MARY CHURCH TERRELL: A HISTORICAL CASE STUDY OF A PIONEER OF FROEBELIAN KINDERGARTENS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN
1896-1901

by

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A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the graduate faculty of The University of Alabama at Birmingham, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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The purpose of this historical case study was to explore the role of Mary Church Terrell in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children 1896-1901. Historical documents, records, photographs, video, and observations were used in the data collection process. The following questions guided this study: “How did the social, political, and economic context of the Progressive Era affect African American women?” “How was Mary Church Terrell’s family and educational history essential to her role in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children?” “How was the history of early childhood education for African Americans established?” “How did Mary Church Terrell promote Froebelian kindergartens for African American children?” There were two participants who were interviewed for this study.

The African American women of the Progressive Era took great pride in their children and the education of them. They wanted to nurture them in their early years through the Froebelian kindergartens. Findings of the study revealed that there were Froebelian kindergartens in the United States for African American children well before the study years of 1896-1901. The findings also show that Mary Church Terrell and the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) mission was the establishment of Froebelian kindergartens. The first department established in the NACW was the
kindergarten department. Mary Church Terrell and other middle-class African American women bonded together for racial uplift and support at a time when self-help was crucial to the African American race. This study could add to the limited amount of information available on the history of African American early childhood education, especially in the area of Froebelian kindergartens.

*Keywords*—uplift, kindergarten, Froebelian, African American, females
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my daddy, Bill Curry, and my deceased momma, Ruthie Louise Ellis Curry, whom I dearly love. I want to thank them both for loving and caring for me and my four brothers, Bill Jr, Forrest A., Roland J., Gary, and my sister, Rosalind F. I want to thank my daddy for the faithful sound of his beat-up work truck starting at 3:00 every morning. For 32 years he went to work as a fork-lift driver at U.S. Pipe and Foundry for our family. I want to thank my loving momma for raising us as she worked inside and outside of our three-room shot-gun house in Rosedale, Alabama. It is my mother’s determined spirit that I hear inside me which continues to motivate me to excel and to be my very best. She was a baby raising a baby, and I really appreciate all her sacrifices for me. To my children, Joshawa and Divaunie, I love you and thank you for letting me work. This work is also dedicated to my loving grand-mothers, Annie Louise Curry and Vernera Ellis Payne, who nurtured me mind, body and spirit, “Granny, My Granny, My Love,” and to my Aunt Olivia Wilson who taught me to speak up and speak out. And finally, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my spiritual father and mother, Senior Bishop Jasper Roby and Mother Malinda Roby of the former Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God, Inc.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

African American women emerged from the darkness of the Civil War with high hopes and expectations for their futures. They embraced the challenge before them to forge a new frontier, for the world as they had known it during slavery had drastically changed. The future would hold tremendous obstacles and limited opportunities for them as they struggled to find their place in it. However, their faith and determination, combined with their strong love of family and community, would be the binding forces in their quest for social, political, and economic advancements. These advancements were made by African American female pioneers such as Mary Church Terrell.

She strongly believed in uplifting her race and advancing African American early childhood education. The successes and achievements of African American women in all areas of American society were suppressed and often ignored by Anglo Saxon historians. Research is therefore very limited or nonexistent concerning black female pioneers and the history of African American early childhood education.

Mary Eliza Church, known as Mollie, entered the world in 1863, the same year as the Emancipation Proclamation. She was born during a time when “The vast majority of people of color had left slavery with nothing other than their brains, brawn, and determination along with agricultural and domestic skills” (Terrell, 2005, p.7). Unlike the majority of African Americans during this time, Mary grew up in an affluent household.
Although her parents, Robert Reed Church and Louisa Ayers Church, had both been former slaves, they each developed and maintained successful businesses. Robert Church was self-educated and considered to be “one of the wealthiest black men in the United States” (Harley, 1998, p.1). Mary was a women’s suffrage activist, gifted public speaker, writer and, civil rights leader who had studied in Europe and spoke four foreign languages fluently, German, Italian, Swiss, and French (Davis, 1996). The life of Mary Church Terrell specifically her socioeconomic status, educational background, and social experiences proved invaluable to the African American race. She united with other African American women of similar socio-economic status to form the National Association of Colored Women (NACW). This association was developed in defense of black womanhood and was an influential agent in the advancement of African American early childhood education.

The plan of the Kindergarten system has been molded according to the nature of the child, and through it he may be lead to a higher state of development of body, mind, and soul and a fuller consciousness of this relationship to nature, to this fellow-man and to his God. This is the aim, the vital purpose of the Kindergarten education. (Davis, 1996, p. 2)

Information on the early history of African American early childhood education is yet to be explored. Watkins (2001) reported that “most states had no provisions for educating slaves prior to the Civil War” (p. 12). This study attempted to investigate these histories and add to the very limited research available. The purpose of this historical case study was to explore the role of Mary Church Terrell in advancing Frobelian kindergartens for African American children from 1886-1901.
**Statement of the Problem**

This historical case study was designed to explore the role of Mary Church Terrell in advancing Froebelian Kindergartens for African American children from 1896-1901. This study was conducted to add to the limited research available on African American early childhood education. Data from the study came from documents, records, archives, videotapes, and photographs. Historical documents, along with multiple women’s club reports from annual meetings, were studied to provide historical details concerning Terrell and the NACW. This historical case study attempted to provide an in-depth investigation into the motive, structure, and design of the organization with a focus on its early childhood programs for African Americans children.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the role of Mary Church Terrell in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children from 1896-1901. Mary Church Terrell and the women of the NACW faced tremendous social, political, and economic struggles in an effort to provide opportunities for African American uplift. This historical case study attempted to explore the history of Froebelian kindergartens for African American children during a time described by Logan (1954) as “the Nadir of the Negro” (p. 35).
Research Questions

The central question of this study was, “What was the role of Mary Church Terrell in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children from 1896-1901?”

Four sub-questions guided this study:

1. How did the social, political, and economic context of the Progressive Era affect African American women?
2. How was Mary Church Terrell’s family and educational history essential to her role in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children?
3. How was the history of early childhood education for African American established?
4. How did Mary Church Terrell promote Froebelian kindergartens for African American children?

Significance of the Study

This historical case study began with an examination of Black Feminist Theory. Mary Church Terrell and other African American women of the NACW are missing in the discussion of great pioneers, thinkers, and activists instrumental in advancing the cause of early childhood education, specifically in the area of Froebelian kindergartens.

Moreover, Terrell brought something unique and special to pedagogical studies (as philosophy and practice) in that she used a specific kind of Black women's activist ethos--through the Women's Club Movement--to bring Kindergarten, meant for prosperous White children, to the Black masses. This was an essential component in
developing an educated Black community that could, with greater knowledge, gain more leverage in becoming full U.S. citizens.” (K. McCray, personal communication, February, 27, 2010)

The NACW, under the leadership of Mary Church Terrell, created a supportive social network for the uplifting of the African American race. Although finances and political support were very limited, the NACW’s stamina and perseverance remained firmly focused on improving conditions for African Americans. The work of the kindergarten founder, German philosopher, Fredrick Froebel, was endorsed, supported, and used not only by Germans and European Americans in the United States but also by African American women clubs. The essence of this study is found in the words of Mary Church Terrell, the first president of the NACW.

From the day the colored woman’s fetters were broken, her mind released from the darkness of ignorance, in which it had been held for nearly 300 years, and she could stand erect in the dignity of womanhood, no longer bought but free till this minute, generally speaking, she has been forging ahead, acquiring knowledge and exerting herself strenuously to promote the welfare of her race. (Terrell, 1898, pg. 1)

**Assumptions of the Study**

The assumptions of the study were as follows.

1. Interviewed participants would be members of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs and be familiar with its history.

2. Study participants would have held elected offices either nationally or locally with the National Association of Colored Women.

3. All interviewed participants would be African American females.
Limitations of the Study

This historical case study was limited by these factors.

1. The limited availability of historical literature on the history of African American early childhood education, specifically, Froebelian kindergartens for African American children from 1896-1901. Historical research is descriptive, and there is often a merging of historical and case study approaches. Histories are preferred when there is no access or control. When dealing with the “dead past” (p. 36), the investigator must rely on primary and secondary documents, and cultural and physical artifacts, as the main source of evidence (Merriam, 1998).

2. This study involves only two participants, which would make it difficult to generalize.

3. All participants were middle-aged African American female members of the National Association of Colored Women and Youth Affiliates Clubs, formally the NACW and the NACWC.

4. The participants were all from the same state. Views from other club members, perhaps in Washington, D.C., where the National Association’s Office is located, may have offered richer sources of information.

5. I am an African American female educator in the area of early childhood education. I have felt the sting of racial injustice and discrimination on a personal basis. As a Black female, I bring to this study an in-depth understanding and appreciation of many of the experiences and struggles of the African American race. However, I am limited in my in-depth understanding of other races. The desire to know more positive things about the African American race in the area
of early childhood education, their successes, contributions, and accomplishments, prompted this study.

6. Because education for African Americans was considered criminal in the United States for hundreds of years, detailed data on early childhood programs are very limited.

7. The code of silence or the “culture of dissemblance” that developed among African American women may have limited the availability of written information on the subject (Hine, King, and Reed, 1995).

**Definition of Terms**

Many of the terms mentioned in the study will be familiar to most readers. However, the following terms are defined to clarify their meaning in the context in which they are used.

*African American* - refers to a race of Black people who were born in America with African descent. The phrase is used interchangeably in this study with names such as Colored, Afro-American, Negro and Black.

*Alabama Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs (AFCWC)* - AFCWC is the organizational title used to describe the African American women’s clubs in Alabama beginning in the late 1800. The Alabama Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs is affiliated with the Southeastern Association of Colored, Women’s Clubs, and the National, Association of Colored Women’s Clubs (National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, 1984).

*Black womanhood* - A phrase used in defense of negative allegations against the moral
character of African American women.

*Colored* - Colored is defined by Webster as a person of a race other than the White or of mixed race.

*Friederich Froebel* - Froebel is considered the “Father of Kindergarten.” He was born in Germany 1782. Froebel devised a preschool curriculum for three to seven year old children. According to Ross (1976) the kindergarten was a system of intellectual, moral, and physical education which reflected pedagogical principles (p. viii).

*Froebelian Approach* – Friedrich Froebel developed his program on the premise that play was the most natural and educational activity for a young child.

He translated what was ordinarily considered work into the child’s realm of play. The Froebelian approach was based on three categories: (1) the gifts or playthings; (2) the occupations or handiwork activities; and (3) the songs, games, stories, and gardening. Together, these activities restricted the child’s complete freedom, yet still gave him outlets for self-expression, offered the opportunity to develop manual dexterity, and taught him about geometric as well as social and natural relationships. (Ross, 1976, p. 5)

*Hippolyte Taine* - He was a French writer, critic, and historian. He was an influential supporter of positivism.

*Immanence of God* - The literal meaning of the immanence of God is “to be within” or "near" in relation to God’s creation. Immanence is closely related to God's omnipresence, in that God is always present within the universe, though distinct from it. God is “within” the universe in that God is its sustaining cause.

*Jim Crow* – It is a term used by Cash (2001) to describe how “The Supreme Court constitutionalized the encroaching segregation in transportation, education, and
public facilities by grounding its rationale on notions of racial inferiority informed by Social Darwinism” (p. 4).

**National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs** - The national affiliate of the Alabama Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs. According to Hine (1994), the National Association of Colored Women merged with local and regional clubs to create one strong organization in defense of black womanhood. It had over 50,000 members by 1914. The organizations of the NACW are listed as Women’s Clubs in the historical records and are listed as such in this study.

**Negro** - Negro is defined by Webster as a member of a race of humankind native to Africa and classified according to physical features (e.g., dark skin pigmentation) (Reed, 1995).

**Progressive Era** - This is loosely defined as the period from 1880-1930 (Hine, King, & Reed, 1995).


**Thomas Carlyle** - A British essayist and historian.

**True Womanhood** - A new ideal of womanhood and a new ideology about the home arose out of the new attitudes about work and family. Called the "cult of domesticity," it is found in women's magazines, advice books, religious journals, newspapers, and fiction—everywhere in popular culture. This new ideal provided a new view of
women's duty and role while cataloging the cardinal virtues of true womanhood for a new age (Hine, King, & Reed, 1995).

**Organization of the Study**

There are five chapters in this historical case study. Chapter 1 provides background information on Mary Church Terrell and her interest in Froebelian kindergartens. The statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions of the study, and definition of terms are also discussed in this chapter. Chapter 2 reviews the literature beginning with information addressing Black Feminist Theory and the social, political, and economic context of the Progressive Era. The family history and education of Mary Church Terrell and the paradigms of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois are also included. Finally, this chapter looks at a history of Froebelian kindergartens for African Americans from the Colored Women’s League of Washington D. C., the NACW, and black universities. Chapter 3 explores the historical case study method used. The research design, settings and participants of the study, trustworthiness, researcher’s role, and ethical considerations are reported. Data collection, verification procedures, data analysis, and interpretation complete this chapter. Chapter 4 explores the themes and sub-themes generated from the data. Chapter 5, the final section of this historical case study, contains discussions of the findings, responses to research questions, implications, and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter discusses Black Feminist Theory as it relates to Froebelian kindergartens for African American women. It includes a review of literature related to the history of early childhood education and Mary Church Terrell’s role in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children from 1886-1901. Three questions guide this section of the study: How did the social, political and economic context of the Progressive Era affect African American women? How was the history of early childhood education for African American established? How was Terrell’s family and educational history of Terrell essential to her role in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children? Each question will be discussed in the following section.

Theoretical Framework

Black Feminist Theory addresses the struggles African American women faced based on race, class, and sex. Collins (1990) reported that there are three independent dimensions that have oppressed African American women,

…the exploitation of Black women’s labor essential to U.S. capitalism; the political dimension of oppression that denied African American women the rights and privileges routinely extended to White male citizens, and controlling
According to Hooks (1994) in order to eliminate eras of domination, teachers now have to consciously teach for freedom, engaged pedagogy, and in an environment where children learn together with the teacher. Teaching for freedom is a way for young children to feel respected. Mary Church Terrell saw children as being rich with potential. Hooks also believed that young children have to be cared for by early childhood teachers that envisioned their position as a sacred vocation. Teachers of the young have to be committed to children's learning through active learning. By having a community, young children feel engaged and work toward their potential, what early educators believed as, the possible. Learning in partnership was another of bell hook's beliefs about how young children and their teachers learn together. In democratic learning environments, domination would be an ideal learning environment that is counter to the past of a white-supremacist patriarchy to which African Americans were subjected.

**Black Feminist Theory**

Collins (1990) reported that in United States society the position of colored women was “relegated to a lesser status than those of white men and women. They were the pariahs of society and at the depths of the social scale in the South in slavery and in freedom during the nineteenth century” (Wesley, 1984, p. 1). Furthermore, according to Danto (2004) the term,

Black feminism was not widely used until the inception of the contemporary Black women’s movement in the 1970’s. However, Black feminist scholars frequently apply it to a variety of Black women’s survival strategies and actions in
the past. It is used to characterize Black women’s tradition of courage, independence, and pragmatism under the brutal conditions of slavery and institutionalized racism… Black feminism has of course been used to define political theory and practice that explicitly addresses gender and sexual oppression in Black women’s lives. (p. 124)

**Exploitation of Black women’s labor.** The majority of Black women came to the United States as slaves in oppression (Wesley, 1984; Collins, 1990; Hine, 1994). Howell and Prevenier (2001) posited that race is not a biological category. Race is cultural, social, and political. Thus the term race is a social convention.

