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Safoura Boukari

Western Illinois University, AS-Boukari@wiu.edu

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20TH CENTURY BLACK WOMEN'S STRUGGLE FOR EMPOWERMENT IN A WHITE SUPREMACIST EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: TRIBUTE TO EARLY WOMEN EDUCATORS

by
Safoura Boukari

INTRODUCTION

The goal in this work is to provide a brief overview of the development of Black women's education throughout American history and based on some pertinent literatures that highlight not only the tradition of struggle pervasive in people of African Descent lives. In the framework of the historical background, three examples will be used to illustrate women's creative enterprise and contributions to the education of African American children, and overall racial uplift. In doing so, I will refer to how those women struggled to set up schools in a totally hostile society where, race, patriarchy, class and gender, interlocking issues combined to make access to educational institutions difficult for a portion of American population up to the early twentieth century through the present.

Keywords: American History, Black Experience, Black Women's Activism, Education

When dealing with African American women's education, one cannot do without mentioning the socio-historical context in which, girls were educated, and the Black women's actions not only to transform African American educational, and economic situation, but also, to impact the general sociopolitical institutions in the U.S at the turn of the twentieth century. Black women's struggles in different fields were for the improvement of Black people's conditions of life to "uplift the race." Nor could we discuss the contributions of black women in education, without mentioning such figures as Charlotte Hawkins Brown, Mary McLeod Bethune, Nannie Helen Burroughs, and Anna Julia Cooper, just to name a few. These women began to develop an institutional base that they believed would influence the economic base for the African American youth in the early twentieth century. In this respect, this work is composed of three parts. The first part gives an overview of the historical background in which the first educated Black women operated as students, and then as educators. The second part will deal with the biographical sketches of three prominent women who contributed especially to the development of educational opportunities, and general welfare of Blacks. In the third part contemporary educational issues related to Black women as students and as professionals in Higher Education, will be tackled. In this last section, the focus will be on how Black women face a multi-faceted discrimination in their studies or professions today.

Mastering these skills was an expression of political activism not because education allowed slaves to become better slaves but because it offered skills essential in challenging the very tenets of slavery itself. An illustration of these ideas is shown through Mwalimu J. Shujaa's *Too much Schooling Too little Education: A Paradox of Black Life in White Societies* (1994). In chapter six, "Historic Readers for African American Children (1868-1944) "Uncovering and Reclaiming a Tradition of Opposition," Violet J. Harris's reference to Mrs. Alice H. Howard's

contribution is meaningful. The example of Howard's "My Duty" not only reflects the predicament of people of African Descent but it also stimulates young generations to a racial awareness, duty and refinement in their actions.

Another point that Harris made is that historically, African American literacy has always been a contested battleground of competing theories, practices, doctrines, and ideologies. The complexity of these issues can account for their inter-relatedness with race, class and gender. In light of this, she explained how this complex phenomenon seriously influenced African American schooling. After acknowledging that most African American schooling frequently highlighted the works of Booker T. Washington and Du Bois, she pointed out how few include a discussion about prominent women such as Anna Julia Cooper. Harris's study highlights a wide range of views existing between the dichotomy created by Booker T. Washington and W. Burghardt Du Bois' opinions, which varied because of their socio-cultural environment. Discarding mainstream antagonistic point of both Black leaders' ideologies, Harris suggested that rather than keeping the notion of dichotomy, studies should be objective and think in terms of continuum regardless of the minor differences in their conceptual work. Though some might still view ancestor William Burghardt Du Bois as opponent to Booker T. Washington, the continuity and complementary roles of their ideologies have become much obvious as Industrial Education was necessary as a transitional stepping stone for developing later African American intellectuals. In this regard, Dudley Randall's poem "Booker T. and W.E B" (Booker T. Washington and W.E Du Bois) is significantly illustrative. While Booker T. Washington utters:

"It seems to me that all you folks have missed the boat,
Who shout about the right to vote?
And spend vain days and sleepless nights
In uproar over Civil Rights
Just keep your mouth shut, do not grouse,
But work, and save, and buy a home!"
W. E. B. Du Bois would object: "I don't agree"
For what can property avail?
If dignity and justice fail
Unless you help to make the laws,
They'll steal your house with trumped-up clause." (Chapman, *Black Voices*; 1968, 470-71)

BACKGROUND OF BLACK WOMEN'S EDUCATION & RISE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS: AN OVERVIEW

Black American women's educational consciousness arose from the Afro- American Women in the South. At the 1899 Hampton Negro Conference, Lucy C. Laney argued that educated colored women had the responsibility to help Afro- Americans develop more hygienic habits for their homes and persons, to assist those who were imprisoned, and to help eradicate the burden of prejudice. In her statement, clearly "women are by nature fitted for teaching very young children... In the kindergarten and primary school is the salvation of the race." Still, only women of character

and culture could "do the lifting, for she who would mold character, must herself possess it" (Morton, 1989, p.5).

