

# Anna Julia Cooper: Standing at the Intersection of History and Hope

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## Introduction

In order to understand the magnitude of the life of Anna Julia Cooper, one has to understand the historical timeframe in which she was born. The years leading to Anna's birth and events that followed had a tremendous significance on how Anna viewed the world and how she approached her future endeavors. By the 1850s, the United States of America had reached a boiling point in which regional identities were polarizing the nation.<sup>1</sup> The status of slavery in the newly gained Western territories, the Compromise of 1850, and the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act served to increase division in the country.<sup>2</sup> Only a few years later, the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision further escalated the tension between the North and the South.<sup>3</sup> Figure A.1 in the Appendix illustrates the regions of the United States designated either free or slave as well as territories opened to slavery as a result of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Figure A.2 in the Appendix illustrates the division between abolitionists and pro-slavery groups regarding the newly added territories. John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, and the subsequent emancipation of the slaves in 1865, changed the world where Anna Julia Cooper would live.<sup>4</sup>

Even closer to Anna Julia Cooper were the events that occurred in her home state of North Carolina. In a state where slavery served as the economic engine, the normalization of human ownership was maintained by "a system that kept enslaved African Americans ignorant, dependent, and powerless within a racial hierarchy."<sup>5</sup> Laws were passed ensuring slaves were forbidden to read or write for the purpose of keeping them obedient, ignorant, and unaware of their own potential.<sup>6</sup> Figure A.3 in the Appendix illustrates the 1830 law passed in North Carolina forbidding slaves to read or write. In doing so, slave owners felt they were preventing any discontent among their human property that might result from an understanding of their

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<sup>1</sup> "A Nation Divided: The Political Climate of 1850s America," The Benjamin Hedrick Ordeal: A Portrait of Antebellum Politics and Debates Over Slavery. North Carolina State University, Accessed November 14, 2020. <https://cwnc.omeka.chass.ncsu.edu/exhibits/show/benjamin-hedrick/politicalclimate>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; <sup>2</sup> Stephen G. Breyer, "A Look Back at the *Dred Scott* Decision," *Journal of Supreme Court History* 35 no. 2 (2010): 110-21. In accordance with the Compromise of 1850, slavery was abolished in Washington D.C.; California was admitted as a free state; and the South gained the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 required free states to return escaped slaves to their owners in the South, thereby guaranteeing another form of controlling slaves outside of one's own state.

<sup>3</sup> "A Nation Divided: The Political Climate of 1850s America." Proposed by Stephen Douglass, the Kansas-Nebraska Act repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 in which slavery was prohibited north of the 36° 30' latitude.

<sup>4</sup> "Nineteenth Century North Carolina Timeline." North Carolina Museum of History. Smithsonian Affiliate. Accessed November 14, 2020. <https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/learning/educators/timelines/nineteenth-century-north-carolina-timeline>

<sup>5</sup> Jenn Curry, "Slavery in Antebellum North Carolina." Storymaps, December 10, 2019. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c3345ffd7c584c1ca8bb76e9ee5486b9> No page numbers are indicated on the author's website.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

oppression.<sup>7</sup> Certainly, Anna Julia Cooper's steadfast dedication to the education of Black students, and Black women in particular, can be seen as an act of resistance to the educational oppression of her enslaved ancestry.

Anna Julia Cooper's predecessors, held in the bondage of slavery, spoke out against their oppression in ways that allowed Anna to do the work she did in her lifetime. Black women such as Maria W. Stewart, Mary Prince, and Harriot Jacobs, demanded sexual justice as a right and led other Black women to insist on their inclusion in the equality of the races.<sup>8</sup> Stewart spoke to the exclusion of Black women from filing rape charges against White men, and how that characterized Black women "as a prostitute at best and a sexual beast incapable of virtue at worst."<sup>9</sup> These Black women, and more like them, transformed their words into acts of resistance against the idea that Black women were not virtuous and welcomed the sexual advances of White men. During the years following the Civil War, this resistance was turned against Black women:

Whereas prior to the war, abolitionists had espoused a political narrative that centered on the rape of black women by white men, in the postwar years southern white men developed a political discourse that defined rape as a crime committed by black men against white women.<sup>10</sup>

### **Anna Julia Cooper: A Brief History of Her Life**

Anna Julia Cooper was born into slavery on August 10, 1858, in Raleigh, North Carolina.<sup>11</sup> Anna's mother was Hannah Stanley, a slave owned by Dr. Fabius J. Haywood. Hannah was, for a period of time, working for Haywood's brother, George Washington Haywood, an attorney from Raleigh, who was most likely Anna's father.<sup>12</sup> Anna acknowledges both of her parents in a

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.; Melissa Meeks, trans., "Revised Code—No. 105. Slaves and Free Persons of Color. An Act Concerning Slaves and Free Persons of Color," Documenting the American South. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2002. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/slavesfree/slavesfree.html> The 1830 law enforced in North Carolina stated, in part, "If any slave shall teach or attempt to teach, any other slave to read or write, the use of figures excepted, he or she may be carried before any justice of the peace, and on conviction thereof, shall be sentenced to receive thirty-nine lashes on his or her bare back."

<sup>8</sup> Crystal M. Feimster, "When Black Women Reclaimed Their Bodies: The Fight for Sexual Justice During Reconstruction." *Slate*, February 2, 2018. <https://slate.com/human-interest/2018/02/how-formerly-enslaved-black-women-fought-for-human-dignity-and-sexual-justice.html> ; Jennifer A. Garcia, "*Maria W. Stewart: America's First Black Feminist*." Thesis, FIU Electronic Theses and Dissertations, 1998.

<sup>9</sup> Feimster, "When Black Women Reclaimed Their Bodies," No page numbers are indicated on the author's website.

<sup>10</sup> Jennifer A. Garcia, "*Maria W. Stewart: America's First Black Feminist*." <https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5331&context=etd>

<sup>11</sup> Giles, Mark S., "Dr. Anna Julia Cooper" 1858-1964: Teacher, Scholar, and Timeless Womanist," *The Journal of Negro Education* 75, no. 4 (2006): 621-34; Cooper, *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*, Edited by Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998); Cathryn Bailey, "Anna Julia Cooper: 'Dedicated in the Name of My Slave Mother to the Education of Working People.'" *Hypatia* 19, no. 2 (2004): 56-73. Cooper did not have a birth certificate, so the exact year of her birth cannot be proven on paper. However, while the year of her birth may be uncertain, birthdays are typically remembered, hence the August 10<sup>th</sup> date. Additionally, Cooper's marriage license, dated 11 June 1877, states that she was nineteen at the time, making the year of her birth as 1858 seem reasonable.

<sup>12</sup> Giles, Mark S. "Dr. Anna Julia Cooper" It should be noted that two primary source obituaries list Cooper's father as a slave. *Howard University, "Mrs. Anna Julia Cooper, 105, Negro Educator, Dies," Digital Howard. Howard University, 2017.* [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_clipsabout/1/](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_clipsabout/1/), Howard University, "Negro Educator Sees Life's

handwritten (n.d.) autobiographical fragment in which she states, “My mother was a slave and the finest woman I have ever known.”<sup>13</sup> Regarding her father Anna writes, “Presumably my father was her master; if so I owe him not a sou.”<sup>14</sup> Figure A.4 in the Appendix illustrates the handwritten autobiographical sketch. Additionally, Anna writes in a 1930 Negro College Graduates Individual Occupation History, “I owe nothing to my White father beyond the initial act of procreation. My mother’s self-sacrificing toil to give me advantages she had never enjoyed is worthy of the highest praise and undying gratitude.”<sup>15</sup> Figure A.5 in the Appendix illustrates Anna’s response on the 1930 Negro College Graduates Individual Occupation History. Certainly, the origins of her birth as a child born into slavery, the daughter of a woman raped by her master, and a person whose fate rested on the outcome of the Civil War, had a profound effect on her personal determination and her future work. Likewise, the relationship with her mother may have served as a sphere of influence in which culture and forms of resistance were deeply ingrained in Anna’s heart and mind.<sup>16</sup>

Somewhere between the years of 1865 and 1868, Anna began her formal education at St. Augustine’s Normal School and Collegiate Institute in Raleigh, North Carolina.<sup>17</sup> Figure A.7 in the Appendix illustrates Anna’s feelings about St. Augustine’s when she states, “That school was my world during the formative period, the most critical in any girl’s life.” A bright and precocious youngster, Anna learned quickly, was soon promoted to “pupil teacher,” and was subsequently given selected classes to teach.<sup>18</sup> Anna writes in *A Voice from the South*,

When a child, I was put into a school near home that professed to be normal and collegiate, i.e. to prepare teachers for colored youth, furnish candidates for the ministry, and offer collegiate training for those who should be ready for it. Well, I found after a while that I had a good deal of time on my hands. I had devoured what was put before me, and, like *Oliver Twist*, was looking around to ask for more. I constantly felt (as I suppose many an ambitious girl has felt) a thumping from within unanswered by any beckoning from without.<sup>19</sup>

In 1877, Anna completed her course work and graduated from St. Augustine’s.<sup>20</sup> Figure A.6 in the Appendix displays a photo of Anna that may have been taken around this time. She married George Christopher Cooper, a theological student and teacher of Greek.<sup>21</sup> George and Anna

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Meaning at 100,” Digital Howard. Howard University, 2017. [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_clipsabout/2/](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_clipsabout/2/) This source and the previous source I referenced indicate there are contradictory claims regarding Cooper’s family.