The roots of racial theory run deep in European history, certainly back to the Enlightenment, which celebrated all created beings but gave pride of place to a Greek ideal of beauty which was equated with Aryanism. It has even deeper roots in the positivism of Hippolyte Taine, and above all in the romanticism of Thomas Caryle and others who found perfection in the Anglo-Saxon body type. With romanticism came as well the ideal of the Volksgeist and with it the potential for a virulent kind of nationalism, irrationalism, the worship of “great men” and “great nations.” Social Darwinism and imperialism in the nineteenth century added the crucial element of “scientific” racism, and when these ideologies were combined with race-based slavery in the Americas, the potent form of racism that still infects Western culture took root. It is thus that “race” became a historical category, an issue that has seemed to some historians a crucial element of any equation explaining historical change. (p. 136)

Jones (1985) states that most Black women in the past, especially during the time when Mary Church Terrell lived and worked, were confined to two types of occupations: domestic or institutional service. It was hard manual labor. In the antebellum South, some enslaved women worked as domestics in their owners’ houses:

They worked in the houses of their owners cooking and serving meals, tending gardens, caring for livestock and chickens, sewing clothes, carding and spinning wool,
cleaning, churning butter, running errands, waiting on their masters and mistresses, and nursing and tending the owners’ children. Slave women were valued not only for their work, but also for their fertility. After the slave trade was outlawed, slave owners depended on the reproductive capacities of their slaves to make the slave economy possible. (Sterling, 1988 p. xxiii)

The not so fortunate enslaved women who were field hands worked from dawn to sunset along with the men, “hoeing, building fences, cutting down trees, constructing dikes, pulling fodder, clearing land, planting tobacco, cotton, rice, sugar, and corn, and then harvesting the crop” (Sterling, 1988 p. xxiii).

Following slavery “the vast majority of black female wage earners were barred from peacetime factory labor and from the traditional (white) female occupations of secretarial and sales work until well into the 1960’s” (Sterling, 1988, p. 4). Mary Church Terrell reported the following in her speech presented at the National American Women’s Suffrage Association in 1898,

For, not only are colored women with ambition and aspiration handicapped on account of their sex, but they are everywhere baffled and mocked on account of their race. Desperately and continuously they are forced to fight that opposition, born of a cruel, unreasonable prejudice which neither their merit nor their necessity seems able to subdue. Not only because they are women, but because they are colored women, are discouragement and disappointment meeting them at every turn. Avocations opened and opportunities offered to their more favored sisters have been and are tonight closed and barred against them. While those of the dominant race have a variety of trades and pursuits from which they may choose, the woman through whose veins one drop of African blood is known to flow is limited to a pitiful few…. And yet, in spite of the opposition encountered, the obstacles opposed to their acquisition of knowledge and their accumulation of property, the progress made by colored women along these lines has never been surpassed by that of any people in the history of the world. (Jones, 1990, p. 184)
Opportunities for women of color were scarce. Barriers and prejudice were boundaries that were seldom crossed and never broken.

**Political dimensions.** Cook (2010) cited that, “U.S. injustice elevated during the segregation period (1896-1965), however, southern politics had set the stage by modeling racist laws Americans followed” (p.1). The Compromise of 1877, also known as the Corrupt Bargain “made injustice and racial discrimination the political theme of every subsequent president to Franklin D. Roosevelt” (p. 1). The Compromise of 1877 was an agreement between the Republican Rutherford B. Hayes and the Democrats to secure his position as the next president of the United States. In this agreement he allowed Confederates to “handle their race relations” (p. 1) in their region.

More restrictive laws were enacted toward African Americans by southerners after the Compromise of 1877. Laws such as, poll taxes, literacy tests, the good character and understanding clauses and the Grandfather Clause were instituted. It was during the administration of Benjamin Harrison that southern legislators created more laws to discriminate against African Americans. According to Cook (2010) the authors of *The American People – Creating a Nation and a Society* explained that the South’s Jim Crow laws legalized public segregation, which started with “railroads and schools” and moved to “…libraries, hotels, hospitals, prisons, theaters, parks,” (para. 2) and every other place where people might interact. These regional laws transformed into national laws through federal government assistance.
Mary Church Terrell personally felt the injustice of racism as she expressed in her speech, “What It Means to Be Colored in the Capital of the United States.”

For fifteen years I have resided in Washington, and while it was far from being a paradise for colored people, when I first touched these shores it has been doing its level best ever since to make conditions for us intolerable. As a colored woman I might enter Washington any night, a stranger in a strange land, and walk miles without finding a place to lay my head. Unless I happen to know colored people who live here or ran across a chance acquaintance who could recommend a colored boarding house to me. I should be obliged to spend the entire night wandering about. Indians, Chinamen, Filipinos, Japanese and representatives of any other dark race can find hotel accommodations, if they can pay for them. The colored man alone is thrust out of the hotels of the national capital like a leper. (Jones, 1990, pp. 283-284)

The voice of Mary Church Terrell was filled with emotion about the discrimination she encountered as an educated woman. She knew that education alone did not offer her freedom, justice, or equality in Washington, D. C., the capital of the United States, her country.

As a colored woman I may walk from the Capital to the White House ravenously hungry and abundantly supplied with money with which to purchase a meal, without finding a single restaurant in which I would be permitted to take a morsel of food, if it was patronized by white people, unless I were willing to sit behind a screen. It is impossible for any white person in the United States, no matter how sympathetic and broad; to realize what life would mean to him if his incentive to effort were suddenly snatch away. To the lack of incentive to effort, which is the awful shadow under which we live, may be traced the wreck, and ruin of scores of colored youth. And surely nowhere in the world do oppression and persecution based solely on the color of the skin appear the chasm between the principles upon which the Government was founded, in which it still professes to believe, and those which are daily practiced
The dichotomy that Mary Church Terrell deeply thought about and profoundly felt was a real fact in her life and of all of her family and friends. The worry for future generations was evident in this piece. Still keeping her sights on children and youth, despite the almost unbearable barriers, Mary Church Terrell's concern was for children growing up in their country that professed one principle but lived the opposite.

**Literature Review**

**Family History of Mary Church Terrell**

**Father.** Mary Eliza Church, known as Mollie, was born to Robert and Louisa Church in Memphis, Tennessee on, September 26, 1863. She shares her birth year with thousands of slaves who were freed by the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. Unlike thousands of freedmen who were desolate and poor, Mary grew up free and quite wealthy. Mary’s father, Robert Reed Church, was an outstanding individual. As an ex-slave he had become a self-educated, wealthy businessman. He was so fair skinned that no one would have suspected that he had “a drop of African blood in his veins” (Terrell, 1940, p. 22).

Mary and her father would take a buggy ride out to the home of Captain Church every Sunday morning. She looked forward to seeing Captain Church and receiving the fruit and flowers he would give her. Once he affectionately patted Mary on the head and said to her father, “You’ve got a nice little girl here, Bob. You must raise her right.” Following a visit on one such occasion, when Mary was about four or five, she remembers looking at her father and saying, “Captain Church is certainly good to us,
Papa. And don’t you know, Papa, you look just like Captain Church. I reckon you look like him because he likes you” (Terrell, 1940, p. 32). Mary had adored Captain Church long before she knew that he was her grandfather. These trips helped to create a strong bonding relationship between Mary and her father. This was their special time together to share experiences and talk to one another. I can easily relate to the bond that Mary had with her father. As a child I suffered from severe asthma attacks. My father would take me to the doctor’s office on those occasions for treatment. He and I would then go to a restaurant and eat lunch. I treasured those moments then and now as Mary probably did.

Mother. Mary’s mother Louisa (Ayers) Church, known as “Lou Church,” was the exact opposite of her father. She was easy-going and even tempered. According to Mary, “She irradiated good will and cheer upon all with whom she came into contact” (p. 37). She had troubles of her own, but no one could tell by looking at her. Mary recalls seeing her mother depressed only once in her life. It was her mother that she confided in when she was troubled or depressed about something. Her mother would always reassure her that things would work out for the best in the end.

As I look back upon my habit of confiding my troubles to my mother. I reproach myself severely for placing upon her mind and heart any burdens which she, herself, was not obliged to bear. It seems to me it was a weak and inconsiderate thing for a daughter to do. The only reason I can forgive myself for imposing my woes upon my mother was that she never seemed to let anything worry her at all. (Terrell, 1940, p. 38)

Mary felt that her mother was a talented artist and would have been recognized as a painter, had she been trained in her youth.

When I had completed my sophomore year in college, I spent the summer vacation in Oberlin, Ohio, where I had
been attending school. My mother came to see me and began to take lessons in painting. She was thoroughly absorbed in her work and did nothing from morning to night but paint. So enthusiastic and industrious was she in the pursuit of art, I was really concerned about her and feared she might be losing her mind. She painted pictures of birds, butterflies, and flowers, ad infinitum on little trays and articles of various kinds, till her room fairly overflowed with them. I have today a beautiful screen on which she painted wisteria, which has been highly commended by artists. (Terrell, 1940, p. 38)

She was also a very remarkable business woman, owning her own hair store in Memphis, Tennessee, and one later in New York City.

I am sure she was the first colored woman in Memphis and among the first of the entire South to establish and maintain a store of such excellence as hers undoubtedly was. The elite of Memphis came to “Lou Church’s” store to buy their hair goods. And way back in the 70’s women had to buy a quantity of false hair to keep up with the prevailing style. (Terrell, 1940, p. 38)

Customers would wait all day to have their hair styled by Lou Church for “important social functions” (Terrell, 1940, p. 38). Their first home and carriage was bought by her mother. Mary describes her as, “The most generous human being I have ever known” (p. 38). She was very free hearted to a fault when it came to spending money on her children and other people’s children. Lou Church was not one for saving money but “delighted in making presents to her friends” (p. 39).

Mary’s parents separated and divorced when she was a young girl. Her mother was given custody of her and her brother. Her brother had been staying with her father who wanted to keep him. But the court decided that he was to remain with his mother.

I remember very distinctly the day the “hack” drove up to Mother’s house on Court Street, a block below her hair store, and deposited my little brother, bag and baggage on the sidewalk in front of our home. My joy knew no bounds. (Terrell, 1940, p. 39)
Maternal grand-mother. Mary’s maternal grand-mother was Eliza. The neighbors all called her Aunt Liza.

In complexion she was very dark brown, almost black, with a straight, shapely nose and a small mouth. In her manner she was quiet and refined, and reserved; she always spoke in a low tone of voice, and tried hard to teach her grand-daughter to do the same thing. (Terrell 1940, p. 40)

She was a wonderful storyteller, and Mary could listen to her tell them for hours on end. She especially liked the story about the “hoop snake.” Sometimes she would talk about the brutality inflicted on slaves who had cruel masters. But she would become upset and unable to finish them. The memories were too painful in their realities. Mary loved her grand-mother very much.

Grand-mother. Mary received a letter from a white man whom she had never met before. He claimed to be the son of her grand-mother Emmeline’s owner. Emmeline had been his mother’s slave nurse. He recounted the story he had heard about how her “great-grandmother was not an African or of African descent but a Malay princess brought over from the Island of San Domingo… her complexion was a deep red and her hair was very straight and black” (Terrell, 1940, p. 33). There had been a revolt there and the royal family had been taken into captivity. They were given the choice of being sold into slavery or death. Her great grandmother was very beautiful and 14 years old at the time. “Upon her arrival at Norfolk, Va., one of the favorite ports of both entry and sale for the slavers in those days, she was sold to a rich tobacco merchant at what was then considered a fancy price” (p. 33). She became the seamstress for his daughters. It was on his plantation that her great-grandmother gave birth to a baby girl named Emmeline, Mary’s grandmother.
He went on to say that the merchant had business problems and “all his slaves had to be sold, including your grandmother and her mother” (Terrell, 1940, p. 33). It was then that his grandfather, who had three Virginia plantations, bought the little girl Emmeline for his then baby girl. Mary’s great-grandmother was sold to a planter in Natchez, Mississippi, and became their seamstress. When Emmeline’s mistress married at age 16 she moved to New Orleans:

Twenty years of her life were spent in New Orleans where your grandmother learned the French language and always passed for creole. I have often heard my mother say she was the most beautiful type of creole she ever saw. The affection which existed between Mother and Emmeline was more on the order of sisters than mistress and maid. (Terrell, 1940, p. 34)

The man who wrote the letter lived in Mammoth Springs, Arkansas at the time the letter was sent. However sincere the letter may have been, Mary could only think of the agony that her great-grandmother and grandmother had experienced as a result of being sold and separated:

Many a time I have lived over that parting scene when Emmeline, my grandmother, who was then only a small child, was sold from her mother never to see her again. Often have I suffered the anguish which I know that poor slave mother felt, when her little girl was torn from her arms forever. When slavery is discussed and somebody rhapsodizes upon the goodness and kindness of masters and mistresses toward their slaves in extenuation of the cruel system, it is hard for me to conceal my disgust. There is no doubt that some slaveholders were kind to their slaves. Captain Church was one of them, and this daughter of a slave father is glad thus publicly to express her gratitude to him. But the anguish of one slave mother from whom her baby was snatched away outweighs all the kindness and goodness which were occasionally shown a fortunate favored slave. (Terrell, 1940, pp. 34-35)
Having worked on the boats of his father and former master, Captain C. B. Church, he elevated from being a dishwasher to a steward. This was considered the highest level that a slave could achieve at the time. It was while working in this capacity that he learned how to buy bulk items in large quantities. As a child, Mary remembers the abundance of food around her house.

My earliest recollection is of seeing barrels of flour, firkins of butter, and large tins or wooden buckets of lard. He would buy turkeys and chickens by the crate. Bunches of bananas used to hang where we could easily get them in our house, and there was always a goodly supply of oranges and nuts. (Terrell, 1940, p. 35)

On a rare heavy snow day in Memphis, Robert Church was riding down the road in his new sleigh. Men were throwing snowballs at him, which he initially took playfully. However, he soon found that the snowballs contained rocks and stones which had been thrown at him.

After he had been pelted with these missiles several times, a large rock was hurled at him and struck him in the face. Then he pulled out a revolver and shot into the crowd of men who had injured him. It was a desperate thing for a colored man to do anywhere, particularly in the South, and it is a great wonder he was not torn limb from limb, even though he was shooting in self-defense. (Terrell, 1940, p. 37)

Mary thought very highly of her father and greatly loved and admired him.

My father was rather reserved in his manner, was rarely familiar with anybody, and had a certain innate culture which men deprived of educational opportunities, as he was, rarely possess, He had a business ability of high order and gave proof of that fact over and over again. (p. 36)

**Uncle.** Robert Church had a brother by the name of James Wilson. “He was fair as a lily, with eyes as blue as the sky, and was as perfect a specimen of the Caucasian as
could be found anywhere in the world” (Terrell, 1940, p. 41). One of the most painful events in his life involved his being forced to fight in the Confederate Army. Mary recalls that “nothing riled him so quickly as a reference to what he considered that painful and disgraceful episode in his life” (p. 41).

The Progressive Era

The Progressive Era is the period from 1880-1920 (Sheftall, 1990). It was a period of rapid industrialization, urbanization, and immigration. It was a critical time for African Americans, whose emancipation from slavery was only 17 years old. The continuous social, political, and economic struggles experienced by African Americans after the Civil War predetermined, dominated, and marginalized their lives. Issues such as the “Nadir of the Negro,” the ideals of “True Womanhood,” and controversies over industrial versus liberal education were areas of crucial concern for African Americans.

