



Black Women and Civic Engagement from Reconstruction through the Jim Crow Era: A Resource Guide

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Introduction

The purpose of this resource guide is to explore different manifestations of Black women’s civic involvement during the period from Reconstruction through the Jim Crow Era. The resources in this guide will introduce topics such as economic independence, citizenship, personal care, education, and women’s club organizations. Considering the gender of Black women, the guide lists resources that will allow students to explore how Black women asserted and maintained their position in public spheres that were typically reserved for white people and occasionally for Black men too. Using the biography of Ida B. Wells as a central text, along with additional readings, this guide offers examples of secondary and primary source materials that can be used to explore different aspects of civic involvement by Black women from the Reconstruction years to the Jim Crow era.

TOPIC 1: Reconstruction and the transition to the Jim Crow Era

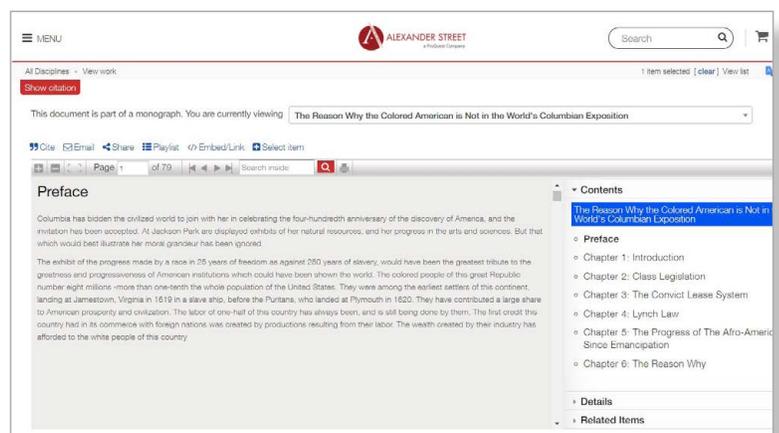
Following the Civil War, Radical Republicans in Congress passed the Reconstruction Act of 1867, a sweeping law that outlined the terms by which former Confederate States would be readmitted to the United States. The Reconstruction Act required states to ratify the 13th and 14th Amendments to the Constitution and to write new constitutions. Under the Reconstruction Act, Congressional Reconstruction represented an opportunity for a radical reshaping of American democracy. During Reconstruction, hundreds of African American men won elected office during Reconstruction, and sixteen African American men were elected to the U.S. Congress, but, overall, the promise of Reconstruction was short-lived as some white southerners, including groups like the Ku Klux Klan engaged in violence, intimidation and political maneuvering to overturn Radical Reconstruction and enact Jim Crow laws that mandated segregation and robbed African Americans of legal rights and political office.

The following readings, beginning with W. E. B. DuBois’s important book, *Black Reconstruction*, set the stage for the other resources which follow in this guide.

Readings:

- DuBois, William Edward Burghardt. *Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*, 5-19. New York, NY: Russell & Russell, 1935. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cdocument%7C4386925

- How Did African-American Women Define Their Citizenship at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893?, by Kathryn Kish Sklar and Erin Shaughnessy. (Binghamton, NY: State University of New York at Binghamton, 1997). https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cweb_collection%7C2495748?account_id=196340&usage_group_id=1337549
- See especially:
 - Document 20: “Frederick Douglass’s Speech At Colored American Day,” 25 August 1893 written by Frederick Douglass, 1818-1895 (1893) (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000, originally published 2000),
 - Document 21: Ida B. Wells, “Preface,” *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World’s Columbian Exposition*, written by Ida B. Wells, 1862-1931 (1893); edited by Ida B. Wells, 1862-1931 (Chicago, IL: Ida B. Wells, 1893, originally published 1893),



- Chapter One: Frederick Douglass, "The Afro-American's Contribution to Columbian Literature" written by Frederick Douglass, 1818-1895 (1893) (Chicago, IL: Ida B. Wells, 1893, originally published 1893),
- Chapter Two: Ida B. Wells, "Class Legislation" written by Ida B. Wells, 1862-1931 (1893) (Chicago, IL: Ida B. Wells, 1893, originally published 1893),
- Chapter Three: Ida B. Wells, "Convict Lease System" written by Ida B. Wells, 1862-1931 (1893) (Chicago, IL: Ida B. Wells, 1893, originally published 1893),

Discussion Questions:

- How did W.E.B. DuBois and Frederick Douglass characterize Black Reconstruction and the period that we come to know as the Jim Crow Era?
- What were some of the conditions associated with not being recognized as citizens?

