

**'I Must Speak, I Must Think, I Must Act.' [Laura Simmes, 1864] *The Christian Recorder*, Literary Activism, and the Black Female Intellectual.**

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Abstract: During the American Civil War black women increasingly published opinion pieces in the form of letters, short essays, and in one case, serialised fiction in the African Methodist Episcopal newspaper, *The Christian Recorder*. This article argues that, collectively, these women's voices contributed to a developing black intellectualism of the early nineteenth century, setting the precedent for black feminist thinking of the Reconstruction period and beyond. Through their public literary activism, these women challenged the boundaries of the gendered and racialised spaces of the public and private spheres. Through a series of case studies published in the *Christian Recorder* from 1861-66, this article reflects on the ways in which these women developed a conscious writing self which should be understood as literary activism. These women wrote under the most difficult of circumstances in a period of conflict, yet they persisted in having their voices heard. Collectively, they wrote about the importance of action, the influence of women on the African American nation, and the vital influence of women's role in education for racial uplift. This article thus places the literary activism of these women front and centre and highlights the power of their words for subsequent generations.

Julia C. Collins must have mailed her essay off from Williamsport, Pennsylvania in the early spring of 1864, to be considered for publication by the *Christian Recorder*, with no small degree of anxiety. It had taken her time to draft the 400 or so words on the value of education intended for the *Recorder*, the weekly publication of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME). In between the demands of teaching at the small school house in Williamsport, her daily domestic chores, and caring for her little ones, it must have proven difficult for her find

the presence of mind to put pen to paper and write even a short essay. These difficulties must have been compounded by worrying thoughts of her husband, Stephen, risking his life fighting for the Union in the US Colored Infantry. Of course, in the preceding years, the *Recorder* had published pieces written by women, short prose or poems, yet these contributions were heavily outweighed by those from male missionaries, ministers, and army generals. Indeed, the wife of the minister of Williamsport, Amanda Turpin, might have also been considering whether it would be unwise, as a pastor's wife, to publish her thoughts in the *Recorder* on the growing significance of black womanhood in the nineteenth century. Perhaps she had spoken with Julia about this before finally submitting her own piece later that same year; if not, perhaps Julia's first publication in April 1864 provided Amanda with the confidence to do so herself.

In any case, what we begin to witness here through these two women, is the utilisation of a publication grounded in the conservative morality of Protestant Christianity providing voice to women's views. In the process, they, and a growing number of others, overstepped the boundaries of womanhood in the pre-Civil War period - of being a dutiful wife and mother tied to the domestic circle - to forcefully enter the public sphere and join a national conversation concerning African American rights and citizenship. The *Recorder* proved particularly valuable for African American women in the Civil War era, both as subscribers and contributors. It not only provided news of loved ones on the frontline for female relatives at home or in transit, but also allowed for African American women of the era to contribute to the public discourse through its pages.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in the *Recorder's* first edition of 1863 it ran a self-congratulatory piece marvelling at its success over the past two years and inviting contributions to its pages: 'We also invite all of our brethren who can write for a paper of such magnitude and character as this, to do so. If they will do so, it will tend much to interest our people whom you address, and it will create in them a strong appetite for reading, and especially your own productions.'<sup>2</sup> It is doubtful whether the *Recorder* envisaged a sizeable increase in

the volume of submissions it received from women, or that the content would be overtly politicised. This article will consider the somewhat unexpected increase in contributions by African American women to the *Christian Recorder* during the remainder of the Civil War. It will reflect on how these female contributors used the paper as a means to enter into meaningful conversations about what freedom might mean and the accompanying rights of citizenship for African Americans as a whole, and African American women more specifically.

Importantly, this article claims that by entering these vital public debates of the era these women claimed a voice within Black intellectualism, a term generally disassociated with African American women, especially in the nineteenth century. Their collective voices were particularly important in the context of the Civil War as African American women in the public sphere. They, among others, arguably laid the foundations for a more active movement among African American women in the era of Reconstruction and beyond, to challenge the racial and gendered hierarchies that persisted in late nineteenth century America. Through a consideration of the limited opportunities for publication in the nineteenth century for these women more generally, the article will add to existing scholarship concerning black female activists of the era and the forums through which they made their voices heard.<sup>3</sup> More specifically, the piece will consider how, in using the *Recorder* as their platform, these female authors, often unknown beyond their neighbourhood initially, collectively furthered women's power within the conservative structures of the AME church and by extension began to carve out a space for women's voices within a developing idea of the Black intellectual in the nineteenth century.

### **The AME Church and the *Christian Recorder***

The AME was an archetypal conservative institution of black nineteenth-century life in the United States, particularly with its keen adherence to nineteenth-century ideals of gender. The *Christian Recorder* was therefore an unusual choice for women as the vehicle they chose to

promote their opinion on topics such as the value of education, social responsibility to the race, suffrage, and citizenship. *The Recorder*, a weekly newspaper by the late 1850s, had been established by the Book Concern of the AME in 1852, an initiative started in 1817 as the first African American publishing company. As Frances Smith Foster has argued, the creation of the AME Book Concern was part of a larger African American print culture serving a fundamental purpose ‘in constructing African America, in ensuring the protection and progress of the ‘race’ or the ‘nation’...for reconstructing individual and group definitions and for advocating behaviors and philosophies that were positive and purposeful.’<sup>4</sup> One of the central missions of the AME Book Concern, then, was to promote ideals of morality, self-help, and racial uplift through its publications, most notably the *Recorder*. As Clarence Walker has argued, the AME Church was mindful of the special place that they had been accorded as ‘an instrument of God’s providence’ and was therefore keen that the *Recorder* provide examples of positive images for others. This was important regardless of whether they were parishioners of the AME or subscribers to the publication.<sup>5</sup>

One such ideal ever present in the *Recorder* was an observance of nineteenth-century gender conventions, whereby women were confined to the domestic sphere, where they were best placed to act as examples of moral virtue to their children and husbands. Antebellum idealisations of female piety, purity and domesticity in order to best perform the sanctified role of moral guardians of their family and the nation were popularised by white authors such as Horace Bushnell and Catharine Beecher Stowe through the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>6</sup> Such models were adopted and carefully adapted by the AME to more adequately acknowledge the realities of African American life immediately before and during the Civil War, and into the post-Emancipation period, yet still promoted a vision of womanhood grounded in a model of feminine duty, devoutness and morality. In a piece published in January 1862, for example,

‘Woman’s Influence Over Man,’ the unnamed author argued that, ‘To the formation of manly character, the love and reverence of the virtuous feminine character is essential.’<sup>7</sup>

The role of the mother was also venerated within the *Recorder*, particularly in relation to the teaching of virtues such as love, compassion, and kindness. A short story by an unnamed author published in March 1861, ‘Love wins Love’ had little Charlie question why the animals all loved his father. In response, Charlie’s mother pressed him to think of an answer: ‘What is the reason the birdies all love your father...Think Charlie, - try and find a reason yourself.’ So, the five-year-old child pondered the question and then resolved that it was because his father demonstrated love towards the animals. Pleased with his answer and that he had solved his own question, Charlie’s mother reminded him to love as his father did to receive love in return:

Love all things and be kind to them. Do not speak roughly to the dog. Don't pull pussy's tail, nor chase the hens, nor try to frighten the cow. Never throw stones at the birds. Never hurt nor tease anything. Speak gently and lovingly to them. They now as well as you do who has a pleasant voice. Feed them, and seek their comfort, and they will love you, and everybody that knows you will love you too.<sup>8</sup>

Through such didactic tales the *Recorder* celebrated the virtuous and selfless woman – mother, daughter, school mistress – who was positioned as the gatekeeper of morality and whose role it was to educate the young on virtues of goodness, decency, and respectability.

