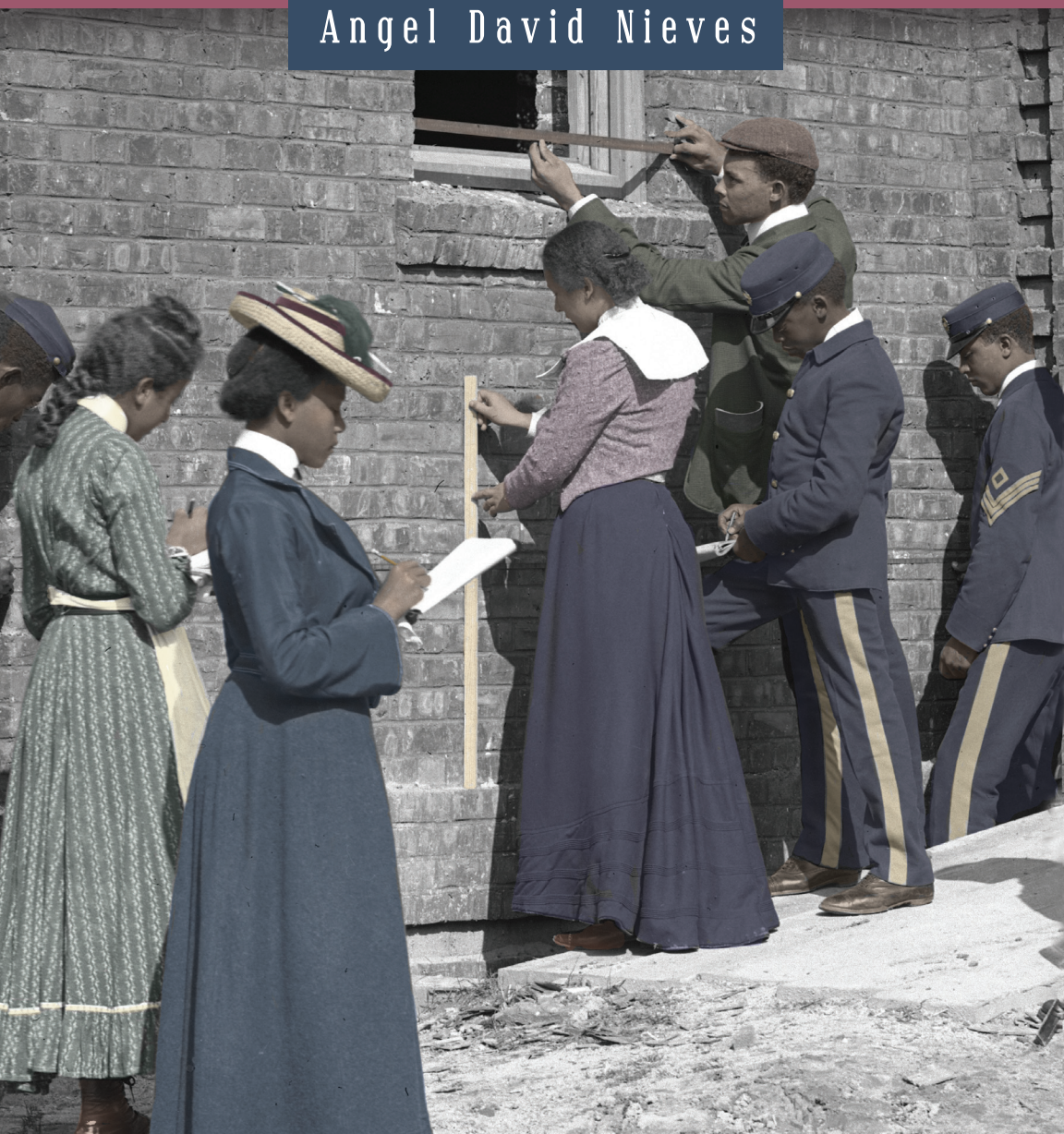


AN ARCHITECTURE OF EDUCATION

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN DESIGN THE NEW SOUTH

Angel David Nieves



An Architecture of Education

Gender and Race in American History

Alison M. Parker, The College at Brockport, State University of New York
Carol Faulkner, Syracuse University

The Men and Women We Want

Jeanne D. Petit

Manhood Enslaved:

Bondmen in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century New Jersey

Kenneth E. Marshall

Interconnections:

Gender and Race in American History

Edited by Carol Faulkner and Alison M. Parker

Susan B. Anthony and the Struggle for Equal Rights

Edited by Christine L. Ridarsky and Mary M. Huth

The Reverend Jennie Johnson

and African Canadian History, 1868–1967

Nina Reid-Maroney

Sex Ed, Segregated:

The Quest for Sexual Knowledge in Progressive-Era America

Courtney Q. Shah

An Architecture of Education:

African American Women Design the New South

Angel David Nieves

An Architecture of Education

*African American Women
Design the New South*

Angel David Nieves



UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER PRESS

The University of Rochester Press gratefully acknowledges generous support from Hamilton College.

Copyright © 2018 by Angel David Nieves

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under current legislation, no part of this work may be photocopied, stored in a retrieval system, published, performed in public, adapted, broadcast, transmitted, recorded, or reproduced in any form or by any means, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

First published 2018

University of Rochester Press
668 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620, USA
www.urpress.com
and Boydell & Brewer Limited
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK
www.boydellandbrewer.com

ISBN-13: 978-1-58046-909-8

ISSN: 2152-6400

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Nieves, Angel David, author.

Title: An architecture of education : African American women design the new South / Angel David Nieves.