Other Readings:

- Faulkner, Carol, and Laurie Olin. *Women's Radical Reconstruction: The Freedmen's Aid Movement*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=3442156>
- Mitchell, Michele. *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny after Reconstruction*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2004. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=413362>
- *The Human Tradition in the Civil War and Reconstruction*, edited by Steven E. Woodworth, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=1351134>
- Williams, Kidada E. *They Left Great Marks on Me: African American Testimonies of Racial Violence from Emancipation to World War I*, New York University Press, 2012. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=865957>
- Davidson, James West, and James West Davidson. *They Say: Ida B. Wells and the Reconstruction of Race*, Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2007. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=430773>

Documentary:

- Reconstruction: America After the Civil War, Reconstruction: Part 1, Hour 1, directed by Rob Rapley, fl. 1994-2009; produced by Portland Helmich, fl. 2019 and Rob Rapley, fl. 1994-2009, in Reconstruction: America After the Civil War (Arlington, VA: Public Broadcasting Service, 2019), 56 mins https://search.alexanderstreet.com/cite/display/default/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C5067716

TOPIC 2: Black Women and Economic Independence

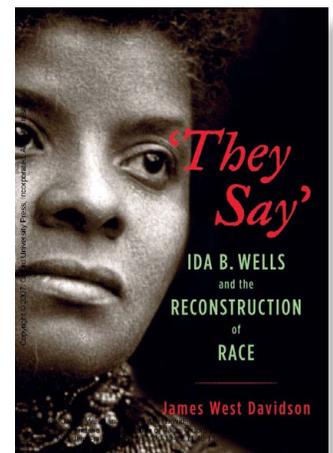
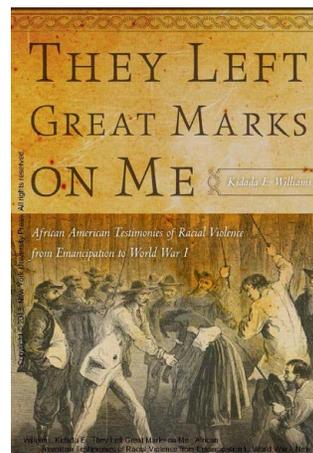
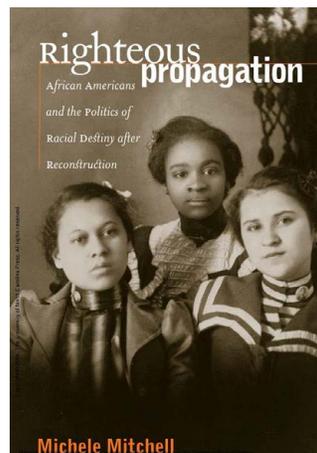
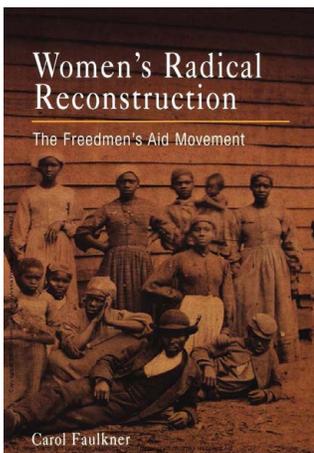
Primary Source Documents:

- **Freedman's Savings and Trust Company: Letters Received by the Commissioners, 1870-1914, Part 1: Correspondence, Loans, and Bank Books (in ProQuest History Vault: Reconstruction and Military Government after the Civil War)**

Collection URL = <https://search.proquest.com/histvault?q=78582:100542>

In an effort to better meet the needs of black soldiers and civilians after the Civil War, John W. Alvord, an abolitionist and Congregational minister, proposed the establishment of a permanent savings bank in 1865. The Freedman's Savings and Trust Company, colloquially known as the Freedman's bank, opened branches in Savannah, New Orleans, Vicksburg, Charleston, Richmond, and Houston. By 1871, the Freedman's bank operated thirty-seven branch offices in seventeen states and the District of Columbia.