Between 1895 and 1925, Black intellectuals debated the aims and content that should dominate high education for African-Americans. Hampton Institute originated the concept of a higher education for Afro-Americans focused on trades. This concept was picked up and further elaborated by Booker T. Washington, a Hampton graduate, who became head of the Tuskegee Institute in 1895.

After 1905, there was no Black intellectual who did not discuss the need for Afro-Americans to learn about themselves. W.E.B. Dubois, as the champion of Pan-Africanism, offered a scheme for education, which would give all Afro-American students the basic tools for life. According to Du Bois, for Africanism to succeed, the ability to speak French, Spanish, and Portuguese was a must for every Afro-American. One could not agree with him more than the necessity of foreign languages has become obvious in Today's multilingual socioeconomic and political environment of globalization. Butler (1897) argued that those languages were emphasized because most people of African descent outside the US spoke French or Spanish.

By 1925, Howard Fisk and Atlanta Universities became known for their professional programs while Hampton, and Tuskegee Institutes concentrated on industrial training and related areas. The important thing to point out here is that Afro-Americans often saw education as a means of escaping poverty. Education enhanced their ability to secure employment and redress social inequalities and injustices. As white institutions would not hire Afro-Americans even if they were highly qualified, many Afro-American educators, intellectuals, and leaders demanded that only black scholars, formally trained should be hired to teach at black institutions. Those blacks who were hired as teachers often served as administrators while also fulfilling their teaching obligations. Many white presidents were head of many Black institutions because white supremacist philanthropists only accepted to fund them if white people were the leaders or supervisors. Remark that the trend has not totally disappeared in today's predominantly white institutions where the number of Black educators is low. Fortunately, some pressure has been put on public institutions to recruit more and more people from underrepresented groups to balance/diversify or serve as counter-trend. However, one should point out that this need to balance the disparities between mainstream privileged whites and underrepresented minorities has remained rampant. Today several diversity programs and the affirmative quota system though still institutionalized, are frowned upon by young whites who feel they are cheated and victims of a reversed discrimination in admissions to educational institutions.

From slavery through the present, African American labor has been crucial to U.S economic growth and wealth. Forced into slave labor before emancipation, then trapped in Jim Crow legislation in racially segregated housing, employment and schooling, African American Women's resistance, and courage have been essential to their people's struggle for survival freedom and self-determination. To use Amott and Matthaei's (1991) words in *Race, Gender and Work* for centuries, black women have stood at the intersection of race, class and gender oppression, but they were rarely cowed by the burden of these injustices. Instead they created as black lesbian poet Pat Parker so eloquently wrote, a legacy of hard work, fierce dedication to family and community, and

militant struggle against exploitation. The motto of the Nannie Helen Burroughs National Training School for Girls in the early 1900s "We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible," describes the special strength that all African American women have been forced to develop throughout history. ¹

According to Joan Davis Ratteray (1990) in *Center Shift*, published by the Institute for Independent Education, African Americans always have sought to control and operate their own institutions. The earliest educational institutions tried to maintain an African frame of reference, although in later years the focus changed for economic reasons. Ratteray also pointed out that, in the eighteenth century the extreme pressure from the legal system prohibition of the teaching and learning of African Americans and the threat of imprisonment, if caught breaking the law, isolated people from the educational mainstream. Yet, educational societies and independent efforts to create schools stood in stark contrast to the general degraded educational climate for African Americans. Other writers noted that the quest for equal access to education for both women and African-Americans has been a long and difficult one. Both groups were historically portrayed as intellectually inferior and childlike compared to white men. Consequently, education for all women and for African-American men suffered serious neglect. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the prevailing view of most American society was that no African-American should be educated beyond what was appropriate to their different and inferior roles in society.

During the Antebellum Era (1790-1860), while enslaved African-Americans were officially barred from learning to read before Emancipation in the South, free African-Americans had some nominal opportunities for schooling in the North. This was one of the few freedoms they could enjoy, since in many northern states free African-Americans were barred from voting, testifying in court, carrying arms, traveling freely, pursuing certain occupations, and obtaining an equal education. Free African-Americans faced even greater restrictions in the South. White women of this era were expected to adhere to the image of idealized womanhood called the "cult of true womanhood" by historian Barbara Welter. This idealized image stressed piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity for women. Literature of this period described women's natural fragility, and, innocence and modesty were key attributes of the "true woman." The image of African-American women as subhuman was made clear when Prudence Randall, a white Quaker School teacher, opened a "genteel female seminary" for women of the prosperous village of Canterbury, Connecticut, in 1831, and in 1833 admitted as one of its students an African-American. This action resulted in most of the white parents withdrawing their daughters. The public ridicule and condemnation that Randall received prompted her to open a seminary solely for African-American women.

