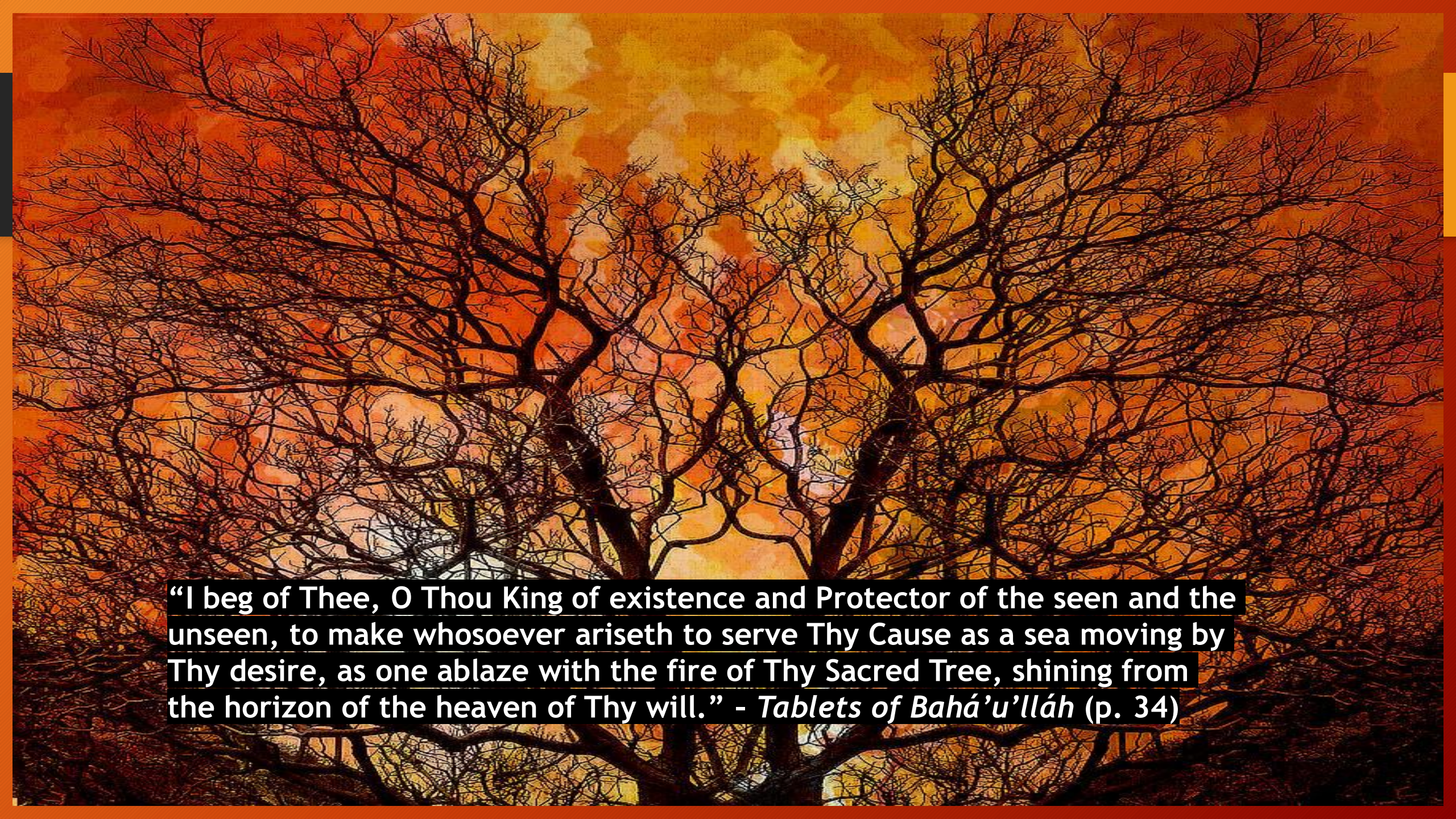


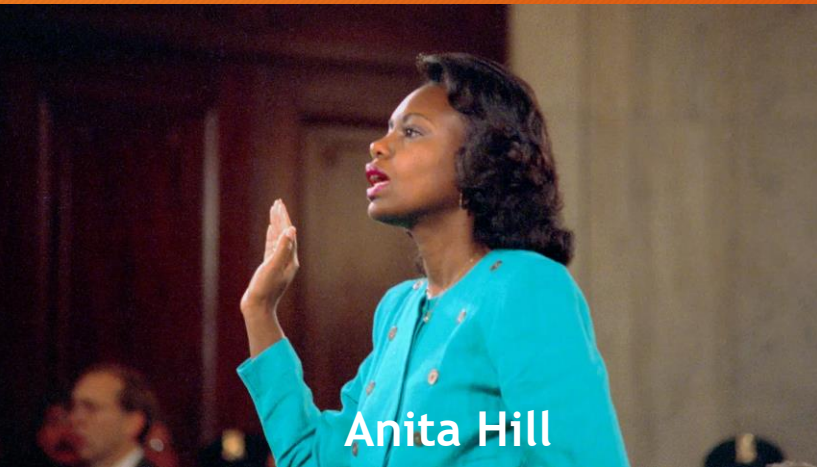


African American Women in the Bahá'í Faith: Intersectionality, Myths and Restorative History

The background of the image is a painting. It depicts several large, leafless trees with dark, intricate branch structures. The trees are set against a sky filled with warm, vibrant colors of orange, red, and yellow, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is dramatic and spiritual.

“I beg of Thee, O Thou King of existence and Protector of the seen and the unseen, to make whosoever ariseth to serve Thy Cause as a sea moving by Thy desire, as one ablaze with the fire of Thy Sacred Tree, shining from the horizon of the heaven of Thy will.” - *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh* (p. 34)

Witnessing and Testifying



Anita Hill



Toni Morrison



Ida Bell Wells-Barnett



Lucy Parsons



Patrisse Cullors, Opel Tometi, Alicia Garza



“While story means so much in every culture and ethnicity, I know that black folk, no matter how they got here, are planted in story and shared lived experience. It’s the way we witness...As Congressman John Lewis... says, “The movement without storytelling, is like birds without wings.” - Andrea Collier

