



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

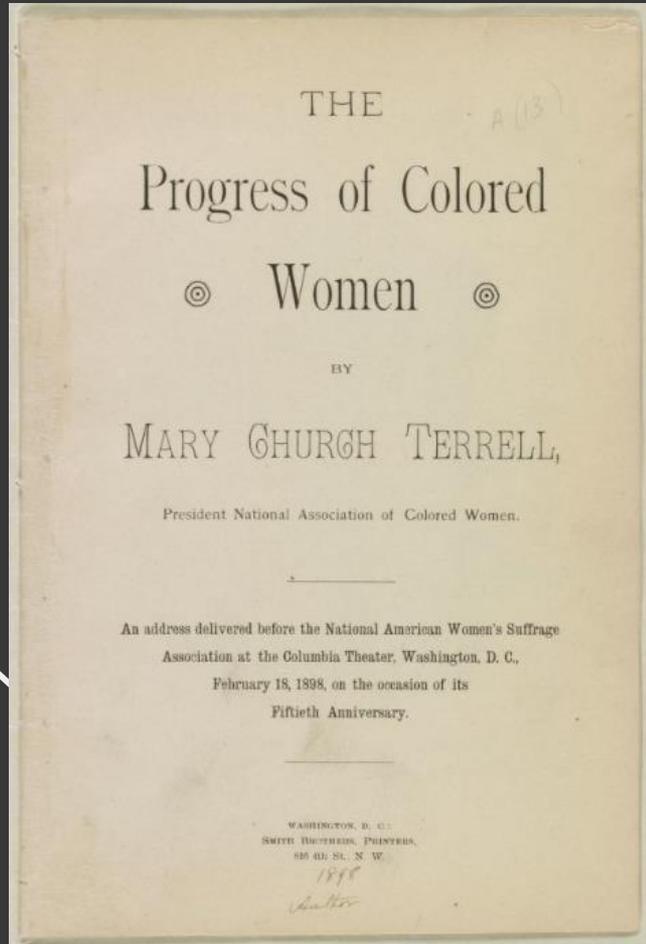
Historical Argument

- 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.

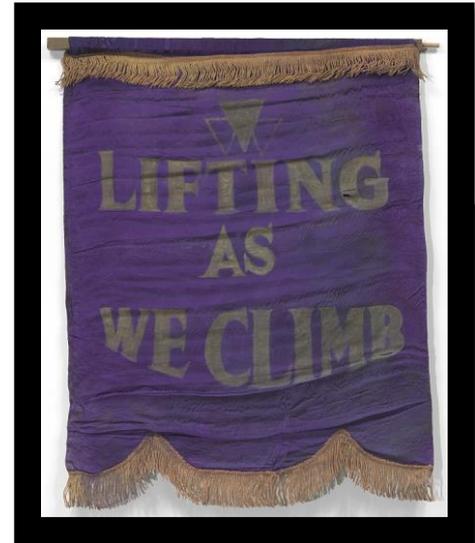


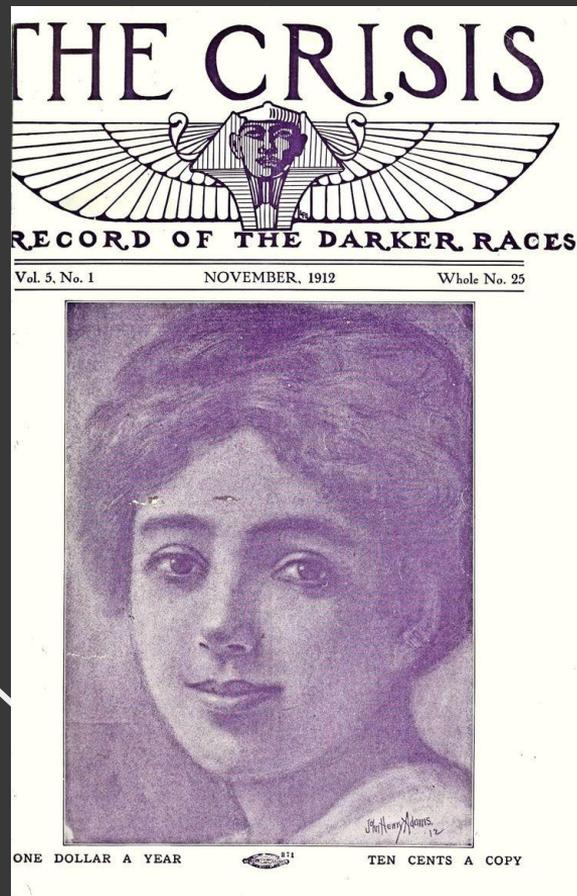
PRIMARY SOURCE EXAMPLE

- ☞ **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.

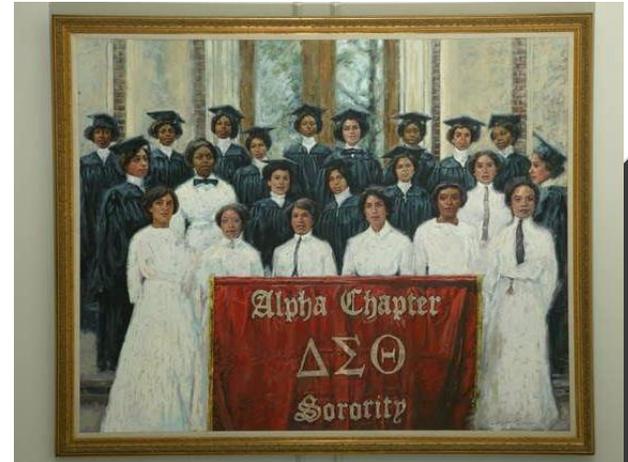
Organization in the Church

- 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.

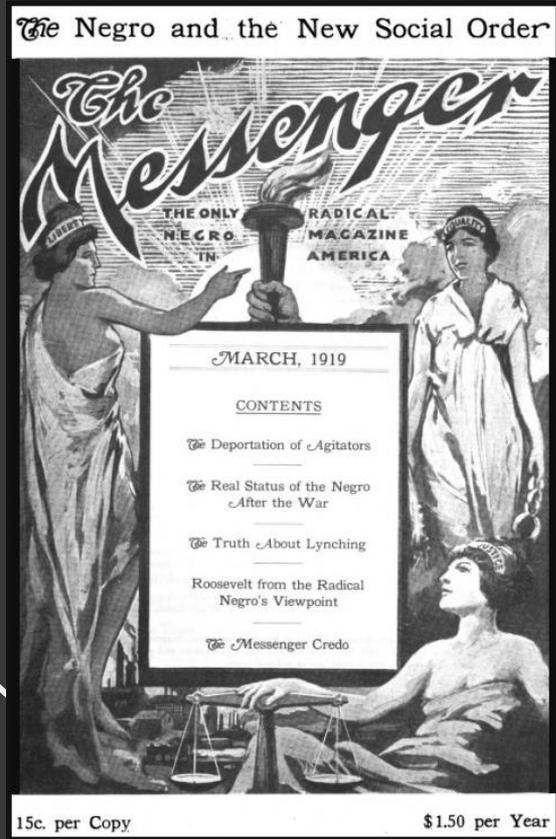
African American Sororities

- 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.



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