Other titles: Gender and race in American history.

Description: Rochester, NY : University of Rochester Press, 2018. | Series: Gender and race in American history, ISSN 2152-6400 ; v. 7 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018014789 | ISBN 9781580469098 (hardcover : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: African Americans—Education—Southern States—History. | Institution building—Southern States—History. | School facilities—Southern States—History. | African American educators—Southern States—History. | African American social reformers—Southern States—History. | African American women—Southern States—History.

Classification: LCC LC2802.S9 N55 2018 | DDC 371.829/96075—dc23 LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018014789>

This publication is printed on acid-free paper.

Printed in the United States of America.

Cover image: Students at Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama, ca. 1902–6. Courtesy of the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Photographer: Frances Benjamin Johnston.

For Richard

Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
Introduction	1
1 Contested Monument-Making and the Crisis of the Lost Cause, 1865–1920	12
2 The Impact of Chicago’s “White City” on African American Placemaking	30
3 Tuskegee Utopianism: Where American Campus Planning Meets Black Nationalism	46
4 The “Race Women” Establishment: Elizabeth Evelyn Wright, Jennie Dean, and Their All-Black Schools	65
5 Manassas and Voorhees: Models of Race Uplift	89
6 Historically Black Colleges and Universities: In Service to the Race	106
Notes	113
Bibliography	155
Index	185

Illustrations follow p. 88.

Acknowledgments

This book has been a long time in the making and the thank-yous and acknowledgments now owed are legion. *An Architecture of Education* was first conceived during the relative optimism of the Clinton presidency and what I now recall as the last years of my youth. The twenty-plus years have been a journey indeed, and with the publication of this book, several chapters of my life and my research are now coming to a close. I want to thank the many stalwart contributors to my personal and professional journey, which has now spanned a number of locales—the American West, South Africa, the East Coast—reminding myself that it’s been a privilege to befriend, study, teach, and work for two decades now with some of the finest in those environs. I have situated most people mentioned in these acknowledgments where I first met them, but many have moved on to other institutions, while a few others have passed from this world to be with our ancestors. For me, regardless of where they are physically or spiritually, they remain a part of my life.

Dear family and lifelong friends and colleagues who have helped me to realize this book in myriad ways, and whom I want to thank at this time, include my parents Angel and Ana Nieves, my sister Irma Nieves, my brother-in-law, my nephew, nieces, great-niece and nephew; Lois and Paul Foote and the extended Foote family clan; Isabel Martinez, Robb Hernandez, Janet T. Simons, Greg Lord, Marla Jaksch, Siobhan Senier, Dorothy Kim, Kim Gallon, Tara McPherson, Cecilia Hwangpo, M. G. Lord, David Dunlap, Scott Bane, Scot Coughlin, David Kesselman, Larry Sicular, Curt Sanburn, Ralph Teyssier; Chris, Lori, and Chelsea Lytle; Lisa Snyder, Elaine Sullivan, Ellen Hoobler, Yumi Pak, Courtney Thompson, Michele Simms-Burton, Kim Miller, Abdul Alkalimat, and Deborah A. Coquillon, and Katie Van Heest.

This book evolved from a seminar paper in a graduate-level African American women’s history course at Cornell University in the late 1990s that was taught by the always inspiring Margaret Washington. Her seminal work on the Gullah and Geechee of Georgia’s Sea Islands, and on Sojourner Truth helped to shape my future work. I had a wonderful interdisciplinary committee at Cornell—Maria Cristina Garcia, Mary Woods, and James Turner. Other Cornell teachers and friends have included: Lois Brown, Sherm Cochran, Marti Dense, Jacquelyn Goldsby, and Abdul Nanji.

The student cohort from my time at Cornell includes Leslie M. Alexander, Juan Barahona, Nicole Guidotti-Hernandez, Jean Ju Kim, Susie Lee, Liz Pryor, Gabriela Sandoval, Michelle Scott, and Jennifer Wilks. Remembering the wonderful times we shared back then, I salute and thank them all.

I left the Cornell nest on the eve of 9/11 in August 2001 and headed for the University of Colorado–Boulder for my first tenure-track teaching gig. Colorado is a stunning place and the personnel and students at CU–Boulder’s Ethnic Studies Department were lively and intelligent. I want to give a shout-out in particular to: Kerry Callahan, Evelyn Hu DeHart, Erika Doss, Elisa Facio, Kenneth Foote, Lane Hirabayashi, Deborah Hollis, Alex Lubin, Jose Martinez, Karen Moreira, Tim Oakes, Lisa Park, David Pellow, and Darrin Pratt.

My partner, Richard Foote, who had elected to remain in upstate New York for the time being, found it difficult to travel west with any regularity in the aftermath of 9/11, so I would find myself back East in short order. It was my great privilege to teach at the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at the University of Maryland–College Park in their Preservation Program. Randall Mason, program chair, made me feel particularly welcome. One of this impressive cohort of faculty, Mary Corbin Sies, has remained the most steadfast of mentors and the dearest of my very close friends. I first met Mary on the professional conference circuit in Seattle in 1997. Her commitment and interest in cultural heritage and preservation across diverse communities was one of the things that first drew me to her, not to mention her passion for social justice. I can’t thank Mary enough at this time and suspect I will always be in her debt and will forever remain in awe of her intellectual energies. Other Maryland acknowledgments include Renee Ater, Steve Boyle, Elsa Barkley Brown, Val Brown, John Caughey, Erve Chambers, Alex Chen, Kandice Chuh, Patricia Hill Collins, Ann Denkler, Stephanie Frank, Isabelle Gournay, Dawn Green, Patrick Grzanka, Wendy Hall, Christina Hanhardt, Marie Howland, Steve Hurtt, Katie King, Mary Konsoulis, Willow Leung, Marilee Lindemann, Don Linebaugh, Amy McLaughlin, Monica Mora-Herrera, Zita Nunes, Jo B. Paoletti, Phyllis Peres, Ann Petrone, Kelly Quinn, Connie Ramirez, Garth Rockcastle, Ana Patricia Rodriguez, Stephanie Ryberg, Paul Schackel, Martha Nell Smith, Nancy Struna, Erika Thompson, Wendy Thompson, Maria Velazquez, Daryle Williams, Psyche Williams-Forsen, and Brooke Wortham.