“We must begin to tell black women's stories because, without them, we cannot tell the story of black men, white men, white women, or anyone else in this country. The story of black women is critical because those who don't know their history are doomed to repeat it.” - Kimberlé Crenshaw

HOMESPUN HEROINES
AND OTHER
WOMEN OF DISTINCTION

COMPILED AND EDITED
By
HALLIE Q. BROWN

AUTHOR OF

"Bits And Odds" *"First Lessons In Public Speaking"*
"Tales My Father Told"
"Machile — The African"



Foreword By
MRS. JOSEPHINE TURPIN WASHINGTON

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PHOTOGRAPHS FROM WIDELY DIFFERENT SOURCES

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Memories of Childhood's
Slavery Days



By
Annie L. Burton
1909

Copyrighted Material

HARRIET E.
WILSON

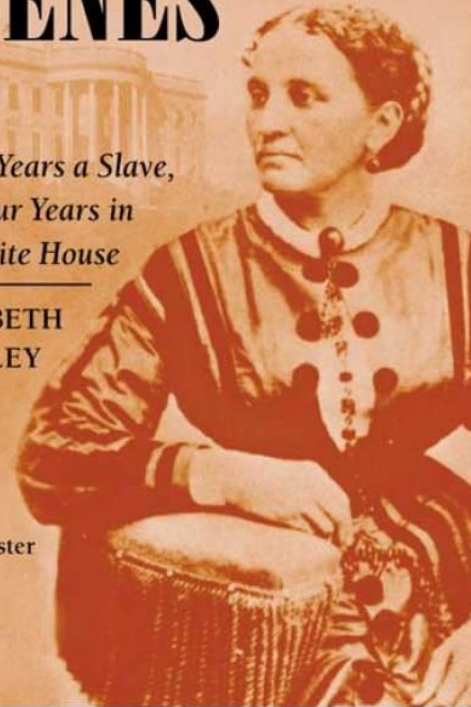
OUR NIG
Sketches from
the Life of a
Free Black

BEHIND THE
SCENES

Thirty Years a Slave,
and Four Years in
the White House

ELIZABETH
KECKLEY

Edited by
Frances
Smith Foster





“Bahá’u’lláh once compared the coloured people to the black pupil of the eye surrounded by the white. In this black pupil you see the reflection of that which is before it, and through it the light of the Spirit shines forth.”