<sup>13</sup> Howard University, “Handwritten Biographical Sketch,” Digital Howard. Howard University, October 2017. [http://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_bio/8](http://dh.howard.edu/ajc_bio/8)

<sup>14</sup> Howard University, “Handwritten Biographical Sketch.”

<sup>15</sup> Howard University, “Negro College Graduates Individual Occupational History,” Digital Howard. Howard University, October 2017. [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_bio/2/](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_bio/2/). Giles, Mark S. “Dr. Anna Julia Cooper”

<sup>16</sup> Collins, “*Black Feminist Thought*”

<sup>17</sup> Howard University, “Biographical Sketch from The Parent-Teacher Journal,” Digital Howard. Howard University, 2017. [https://dh.howard.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=ajc\\_bio](https://dh.howard.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=ajc_bio) There are conflicting dates, as Giles (2006) states that Cooper was ten years old when she began school at St. Augustine, and Lemert and Bhan (1998) list the year as questionable.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Cooper, “*The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*,” 85-86.

<sup>20</sup> Giles, “Dr. Anna Julia Cooper”

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

remained at St. Augustine's until Mr. Cooper passed two years later in 1877.<sup>22</sup> Anna never remarried. It has been speculated that she may have chosen not to remarry "Because it was common practice to exclude married women from the teaching profession during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, her widowed status also allowed her to continue her profession."<sup>23</sup> The ideological and historical exclusion of women and the political discrimination against women in educational institutions is clearly evident in this practice.

Anna attended Oberlin College in 1884, where she earned her bachelor's degree in 1884 and her master's degree in 1887.<sup>24</sup> Figure A.21 displays a photograph that may have been taken around the time that Anna attended Oberlin College. Anna was immersed in an uncompromising academic curriculum, commonly referred to as gentlemen's courses that were typically reserved for men. For Anna, this allowed her to do the intellectual work that few other Black women had the opportunity to do. While at Oberlin, Anna refused to stand by and allow the privilege afforded the men at Oberlin to result in the oppression of her education by demonstrating her academic prowess and demanding a seat at the gentlemen's table of higher education.

It was also during this time that Anna became close friends with Charlotte Forten Grimke', a writer and abolitionist who "struggled constantly with the racism and prejudice inflicted on her race, and sought solace and strength in her religious convictions."<sup>25</sup> Anna, like Charlotte, also relied greatly on her faith. LaRese Hubbard speaks to their relationship when she states, "Their sisterhood gravitated around the struggle for women's rights and the need for the masses to be uplifted. Together they held cultural events at each other's homes in Washington, D.C., and were friends for over thirty years."<sup>26</sup> Figure A.8 in the Appendix displays a photo of Charlotte Forten Grimke'.

In 1887, Anna took a position as a teacher at Washington Colored High School, which eventually became M Street High School. Figure A.9 in the Appendix illustrates a list of Anna's occupations following her graduation from Oberlin College. It indicates Anna took a teaching position at Washington Colored High School in 1887. It also illustrates her becoming principal in December 1901. While at M Street High School, in 1892, Anna published her most famous work, *A Voice from the South*. Throughout, Anna brilliantly exposes the intersectionality faced by the Black women of her time by using extraordinarily witty, sometimes sarcastic, but always poignant language. And certainly, the overarching theme is, as Anna states, "And not many can more sensibly realize and more accurately tell the weight and the fret of the 'long dull pain' than the open-eyed but hitherto voiceless Black Woman of America."<sup>27</sup> Four years later, Anna became principal of the M Street High School.

Anna remained in her position as Principal of M Street High School until 1906, when she retired due to incredulous accusations from the District of Columbia board of education's White

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 624.

<sup>24</sup> Howard University, "Negro College Graduates Individual Occupational History"

<sup>25</sup> Kay Ann Taylor, "Mary S. Peake and Charlotte L. Forten: Black Teachers During the Civil War and Reconstruction," *The Journal of Negro Education* 74, no. 2 (2005), 18. In 1951, Anna commemorated their friendship by publishing *Personal Recollections of the Grimke' Family*.

<sup>26</sup> LaRese Hubbard, "Anna Julia Cooper and African Womanism: Some Early Conceptual Contributions," *Black Women, Gender, and Families* 4, no. 2 (2010), 44.

<sup>27</sup> Cooper, "The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper"

members.<sup>28</sup> The board of education, unwilling to admit that it was Anna's stance on maintaining a liberal arts curriculum over an industrial one, decided to falsely accuse Anna of having an inappropriate romantic relationship with her young-adult foster son, John Love.<sup>29</sup> After leaving M Street High School, Anna left Washington, D.C., and began her work at the Jefferson Institute in Missouri where she also supervised the Colored Social Settlement.<sup>30</sup> Anna remained there until 1913 when she decided to pursue her PhD. Having experienced such profound success as an educator and activist, it is a fair question to ask what led her to do this. Perhaps, "If her successes put her above in some respects, they did as compensation for the bellows of other moments of her life."<sup>31</sup> Anna experienced profound isolation at times in her life, and atrocious indignities at the hands of the White board members while she was principal at M Street High School. It is possible that Anna's pursuit of a PhD was her way of clearing her good name and proving to herself and others that she alone defined who she was and for what she would be remembered.<sup>32</sup> Dr. Cooper earned her PhD at the Sorbonne in 1925 at the age of 66.<sup>33</sup> In an article published by the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority in *The Dunbar Observer*, dated January 14, 1926, Anna speaks to her accomplishment by stating, "I take at your hands, therefore, this diploma, not as a symbol of cold intellectual success in my achievement at the Sorbonne, but with the warm pulsing heart throbs of a people's satisfaction in my humble effort to serve them."<sup>34</sup> Figure A.22 in the Appendix displays a photo of Dr. Cooper taken upon her graduation from the Sorbonne.

Upon her return from Paris in 1925, Anna went back to Washington, D.C., to continue her work at M Street High School where she taught Latin until her retirement in 1930.<sup>35</sup> Following her retirement, she became the president of Frelinghuysen University, an institution created exclusively for the education of "working-class adult learners seeking opportunities to advance their professional aspirations."<sup>36</sup> Frelinghuysen provided social services, offered undergraduate as well as graduate degrees, and had at its heart the mission to serve poor working class citizens of Washington, D.C. Anna knew from experience that the balance of power and domination was deeply rooted in intersecting forms of oppression; and consequently, she sought to resist this oppression in a way that was equally complex. At Frelinghuysen, Anna created a complex web, woven from the fibers of community development, racial and gender uplift, education, and activism that served to catch those who would have otherwise fallen through the cracks. And, as a beautiful, fitting tribute to her beloved mother, Anna named a school at Frelinghuysen the "Hannah Stanley Opportunity School."<sup>37</sup> Figures A.11, A.12, A.13, and A.14 in the Appendix exhibit Anna's home in Washington, D.C., that housed Frelinghuysen University when they

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Howard University, "Handwritten Biographical Sketch"

<sup>31</sup> Cooper, "*The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*" 24

<sup>32</sup> Giles, "Dr. Anna Julia Cooper," states, "The dismissal and exile was a significant incident in Cooper's life because it stimulated her to pursue a long-desired doctorate as a professional countermeasure to the personal scandal she suffered and to increase her credentials in the field of education" 625-626.

<sup>33</sup> Cooper, "*The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*"

<sup>34</sup> Howard University, "Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Presents Dr. A. J. Cooper," Digital Howard. Howard University, January 1926. [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_clipsabout/16/](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_clipsabout/16/)

<sup>35</sup> Cooper, "*The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*"

<sup>36</sup> Giles, "Dr. Anna Julia Cooper," 626.

<sup>37</sup> Cathryn Baily, "Anna Julia Cooper: Dedicated in the Name of My Slave Mother to the Education of Working People," *Hypatia* 19 no. 2 (2004), 63.

could no longer make their mortgage payments. Anna went on to serve her community in this same spirit for the rest of her life.

### **Anna Julia Cooper: Education as Uplift**

Although obviously gifted as a writer and scholar, Anna's true passion was teaching. Figure A.10 in the Appendix illustrates Anna's love for teaching. In Anna's own hand on the Negro College Graduates Individual Occupational History she states,

Teaching has always seemed to me the noblest of callings and I believe that if I were white, I should still want to teach those whose need presents a stronger appeal than money. There might be a bit of vanity in this. It is human to be stimulated by appreciation where it is genuine.<sup>38</sup>

Anna, first and foremost believed the education of girls and women was not for the purpose of providing men with playthings, or to become sacrificial lambs, and certainly not for the training of servants, but rather, "She called for access to free, comprehensive education as part of the reparations due Black communities and later argued that Black students must be taught overtly about abuses of power."<sup>39</sup> Her educational philosophy was based on the profound belief that women's place in education was in all settings, without limits, and available throughout their entire lives. Anna spoke up and said, "Let her make herself her own."<sup>40</sup>

Anna likewise addressed the sexual inequality in education. When she looks back on her time at St. Augustine's, she is reminded of her struggles compared to that of her male classmates.