Documents within the Freedman's Saving and Trust collection in ProQuest History Vault consist of correspondence, loan papers, and bank books sent to commissioners by depositors. Three of the commissioners, John A. J. Creswell, Robert Purvis, and Robert H. T. Leipold, are among the principal correspondents in the collection. Scattered throughout are deeds and conveyances, dividend checks, wills, powers of attorney, and other legal documents that reveal significant detail about black customers' personal finance in the decades following the Civil War. Receipts inform the researcher of personal consumption patterns and the availability of consumer goods in the Black community.



Legal historians concerned with property law will find useful the numerous records from court cases related to financial disputes, while genealogists should examine legal documents for valuable information about black families.

Questions:

- How do these records indicate women's participation in Black banking?
- How can financial records give us insight into Black women's civic participation?
- Is there a connection between financial behavior and activism?

These questions can be answered by looking at folders like this one which includes records on accounts claimed by women. FOLDER: 100542-001-0001, Freedman's Savings and Trust Company correspondence: Alabama <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=100542-001-0001&accountid=146910>

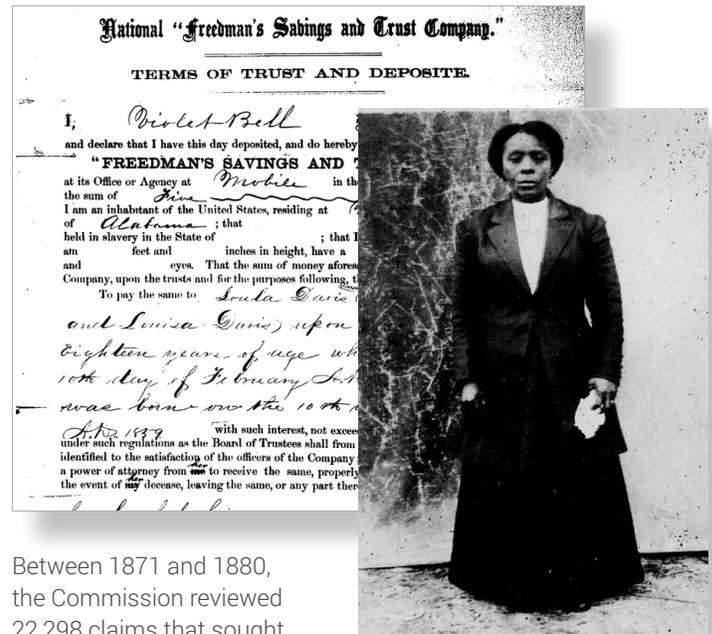
For a different view of Black women and the economy after the Civil War, consult the **Daniel Trotter Papers** in the **ProQuest History Vault module entitled Southern Life and African American History, 1775-1915, Plantations Records, Part 1.**

Daniel Trotter, of Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, began his farming career by renting land, but he was eventually able to save enough money to purchase his own plot of land. The Trotter Papers indicate that Rose Trotter, Daniel Trotter's wife, played an invaluable role in allowing the couple to save enough money for their own farm. Rose ran a personal care and cosmetics business and she also took in sewing and worked as a domestic in order to make extra money. A series of bank books and cash books documents the Trotter family's finances. These cash books include entries referring to labor and picking of cotton, revealing that once Trotter owned his own land, he also became an employer of field hands.

- Daniel Trotter Papers folder, covering sales of land from William Moffitt and Samuel Nelken, personal care products, Columbia Supply Company, and personal finances of Rose Trotter, 1900-1919 <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=009207-002-0065&accountid=146910>
- Rose Trotter bank book covering personal finances, 1918-1920 <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=009207-002-0291&accountid=146910>

Records of the Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880, Settled Case Files for Approved Claims: Florida resident, Louisiana resident, South Carolina, and Texas

The Southern Claims Commission was established in 1871 to settle the claims of residents of twelve Southern states who could demonstrate having been loyal to the Union and who lost property to the U.S. Army during the Civil War years of 1861-1865. In July 1864 Congress established a claims process for citizens in non-seceded states and in 1871 provided for claims for losses of loyal individuals in twelve Southern states. Commissioners of Claims were appointed to receive, examine, and consider the validity of claims. The commissioners lacked final jurisdiction in their cases, rather they reported their decisions annually to Congress, which appropriated funds to settle allowed claims through the Treasury Department.