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London, p.68

“Again, it is well established in history that where woman has not participated in human affairs the outcomes have never attained a state of completion and perfection. On the other hand, every influential undertaking of the human world wherein woman has been a participant has attained importance.” - The Promulgation of Universal Peace (1982, pp. 134-135)

“And among the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh is the equality of women and men. The world of humanity has two wings—one is women and the other men. Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly.” - *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 227





“By some strange phenomenon certain white people think or affect to think, that if a colored person shares in the ordinary privileges which pertain to comfort and convenience, or political or civic right that it means ‘social equality’...To any but a morbid mind or diseased mind this seems like unbelievable absurdity...which...is making the position of colored people almost unbearable and robbing the American white people of any rightful claims to an exalted position...because they are either active participants in, or silent witnesses of the gross injustice.” - Coralie Franklin Cook, 1914

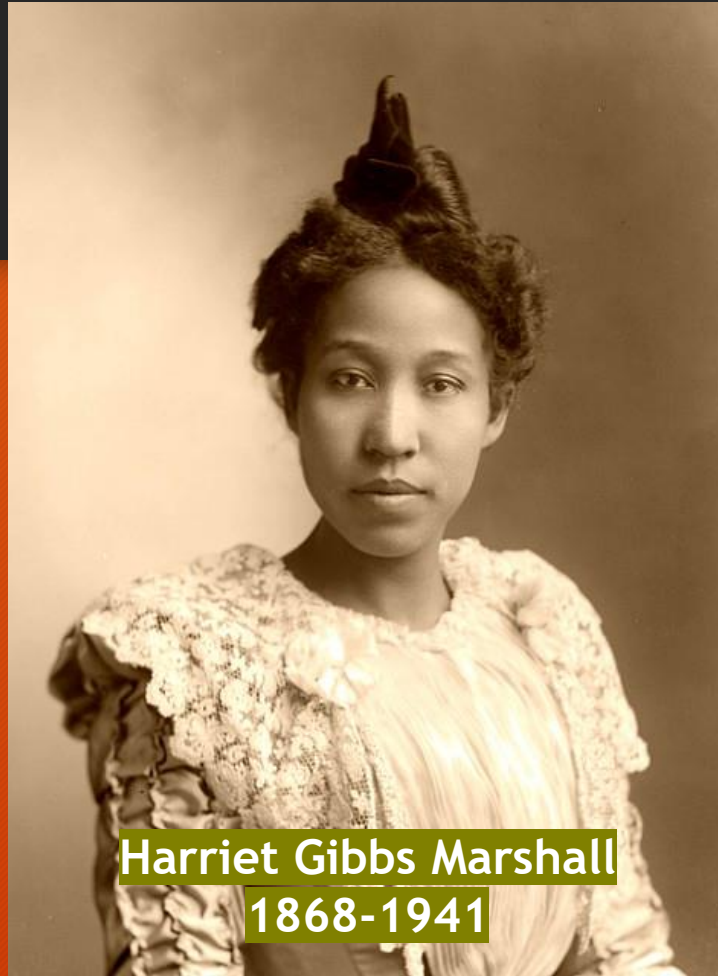


“He [Shoghi Effendi] said when I returned to America, I should seek no rest but be constant and urgent. The importance of this matter should be understood by the friends. That I should be fearless and compelling. I expressed my great sorrow to him and told him I was quite unprepared, unqualified for the work he wished me to do. I said to him, ‘I have no strength or importance in America. I am so sorry.’

To this Shoghi Effendi said, ‘When you return to America, do as I have told you. Be fearless and know that the invisible concourse will assist you and I will supplicate at the Holy Shrine in your behalf’ - Sadie Oglesby, 1927



Zylpha Johnson Mapp Gray (1890-1970)
Springfield Women's Club (MA)