A boy, however meager his equipment and shallow his pretensions, had only to declare a floating intention to study theology and he could get all the support, encouragement and stimulus he needed, be absolved from work and invested beforehand with all the dignity of his far away office. While a self-supporting girl had to struggle on by teaching in the summer and working after school hours to keep up with her board bills, and actually to fight her way against positive discouragements to the higher education.<sup>41</sup>

In response to the inequality of educational opportunities for girls, and in particular Black girls, Anna argues for an education where "our girls feel that we expect something more of them than that they merely look pretty and appear well in society. Teach them that there is a race with special needs which they and only they can help."<sup>42</sup> She believed education was a means of uplifting the race. In particular, Anna focuses on those most adversely affected by racist educational practices when she states, "The only sane education, therefore, is that which

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<sup>38</sup> Howard University, "Negro College Graduates Individual Occupational History." Digital Howard. Howard University, October 2017. [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_bio/2/](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_bio/2/)

<sup>39</sup> Giles, "Dr. Anna Julia Cooper"; Alinia Minoo, "On Black Feminist Thought: Thinking Oppression and Resistance through Intersectional Paradigm," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 38, no. 13 (2015): 2334-40. This later argument of calling for Black students to be educated about the dynamics of power indicate a clear understanding of the contemporary Black Feminist Thought that suggests that with human agency, as well as struggle and change, comes the opportunity for awareness of oppression, and a refusal to believe in a dominant view of oneself and consequently the dictated belief of how Black women are to define themselves.

<sup>40</sup> Cooper, "Anna Julia Cooper," 78.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 86-87.

conserves the very lowest stratum.”<sup>43</sup> She furthers her argument for the education of the least in society when she says, “If a child seems poor in inheritance, poor in environment, poor in personal endowment, by so much the more must organized society bring to that child the good tidings of social salvation.”<sup>44</sup> Anna knew this kind of radical knowledge had the potential to undermine White power and she also knew it frightened racist Whites enough that they would do anything to prevent it.

Anna continued her dedication to education as uplift through her leadership of Frelinghuysen University. Anna became the president of Frelinghuysen University in 1930 upon her retirement from the M Street High School.<sup>45</sup> Originally brought to life by Jesse Lawson in 1906, Frelinghuysen University began as a Bible college “with the avowed purpose of reaching the group ‘lowest down,’ the intentionally forgotten man, untaught and unprovided for either in the public schools for all classes or in the colleges and universities for the talented tenth.”<sup>46</sup> Throughout the history of the university, it never lost its dedication to those purposes. In an original Frelinghuysen University Pamphlet, the purpose of the group of schools is a response to the following:

There are now and have been from the beginning scores and scores of young people eager for advanced learning, who, having to work by day would gladly benefit by the opportunity of an up to standard night school. Frelinghuysen for colored students at the nation’s capital undertakes to offer such an opportunity and strives to meet the need of the struggling ambitious youth who is willing with patient industry and perseverance to take the longer time required by reason of his economic handicap, but who is determined to carry on.<sup>47</sup>

Interestingly, Anna’s tone regarding the purpose of education shifted slightly when she took over as the president of Frelinghuysen. Perhaps the impoverished era of the 1930s, the subsequent loss of employment opportunities, and economic injustice that Black Americans faced softened Anna’s heart toward industrial education. Whatever drew Anna to this place, she clearly called for the recognition of both a collegiate and technical education. Additionally, as agricultural work opportunities had declined for Black women, and domestic opportunities were on the rise, she called for the professionalization of the domestic worker.<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps the most telling defense of the importance of Frelinghuysen to Anna is in a letter she wrote to Dr. John W. Studebaker, Commissioner of Education, Washington, D.C., dated December 31, 1943. In this letter, Anna writes a scathing reply to the Commissioner of

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 250.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 258. This concept of working to uplift those the furthest on the margins draws on the model of education that rejects unjust hierarchies often espoused by modern Black Feminist scholars. “Lifting as We Climb,” was also the motto of the National Association of Colored Women established in 1896.

<sup>45</sup> Cooper, “*A Voice from the South*”

<sup>46</sup> Howard University, “Second Decennial Catalogue of Frelinghuysen University.” The Talented Tenth was described by Du Bois as racial uplift through the selection and education of the most exceptional of the race. W. E. B. DuBois, “The Talented Tenth [Excerpts], Yale Mac Millan Center, Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition. Yale University, 2020. <https://glc.yale.edu/talented-tenth-excerpts>

<sup>47</sup> Howard University, “Frelinghuysen University Pamphlet.” Digital Howard. Howard University, April 1906. [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_freling/3/](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_freling/3/)

<sup>48</sup> Cooper, “*A Voice from the South*”

Education who presumed that he needed to check up on Frelinghuysen. Anna uses unbridled sarcasm when she responds to Studebaker's request, feigning surprise at his wanting to "check up on an obscure and unrecognized school which claims to be of, by, and for an unprivileged, unrepresented, un-understood and far too often exploited group in our great American commonwealth."<sup>49</sup> She goes on to lift up her students as a group of individuals seeking their betterment through education, and developing themselves as human beings, demanding they be acknowledged, if not celebrated. She continues with the meritocratic metaphor of the bootstrap, but likens her students to pulling theirs up in high waters. Using her rhetorical genius and playing to the fact that Mr. Studebaker is an elected official, Anna states,

No one can deny that the bare fact of survival is bed rock argument for fitness in the struggle for existence and that self help or self support is in itself a high exponent of social efficiency, while altruistic service, help for one's kind, one's country, one's world is the acknowledged crown and glory of the elect.<sup>50</sup>

She rests her case by comparing the work of Frelinghuysen to the characteristics of loyalty, love and self sacrifice, and the Commissioner's Office of Education to money and "the loudness of powerful politics."<sup>51</sup>

### **A Voice from the South Ahead of Her Time**

Written in 1892, *A Voice from the South*, was a groundbreaking work on the lived experience of Black women in the late nineteenth century.<sup>52</sup> This work is a collection of essays, poetry, speeches, and stories in which Anna often uses the language of the oppressors to defy their oppression. Her acute wit and brilliant use of rhetorical devices draws in her audience and uses the language of their sphere to make her point. In 1886, Anna spoke before the Protestant Episcopal Church's colored clergy in Washington, D.C. Her topic was "Womanhood: A Vital Element in the Regeneration and Progress of a Race."<sup>53</sup> In her speech, Anna uses religious language and Christian principles to make her argument for the uplift and equality of Black women. She speaks to the life of Jesus when she states, "throughout his life and in his death he has given to men a rule and guide for the estimation of woman as an equal."<sup>54</sup> She goes on to remind the clergy, "Now the fundamental agency under God in the regeneration, the retraining of the race, as well as the ground work and starting point of its progress upward, must be the black

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<sup>49</sup> Howard University, "Second Decennial Catalogue of Frelinghuysen University"

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> *A Voice from the South* situates the work of Anna Julia Cooper as a pioneer of what would become modern Black Feminist Thought. "What set Cooper apart from others who were engaged at the time in a similar sort of work was that she, virtually alone, gave precise and unflinching voice to a theoretical attitude that today is very well known." Cooper, "Anna Julia Cooper," 14. Cooper articulates the need for the racial uplift of Black women that is pivotal to our present day understanding of Black Feminism. In reference to Anna's place in the foundations of Black Feminist Thought, Henry Louis Gates states, "...Anna Julia Cooper, a prototypical black feminist whose 1892 *A Voice from the South* can be considered to be one of the original texts of the Black feminist movement. It was Cooper who first analyzed the fallacy of referring to 'the Black man' when speaking of black people... Gender and race, she argues, cannot be conflated except in the instance of a Black woman's voice and it is this voice which must be uttered and to which we must listen." Henry Louis Gates, ed., *Schomburg Library of Nineteenth-Century Black Women Writers*. Oxford University Press, 1988.

<sup>53</sup> Cooper, "Anna Julia Cooper," 53.

<sup>54</sup> Cooper, "Anna Julia Cooper," 57.

woman.”<sup>55</sup> She clearly states, “That the race cannot be effectually lifted up till its women are truly elevated we take as proven.”<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, Anna demands, “Only the BLACK WOMAN can say ‘when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the whole Negro race enters with me.’”<sup>57</sup> Anna’s ability to use context as her frame of reference shows that in order to change the hearts and minds of one’s audience, it is imperative to know their language. Her words would indicate Anna’s understanding that Black males modeled White male patriarchy. Furthermore, it makes sense that Anna’s insistence on providing an education for Black women served to prepare them to enter the fight.