It was my good fortune during my tenure at UMD–College Park to launch a relationship across the Atlantic with some remarkable people in South Africa. My faculty partnership with the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities (MITH) enabled me to conduct research in South Africa for over ten years and from which emerged my earliest critical digital scholarship. Beloved lifelong South African friends, along with those who have proved critical to my research there, include Prinisha Badassy, Dinesh Balliah, Keith Breckenridge, Liz Delmont, Jo-Anne Duggan, Zac Gumbo, Sarah Haines, Ali

Hlongwane, Nicolene van Loggerenberg, Gabi Mohale, Michele Pickover, Brenda Schmahmann, and Jacques Stoltz.

In 2008 I was able to rejoin Richard in upstate New York, where I began what I regard as a period of remarkable personal and professional growth on the beautiful, sheltering campus of Hamilton College. First welcomed to Hamilton by Shelley Haley and her colleagues in the then-Africana Studies Program, I was able to help build (and found) the Digital Humanities Initiative (DHi) there—greatly assisted by generous funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the support of Joe Urgo, dean of the faculty at the time—along with my amazing codirector, Janet T. Simons. I also want to thank the dean of faculty's office for their support of this manuscript by providing a generous subvention grant to assist with final publication. At Hamilton, many thanks are owed to, among others, Rich Alexander, Abhishek Amar, Erol Balkan, Lori Barone, Joyce Barry, William Billiter, Steve Humphries Brooks, J. Monique Collier, Crystal Endsley, Shay Foley, Lisa Forrest, Todd Franklin, Ella Gant, Margaret Gentry, Nathan Goodale, Amy Gowans, Martine Guyot-Bender, Tina Hall, Jan Howarth-Piayai, Carol Kentile, Gill King, Anne Lacsamana, Chaise LaDousa, Terri Lapinski, Doran Larson, Amy Lindner, Peter MacDonald, Lisa McFall, Linda Michaels, Kyoko Omori, Patricia O'Neill, Sam Pellman, Tammy Rotach, Patrick Reynolds, Nhora Serrano, Krista Siniscarco, Dave Smallen, Tami Stevens, Joan Hinde Stewart, Kristin Strohmeier, Amit Taneja, Margie Thickstun, Kelly Walton, Nigel Westmaas, Thomas Wilson, David Wippman, Steve Yao, Penny Yee, and Steve Young. I have had the good fortune to teach a number of remarkable students at Hamilton during my tenure there. In particular, I remain indebted to, and in awe of, Samantha Donohue, Robyn Gibson, Robin Joseph, Stephanie Tafur, and Will Weston.

With my almost ten years at Hamilton College now drawing to a close, I want to thank new colleagues, mentors, and friends at Yale University: these include Weili Cheng, Cathy DeRose, Joe Fischel, Maureen Gardner, Inderpal Grewal, Linda Hase, Peter Leonard, Joey Plaster, Elihu Rubin, and jub sankofa. Laura Wexler of Yale has been a close friend, mentor, and intellectual powerhouse at a pivotal moment in my scholarly life. Her generosity and unwavering support have meant so much more than I can express in just a few words.

My intellectual journey carries me to San Diego, California, in the fall of 2018. I join a dynamic cohort of old and new colleagues, Bonnie Akashian, Norma Bouchard, Joanna Brooks, David P. Cline, Clarissa Clo, Sarah Elkind, Pam Lach, Angel Daniel Matos, William Nericcio, Walter Penrose, Beth Pollard, Jessica Pressman, Adriana Putko, Nathian Rodriguez, and Andrew Wiese. Andy, Jessica, Joanna, Pam, and Bill are welcoming me to San Diego State University (while also making it possible for me to spend an intervening year at Yale), making a new academic home for me, and permitting me to remain committed to research, teaching, and social justice.

I must also thank library personnel and libraries at the following: Hollis Burke Frissell Library, Tuskegee University; Harvey Library, Hampton University; Olin Library, Cornell University; McKeldin Library, University of Maryland; Norlin Library, University of Colorado; Burke Library, Hamilton College; and Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University. And a very personal shout-out and acknowledgment must be made to Barbara Opar, arts librarian, Syracuse University, for instilling in me during my undergraduate days at Syracuse University's School of Architecture the proper love and respect for her passionately held collection of fine arts volumes.

I also want to thank the many people with whom I've networked and befriended outside the walls of my respective institutions but who, in other respects, have been as important as those on the inside. First, I'd like to thank the program officers and administrators at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their support and generosity. Hamilton's DHi was made possible, in large part, by two generous grants from Mellon and I will remain forever grateful for the early believers and risk takers there. Mellon Foundation people include Armando Bengochea, Patricia Hswe, Phil Lewis, Gene Tobin, and Don Waters. At the National Endowment for the Humanities Office of Digital Humanities, I would like to thank Brett Bobley, Perry Collins, Jason Rhody, and Jennifer Serventi. At the Society of American City and Regional Planning Historians (SACRPH) it was my great good fortune to meet the aforementioned Mary Corbin Sies. Other SACRPH scholar-activists include Robin Bachin, Gail Lee Dubrow, Howard Gillette, Walter Greason, Joseph Heathcott, Lynne Horiuchi, Marsha Ritzdorf, David Schuyler, Daphne Spain, June Manning Thomas, and the aforementioned Andy Weise.