### **Historical Invisibilities and Silences in the Archives**

As the war years progressed, however, a sizeable minority of female contributors to the *Recorder* began to shift the tone of what might be expected of women in the post-emancipation world. In the process, they provided a more meaningful platform for black

women in the post-Civil War era to publish pieces that were politicised in nature and meaningful in intent.

As with other Protestant denominations of the era, at its founding in 1816, the AME Church had no official place in its hierarchies of governance for women. As Jualynne E. Dodson explains, ‘Men held all offices in the...ministry, laity and the conferences. The structure would not change for the first fifty-two years of Church life.’ Yet, as the Church expanded through the first half of the nineteenth century through the Civil War, so too did the number of female parishioners, extending their numerical strength at the local level within their communities. Indeed, as Dodson further comments, with women numbering 60% of the AME Church membership in 1846, they were beginning to develop a ‘critical mass,’ reminding her readers that ‘numbers are an essential prerequisite to power.’<sup>9</sup> Simultaneous to this expansion of female congregants to the AME church was the development of the AME Book Concern and its subsequent weekly publication of the *Recorder* where the number of African American female subscribers was also growing. Eric Gardener’s exhaustive research on the *Recorder*, which places the publication within the history and culture of nineteenth-century African American literature and print culture more broadly, has noted that a sizeable minority of subscribers to the weekly *Recorder* were single women. As Gardner notes, we should be careful with how we think about the term ‘single women’ – which could mean widowed, not married yet, or never married. Moreover, given that we also know that 99% of the subscribers were African American in late 1864, it is relatively certain that the majority of these widowed, not married yet, or never married women were also black.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the female contributors to the *Recorder* during the Civil War years were writing to and for young black women of the post-Emancipation world, imparting a message of racial uplift through engaging them in the wider public duties of womanhood to both their families and future generations. Women who published in the *Recorder* during the Civil War years, such as Julia Collins and Amanda Turpin,

were mostly unknown to an audience beyond that of immediate family, their communities, and close friends. Mitch Kachun, who rediscovered Collins' writings in the archives, argued in 2006 that, '[u]ntil quite recently...most people, including leading scholars in the field, had never heard of Julia C. Collins, let alone incorporated her work into our understanding of black [is this capital in the original?] literary traditions.'<sup>11</sup> Tracing Collins in the historical archives has proved problematic given the absence of any tangible information before her publishing debut in the *Recorder* in April 1864. We do know that she came to Williamsport, Pennsylvania sometime before this date to take up the position of school teacher to the black children there as reported in a letter to the *Recorder* from Enoch Gilchrist, a leading member of the AME congregation in the town. Yet, her age at this appointment can only be tentatively estimated at 21, with 1860 census data perhaps locating her in the house of Enoch Gilchrist as 'Julia Green', a literate mulatto of 17 years of age. Perhaps we might speculate that when his father, Cornelius, retired from his teaching position, Enoch requested that his former house guest be appointed as the replacement. In the ensuing years before 1864 Julia Green may have married Stephen C. Collins, and archival documentation does confirm him as Julia C. Collins' husband. Yet, as is so often the case with African American women of the nineteenth century, we are left with silences and absences that we might only hope to fill by employing what Stephanie Camp has termed 'the historical imagination.'<sup>12</sup> The lived realities of Julia C. Collins' life – where she was born and when, whether she was born into slavery or free, her lineage and descendants, and the social circles she moved in before she arrived in Williamsport – are left for us as historians to deliberate over, employing what we do know about her, and the lives of other African American women in the antebellum era, to construct a speculative narrative of her life.<sup>13</sup>

Mitch Kachun puts Collins's literary invisibility down, in part, to the incomplete nature of her serialised novel for the *Recorder*, *The Curse of Caste*. Collins died from tuberculosis in

November 1865 before the story reached its conclusion. He also suggests that her marginal status in the histories of black women activists in the nineteenth-century United States could be due to the limited nature of publication options for African Americans in this era.<sup>14</sup> That Collins, and her contemporaries chose the *Recorder* as the means to express their politicised viewpoints, - in essays, letters, or prose - confirms that these women were engaged in a political venture that William A. Andrews and Mitch Kachun define as ‘nationalistic’: ‘Collins [and her female contemporaries] published...in a leading, probably *the* leading black operated periodical of the time.’ This, they continue, would have ensured that these women’s ideas and arguments would have reached a sizeable portion of the African American population in comparison to self-published autobiographical narratives such as Harriet Jacobs, Sojourner Truth’s, and Harriet Wilson’s semi-autobiographical text.<sup>15</sup> Yet, the fact remains that black women’s voices, whether published in the *Recorder* or elsewhere during this period, remained muted for several decades if not more. Indeed, as Veta Smith Tucker points out in relation to Collins, ‘When [she] died...just 19 months after her publishing debut – her voice was silenced for more than a century.’<sup>16</sup>

### Recovering the Black Female Intellectual of the Nineteenth Century

The concept of the intellectual, in modern history at least, is best described by Edward Said who argued that the ‘[o]ne task of the intellectual is the effort to break down the stereotypes and reductive categories that are so limiting to human thought and communication.’<sup>17</sup> Black intellectuals in the United States from the late eighteenth through the nineteenth and twentieth century were very much engaged in dismantling racist stereotypes and long-held beliefs regarding those on American shores descended from the African continent. Yet, as Gregory D. Smithers reminds us, the history of the black



intellectual movement from the late eighteenth century through to the contemporary period is complex, containing myriad perspectives from across the black diaspora, which are often dependent on prevailing social ideologies and historical context.<sup>18</sup> The *Recorder* women who form the focus of this article, although presenting diverse perspectives, were all engaged in challenging prevailing racialized perspectives and racial stereotypes in antebellum America, especially as they related to black women. Through publication of their thoughts in the *Recorder* they had become, in Said's estimation at least, *public intellectuals*, for 'the moment you set down the words and then publish them you have entered the public world.'<sup>19</sup>