Additionally, Anna rallies her cause when she addresses the status of women in America in *A Voice from the South*. Anna begins by acknowledging the valiant humanitarian work of her contemporaries including Mary Lyon, Dorothea Dix, Helen Hunt Jackson, and Lucretia Mott.<sup>58</sup> She also emphasizes the work of women unrecognized for their work in all places where compassion, love, and tenderness are “purifying antidotes for the poisons of man’s acquisitiveness.”<sup>59</sup> Cooper goes on to unearth the differences between men and women regarding wealth and the fight for material prosperity. She notes that women, when viewed in comparison to men “purify the whole civilized world. It is the living embodiment of woman’s activities and woman’s ideas, and its extent and strength rightly prefigure her increasing power as a moral force.”<sup>60</sup>

In her speech to the clergy in 1886, Anna continues with the idea of Black women as a soothing balm in an otherwise brutish world. She warns us, “Not one of the issues of this plodding, toiling, sinning, repenting, falling, aspiring humanity can afford to shut her out, or can deny the reality of her influence.”<sup>61</sup> Interestingly, Anna points to the Women’s Christian Temperance Movement as an example of the “new era and of woman’s place in it.”<sup>62</sup> Perhaps Anna’s faith drew her to the movement, but that did not mean she did not take a critical eye to some of their practices. In a handwritten letter from Anna to Mr. A. G. Comings, she responds to the request for her support in the campaign of Governor Al Smith of New York, against Herbert Hoover in the 1928 presidential election. Figure A.15 in the Appendix illustrates the letter written to Mr. Comings. Anna states she prefers Hoover as the candidate who comes closer to, representing the best in American ideals. But personally, the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution are just as precious in my sight as the 18<sup>th</sup> and I am unable to warm up very enthusiastically with religious fervor for Bible “fundamentalists” who have nothing

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>56</sup> Cooper, “*Anna Julia Cooper*,” 69. Likewise, Giles (2006) states, “As an early activist in national Black women’s organizations, Cooper lived the motto of the NACW, ‘Lifting as We Climb,’ 630.

<sup>57</sup> Cooper, “*Anna Julia Cooper*,” 63.

<sup>58</sup> Cooper, “*Anna Julia Cooper*”

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>60</sup> Cooper, “*Anna Julia Cooper*,” 112. These ideas of love, compassion, tenderness, and activism are reflected in contemporary Black Feminist Thought’s “alternative epistemology” of an Ethic of Care. Collins, “*Black Feminist Thought*,” 281.

<sup>61</sup> Cooper, “*Anna Julia Cooper*,” 116.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 112.

to say about lynching Negroes or reducing whole sections of them to at state of peonage worse than slavery.<sup>63</sup>

Anna addresses the status of Black women with regard to political participation and their relationship with Black men. In this discussion, she clearly articulates her understanding of intersecting oppression when she states,

The colored woman of to-day occupies, one may say, a unique position in this country. In a period of itself transitional and unsettled, her status seems one of the least ascertainable and definitive of all the forces which make for our civilization. She is confronted by both a woman question and a race problem, and is as yet an unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both. While the women of the white race can with calm assurance enter upon the work they feel by nature appointed to do, while their men give loyal support and appreciative countenance to their efforts, recognizing in most avenues of usefulness the propriety and the need of woman's distinctive co-operation, the colored woman too often finds herself hampered and shamed by a less liberal sentiment and a more conservative attitude on the part of those for whose opinion she cares most.<sup>64</sup>

Here, Anna responds directly to the oppression of Black women by White men, White women, as well as Black men. When Anna speaks to American politics, she states, "Altruism is its *mauvais succes* and naturally enough it is indifferent to any factor which cannot be worked into its own immediate aims and purposes."<sup>65</sup> And while she is quick to be critically aware of the situations she and her Black sisterhood are facing, she is also optimistic about their future when she says, "She stands now at the gateway of this new era of American civilization. To be alive at such an epoch is a privilege, to be a woman then is sublime."<sup>66</sup>

### **Anna Julia Cooper: Addressing the White Feminist Movement (1891- 1913)**

Between the late 1800s and the early 1900s, Black and White women organized themselves to fight patriarchal systems of oppression that withheld suffrage, as well as economic, social, and political equality for women. Women fought for their right to own property, the right to divorce and take custody of their children, and the right to control their earnings.<sup>67</sup> Made famous at the 1848 Seneca Falls, New York women's rights convention were Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth

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<sup>63</sup> Howard University, "Cooper, Anna J. to Comings, A.G." Digital Howard. Howard University, 2017. [https://dh.howard.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=ajc\\_corres](https://dh.howard.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=ajc_corres) The critical view Anna takes towards the blatant hypocrisy is tightly engrained within the distinguishing features of Black Feminist Thought that "All practices and principles tied to dominance must be dismantled." Vivian M. May, "Anna Julia Cooper's Black Feminist Love-Politics," *Hypatia* 32, no. 1 (2017): 35-53, 4.

<sup>64</sup> Cooper, "Anna Julia Cooper," 112-113.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 114. Loosely translated, *mauvais succes* means a false success. Ninety-eight years after these words were written by Anna, Derrick Bell, a Critical Race Theory legal scholar, published *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma which echoes what Anna was saying. Bell states, "The interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of Whites." Derrick A. Bell, "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma." *Harvard Law Review*, 93. No. 3 (1980): 518-533.

<sup>66</sup> Cooper, "Anna Julia Cooper," 117.

<sup>67</sup> Library of Congress, "Women's Suffrage in the Progressive Era," Accessed November 22, 2020. <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/united-states-history-primary-source-timeline/progressive-era-to-new-era-1900-1929/womens-suffrage-in-progressive-era/>

Cady Stanton. Figure A.16 in the Appendix displays a photo of Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Eight years prior to Seneca Falls, Mott and Stanton attended London's 1840 World Antislavery Convention, where they were denied both seating and voting rights.<sup>68</sup> Incensed by this treatment, they decided to address their grievances upon their return to the states. The convention, attended by 200 women on the first day, began to draft their *Declaration of Sentiments*. Among these, "The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her."<sup>69</sup> The tyranny they speak of is eerily similar to the tyranny of slavery. It is reasonable, therefore, to see the parallels Stanton and Mott were drawing between their own condition in a patriarchal society and the enslaved population.<sup>70</sup> Anna Julia Cooper, likewise recognized parallels to tyranny, but these were built on the hypocrisy of the White feminist movement and the deliberate exclusion of Black women.<sup>71</sup>

The ensuing turmoil over the admission of the Fifteenth Amendment, which did not protect women's suffrage, led to a further separation between Black and White women. Susan B. Anthony, in reference to the fight over the amendment, stated, "I will cut off this right arm of mine before I will ever work, or demand the ballot for the Negro and not the woman."<sup>72</sup> Figure A.17 in the Appendix displays a photo of Susan B. Anthony. Racist underpinnings of the feminist movement were not uncommon and "positioned white woman suffragists as victims of male privilege on the one hand and inheritors of white privilege on the other - as both oppressed and oppressing."<sup>73</sup> Black suffragists and activists fought back in word and deed to the Fifteenth Amendment. Sojourner Truth stated in 1867,

I feel that I have the right to have just as much as a man. There is a great stir about colored men getting their rights, but not a word about the colored women; and if colored men get their rights, and colored women not theirs, the colored men will be masters over the women, and it will be just as bad as it was before.<sup>74</sup>

Figure A.18 in the Appendix displays a photo of Sojourner Truth. Other Black women including Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Mary Ann Shadd Cary, Mary Church Terrell, and Nannie Helen Burroughs rose up to demand their right to equality in a movement

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<sup>68</sup> Gerda Lerner, "The Meaning of Seneca Falls: 1848-1998," *Dissent* (1998): 35-41.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>70</sup> Allison K. Lange, "National Women's History," Edited by Cara Bennett. National Women's History Museum. Accessed November 22, 2020. <https://artsandculture.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/exhibit/parading-for-progress-national-women%E2%80%99s-history-museum/dQLitXejg0YgLw?hl=en>

<sup>71</sup> Giles, "Anna Julia Cooper," To be clear, our contemporary conceptualization of feminism, or Black feminism, were not available during the years that Anna was a practicing educator or activist. Simply because Anna did not possess our current vocabulary, she certainly had a clear understanding of what White, female racism looked and felt like from a first-hand perspective. The writing and work of Anna Julia Cooper underpins our understanding of modern-day Black Feminist Thought. Within the framework of the first wave of women's rights movements, Anna's recognition of the hypocrisy reflected her critical thinking and her ability to advocate on the behalf of Black women and directly confront the racist policies and leaders of the movement.

<sup>72</sup> Midge Wilson and Kathy Russell, "One of Divided Sisters: Bridging the Gap Between Black and White Women and the Suffrage Movement: 1848-1923. Wesleyan University, 1996. <https://www.wesleyan.edu/mlk/posters/suffrage.html>

<sup>73</sup> Jen McDanel, "White Suffragist Dis/Entitlement: The *Revolution* and the Rhetoric of Racism," *Legacy* 30, no. 2 (2013): 243-64, 244.