Finally, my growing community of digital humanities coworkers and friends are stellar and humbling, and, with their boundless generosity, they never fail to teach and inspire me. They include Lissette Acosta-Corniel, Taylor Arnold, Keisha N. Blain, Susan Brown, Vincent Brown, Micha Cardenas, Bryan Carter, Marie Sachiko Cecire, Sonia Chaidez, Mark Christel, Alan Christy, John Clarke, Brittney Cooper, T. L. Cowan, Anne Cong-Huyen, Constance Crompton, Nathaniel Deutsch, Craig Dietrich, Amy Earhart, Mark Edington, Kristen Eschelman, Diane Favro, Nicole Ferraiolo, Dawn-Elissa Fischer, P. Gabrielle Foreman, Neil Fraistat, Alex Gill, Alyson Gill, Tula Goenka, Amanda Golden, Edward Gonzalez-Tennant, Dene Grigar, Roger Hallas, Jacob Heil, Chuck Henry, Sharon Irish, Bruce Janz, Jessica M. Johnson, Matt Kirschenbaum, Anne Kelly Knowles, Carly Kocurek, Adeline Koh, Liz Losh, Kim Martin, Anne McGrail, Jim McGrath, Tara McPherson, R. C. Miessler, Greg O'Malley, Scott Nesbit, Reynaldo Ortiz-Minaya, Costas Papadopoulos, Marisa Parham, Jessica Parr, Annemarie Perez, Eric Poehler, Irena Polic, Miriam Posner, Todd Presner, Andrea Rhen, Lisa Marie Rhody, Roopsi Risam, Gretta Roman, Shawna Ross, Jentery Sayers, Susan Schreibman, Carrie Schroeder, Donnie Sendelbach, Lynne Siemens, Ray Siemens, J. Mark Souther, Jesse Stommel, Friederike

Sundarm, Lauren Tilton, Fiona Vernal, Jacque Wernimont, Meg Worley, Marta C. Youngblood, Paul A. Youngman, and Vika Zafrin.

The series editors at the University of Rochester Press (URP), Alison Parker and Carol Faulkner, have been extremely patient, insightful, and incredibly supportive at every moment in the book-making process. Sonia Kane, editorial director at URP, has been supportive and admirably persistent throughout this process. I must also thank Julia Cook, Tracey Engel, and Valerie Ahwee for their invaluable assistance in the final stages of this book project.

And, in closing, I want to recognize two beings in particular: the two loves of my life, one human and the other canine—I'll let the reader determine which one is which—and to whom I dedicate this book: Paul Richard Foote III (Richard) and Mitzy. They both opened my heart and made me a better scholar and person. Although Mitzy passed in December 2016 (unbelievably, almost reaching the age of twenty!) her feisty spirit, humor, beauty, and loyal companionship are never far from my thoughts.

Thank you all.
New Haven, Connecticut
December 2017

Introduction

“She made the vision true.”

—Coleman, *Tuskegee to Voorhees*

African American racial uplift—that is, a gendered racial mutual history of self-help—has existed as a tradition since the early part of the nineteenth century. Yet African American educational history and readings of the built environment have too often heralded the achievements of Black men such as Booker T. Washington or John Hope Franklin at the expense of Black women’s involvement in racial uplift and, more specifically, in the creation of industrial and normal schools throughout the South in the nadir of Jim Crow.¹ Incorporating research into African American community and culture, *An Architecture of Education: Black Women Design the New South* essays the critical influence African American women of the late nineteenth century had on the built environment in the South (figure 1), and who, as such, inscribed a social and political ideology of race uplift onto the very bricks of the industrial and normal schools they worked to found in “the Age of Washington and Du Bois” some thirty years after the Civil War.² Two notable women, Elizabeth Evelyn Wright (figure 2) and Jennie Dean (figure 3) founded, respectively, Voorhees College in Denmark, South Carolina, established in 1897 (figure 4), and the Manassas Industrial School, Manassas, Virginia, established in 1893 (figure 5). Wright (born in 1872 and died in 1906) and Dean (born a slave in 1848 and died in 1913), whose biographies and actions illuminate and are central to *An Architecture of Education*, both regarded education not only as a remedy for the trauma of years of chattel slavery but also as a means to enlarge the limited role of women in the often male-dominated process of Black community building.³

Race Uplift and the Built Environment

An Architecture of Education expands our understanding of this period in African American women’s history by arguing that the intellectual project of race uplift as a social movement included the built environment as a primary vehicle for race-based advancement.⁴ As historians of the South—from post-Reconstruction through the beginning of the Progressive era—have yet to study the

work of African American women and the built environment in an extended monograph, this book begins to fill this critical gap. This book also attempts to incorporate more recent thinking on intersectionality into its historical narrative. *Intersectionality* is a term that was coined by legal scholar and critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw in the 1990s to describe the intersecting identities that factor into discrimination and systems of oppression.⁵ These identities include categories such as race, gender, class, sexuality, age, disability, ethnicity, nation, and religion, among many others. While there is no single way to implement intersectionality into interdisciplinary scholarship, there are numerous research strategies and theoretical frameworks with which to highlight and interrogate categories of diversity and difference.

