

Apr 27th, 12:00 AM - 12:00 AM

Mobilize for Franchise: The Quest for African American Women's Suffrage with the Creation of African American Organizations from the 1910s to the 19th Amendment

Christina Kleman
Susquehanna University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.susqu.edu/ssd>

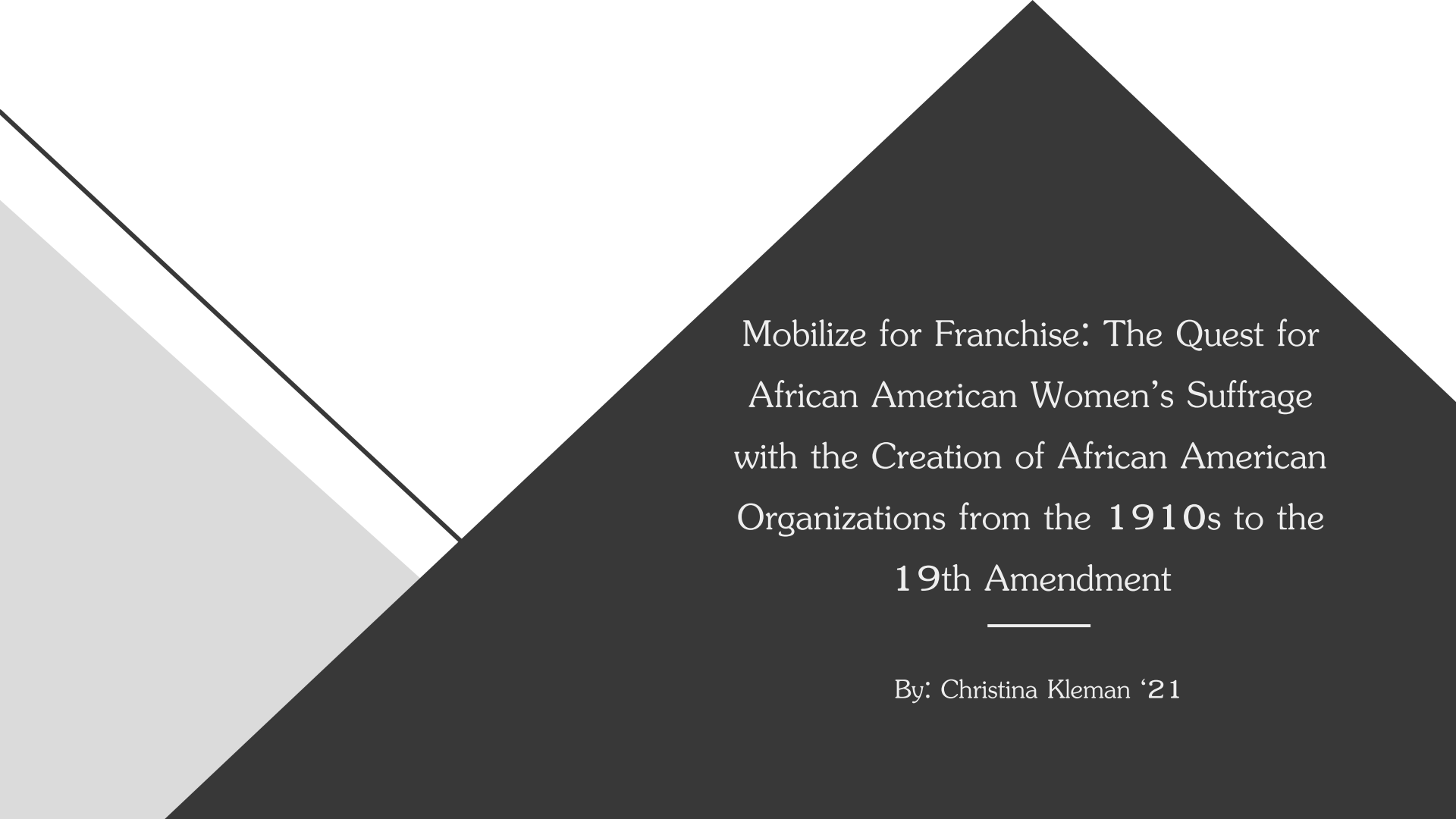


Part of the [African History Commons](#), [History of Gender Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), [United States History Commons](#), and the [Women's History Commons](#)

Kleman, Christina, "Mobilize for Franchise: The Quest for African American Women's Suffrage with the Creation of African American Organizations from the 1910s to the 19th Amendment" (2021). *Senior Scholars Day*. 6.