Between 1871 and 1880, the Commission reviewed 22,298 claims that sought more than \$60 million in damages. Of these claims, 5,250 were dismissed; of the settled claims, payments were made for more than \$4.6 million (with the originally requested amount over \$55 million). Geography, race, socioeconomic class, the certainty of loyalty, and the perceived veracity of claimed items and amounts appear all to have been factors, but typically claims were settled for significantly smaller sums than that requested by claimants.

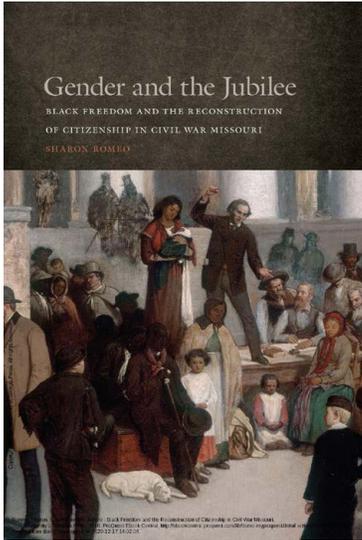
In this collection, case files are arranged by state and then alphabetically by county and claimant name. Each file may contain: a summary report; form petition; list of lost property; records of testimony of the claimant and witnesses; and oaths, memoranda, and evidential and administrative documents. A number of the claims were made by Black women. Here are five examples in which women made claims for lost crops, livestock, or property.

- Beaufort County, South Carolina former enslaved person Rose Goethe loss of swine, meat, corn, and poultry <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=105500-015-0908&accountid=146910>
- Beaufort County, South Carolina former slave Plenty Green loss of swine, crops, and poultry <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=105500-015-0932&accountid=146910>
- Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana free-black planter Emily Kirkland loss of livestock, crops, wagons, and food <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=105500-008-0001&accountid=146910>
- Marlboro County, South Carolina former slave Betty Deese loss of bacon, chickens, and cash <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=105500-021-0216&accountid=146910>
- Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana free black Divine Decuir loss of livestock, crops, and dwelling house <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=105500-011-0402&accountid=146910>

TOPIC 3: Black Women and Citizenship

Reading:

- Romeo, Sharon. *Gender and the Jubilee: Black Freedom and the Reconstruction of Citizenship in Civil War Missouri*, University of Georgia Press, 2016. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=4397157>.



“Embodied performance, such as hanging a picture of a head of state or flying a national flag, can play a part in establishing the cultural aspects of political identity. Jackson enacted a patriotic performance when she clipped and hung the picture. Through the act of hanging the picture, Jackson articulated a relationship with the nation. The rhetorical image declared an emotional attachment to the president. Through her affiliation with the head of state, she

identified herself as a member of the nation.” [*Gender and the Jubilee*, page 11]

Discussion Questions for *Gender and the Jubilee*:

- What is the relationship between the body and citizenship? What were purported characteristics of people that embodied citizenship?
- What were the different ways Black women performed, or activated their citizenship?
- How does this reading connect to the freedmen’s saving’s bank correspondence?

Interview with Nell Irvin Painter, Historian, Princeton University, 1 of 2. Directed by Llewellyn Smith. WGBH Educational Foundation, 2017. <https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/interview-with-nell-irvin-painter-historian-princeton-university-1-of-2?source=autosuggest>

Dr. Painter’s concept of working freedom considers Black women’s labor within the Black family as intertwined with their civic participation.

Poems:

- Fordham, Mary Weston. *The Washerwoman*. Charleston: 1897. <https://www.proquest.com/books/washerwoman/docview/2147686585/se-2?accountid=131239>
- Fordham, Mary Weston. *The Coming Woman*. Charleston: 1897. <https://www.proquest.com/books/coming-woman/docview/2147796236/se-2?accountid=131239>

Discussion Questions:

- What were some of the ways that the poems highlighted Black women’s roles during this time?
- What are your impressions of the work/family balance - if there is one?
- What is significant about the women’s convention in the “Coming Woman”?