Despite this however, as Mia Bay, Farah Griffin, Martha S. Jones and Barbara D. Savage have noted, 'black women artists, activists, and intellectuals have [long] provided critical insight into issues of national and global importance. Shaped by lives lived at the crossroad of race, gender, and justice, [yet] their ideas have been distinctive but often ignored.'<sup>20</sup> Admittedly, Collins's publishing career was brief and possibly provides justification for overlooking her work until fairly recently. Yet, there has been comparatively minimal discussion around other African American women of the first half of the nineteenth century with much lengthier publishing careers, or a more significant presence within their own counter public spheres. This historical marginalization is not helped by the gender constructions at the centre of understandings of the black intellectual movement. As Teresa Zackodnik has argued, 'the black public sphere is often understood as a masculine and a largely twentieth century phenomenon,' thus the work of many black women toward civil and legal equality has been historically marginal to narratives of civil rights and black intellectualism.<sup>21</sup>

Shirley Wilson Logan has argued that 'the definition of an intellectual is not fixed, especially as it would apply to [black] women of [the nineteenth century].'<sup>22</sup> Yet, she does however provide her readers with a means to understand what she means when using the term, confirming that 'I use it here to mean one who participates in public discourse that has

as its purpose the application of ideas to the understanding and possible modification of social and political phenomena.’<sup>23</sup> Adopting Logan’s definition, this article will consider how black women writing for the *Christian Recorder* in Civil War America, were actively participating in a public conversation concerning civil rights and citizenship that ultimately would shape the political demands and cultural worlds of African Americans in postbellum America. The article also takes into account Martha S. Jones’s consideration of the black intellectual as the means through which African American activist women became visible and influential leaders of their respective communities. Jones describes how an intellectual community developed among black people in nineteenth century America through a public culture including ‘churches, political organisations, secret societies, literary clubs, and antislavery societies.’ She reminds her readers that black women were central to these public sites of African American life, not just in terms of their numbers or commitment, but also to the conversations taking place within them, which embraced ‘a realm of ideas, a community of interpretation, and a collective understanding of issues of the day.’<sup>24</sup>

As Mia Ray et al., have argued then ‘it is time to recognise black women’s intellectual history as a distinct and growing field of study.’<sup>25</sup> Yet doing black women’s intellectual history remains challenging for historians of the nineteenth century. While academic literature has burgeoned relating to the latter part of the nineteenth century, particularly in the post-Reconstruction years leading up to the founding the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) in 1896, the antebellum period through the Civil War and into Reconstruction remains somewhat marginalised.<sup>26</sup> Historians and cultural literary scholars such as Hazel Carby, Carla Peterson, France Smith Foster, and Nell Irvin Painter have already done sterling work exploring women’s contributions to black intellectualism and activism in the pre-NACW era, however there is little consideration in their work of the individual women who were active at the local level.<sup>27</sup> Those already considered as black

female intellectuals of the nineteenth century such as Frances Watkins Harper and Sojourner Truth, who either lectured and/or published at the national level - are subsequently placed centre stage. This leaves other women of the era – such as the *Recorder* women – marginalised in the broader histories of African American activism and their contributions to the intellectual arenas of black life.

Black women who were writing in the mid-nineteenth century and publishing in the *Recorder* during the critical Civil War years – when ideas about race, freedom, and citizenship were being debated – had a significant impact on the cultural and political worlds of African Americans during these years and beyond through the performative power of the written word. They were, in Carla Peterson's terms 'doers of the word...[where] speaking and writing constituted a form of doing, of social action continuous with their social, political and cultural work.'<sup>28</sup> Using the benefits of their education creatively, these women sought to record their ideas and arguments in the pages of the *Recorder* and in the process, as Nellie Y. McKay has argued, demonstrate the 'close relationship between literacy and freedom,' that lay at the heart of their arguments.<sup>29</sup> The limited opportunities for African Americans to publish in the nineteenth century, most especially for black women who lacked influential white patronage, made those who published in the *Recorder* from 1861-1865 particularly ground-breaking. These women used the *Recorder* as a platform to explore critical questions of black (female) citizenship and civil rights. They were engaged in the beginnings of a national conversation that would ultimately carry long over Reconstruction and into Jim Crow and beyond. [please can you re-do the last sentence, it's a bit confusing and could be snappier.]

Yet, it was the *Recorder* women who arguably ventured forth into this brave new world of possibilities and opportunities, capturing the essence of what it might mean to be 'free'. Adapting an argument made by Wilma King about black female writers of the nineteenth century, the *Recorder* women of the Civil War years were defiantly reaching 'beyond the nexus

in their thoughts between literacy and freedom...[using] their knowledge to identify and address social problems.’<sup>30</sup> It is evident that during the Civil War years black female contributors to the *Recorder* began to write something new and different than women who had published in the *Recorder* previously. What they contributed during this era became increasingly politicised in nature, reflecting the expectant challenges that would come with freedom. Tackling the thorny issues of the place of African America in the reconstructed nation, women’s special duties to the race, the privileges of citizenship, and the role of education, these women confronted pressing political and societal issues. In the process, they arguably helped to form a model of black female activism for subsequent generations of African American women in the post-Civil War years and beyond. [not sure you need this last sentence]

**‘I repeat, I must think, I must speak, I must act’ [Laura Simmes, 1864]: The Developing Literacy Activism of Black Women in the *Recorder***

The *Recorder* had occasionally published the writings of black women in the form of short prose and poetry during the late 1850s and early 1860s. However, the paper’s publication of female writing slowly increased during the Civil War, particularly during the latter years of the conflict. More importantly however, there was also a noted change of tone in these contributions over the war years.

Initially, women ventured forth modestly, with a keen awareness of the limits placed on their ways of being in the public spaces of black cultural and political life. Notices were posted in the *Recorder* advertising moral reform associations and charitable groups founded by and for women. Although such notices were not written by women, they did serve to demonstrate black women’s participation in the public sphere and their developing political

consciousness on a local and national level. Such associations survived and thrived through a black female collective, based on notions of moral guidance, self-help, and community support.

These all-female collectives were therefore indicative of the developing sense of black women's activism in the public sphere. For example, the *Recorder* ran an advertisement on behalf of the Pennsylvania based Hope Grand Union of the Daughters of Temperance. The paper was ebullient in its approval for this 'praiseworthy society', although admitted that 'it was somewhat astonished when a Committee of Ladies' informed them of its existence and that they had been established since 1849. In closing the *Recorder* encouraged men of the city to follow the example of the *Ladies* and form a similar association. Women also proved essential in gathering financial support for the *Recorder* in terms of increasing the number of subscribers and fund-raisers. Social events organised by the 'Friends of the *Christian Recorder*,' an all-female group, were also advertised within the pages of the paper, announcing in its late April edition of 1861 the 'grand social entertainment' that would take place on 1 May which it hoped that 'all who are friends to literature, both moral and religious, will be present.'<sup>31</sup>

