

# PROFILES IN LEADERSHIP

FROM 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

EDUCATORS  
JOURNALISTS



# INTRODUCTION TO PROFILES IN LEADERSHIP

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CENTURY

EDUCATORS AND  
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Black history is American history and should represent blacks' contributions in every American history milestone.

- The desire and need for slaves to learn to read and write were so great that they risked grave punishment to learn to do so. A rapid succession of educated black leaders made great accomplishments and paved the way for others to follow.
- YAAHA highlights some of these trailblazers for the Profiles in Leadership series to honor African Americans' contributions to American history.



# FRANCES ELLEN WATKINS HARPER

## 1825-1911

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was born to free African American parents.

Frances was well-known in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as an abolitionist, poet, teacher, lecturer, suffragist, and devoted to the antislavery cause.

She was considered “the mother of African American journalism.”

Harper was the co-founder of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs.

In 1946, she wrote her first published book of poetry, ***Forest Leaves***.

She was the first woman instructor at Union Seminary.

Harper began writing in antislavery newspapers such as *The Liberator* and Frederick Douglass’ newspapers.



# SARAH JANE WOODSON EARLY

## 1825 - 1907

Sarah was born to free African American parents in Chillicothe, Ohio in 1825.

Her family moved to the free state of Ohio in 1821 and established the first black Methodist church west of the Alleghenies.

Early enrolled at Oberlin College in 1852 and graduated in 1856 with a bachelor's degree to teach English and Latin.

Upon graduation, she was hired at Wilberforce University as the first African American to teach English.

She was a teacher for thirty-six years as well as a school principal.

In 1868, she gave speeches to encourage others to follow in her steps to choose careers in education.



# FANNIE JACKSON COPPIN

1837-1913

Fannie Jackson Coppin was born as a slave in 1837.

She was determined to get an education and enrolled in Rhode Island State Normal School.

In 1860, Fannie entered Oberlin College, one of the first colleges to open its doors to blacks.

After graduation in 1865, she taught Latin, Greek and math at the Institute for Colored Youth in Philadelphia.

Coppin was an innovative teacher and became principal of the Institute in 1869; she started a practice-teaching system and an industrial training department that offered ten trade trainings.





## **CHARLOTTE FORTEN GRIMKE 1837-1914**

Charlotte was an antislavery activist, poet, and educator.

She grew up in a prominent abolitionist family in Philadelphia and was a major member and financial supporter of the movement.

She believed “with equal chances blacks could achieve what white women could do.”

Grimke went south to educate boys and girls in South Carolina.



# FRANKIE E. HARRIS WASSOM

## 1850 - 1933

Frankie was born in Monroe, Michigan in 1850, but was raised in Oberlin, Ohio.

Her parents were involved with the Underground Railroad.

Frankie went to Oberlin College and graduated in 1870.

She spent a total of 54 years in teaching which included two faculty positions at black colleges.

She was a principal at a school in Tennessee, taught at Lincoln Institute in Kansas, and published her first book of poetry in 1886.





## **DELLA IRVING HAYDEN 1851-1924**

Della Irving Hayden was an African American educator who was born into slavery.

She graduated from what is now known as Hampton University in 1877.

As an educator, she served as a teacher and principal in Franklin.

Founded Franklin Normal and Industrial Institute in Virginia in 1904.





## BOOKER T. WASHINGTON 1856-1915

Booker was born into slavery in Franklin County, Virginia in 1856.

He was one of the most influential speakers of his time.

Booker was principal of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute at the age of 25. He hired George Washington Carver to teach agriculture at Tuskegee.

Washington founded the National Negro Business League and wrote the book, *The Negro In Business*.

He is also the author of *Up From Slavery*, *The Story of the Negro*, *My Larger Education*, and *The Man Farthest Down*.





## ROSA D. BOWSER 1859 - 1941

Rosa was the first black teacher hired in Richmond, Virginia.

She organized the Virginia Teachers' Reading Circle that became the Virginia State Teachers Association.

Bowser worked to reform conditions for blacks, started industrial schools, supported women suffrage, publicly opposed lynching and racial segregation.

She was a correspondent for *The Women's Era*.





## LUCY WILMOT SMITH 1861 - 1889

Lucy Wilmot Smith was a writer, educator, historian, editor, suffragist, and journalist.

In 1884, she became a journalist for the ***American Baptist***, and later became its editor.

She was also the secretary of the W.C.T.U. (Women's Christian Temperance Union.)



# MARY V. COOK PARISH

1862 - 1945

Mary Cook Parish was an educator and professor at Kentucky Baptist College.

She was a journalist for ***The American Baptist*** and wrote about equal rights in the areas of employment and education, social and political reform, women's suffrage, and the importance of religion and Christian education.

Parish was the founder of National Baptist Women's Convention in 1900.

She was also the editor of an African American Baptist magazine, ***Our Women and Children***.





## LAVINIA B. SNEED 1867-1932

Lavinia graduated as valedictorian of the class of 1887 from the State University in Kentucky.

She was a gifted educator and journalist who contributed to magazines such as ***Our Women and Children***.

She was the principal of the Georgia Moore Colored School and the Phillis Wheatly School.





## JULIA RINGWOOD COSTON

Julia was a journalist from Cleveland, Ohio.

Coston noticed that white journals ignored black interests, so she started a very popular journal for black women.

She was the editor of ***Ringwood's Afro-American Journal of Fashion***. The journal contained editorials, advice on homemaking, etiquette and fashion.



# SUMMARY

*“Knowledge makes a man unfit to be a slave.”* Frederick Douglass

- Teaching black slaves to read was against the law in the South. Constraining black education helped to quell slave rebellions and kept slaves on the plantations. Quakers, missionaries, whites and blacks risked their lives to help slaves escape their masters and teach them to read.
- The early 1800s produced numerous educators and journalists, who used their pens as swords, educated themselves to become elementary teachers. Many of the teachers went to Oberlin College, established in 1833, that regularly admitted black students in 1835. Another Ohio school, Wilberforce University (1856) also opened its doors to blacks.
- YAAHA is proud to share these **Profiles in Leadership** to illustrate that there is no self without knowledge of history.