Harriet Gibbs Marshall
1868-1941



Creadell Haley
1916-2000

The Myth of the Exceptional Woman

ex·cep·tion·al | \ ik-'sep-shnəl , -shə-nəl \

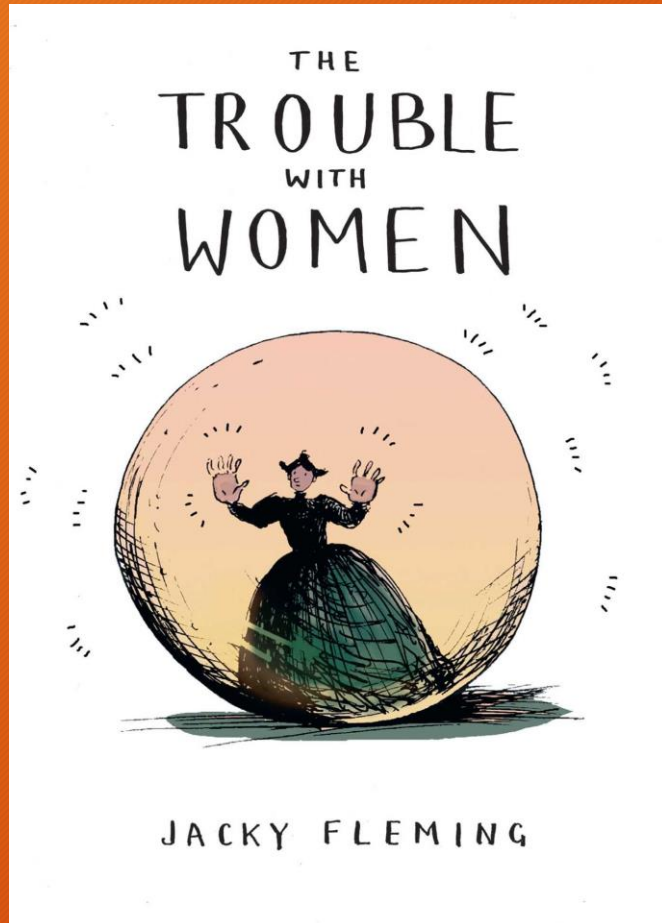
- 1: forming an exception : **RARE**
- 2: better than average : **SUPERIOR**
- 3: deviating from the norm

- **Synonyms**

aberrant, aberrated, abnormal, anomalous, atypical, especial, exceeding, extraordinaire, extraordinary, freak, odd, peculiar, phenomenal, preternatural, rare, singular, uncommon, unc customary, unique, unusual, unwonted



‘Early women did not need an education as they were feeble-minded...Female brains were not only smaller, but they were made of soft, spongy, lightweight material’ ...



“Women are invisible because they weren’t good enough. Playing good enough meant playing like men. Women who play like men are ‘exceptional women,’ and exceptional women can enter the discourse without changing it.” - Sherrie Tucker

“One is left to believe that exceptional women work primarily in isolation from each other because while the stage can accommodate as many exceptional men as possible, there is space for only one exceptional woman.” - Tammy Kernodle

Before Rosa Parks



Claudette Colvin

Girl, 15, Guilty In Bus Seat Case

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — A 15-year-old girl who refused to move to the rear of a city bus was found guilty in Juvenile court here last Friday on charges of assault and battery, disorderly conduct and with violating a city ordinance which makes it "unlawful for any passenger to refuse or fail to take those seats assigned to the race which it belongs."

The girl, Claudette Colvin, was declared a ward of the state and placed on probation pending good behavior.

Put On Indefinite Probation

Negro Girl Found Guilty Of Segregation Violation

A 15-year-old Negro girl was making high school student, so-



Rosa Parks

Aurelia Browder, Viola White, Geneva Johnson, Katie Wingfield, Susie McDonald, Epsie Worthy, Mary Louise Smith Ware

After Olive Jackson (1899)

- Pocahontas Pope (1906, Washington, DC).
- Mrs. Andrew J. Dyer (c. 1909, Washington, DC).
- Louise Washington (1910, Washington, DC).
- Harriet Gibbs-Marshall (c. 1910, Washington, DC).
- Coralie Franklin Cook (c. 1910, Washington, DC).
- Millie York (c. 1910, Washington, DC).
- Nellie Gray (c. 1910, Washington, DC).
- Rhoda Turner (c. 1910, Washington, DC).
- Susan C. Stewart (c. 1910, Richmond, Virginia).
- Leila Y. Payne (1912, Pittsburgh, visiting Washington, DC).
- Hallie Elvira Queen (c. 1913, Washington, DC).

Intersectionality



A web of interconnected relationships between multiple forms of oppression.

- “It’s basically a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What’s often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts.” - Crenshaw



Intersectional Invisibility



- “...intersectional invisibility provides a framework to understanding how Black women, who live at the intersection of racism and sexism, may be harmed when their unique experiences as Black women are not recognized.”
-Coles and Pasek

Lecile Webster (1922 -)



As Bahá'í "pioneer" in Norway, Lucille Webster (r.), formerly of Cleveland, is helping to expand the faith in Scandinavian area. She is employed by Department of State. Only Negro Bahá'í in Norway, she was elected chairman of country's Assembly.