<https://scholarlycommons.susqu.edu/ssd/2021/posters/6>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Scholars Day by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact sieczkiewicz@susqu.edu.



Mobilize for Franchise: The Quest for
African American Women's Suffrage
with the Creation of African American
Organizations from the 1910s to the
19th Amendment

By: Christina Kleman '21

Overview

- The research encompassed how African American women (with the help of some men) mobilized in the Women's Suffrage movement despite challenges.
- Topics That will be Covered :
 - 15th Amendment and Questioning
 - Racial Inequality in the Movement
 - Women's Clubs
 - African American Sororities
 - Organization in Black Churches
 - Primary Source Evidence with certain areas of research
 - Historical significance



Mary Church Terrell

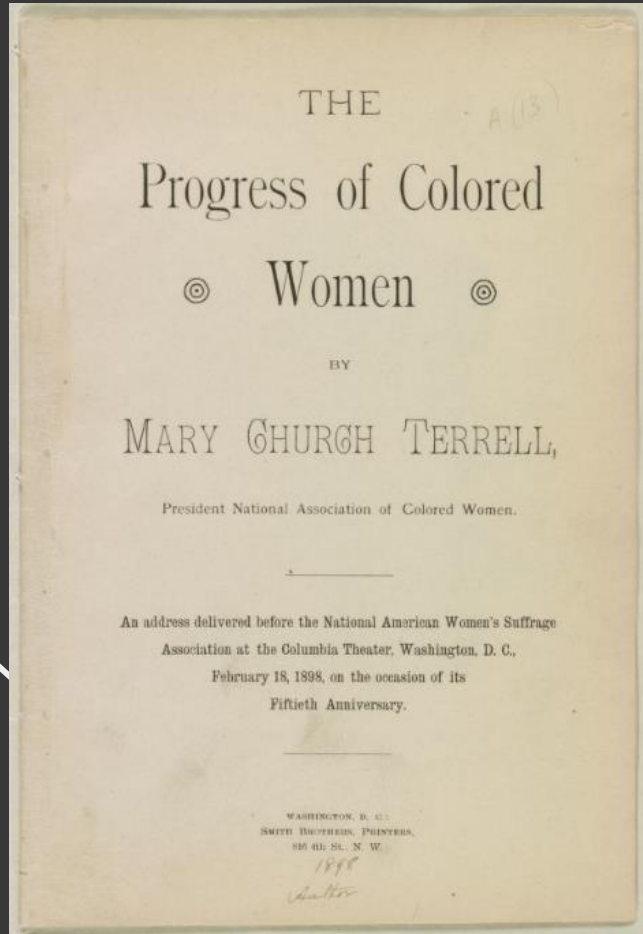
Historical Argument

- The diversification of social clubs exchanged ideas to support African American women's voting rights to campaign for human rights.
 - Human Rights
 - As a citizen of the United States
 - Part of their Race and Gender
 - The right to voice opinions in government with representative democracy
 - A way to improve their socioeconomic conditions



15th Amendment's questioning

- The 15th Amendment granted freed male slaves the right to vote without the basis of race after the Civil War.
- African American Women did not count into the voting pool with this amendment or White Women.
 - Southern States heavily influenced by the Jim Crow Laws wanted to inflict different voting laws such as the Grandfather Clause that Carried onto the Civil Rights Era.
 - Slaveholders had local or state power and they influenced others to question the amendment and place racially motivated laws I the Reconstruction Era
 - White Suffragists were outraged by African American Men voting before them and if African American women wanted to join their suffrage organizations, they would not let them until a certain time.