The Nadir

The Progressive Era was, “the Nadir,” or the lowest point for the Negro. Historian Rayford Logan was the first to use the phrase to describe the period following Reconstruction through the early 20th century. This was the time when racism was worse than any other period following the Civil War. Many of the civil rights gains made during Reconstruction were lost during this time. Increases in anti-black violence, lynching, segregation, legal racial discrimination, and expressions of white supremacy increased (Logan, 1954, p. 35).
White Supremacist Ideology

During the Progressive Era, white supremacist ideology was rampant in America, according to Jones (1990). The prevailing attitudes toward Black women cannot be viewed apart from the racial and terrible discriminatory attitudes of the time. Thomas Pearce Bailey was an outspoken southern white supremacist. Bailey’s 1914 book, “Race Orthodoxy in the South: And other aspects of the Negro Question,” sets down the racial creed of the majority of southern people:

“Blood will tell”; the white race must dominate; The Teutonic people stand for race purity. The Negro is inferior and will remain so. “This is a white man’s country. “ Let there be no social equality; no political equality. In matters of civil rights and legal adjustments give the white man as opposed to the colored man the benefit of the doubt. In educational policy let the Negro have the crumbs that fall from the white man’s table. Let there be such industrial education of the Negro as will fit him to serve the white man. Only Southerners understand the Negro question. Let the South settle the Negro question. The status of peasantry is all the Negro may hope for, if the races are to live together in peace. Let the lowest white man count for more than the highest Negro. The above statements indicate the leadings of Providence. (Bailey, 1914, p. 93)

It was during the Nadir that the Great Migration occurred. According to Logan (1954) “some 40,000 Negroes left Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and Georgia for the Midwest” in order to escape the lynching and legal segregation in the south (p. 97). More than 1.5 million Blacks migrated from the south though the 1930’s. In the north housing was often segregated. The influx of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe created great competitions for jobs and housing. This situation became more aggravated by the fall of the stock market in 1929, when most of the jobs that Black men had were taken by Caucasian men (Anderson, 1988). Blacks could not serve on juries in some areas. Blackface shows were popular in the North and South. In these shows whites dressed up
as Blacks and portrayed them as ignorant clowns. As a result, Jim Crow laws developed all over the United States.

The Supreme Court reflected conservative tendencies and did not overrule southern constitutional changes resulting in disfranchisement. In 1896, the Court ruled in Plessy v. Ferguson that “separate but equal” was constitutional. The Court was made up almost entirely of Northerners. (Logan, 1954, p. 98)

African Americans that moved north also encountered racism over territory with the ethnic Irish. Mary Terrell’s father, Robert Church, was shot during the Irish Riot in Memphis, Tennessee, following the Civil War. Robert Church began as a dishwasher and moved up to steward on Captain Church’s boats. Although her father had never gone to school (since learning to read and write was illegal during slavery), he had taught himself how to write his name quite well and to read by “perusing the newspapers and always kept abreast of the times” (Terrell, 1940, p. 35). He was a very brave man with a very bad temper, according to Terrell.

An example of his bravery came during the Irish Riot. Robert Church owned a saloon, and he had been warned by his friends that he would be shot and killed if he went to his place of business. He was to be shot because he had been named among several colored men to be killed. However, he did not heed their warnings and went to work where he was shot in the back of the head. Mary recalls the injury:

Till the day of his death there was at the back of his head a hole left by the bullet which wounded him, into which one could easily insert the tip of the little finger. He suffered terribly from excruciating headaches which attacked him at intervals and lasted several days. Sometimes the pain was so great he threatened to take his life. Doctors told him these headaches were caused by the wound he received during the Irish Riot when he was a young man. (Terrell, 1940, pp. 36-37)
African American Leadership Paradigms


The Booker T. Washington Paradigm

Booker Taliaferro Washington was born April 5, 1856. He was a former slave and graduate of Hampton Institute who founded Tuskegee Institute. In his 1895 speech at the Atlanta Exposition, Washington spoke to an audience of industrial capitalists, assuring them that all they had to be concerned with was the White working class. According to Hinton (2000) by saying this Washington left out over 90 percent of the African American working class, “an oppressed agrarian proletariat whom historians, cognizant of its dilapidated attribute, labeled a peonage agrarian class” (p. 302). He also left African Americans…with America’s operational authoritarian white supremacist overrule of some 10 million black people (p. 302).

Washington sought to gain financial and institutional resources for what Kilson (2000) calls his social organization black leadership.

This Washington brand of black leadership would, on one hand, neglect the quest for full-fledged citizenship status and human rights-rights that were by 1895 some 30 years old, enshrined in the Constitution on pain of a bloody Civil War and elaborated by federal legislation known as the Civil Rights Codes of 1866, 1866, and 1867. (p. 303)
The W. E. B. Du Bois Paradigm

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was born February 23, 1868, in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Unlike Washington, he had never been a slave. He was the first Black to receive a PhD from Harvard University in 1895. He was an intellectual leader as scholar, socialist, historian, civil rights activist, Pan-Africanist, author, editor, and writer. To some he was considered “radical” in his ideals for racial advancement.

According to Hinton (2000) Du Bois paradigm focused on the following:

- The guidance type leadership modalities, which is to say protecting a group’s rights, status, and honor.”
- His three-pronged strategy which consisted of (1) … a citizenship rights leadership cadre-a group of individuals committed to translating American social contract rights into rights for black people; committed to challenging status-denying racist values, ideas, and cultural practices; and committed to mobilizing popular support against group defamation.
- The founding of the NAACP was the first prong in this strategy. (2) Du Bois and his African American colleagues (Monroe Trotter, J. Milton Waldron, Clement Morgan, and others) cultivated a network of loyal white allies among the white middle class and upper class — mainly from that small strategic segment of elite WASPs that sociologist have aptly labeled the cosmopolitan segment. (3) The third prong of the Du Bois paradigm involved the need to mobilize the federal government into a major role in fostering the development of citizenship rights equality for African Americans. (pp. 306-307)

During World War I. Du Bois pioneered the first march on Washington. He helped develop the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, directed by Thurgood Marshall, who became a U.S. Supreme Court Justice Marshall. The Legal Defense Fund “directed a long and arduous legal battle to dismantle the total juridical infrastructure of racial segregation and discrimination” (Hinton, 2000, p. 306). By 1930, the Washington paradigm had been replaced by the Du Bois paradigm. Du Bois “strove to bring the poorest, weakest, and
least educated black individuals into mainstream citizenship rights enjoyed by white America” (Hinton, 2000, p. 307).

**Lynching**

From 1882-1968, there were 4,743 known lynching which occurred in the United States. Three thousand, four hundred and forty-six of those lynched were African Americans. This question, although relevant today, was evident in the life of Ida B. Wells Barnett’s Anti-lynching Campaign during the Progressive Era (Hine, et al, 1995).

Ida B. Wells Barnett, an African American woman, became an outstanding spokesperson for the victims of lynching in America. She went to England to speak out against racial violence in the United States because lynching was rarely mentioned in the white Northern press. Wells “returned to an America where lynching was widely discussed as a stain on American civilization” (Hine, et al., 1995, p. 407). Her visit to England would also be the motivational factor in the founding of a national association for Black women, the NACW. Wells would be known by historians as “successfully debunking the myths of the black rapist” (p. 407).

Moreover, in the late nineteenth-century South what Joel Williamson has characterized as a veritable “rage for order” made racial control a crucial security blanket. As white supremacy became institutionalized by racial segregation, the “uppity Negro” who failed to know “his place” was scapegoated as the great menace to order. In this context the image developed and flourished of the black man as a rapacious “black brute” who savagely despoiled “the flower of white womanhood.” This symbolization of Negro menace served to justify, and also fueled the swelling of lynching—the mob terrorism which constituted the ultimate weapon of white rule. (Morton 1991, p. 19)
According to Jones (1985):

During the Reconstruction period, white men lost such tight control over black women, they feared that black men would “naturally” begin to sexually harass their former mistresses; after all (whites realized), the sexual abuse of women had always signified the hatred men of one race felt toward members of the other. Thus any hint of sexual impropriety on the part of black men, and, indeed, the slightest possible pretext of any kind, met with swift retribution, and provided white men as a group with an opportunity to reaffirm their own sense of racial superiority and “manhood.” The mutilation and castration of lynching victims (invariably accused of raping white women) brought into explicit focus the tangle of “hate and guilt and sex and fear” that enmeshed all southerners well into the twentieth century. (pp. 149-150)

Terrell was a social activist all through her adult life. The legalized racism found in the Jim Crow laws of the times affected her and every colored person around her.

Since married women were not allowed to teach, Mary stayed home and became a housewife.

The primary event that drove Terrell back into the political and professional arena was the 1892 lynching of her lifelong friend from Memphis, Tom Moss, who was murdered by Whites jealous of the success of his grocery store. Never had such blatant injustice struck Terrell so personally. (Terrell, 1940, p. 14)

After the death of her friend Mary Church Terrell and Frederick Douglass met with President Benjamin Harrison to ask him to speak out against racial violence. He listened to them but did not speak on it in public.
**True Womanhood**

According to Welter (1966) there were four attributes of “True Womanhood” for White women: piety, purity, submission, and domesticity. By these a woman was judged by her husband, neighbors, and society. When all four of these virtues were combined you had mother, daughter, sister, wife—woman. Without them, no matter whether there was fame, achievement or wealth, all was ashes. With them she was promised happiness and power (p. 154). Religion or piety was considered the core of a woman’s virtue. It was valued because it did not take a woman from her home but kept her “proper sphere.” Church work did not make her less domestic or submissive. Purity was as important as piety.

Without it she was, in fact, no woman at all, but a member of some lower order. A “fallen woman” was a “fallen angel,” unworthy of the celestial company of her sex. To contemplate the loss of purity brought tears; to be guilty of such a crime, in the women’s magazines at least, brought madness or death. (Welter, 1966, p. 154)

**Black Womanhood**

In the article, “The Myth of the “Bad” Black Woman,” Lerner (1972) reports as follows:

After slavery ended, the sexual exploitation of black women continued, in both the North and the South, although in different forms and with somewhat greater risk to the white man involved. To sustain it, in the face of the nominal freedom of black men, a complex system of supportive mechanisms and sustaining myths was created. One of these was the myth of the “bad” black woman. By assuming a different level of sexuality for all Blacks than that of whites and mythifying their greater sexual potency, the black woman could be made to personify sexual freedom and abandon. A myth was created that all black
women were eager for sexual exploits, voluntarily “loose” in their morals and, therefore, deserved none of the consideration and respect granted to white women. Every black woman was, by definition, a slut according to this racist mythology; thereby to assault her and exploit her sexually was not reprehensible and carried with it none of the normal communal sanctions against such behavior…laws against intermarriage, the denial of the title “Miss” or “Mrs.” to any black woman; the taboos against respectable social mixing of the races, the refusal to let black women customers try on clothing in stores before making a purchase, the assigning of single toilet facilities to both sexes of Black, the different legal sanctions against rape, abuse of minors and other sex crimes when committed against white or black women. (Lerner, 1972, pp. 163-164)

When I began this research study it was difficult for African American club women to open up and talk with me. I really did not understand why they did not until my study lead me to the above quote. When a group of people are terrorized and stigmatized for hundreds of years it is not surprising that they would develop self-protection modes. With cruel attitudes prevailing against African American women, as in the above quote, there were no real options except to develop a code of silence to survive. When the laws which should protect all do not apply to all men and women, it is a travesty. It is quite amazing to me the sheer determination and perseverance these women had.

As an African American female this quote makes me wonder about my own ancestors and what they endured, just because of the color of their skin. I have often heard of the terrible atrocities which occurred during the Holocaust and how that time should never be forgotten. I also feel that the suffering and injustices inflicted on African American men, women and children, should not be hidden or forgotten, for it is a painful, but important part of American history. I attribute information, similar to the quote
above, from keeping the accomplishments of African American women excluded. It also explains why the history of early childhood education for African American children is not well known.


Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that ‘twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what’s all this here talking about?

That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain’t I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain’t I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man-when I could get it-and bear the lash as well! And ain’t I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother’s grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain’t I a woman?

Then they talk about this thing in the head; what’s this they call it? [member of audience whispers, “intellect”] That’s it, honey. What’s that got to do with women’s rights or negroes’ rights? If my cup won’t hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn’t you be mean not to let me have my little half measure full?

Then that little man in the black there, he says women can’t have as much rights as men, ‘cause Christ wasn’t a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From god and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him.

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.
Obliged to you for hearing me, and now old Sojourner ain’t got nothing more to say. (p. 1)

Because of the historical circumstances of Black women they could not be expected to conform to the ideals of True Womanhood (Jones, 1990, p. 13).

Sojourner Truth was a prime example of an African American woman who had suffered and survived. She was requesting the same respect that would be given any White woman. She was saying that she was a woman with the same needs, wants, and desires as any other. She felt deserved it.

According to Hine et al. (1995):

The heated debate about black women tended to revolve around two diametrically opposed notions about the nature of black womanhood. Most whites, male and female, maligned the black woman on the grounds of racial make-up and questionable moral character, which resulted in her inevitable conceptual deviation from the True Womanhood ideal. Blacks, on the other hand, agreed that she departed from the ideal, but not because she was morally defective; rather, she was the victim of sexual abuse and exploitation and could therefore not be blamed for circumstances beyond her control. Instead of being blamed, the argument continued, she should be perceived as a new model of the True Woman because of the unique qualities she had developed surviving in a hostile environment. (p.13)

Originally Black women responded to attacks on their sexuality by creating a politics of silence. However, after continuous attacks on their morality, especially after a disturbing letter by James W. Jacks, they would break that code of silence by joining in a united front of Black womanhood in 1896, by the formation of the NACW. It would be the NACW that would be the primary vehicle for race leadership (White, 1999, p. 24).

Hine et al. (1995) referred to African American women’s silence as:
“a culture of dissemblance.” In order to “protect the sanctity of inner aspects of their lives,” black women, especially those of the middle class, reconstructed and represented their sexuality through its absence-through silence, secrecy, and invisibility. In so doing they sought to combat the pervasive negative images and stereotypes. Black clubwomen’s adherence to Victorian ideology, as well as their self-representation as “super moral,”...was perceived as crucial not only to the protection and upward mobility of black women but also to the attainment of respect, justice, and opportunity for all black Americans.

(p.13)

I found the above quote concerning, “a cult of dissemblance,” to be very true and still in existing in some ways today. During my initial search for information on Black women’s clubs, it was difficult to get them to talk with me. I had to first gain their trust through members of the group. However, once they realized I had good intentions, they were more than willing to offer information. They wanted to know if my interest and intent was pure and honest. Black women fought these myths through individual and organizational efforts. The NAWC, with Mary Church Terrell as the first president, played a major part in dispelling racial myths against Black women.

Mary Church Terrell’s Educational History

Preschool Years

Mary Church Terrell grew up in the suburbs of Memphis, Tennessee. She grew up playing with the German children in her neighborhood. She learned German words and phrases from them which she spoke a great deal. “My mother says that sometimes she could not understand what I wanted, because I would call things by their German rather than by their English names having heard my playmates talk about them in their mother tongue” (Terrell, 1940, p. 43). She was a very happy child and a very big talker.
Ironically, she was named by her father after one of Captain Church’s daughters, Mollie, who was deaf and dumb.

Terrell began at an early age to care about the welfare of others. She recalls an incident when she was four. She had been left with the housekeeper while her mother was out. A cat had somehow caught a canary, and the housekeeper and her friends punished the cat by beating it to death. They were not deterred by her crying and attempts to save the cat, but were merciless in their pursuit.

As I looked back upon the shocking exhibition of cruelty to animals, I can easily understand why those ignorant women were guilty of it. They had all been slaves and had undoubtedly seen men, women, and children unmercifully beaten by overseers for offenses of various kinds, and they were simply practicing upon an animal which had done wrong from their point of view the cruelty which had been perpetrated upon human beings over and over again. (Terrell, 1940, p. 44)

Terrell’s first introduction to racism came when she was five. She was taking a train trip North with her father. At that time there were no Jim Crow laws in Tennessee, even though there were separate cars for Coloreds. There were no mandatory statutes. However, Colored people were expected to sit there. Terrell and her father had seats in the best coach.