Intersectionality

As historians Carol Faulkner and Alison M. Parker have argued, gender and race must be seen as linked categories that shape, reflect, and situate how power, privilege, and oppression act as historical forces overwhelmingly impacting African American women.⁶ A fuller, more in-depth theoretical framework examines how these systems, interwoven identities, and emerging feminist politics intersected and dynamically catalyzed nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women's social movements. The struggle to integrate the kinds of identities that defined both their gender and race as African American women reformers, along with their struggle to organize and build institutions of learning for poor and working-class students, are best understood through an intersectional feminist framework.⁷ Intersectionality allows us to interrogate the ways in which racism and sexism evolved in the late nineteenth century at this critical juncture of "freedom," segregation, and the continued exploitation of labor (especially of women) under capitalism during the Second Industrial Revolution in the latter part of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth centuries.⁸

As such, these intersectional identities and their histories are crucial subject matter for interdisciplinary research and activism as they tend to overlap or cut across traditional and often siloed disciplinary areas of study.⁹ More particularly, the gendered, racialized agents of *An Architecture of Education*, Jennie Dean and Elizabeth Wright, operating in the face of daunting oppression during the nadir of the Jim Crow South, seized agency and, acting at the highest levels as the clients of both Black and white establishment architects, worked to upend the dominant culture's monopoly on monumental material culture.¹⁰

The Civil War inspired women, both Black and white, to work to educate African Americans across the South. Many of these women were abolitionists or missionaries who felt that their efforts to educate Blacks were a logical extension of their antislavery work. Northern religious and philanthropic

organizations initiated efforts to educate slaves living in areas occupied by the Union Army. Of the more than nine hundred Northern teachers sent to freedom schools in the South, 75 percent were women.¹¹ The federal government's Freedmen's Bureau (the Bureau of Abandoned Lands, Refugees, and Freedmen) became involved in educating Blacks while providing federally mandated social welfare programs.¹² During Reconstruction more than three thousand Southern whites taught in new Black schools with men outnumbering women by a very small margin.¹³ Later, women from across the North and South during the Progressive era would embrace schoolteaching as one of the few public occupations available to them. Teaching, understood as an extension of child care and the domestic sphere, would soon be dominated by women.

Contested Black Educational Historiography

The canonical (and siloed) historical narrative of the African American experience of the end of the nineteenth century has regarded vocational education for African Americans as the only feasible alternative to classical higher education then available.¹⁴ This historiography of Black education has perpetuated a master narrative, since the 1970s and 1980s, that industrial and vocational training was little more than a program for social engineering and racial control to make better laborers and workers to advance white capitalist goals. Wright's and Dean's efforts fell strongly on the side of the industrial education advocates of the Black South. As women, they both understood that to advance the political project of race-based industrial and normal school education, they would ally themselves publicly with accommodationist Black male proponents—that is, consciously adopting or adapting to white political strategies and ideals.¹⁵ Wright, founder of Voorhees College, herself was a follower of Booker T. Washington. Wright had attended the Tuskegee Institute and had befriended both Booker T. and his second and third wives, Olivia Davidson and Margaret Murray (his second wife had died during Wright's tenure at Tuskegee, and Booker T. remarried several years later). Her fondest wish, she claimed, would be “to try and be the same type of woman as Mr. Washington was of a man.”¹⁶ Jennie Dean modeled her institution on the industrial school, placing herself squarely on Booker T.'s side.¹⁷ Yet if the accommodationist strategies employed at Tuskegee and Voorhees were seemingly designed to be inoffensive to the white elite, the built environments—that is, the evidence inherent in the material culture there—were fully competitive and monumental, organizing as they did at once the plan of whole communities. *An Architecture of Education* maintains that Manassas and Voorhees were intended to assist their race toward political self-determination and, from a scholarly perspective in the first years of

the twenty-first century, acted as critical agents of a de facto strategy of nation building under the American segregationist policy of Jim Crow.

There were other Tuskegee disciple schools such as the Utica Institute, the Piney Woods School, the Palmer Memorial Institute, and the Calhoun Colored School, to name a few, that were founded by women.¹⁸ For example, the Calhoun Colored School was founded in 1892 by Charlotte Thorn and Mabel Dillingham in Lowndes County, Alabama. Both white women and former Hampton Institute teachers, they worked in partnership with Booker T. Washington to start a school focused on industrial and vocational training. Charlotte Thorn, born in New Haven, Connecticut, was committed to training rural Blacks because of her support of Gen. Samuel Armstrong's Hampton model. Although Calhoun offered students an industrial education, it promoted land ownership for future economic stability.¹⁹ In 1902 Charlotte Hawkins Brown founded the Palmer Memorial Institute in Sedalia, North Carolina, after raising funds across New England. The school emphasized manual and industrial training for rural African Americans. Palmer does not, however, reflect Tuskegee's influence on the built environment or that of other working-class school founders such as Wright or Dean. Palmer was a preparatory high school and not a fully designed industrial school campus as those built at Voorhees or Manassas.