Theresa A. Rector, Associate editor *Journal of the Negro Education*, Howard University, argued that among the women who have contributed significantly to the education and general welfare of Blacks in the Americas have been various religious groups, including Roman Catholic nuns. Although communities of nuns have existed in the Western Hemisphere since the colonial period, little recognition has been given in the literature, to the role that these women have played in American education, particularly as affecting Blacks. As early as the eighteenth century, some

¹ Theresa L. Amott & Julie A. Matthaei *Race, Gender & Work: A Multicultural Economic History of Women in the United States*, South End Press, Boston, MA, 1991, p.142

of these groups of women not only established schools that instructed slave children as well as free Blacks of antebellum times, but they also maintained facilities for care of the elderly, the poor, and the homeless. These early communities were made up, mainly of European women. In addition, she mentioned that, approximately 600-700 of the 122,653 Roman Catholic nuns in the U.S., were Black. There were also religious groups many of which, The Oblate Sisters of Providence, The Sisters of the Holy Family, and the Franciscan Handmaids of Mary. These religious Orders were founded by Black women during times when racial discrimination openly permeated every aspect of American life. Two of them date back to antebellum times; the third was founded early in the twentieth century. Each began in response to the need to educate, and to provide assistance to, Blacks at times when American social systems were most harsh toward the Black citizenry. The founding and continuation of each represent the culmination of dreams for zealous Black women to serve in the elevation of their race through apostolic work. The most known early black schools that provided influential development in educational and organizational opportunities for health at the end of the nineteenth were Spellman Provident, Dixie, and Tuskegee.

Another reference to Linda Perkins (1993) *Black Women in America* gives us an overview of the women's education from the Antebellum Era to the twentieth century. Perkins mentioned that as early as 1793 a slave, Catherine Ferguson, purchased her freedom in New York and took forty-eight Black and white children from an almshouse and opened Kathy Ferguson's school for the poor. The same year, the committee for improving the condition of Free Blacks in Pennsylvania opened a school. There was a recommendation to African-American families to relocate to areas where their daughters and sons could receive a better public education. The possibility of relocating brings to mind the Chicago mother who was taken to court because she listed her child in a different neighborhood so that the child could have access to a better education. Are we witnessing a double standard policy implementation in the Illinois educational system? If there was a possibility for blacks to relocate during educational integration several decades ago, why would it be a crime to list a child in a different school providing a better education in 2011? Has the implementation of equal opportunities regressed several decades backwards in the twentieth century when we are in the twenty first?

Education within the African-American community extended beyond the classroom and was augmented by the formation of literary and educational societies. For example, obtaining a secondary education was difficult for both African-American women and men before the civil war. Thus, the founding in 1829 of St. Frances Academy of Rome in Baltimore, a boarding school, was an important event for the race. The school was founded by the Oblate Order, a group of French-educated Black nuns. Most of the women were from prosperous families. One of the nuns, Elizabeth Lange, who became the first Superior of the Order and head of the school, operated a free school for poor Black children in her home. Before the opening of St. Frances, Classes were offered in both French and Spanish. Because the St Frances Academy was the only secondary institution available to African-American females, the school was well known. Girls from all over the country and Canada attended the academy. To preserve their native language, the Sisters conducted classes at the Academy on alternate days completely in French. By 1865, the school was coed and known simply as the St. Frances Academy.

A very prominent institution, which gave opportunities for black girls to get a good education was the Oberlin College in Ohio. It was the only institution in the nation admitting both

Black Americans and white women into the same program with white men. According to what Ellen N. Lawson and Marlene Merrill contended in their article, "Antebellum Black Coeds at Oberlin College," that shortly after Oberlin's founding in 1833, trustees of the Oberlin Collegiate Institute agreed (1835) that "the education of people of color is a matter of great interest and should be encouraged & sustained in the institution." Oberlin was distinctive for starting its policy frankly. Despite the fact that black students constituted less than five percent of the student body, Carter G. Woodson, scholar of Afro-American history, wrote in *Education of the Negro* (New York (1915) that Oberlin College "did so much for the education of the Negroes before the Civil War. As a result, it was often spoken of as an institution for the people of color," p. 276.

Other institutions emerged during this period as well. In 1852, the Society of Friends established the Institute for Colored Youth as the first coeducational high school in Philadelphia, and the Normal School for Colored Girls was founded by a white woman, Myrtilla Miner, in the District of Columbia. These institutions produced some first formally trained African-American teachers in the North before the Emancipation. Although most opportunities for the education of African-Americans were in the North before the Civil War, many clandestine civil schools existed in the South during this period.

Perkins continued her argument by pointing out that, during the 1890's African American women were increasingly concerned about issues specific to women and children of the race and organized the National Association of Colored Women in 1895. Education, job opportunities, protection from sexual assaults by white men in the South, and defense of the character of the African American women were the primary focus of this group. So, with Black women concerned about the special plight of African American girls, and the growing population of single Black women in the nation, numerous attempts were made to establish schools exclusively for Black women. The information that Perkins mentioned in her article is taken further in much more details in the paper with other writers dealing with specific examples of women's contribution to Education and race uplift in the early twentieth century.