Sometime during their trip, Robert Church went to the Smoker car and left Terrell sitting alone. As the conductor was making his rounds to check tickets, he asked her name and why she was there. She became afraid and her answer did not satisfy the conductor. He grabbed her roughly by the arm and snatched her up out of the seat; “Whose little nigger is this?” was his question as he turned to ask the passengers? One of the men began to tell him who Terrell’s father was and that it would be in his best interest
to leave her alone. This did not stop the conductor who was about to remove her from the train.

Then one of her father’s white friends went to the back and told him what was going on, “My father returned immediately and there ensued a scene which no one who saw it could ever forget” (Terrell, 1940, p. 46). It is possible that Terrell’s father pulled out a gun, although she does not say he did. She does, however, make reference to it being a time when it was customary for men to carry revolvers in their pockets. No doubt Robert Terrell was one such man. She remembers how courageous her father had been in the white coach and how she was allowed to stay there with him.

This event greatly agitated Terrell because she had tried so hard to be good as her mother had instructed her. While confiding to her mother she asked her the following question:

Why the conductor had wanted to take me out of a nice clean coach and put me in one my father said was dirty? I assured her that I had been careful to do everything she told me to do. For instance, my hands were clean and so was my face. I hadn’t mussed my hair; it was brushed back and was perfectly smooth. I hadn’t lost either one of the two pieces of blue ribbon which tied the little braids on each side of my head. I hadn’t soiled my dress a single bit. I was sitting up straight and proper. Neither was I looking out of the window, resting on my knees with my feet on the seat (as I dearly loved to do). I wasn’t talking loud. In short, I assured my mother I was “behaving like a little lady,” as she told me to do. (Terrell, 1940, p. 47)

**Elementary School Years**

Terrell’s mother felt that the colored schools in Memphis were not very good so she sent her up north to Yellow Springs, Ohio, when she was six years old. She lived with the Hunster family while attending the Model School. The school was connected with Antioch College. Terrell believes that this Model School was “the forerunner of the
kindergarten in the United States “(Terrell, 1940, p. 49). At that time, Antioch’s first president was the educator Horace Mann.

The Hunsters were a great family, and Terrell enjoyed living with them. They had a large house and operated a hotel called the Union House. She transported love letters for one of their daughters, Miss Sallie, whom she loved dearly. “No little girl could possibly have been happier than I was so far away from home, for I became a member of the family in every sense of the word. I called Mrs. Hunster “Ma” and Mr. Hunster “Pa” (Terrell, 1940, p. 49).

Terrell excelled in school while learning two foreign languages. Her mother hired a tutor to teach her German. She never had to be forced to study because she thrived on it.

I was ambitious to stand at the head of my class and I was willing to pay the price. I do not deserve one bit of credit for this, however, for getting my lessons was a sort of indoor sport for me and was a genuine joy. I was always curious to know what “my books” were going to say next. (Terrell, 1940, p. 51)

After several years at the Model School she attended the public schools of Yellow Springs. One day in history class she made a connection between herself and former slaves. She realized that she was a descendent from the very slaves who had been freed by the Emancipation Proclamation and she was shocked.

I felt humiliated and disgraced. When I read or heard about the Union army and the Rebel forces, I had never thought about my connection with slavery at all. But now I know I belonged to a group of people who had been brutalized, degraded, and sold like animals. This was a rude and terrible shock indeed. (Terrell, 1940, p. 52)

It was this revelation which instilled in Terrell a desire to stand as an equal with her white classmates in every way. Being the only black girl in her class, she thought that she now had to “hold high the banner of my race” (Terrell, 1940, p. 52).
The incident in history class made her remember something else that had happened while she was in the Model School. A group of little white girls were admiring themselves in the mirror, complementing their rosebud mouths, sparkling eyes, and wonderful tresses. Terrell imitated them and asked, “Haven’t I got a pretty face?” She was told she had “a pretty black face.” This response was followed by a shout of laughter from the other girls. After she recovered from the hurt, she had learned a valuable lesson.

From that day to this, not only have I never laughed at any human being because of any physical defect, but I have never had the slightest inclination to do so. It is amazing how many people who are otherwise kind, considerate, and well-bred have the bad habit of making fun of people, if one or more of their features are not exactly in proper proportion, or pleasing to the eye, or if they carry themselves in some peculiar way. (Terrell, 1940, p. 54)

*High School Years*

Terrell completed her courses in the public school at Oberlin High, attended the Academy and entered Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio. While in high school she continued to excel in her work studying Latin and writing her first essay on birds. She sang in the choir and really enjoyed it.

Professor Fenelon B. Rice, who was then director of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, came to the high school to train girls to sing for our Commencement. Among the nine girls selected, I was one of three chosen to sing contralto. (Terrell, 1940, p. 63)

It was in high school that Terrell decided that she would choose the Classical Course of study in college. The Classical Course was usually reserved for gentlemen because it involved studying Greek, lead to a Bachelor of Arts degree and took two years longer that the Literary Course. The Literary Course could be completed in two years and
participants received only a certificate. Although her friends tried to persuade her not to choose the Classical Course, she did it anyway.

They pointed out that Greek was hard; that it was unnecessary, if not positively unwomanly, for girls to study that “old, dead language” anyhow; that during the two extra years required to complete it I would miss a lot of fun which I could enjoy outside college walls. (Terrell, 1940, p. 64)

**College Years**

Terrell attended Oberlin College in Ohio where she earned a bachelors and master’s degree. Oberlin College was founded in 1833 as a religious school. It was unique for the time because: (a) it was coeducational, (b) it accepted Negro students (c) it was a strong supporter of abolitionism and other reform movements, (d) Christian perfectionism was mildly practiced, (e) it was led by Charles Grandison Finney, a powerful evangelist. Oberlin had been part of the Underground Railroad providing safe houses for slaves escaping to the North.

Oberlin was also associated with Reverend Washington Gladden. He was known as the father of the Social Gospel. Terrell would have had many opportunities to hear him speak as the minister of her church the First Congregational Church of Columbus, Ohio.

Gladden became closely associated with Oberlin College, he delivered lectures and sermons at the college, and his writings were studied in courses in practical sociology. Over the years, Gladden would be recognized as “a pioneer in three general fields—the popular exposition of new Biblical scholarship, the social application of the Gospel, and the presentation of liberal theology. (Bunge, 2001, p. 375)
Social Gospel

The Social Gospel movement began at the end of the Civil War and continued through the end of World War I. It was a social reinterpretation of Christianity seeking to bring theology and sociology together. It was created to address the problems and issues caused by growing industry and urbanization “including crime, poverty, unemployment, exploitative employment practices, slums, and disease” (Bunge, 2001, p. 373).

The Social Gospel movement was based on four theological tenets: “social salvation based upon dynamic interpretation of the kingdom of God; the immanence of God; the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man and emphasis not simply on charity but justice” (Bunge, 2001, pp. 373-374). The corollaries of these tenets were as follows:

1. The principles of Jesus are reliable guides for personal and social life in any age.
2. It is important to have a strong belief in progress, conditional upon human response to divine leading.
3. Human beings can be educated to make the right choices and so contribute to the coming of God’s kingdom on earth.
4. It is important to establish an ethics of the kingdom of God that puts great emphasis on the law of love, asserting that individual sin (primarily selfishness) and the corporate transmission of sin through human institutions can be overcome when individuals and institutions are subject to the law of love. (Handy, 1986, 593)

The Social Gospel movement involved ministers and laypersons, such as pastors, educators, editors, and leaders in social-reform organizations. Racial reform was also associated with social-reform. Bunge (2001) reported that “a number of African American pastors and laity espoused to the Social Gospel, including William N. DeBerry,
Francis G. Grimke, George E. Haynes, Kelly Miller, Henry N. Proctor, Mary Church Terrell, Alexander Walters, and Ida B. Wells-Barnett (p. 375).

Mary Church Terrell graduated from Oberlin with strong religious roots informed by race-class ideologies among African Americans.

Although Terrell lived a very privileged life from birth through adulthood, it would be her own experiences with racial discrimination in spite of her privilege, a keen empathy for others, and a sharp mind for analyzing the roots of social issues that would make her an effective spokesperson and moral agent for justice. (Bunge, 2001, p. 375)

At Oberlin College Terrell was a happy active scholar. Any outward acts of prejudice during the time she was in school would not have been tolerated, although in future years conditions would become worse and sometimes intolerable for Colored students at Oberlin. She enjoyed her college years (Terrell, 1940).

Terrell chose the Classical Course and was the only girl in a class of 40 boys at one time. Reading the Iliad gave her great joy. She loved poems, writing and reciting them, and was considered the class poet in her freshman year. In the senior preparatory class she was invited to join the literary society called the Aelioian. It was in this group that she learned parliamentary law, because parliamentary drills were required for all members. She was elected twice as the Aelioian representative when they had public debates. She served as the editor of the college paper, The Oberlin Review. She was always excited about the great orators that came to town to speak on various topics along with the singers and orchestras (Terrell, 1940).

Terrell was very active in college life, “I attended all the class receptions and every social function which the college gave and was sure of a cordial reception wherever I went” (Terrell, 1940, p. 77). She was actively engaged in sports and was a member of
the Lawn Tennis Club. Terrell loved to dance, a practice that was frowned upon at Oberlin. So she would often slip away to the gymnasium to dance. Terrell also served as the lead singer in the Sunday evening prayer meeting in Ladies Hall.

Mary Church Terrell was invited to attend the Inauguration in Washington of Senator B. K. Bruce. “Senator Bruce was the only colored man in the United States Senate, was highly respected by all the worthwhile people in the official life of the capital and was genuinely liked by many” (Terrell, 1940, p. 82). This event held a special place in her heart. Not so much the grandness of the occasion but the fact that she got to meet, “one of the greatest men whom this or any other country has ever produced” (Terrell, 1940, p. 83). It was also during this visit to Washington that she met and became life-long friends with the great Frederick Douglass.

**Study Abroad**

Robert Terrell offered to send Terrell on a trip to Europe and he did that in 1888. She was there for two years studying in France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and England.

She relished the cultural opportunities that were open to her in Europe because of the freedom from racial tensions. She attended plays and concerts frequently and regularly practiced her language skills with nationals. She kept diaries in French and German detailing her activities and describing her friends and acquaintances. She resisted several opportunities to marry European men, feeling that such a marriage would cause her to relinquish her Afro-American identity. (Terrell, 1940, p. 13)
Marriage

After a year at Wilberforce, Terrell was invited to teach in Washington, D.C. at a colored high school. It was in Washington that Terrell met and married a, colored man, who had graduated with honors from Harvard University in 1884, Robert Herberton Terrell. Robert was a very light-skinned mulatto born in Orange, Virginia. He was in charge of the Latin department, and she was assigned as his assistant. He would often ask her advice concerning Latin terms during his classes. Soon the students noticed their growing friendship, and Terrell would find a saying written on her blackboard, “Mr. Terrell is certainly getting good. He used to go to dances, but now he goes to Church (Terrell, 1940, p. 137).

Before she was married, an offer of employment came to her from Oberlin College. They wanted her for the position of registrar. She was very surprised because it had never occurred to her that “any colored women however great her attainments might be considered in the search for officers or instructors in a college for white youths in the United States” (Terrell, 1940, p. 138). She had some regrets after declining the offer but felt she had made the right decision. Terrell decided not to alter her wedding plans and married Robert Herberton Terrell in October of 1891. To this union were added one daughter Phyllis and an adopted niece and nephew, Mary and Robert.

Employment

After graduating from Oberlin College, Mary Church Terrell went back to live with her father in Memphis. But after he remarried she became more and more dissatisfied with her life, “All through my college course I had dreamed of the day when I
could promote the welfare of my race” (Terrell, 1940, p. 93). Her father did not want her to work. Instead he wanted to provide for her so she could be a lady of leisure. Terrell could have dedicated herself to a life of leisure. Instead, against her father’s wishes, she chose to help uplift her race in service, for the betterment of mankind. In her autobiography, *A Colored Women in a White World*, Terrell (1940) writes:

During the year I spent in Memphis after my father’s marriage I made up my mind definitely that, since he no longer needed me, it was wrong of me to remain idle there. I could not be happy leading a purposeless existence. Situated as I was, I could not put the college education I had taken such pains to acquire to any good use. I could not engage actively in any kind of work outside the home, because my father did not approve of my doing so. He would not consent to my teaching in the public schools of Memphis, because, he said, I “would be taking the bread and butter out of the mouth of some girl who needed it.” Since he was able and willing to support me, he declared, he did not understand why I wanted to teach or do any kind of work. (p. 92)

Terrell (1940) goes on to say that her father was a product of his environment:

In the South for nearly three hundred years “real ladies” did not work, and my father was thoroughly imbued with that idea. He wanted his daughter to be a “lady.” But said daughter had been reared among Yankees and she had imbibed the Yankee’s respect for work. I had conscientiously availed myself of opportunities for preparing myself for a life of usefulness as only four other colored women had been able to do. (p. 93)

But she applied for a job, without his knowledge, and was accepted as a teacher at Wilberforce University. Her father was so upset with her that he did not speak to her for a year.

At Wilberforce I received the munificent salary of $40.00 per month, out of which I was obliged to pay my board, although my room was furnished me free of charge. I taught everything from French and mineralogy in the
college department to reading and writing in the preparatory department. (Terrell, 1940, p. 93)

Although she had many responsibilities at Wilberforce, she enjoyed her work there.

Mary Church Terrell had many accomplishments in her life. She was indeed outstanding individual. Table 1 shows some of her accomplishments up to 1940.

Table 1
Mary Church Terrell’s Accomplishments 1883-1940

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Accomplishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts from Oberlin College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>Master of Arts from Oberlin College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1887</td>
<td>Taught languages at the High School on M Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895-1906</td>
<td>First Black appointed to the Board of Education of the District of Columbia serving for a total of 11 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890-1891</td>
<td>Studied languages abroad in France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>First President of the National Association of Colored Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>First to sell her speeches to fund kindergartens through the NACW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Delegate to the International Congress of Women (She gave her address in German.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1919</td>
<td>Delegate to the International League of Peace at Zurich, Switzerland representing the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Appointed Director of Work among Colored Women of the Eastern Division for the Republican National Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Appointed Director of Work among Colored Women during World War I Serving as National Supervisor of Work among Colored women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>Served with the delegation to the World for the Advancement of Colored People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Published her autobiography: A Colored Woman in a White World</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

History of Early Childhood Education for African Americans

Schools for African Americans 1616-1860

According to Cunningham and Osborn (1979), there were three types of schools for blacks between 1618 and 1860: (a) formal schools, (b) sabbath schools, and (c)
clandestine schools. These types of schools are further discussed in the following passages.

**Formal schools.** In 1619, the first Blacks to come to America were not slaves but indentured servants. A school was established by the Virginia Colony in 1620 for Negroes and Indians. As colonies began to import slaves, the position of Blacks changed. After 1640, there were no more provisions for educating Negroes (Quarles, 1964). Hugh Bryan established a school for Blacks in Charleston, North Carolina, for religious leadership in 1740. An ex-slave, Reverend Thomas Bacon, established a school for poor Black and White children in Maryland in 1750. Virginia had several formal schools by 1755, and Massachusetts had a private school for Blacks (Bullock, 1964). A Negro primary school was established in Boston in 1852. According to The Negro Yearbook (1931-32), there were 24 formal schools for Blacks prior to 1860.

**Sabbath schools.** Sabbath schools were important to the religious lives of slaves. They provided religious instruction and literacy skills. According to Anderson (1988) sabbath schools were church-sponsored schools which were opened in the evenings and on weekends. They provided basic literacy instruction.