Black Nationalism and Women Reformers

Black nationalism is a constructed world view characterized as a "quest for autonomy" on the part of all peoples of African descent throughout the African diaspora who are interlinked by the common history of enslavement. Black nationalism in the United States is best understood when linked to both pan-Africanism because of the international system of enslavement and an imagined community notion of nationalism.²⁰ Through an intersectional analysis we can more fully understand that Black nationalist reform efforts and protest in America, linked by race and gender oppression, have a long history in the United States. In the mid-nineteenth century women such as Maria Stewart and Mary Ann Shadd argued for a Black nationalism that supported economic independence and a sustained political activism.²¹ Scholars have often viewed Black nationalism as inherently patriarchal and linked to the construction of separate spheres for women and men, with women being left outside most mainstream theorizations of nationalism until recently.²² Scholars such as August Meier, Wilson J. Moses, and Tunde Adeleke have provided siloed academic discourses on Black nationalism that ignored the important contributions by feminist nationalists, especially those who used the built environment as significant parts of their race uplift and nation-making efforts.²³

Today, it is understood that Black nationalism is the belief in distinct African group traits: the consciousness of shared oppression, the awareness of duties and responsibilities of African-descended peoples to assist one another, and the need for Black self-determination and solidarity.²⁴ Black nationalism reflects not only a sense of tradition and history, but an African value system predicated on collective advancement. Despite forced cultural deracination, virulent biologically determined racism (also understood as scientific racism), and the ravages of slavery, Black nationalism maintained its roots in an African core culture that espoused Black pride and identity through cultural and heritage preservation.²⁵ In the context of this book, Black nationalism centers on a conscious ideology of racial solidarity and self-help among African Americans, specifically as seen through these two women, who were committed to the vindication of the race by building bricks-and-mortar institutions. The collective self-determination and identity formation of African Americans in the late nineteenth century is clearly expressed through their attempts to build a nation within the American cultural landscape composed entirely of all-Black institutions such as the church, school, and home. Although separatism and emigration were once considered preferred solutions to the “race problem” of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries among many African American leaders, Black women nationalists of a different era sought to empower and liberate African Americans in other ways. For African American women, nation building was but a single aspect of the much larger Black nationalist agenda: a series of complex racial projects for social, economic, and political betterment expressed through the built environment.

An examination of African American industrial education, school building, and social welfare activism demonstrates that African American women were purposefully invested in the physical design of their many community-based institutions for race uplift. African American women were uniquely aware of the spatial power (and, in turn, a kind of spatial activism) that their social welfare institutions had in the making of what were radical agendas for social change and race-based advancement. These African American women were not simply the clients of architects (who, contemporaneously, were being rigorously trained and regulated as professionals in the latter part of the nineteenth century as industry, science, and mass education took hold in the United States) but as female clients, they were allying themselves with designers, although they themselves may have lacked training in architecture or its allied arts.²⁶ New scholarship is needed that cuts across traditional constructs of historical periodization for our broader understanding of race uplift institutions founded by those women, who were undeterred by boundaries of gender, class, and color—including gendered and racialized respectability—at the height of the Victorian era. As such, *An Architecture of Education* will employ an intersectional investigation into this particular arena of uplift.

This book is not intended to be a comprehensive history of Black women in education; instead, it documents and situates the architectural and social history of two particular instances of nation building, and, nodding to the *spatial turn* that animates so much scholarly conversation today, demonstrates linkages between the construction of autonomous spaces, resistance against racism, and promotion of collective identity and community in an historical epoch of American oppression—the late nineteenth-century U.S. South.²⁷ In spotlighting the work of Wright and Dean, this book acts as historical recovery, while also situating these women’s efforts in the inter- and multidisciplinary field of African American studies, demonstrating linkages to women’s spatial reform work while also employing architectural history, historic preservation, women’s studies, and cultural studies.²⁸ This interdisciplinary and intersectional approach is intended to help the reader better understand the complex social and spatial dynamics of race, class, gender, and nation that were in play and that have shaped many of these cultural landscapes of educational reform. Rejecting subordinated assimilation, the institutions these women founded in the post–Civil War South may be understood as experiments in Black cultural and economic nationalism.²⁹

Narrative Chapters

Chapter 1 examines the history of the postbellum Lost Cause and its contemporary relevance. Chapters 2 and 3 provide a historical framework with which to understand the architectural and social history of the period. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the histories of Wright and Dean, their respective schools, and how they claimed agency. The book does not frontload the careers of Wright and Dean; instead, it provides readers who might be unfamiliar with the period a critical spatial history of the late nineteenth century. Recent concerns in architectural history now consider historic preservation, historical recovery, and the social production of memory around the built environment in the African American community.³⁰ Narratives written by architectural historians today must begin to critically engage with the social, political, and economic world “in which such works [in the built environment] serve as cultural and historical agents.”³¹ The built environments of African Americans as proposed were sometimes not realized, in addition to those that were built; both, however, must be seen as important historical agents in the movement for race uplift.

In chapter 1, *An Architecture of Education* recounts how, in the decades after the Civil War, as white southerners maintained their own “official” culture through acts of racial violence, African Americans responded by continuing to develop a nationalist culture informed by the built environment and their heroic acts of agency. Despite white supremacists’ assaults on Black homes,

churches, schools, and even towns, the South remained home to fully 90 percent of the almost ten million (9,733,313) African Americans living in the United States in 1910. Over 60 percent alone were living in the states of Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Education afforded hope, and eventually African Americans were to claim progress, with metrics such as illiteracy rates plummeting from 79.9 percent in 1870 to 44.5 percent by 1900.³²

As a milestone in American political will, material culture, and the built environment, the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition still looms large in the historical imagination. Chapter 2 examines the significance of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition on placemaking among African American women reformers and architects. Located on 690 acres on the South Side of Chicago, the Columbian Exposition opened its doors from May to October 1893 to great popular acclaim, with attendance reaching twenty-seven million (figure 6). At an event celebrating culture, commerce, and national ideology and narrative of the industrial age of the late nineteenth century, the so-called "White City's" Court of Honor and its neoclassical style "great buildings" contrasted with the chaos of the "savage" ethnological exhibitions of the nonwhite "other" in the Midway elsewhere on the fairgrounds.³³ The message to visitors was clear—there would be no doubt that the architectural spectacle of the Exposition had sublimely linked notions of Anglo-Saxon supremacy and Western expansion to the imperial Roman past.