As the Civil War progressed black women were published more regularly in the paper perhaps, in part, because some men were prevented from contributing due to their wartime efforts. Yet, perhaps more important than the *number* of women who were seeing their work in print courtesy of the *Recorder*, the content of such pieces was increasingly politicised. Lizzie Hart's eulogy for her sister, Julia, who had died in March 1864 from neuralgia, was published in a late May edition of 1864. Recollecting her last days, Lizzie wrote of Julia's serene piety and selflessness, recounting that '[a]bout an hour before she breathed her last, she asked the Lord to send a band of angels to accompany her home.' Lizzie's tribute to her sister was accompanied by a poem she had written lamenting Julia's loss and the overwhelming grief of the Hart family.<sup>32</sup> Such notices announcing the death of a family member were not unusual in the *Recorder* and speak to the increasing importance of black newspapers in the nineteenth

century as a means of communicating across their patrons and beyond, in the process creating a community of black readers.<sup>33</sup> What is more interesting, however, is that the *Recorder* also published a second piece by Lizzie Hart in the same edition concerning her thoughts on the massacre of African American troops at Fort Pillow on 12 April 1864. Weeping with those who had suffered loss in the massacre of brothers, sons, husbands and friends at the battle, Lizzie also reminded the readers that she too had suffered loss and that to put down this ‘wicked rebellion...some of the best blood of the nation must be spilt.’ Framed by discourses of traditional gender conventions yet simultaneously stepping outside of these through the message she imparted, Lizzie Hart urged black soldiers to remember that they were fighting to preserve their manhood – ‘fight with your whole soul, mind and strength, and die rather than surrender’ - and their entitlement to citizenship. Notions of masculine privilege were evidently equated in Lizzie Hart’s mind with rights about citizenship – including suffrage - for as she reminded black soldiers: ‘you are fighting men who are enemies to you - those who are trying to destroy your manhood and rob you of your God-given rights.’<sup>34</sup>

On 30 January 1864, the *Recorder* published arguably the most significant call to literary arms for black women with Miss Laura Simmes’s piece, ‘A Fanatical Stimulant to Female Action.’ Simmes, an agent for the paper from late 1863 to mid-1864, had already written a letter to the *Recorder* in the fall of 1863, extolling the virtues of the paper for its ‘versatility of moral and religious truths...so exquisitely portrayed by your large corps of contributors.’<sup>35</sup> Within this earlier piece, Laura Simmes stressed the importance of literacy as a vital means of gaining knowledge. She argued that the *Recorder* was attentive to this in its coverage of war news, ‘which has attracted the attention of the entire nation is doing much to bring up the illiterate to that love of intelligence which will widely spread through the country a knowledge of things in general.’<sup>36</sup> Yet, her ‘Fanatical Stimulant,’ published just three months after her ‘Letter’, demonstrated a much more strident and assertive tone, grounded in notions

of female activism through the act of writing. Laura opened her piece with a rhetorical question, deliberating on whether she, a ‘poor, weak woman’ should venture to put her pen to paper to ‘trouble to the columns of your excellent paper with a few thoughts that crowd my brain?’ Laura Simmes’s opening lines were rooted in her acknowledgement of the absence of women’s active engagement in the public spheres of black intellectual life. She recognised and confirmed the expectations of ideal womanhood within the boundaries that the *Recorder*, as a middle-class Protestant publication, would expect. Yet, her subsequent arguments within this piece provided a response to this opening question, in the form of active black female agency. Simmes insisted that through their own creative endeavours, putting their thoughts into the public sphere through papers such as the *Recorder*, and participating in the intellectual cultures of the black thought, that black women could participate in the ‘deep considerate thought’ which was ‘the backbone of all of our aspirations.’ Indeed, her specific plea to black women was intended as an incitement for action beyond their traditional spheres of influence:

Come, ladies, join the throng. Let us help the brethren by voice and strength of purpose; and when we will lay aside this false modesty, that so easily besets us, we will prove that, in our own circle, they more than hope for the nation.<sup>37</sup>

Laura Simmes’s piece was probably the most overtly radical in terms of its message impelling black women to speak, think, and act in the name of the ambitions of ‘the colored race of this country...[in an] international transitional state’<sup>38</sup> However, she was in good company as regards the revolutionary message she imparted in her writing concerning the possibilities of female activism through literary means. Julia C. Collins published her essay ‘Intelligent Women’ with the *Recorder* on 4 June 1864. The third of six she would see in print with the paper from April 1864 through January 1865, Collins was the most regularly published

black woman in the *Recorder* during the Civil War.<sup>39</sup> The paper also serialised her first novel, *The Curse of Caste; or The Slave Bride*, between 25 February and 23 September 1865. As Eric Gardener notes, ‘Before Collins the *Recorder* had published no extended serialized fiction in its entire existence,’ thus Collins’ work can be defined as engaging in literary activism just from the volume of work produced and its successful publication in the black press.<sup>40</sup> Yet more importantly, and in common with her female contemporaries who published in the *Recorder* during the war years, were the themes of her work, which spoke to black women’s roles in advancing the freedoms of African Americans in the United States. ‘Intelligent Women,’ for example, named the mid-1860s as ‘the colored man’s ‘golden era,’ when the dark cloud, which for ages has enveloped in darkness the destiny of our race is rapidly revealing its silver lining.’ Collins wrote with expectant hope that ‘the time is coming, with giant strides, when the black *man* will only have to assert his equality with the white, to have it fully and cordially awarded to him.’ However, this particular piece, addressed to young black girls, encouraged them to ‘improve every opportunity that is offered for our moral and intellectual culture; not only for the pure enjoyment, and gratification it affords; not merely as a matter of taste; but it is incumbent upon us, as a duty’<sup>41</sup>

Anticipating full legal and civil equality for black men at least in the years that followed the Civil War, Collins extended this call for civil rights into the marital contract in her serialised novel *The Curse of Caste*, disavowing miscegenation laws and championing marriage as something that all *citizens* of the United States should have the right to participate in, no matter the racial heritage of either partner. *Curse of Caste* provided a narrative that spoke to the traumas of broken bloodlines and its consequences for the stability of the African American family. Yet, moving the narrative arc away from a much more familiar trope of the tragic mulatta featured in previous publications of both white and black abolitionists, *Curse of Caste* voiced the possibilities of interracial reconciliation in the post-emancipation South and



progressive ideas around African American citizenship by means of the mulatta protagonist in the novel, *Claire Neville*.<sup>42</sup>

Collins's novel centres on Claire, the biracial daughter of the enslaved octoroon, Lina, and the slaveholder's son, Richard Tracy. Claire is raised in the North, believing herself to be an orphan, after the death of her mother in childbirth and the absence (and assumed death) of her father. Brought up under the guardianship of African American housekeeper, Juno, Claire's father, Richard, is informed by a corrupt associate that both mother and daughter had died in childbirth. Juno refuses to tell Claire the truth of her family history and parentage, including that her mother was enslaved and that her father had married across the colour line. Meanwhile, the Tracy household is haunted by the filicidal conflict between father and son, as a distraught and bereaved Richard attempts to escape his grief by fleeing to Europe to reside with an uncle there. Unbeknown to him, Claire lives a relatively modest life, graduating from a Northern seminary and subsequently serving as a governess to the Tracy family of New Orleans, unaware of the ties that already bind them together. While resident at the Tracy home, Colonel Tracy, Richard's father and the family patriarch, is struck by Claire's likeness to his estranged son, Richard, and from there the family mystery unravels.