The first Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Seoul, Korea 1956.

Valerie Wilson (1919-1993)



While in her early thirties she became one of the first African—American pioneers. Responding to the call of the Guardian for the Africa Campaign, she settled in Monrovia, Liberia, in 1952.

Deeply devoted to the Faith she traveled extensively throughout West Africa, often under conditions of physical hardship and risk of health. She made a nine—week trip in early 1955 visiting communities in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Togo, and Nigeria. She returned to Monrovia, in the wee hours of the morning of February 28th, after having made a round trip of 7,557 miles.

The First Bahá'is in Liberia, 1952
The Bahá'í Faith in Africa - Anthony Lee



Winnifred Harvey

Lucille Giscome

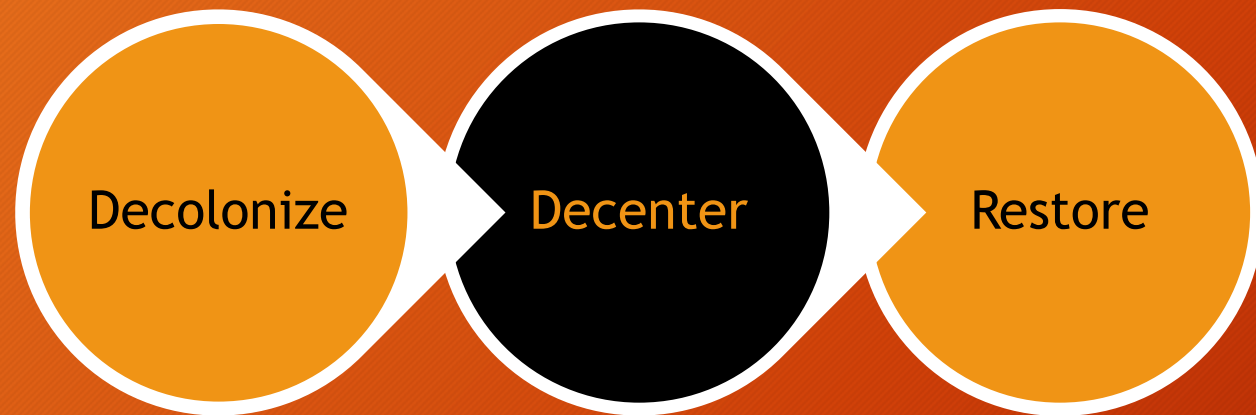
- Lucille Giscome, a young black journalist from Northern Ontario, and Winnifred Harvey, a white college teacher from Manitoba came to Ottawa to work for the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.
- They had a great deal in common: both were seekers of truth and voracious readers who were looking for careers rather than the safe traditional roles of wife and mother. They were to be the first and second members of the Ottawa Bahá'í Community, Winnifred in 1940 and Lucille in 1941.

Lucille Giscome



- In 1948, at the age of 36, disgusted by the racism she had faced in Canada, Lucille travelled to England and then on to Czechoslovakia where she learned to speak Czech and became the editor of a Prague newspaper. There is a record of a letter she wrote in 1953 from Czechoslovakia to W.E.B. DuBois, the American sociologist, socialist, historian and civil rights activist, asking for information on U.S. progressive movements and colonialism.

Restorative History



As a result, too many of these re-centralized bodies of knowledge—black history, women’s history, “multicultural studies,” etc.—have become “ghettoized.” They are still not considered The History, but rather subsidiary histories to the Primary History of the colonizer. In schools, they are elective instead of required courses. In reality, they have been pushed back to the margins. And so, in developing Restorative History, I am attempting to confront and completely dismantle the frameworks that have made the colonizer’s history the Primary History. - M. Campbell Yahn

Decolonizing History

In some future age when history is no longer written to advance the prestige and power of particular groups and nations, perhaps historians will be able to state frankly how much of the tragedy and chaos of our world has been due to the efforts of men and women who distorted civilization and humanity by deliberately provoking animosity and division over the outward differences of men. - H. Elsie Austin, "The Bahá'í Faith and Problems of Color, Class and Creed." *The Bahá'í World* (1940-4)

The process of 'decolonizing history' is broadly about making historians aware of and committed to addressing the disproportionate focus on Eurocentric history in the profession, and attuned to the structures of power underlying this. The study of decolonization rests on an understanding of imperial power and its implication in structures of racial discrimination, as well as the fraught processes of disentangling colonized societies from the economic, political, social, cultural, and psychological damage of imperial rule. - Su Lin Lewis, "Decolonizing History: Enquiry and Practice"