By 1893 African Americans had enjoyed thirty years of widespread emancipation (although complicated by the wholesale collapse of Radical Reconstruction).³⁴ However, segregation or Jim Crow was now the law in much of the United States, and early twentieth-century eugenics brought added vehemence and violence to Jim Crow: African Americans were decried as an underdeveloped race and it was the right and obligation of white men—either the "Southern Best Man" or the "New Southern Man" of the Progressive era—to rule.³⁵ In the face of Southern segregation and terror, Ida B. Wells and many other Black female social reformers were laying out the political agenda of a gendered Black nationalism to counter American white hegemony.³⁶ African American architects and social reformers challenged claims concerning separatism and strategies for subordinated assimilation at the Columbian Exhibition, and reappropriated its divisive imagery. In doing so, they co-opted the hegemonic material culture of the Exposition (and other architectural production of the Beaux Arts era) and transformed it into a working model for race betterment in the built environment—transforming it from the imperial to the progressive—as they were forced to create their separate Black-based institutions.³⁷

An act of Congress had authorized the creation of the Exposition, calling for "an exhibition of the progress of civilization in the New World"—with little acknowledgment that any such advances were achieved, in no small part, on the backs of the enslaved and indentured.³⁸ The Midway, depicting the

supposed backwardness of peasant peoples from Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and the Middle East, essentially representing them as the “savage races”—Africans and American Indians, for example—were sequestered the farthest from the White City. Soon, however, by reappropriating the style of the “master class,” African Americans “attempted to employ the racialization of the Southern landscape to their advantage.”³⁹ African Americans promoted a narrative of a new Black nation with its own identity and citizenship, and actively constructed Black self-help institutions that could provide safe space and refuge for Black citizens from racist hostility.

Chapter 3 frames the influence of dominant architectural practice on American campus design during the growth of normal and industrial schools in the South in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The American college campus had by then reimagined itself as a kind of utopia and a city of learning.⁴⁰ The exurban settings of the prototypical American college—often far from settlements of any kind—required that “the college become even more fully a kind of miniature city.”⁴¹ Once imagined by Thomas Jefferson as a kind of “academical village,” the design of the American campus also “became an experiment in urbanism” (figure 7).⁴²

Perhaps no African American institution of higher learning more fully realized these aspirations than the Tuskegee State Normal School, founded in 1881 by African American reformer Booker T. Washington. The craft traditions—woodcarving, building, and ironsmithing—that built the antebellum South on the backs of the enslaved can be difficult to reconstruct because so much of the work went unrecorded. With African American higher education seemingly contested between classical versus industrial traditions, Washington and his “machine” were powerful advocates for industrial training, and so he required that his students participate in the construction of Tuskegee’s campus as a key component of their educational and moral training. As such, Black students constructed seemingly autonomous Black spaces (figure 8) despite the compromises that were implicit in Booker T. Washington’s larger compact with Northern capital and the dominant White Southern establishment. Washington wrote that although he “knew that our first buildings would [not] be comfortable or complete in their finish as buildings erected by the experienced hands of outside workmen . . . but that in the teaching of civilization, self-help, and self-reliance, the erection of the buildings by the students themselves would more than compensate for any lack of comfort or finish.”⁴³

“Jim Crow” laws—the name was derived originally from the minstrel song “Jump Jim Crow,” written in 1828—were enacted primarily in Southern states in the latter half of the nineteenth century, restricting many of the rights granted to African Americans after the Civil War. Culminating in the U.S. Supreme Court’s doctrine of “separate but equal” in the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* of 1896, Jim Crow laws required that African Americans decamp to their own space—in the largest sense, that they make an exodus to their own lands

or their own nation. As if to rally this nation, writer and social reformer Anna Julia Cooper employs the biblical Exodus tale, making an explicit comparison with this, the African American nation, and the nation of Israel in her work, *A Voice from the South* (1892): "We look within that we may gather together once more practical methods, address ourselves to the tasks before us. We look forward with hope and trust that the same God whose guiding hand led our fathers through and out of the gall and bitterness of oppression."⁴⁴ Sensing an opportunity in the face of what might otherwise be calamity, Cooper writes, "to be a woman of the Negro race in America, and to be able to grasp the deep significance of the possibilities of the crisis, is to *have a heritage*. . . . No plan for renovating society, no scheme for purifying politics, no reform in church or in state, no moral, social, or economic question, no movement upward or downward in the human plane is lost on her."⁴⁵

In chapter 4, *An Architecture of Education* pivots to the personal biographies and microhistories of two African American women reformers of the Progressive era. One, Elizabeth Wright, had been forever altered by her experience at Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute, an experience that led her to claim agency and seize the singular opportunity lying ahead for African American women who wished to better the race. Additionally, the relationships with key race women during her tenure as a student at the Tuskegee Institute had solidified her resolve to contribute to an expansive social movement, while at the same time it encouraged her further education. Much as Booker T. Washington had appealed to Northern capital and its agents—the Rockefellers, and Andrew Carnegie et al.—to bankroll the Institute, so would Wright appeal in the 1890s to another cohort of Northern philanthropists—Ralph Voorhees of New Jersey, in particular—to eventually establish Voorhees College in rural Denmark, South Carolina. Wright's initial vision of an all-Black *race-based* institution and model educational community was unique in the state of South Carolina, and was significant as a site spearheaded entirely by the efforts of an African American woman. Wright supported industrial education and believed that the school should follow Tuskegee's example in all its endeavors. Unfortunately, Voorhees's typically straitened finances were such that it was difficult to implement development for all its programs. Trades taught at Voorhees included farming, bricklaying, plumbing, carpentry, wheelwrighting, blacksmithing, painting, printing, cooking, laundering, sewing, millinery, housekeeping, nursing, and mattress making. Other curricula offered at Voorhees included reading, writing, and arithmetic.⁴⁶ Today, Voorhees College continues with its mission on the same campus that Elizabeth Wright founded in 1893.