TOPIC 4: Beauty and Politics

“All of the Madame C.J. Walker agents had a great love for Madame. They felt that she had done something for the race of women. They felt that they she had given them an opportunity to make livings for themselves, which were different from the livings that most colored women had been able to make. They were in business for themselves. They were doing something. They were making other colored women look beautiful. They loved the company. They, they kind of glorified Madame C.J. Walker.” (appx 16:00 minutes)

Two Dollars and A Dream. Directed by Stanley Nelson. Produced by Stanley Nelson. Filmmakers Library, 1989. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C1785149

Readings:

- Lowry, Beverly. *Her Dream of Dreams: The Rise and Triumph of Madam C. J. Walker*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=6077489>
- Miyatsu, Tami. *Bodies That Work: African American Women’s Corporeal Activism in Progressive America*, Peter Lang Publishing, Incorporated, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=6184842>
- Bundles, A’Lelia. *Self Made: Inspired by the Life of Madam C. J. Walker*, Scribner, 2001. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=5653231>
- Freeman, Tyrone McKinley. *Madam C. J. Walker’s Gospel of Giving: Black Women’s Philanthropy During Jim Crow*, University of Illinois Press, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=6354139>

Discussion Questions:

- In what ways does the film connect the entrepreneurship of Madame C.J. Walker to early-reconstruction era assertions of Black women’s financial holdings in the Freedmen’s Bank & Savings Correspondence and the Southern Claims Commission Records?
- What were Madame C.J. Walker’s contributions to Black civic participation?

TOPIC 5:

Civic Participation through Education

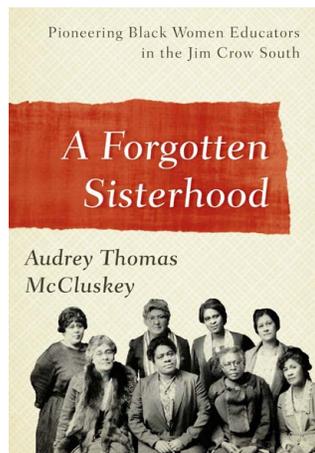
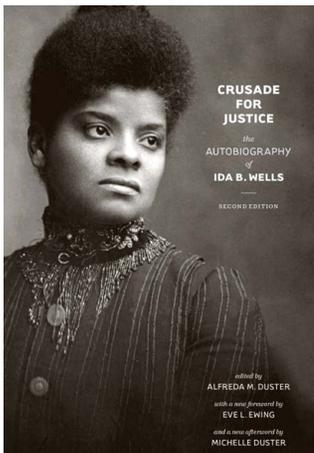
"That year, when the time came for election of teachers, the school board failed to reelect me as it had done every year for seven years. I was not even notified of this until time for the school to be opened, too late to seek employment elsewhere. I sent my lawyer to the board of education to find out why. The reply was that no fault was found with my ability as a teacher or with my character, but the board had a copy of the Free Speech on file in the office showing criticism of them. They didn't care to employ a teacher who had done this, and for that reason I had been left out." [Page 34 of Wells, *Ida B. Crusade for Justice: The Autobiography of Ida B. Wells*, Second Edition, edited by Alfreda M. Duster, University of Chicago Press, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=6157250>]

Other Books:

- McCluskey, Audrey Thomas. *A Forgotten Sisterhood: Pioneering Black Women Educators and Activists in the Jim Crow South*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=1864065>
- Evans, Stephanie Y. *Black Women in the Ivory Tower, 1850-1954: An Intellectual History*, University Press of Florida, 2016. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=4747754>
- Fairclough, Adam. *A Class of Their Own: Black Teachers in the Segregated South*, Harvard University Press, 2007. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=3300135>
- Anderson, James D. *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*, University of North Carolina Press, 1988. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/demo-myproquest/detail.action?docID=880026>

Documentary:

- Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice. Directed by William Greaves. California Newsreel, 1989. <https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/ida-b-wells-a-passion-for-justice>