<sup>74</sup> Wilson & Russell, "One of Divided Sisters," 1.

that sought to leave them behind.<sup>75</sup> Figure A.19 in the appendix displays a photograph of several Black suffragists. Also among these courageous women was Anna Julia Cooper, who was especially capable of using her writing to articulate the need for Black women to fight for equality and the right to vote to “counter the belief that Black men’s experiences and needs were the same as theirs.”<sup>76</sup>

Nowhere else was Anna more clear on her thoughts regarding racism and White feminism than in her chapter in *A Voice from the South* titled “Woman versus the Indian.” In February of 1891, the National Woman’s Council was convened in Washington, D.C. Present at the event was a woman’s culture club called Wimodaughsis, “whose name is made up of the first few letters from the four words wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters.”<sup>77</sup> The president of this club was the Rev. Anna Shaw, a woman who Anna admired and respected.<sup>78</sup> Her secretary was a woman from Kentucky.<sup>79</sup> For the secretary, a problem arises when “Pandora’s box is opened in the ideal harmony of this modern Eden without an Adam when a colored lady, a teacher in one of our schools, applies for admission to its privileges and opportunities.”<sup>80</sup> Anna describes this woman as one,

who really would like to help “elevate” the colored people (in her own way of course and so long as they understand their places) is filled with grief and horror that any persons of Negro extraction should aspire to learn type-writing or languages or to enjoy any other advantages offered in the sacred halls of Wimodaughsis. Indeed, she had not calculated that there were any wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters, except white ones.<sup>81</sup>

When this solitary Black woman applied to take a type-writing class, the secretary informed her that colored people were not admitted to take classes and she was given her money back. When the Rev. Shaw was informed, she put a stop to it immediately and stated that she would retire from her role in the Wimodaughsis organization before she would allow discrimination based on one’s color.<sup>82</sup> Rev. Shaw kept her position, and the secretary, along with the others she managed to bring to her side, left. Anna describes this event as “‘Twas only a ripple-,” and goes on to describe the opportunity to confront these types of attitudes as a missed opportunity, and as a result, “the work flowed on as before.”<sup>83</sup> And while Anna aptly points out that more should have come of it, Rev. Shaw’s actions demonstrate, “When it comes to the disciplinary domain of power, resistance from inside bureaucracies constitutes the overarching strategy.”<sup>84</sup>

In telling this story, Anna is reaching out to all of the women in America, whatever their station, to be aware of this injustice, and she calls them to speak out against caste, racism, oppression and injustice. She also reveals the power of women in places of power to use that power to lift as

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<sup>75</sup> Lakshmi Gandhi, “5 Black Suffragists Who Fought for the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment- and Much More.” History, August 4, 2020. <https://www.history.com/news/black-suffragists-19th-amendment>

<sup>76</sup> Wilson & Russell, “One of Divided Sisters,” 1.

<sup>77</sup> Cooper, “*Anna Julia Cooper*,” 88.

<sup>78</sup> Cooper, “*A Voice from the South*,” The Reverend Anna Shaw (1847-1919): suffragist and Methodist preacher.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>84</sup> Collins, “*Black Feminist Thought*,” 300.

they climb.<sup>85</sup> Specifically, she makes note of two women who attended the 1891 convention who embody this spirit,

Susan B. Anthony and Anna Shaw are evidently too noble to be held in thrall by the provincialisms of women who seem never to have breathed the atmosphere beyond the confines of the grandfather's plantations. It is only from the broad plateau of light and love that one can see petty prejudice and narrow priggishness in their true perspective; and it is on this high ground, as I sincerely believe, these two grand women stand.<sup>86</sup>

Finally, Anna emboldens herself and uses language she rarely uses to make her point. For change to really come, she states, "It may require some heroic measures, and like all revolutions will call for a determined front and a courageous, unwavering, stalwart heart on the part of the leaders of the reform."<sup>87</sup> Anna's use of the word revolution truly speaks to her understanding of the heart of her cause and the movement for social justice for Black women.

### **Anna Julia Cooper: Uplift Through Community Activism**

**The Social Settlement.** In an essay published in 1913 in the *Oberlin College Alumni Journal*, Anna puts forth her explanation of the Social Settlement Movement to justify its need. It is but one example of Anna's life-long dedication to serving the poor and disenfranchised. Anna's purpose in working at the Social Settlement was to carry ideas including better living and education into the poorest neighborhoods of Washington D. C., where people of color who had been socially, racially, and economically oppressed. She states,

It is set on fire with the conviction that all men are created with the divine right to a chance, and set about in hammering down some of those hideous handicaps which hamper whole sections of a community through the inequalities of environment, or the greed of the great.<sup>88</sup>

Within the Social Settlement were libraries and reading rooms for the good and use of the entire neighborhood, a coffee house and kitchen, art exhibits, a cooperative coal club which saves its members money on coal, and lectures on social and hygienic subjects as well as economics provided by individuals from charitable institutions who come to provide training for their fields. In addition, "A milk station supplied by a philanthropic citizen has furnished wholesome nourishment to about sixty babies each day," meant to serve the "little mothers whose slender shoulders have burdens beyond their years."<sup>89</sup> Anna, with her superior intellect, and her heart for God and her people, found a way through the Social Settlement Movement to not only fight back against oppression, but also to create a resistance, demonstrate activism, and instill a knowledge of the politics of empowerment.<sup>90</sup> Figure A.20 in the Appendix illustrates several documents

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<sup>85</sup> "Lift as we climb," was the motto for the National Association of Colored Women (NACW). The NACW advocated for women's rights as well as the uplift of the African American community.

<sup>86</sup> Cooper, "A Voice from the South," 89. I found no reference in any of the literature wherein Anna spoke to the quote I used previously from Susan B. Anthony.

<sup>87</sup> Collins, "A Voice from the South," 97.

<sup>88</sup> "Second Decennial Catalogue of Frelinghuysen University," Digital Howard. Howard University, October 2017. [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_freling/2/](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_freling/2/)

<sup>89</sup> Cooper, "A Voice from the South," 221.

<sup>90</sup> Minoo, "On Black Feminist Thought"

from the Colored Social Settlement between 1913 and 1914. In those documents, Mrs. Anna J. Cooper is listed as the Supervisor of the Board of Trustees.

In addition to Frelinghuysen University and the Social Settlement Movement, Anna was also a leader in the Negro Women's Club movement, helped to establish a local colored YMCA, the Washington Folklore Society, the Bethel Literacy and Historical Society, and contributed regularly to newspapers such as the *Washington Post* and the magazine, *Crisis*.<sup>91</sup> Likewise, Anna took her activism across the world through speaking engagements and professional activities.<sup>92</sup> Her lifetime of service to the cause of Black women, her lifelong dedication to teaching for the uplift of her community, and her significant contributions to the early literature on early Black feminism, puts Anna in an elite class of groundbreaking, courageous women who changed the world.

## Conclusion

In 1892, Anna traveled across the county by train. She acknowledged in her notes that there were states with certain laws that required colored people to ride in cars separate from the Whites. She also noted that while looking out the window, she saw "working on private estates, convicts from the state penitentiary, among them squads of boys from fourteen to eighteen years of age in a chain-gang. Not in 1850, but in 1890, '91 and '92."<sup>93</sup> She asked herself if there were women, especially Black women, who were organizing themselves to fight against this cruelty to human beings? When her train came to a halt at a dilapidated station, she noted that the White man, who typically held the stool out for the White women to descend safely from the train, turned his back on her as if she did not exist. And having stepped on to the platform, Anna saw "two dingy little rooms with "FOR LADIES" swinging over one and "FOR COLORED PEOPLE" over the other; while wondering under which head I come..."<sup>94</sup>

Anna Julia Cooper's very existence was an act of resistance. Her birth into slavery, and her membership in the oppressed groups of both women and Blacks, coupled with her brilliant intellect, her fierce dedication to education, and ceaseless activism, resulted in a life of service that changed the course of Black women's history. Her life at the intersection of educational uplift and unbending standards gave an education to those who would have otherwise been denied. Her life at the intersection of courage and determination gave voice and access to those on the margins. Her life at the intersection of hope and faith gave her the determination she needed to spend every one of her 105 years fighting for the rights of Black women. When Anna was born, the vast majority of African American people in this nation were in chains. When she died, the people of America were in the midst of a collective struggle for civil and human rights and social justice. Anna transcended this time span and left an indelible mark on the history of Black women, education, and the country.

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<sup>91</sup> Cooper, "A Voice from the South." *The Crisis* is the official publication of the NAACP, founded in 1910. Its founding editor was W.E.B. DuBois.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 95.

## Appendix - Primary Documents



Figure A.1. 1850 political map of the United States published by William C. Reynolds using 1850 census data. The map illustrates regions of the United States designated as either free or slave as well as the territories opened to slavery as a result of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

Source: Census History Staff, "1850 Political Map of the United States," December 17, 2019, [https://www.census.gov/history/img/reynolds1850\\_map-loc.jpg](https://www.census.gov/history/img/reynolds1850_map-loc.jpg).

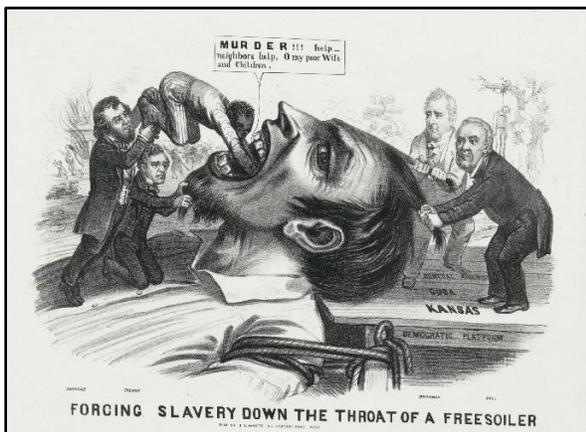


Figure A.2. The Kansas Nebraska Act of 1854 implemented popular sovereignty in the Kansas Territory which led to competition between abolitionists and proslavery groups and deepened the divide between the North and South.