Sabbath schools among freedmen have opened throughout the entire South; all of them giving elementary instruction, and reaching thousands who cannot attend the week-day teaching. These are not usually included in the regular returns, but are often spoken of with special interest by the superintendents. Indeed, one of the most thrilling spectacles which he who visit’s the southern country now witness in cities, and often upon the plantations, is the large schools gathered upon the Sabbath day, sometimes of many hundreds, dressed in clean Sunday garments, with eyes
sparkling, intent upon elementary and Christian instruction. The management of some of these is admirable, after the fashion of the best Sunday schools of white children, with faithful teachers, the majority of whom it will be noticed are colored. (p. 12)

_Clandestine schools._ Clandestine or midnight schools were held in secret. Widow Woodhouse’s Clandestine School taught reading and writing. In Savannah Georgia, Miss Deveaux established a school in 1838 which continued to operate until the union troops captured the city in 1864. According to Jenkins (1984) Susie King Taylor attended a clandestine school along with her brother. They along with thirty other children were taught in the kitchen of a widow. They would leave out secretively one by one with their books covered in paper to avoid detection by police or others. Susie Taylor later opened her own school in Savannah for black children. She had 20 pupils and she received one dollar a month for each of them (p. 37-38).

During the Progressive Era Americans became more convinced that, “young children should have access to preschool education outside the home. (By young children, I mean three-, four-, and five year-olds, not infants and toddlers, (though their needs are equally important)” (Beatty, 1995, p. ix). Frederick Froebel’s kindergartens succeeded where the infant schools failed.

Froebelianism was a romantic reconstruction of supposedly traditional modes of child nurture, not an attempt to take children away from their families and force-feed them academics. But as the same time the kindergarten was a force for modernization within the family and in education, legitimizing extrafamilial education and new pedagogical methods and modifying relationships among young children, women, schools, and the state. (Beatty, 1995, p. 38)
Frederick Froebel’s kindergartens began to flourish in the United States during this time.

**Frederick Froebel**

Frederick Froebel, known as the “Father of Kindergarten,” was born April 21, 1782, in Oberweissbach, Germany. His father was a Lutheran pastor, and his mother died when he was nine months old. He had an unhappy childhood up to the age of 10 when he was sent to live with his mother’s brother. There he found love and pleasure in the outdoors. Froebel recalled two types of teachers that he had in school:

One was pedantic and rigid, the other was large-hearted and free. The first never had any influence over the class, frequently scolding and ordering us about. The second led us with a glance, could do whatever he pleased with us but was not aware of his power. He was mild, gentle and kind hearted. (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000, p. 86)

Froebel became a forester very interested in plants and trees and natural growth. The sense of order and continuity that he found in nature would become a part of his educational thinking and practice. He wanted to “educate man in his true humanity” (p. 90). Froebel was persuaded by the headmaster of the Frankfurt Model School to give up agriculture and become a teacher. He accepted the challenge and found that he enjoyed teaching (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000).

Froebel established his first kindergarten in Blankenburg, Germany in 1837. The first English speaking kindergarten in the United States would be opened by Elizabeth Peabody.

The spiritual development of man was Froebel’s highest priority in education. He wanted, however, to develop it in harmony with man’s physical and intellectual growth. Froebel felt that his emphasis on
interconnection and unity of life (*Lebenseiningung*), which stemmed from his view of divine unity, distinguished his educational system from all others. (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000, p. 94)

Froebel’s methods included: the use of gifts (basic forms to show the general qualities of things) and occupations (activities in drawing, modeling of clay, use of paper and pliable materials in a variety of ways), songs and games, kindergarten specific teacher training, an emphasis on the importance of play and the moral development of children (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000, p. 104).

According to Ross, (1976) Froebelian kindergartens involved the use of ten gifts. The first gift was the ball. The ball was first used in the nursery and later in kindergarten. While playing with the ball the child learns a sense of observation and concepts such as; presence, absence, return, seeking, finding, clasping, rolling, sliding, and falling. There were a series of six balls, red, blue, yellow, green, purple, and orange. The importance of the balls was in its physical embodiment of Froebel’s concept of unity: the three-dimensional circle was the purest of forms. Froebel felt that the child would see a parallel between his own inner unity, interconnections within himself, and that of the ball. The second gift consisted of a wooden sphere, cube, and cylinder which represented variety, contrast, and synthesis. While the child played with these shapes he learned to express verbally the various qualities of the forms. The third through the sixth gifts were considered the building gifts. These gifts involved more creative activities.

The third Froebelian gift was a cube divided into eight smaller cubes. The fourth gift was a two inch cube divided into eight oblong blocks. By using these gifts the child also learns unity and he can see the relationship between parts and the whole. The child could take the shapes apart and create new whole. The child had more freedom of imagination while sometimes guided by the teacher. The seventh gift was a one-inch
square and four different triangles made of very thin pieces of colored wood. This gift moved from the realm of solids to plane. The eighth and ninth gifts consisted of small sticks of different lengths and wire rings and half rings of different sizes. The children could create an unlimited number of designs from the sticks and rings. The final gift was any object that symbolized a point, such as a seed or a pebble. The objects were arranged in logical geometric sequence and given to the child in that order. Froebel felt that all ten gifts together could guide the child to understand the relationship between the whole to its parts (Ross, 1976, p. 6).

The occupations of Froebel’s systems began after the child had used the ten gifts. The occupations involved the child learning how to work with solid forms and textures. The child would use a long needle to pierce though heavy paper to create designs, sew with brightly colored wool, embroider, draw, paper twist, weave, and create clay models, with countless possibilities. The finally area of the Froebelian kindergarten involved the use of songs, games, stories, conversations, and gardening, which were to be substitutes for traditional reading, writing, and other traditional activities. Through the songs and games children made individual contributions to the functioning of the group. They were intended to help the child’s realization of himself as an important part of the group (Ross, 1976, pp. 6-7).

Frederick Froebel envisioned the following:

1. A rural environment where the children would like and learn from nature.
2. He assumed each child would tend his own small garden and see the similarity to his own development.
3. He was a romantic concerning his view of the unity and goodness in nature. He felt that children who seek out flowers, cares for them, and protects them cannot become a base child or a wicked man.
4. In the kindergarten the child learned through activity.
5. Froebel felt that real education could only occur when the child puzzled things out for himself.
6. Froebel also saw the importance of trained kindergarten teachers. He felt that if the teachers were not trained well or had the wrong temperament the kindergarten system would only amount to child’s play. The kindergarten had to reflect the ideals of motherhood. Froebel sought women to train as kindergarten teachers. (Ross, 1976, p. 7)

Schools for African Americans During and After Reconstruction

Reconstruction. According to Cunningham and Osborn (1979), in 1866 there were 79 private schools for Blacks. By 1876 there were 1,075 public schools and 121 private schools for Blacks. Hampton Institute had a school on campus called the Butler School. The Butler school admitted five year olds. It was a colored free school affiliated with the county school. One of the first graduates of Hampton, Lucy Laney, established a nursery school and day school for Black children in Augusta, Georgia. Lucy Laney would later establish Haines Institute. James D. Anderson (1988) concurred about the same arrangement with the addition of the Armstrong and Rosenwald schools in the south for Black youth, but not for early childhood learners.

Black Colleges and Universities. Between 1865 and 1890, the following Black colleges were founded: Atlanta University (1865), (b) Fisk University (1867), (c) Morehouse College (1867), (d) Howard University (1867), (e) Hampton Institute (1868) began working with five year olds in 1873 at the Whittier School), (f) Meharry Medical College (1876), (g) Jackson State College (1877), (h) Tuskegee Institute (1881) established the Model School later renamed the Chambliss House which taught kindergarteners), (h) Spellman College (1991) and (i) Florida A&M University (1887). These schools had laboratory schools for prospective teachers. The schools were attached
to the writings and methods of Pestalozzi, Froebel, Hall and Dewey (Anderson, 1988; Cunningham & Osborn, 1979). In addition to Black colleges and universities African American clubwomen began establishing kindergartens for African American children all over the country via local and national Black women’s clubs.

Table 2
*Kindergarten Locations in Black Colleges and Universities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black Colleges and Universities Founded Between 1865-1890</th>
<th>*Kindergarten locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Atlanta University</em></td>
<td><em>Hampton Institute</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisk University</td>
<td>Meharry Medical College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morehouse College</td>
<td>Jackson State College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard University</td>
<td><em>Tuskegee Institute</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Spellman College</em></td>
<td><em>Florida A&amp;M University</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Organization of African American Womanhood*

The Colored Women’s League of Washington D.C. was one of the first black women’s clubs established. It was founded in June 1892 and incorporated on January 11, 1894. The founders were: Mary Church Terrell, Helen Appo Cook, Charlotte Forten Grimke, Josephine B. Bruce, Mary J. Patterson, Anna J. Cooper, Evelyn Shaw and Ida D. Bailey (Smith, 1996, p. 138). Mary Church Terrell reported that it was composed of mostly teachers that were concerned with the educational development of disadvantaged African American women and children. “The League established evening classes for adults, a program to train kindergarten teachers, and a free kindergarten and day nursery for the children of working mothers” (Terrell, 2010, p. 1). Helen Cook was the first president and continued in that position until the early 1900’s.
Anna Evans Murray. Anna J. Murray was born in 1857. She was also an Oberlin graduate. She “dedicated her life to the establishment of free kindergarten education and the training of kindergarten teachers in the District of Columbia schools and to the development of the black child” (Smith, 1996, p. 492). According to Beatty (1995), “Some African-American’s, however, like Anna J. Murray who organized kindergartens for African American in Washington D.C., argued that African-American children, too, would benefit from the play experiences and “communion with nature” of the Froebelian kindergarten” (p. 109). She saw the need for free kindergartens and trained kindergarten teachers to direct them. Murray was the Education Committee chair of the National League of Colored Women (NLCW).

She managed a normal school established by the NLCW in October 1896, training kindergarten teachers for seven free kindergartens established by the league. Seven of her teachers were appointed to teach in the district public schools. In 1898, she successfully lobbied for a twelve-thousand-dollar federal appropriation to establish kindergarten classes. Phoebe A. Hearst, wife of the senator from California, funded the Kindergarten Training School for five years. Murray received a second appropriation from Congress in 1906 which included teacher training courses at Miner Teachers College, then called Miner Normal. She directed the free kindergarten program at the Colored Settlement House. (Smith, 1996, p. 492)

Murray stated:

The education of the Negro child should reach lower down, for long before he reaches the age of six years (the legal age for entrance to public schools) the work has been done which makes of him either a useful citizen or a worse than useless drag upon his community and his race…Let the kindergarten become the basis for all instruction, for it offers the only logically safe, sure, and natural means for
the training of the individual and the recreation and reproduction of the ideal life as it should exist in the home, the community, and the nation. Give use two generations of children trained under this system of education and we will change the present menacing aspect of the American race problem, whether within or without our borderland, to one of sympathy and harmony. (Smith, 1996, p. 493)

**Haydie Campbell.** Haydee Campbell, an Oberlin graduate, was the first Black female to receive formal kindergarten training under Susan Blow at the St. Louis Kindergarten Training School (Beatty, 1995, p. 109). She would become the supervising principal of the kindergartens for African American children in the St. Louis Public Schools where Froebelian methods were used. She secured this position by receiving the highest score on her examination over all White applicants. Haydie Campbell, Josephine Silone Yates and other kindergarten advocates understood that, “high-quality kindergarten training was the key to the success of the public kindergarten movement” (p. 109). In 1896 Campbell would become the National Kindergarten organizer of the NACW under the leadership of Mary Church Terrell. In Campbell’s first speech, “Why the National Association Should Devise Means for Establishing Kindergartens,” presented at the 1899 NACW Convention, she says:

The plan of the Kindergarten system has been molded according to the nature of the child, and through it he may be led to a higher state of development of body, mind and soul and a fuller consciousness of this relationship to nature, to this fellow-man and to his God. This is the aim, the vital purpose of the Kindergarten education. The Kindergarten assist the natural growth of the child, developing the good that in him lies and helping him to receive from his environment the good it may contain. As tools to this end, Froebel has given us songs, games, stories, talks, gifts, occupations, lunch and garden work, and these are only tools to be subordinated always to the thought which directs their use. (Campbell, 1899, para. 4)
Josephine Silone Yates. Josephine Silone Yates was born in 1859, of New England ancestry. She was the first Black to graduate from the Newport Rhode Island high school as valedictorian of her class. After moving to the Midwest she was educated in the schools of Philadelphia and studied under Fanny Jackson Coppin. Yates graduated from Oberlin College in 1865. She organized the Kansas City Women’s League in 1893 and served as treasurer and president of the NACW. She was also a professor of English at Lincoln Institute. Yates believed strongly in establishing Froebelian kindergartens. In her article, “Kindergartens and mother’s clubs: As related to the work of the National Association of Colored Women”, she begins with the words of Frederick Froebel:

“Come let us live with our children” wrote the great educational reformer Froebel realizing more and more that the one thing needful for the universal good of humanity was unity of development; perfect evolution in accordance with the laws of nature,—such an evolution as science discovers in other organisms of nature…”Living, Acting, Conceiving,”—these processes, Froebel contended, form the triple chord of nature; and the great stress he placed upon self-activity foreshadowed the industrial movement in education which followed the wake of the kindergarten; and which served among other things, to prove that his principles, in place of being limited in application to the earliest years, apply as well to each period or stage of life. His principles also proved that, not only has each stage a completeness of its own, but also that perfection in the latter stages can be attained only by perfection in the earlier; hence the necessity of properly planned courses in kindergarten and primary instruction. (Yates, 1905, p. 304)

The National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs

The National Association of Colored Women (NACW) was founded in 1896 by:

(a) Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, (b) Harriet Tubman, (c) Frances E. W. Harper, and (d) Ida
Bell Wells-Barnett to defend Black womanhood. Ida Bell Wells-Barnett’s anti-lynching campaign, resulting in her visit to England, angered many White Americans. In 1895 the president of the Missouri Press, James W. Jacks, wrote a letter to Florence Balgarnie in England. Balgarnie was the secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society. In his letter he declared that “the Negroes of this country are wholly devoid of morality” and that “the women were prostitutes and all were natural thieves and liars” (Hine et al, 1995, p. 13). It was Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin who sent out a call persuading black women of the critical need for organization (Hine et al. 1995).

The NACW was developed as a result of a merger between the National Federation of Afro-American Women, formed in 1892, and the Colored Women’s League of Washington, D.C. formed in 1895, along with hundreds of women clubs around the country (Hine et.al., 1995).

Because African American women were not accepted in the General Federation of Women’s Clubs (GFWC), the white women clubs of the day, they established their own. The NACW members were very interested in uplifting the masses of the Black race and educating the children. They raised funds to be used in the establishment of kindergartens for Black children; created vocational schools; homes for the elderly and summer camps. They opposed segregation and strongly supported the anti-lynching movement. The National Notes was the magazine adopted as the official organ of the Association. Originally it was called “The Notes,” and it was a small sheet of facts gathered by Mrs. Booker T. Washington which she published at her own expense (Davis, 1996, p. 77).
The NACW wanted to show the progress and accomplishments that had been made by Blacks in past decades. They sought to help the Black race by strengthening character and family life. Under the leadership of its first president, Mary Church Terrell, the organization worked to accomplish educational and social reform. Their motto was, “Lifting as we climb.” The organization created a national scholarship fund for African-American women going to college. It also supported the suffrage movement two years before the General Federation of Women’s Clubs (Wesley, 1984; Sheftall, 1990; Lerner, 1972; Terrell, 2005).