These are studies of two quite different examples of activities aimed at back educational improvement. Franklin (1979), describes and explains the black focus on advancement through education in Philadelphia between 1900 and 1950. Because the white majority held racist beliefs and negative attitudes about Black people's character and capacities, Black schooling was generally inferior to that of Whites. According to him, before 1900, Blacks were never more than 10 percent of the city's population and had little political influence. As the population increased in the twentieth century, blacks began to demand more control over their education. Since education takes place in a socio-political context, Franklin describes the changes in race relations of Black political power and economic cycles as they influence black education. He also includes such matters as black and white community educational activities of social and religious organizations, fund-raising debates, cultural forums on black history and the role of the local branch of the NAACP.

Franklin (1989) begins by analyzing the interaction between education and the social, and economic status of blacks between 1899, when W. E. B. Du Bois' "*The Philadelphia Negro*," was published and the beginning of the Great Depression. He describes the origins of the Philadelphia black community, social conditions before 1920, and the impact of in-migration of blacks from the

South. He then discusses various education movements and reforms signed to deal with immigrants and black enrollments, and the increase in school segregation. As the numbers of blacks increased, the black community made efforts to undermine school segregation. What is particularly interesting in Franklin's is his consideration of the difficulties the black community had in translating its desire for quality education into reality. First blacks faced inferior unequal education under white control. Then through politics and increased numbers of teachers in the 1930's (a black on the school board) and the ability to compete for position in secondary schools, and the merging of white and black lists for elementary school teachers, more black control emerged. Franklin concludes that public schooling did not improve the overall social status of blacks and that also at times the public schools more an obstacle to the achievement of the larger goal of black school advancement.

Unlike Franklin who focuses on the educational aspirations and activities of a community, Moss's (1981), *The American Negro Academy* is concerned with the cultural activity of the few elites. According to Moss, these elites had actual and potential for broader and more than local involvement and influence. The mentioning of this example may seem displaced, but I think it may help us understand better not only the racial but also the gender predicament that African American women had to undergo in the United States.

In "The Schooling of Girls and Changing Community Values in Massachusetts Town" 1750-1820, *History of Education Quarterly* Kathryn Kish Sklar, (1993) is dealing with the education of white girls in New England. Her views are necessary to mention not in racial but in terms of gender approach. She contends that studies showed that in many communities only half as many women as men were literate when measuring literacy by the ability to sign one's name. By 1850 when the first federal census measured literacy by gender, both men and women in New England were literate. Scholarly writings on female literacy in New England showed that church membership was traditionally more significant than class membership. Sklar makes a notice of the insufficient information that historians provided about the transformation in women's access to education in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. She thinks they have focused on secondary and higher education especially the abundance of academies that flourished after 1790. Yet, significant as these institutions were, they represented the tip of a larger iceberg of institutional change affecting the schooling of girls in New England. Moreover, she tries to demystify the social institutions by displaying the contrast between the outside beauty of the community and the inhumane attitude of its people towards female education. We might think, she said that the prosperous town with a surplus to spend on luxuries would emerge as the most favorable to female schooling. In fact the opposite held true. The community most hostile to the use of public funds for schooling girls was the powerful, proud and wealthy Northampton. Public schooling was not provided for girls on a regular basis until 1807, a full generation later than was in any other case in other towns. Why? Political social economic and cultural factors all played a part. She pursues in her demonstration by giving the example of the Lickingwater District which, when requested for permission in 1771, for "allowing females to attend this school", the district petition was denied. In 1785 and again in 1788, Northampton Selectmen voted "not [to] be at any expense for schooling girls." The question that comes into play at this level is, if white people did not see the importance of educating their own women how could we expect them to perceive the need for blacks to get educated or help set up good public schools, given the fact that black people were considered intellectually inferior? Sklar's ideas lead us to understand the institutionalized machine of racism in

the South's educational system. We have here, a totally different view because of the difference in the purposes of educating a category of American people.

In his book, *The Education of Blacks in the South 1860-1935*, Anderson (1988) pointed out the Byrd's survey in New Orleans about the status of Negroes. Byrd's report said, "The Negro girl and woman occupied traditionally the field of domestic service in New Orleans." But the traditional method of training "the mother to daughter variety was 'unscientific and wasteful' and it had led to an unfortunate situation in which a well-trained, efficient, reliable house-worker is scarce and is becoming more and more as years pass." Byrd concluded that thorough training in domestic science will correct this need and put into the field a larger supply of competent house-workers.