During its tenure, Jennie Dean's Manassas Industrial School grew from a bare one hundred-acre site to a two hundred-acre campus. The school held classes in sewing, carpentry, laundry, blacksmithing, wheelwrighting, cooking, dairying, and poultry husbandry; its eight instructors also assumed

the teaching of strictly academic subjects. Despite the abuse that slavery had inflicted upon her, Dean summoned the strength to promote training classes for African Americans in the face of national and, in particular, local white hostility as whites regarded the education of Blacks as a means of openly subverting the legitimacy of white supremacy.

Chapter 5 looks critically at these all-Black schools as early efforts to construct the physical sites of race betterment. Architectural training was considered one of the “most important divisions of Tuskegee’s work,” providing the basis for the erection of some twenty-three buildings at the school site by 1901. Booker T. Washington’s experiment in campus planning in particular had provided young architects with the opportunity to design their own monumental Black City in microcosm and experiment with issues of urbanism. As at the Columbian Exposition, Beaux Arts monumentality would inform the plan “parti” for the Manassas Industrial School, where ten pavilion-like structures were to be interspersed along a series of one-story dormitories arranged around a terraced “great lawn,” somewhat reminiscent of Thomas Jefferson’s seminal arrangement of buildings around the open lawn at the University of Virginia’s “academical village.”⁴⁷ Manassas’s placement of administration buildings and residences for various school officials and the incorporation of a secondary axis suggests the dual role of the industrial school to help educate its students in both the manual trades and provide them with elements of a liberal arts education. Meanwhile at Voorhees, the striking scale and grandeur of its overall design is a testament to the educational authority and permanence that was intended for this institution founded by African Americans. Moreover, it was believed that community building would be an essential part of African American architectural practice—in the words of Booker T. Washington, it would connect “the school with life, thus making it a center and a source of interest that might gradually transform the communities about them”—and, as such, architects initially trained at places like Tuskegee would approach the study and practice of architecture very differently from those trained only at elite Northern white schools.⁴⁸

As African Americans painfully built upon their heritages under enslavement in the nadir of Jim Crow, Southern whites invented and promoted the Lost Cause, a white antebellum Southern cultural narrative of valor, chivalry, and martyrdom. The Lost Cause was recognized in particular as a literary phenomenon, shaped largely by journalists and fiction writers, who gave their audience a sense of belonging to an “imagined community” of the “Old South.” With elite white Southern women assigned the mantle of “guardians of the past,” they expanded the boundaries of propriety and voluntarism, allowing elite white women to influence the making of a Southern tradition in “public history.” Thus, throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century, advocates of the Lost Cause (figure 9) would found a number of colleges and institutions throughout the South as memorials to their fallen Confederate heroes,

seemingly in tandem with Black attempts to recover and commemorate their own heritage. Opposed to the narrative of the Lost Cause were those African American writers and reformers of the late nineteenth century involved in the production of race literature, who believed that such a literature would provide a “pattern-book” to promote race uplift strategies. Race literature would ensure the careful promotion and preservation of important events, “saving from obstruction and obliteration what is good, helpful, and stimulating.”⁴⁹

If white women believed that it was their primary goal to preserve Southern culture through a carefully scripted interpretation of the past, Black women, on the other hand, such as Jennie Dean and Elizabeth Evelyn Wright had determined that radical social reform would be made possible only through mass education for African Americans. Black women’s efforts to exploit the junctures of public and private space in political culture had a lasting impact, despite whites’ continued attempts to hinder African American institutions from maturing into viable centers of race education and community advancement. At school sites such as Voorhees and Manassas, African Americans were surrounded by the physical artifacts, stories, and traditions that testified to their enslavement and liberation. On these campuses, African Americans were no longer simply replicating traditional architectural forms: they would instead transform the symbolic meaning of white dominance and social control long embedded in the classical architectural orders as a means of expressing their own power over cultural production. By reconfiguring the American ideal of an all-white nationalist and exclusive spatial culture, African American women seized a place for themselves and their communities.

An Architecture of Education examines how African American women, as educators and reformers, built their educational institutions in racist and hostile environments throughout the New South in the last decades of the nineteenth century. The *spatial turn* of the academy over the past twenty years—popularized by the work of white male social theorists such as Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, Manuel Castells, and Anthony Giddens—has failed to adequately theorize the lived experiences of African Americans and their complex relationship with the American cultural landscape.⁵⁰ Countless scholars have argued that spaces and places can be constituted as subjects and analyzed as material evidence, seemingly bearing witness to varying forms of violence and cultural trauma brought on by state-sponsored injustice. Few scholars have, however, made the linkage between Black women and their social reform work as it impacted the American built environment beginning in the late nineteenth century.⁵¹ By addressing the absence of African American women in the spatial narrative of American public and civic culture, *An Architecture of Education* attempts to reinstate their presence.