Primary Source Documents:

- ProQuest History Vault. *Mary McLeod Bethune Papers, Bethune Foundation Collection, Part 1. Writings, Diaries, Scrapbooks, Biographical Materials* <https://search.proquest.com/histvault?q=23138:001387&accountid=131239>

The Mary McLeod Bethune Papers consist of the Bethune-Cookman Collection and the four-part Bethune Foundation Collection. The Bethune-Cookman Collection documents Bethune's career as president of Bethune-Cookman College (B-CC) [now Bethune-Cookman University]. Bethune founded what became B-CC 110 years ago as an elementary school. She started the Daytona Educational and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls on October 3, 1904, in a rented house in Daytona, Florida, "with five little girls, a dollar and a half, and faith in God."

The Bethune Foundation Collection of the Mary McLeod Bethune Papers consists of biographical material about Bethune, her correspondence, writings and speeches, scrapbooks and diaries, and her files from her years of service with the National Youth Administration and National Association of Colored Women. The biographical items in the collection detail Bethune's childhood, her family, early education, early career as a teacher, her mission work in Florida, and the founding of the Daytona Educational and Industrial Institute.

Here we are highlighting a number of items within the collection that focus on Bethune's early life and the first years of her career as an educator.

- Mary McLeod autobiographical statement, "A Yearning and Longing Appeased" <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001387-001-0001&accountid=146910>
- Mary McLeod Bethune autobiographical statement covering her education and founding of Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001387-001-0014&accountid=146910>
- Mary McLeod biographical sketch covering childhood, education, professional career, and Bethune-Cookman College development <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001387-001-0089&accountid=146910>
- Mary McLeod biographical sketch by Emma Q. V. McBride, covering Bethune's childhood, education, Bethune-Cookman College development, interracial work in the South, Bethune Red Cross service in World War II and Bethune leadership positions in organizations <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001387-001-0199&accountid=146910>
- Biographical sketch of Mary McLeod Bethune, covering founding of Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute and Bethune's leadership in National Youth Administration <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001387-001-0228&accountid=146910>
- Mary McLeod Bethune biographical sketch, "One Woman" by Cynthia M. Ranslow, covering childhood education, founding of Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute, Bethune women's advisory network, early mission work in Florida convict labor camps, and General Education Board depression-era grant to Bethune-Cookman College <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001387-001-0234&accountid=146910>

- Mary McLeod biography, covering her childhood, living conditions and medical practices on South Carolina plantations, parents' life as slaves, parents' religiosity, elementary education and adolescence, and relationship with mother Patsy McLeod <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001387-001-0686&accountid=146910>
- Mary McLeod oral history, covering her childhood and early education, psychology, missionary aspirations, European tour, mission work in Palatka, Florida, settlement in Daytona Beach and friendship with Lucy Laney, courtship and marriage <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001387-002-0001&accountid=146910>
- Mary McLeod Bethune biographical information, 1939-1955. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001392-003-0404&accountid=146910>
- Bethune -Cookman College, publications and publicity materials, 1895-1954, including 1895 Cookman Institute commencement, Daytona-Cookman Collegiate Institute, B-C (Bethune -Cookman) Book, BCC brochures, The Advocate (BCC newspaper), and Camilla Williams concert <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001395-011-0418&accountid=131239>

Mary McLeod Bethune, Founder and President of Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Florida.

Through sheer grit, courage, business sagacity, tireless energy and magnificent dreaming, linked with a manifest integrity and personal magnetism that have been able to command the cooperation of people of wealth and nation wide influence, educational experts, figured teachers, she has developed this school which has sent out hundreds of cultured, ambitious, inspired young men and women who give the torchlight to the darkened areas.