Source: Debra L. McArthur, "The Kansas Nebraska Act of 1854," Virginia Center for Civil War Studies at Virginia Tech. Virginia Tech, 2010. <https://www.essentialcivilwarcurriculumcom/the-kansas-nebraska-act-of-1854.html>.

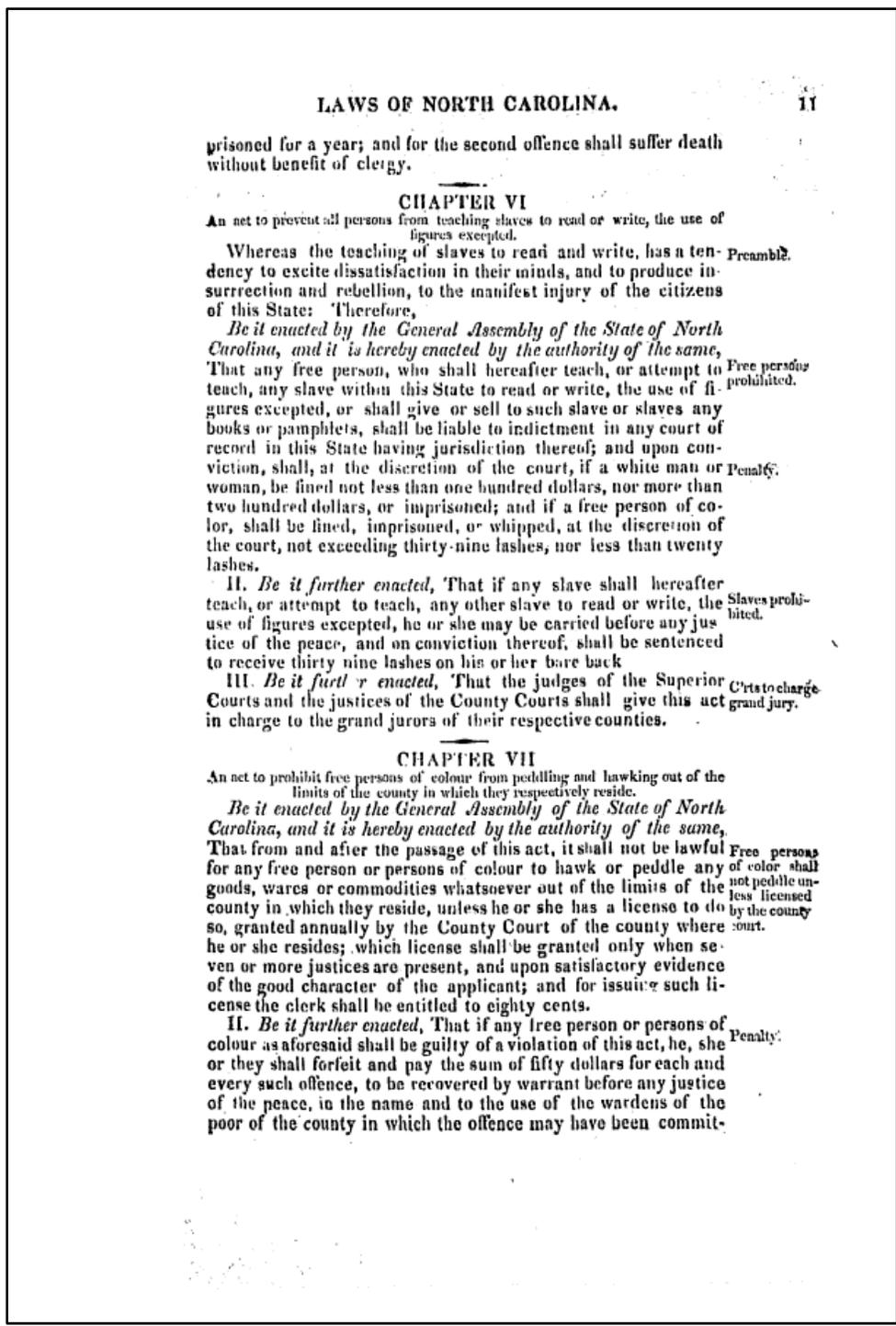


Figure A.3. Laws of North Carolina prohibiting teaching slaves to read or write (1830).

Source: "An Act to Prevent All Persons from Teaching Slaves to Read or Write, the Use of Figures Excepted," 1830-1831. HeinOnline. Accessed November 25, 2020.

<https://heinonline.org/HOL/LandingPage?handle=hein.slavery/ssactsnc0118&div=1&src=home>

I was born in Raleigh North Carolina. My mother was a slave & the finest woman I have ever known. I was untutored she could read her Bible & write a little. It is one of my happiest childhood memories explaining for her the subtle differences between g's & q's or between b's & l's. Presumably my father was her master, if so I owe him not a sou & she was always too modest & shamefaced ever to mention his name. I was born during the civil war & served many a night in a hospital to wake the baby up &

Figure A.4. This biographical sketch makes reference to Anna's parents and states, "I was born in Raleigh, North Carolina. My mother was a slave and the finest woman I have ever known. Presumably my father was her master, if so I owe him not a sou." No date is indicated.

Source: "Handwritten Biographical Sketch" (2017). Biographical Data. 8.  
[https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_bio/8](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_bio/8)

Of what college or professional school a graduate \_\_\_\_\_ Degree \_\_\_\_\_  
 19. What was the attitude of your parents toward your college education? I owe nothing to my white father beyond the initial act of procreation. My Mother's selfsacrificing toil to give me advantages she had never enjoyed is worthy the highest praise & undying gratitude.

Figure A.5. This reference to Anna's parents comes from a Negro College Graduates Individual Occupational History. It states, "I owe nothing to my white father beyond the initial act of procreation. My mother's selfsacrificing toil to give me advantages she had never enjoyed is worthy the highest praise and undying gratitude."

Source: "Negro College Graduates Individual Occupational History" (2017). Biographical Data, 2. [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_bio/2](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_bio/2)



Figure A.6. Photograph of Anna Julia Cooper, no date was provided.

Source: “Anna Julia Cooper,” Black History Biographies from the Black Heritage Commemorative Society. *Black History Now*, August 14, 2011.

<http://blackhistorynow.com/anna-julia-cooper/>

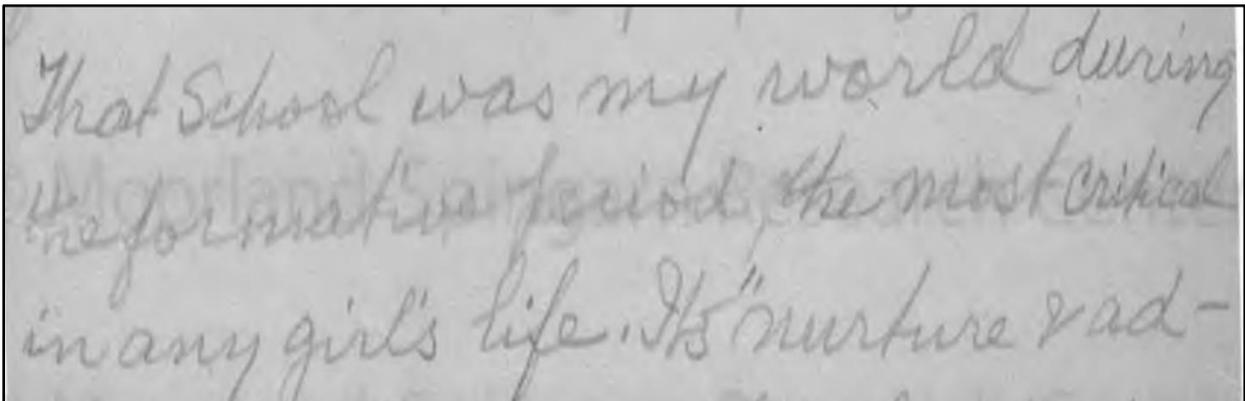


Figure A.7. This note describes Anna’s experience as a young girl at St. Augustine’s Normal School and Collegiate Institute. No date was provided. In the note, Anna states, “That school was my world during the formative period, the most critical in any girl’s life.”

Source: “Life at St. Augustine’s Normal School,” (2017). Biographical Data. 3.

[https://dr.howard.edu/ajc\\_bio/3](https://dr.howard.edu/ajc_bio/3)



Figure A.8. This a photograph of Charlotte Forten Grimke', one of Anna's closest friends and fellow activists. Anna and Charlotte spent a significant amount of time together in one another's homes holding cultural events for their community in Washington, D.C.