During the Woman’s Era, middle-class African American women worked to promote positive changes in black communities. They began to express their feelings in public forums on issues such as (a) social services, (b) reform schools, (c) lynching, (d) Suffrage, (e) Black Womanhood, and (f) various educational projects. Thomas (1995) states the following:

Middle-class women, black and white, had institutional or organizational bodies with which to influence public policy. Although they were excluded from positions of political power, women compensated by activity in their various organizations. Beginning with the temperance societies, then followed by the women’s club movement, women strove to fuse politics with their domestic ideals. (p. 4)

Hamilton (1978) stated that the NACW had the following objectives:

(1) to improve the education of colored women, (2) to improve the homes and homelife of Black people, (3) to work for the moral, social, economic, and religious welfare of women and children, (4) to protect the rights of working women and children, (5) to work for civil and political rights for Black people, (6) to work for job opportunities for Black women, and (7) to promote interracial understanding. (p. 9)
Wesley (1984) reported that in the late nineteenth century local, regional, and national associations were organized by Black women. There were five regional associations under the NACW Inc. The first regional association was the North Eastern Federation of Women’s Clubs which was founded June 3, 1896 (p. 184). The Central Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, Inc. was organized on December 31, 1925 (p. 353). The Northwestern Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, Inc., was organized in 1915 in Wilberforce, Ohio (449). The Southwest Region was organized in Fort Worth, Texas in 1945 (p. 484). The Southeastern Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, Inc. included: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Mississippi and Virginia. It was organized in 1919 for a brief time and then permanently organized with Mary McLeod Bethune as its first president (p. 246).

There were African American women of the Semper Fidelis Club working toward racial uplift in Birmingham, Alabama. According to McGregor (1962) they heeded the call for unity.

In Birmingham, Alabama, this spirit was at work and it expressed itself in a new interest on the part of women in the political, social and economic conditions. Birmingham women heard the call of “The National Colored Women’s League” and “The National Federation of Afro-American Women,” and their answer was—organize—organize and organize they did. (p. 5)

The early organization of the Semper Fidelis Club was under the name of the “Noblesse Oblige.” The founders of the 1900 club were: Mrs. Mamie Lou Brown, Mrs. Hattie C. Davenport, Mrs. Alice Harney, Mrs. Lena Hadnott, Mrs. Sarah Jones, Mrs. Anna C. Parker, Mrs. Pearl Johnston, Mrs. Alice Cammack, Mrs. Emma Devigne, and Mrs. Caroline Brooks. Mrs. Mamie Folkes was the first president. The Noblesse Oblige joined

The aims of the Semper Fidelis Club involved various charity and civic responsibilities. The information on the Semper Fidelis Club adds to what was done in Alabama among African American women.

**Kindergartens**

During the late nineteenth century there were three types of kindergartens in the United States: (a) private, (b) public, and (c) charity. Elizabeth Palmer Peabody started the first English speaking kindergarten in 1860. These private schools consisted of middle and upper class White children. The parents paid tuition to attend. The main focus was on preparing children for proper socialization using Froebelian methods. Susan Blow opened the first public kindergarten in St. Louis, Missouri. Public kindergartens were established because of the growing concern of urban decay. Many believed that the churches, communities, and the families were not properly socializing their children. Charity kindergartens began during the late 1870’s. Various philanthropists supported these kindergartens. The aims of these schools were to: (a) assimilate and Americanize immigrants, (b) prepare students for elementary school, and (c) educate families. In the north White charity organizations and churches provided the free kindergartens for Black children. However, in the south the National Association of Colored Women and other
Black clubs sponsored free kindergartens because there were not many public schools that would serve Black children (Spring, 2001).

According to Yates (1905):

From its initial period, one of the most important features of the work of the National Association of Colored Women, organized in 1896 by the consolidation of the National League and of the National Federation, and having as its first president Mrs. Mary Church Terrell, a staunch advocate of the efficacy of the kindergartens, has been through its branches in the various states a potent force in the formation and promotion of kindergartens, day nurseries, and mother clubs; while one of the most practical features in the National League, organized several years earlier, was “child study,” as advanced by Preyer and Dr. Stanley Hall—Study that as early as 1893 lead many Afro American mothers, in localities where branches of the League were organized, to study kindergarten methods to be used in the home-training of their children. (p. 307)

The establishment of free Kindergartens for African American children was one of the primary goals of the National Association. In an 1898 speech, before the National American Women’s Suffrage Association, Terrell wrote:

Make a tour of the settlements of colored people, who in many cities are relegated to the most noisome sections permitted by the municipal government, and behold the mites of humanity who infest them. Here are our little ones, the future representatives of the race, fairly drinking in the pernicious example of their elders, coming in contact with nothing but ignorance and vice, till at the age of six, evil habits are formed which no amount of civilizing or Christianizing can ever completely break. Listen to the cry of our children. In imitation of the example set by the Great Teacher of men, who could not offer himself as a sacrifice, until he had made an eternal plea for the innocence and helplessness of childhood, colored women are everywhere reaching out after the waifs and strays, who without their aid may be doomed to lives of evil and shame. As an organization, the National Association of Colored Women feels that the establishment of kindergartens is the special mission which we are called to fulfill. So keenly alive are we to the necessity of rescuing our little ones, whose noble
qualities are deadened and dwarfed by the very atmosphere which they breathe, that the officers of the Association are now trying to secure means by which to send out a kindergarten organizer, whose duty it shall be both to arouse the conscience of our women, and to establish kindergartens, wherever the means therefore can be secured. (Terrell, 1898, p.6)

Yates (1905) conducted a study on kindergartens and teacher training schools open to African Americans. She found that by 1905 there were no public kindergartens for Negro children in the south. However, there were several private kindergarten and teacher training school locations funded through private citizens and various denominational schools and the NACW (p. 309). Table 3 provides a listing of those locations.

Table 3

Early Kindergarten Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Early Kindergarten Locations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuskegee, Ala.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Montgomery, Ala.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opelika, Ala.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charleston, S. C.</td>
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<td>Orangeburg, S. C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topeka, Kan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augustine Mission, S. C.</td>
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<td>New Orleans, La.</td>
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<td>Louisville, Ky.</td>
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<td>Galveston, Tx.</td>
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<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moorestown, Pa.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butler-Mission, Chicago</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Summary

In Chapter 1 Black Feminist Theory is discussed as it relates to African American women. It included a review of literature related to the history of early childhood education and Mary Church Terrell’s role in advancing Froebelian Kindergartens for African American children from 1886-1901. Three questions guided this section of the study: How did the social, political and economic context of the Progressive Era affect African American women? How was the history of early childhood education for African American established? How was the family and educational history of Mary Church Terrell essential to her role in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children?
Chapter 3

METHOD

Introduction

The purpose of this historical case study was to explore the role of Mary Church Terrell in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children 1896-1901. A better understanding of the case would add to the limited history available on African American early childhood education in the area of Froebelian kindergartens. As members of the NACW the participants were chosen because of their familiarity and understanding of the association and its functions. This chapter describes the philosophical assumptions, qualitative tradition, settings and participants, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, verification procedures, ethical considerations and the role of the researcher, followed by a summary of the chapter.

Philosophical Assumptions

Ontological assumptions focus on the nature of reality of a study for the (a) researcher, (b) individuals or groups and, (c) reader or audience. In the study of Mary Church Terrell I used quotes from her speeches, autobiography, diaries, letters and historical documents to explore the nature of reality for her life. Through participant interviews and observations I learned about the realities of Mary Church Terrell’s service and her role in advancing Froebelian kindergartens in the United States. In addition to participant interviews, which were videotaped, observations, and unobtrusive data were
used in the form of historical documents, records, archived data, other primary documents and photographs. Unobtrusive data provided “insight into the phenomenon under investigation without interfering with the enactment of the social phenomenon” (Hatch, 2002, p. 117). I continued to move from being an outsider to becoming an insider immersed in the social context of the time and Terrell’s own personal life experiences through reading, observing, and analyzing all of the data.

**Research Design**

According to Merriam (1998) a historical case study employs techniques common to historiography, in particular, the use of primary documents. The nature of the account also distinguishes this type of study. Historical case studies have been used to describe institutions, programs, and practices as they occur over time. “To understand an event and apply that knowledge to present practice means knowing the context of the event, the assumptions behind it, and perhaps the event’s impact on the institutions or participants” (p. 35). I investigated the case presenting a holistic description and analysis of Mary Church Terrell. Her, often overlooked work and life, was instrumental in establishing untold numbers of Froebelian kindergartens for African American children, while a leader of the NACW, profound orator, and prolific writer. The cases are investigated over a period of time from a historical perspective (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1989). This multiple case study has been in process for six years.

Yin (1989) described that, “a major step in designing and conducting a single case is defining the unit of analysis (or the case itself)” (p. 52). The unit of analysis for this study is Froebelian Kindergartens for African American children. It is bounded in time
because it involved six to eight months of data collection from interviews, five years from gathering historical information, and it is historically situated and located over the particular years of, 1896-1901.

The case study method is used when an in-depth investigation into a matter is needed. A case study structure involves the (a) problem, (b) context, (c) issues, and (d) lessons learned (Lincoln & Cuba, 1985). In the study of Froebelian Kindergartens for African American children, the problem was the very limited information on the history of early childhood education. The history of Mary Church Terrell is seldom included in the history of early childhood education. If it is, it is diminished in comparison to more dominate women and especially to men.

The context or setting for this study was historical. Much of the information came from documents, records, archives, videotapes, photographs, and primary documents. Literature on the topic provided information. Interviews with contemporary women involved in the NACW also provided valuable information. The issues of the study were addressed by exploring the social context of the historical times. The issues were studied to determine why it was necessary for Mary Church Terrell to advance Froebelian Kindergartens through Black women clubs. The lessons learned can be applied to learn about the past in order to inform the present.

**Setting and Selection of Participants and Interviews**

According to Patton (2002), qualitative inquiry involves a small sample of participants that are selected purposely. By limiting the study to a small sample, I was able to gain a more in-depth understanding of the case. The participants interviewed
were selected because they were former officers affiliated with the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs and could provide information-rich details about the organization in the present time.

**Setting.** These interviews were conducted in the summer of 2006 in Birmingham, Alabama. One interview was conducted at the clubhouse of the Alabama Federation of Colored Women Clubs (AFCWC). The president met with me and provided a guided tour of the building following the interview. Photographs of over 40 former presidents were videotaped during this interview. The second interview was conducted with a former secretary who provided very helpful pamphlets and programs from the National Association of Colored Women.

**Participants.** Each participant was a past or present officer of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs (N.A.C.W.C.), which is now known as the National Association of Women’s Clubs and Youth Affiliates. The participants were all members of the Southeastern Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs (SFCWC) and affiliated with the NACWC.

The central question of this study was, “What was the role of Mary Church Terrell in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children 1896-1901?” The sub-questions used to answer the research were:

1. How did the social, political, and economic context of the Progressive Era affect African American women?
2. How was Terrell’s family and educational history essential to her role in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children?

3. How was the history of early childhood education for African Americans established?

4. How did Terrell promote Froebelian kindergartens for African American children?

**Data Collection**

Creswell (1998) describes four types of data collection: (1) observations, (2) interviews; semi-structured to open-ended, (3) documents, and (4) audio-visual materials. For this study I collected data from observations by attending a local conference in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The Alabama Association of Women’s Clubs and Youth Affiliates conducted the conference in June 2006. I was able to observe the opening session and attend a luncheon during the annual state meeting. In order to provide the assembly with information on the study, I was invited by the president to speak at the luncheon. I was extremely honored for the opportunity. As a result of attending this conference, I was able to secure names and telephone numbers of future contacts for the study. I observed that the group showed a sincere love and high respect for the former national and state president that was present during the meeting. I was able to talk with this highly respected woman for approximately 20 minutes and take a photograph with her. Observations were later made at the clubhouse of the Alabama Association of Women’s Clubs and Youth Affiliates, where I was permitted to video historical documents and
photographs of former officers. An observation protocol (Creswell, 2003) was used to record information.

Interviews were conducted over a seven-week period from June 14, 2006 to July 31, 2006. Initial review and approval for the study was secured from the University of Alabama at Birmingham Internal Review Board (IRB) in June 2006. Each participant signed an approved consent form. The participants were informed of their rights to confidentiality. Data was collected from interviews using an interview protocol (Appendix C). Participants were asked semi-structured questions for all interviewed sessions. Interviews were recorded using cassette recorders and camcorders. Historical documents were in the form of (a) personal diaries, (b) journals, (c) letters, (d) original copies of speeches and other literary works of Mary Church Terrell, (e) convention records, and (f) newspapers were used. Documents used in the study were secured from various libraries, including the Library of Congress, and individual clubwomen, and from Terrell’s autobiography. Her book, *A Colored Women in a White World*, provided me with a personal view of her lived life for the study.

Because information on Mary Church Terrell was very limited, I depended on the help received from members of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs. Their assistance helped me by creating a snowball effect in the data collection process. According to Patton (2002), a snowball effect occurs by “asking a number of people who else to talk with, the snowball gets bigger and bigger as you accumulate new information-rich cases” (p. 237). Signed consent forms were secured from all interviewed participants for the study.
Audio-visual materials used in the study were in the form of (a) video and audiotapes, (b) electronic messages, (c) photographs, and (d) plaques and certificates. Each interview was recorded and the data transcribed. All tapes were secured in a locked metal box. There was data secured via email from library assistants and association contacts. Photographs from (a) microfilm, (b) the Alabama Association of Women’s Clubs and Youth Affiliate’s clubhouse, (c) internet sources, (d) books, (e) national, state and local programs, (f) newspapers, (g) pamphlets and brochures were viewed and examined for the study, and (h) plaques and certificates were observed from microfilm and from the Association clubhouse.

Data Analysis

Restorying was the process used to analyze data. According to Creswell (2003), restorying involves collecting stories and analyzing them for the key elements of time, place, plot, and scene. I followed the three steps involved in restorying by: (1) conducting individual interviews and transcribe the conversations from audio and video tapes, (2) securing data from the tapes and retranscribe them to identify the key elements, and (3) sequencing key codes from the restoried information secured from participants.

I also used three dimensional space narrative structure (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). This structure involved: (1) the interaction of a person’s feelings, hopes, reactions, and dispositions, (2) continuity involving the past, present, and future, and (3) situation information about the context, time and place. I identified themes that were emergent from the coding of information to provide depth and insight into the story.
During the coding process, I used the following five elements in restorying: (1) setting, (2) characters, (3) actions, (4) problem, and (5) resolution. The setting of the study involved the time, location and year. The character of the study, Mary Church Terrell, was portrayed as an outstanding leader and pioneer of African American early childhood education. Her actions as an Oberlin graduate and first president of the NACW determined the sequence of this study. There were many societal problems that she and other African Americans encountered. The resolution or outcome of this study was explained in the history obtained concerning Froebelian kindergartens and their importance during numerous racial struggles.

I also used three-dimensional space narrative structure (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). This structure involved: (1) the interaction of a person’s feelings, hopes, reactions, and dispositions, (2) continuity involving the past, present, and future, and (3) situation information about the context, time, and place. Themes emerged from the coding of information to provide depth and insight into the story (Creswell, 2005).

**Trustworthiness**

According to Hatch (2002) unobtrusive data consists of artifacts, traces, documents, personal communications, records, photographs, and archives. It is considered unobtrusive data because it is nonreactive in that they are not “filtered through the perceptions, interpretations and biases of research participants. This historical case study relied heavily on unobtrusive data such as documents, records, archives and photographs in its analysis of information. The data provided multiple views to interpret the findings. Triangulating unobtrusive data with data from other sources is one way to
improve confidence in reporting findings based on such information. It is a way to establish “trustworthiness” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 281).