Newspaper Articles:

- Bureau of the AFRO-AMERICAN LEDGER. "NOW READY TO TRAIN COLORED WOMEN AND GIRLS: OPENING OF THE NATIONAL TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN." Afro-American (1893-1988), Oct 29, 1910. <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/now-ready-train-colored-women-girls/docview/530325357/se-2?accountid=131239>
- "The Nation's Colored Teachers Reconsecrate Themselves to the Cause of Youth Uplift." New Journal and Guide (1916-2003), Aug 30, 1924, pp. 7. ProQuest, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/nations-colored-teachers-reconsecrate-themselves/docview/566967850/se-2?accountid=131239>
- "NEWS OF THE SCHOOLS: BORDENTOWN TRAINING SCHOOL BORDENTOWN, N. J." The Chicago Defender (National edition) (1921-1967), May 29, 1926, pp. 8. ProQuest, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/news-schools/docview/492098863/se-2?accountid=131239>
- "TEACHERS URGE BETTER SALARIES: ATTENTION OF STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION CALLED TO THE PRESENT LOW SALARIES IN THE COUNTIES. MURPHY CHOSEN HEAD

LARGEST ATTENDANCE OF TEACHERS IN THE HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION." Afro-American (1893-1988), Dec 01, 1917, pp. 1. ProQuest, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/teachers-urge-better-salaries/docview/530382731/se-2?accountid=131239>

- BERLACK, THELMA E. "A High Spot in Florida: Daytona - Cookman College Started Twenty-Two Years Ago with Capital of \$1.50-- Now Valued at nearly \$1,000,000 Faith Hall, One of the Fourteen Building on Campus, was Constructed by Volunteer Service of Negro Tradesmen New Girls' Dormitory Curtis Hall at Bethune-Cookman College. (Insert--Mrs. Bethune) Where Cooking is an Art the House that Faith Built." The New York Amsterdam News (1922-1938), Nov 17, 1926, pp. 15. ProQuest, <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/high-spot-florida/docview/226338423/se-2?accountid=131239>

Using the examples of Mary McLeod Bethune, Ida B. Wells, and coverage of education in Historical Black Newspapers, students can investigate connections between education and civic and political involvement.

TOPIC 6: Club Women and Black Civil Rights Organizations

This resource guide concludes with a consideration of the African American Women's Club Movement. The National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Inc. (NACWC) is the oldest African American secular organization still in existence. The black women who gathered in Washington, D.C. in July 1896 to form a national organization of women were following in the tradition of earlier generations of African American women who had come together in clubs to address immediate and long-range issues that impacted upon their communities. At the turn of the century, grave political, social, and economic considerations compelled them to move beyond their local and state associations to devise plans for the formation of a national body that would systematically and professionally address the problems that they believed threatened the very survival of black Americans.

By 1895 Jim Crow laws that relegated African Americans to second-class citizenship, were well in place in the South, while social Darwinism was well entrenched in both the private and public sectors throughout the country. All of this spelled unprecedented crisis for black Americans. The resultant economic disparities, political disfranchisement, and social ostracism presented the greatest threats to black aspirations for freedom and inclusion in the American system of democracy. At this juncture, too, prominent white Americans launched vitriolic attacks upon the moral character of black women. Simultaneously, white men lynched black men for allegedly raping white women. African American women believed that these allegations were key components to understanding their oppression as women and as black Americans, and to securing support for their eradication. They believed that it was essential to challenge these accusations and they launched the NACWC as a vehicle to confront their accusers.

Documents:

- Margaret Murray Washington, Club Work as a Factor in the Advance of Colored Women. Colored American Magazine 1906-1908 https://search.alexanderstreet.com/preview/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C2776156?account_id=196340&usage_group_id=1337549
- Annie H. Jones, "How Can We as Women Advance The Standing of the Race?" *National Association Notes*, 7:11 (July 1904), pp. 9-13, Records of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, 1895-1992 in ProQuest History Vault <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001554-023-0410&accountid=146910>
- *Speaking at the annual meeting of the National Association of Colored Women's clubs in 1904, Annie Jones urged fellow club members to maintain impeccable moral standards so as to never reflect adversely on the race. Aware of negative white stereotypes of black women, Jones argued that "A race cannot rise above its womanhood." Hence club women should use their educational gifts, organizational skills, and Christian morals to set an example for all persons of color. Bright, articulate, socially motivated women like Jones peopled the women's club movement for decades, yet their work in local communities, in lobbying state and national legislators, and in providing opportunities for the next generation of young black adults has gone virtually unrecorded in history until recently.*