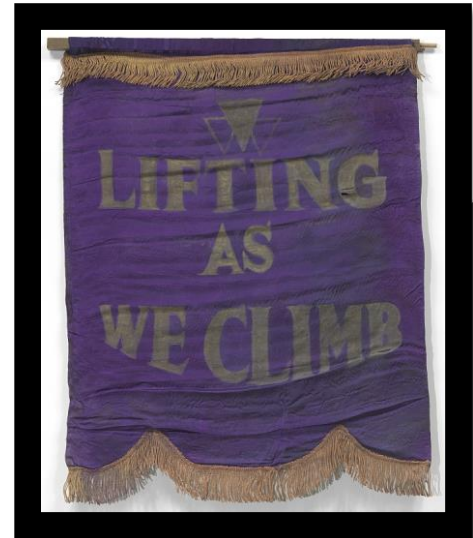


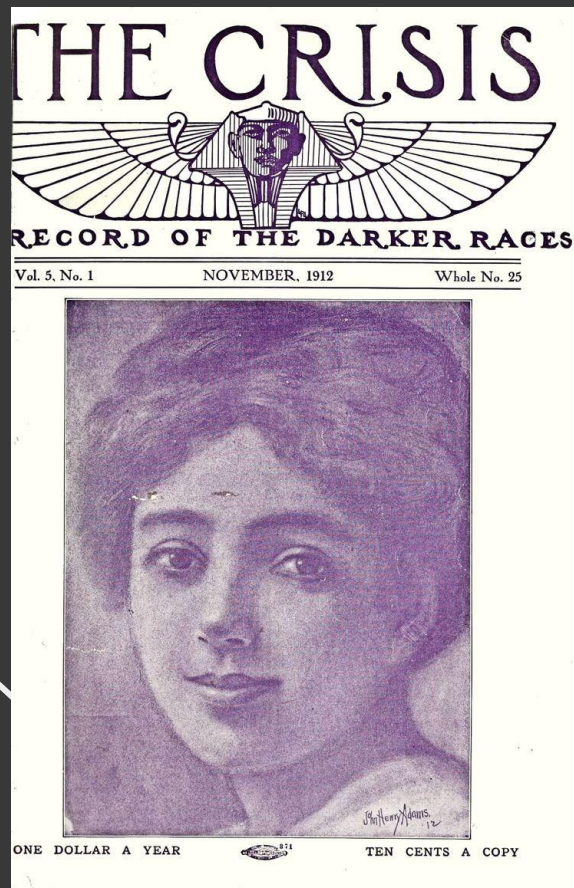
PRIMARY SOURCE EXAMPLE

- ☞ **The Progress of Colored Women**
February 18th, 1898, by Mary Church Terrell
- ☞ This was a popular book extended a hand to African American women living in the rural south where it was impacted by the Jim Crow Laws.
- ☞ Terrell explained the successes of African American women since before the American Civil War and the importance of how African women are valid in fighting for a right to vote and how to combat racial inequality in where they live.
- ☞ This also helped explain the disenfranchisement within the 15th amendment's ratification and how it did not include African American women.

Women's Clubs

- African American women started their own organizations since they originally did not have acceptance in white women's suffrage organizations.
- In 1896, the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) was established.
- The NACW empowered women and girls to campaign for voting equality and to give back to their communities.
- Women's clubs such as the Black Women's Club Organizations also ensured that African American youth would have a quality education.





PRIMARY SOURCE EXAMPLES

- ☞ **The Crisis Volume 5, Number 1 November 1912 Issue**
- ☞ This gave a further background on how women's clubs gained popularity to the point where it was a normal occurrence in African American periodicals.
- ☞ This issue also examined how the church mobilized with meetings for men and women to voice their opinions on suffrage.

Organization in the Church

- The Church was a meeting place for African Americans and people had leadership in church groups.
- The church helped associate suffrage with good morals.
- Women and sometimes men created interest groups within the church and hosted meetings about suffrage and where to campaign at.
- Church members would write to certain leaders such as women's suffrage activist, W.E.B. DuBois for support.
- Progressive ministers also helped members talk about suffrage and tying it with the importance of human rights in sermons.