**Verification procedures**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested eight verification procedures: (1) prolonged engagement and persistent observation; involves gaining trust and learning about a culture (2) triangulation; where multiple sources, methods and investigations are used to provide collaborative evidence for a study, (3) peer review or debriefing; an external check, (4) negative case analysis; where a working hypothesis is either refined or revised, (5) clarifying researcher bias; the researcher explains any biases, past experiences, prejudices and orientations that may influence interpretation of a study, (6) member checks; use of other informants to check findings and interpretations, (7) rich, thick description, the researcher describes the setting and participants in such detail that the readers can make decisions concerning transferability, and (8) external audits; an external consultant that determines if the findings, interpretations and conclusions are supported by the data. The following five procedures were used in this study: (1) triangulation, (2) peer review, (3) clarifying researcher bias, (4) member checks, and (5) use of rich, thick description.

**Ethical Considerations**

I engaged in the following ethical practices during this study: (1) respecting the rights of participants, (2) honoring research sites, and (3) reporting research fully and honestly (Creswell, 2005). I was required to complete a training course on human
subjects’ protection (CITI). An approval letter (Appendix A) and an informed consent form (Appendix B) were approved by the International Review Board for Human Use (IRB) at the University of Alabama at Birmingham before the study began. An interview protocol letter was also provided (Appendix C). The purpose of the IRB approval was to ensure the rights of all participants in the study. The participants were informed (a) of their rights to participate or decline participation in this study, (b) that pseudonyms would be used in the report to ensure confidentiality, (c) and that all audio and video tapes would be stored safely in a locked metal cabinet. Signed consent forms were secured from all participants.

*Researchers Role*

As a Black female, I bring to this study an in-depth understanding and appreciation of many of the experiences and struggles of the African American race. My knowledge of successful African American role models for girls was very limited during my childhood and teenage years. It appeared that the voices of the Black men and women were silent in textbooks, corporate businesses, and governmental positions. The desire to know more positive things about my race, including their successes, contributions, and accomplishments, prompted this study. As an African American doctoral candidate in early childhood education, I continued to see a lack of information provided in my classes on the history of African American early childhood education. Having learned that Froebelian kindergartens were established in the United States in the late 1800, I wanted to know if Froebelian kindergartens existed for Black children. The desire to know the role that African Americans played in advancing African American early
childhood education motivated me throughout this study. Realizing the intrinsic nature of this study, I strove to be as objective as possible.

Summary

Chapter 3 discussed the historical case study method used in this study. This chapter described the philosophical assumptions, qualitative tradition, settings and participants, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, verification procedures, ethical considerations and the role of the researcher.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate Mary Church Terrell’s role in advancing Froebelian kindergarten for African American children from 1896-1901. Chapter 2 reviewed the social, political and economic struggles that African American women faced during a time of institutionalized racism. The early history of African American early childhood education was discussed with origins of Froebelian kindergartens for African Americans explored. It examined the motivation and needs behind the creation and operation of the National Association of Colored Women with Mary Church Terrell as the first president. Chapter 4 will present the themes identified from the data collected and analyzed.

Themes

According to Bogdan and Biklin (1998), a theme is “some concept or theory that emerges from your data” (p. 189). There were four themes that emerged from this historical case study: “Early History,” “Leadership,” “Youth Affiliates,” and “Struggles.” The data was analyzed using a method called restorying. There were three subcategories under the theme of Early History. The first involved the purposes for the club’s
organization. The second examined the need for Black children’s education. The final subcategory involved the need for socialization. *Leadership* was the second theme that emerged from the interviewed data.

**Table 4**

*Themes*
There were four subcategories under that theme: (1) legacy, (2) presidents, (3) past leaders, and (4) present leaders. The third theme to emerge was *Youth Affiliates.* There were three subcategories under that theme: (1) scholarships, (2) youth clubs, and (3) debutants. The final theme involved the *Struggles* that the group experienced.

**Theme 1: Early History**

In order to understand any person, group or organization, it is necessary to know their history. “Historical studies or historiographies involve the collection and analysis of data for the purpose of reconstructing events or combinations of events that happened in the past (Berg, 1998; Denzin, 1998, p. 25).

**Purpose for the organization.** During the Progressive Era, the initial purpose which motivated and inspired middle-class African American women to form the NACW women during the Progressive Era was to defend Black womanhood (Davis, 1996; Hine, 1994; Hine et al., 1995; Giddings, 1984; Hamilton 1978; White 1999). The following resolutions were developed and read at the First National Convention of the Colored Women of America called in Boston, Massachusetts, July 29, 30, and 31, 1895:

> Whereas, a most indecent, foul and slanderous letter, traducing American womanhood, has been sent to Miss Florence Balgarnie of England, by one James W. Jacks, Pres. of the Mo. Press Association.

> Be it therefore resolved, that this National Conference of Colored Women denounce this man as a traducer of female character, a man wholly without sense of chivalry and honor, and bound by the iron hand of prejudice, sectionalism and race hatred, entirely unreliable and worthy the prominence he seeks

> That no man capable of reverencing his mother or protecting the unsullied fame of any woman, much less Miss Balgarnie, whose life work entitles her to the respect
at least of progressive and wholesome minds, regardless of sex, wherever principle and unselfish efforts to uplift struggling humanity exist. And as the man has not only slandered the women of Negro extraction but the mothers of American morality, on a question that not only involves the good repute of the present generation, but generations yet to come. (Historical Records of Conventions of 1895-96 of the Colored Women of America, 1902)

The NACW wanted to show the progress and accomplishments made by African Americans in past decades. They sought to help the black race by strengthening character and family life. The organization created a national scholarship fund for African-American women going to college. It also supported the suffrage movement two years before the General Federation of Women’s Clubs (Wesley; 1984; Sheftall, 1990; Lerner, 1972; Terrell, 2005).

Under the leadership of its first president, Mary Church Terrell, the organization worked to accomplish educational and social reform. Their motto was “Lifting as we climb.” The motto was first coined by Terrell in 1900.

It has been suggested, and very appropriately, I think, that this Association should take as its motto—Lifting as we climb. In no way could we live up to such a sentiment better than by coming into a closer touch with the masses of our women, by whom, whether we will or not, the world will always judge the womanhood of the race. Even though we wish to shun them, and hold ourselves entirely aloof from them, we cannot escape the consequences of their acts. So, that, if the call of duty were disregarded altogether, policy and self-preservation would demand that we go down among the lowly, the illiterate, and even the victims to whom we are bound by the ties of race and sex and put forth every possible effort to uplift and reclaim them. (Davis, 1996, p. xix)

Hamilton (1978) stated that the NACW had the following objectives:

(1) to improve the education of colored women, (2) to improve the homes and homelife of Black people, (3) to work for the moral, social, economic, and religious welfare
of women and children, (4) to protect the rights of working women and children, (5) to work for civil and political rights for Black people, (6) to work for job opportunities for Black women, and (7 to promote interracial understanding. (p. 9)

Participants in the study stated that the purpose for the organization was as follows:

Participant #1-Evelyn stated,

Well, according to what I found out, what they were trying to do was to help young women to better themselves, educational wise and community wise, socially. So they would be able to go out and be productive citizens.

Participant #2-Melonie stated,

It was formed as an organization to inspire Negroes at the time. If you notice the name is Colored. We maintained that name because that’s the way we were originally charted. As the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, the Alabama Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, City Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, all the branches still maintain that Colored concept, because that’s who we were.

**Black children’s education.** The second area involved the need for Black children’s education. Early schools for African American children were sabbath schools, formal schools and clandestine schools (Cunningham and Osborn, 1979; Bullock, 1964). During the late nineteenth century there were three types of kindergartens in the United States: (a) private, (b) public, and (c) charity. Elizabeth Palmer Peabody started the first English speaking kindergarten in 1860. These private schools consisted of middle and upper class White children. The parents paid tuition to attend. The main focus was on preparing children for proper socialization using Froebelian methods. Susan Blow opened the first public kindergarten in St. Louis, Missouri.
Public kindergartens were established because of the growing concern of urban decay. Many believed that the churches, communities, and the families were not properly socializing their children. Charity kindergartens began during the late 1870’s. Various philanthropists supported these kindergartens. The aims of these schools were to: (a) assimilate and Americanize immigrants, (b) prepare students for elementary school, and (c) educate families (Cunningham and Osborn, 1979; Bullock, 1964).

In the north White charity organizations and churches provided the free kindergartens for Black children. However, in the south the National Association of Colored Women and other black clubs sponsored free kindergartens because there were not many public schools that would serve Black children (Spring, 2001). Josephine Silone Yates was an African American woman who organized and served as president of the Kansas City Women League in 1893. She was an ardent supporter and member of the NACW, serving as treasurer and as a president of the organization. Yates (1899) reported the following concerning the education of young African American children.

From its initial period, one of the most important features of the work of the National Association of Colored Women, organized in 1896 by the consolidation of the National League and of the National Federation, and having as its first president Mrs. Mary Church Terrell, a staunch advocate of the efficacy of the kindergartens, has been through its branches in the various states a potent force in the formation and promotion of kindergartens, day nurseries, and mother clubs; while one of the most practical features in the National League, organized several years earlier, was “child study,” as advanced by Preyer and Dr. Stanley Hall-Study that as early as 1893 lead many Afro-American mothers, in localities where branches of the League were organized, to study kindergarten methods to be used in the home-training of their children. (p. 307)
The establishment of free Kindergartens for African American children was one of the primary goals of the National Association. In Haydie Campbell’s first speech, “Why the National Association Should Devise Means for Establishing Kindergartens,” presented at the 1899 NACW Convention, she states the plan for the kindergarten system to be developed by the organization. Campbell, Josephine Silone Yates and other kindergarten advocates understood that, “high-quality kindergarten training was the key to the success of the public kindergarten movement” (Beatty, 1995, p. 109).

The plan of the Kindergarten system has been molded according to the nature of the child, and through it he may be led to a higher state of development of body, mind and soul and a fuller consciousness of this relationship to nature, to this fellow-man and to his God. This is the aim, the vital purpose of the Kindergarten education. The Kindergarten assist the natural growth of the child, developing the good that in him lies and helping him to receive from his environment the good it may contain. As tools to this end, Froebel has given us songs, games, stories, talks, gifts, occupations, lunch and garden work, and these are only tools to be subordinated always to the thought which directs their use. (Campbell, 1899, para. 4)

Anna Evans Murray of the Women’s League of Washington D. C. was the first African American woman to lobby for and receive a twelve thousand dollar appropriation from the federal government to establish kindergartens and kindergarten teacher training schools for African American women and children (Smith, 1996; Beatty, 1995). Terrell reported the following about the Colored Women’s League of Washington D. C.

It was composed of teachers that were concerned with the educational development of disadvantaged African American women and children. The League established evening classes for adults, a program to train kindergarten teachers, and a free kindergarten and day nursery for the children of working mothers. (Terrell, 2010, p. 1)
Participants in the study stated the following concerning day cares and kindergartens for
African American children. Participant #1-Evelyn stated,

Well, according to what I found out what they were trying
to do was to help young women to better themselves,
educational wise and community wise, socially. So they
would be able to go out and be productive citizens. And
with the starting of the day care, that was the beginning, so
that they had a hand on the children from infancy up. I
know we have youth clubs where we tried to get the
children to keep them out of the streets and give them
something focused.

Participant #2-Melonie replied,

Yes, I did. The Day Care concept was founded in
Birmingham out of this organization, The City Federation
of Colored Women Clubs. Mrs. Leela Butler, who at that
time was president of City Federation of Colored Women
Clubs, saw the need for parents to have somewhere to leave
their children. And originally that facility was on Jasper
Road. It had first girl scouts troops there, first hospital, first
nursing home, first orphanage for Blacks in the whole city
of Birmingham. Many of the early doctors performed their
surgeries there. And they did that for people all over the
state of Alabama. Angela Davis went to that Day Care
Service in Birmingham when it first started. As a matter of
fact, we have a picture of her and when she graduated from
there.

For a time the day cares of the Federation were partially supported by what is now
known as the United Way. Participant #2-Melonie explained:

They were originally a Red Feather Agency, which is now
the United Way. They were supported by, you know, that
organization. But after a while the United Way pulled out
and they were self-sustaining. You know they had to
sustain themselves? And that may be the reason why they
no longer function. United Way had a different focus. They
moved their day cares into the housing projects, you know,
from the different sites. They had one at Enon Ridge which
they moved. And then the one we had, they moved. The
Day Care facilities established by the Federation were
closed when the first clubhouse was sold to the City of
Birmingham. “We closed it up, yes, when we moved here.
But it was closed before, right after we moved here. They closed it up because they closed the building down. But this building is not used for Day Care, no.

Socialization. The final subcategory under the heading of Early History was the need for socialization. Mary Church Terrell’s education at Oberlin High School and Oberlin College molded her in the teachings of the Social Gospel.

Although Terrell lived a very privileged life from birth through adulthood, it would be her own experiences with racial discrimination in spite of her privilege, a keen empathy for others, and a sharp mind for analyzing the roots of social issues that would make her an effective spokesperson and moral agent for justice. (Bunge, 2001, p. 375)

During the Progressive Era, middle-class African American women worked to promote positive changes in black communities. They began to express their feelings in public forums on issues such as (a) social services, (b) reform schools, (c) lynching, (d) Suffrage, (e) Black Womanhood, and (f) various educational projects (Thomas, 1995).

According to Terrell (2005) in her autobiography, A Colored Woman in a White World:

It would appear, therefore, that while the Colored Women’s League of Washington was the first to “resolve that colored women of the United States associate ourselves together to collect all facts obtainable to show the moral, intellectual, industrial and social growth and attainments of our people, to foster unity of purpose, to consider and determine methods which will promote the interest of colored people in any direction that suggests itself,” the group which assembled in Boston in 1895 at the call of Mrs. Ruffin was the first secular, national gathering of colored women in the United States which actually met with the intention of becoming a permanent organization. Thus was the National Federation of Afro-American Women formed. (p. 186)
Socialization for the participants of this study meant the following. According to Participant #2-Melonie:

Women way back then they had nothing else to do but to go to Federation meetings on Sunday afternoon. I’ll show you these pictures. This is what they did. This is 1945. This is what they did on Sundays. These are some of the most prominent women in the city of Birmingham.

The national motto of the clubs, “Lifting As We Climb,” represented social uplift at a time when African Americans were excluded from mainstream society.

When explaining the motto Participant #2-Melonie said,

It represents a mountain climber, and she is reaching down to pull up another person as she is climbing that mountain. She’s reaching down with her right hand to lift her up. And that’s what we strive to do, lift somebody as we climb. In other words, we are sharing and giving back some of the things that have been given to us.

Socialization experiences were also extended to the young people of the organization. They were engaged in various social events, according to Participant #1-Evelyn:

We do service projects. We do workshops and things. We expose them to various charities within the city. They do service projects. We promote vital womanhood and moral values and some cultural things. And even to home making skills at some point.

**Theme 2: Leadership**

Leadership was the second theme that I identified as emerging from the interview data. There were four subcategories under that theme: (1) legacy, (2) presidents, (3) past leaders, and (4) present leaders.
Legacy. Mary Church Terrell and the women of the NACW lead by example. They left a legacy of service to the African America race. Not only in their past service but even today. The NACW is over 110 years old with its central location in Washington, D. C. The name was changed to The National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, Inc., (NACWC) and its mission continues to be uplift in the home and family.

The Association’s endeavor is to promote interracial understanding, justice, and peace among all people, raise the standard of the home, and advance the moral, economic, social and religious welfare of the family. The Association also strives to promote the education of women and youth through local, state, and regional workshops, seminars and scholarship assistance. Historically it was the teaching and support base for the teaching and support base for Black Colleges and Universities, which erased illiteracy among the freed slaves by the end of the 19th century.
(National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, Inc., 2004)

Participants #1-Evelyn and #2-Melonie, both recall having grown up in the club movement and they each convey their own legacies.