Source: "Charlotte Forten Grimke'," Only a Teacher: Schoolhouse Pioneers. Accessed November 25, 2020 from <https://pbs.org/onlyateacher/charlotte.html>

10. Of what college or professional school are you a graduate? Oberlin College Date of graduation BA, 1884, MA 1887

| 11. Occupations since graduation                       | From       | To         | Yearly Salary                  |
|--|------------|------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Professor Modern Lang. & Lit. Wilberforce U.        | Sept. 1884 | June 1885  | 1000                           |
| 2. Instructor Math, Latin & Greek St. Aug. Normal Sch. | Sept. 1885 | June 1887  | less than 1000, forget exactly |
| 3. Teacher Washington High School                      | Sept. 1887 |            | from 750 up.                   |
| 4. Principal M. St. High School                        | Dec. 1901  | Sept. 1906 |                                |
| 5. Professor Foreign Languages Lincoln Inst. Md.       | 1906       | 1910       | 1100                           |
| 6. Teacher of Latin Washington High School             | 1910       | 1930       | 1800                           |
| 7. Retired from Public Schools                         | June 1930  |            | Pension 1434                   |
| 8. President Frelinghuysen University                  | June 1930  |            | 50.                            |

Figure A.9. This is list of Anna's occupations since graduation from Oberlin College. It indicates Anna took a position at Washington High School which became M Street High School in 1887.

Source: "Negro College Graduates Individual Occupational History" (2017). Biographical Data, 2. [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_bio/2](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_bio/2)

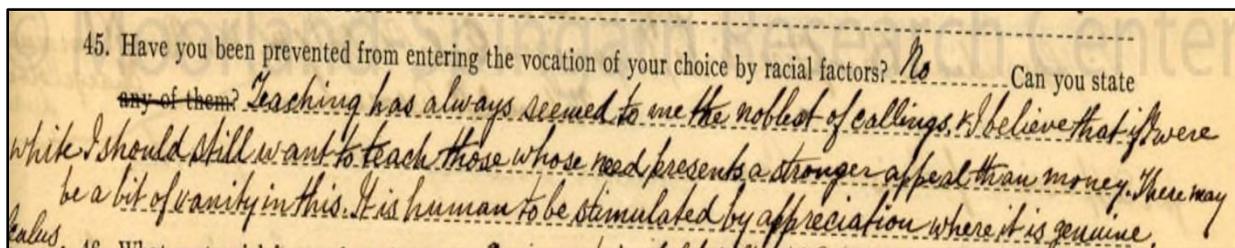


Figure A.10. In this handwritten response, Anna provides testimony for her love of teaching. It is interesting that she indicates that she had not been hindered occupationally by her race, but in her following words, she indicates that even if she were white, she would still want to teach.

Source: “Negro College Graduates Individual Occupational History” (2017). Biographical Data, 2. [https://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_bio/2](https://dh.howard.edu/ajc_bio/2)



Figure A.11. This is a photograph of Anna’s home at 201 T Street NW in Washington, D.C. When Frelinghuysen University could no longer make their mortgage payments in 1931, Anna graciously donated her home to be used as the new site for the University.

Source: Paul K. Williams, “Anna Julia Cooper & Frelinghuysen University,” *The House History Man*, February 2, 2012. <https://househistoryman.blogspot.com/2012/02/anna-julia-cooper-frelinghuysen.html>



Figure A.12. Photograph of Anna at her home and the new site of Frelinghuysen University.

Source: Paul K. Williams, "Anna Julia Cooper & Frelinghuysen University," *The House History Man*, February 2, 2012. <https://househistoryman.blogspot.com/2012/02/anna-julia-cooper-frelinghuysen.html>



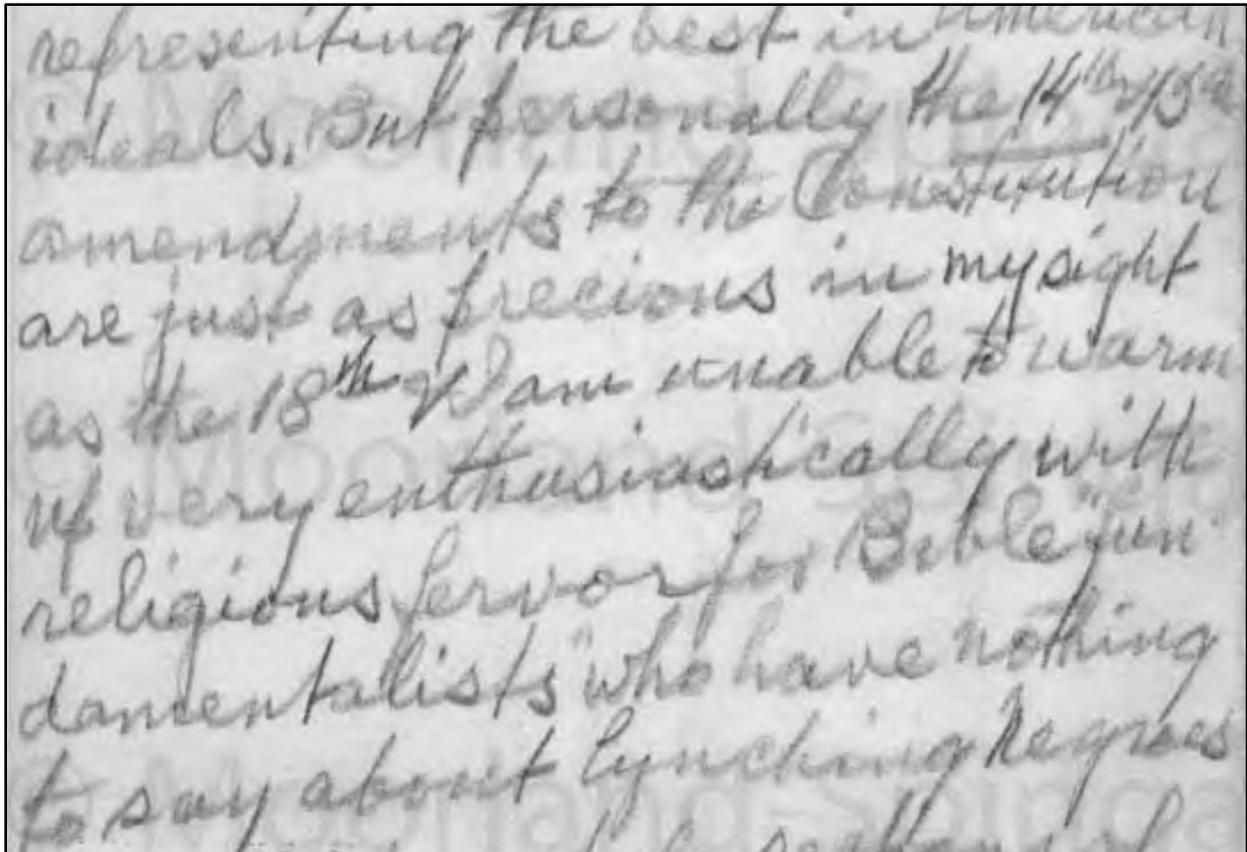
Figure A.13. Photograph of students at Frelinghuysen University.

Source: Paul K. Williams, "Anna Julia Cooper & Frelinghuysen University," *The House History Man*, February 2, 2012. <https://househistoryman.blogspot.com/2012/02/anna-julia-cooper-frelinghuysen.html>



Figure A.14. Photograph of Anna on the veranda of her home.

Source: Paul K. Williams, "Anna Julia Cooper & Frelinghuysen University," *The House History Man*, February 2, 2012. <https://househistoryman.blogspot.com/2012/02/anna-julia-cooper-frelinghuysen.html>



representing the best in American  
 ideals. But personally the 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>  
 amendments to the Constitution  
 are just as precious in my sight  
 as the 18<sup>th</sup> & I am unable to warm  
 up very enthusiastically with  
 religious fervor for Bible "fun-  
 damentalists" who have nothing  
 to say about lynching Negroes.

Figure A.15. This is letter to Mr. A. G. Comings who requested Anna's support of Governor Al Smith in the 1928 presidential election. Anna's response speaks to her dedication to her race when she states, "personally the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution are just as precious in my sight as the 18<sup>th</sup> and I am unable to warm up very enthusiastically with religious fervor for Bible 'fundamentalists' who have nothing to say about lynching Negroes."

Source: "Cooper, Anna J. to Comings, A.G," Correspondence. 22.  
[http://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_corres/22](http://dh.howard.edu/ajc_corres/22)



Figure A.16. Pictured above are (left) Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, both known for their role in the 1848 Seneca Falls, New York, Women’s Rights Convention.

Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica, ed. “Elizabeth Cady Stanton: American Suffragist.” Encyclopaedia Britannica. *Britannica*, November 8, 2020. <https://britannica.com/topic/National-Woman-Suffrage-Association>

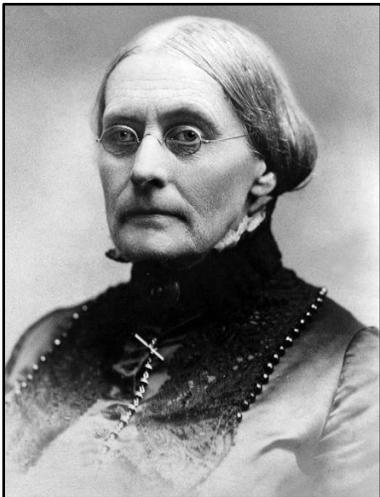


Figure A.17. A photograph of Susan B. Anthony, who stated in regards to the Fifteenth Amendment, “I will cut off this right arm of mine before I will ever work, or demand the ballot for the Negro and not the woman.” Midge Wilson and Kathy Russell, “One of Divided Sisters: Bridging the Gap Between Black and White Women and the Suffrage Movement: 1848-1923. Wesleyan University, 1996. <https://www.wesleyan.edu/mlk/posters/suffrage.html>

Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica, ed. “Susan B. Anthony.” Encyclopaedia Britannica. *Britannica*, March 9, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Susan-B-Anthony>

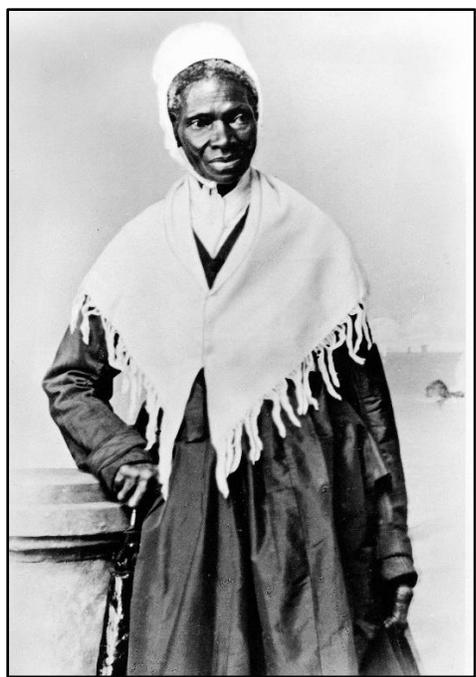


Figure A.18. Photograph of Sojourner Truth.

Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica, ed. "Sojourner Truth." Encyclopaedia Britannica. *Britannica*, November 22, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sojourner-Truth>

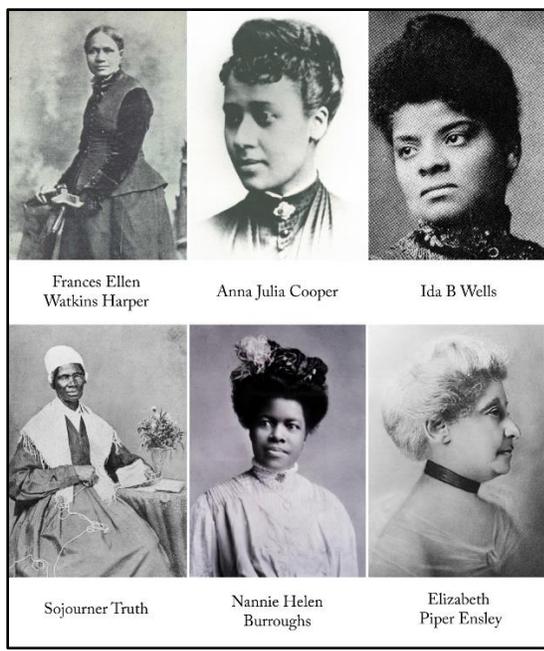


Figure A.19. Photograph of Black Suffragists.

Source: Lynn Yaeger, "The African-American Suffragists History Forgot." *Vogue. Conde 'Nast*, October 21, 2015. <https://www.vogue.com/article/african-american-suffragists-women-voting-rights>

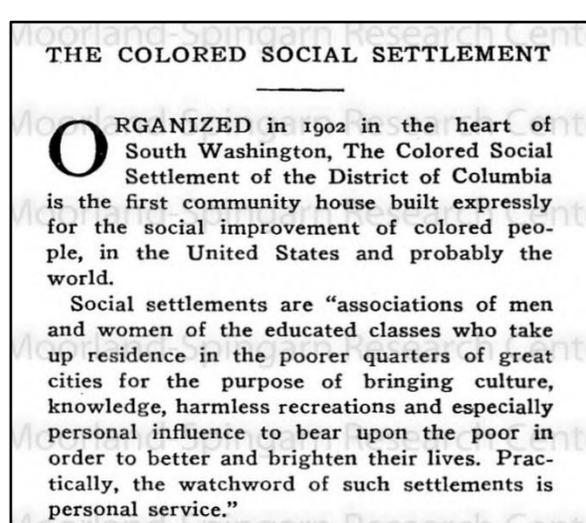
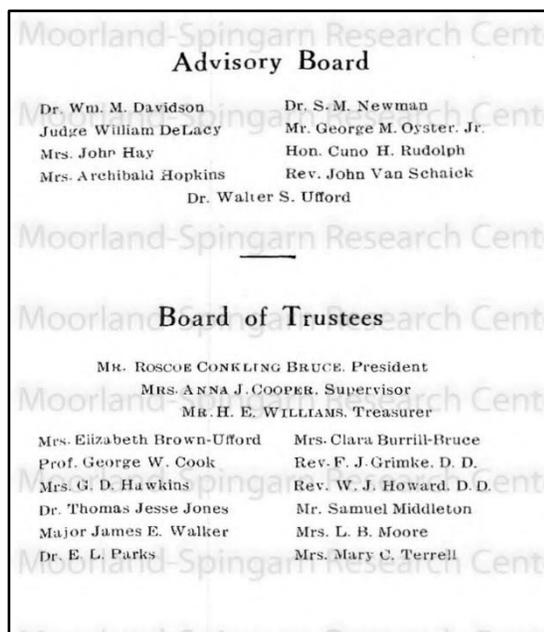
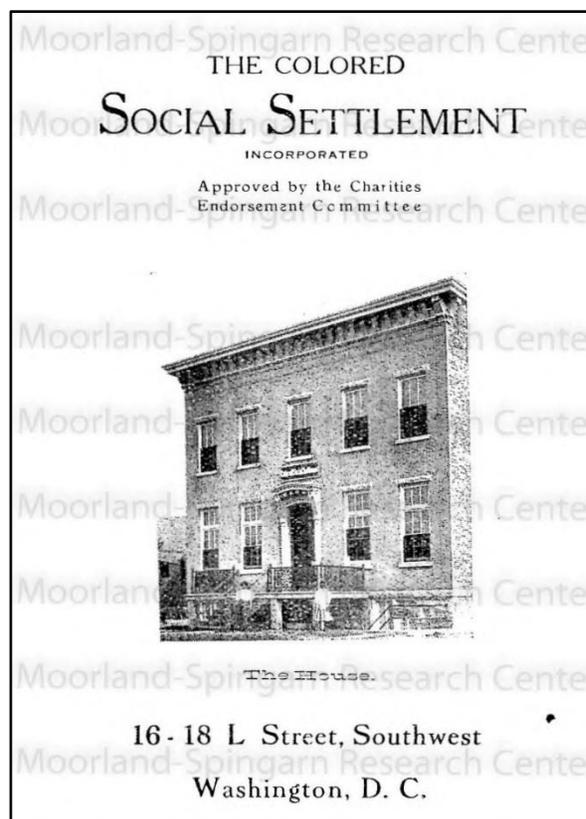
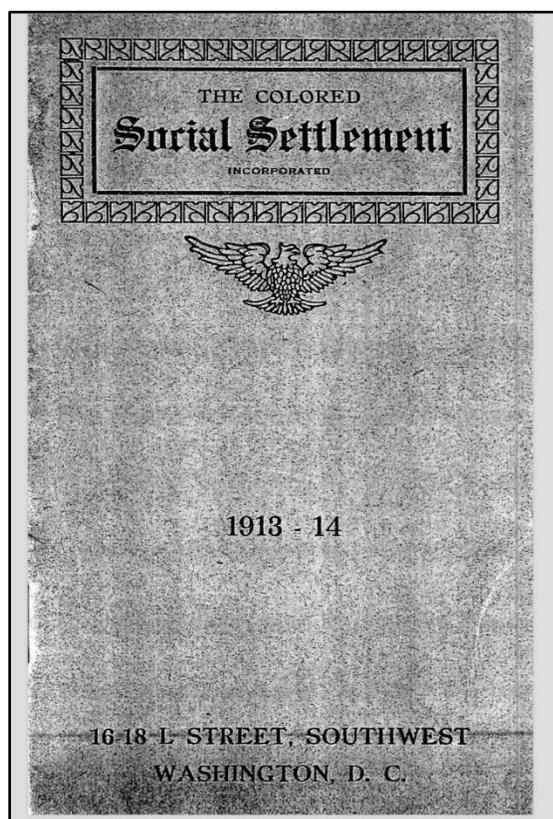


Figure A.20. Documents from the Colored Social Settlement 1913-1914, in which it denotes Mrs. Anna J. Cooper as the Supervisor of the Board of Trustees.

Source: "The Colored Social Settlement: What it Is and What it Does," (2017). The Colored Social Settlement Washington, D.C. 1. [http://dh.howard.edu/ajc\\_css/1](http://dh.howard.edu/ajc_css/1)



Figure A.21. Photograph of Anna, unable to read date.

Source: Shauna Upp Pellegrini, “Her Story: A Woman’s History Project.” She Made History. Wordpress. Accessed November 28, 2020. <http://shemadehistory.com/her-story-anna-j-cooper?>



Figure A.22. Anna’s graduation photo from the Sorbonne in Paris in 1925 at the age of 66.

Source: Karen Grigsby Bates, “A Child of Slavery Who Taught a Generation.” NPR. Accessed November 28, 2020. <https://www.wemu.org/post/child-slavery-who-taught-generation>

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