Collins' *Curse of Caste* presents a very different narrative to that which was used by other authors of the period, placing agency with the mulatta character, Claire Neville, and subsequently allowing Collins to voice her ideas relating to progressive black politics.<sup>43</sup> Her vision for the future of African Americans within the reconstructed United States was symbolised through the biracial protagonist of her novel, significantly embodied by a young mulatta woman rather than a man. As *Curse of Caste* and many of her shorter *Recorder* essays demonstrate, Collins's hope for the future lay in fulfilling ambitions of citizenship and equality for African American. Key to this, however, was the role that young black women would play in educating their families and communities on moral and intellectual improvement. It is no

coincidence that Claire Neville, like Collins herself, was an educator: the fictional governess of *Curse of Caste* thus mirrored the ideals of moral nurturance and intellectual growth that Collins, as a school teacher, mother, and wife promoted through her published work in the *Recorder*.

**‘We are almost Persuaded to Speak [o]n Behalf of Women’s Rights’ [Amanda Turpin, 1865]: Championing the Influence of Women.**

Despite its progressive black politics, Collins’s ‘Intelligent Women’ remained within a framework of women being duty-bound by a higher authority to fulfil their sacred roles as wives and mothers. Indeed, as Collins wrote, ‘[i]t is women’s province to make home happy, to be man’s companion...to be the mother, and instructor of his children... render herself worthy to fulfill (sic) the sacred office of wife and mother.’<sup>44</sup> The special role that women held in the black family - as care-givers, nurturers, and subsequent teachers of moral, religious, and secular life - awarded them particular social responsibilities. This was a theme that many black women developed through their pieces for the *Recorder* during the war years. Amanda Turpin, the wife of the conservative AME minister, Nelson Turpin, of Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and associate of Julia C. Collins published two pieces in the *Recorder* over the space of a few months. Both intimately linked the duties of womanhood to the blessed roles of wife and mother as educators and in the process stressed the enormity of power that this commanded. ‘The Character of a Wife,’ Amanda’s first submission, published on 6 August 1864, echoed the public expectations of a minister’s wife while also hinting at the influence women held within the family circle. Her short piece opened with an image of a meek and submissive woman as an ideal wife: ‘A good wife is one who, ever mindful of the contract which she has entered into, is strictly and conscientiously virtuous, constant and faithful to her husband, chaste, pure, and unblemished in every thought, word, and deed.’ Yet, Turpin’s piece also demonstrates the

beginnings of her thinking about black female empowerment through their accorded roles as moral guardians of the family:

She it is who stamps the first impression upon the young mind of the tender offspring; that impression which time, though it may furrow the cheek, can never erase from its memory. 'She openeth her mouth,' says Solomon, 'with wisdom, and in her tongue, is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness; her children rise up and call her blessed - her husband also - and he praiseth her.'<sup>45</sup>

Her second piece for the *Recorder*, 'Female Influence,' published on 20 August 1864, signalled an emboldened tone as regards women's power and rights within the contours of the black public sphere. Asking the *Recorder's* readers to question women's current inferior roles in life, Amanda advanced the idea that 'surely the female must have been created for some greater and more eminent position than she has yet attained. There is nothing the female undertakes, no matter how difficult, that she does not by some means perform.' Acknowledging the work that remained to be done, however, in order to truly emancipate their race, Amanda called on all black women, educated or not, 'to rally to a post of duty, and help burst open the dark prison-doors of ignorance, that the light of intelligence, mental and moral improvement, may break forth and shine into the minds of our once down-trodden and oppressed, but now freed race.'<sup>46</sup>

Scholarly evaluation of Amanda Turpin's *Recorder* essays is limited. William L. Andrews and Mitch Kachun's negative assessment deems her contributions as extremely conservative, 'short and unremarkable.' Eric Gardner's more sympathetic analysis, however, suggests, 'Amanda Turpin – like Julia C. Collins – may have been more independent and more interested in women's self-sufficiency than previously thought.'<sup>47</sup> Both evaluations compare

Amanda's work to Julia's in isolation from the other women contributing to the *Recorder* during these vital years. Both consequently fail to consider Amanda and Julia as part of a growing collective literary community of black women writers publishing in the *Recorder* during the Civil War years, and the impact this had on the black women's activism in during Reconstruction and beyond.

Such contributors included Mrs R. A. Jackson, who penned a piece published in January 1862 concerning 'Women's Influence over Men.' Keeping within the boundaries of AME ideals regarding womanhood, she advanced the argument that women held power over men's hearts, most particularly in maintaining his self-respect: 'To the formation of manly character, the love and reverence of the virtuous feminine character is essential.'<sup>48</sup> 'Sallie,' who published her short essay titled, 'Woman' on 25 June 1864, again extolled the especial virtues of women and their contribution to the public good through acts of piety and selflessness: 'in a thousand ways does she contribute to the welfare and happiness of her nation, by the continued practice of those acts of patience and self-denial, which man, how much soever strength he may glory in, is incapable of performing.'<sup>49</sup> While both of these pieces are framed by discourses of ideal womanhood, as many other contributions were including Amanda Turpin's and Julia C. Collins's, their radicalism lies in the act of writing about effecting political and social transformation – albeit through influencing their husbands and sons. Far from the conservatism that previous scholars have assigned to these women their words entered a very public conversation at a vital juncture of black history.

The Civil War and the impending end of slavery made arguments for citizenship rights more immediate and gave the moral imperative of black women much more urgency. Miss Annie M. Smith wrote to the *Recorder* in early December 1864, urging young women to 'lay aside the novel, and those musings which have a tendency to produce evil, and say within yourselves, 'I will act and perform my duties with all earnestness', for there is a work for each

and every one.’ Annie expressed concern that young ladies were neglecting their duties of care towards the enslaved and coloured regiments fighting for black freedoms, ‘who were often crying with hunger and cold, while others are sick and dying.’ The duties of young black women, according to Annie M. Smith, should focus in particular on the needs of the formerly enslaved, who would require the support of the free colored population in order to survive this brave new world of freedom. She encouraged young women to take up their sewing needles ‘and make clothing for the needy.’ More significantly perhaps, she also advised that ‘For those who are educated, [to] teach the illiterate’<sup>50</sup> This theme of women as educators of the race, in connection to moral and intellectual uplift, was a recurrent theme in many of the pieces that women contributed to the paper. This was especially true in the last few years of the Civil War, when questions regarding civil rights and privileges of citizenship were intimately connected to impending freedom.