The frustration is that in the South, the different philanthropic groups, particularly the missionary and the industrial philanthropists who provided the funding were in sharp disagreement over the ends and means of Black Education in general. Most visible were their divergent conceptions of the values and purposes of Black Higher Education. The example of one of the opponents of higher education was Tuskegee trustee William H. Baldwin Jr. who was convinced that what Afro-Americans needed to learn was the discipline of manual labor and the boundaries of their "natural environment." Anderson argued that, Baldwin like other philanthropists generally opposed the development of black higher education. He quoted this statement of Baldwin which joins to some extent Sklar's report about the Northampton decision makers against female education in New England. Baldwin proclaimed "except in the rarest of instances, I am bitterly opposed to the so-called higher education of Negroes." Further, James Anderson referred to Byrd's report about industrial education as follows, "Secondary industrial education could produce scientifically, trained and more efficient caterers, gardeners and cooks, tailors, chauffeurs, auto mechanics, printers and book binders, bricklayers, plasterers and sewing machine operators." These were the occupations held largely by black men in New Orleans whereas black women predominated in laundry work, house services as "mammies, maids" and hairdressing. They constituted 96% of the laundry women, 79% of the hairdressers and 86% of the house servants. Black women made up 75 to 80% of the labor force of many shops in the clothing industry. Some examples of the architectural sketch of an industrial high school on p. 218, some figures on p. 246, and pictures Anderson provided, are sufficient elements which reflect how much segregated those industrial schools were in terms of race and gender, notwithstanding the economic oppression they were exposed to. For examples, on p. 48, the prospective female teachers of Hampton Institute (top) were compelled to fieldwork in order to internalize the value of hard work that they were expected to transmit to their students. Another instance is on p.143, we have the picture of "Domestic Science" class at Marion County: the young women were being prepared to work as cooks in the homes of whites in the county.

The conclusion drawn out of these is that Black women's education was oriented from the beginning in such a way that, it was virtually impossible for them to move forward towards a supposedly better life. This trend is documented in one of Yolanda Moses's speech on Diversity, an extension of her 1989 Article on "black Women in Academe, during 2010. An example is that the first college degree earned by a Black woman in the United States was acquired by Mary Jane Paterson from Oberlin College in 1862. In 1865, Fanny Jackson Coppin was the second Black woman to earn a degree. By 1890, only 30 Black women in the U.S. held Baccalaureate degrees as

compared with 300 Black men and 2500 white women (Perkins 1983). Considering the precarious situation they were in and the challenges Black women faced and are still facing today, Nannie Burroughs came with a motto for the girls' school she led:

“We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible”

Nannie Burroughs

African American Women

It is from the past that I come
Surrounded by sisters in blood
And in spirit
It is this past
That I bequeath
A history of work and struggle
Each generation improves the world
For the next
My grandparents willed me strength.
My parents willed me pride.
I will to you rage.
I give you a world incomplete
A world
Where
Women still
Are properties and chattel
Where
Color still
Shuts doors
Where
Sexual choice still
Threatens

But I give you
A legacy
Of doers
Of people who take risks
To chisel the crack wider

Take the strength that you may
Wage a long battle.
Take the pride that you can
Never stand small
Take the rage that you can

Never settle for the less. Pat Parker "Legacy, II"²

Many metaphorical features in the aforementioned poem are illustrated through Black women's experience from slavery throughout history. Apart from reference to the African people's enslavement, there are other intersecting issues of race/ethnicity including other discriminations such as gender and sexual assault black women have to face on a daily basis, at home, at the workplace and outside. "The legacy of doers," of people "who take risks to chisel the crack open" is illustrated through Black people's early commitment to racial uplift and courageous white people starting independent schools in their home to provide Black children with the necessary education they could not have. The first Institute for colored girls was founded by Richard Humphreys in 1837 and, Ashmun Institute followed as the first school for higher learning for young Black men, founded in 1854 by John Miller Dickey and his wife, Sarah. The latter was later renamed Lincoln University in 1866.

In the twentieth century teaching was primarily viewed as women's work, and so Black women were over represented in the student bodies in the state land-grant teacher training colleges. Of the 14,028 Black students admitted to the seventeen Black land-grant colleges in 1928, 64 percent admitted by high school certificate and 73 percent by examination, were women. Although Black men taught at relatively higher percentages than white men, the year 1930's census reported that 45,872 women were teachers compared to 8,767 Black men. A 1938 study of Black college students indicated that 71 percent of Black elementary school teachers and 63 percent of Black high school teachers were women. Despite these figures, few Black women were represented in the leadership positions within these schools. Perkins reported that these figures were disturbing to Lucy Diggs Slowe, the first Black female Dean at Howard (1922-37).