Excerpts from "With Quietness They Work": *Report of the Activities of Southern Women in Education Against Lynching During 1937* (Atlanta, Georgia: Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, 1938), pp. 1, 3, 9, 15, and 16 (Gerristen Collection of Women's History Microfiche, #100.2), by Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, 1930-1942. https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cweb_collection%7C2497921

- "Southern Negro Women and Race Co-operation," 28-30 June 1921, *Commission on Interracial Cooperation Papers*, Atlanta University Center, Robert W. Woodruff Library, (Commission on Interracial Cooperation, 1919-1944, microfilm, reel 14, #476-80), by Southeastern Federation of Colored Women's Clubs. Included in *How Did Black and White Southern Women Campaign to End Lynching, 1890-1942?*, by Thomas Dublin, Kathryn Kish Sklar, and Karen Vill. (Binghamton, NY: State University of New York at Binghamton, 1999). https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cweb_collection%7C2497921

Compare this piece to the texts from earlier about the Chicago Exposition. What are some of the concerns that motivate this letter? Are they different or related to the concerns raised by W.E.B. DuBois and Frederick Douglass respectively?

For other material related to these documents, consult the Women and Social Movements Document project entitled **What Was the Relationship between Mary Church Terrell's International Experience and Her Work against Racism in the United States?**

https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cweb_collection%7C2500020?account_id=196340&usage_group_id=1337549

Additional material can be found in ProQuest History Vault's collection on the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs. <https://congressional.proquest.com/histvault?q=001554-025-0373&accountid=146910>

As students review original writing from the National Notes, and individual publications from their members, they might analyze how beauty and comportment were tied with assertions and performances of citizenship.

The records of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs can also provide a bridge from the Jim Crow Era to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Key leaders of the NACW such as Mary Church Terrell and Mary McLeod Bethune would play a key role in fighting for civil rights throughout the first half of the 20th Century. By World War II, a new generation of women leaders started to emerge, such as Ruby Hurley, Rosa Parks, Ella Baker and many others. Students interested in continuing to analyze women's contribution to the Black Freedom Struggle in the 20th Century could consult the resource guide on Researching the Civil Rights Movement, available at <https://media2.proquest.com/documents/civilright-resourceguides.pdf>

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The President's Biennial Report For 1926-28

TO THE SIXTEENTH BIENNIAL CONVENTION, WASHINGTON, D. C. JULY 27TH TO AUGUST 3RD

It gives us great joy and happiness to meet here in the shadow of our great capitol, where a group of far-sighted women met 32 years ago and planted the seed that has grown into this mammoth oak, spreading her branches over 44 states of our Union, and even in the islands of the sea, our great National Association, with her soul-stirring motto, "Lifting as we Climb."

Next to God, we are indebted to women, first for life itself, and then for making it worth having; and it is to Christianity that we are indebted for the elevation of women to her true place in society

And just in proportion as Christianity has away, will she rise to a higher dignity in human life. This is a tribute to womanhood in general, but to the women of my race in particular. When we look back over a period of years and realize the hard struggles encountered and the many obstacles surmounted, it is with a degree of pride that the Negro woman acknowledges and demands her present social status

And now my dear co-workers, realizing the firm foundation laid by my predecessors upon which I have been permitted to build; enjoying the love confidence and unwavering support, and co-operation of the women of the National Association, we are very happy to be privileged to meet in this our Capital City, Washington, District of Columbia. We feel the presence of the President of our great nation, and the great national executives, who preside over all the peoples of our great

May I on this occasion thank most earnestly the women of my race for the honor you have conferred upon me and the confidence you have voted me in permitting me to serve you as president these four years. They have been years of hard work, unselfish service, love-making years to and for the thousands and thousands of women that I have been privileged to meet and know and serve all over our country and even in foreign lands.

The handling of the problems of our great organization have not been easy; we have made mistakes, many of them, but all the time we have been trying to find the best road leading toward the finest and best for the womanhood of our race.

During these four years the task has not been easy for any of us; we have had many difficulties, but you have given me hearts full of love and hands full of service which have encouraged me and braced me, hence I am permitted to render to you a very fine report as a result of the services you all



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