**‘Next to Liberty is the Acquisition of Useful Knowledge’ [Lizzie Hart, 1865]: The Importance of Education towards Racial Uplift.**

The most important female attribute reflected in black women’s writings for the *Recorder* during the War years, then, was the vital link between them as educators, both morally and intellectually, and the project of racial uplift. Maria Stewart, probably the first black feminist to stand on the platform of intersectionality in relation to race and gender, was also one of the first black women to recognise the links between education and racial uplift. During the 1830s her arguments focussed on the distinctive role that black women should play as teachers of the race. Stewart advocated that this education should begin within their own domestic circle and would eventually benefit the entire coloured nation in the United States. In her ‘Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality, the Sure Foundation on Which We Must Build,’ (1831) parts of her address were clearly directed towards black women, asking them to:

‘awake! awake! arise! no longer sleep nor slumber, but distinguish yourselves. Show forth to the world that ye are endowed with noble and exalted faculties. O, ye daughters of Africa! what have ye done to immortalize your names beyond the grave? What examples have ye set before the rising generation? What foundation have ye laid for generation yet unborn?’<sup>51</sup>

Black women would take up Stewart’s call during the 1830s, and promote her message championing the moral and intellectual improvement of the African American nation as the work of black women. Black female literary societies of the era in particular encouraged women to use their role as moral guardians to impart principles of morality, respectability, and piety to their children and others within the populace. Indeed, as Julie Winch has argued, ‘Central to the decision of these women to organize literary societies was a sense of their responsibility to the entire black population of the United States.’<sup>52</sup>

Annie Smith’s ‘Letter from Xenia’ cited above is a more direct call to free black women to offer practical support to the formally enslaved. This was hardly a surprise given the time of her writing, in the closing few months of the Civil War, and the developing crisis that presented itself in the form of 4,000,000 freedpeople, destitute and possibly starving, sick, and without shelter. What is interesting about Annie’s piece in relation to education is that she addressed young black women, in particular, as the moral and intellectual gatekeepers of the race. More direct arguments, centring on women’s responsibilities for racial uplift of the entire African American nation, were also published alongside pieces such as Annie’s. These had a much more explicit focus on black women’s role as ‘race mothers’. Wilma King has connected this concept to the arguments of Maria Stewart, placing it as analogous to the ideal of the revolutionary-era ‘Republican Mother’ which ‘reverberated among many white women who

believed their patriotic duty was to prepare sons for citizenship.’<sup>53</sup> Black women writing for the *Recorder* in the Civil War era were, then, employing the already established discourse of ‘race mothers’ to further the call for women’s unique virtues to be put to good use, particularly in terms of educating the sons and daughters of the black race.

As already discussed, women such as Amanda Turpin and Laura Simmes wrote explicitly on the roles of women as moral and intellectual educators of the black race during the war years. One woman who was especially keen to promote this theme in the *Recorder* was Julia C. Collins. All of Collins’s work published in the *Recorder* spoke in some way to the values of education in relation to demonstrating one’s claims to the privileges of citizenship and the project of racial uplift. Writing as a black female school teacher and given the content of her previously discussed essay, ‘Intelligent Women,’ it is likely that the intended audience for Collins in terms of the *Recorder*’s readership were young black women. Indeed, that her serialised novel, *The Curse of Caste*, had its young black female protagonist, Claire Neville, take up the role of governess to children of a white slaveholding family spoke volumes about Collins’s faith in the role of education to bring about racial harmony in the aftermath of conflict.<sup>54</sup>

Making her publishing debut on 16 April 1864 with her essay ‘Mental Improvement,’ Collins questioned the ideologies of racial inferiority in relation to intelligence arguing that ‘We are [all] born with faculties and power, capable of almost anything.’ While she did impress on her readers the challenges of developing one’s capacity for thought and reflection, she also reminded them that ‘A mind well stored and well cultivated, is certainly conducive to true happiness.’ Invoking the words of the eighteenth-century English poet, Alexander Pope, she subsequently declared that ‘Happiness...is truly ‘our being’s end and aim!’ She called for increased literacy among her race in this first essay,

especially the ‘art of reading,’ which to Collins resulted in the ‘improvement of the mind...the cultivation and purity of taste and the acquisition of knowledge.’<sup>55</sup>

While education was a key feature of all her published pieces, and a crucial message for other black women who wrote for the *Recorder* during these years, enslaved black people in the southern states were largely denied even the most basic rights of learning. During the antebellum era, laws had been passed throughout many of the slaveholding states that made it illegal to teach enslaved people to read and write. In the wake of the Emancipation proclamation and Union occupation of parts of the Confederacy, however, African American schools were established in places like Louisiana and South Carolina to begin providing education to mostly illiterate slave children. At the end of the Civil War with Union victory and the abolition of slavery via the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, schools were established throughout the South and northerners, mostly women, white and black, journeyed to the former Confederacy to take up positions as school teachers to both children and adults who had formerly been enslaved. If Collins had survived the Civil War, it is highly possible that she would have taken up a teaching role in one of the freedmen’s schools in light of her commitment to teaching and the joy it gave her.<sup>56</sup>

This was made especially evident in her second published essay, ‘School Teaching’, published in the *Recorder* on 7 May 1864. Within the essay, Collins provided instruction on how to be an effective teacher which, although bound with duty and replete with somewhat routine tasks, was, in Collins’ opinion, a rewarding occupation. She suggested that the two qualities that were fundamental to the role of school teaching were tact and patience, for ‘[T]he affection of your pupil once gained, you have their interest in every scheme for their improvement and advantage.’ Nevertheless, while she recommended being ‘kind and gentle in your rule’, she suggested that teachers also be ‘firm, and even severe when the faithful discharge of your duty requires it.’ Placing the role of education squarely on women’s



shoulders, Collins criticized mothers who ‘allow a child to grow to the age of six or seven without learning its letters, because they have not time, or its too much trouble.’ Collins here situates her essay within a larger discourse of black women as ‘race mothers,’ stressing their incumbent duty to educate their children in order that they be better prepared for the duties that would come with full citizenship.

### **Conclusion: Yours for the Education of My Race [Lizzie Hart, 1865]**

Then I would say to the freedmen, Let me beseech you, by all the ties that bind you to a common country, seek to acquire an education. It is a friend that will never desert you - no clime can alienate it, no despotism enslave.<sup>57</sup>

At war’s end, in the early years of Reconstruction, the imperative of education for racial uplift was promoted with increased enthusiasm through the pages of the *Recorder*. Lizzie Hart’s ‘Letter from Morrow’ was written with a dedicated message of insistence that if ‘we work upon the immortal mind, - if we infuse into it high principles and a right fear of God, we engrave on tablets over which time has no power.’<sup>58</sup>

Alongside other black women who wrote for the *Recorder* during these years, Lizzie Hart was writing to and for an enlarged black public sphere. She, and other black female contributors, joined a growing minority of black women in the Civil War era who actively contributed to the intellectual arena of the period. The developing literary activism of black women examined here confirms their influence on the public platforms of Reconstruction and beyond. Many other black women went on to claim a voice in the intellectual arenas of black life in the immediate post-Civil War era, those published in the *Recorder* setting something of a precedent. The famed black novelist Frances E. W. Harper, for example, had one of her

first novels, *Minnie's Sacrifice*, serialised in the pages of the *Recorder* in 1869, following in the footsteps of Julia C. Collins.<sup>59</sup>

The power of words – written or spoken - and their ability to effect social and political transformation through resistance should never be underestimated. These *Recorder* women wrote with expectant promise for the future. Yet they could not have realised the power of the words they wrote by candlelight after long days of emotional and often physical labour caring for their families and going about their daily work lives. While they hoped that others would at least read their *Recorder* pieces, they could not have known the influence their letters, essays, and stories would have on other black women of the time and thereafter. While black women's voices were muted more widely in the nineteenth century, the *Recorder* women knew their relative powerlessness in a racially ordered patriarchal society. They resisted this through their literary activism. By writing their voices into a pivotal historical moment they claimed their right to speak and engage in a public conversation concerning black freedoms and citizenship that would continue well after the Civil War. Collectively claiming their place in the early black intellectual movement, these women's words had influence beyond the limits of the nineteenth century and the conservatism of the AME and the *Christian Recorder*. Their words would be carried forward by black women such as Anna Julia Cooper, Frances E. W. Harper, and Ida B. Wells, standing on a platform of black feminist thought in the late nineteenth century. These women lived out their lives in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, adhering to *Recorder* women's advice for politicised radical activity laid down in the Civil War era: must speak; must think; must act.