In another survey Slowe conducted in 1931, of 153 first-year women at Howard University concerning their careers, 90 percent indicated that they aspired to teach. Noting a trend in Black women's limited career choices, Slowe wrote an article in 1933 entitled "Higher Education of Negro Women." Here, notice that unlike what Harris said about Cooper as being the first woman to bring in gender issues in African American discussion, Perkins points out that Slowe did this three decades before. She argued that Slowe discussed the varied career opportunities for Black men but the limited areas of education and social work for women. Surveying four coeducational Black colleges, Slowe discovered that Black women received little in courses, activities, or role models that prepare them for leadership. Although leadership was expected from Black Americans, Slowe charged that Black colleges perpetuated a conservative view of women that limited their leadership growth. Black women were expected to serve and not to lead. The overall philosophy of education as a group effort has its roots in the slave experience as Perkins said. African-American women saw their performance as students and educators in broader political terms in Collins' reference to (Neverdon-Morton 1989). Coppin describes the importance of her school performance: "I never

² From *Jonestown and Other Madness*, Poetry by Pat Parker (Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1985), 74-75.

rose to recite in my classes at Oberlin, but I felt that I had the honor of the whole African race upon my shoulders. I felt that, should I fail, it would be ascribed to the fact that, I was colored" (Lowenberg and Bogin 1976,306).

According to Collins (1991), Educated Black women were brought up to see their education as something gained not just for their own development but for the purpose of race uplift. This feeling was so strong that the women founding the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs chose as their motto "Lifting as we climb." The motto which symbolizes the deep commitment of Black women as teachers/activists is exemplified through their struggle for group survival. Collins confines her examples of Black Women racial awareness and their urgent need for education. In this vein a few remarkable people as role models with a commitment to educational and racial uplift and also perceived it as a must for black children.

Mary McLeod Bethune expressed a similar sentiment as Coppin in the following "I am my mother's daughter, and the drums of Africa still beat in my ear. "They will not let me rest while there is a single Negro boy or, girl, without a chance to prove his worth." (Lerner, 1972:143) This belief in education for racial uplift and in the special role of Black women in this struggle continued well into the twentieth century throughout the twenty first. In a 1938 article, in the *Journal of Negro History*, Mary McLeod Bethune argued, "if our people are to fight their way up and out of bondage, we must arm them with the sword and the shield...of pride-belief in themselves and their possibilities based upon a sure knowledge of the achievements of the past" (Lerner 1972; 544).

THREE CASES OF TWENTIETH CENTURY BLACK WOMEN CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION

ANNA JULIA COOPER: 1858-1964

Referring to Darlene Clark Hine (Encyclopedia) Louise Daniel Hutchinson's was born from a slave mother, she was marked by an unusual maturity and mental aptitude, which made her decide to become a teacher. Louise Daniel Hutchinson reported that Cooper's early and unbridled passion for learning and the belief that women were equipped to follow intellectual pursuits, carried her from the then ungraded St Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institute in Raleigh, North Carolina, to the Sorbonne in Paris where she received her Ph.D. at the age of sixty-six (on March 23, 1925). She became the fourth African-American Woman to earn a Ph.D. Unlike Hutchinson's article, which gives us the slightest details about Cooper's life and her family, Linda M. Perkins (1993) in *Black Women in America*, reported that Anna Julia Cooper dedicated her life to the education of Blacks. She served as Principal of Washington, DC.'s famous M Street High School and as the President of the City's Frelinghury University, an Institute dedicated to providing an education to adult "colored working people".

The White South was so hostile to the education of African-Americans that Du Bois reported that between 1900 and 1910, the number of Black Students attending publicly financed common schools had in some places decreased. Most Black colleges in the South were overwhelmingly

devoted to preparatory and secondary education in the nineteenth Century. Referring to Du Bois' report of Black College graduates in 1900, Harris pointed out that, a total number of 252 women compared to 2,272 men had obtained Baccalaureate degrees. Of this Number, 65 had graduated from Oberlin College. Only 22 of the 156 graduates of Black Colleges by 1900 were women. This Great disparity in educational achievement led some African-American women to become concerned and question this disturbing trend.

In developing Independent Institution, African-Americans always have sought to control and to operate their own institutions including schools. According to Joan Davis Ratteray, (1990), the Earliest Educational Institutions actually maintained an African frame of reference, although in later years, the focus changed for economic reasons. In this respect, in her book *A Voice from the South*, published in 1892, Anna Julia Cooper, a Oberlin graduate and educator addressed the issue of growing sexism with the Black Community and the limited educational opportunities for African-Americans. According to Hutchinson, while at Oberlin College, Cooper began to see herself as a defender of her race and advocate for Black women. Personal success aside and achievement aside, she remained sensitive to the plight and needs of oppressed people and was encouraged to be a free thinker as well as she represented the voice of unheard Southern Black women. She wrote, "I fear for the majority of colored men do not yet think it worthwhile that women aspire to higher education... Let money be raised and scholarships be founded in our Colleges and Universities for self-supporting worthy young women."

Harris (1992) pointed out that critic Henry L. Gates Jr. characterized Anna Cooper as "the prototypical African American feminist," because she was in part, responsible for the inclusion of gender in discussions of African American literacy. She also said that the rediscovery of a third jeopardy is crucial because she recognized that while racial oppression was pervasive, the oppression of the African American women had the additional feature of gender oppression. Cooper did not, however, argue that African-American men and women had any irreconcilable differences, but that oppression affected each in different ways. She did suggest that African-American women would lead the movement for equality. In her own words, "only the Black Women can say when and where I enter in the quiet, in disputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing a special patronage, then and there, the whole Negro race enters with me."