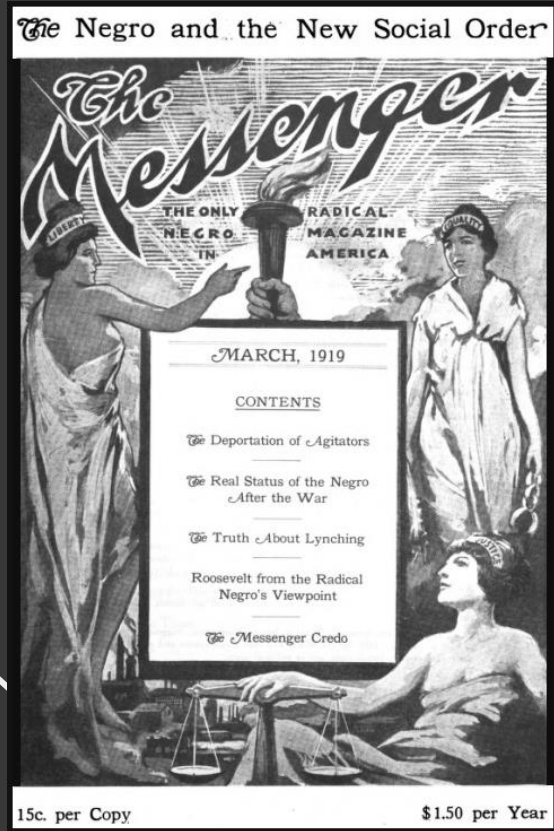
African American Sororities

- African Americans are increasingly going to college and joining these organizations rooted in black excellence through helping the unfortunate.
- The sororities were a part of a larger organization called the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) or the Divine 9.
- The first NPHC sorority established was Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) in 1908
- The sorority with the direct link to the Women's Suffrage Movement was Delta Sigma Theta ($\Delta\Sigma\Theta$)
 - They marched in the most notable suffrage parade in Washington D.C

Women's Suffrage Parade in Washington DC - 1913



PRIMARY SOURCE EXAMPLES



- ∞ **The Messenger: March 1919 Issue**
- ∞ The magazine helped find the significance of how Black Greek-Letter Organizations were involved in the Women's Suffrage Movement.
- ∞ This issue mentions the sorority, Delta Sigma Theta's involvement in the Washington D.C. Women's suffrage Parade leading up to the 19th Amendment's ratification.

Historical significance

- ✚ The research was historically significant since it gives African American women agency to women who were disenfranchised by specifically the 15th and 19th amendment.
- ✚ Historical narratives often forget the involvement of African American women in the Women's suffrage movement and give notoriety to the white suffragists that often-excluded black members due to their deep-rooted racism.
- ✚ These women need more credit for mobilizing communities attacked by the Jim Crow laws and who inspired women for generations to come.



Bibliography

- Dubois, W.E. Burghardt, ed. *The Crisis: The Record of Darker Races* 1, no. 1, November 1910. <https://modjourn.org/issue/bdr507789/#>.
- Dubois, W.E. Burghardt, ed. *The Crisis: The Record of Darker Races* 1, no. 2 (December 1910): 5–30. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044012439774?urlappend=%3Bseq=132>.
- Dubois, W.E. Burghardt. “The Crisis: The Record of Darker Races.” Hathi Trust. September 1911. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044012439774&view=1up&seq=389&q1=women%20vote>.
- Harris, Jessica, and Vernon C. Mitchell. “A Narrative Critique of Black Greek-Letter Organizations and Social Action.” In *Black Greek-letter Organizations in the Twenty-First Century: Our Fight Has Just Begun*, edited by Parks Gregory S., by Malveaux Julianne and Morial Marc H., 143-68. University Press of Kentucky, 2008. Accessed October 17th, 2020. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2jcrs6.14>.
- Phillips, Clarendia M. “Sisterly Bonds: African American Sororities Rising to Overcome Obstacles.” In *African American Fraternities and Sororities: The Legacy and the Vision*, edited by Phillips Clarendia M., Brown Tamara L., and Parks Gregory S., 341-60. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 2005. Accessed October 16th, 2020. doi:10.2307/j.ctt2jctpn.17.
- Randolph, A. Philip, and Chandler Owen, eds. “The Messenger March 1919.” *The Messenger*, no. March 1919 (March 1919): 2–21. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.c2904887&view=1up&seq=136&q1=church%20women%20suffrage>.
- Terrell, Mary Church. *The Progress of Colored Women*. Library of Congress\ Online Catalog. Washington, pDC, 1898. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/lcrbmrp.t0a13/?sp=5&st=text&r=0.087,0.202,0.903,0.721,0>.