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<sup>1</sup> See Eric Gardner, *Black Print Unbound: The Christian Recorder, African American Literature and Periodical Culture*. New York and Oxford, UK., Oxford University Press, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Christian Recorder, Two Years,’ *Christian Recorder*, 3 January 1863, accessed through *Accessible Archives* <http://www.accessible-archives.com/> (30 June 2017).

<sup>3</sup> See for example Frances Smith Foster, *Written by Herself: Literary Production by African American Women, 1746-1892*. (Somerset, NJ., Wiley, 1993); Carla Peterson, ‘Doers of the Word’: *African American Speakers & Writers in the North (1830-1880)*. (New Brunswick, NJ., and London: Rutgers University Press, 1998); Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol*. (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1998); Jean Fagin Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs: A Life*. (New York: Basic Books, 2005); Xiomara Santamarina, *Belabored Professions: Narratives of African American Working Womanhood*. (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Wilma King, *The Essence of Liberty: Free Black Women During the Slave Era*. (Columbia, MO., and London: University of Missouri Press, 2008); Teresa Zackodnik, *Press, Platform, Pulpit: Black Feminist Politics in the Era of Reform*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Frances Smith Foster, ‘A Narrative of the Interesting and (Somewhat) Surprising Developments of African-American Print Culture,’ *American Literary History* 17:4 (Winter 2005), pp.714-740: 716.

<sup>5</sup> Clarence E. Walker, *Rock in a Weary Land: The African American Methodist Episcopal Church During the Civil War and Reconstruction*. (Baton Rouge, La., Louisiana 1982), 15.

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<sup>6</sup> Catherine E. Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy: For the Use of Young Ladies at Home and School*. (Boston: T.H. Webb & Co, 1842); Horace Bushnell, *Christian Nurture*. (Hartford: Edwin Hunt, 1861).

<sup>7</sup> Miss R. A. Jackson, 'Woman's Influence Over Man,' *Christian Recorder*, Jan 18 1862, accessed through *Accessible Archives* <http://www.accessible-archives.com/> (2 July 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Unnamed author, 'Love Wins Love,' *Christian Recorder*, 30 March 1861 accessed through *Accessible Archives* <http://www.accessible-archives.com/> (2 July 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Jualynne E. Dodson, *Engendering Church: Women, Power and the AME Church*. (New York and Oxford: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2002), p2, p33

<sup>10</sup> Gardner, *Black Print* Unbound, p119, p112.

<sup>11</sup> Mitch Kachun, 'Interrogating the Silences: Julia C. Collins, 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Black Readers and the 'Christian Recorder'. *African American Review* 40:4, 'The Curse of Caste' (Winter 2006), pp.649-659: 649.

<sup>12</sup> Stephanie Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*. (Chapel Hill, NC., and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), p.95.

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<sup>13</sup> For an analysis of what is known about Julia C. Collin's life before her premature death in November 1865 see Gardner, *Black Print Unbound*, chp. 8, 'Black (Women's) Fortunes and *The Curse of Caste*, esp. pp.226-pp236 and William L. Andrews and Mitch Kachun, ed., *The Curse of Caste; or The Slave Bride. A Rediscovered African American Novel by Julia C. Collins*. 'Reconstructing Julia C. Collin's Life and Community,' pp. xix – xxxviii.

<sup>14</sup> Mitch Kachun, 'Interrogating the Silences,' p.649.

<sup>15</sup> Andrews and Kachun, ed., *The Curse of Caste*, pp. xxxv-xxxvi; Sojourner Truth and Olive Gilbert. 1850. *Narrative of Sojourner Truth, A Northern Slave, Emancipated from Bodily Servitude by the State of New York in 1828*. Documenting the American South. University Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2000.

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/truth50/truth50.html>; Harriet Wilson. 1859. *Our Nig, or Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, in a Two Story White House, North showing that Slavery's Shadows Fall Even There*. London and New York: Penguin Books, 2005; Harriet A. Jacobs. 1861. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Written by Herself*. Documenting the American South. University Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. 2003.

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html>

<sup>16</sup> Veta Smith Tucker, 'Reclaiming Julia C. Collins: Forgotten 19<sup>th</sup>-Century African American Author,' *African American Review* 40:4, 'The Curse of Caste' (Winter 2006), pp. 623-30: 623.

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<sup>17</sup> Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994, p. xi.

<sup>18</sup> Gregory D. Smithers, “‘All the Science and Learning’: Black Intellectual History in the United States,” in Brian D. Behnken, Gregory D. Smithers, and Simon Wendell, eds., *Black Intellectual Thought in Modern America: A Historical Perspective*. Jackson, Miss., University Press of Mississippi, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Said, *Representations*, p.12

<sup>20</sup> Mia Ray, Farah J. Griffin, Martha S. Jones and Barbara D. Savage. eds., *Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women*. (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 1. See Part II ‘Race and Gender in the Postemancipation Era’ (pp.75-194) for a focus on nineteenth-century black female intellectuals.

<sup>21</sup> Teresa Zackodnik, *Press, Platform, Pulpit*, p. xxxv. The idea of championing the cause of black civil rights has, in recent years, been dislodged from its previous twentieth-century mooring in the intellectual work of scholars. So, too, has the work of black women within these nineteenth-century movements begun to be recognized. See for example Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Frances Smith Foster. ed., *A Brighter Coming Day: A Francis Ellen Watkins Reader*. (New York: Feminist Press CUNY, 1989); Carla Peterson, ‘Doers of the Word’; Claudia Tate, *Domestic Allegories of Political Desire: The Black Heroine’s Text at the Turn of the Century*. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Frances Smith Foster, *Written by Herself: Literary Production by African American Women, 1746-1892*. (Somerset, NJ., Wiley, 1993); Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol*. (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1998);

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Xiomara Santamarina, *Belabored Professions: Narratives of African American Working Womanhood*. (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Zackodnik, *Press, Platform, Pulpit*.

<sup>22</sup> Shirley Wilson Logan, *We Are Coming: The Persuasive Discourse of Nineteenth-Century Black Women*. (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1999), 127.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Martha S. Jones, *All Bound Up Together: The Woman Question in African American Public Culture, 1830-1900*. (Chapel Hill, N. Car., and London, 2007), 4-5.