According to Harris, Cooper urged African-American men to recognize their omission of African-American women in their argument for higher education. She criticized those men who argued against higher education. Her basic argument was that the race would not progress unless women made up its foundation and their intellectual potential was realized. "It seems hardly a gracious thing to say, but it strikes me as true, that while our men seem thoroughly abreast of the times with almost every other subject, when they strike the woman question, they drop back into sixteen century logic." Despite Cooper's feminist views and her racial awareness, Mary E. Washington criticized her adherence to the ideal of the middle class woman and her lack of that consciousness. She wrote in the introduction of the reissued *A Voice from the South*:

Although her sympathies were with the poor and uneducated,
Cooper's images in *A Voice* are almost entirely of privileged women,

the struggling, ambitious intellectual, those fatally beautiful Southern mulatto women, a 'cream colored' aspirant to a white culture club and an artist whose application to Corcoran Museum School, was rejected because of her race.

One should note that regardless of this denigrating remark of Anna Julia Cooper's personal slant towards whiteness and subsequently, socialization with the most affluent white middle class, Anna Julia Cooper remains one of the pioneers of Black women's education through her personal educational journey which included earning a Doctoral Degree at the Sorbonne (France) at the age of sixty.

BROWN, CHARLOTTE HAWKINS 1883-1961, Marsha Vicky in (Encyclopedia) by Darlene Clark Hine

Darlene Clark Hine gives a brief story of Charlotte Hawkins by focusing on her career and her achievement in matters of education and the civil rights movement. It is said that Charlotte Brown was committed to good manners and she made sure that students at her school, Palmer Memorial Institute, were carefully drilled in the proper social graces. But her interest in social manners and education was coupled as a fierce determination to fight for civil rights and not to accept injustice quietly. Brown was born Lottie Hawkins on June 11, in Henderson, North Carolina, she was the granddaughter of Rebecca, a descendent of the English navigator John D. Hawkins.

Contrary to most Black women who graduated from Oberlin College, Brown went to Cambridge English High School. Charlotte H. Brown was only nineteen years old when she founded the Palmer Memorial Institute at the beginning of the twentieth-century. She was responsible for seven children from her brother and her aunt. She expanded the school, initiated interracial cultural activities in the community and became an active clubwoman. She was a founding member of the National Council of Negro Woman and served as President of the North Carolina state Federation of Negro Women's Clubs and the North Carolina Teachers Association. She was the first African-American chosen for membership in the Twentieth Century Club of Boston. In 1941, Brown's *The Correct Thing to do, to say, and to wear*, was published and she became known as the "First Lady of Social Graces". She wrote articles and short stories as well as the famous of which was 'Mammy ' an appeal to the heart of the South" (1919). Brown became a key figure in the Southern interracial women's movement as it developed in the 1920's. Despite all, some people, less charitably, called her a "social dictator". She spoke out against lynching, publicly starting racial problems. Brown retired as President of Palmer in 1952. She died in 1961, just a decade before Palmer was forced to close because of financial problems.

Similarly, in *Notable Black American Women*, the portrait that Marsha Vick makes of Charlotte Hawkins Brown is a much detailed one with more information classified under separate titles. Apart from the similarities mentioned by Clark Hine, in the development of brown as an educator, school founder, author and civic leader information, Marsha Vick, provides some additional information. She mentioned that as the distinguished founder of the Palmer Memorial, Charlotte Hawkins Brown sewed of more than half a century as one of the pioneering and driving forces in

American preparatory education for Black Youths. Marsha Vick goes on to say that, she was inspired by Booker T. Washington to use her Northern education to teach black people in the South. Believing that interracial contacts were necessary for the education of black students, she sponsored cultural exchange programs with the North Carolina state College for women at Greenshow. Brown was also responsible for national leaders who took part in the formal programs at Palmer with the Northern Philanthropists who supported the school. Her associates included Mary McLeod Bethune who founded Bethune Cookman College; Eleanor Roosevelt and Booker T. Washington and his wife, Margaret Murray Washington, who was also an educator.

Going back to what Harris pointed out in *Too Much Schooling, Too Little Education* by Shujaa, Charlotte Hawkins Brown was primary interested in college preparatory work, but she was forced to push for industrial education in order to sustain the interest of her philanthropic sources. These donors were interested in providing funding only if Industrial Education was an integral part of the school program. This example illustrates perfectly what Anderson described in *The Education of Blacks in the South 1860-1935*. The educational arena revealed important ideological differences based on the social position, cultural beliefs, political strategies, and perceived common interests of their proponents. This phenomenon is as much significant as the white planters who dominated local governments in the rural south generally resisted universal public education particularly when it applied to rural blacks. But they also believed that a proper system of education would improve the economic production of future generations. There were two positions. One set of dominant class white southerners believed that formal schooling inappropriately tendered to raise blacks' aspirations and to ruin them as plantation laborers, while another group thought that black education, when properly controlled, could make blacks an asset instead of a burden to the South. The amazing thing is that behind these different beliefs about ways of training the young, lay discrete social vision of the character and order of the New South.