Decolonizing Knowledge

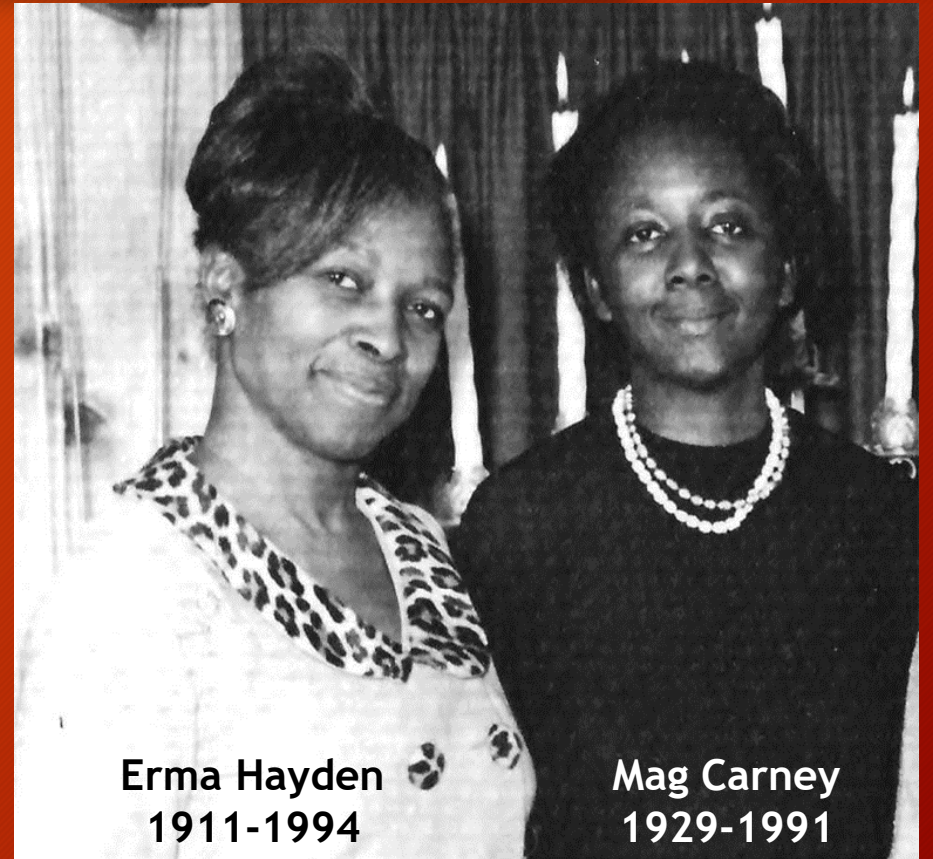
There are many aspects of western thinking which have been exalted to a status of unassailable principle in the general mind, that time may well show to have been erroneous or, at least, only partially true. - March 23, 1983 on behalf of the Universal House of Justice

While colonization came to affect every aspect of Indigenous life, Western science in particular has worked to first subjugate and then discredit Indigenous knowledge systems and the people themselves. - Margaret Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies* (2009)



Marion Townsend King Jackson
1932-2007

...The woman is indeed of the greater importance to the race. She has the greater burden and the greater work. Look at the vegetable and the animal worlds. The palm which carries the fruit is the tree most prized by the date grower...The woman has greater moral courage than the man; she has also special gifts which enable her to govern in moments of danger and crisis. If necessary she can become a warrior. - 'Abdu'l-Bahá in London, pp. 102-103



Erma Hayden
1911-1994

Mag Carney
1929-1991

Knowledge is as wings to man's life, and a ladder for his ascent. Its acquisition is incumbent upon everyone. - Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp. 26



Say Her Name
by
Nikkita Oliver

...

My sister,
we remember you

Seeing how they gather
the trails of your stardust...

I want us to say your name
and remember...

A moment of historic portent has arrived for your nation as the conscience of its citizenry has stirred, creating possibilities for marked social change. - Universal House of Justice (July 22, 2020)



Knowledge is not enough; we hope by the Love of God we shall put it into practice...To know that it is possible to reach a state of perfection, is good; to march forward on the path is better. - , 'Abdu'l-Bahá in London, pp. 60-61