<sup>25</sup> Ray et al, *Toward an Intellectual History*, 2.

<sup>26</sup> For a further discussion of this see the Introduction of Zackodnik, *Press, Platform, Pulpit*,

<sup>27</sup> Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood*; Foster, *Brighter Coming Day*; Peterson, *Doers of the Word*; Painter, *Sojourner Truth*.

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<sup>28</sup> Peterson, *Doers of the Word*, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Cited in King, *The Essence of Liberty*, p.109.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 111.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Daughters of Temperance,’ and Notice, *Christian Recorder*, 20 April 1861, accessed via Accessible Archives (18<sup>th</sup> July 2017)

<sup>32</sup> Lizzie Hart, ‘For the Christian Recorder,’ *Christian Recorder*, 25 May 1864, accessed via Accessible Archives (2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017).

<sup>33</sup> See Gardener, *Black Print Unbound* for a more detailed exploration of the concept of the *Recorder* and a community of Black Readership, esp., Chp 5, ‘We are in the World: Reading the *Recorder* in the Civil War Era,’ pp. 135-165.

<sup>34</sup> Lizzie Hart, ‘For the Christian Recorder,’ *Christian Recorder*, 25 May 1864, accessed via Accessible Archives (2 July 2017).

<sup>35</sup> Laura Simmes, ‘Letter to the Editor,’ *Christian Recorder*, 7 November 1863, accessed via Accessible Archives (9<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid



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<sup>37</sup> Laura Simmes, 'A Fanatical Stimulant to Female Action,' *Christian Recorder*, 30 January 1864. accessed via Accessible Archives (9<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Julia C. Collins's six essays for the *Recorder* included, 'Mental Improvement,' *Christian Recorder*, 16 April 1864; 'School Teaching,' *Christian Recorder*, 7 May 1864; 'Intelligent Women,' *Christian Recorder*, 4 June 1864; 'A Letter from Oswego: Originality of Ideas,' *Christian Recorder*, 4, 10 December 1864; 'Life is Earnest,' *Christian Recorder*, 7 January 1865; and 'Memory and Imagination,' *Christian Recorder*, January 28<sup>th</sup> 1865.

<sup>40</sup>Gardner, *Black Print Unbound*, p 226.

<sup>41</sup> Julia C. Collins, 'Intelligent Women,' *Christian Recorder*, 4 June 1864, accessed via Accessible Archives (8<sup>th</sup> April 2014) - my emphasis.

<sup>42</sup> The term 'mulatto' has been historically used in the United States as a means to racially classify individuals. It was originally used to refer to those who were biracial (one parent of black African descent and the other of white). However, in the later period of the antebellum era, the term was generalised to mean all children born of an interracial relationship between those of black African and white heritage.

<sup>43</sup> For comparisons see Lydia Marie Childs, 'The Quadroons' (1842) and 'Slavery's Pleasant Homes' (1843) *The Online Archive of Nineteenth Century U.S. Women's Writing*, <http://www.facstaff.bucknell.edu/gcarr/19cUSWW/> (accessed 9 July 2015). For other

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examples of abolitionist texts featuring the ‘tragic mulatta’ character, see Richard Hildreth, *The Slave; or Memoirs of Archy Moore* (1836) Two Volumes, Boston: John H. Eastburn, sourced at *Uncle Tom’s Cabin and American Culture: A Multi Media Archive* directed by Stephen Railton, [www.utc.iath.virginia.edu](http://www.utc.iath.virginia.edu); Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin; or Life among the Lowly*. (1853) (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); William Wells Brown. 1853. ‘*Clotel; or The Presidents Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States by William Wells Brown, a Fugitive Slave, Author of ‘Three Years in Europe. With a Sketch of the Author’s Life.* Documenting the American South. University Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2004, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/brown/brown.html>

<sup>44</sup> Julia C. Collins, ‘Intelligent Women,’ *Christian Recorder*, 4 June 1864, accessed via Accessible Archives (8<sup>th</sup> April 2014).

<sup>45</sup> Amanda Turpin, ‘The Character of a Wife,’ *Christian Recorder*, 6 August 1864, accessed via Accessible Archives (1<sup>st</sup> July 2017)

<sup>46</sup> Amanda Turpin, ‘Female Influence,’ *Christian Recorder*, 20 August 1864, accessed via Accessible Archives (1<sup>st</sup> July 2017).

<sup>47</sup> Andrews and Kachun, *Curse of Caste*, p. xxv; Gardner, *Black Print Unbound*, p.235

<sup>48</sup> Miss. R. A. Jackson, ‘Woman’s Influence over Man,’ *Christian Recorder*, 18 January 1862, accessed via Accessible Archives (2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017).

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<sup>49</sup> Sallie, 'Woman,' *Christian Recorder*, 25 June 1864, accessed via Accessible Archives (4<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

<sup>50</sup> Annie M. Smith, 'Letter from Xenia,' *Christian Recorder*, 3 December 1864, accessed via Accessible Archives (30<sup>th</sup> June 2017)

<sup>51</sup> Marilyn Richardson, ed., *Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer: Essays and Speeches*. (NJ., John Wiley & Sons, 1987), pp. 30-31.

<sup>52</sup> Julie Winch, ' 'You have Talents - Only Cultivate Them: Philadelphia's Black Female Literary Societies and the Abolitionist Crusade,' in Jean Fagin Yellin and John C, Van Horne, eds., *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994, pp.101-118, p.108.

<sup>53</sup> King, *Essence of Liberty*, p.91

<sup>54</sup> See Julia C. Collins, *Curse of Caste; of the Slave Bride*. *Christian Recorder*, 25 February – 23 September 1865, accessed via Accessible Archives (2/4/2014)

<sup>55</sup> Collins, 'Mental Improvement' *Christian Recorder* 16 April 1864 accessed via Accessible Archive (8<sup>th</sup> April 2014). See Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man* (1733-34), epistle 4, ln 1.

<sup>56</sup> See for example Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Freedom and Slavery*. (Chapel Hill, NC., and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Kay Ann Taylor, 'Mary S. Peake and Charlotte L. Forten: Black Teachers during the Civil War and Reconstruction,' *Journal of Negro Education*, 74:2 (Spring 2005), pp.124-137;

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Heather Andrea Williams, ‘ ‘Clothing Themselves in Intelligence’: The Freedpeople, Schooling, and Northern Teachers, 1861-1871,’ *Journal of African American History*, 87, New Perspective on African American Educational History (Autumn 2002), pp. 372-389; Mary Niall Mitchell, ‘ ‘Rosebloom and Pure White’ or so it Seemed,’ *American Quarterly*, 54:3 (Sep 2002), pp.369-410.

<sup>57</sup> Lizzie Hart, ‘Letter from Morrow,’ *Christian Recorder*. 30 December 1865, accessed via Accessible Archives (3<sup>rd</sup> June 2017)

<sup>58</sup> Ibid

<sup>59</sup> See Frances Smith Foster. ed., *Minnie’s Sacrifice, Sowing and Reaping, Trial and Triumph: Three Rediscovered Novels*. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1995).