Anderson pursued further stating that neither the antislavery legacy nor the Civil War born sentiment of justice could transcend basic questions of political dominance, economic order, and race relations. Even though Northerners favored universal public education, they did not agree on the purpose and function of schooling among the freed people. Northern white industrialists, with the establishment of the Peabody Educational Fund in 1867, saw universal schooling in much the same way as did Southern white industrialists as a means to make black Southerners an efficient laboring force of the South and to prepare them for a fairly definite caste system.

MARY McLEOD BETHUNE (1875-1955)

In her portrayal of Mary McLeod Bethune, Helene M. Smith pointed out the main events in Bethune's life and her most relevant contributions to the struggle of Black people in general through the founding of educational institutions. As Smith put it, Bethune saw education as the primary route to racial uplift and this field consumed her youthful energies. In 1900, she established a Presbyterian parochial school in Palatka, Florida. Two years later, she opened an independent school that she maintained in conjunction with rendering volunteer social services and selling life insurance. Bethune founded on October 3rd, 1904, in Daytona Florida the Daytona Educational and Industrial Institute with her assets of "five little girls, a dollar and a half, and faith in God". The School was a girl's school except her own son who attended from the beginning. By

1922, with black and white support, Bethune had developed a thriving institution that enrolled three hundred girls and had a dedicated faculty and staff of about twenty- five.

Bethune's tremendous success with her girls ' school led to its transformation. In 1923, with more than 300 and a debt free physical plant valued at 250,000, it became co-educational; the following year, while promoting its high school, it inaugurated a junior college curriculum. These events occurred under the auspices of the Board of education for Negroes of the Northern Methodist Episcopal Church, which had assumed responsibility for the school. The board wanted to merge Bethune's school with the coeducational Cookman Institute founded in 1872 and named for Alfred Cookman, a white New Jersey Methodist Minister who had preached social justice and support for African Americans. The new name epitomized the continuing interracial commitment of Bethune's institution, which probably the only college of its day to be named specifically to highlight such a commitment.

After merging both Institutions as Bethune-Cookman College, Bethune took the leadership in Black Women's club Movement. The striking development of the Southeastern Association of colored women became the Southeastern interracial committee and the black contingent of the women's General committee of the Atlanta based commission on the interracial cooperation. Bethune then establishes the National Council of Negro Women. As an educator, civil and women's rights activist government official, she believed in the necessity of linkage between the distaff leadership of black Americans and New Deal Administrators. On December 5,1935, she established the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW).

Helen Smith argued that Bethune's pivotal advocacy of minorities in the military revolved around the women's army officer cadre. Her foundational strategy for race advancement was promoted, in that the NCNW responded with proposals emphasizing equality of opportunity for black leadership. Another position that Bethune held was head of NYA's division of Negro affairs. Her base was the National Youth Administration, which contact provided NCNW success. In addition, Smith said that Bethune's unrestricted access to the White house, her standing in Black America and the security of her NYA led her to become race Representative at large in the administration. Although Bethune struggled very hard, during the McCarthy hysteria, the Board of Education in Englewood, New Jersey, denied Bethune a school's platform because she had been labeled a communist subversive. But fortunately, some American people who knew the vision that had undergirded her life a vision of a country eschewing segregation, and discrimination so as to appreciate the value of individuals regardless of race, color, creed or gender, rallied to her defense in a movement reversing the Board's action. As a result, honors and awards came to Bethune until her death on May 18, 1955. The interesting thing to notice is that Bethune Cookman College is the only historically Black College founded by a Black Woman, still thriving today.

**HOW HISTORIANS & FEMINISTS HAVE DEFINED AFRICAN-AMERICAN
WOMEN'S EDUCATION (S. Boukari)**

<u>Categories of Influential Factors</u>	New Paradigm	History	Race	Gender	Educ. Policy	Women's Activism.
Anderson (1988)		X	X	X	X	X
Collier (1982)		X	X	X		
Collins (1991)	X	X	X	X		X
Franklin (1990; 1991)	X	X	X	X		
Ford (1991)		X	X	X		X
Brooks				X		
Hutchinson		X	X			
Lawson& Al (1980)	X	X	X	X		
Moses (1980), (2010)	X	X	X			X
Perkins (1993)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ratteray (1990)	X	X	X	X		
Seller (1989)	X	X	X	X		
Shujaa (1994)	X	X	X	x	X	X
Sklar (1985)			X			
Sloan (1985)		X	X			X
Smith		X				
Graves (1990)		X	X			X
Hine		X	X			
Walker (1986)		X	X		X	X

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