Participant #1-Evelyn said:

I am a member of the Alabama Association of Women’s Clubs and Youth Affiliates formally known as the Alabama Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs. I was also a secretary for the organization.

She compares her group service to how the leadership in the clubs was preparing the young adults for leadership positions.

Participant #1-Evelyn said,

They had a youth club in Sojourner Truth, Sorosis and Imperial. And they have a young adult club in the Imperial Club called the Crystal Imperials. So they have the children
that have grown out of there and they do the debutants in December time, and when they go to college and stuff they come back and get into the young adult clubs, before they get into the adult clubs.

Participant #2-Melonie also began working in the Federation as a young woman.

My mother was in the Superior Club which is one of the oldest clubs in the city that sponsors the Black Debutants Ball. And as a child I grew up and finally became a member after I finished college.

Participant #2-Melonie hopes to leave a legacy for the young people:

I just wish we could get more committed younger women to carry on the legacy, because there is no other organization in the whole United States as old as this organization. We’ve celebrated 110 years. And we are a part of the African American history theme for the nation this year. So you know, that’s something to be excited about. I can’t tell you how much I would love to have some young women pick up and carry on the legacy. They’re not doing that.

Past presidents. The second subcategory under leadership involves past presidents. Participant two gave me a tour of the club house of the Alabama Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs which pictured 40 former presidents of the NACW. It was such an impressive thing to have observed.

Participant #2-Melonie speaks of one past leader:

Researcher (R)-Can I film this then?

I-Sure

I-This is Edna Gardner. She’s the only one that’s probably living.

R- I think I spoke with Ms. Gardner and she referred me to you. Yes, ma’am. Here we go.

R- Oh these ladies were sharp.
I-Oh yes, they never went anywhere without hats and gloves.

R- Now who were you telling me?

I-This is Ms. Edna Gardner who is still living on this picture. Basically the others are dead. Let me see. I was trying to see. This is Ms. Clara Wilson was one of the first teachers at the day care, right here. This is Clara Wilson. This is Mrs. Mable Neely who became one of the southeast presidents. This is Minnie Chanderson who taught Music for many many years. This was Dr. Auzzie Mitchell who was one of the black presidents on the Board of Education. This is Ms. Leela Butler who founded the day care.

**Current presidents.** The final subcategory involves current presidents. According to Participant #1-Evelyn:

The new president is Delmarsha Knight. She works for the city of Birmingham. So we usually start our year, we go from September to May and give everybody time to do their Christmas stuff and we come back in September. That’s how we were doing. The city usually has a project, trying to raise the bar, so that we have enough money to do things with.

Participant #1-Evelyn invited me to visit the clubhouse and view its history, speaking once again about the new president:

Delmarcha is the president. I’m sure she has a key now. So she works for the City of Birmingham. So, I don’t have her number with me but I can get you the number. And I’m sure she would be willing to let you go in there and look, because it’s a lot of history on that wall. Just pictures of people way back when.

**Theme 3: Youth Affiliates**

Youth Affiliates was the next theme in this research study. There were three subcategories under that theme: (1) scholarships, (2) youth clubs, and (3) debutants.
**Scholarships.** Both participants agreed that scholarships were provided by various African American women’s clubs to help young people go to college.

Participant #1-Evelyn was very supportive of the scholarship programs:

I was an advocate for the scholarship because having gone to college myself I was fortunate that I did not have to work through school. But I was able to get a loan to get my education. But with the way things are now and the money situation, you need to help children, because a lot of times they won’t extend themselves to find the information they need. So, if you give them a little push to get them in there maybe they can stay and do better. I think it’s a viable organization that needs to exist, and we need to enlighten others about what we do and see if we can pull others aboard. Even though we are not as visible as we use to be, I think that is something we need to look at, because we have a new president in the city. I am going to see which direction she plans to go.

**Youth clubs.** The second subcategory involves the youth clubs. Participant #1-Evelyn describes the youth clubs:

I don’t know how long it’s been in existence because it use to be just the colored women’s club, now it is a youth affiliate. Because there are…we used to have one in Sojourner Truth, but we don’t actually have a viable club. They had a youth club in Sojourner Truth, Sorosis and Imperial. And they have a young adult club in the Imperial Club called the Crystal Imperials. So they have the children that have grown out of there and they you know they do the debutants in December time and when they go to college and stuff they come back and get into the young adult clubs, before they get into the adult clubs. So they had all of that.

Participant #2-Melonie has worked with young people for many years, “And has been state supervisor and national youth supervisor for 16 years.”
**Debutants.** The final subcategory involved the debutants. According to Participant #2-Melonie:

The debutants is one of the programs sponsored by the Imperial Club. This is our 58th one this year. And it is the formal presentation of young ladies into society. The concept originated a long time ago in England, but it spread. But Imperial Club, which is one of the organizations in the Federation, has the oldest one in the southeast. The oldest one in the State of Alabama for Blacks.

**Theme 4: Struggles**

The final theme in this study examined the struggles that the group have experienced. Mary Church Terrell faced many struggles in her life yet she persevered. She struggled on a personal level having to be a colored woman in a racist society. Terrell personally felt the injustice of racism as she expressed in her speech, “*What It Means to Be Colored in the Capital of the United States.*” As the first president of the NACW she struggled for the group to have a voice during a time when African American voices were not heard. She struggled to bring Froebelian kindergartens to Black children when they had only been available to White children. She struggled with prejudice actions and behaviors as she travelled the United and in Europe. She had been treated very well when she went abroad until someone said that she was a Colored woman. Terrell through the efforts of the National Association struggled against causes such as: The Convict Lease Law, Jim Crow Laws, Scottsboro Boys, Lynching, The Share Cropping System, Chain Gangs, Black Codes, Education for African Americans, Voting Rights, Suffrage, and many other areas (Beatty, 1995; Anderson, 1988; Davis, 1996; Giddings, 1984; Jenkins, 1984; Terrell, 1940).
Participant #1-Evelyn expressed her concerns about the current struggles of the group:

And of late, with people getting old and dying out, we were just trying to keep the house going. Because we have to have insurance and nobody lives there and it’s expensive. Nobody lives in your house and you’re trying to keep it up, and then keeping the house up itself. Because we have an old house and we have the south part that backs up, so we have to steadily go in there and do whatever. So we have to move things around to make it.

In the following interview section Participant #2-Melonie explained the struggles:

R- Okay. What’s been your biggest struggle or your challenges trying to maintain your group?

I-The financial part, because at one time we had 21 to 25 clubs, now we are down to 5. It’s unfortunate because the focus has changed. Women way back then had nothing else to do but to go to Federation meetings on Sunday afternoon. I’ll show you these pictures. This is what they did. This is what they did in 1945. This is what they did on Sundays. These are some of the most prominent women in the city of Birmingham. (The photograph shown to me at that time was of a social tea gathering with fine china and linen.)

According to Participant #2, “Oh yes, they never went anywhere without hats and gloves.”

R- You think the shift changed too because the racism was so strong back then?

I-No, I don’t think that had anything to do with it. It’s just the interest of the people in general. Uh, there was a time when you couldn’t wash on Sunday; you didn’t do anything on Sunday.

R- Right. No stores were open.

I- Nothing was open. But now you have all these things that are open and free for people to do on Sunday, so therefore, you know, the focus has changed. Plus a lot of these clubs did not take in younger women. So once they got old, sick,
and died they didn’t have anybody. So that was one of the main things.

Summary

An analysis of the data of this study is located in Chapter 4. This chapter included the themes and subthemes which resulted from the data collected. Each of the themes was introduced along with the subthemes. Direct quotes were used from the participants, to provide insight into the local and national Black women’s club movement. In addition to participant interviews, historical quotes from documents, records, and photographs were included to provide a thick rich description of the organization during the Progressive Era. The African American women in this study provided valuable information concerning the history, purpose and function of the Black women club movement.
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of the research findings, implications of the study, and recommendations for further research. The answers to the research questions that guided this study will be presented in light of the literature reviewed. The central research question for this study was “What was the role of Mary Church Terrell in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children from 1896-1901?” The sub-questions for this historical case study were: “How did the social, political, and economic context of the Progressive Era affect African American women?” “How was Mary Church Terrell’s family and educational history essential to her role in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children?” “How was the history of early childhood education for African Americans established?” “How did Mary Church Terrell promote Froebelian kindergartens for African American children?”

Major Findings

Four themes emerged from the data collected for this historical case study through participant interviews, historical documents, records, and photographs. Of the four themes that emerged from this study, three addressed the central question: “Early History,” “Leadership,” and “Struggles”. The research sub-question, “How did the social,
political, and economic context of the Progressive Era affect African American women?” was answered within the themes, “Early History,” “and Struggles.” The sub-question, “How was Mary Church Terrell’s family and educational history essential to her role in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children?” was addressed in the themes, “Early History,” and “Leadership.” The sub-question, “How was the history of early childhood education for African American children established?” was addressed in the themes, “Early History,” and “Leadership.” The final sub-question, “How did Mary Church Terrell promote Froebelian kindergartens for African American children?” was addressed in the themes, “Early History,” “Leadership” and “Struggles.” The theme on Youth Affiliates helped to enrich the study by adding information on the scholarships, youth clubs, and debutants in their local Federations.

When addressing the central question, “What was the role of Mary Church Terrell in advancing Froebelian kindergartens for African American children? “Her success cannot be separated from her economic status, sex or race. The data showed that as a wealthy African American female during the period and president of the NACW, one of the first departments established by the NACW was kindergarten. To fund the kindergartens she sold her speech, “The Progress of Colored Women,” with the proceeds going into the kindergarten fund. The money was used to help African American women clubs all over the United States.

Terrell had a very good and loving relationship with her family, although I felt she may have been lonely at times being so far away from home at such a young age. It seems that she had to grow up and become independent too early in her life. She was wealthy, but money can never take the place of the security of home and close relatives.
She served the public at difficult times throughout her life, Jim Crow, the Depression, and World War I. She often traveled alone, often in Jim Crow cars to give lectures on the progress of African American women, placing herself in difficult and sometimes dangerous situations. Often she suffered from guilt because she had to leave her family behind with her husband and mother. Terrell was an exceptional individual.

Having lost three children shortly after birth, caused by what Mary Church Terrell believed were poor hospital facilities for African Americans, the NACW became her baby, in a sense. Through this national association, Terrell readily embraced the kindergarten philosophy of Frederick Froebel.

The actions of Mary Church Terrell, as the first president of the NACW, were informed by “her early religious training in the Christian Church in Yellow Springs. It was also informed by her as a member of the First Congregational Church, which espoused the Social Gospel, and by her studies at Oberlin College” (Bunge, 2001, p. 372). Oberlin was unique in that it was “a college that during the nineteenth century had acquired unusual features such as coeducation, a policy of admitting Negroes, an intense and constant support for abolitionism and other moral and social-reform causes, adherence to a mild form of Christian perfectionism, and the leadership of a powerful evangelist Charles Grandison Finney” (p. 372).

**Addressing the Research Questions**

**Early History**

During the Progressive Era, the initial purpose which motivated and inspired middle-class African American women to form the NACW was to defend Black

The NACW wanted to show the progress and accomplishments made by African Americans in past decades. They sought to help the black race by strengthening character and family life. The organization created a national scholarship fund for African-American women going to college. It also supported the suffrage movement two years before the General Federation of Women’s Clubs (Wesley, 1984; Sheftall, 1990, Lerner, 1972, Terrell, 2005).

Leadership

Mary Church Terrell and the women of the NACW lead by example. They left a legacy of service to the African America race. Not only in their past service but even today. The NACW is over 110 years old with its central location in Washington, D. C. The name was changed to The National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, Inc., (NACWC) and its mission continues to be uplift in the home and family.

The Association’s endeavor is to promote interracial understanding, justice, and peace among all people, raise the standard of the home, and advance the moral, economic, social and religious welfare of the family. The Association also strives to promote the education of women and youth through local, state, and regional workshops, seminars and scholarship assistance. Historically it was the teaching and support base for the teaching and support base for Black Colleges and Universities, which erased illiteracy among the freed slaves by the end of the 19th century. (National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs, Inc., 2004)

Participant #2-Melonie began working in the Federation as a young woman. She said,
My mother was in the Superior Club which is one of the oldest clubs in the city that sponsors the Black Debutants Ball. And as a child I grew up and finally became a member after I finished college. I just wish we could get more committed younger women to carry on the legacy, because there is no other organization in the whole United States as old as this organization. We’ve celebrated 110 years. And we are a part of the African American history theme for the nation this year. So you know, that’s something to be excited about. I can’t tell you how much I would love to have some young women pick up and carry on the legacy. They’re not doing that.

**Struggles**

Mary Church Terrell faced many struggles in her life yet she persevered. She struggled on a personal level having to be a colored woman in a racist society. Terrell personally felt the injustice of racism as she expressed in her speech, “What It Means to Be Colored in the Capital of the United States.” As the first president of the NACW she struggled for the group to have a voice during a time when African American voices were not heard. She struggled to bring Froebelian kindergartens to Black children when they had only been available to White children. She struggled with prejudice actions and behaviors as she travelled the United States and in Europe. She had been treated very well when she went abroad, until someone said that she was a Colored woman. Mary Church Terrell, through the efforts of the National Association of Colored Women, struggled against many obstacles: The Convict Lease Law, Jim Crow Laws, Scottsboro Boys, Lynching, The Share Cropping System, Chain Gangs, Black Codes, education for African Americans, voting rights, Suffrage, and many other areas (Beatty, 1995; Anderson, 1988; Davis, 1996; Giddings, 1984; Jenkins, 1984; Terrell, 1940).

Participant #1-Evelyn expressed her concerns about the current struggles of the group:
And of late, with people getting old and dying out, we were just trying to keep the house going. Because we have to have insurance and nobody lives there and it’s expensive. Nobody lives in your house and you’re trying to keep it up, and then keeping the house up itself. Because we have an old house and we have the south part that backs up, so we have to steadily go in there and do whatever. So we have to move things around to make it.

When asked about the biggest struggle or challenges to maintain the group Participant #2-Melonie said,

The financial part, because at one time we had 21 to 25 clubs, now we are down to 5. It’s unfortunate because the focus has changed. Women way back then had nothing else to do but to go to Federation meetings on Sunday afternoon. I’ll show you these pictures. This is what they did. This is 1945. This is what they did on Sundays. These are some of the most prominent women in the city of Birmingham. (The photograph shown to me at that time was of a social tea gathering with fine china and linen.)

Young African American children were dear to Terrell’s heart. She wanted to know the following: “(1) How to address the pain that colored mothers felt for their children, seeing them touched and seared and wounded by race prejudice. (2) How to inculcate adequate values and knowledge in children, and (3) How to create a social context in which children could flourish” (Terrell, 1940, p. 239). Terrell found the answers to her questions in the Froebelian kindergartens, “Through the kindergarten alone, which teaches its lesson in the most impressionable years of childhood, shall we be able to save countless thousands of our little ones who are going to destruction before our very eyes” (Terrell, 1900, pp. 341-342).

In reporting the findings of the first sub-question of this study, “How did the social, political, and economic context of the Progressive Era affect African American women?” The findings show that African American women struggled to survive against
sometimes insurmountable odds to provide, moral, social, economic and political support to the best of their abilities, for the betterment of their race. The study shows that for hundreds of years African American women have been stigmatized and exploited; yet, they survived. An infinite number of laws were enacted against African Americans, Plessy vs. Ferguson, Jim Crow laws, Black Codes, Federal and State laws flourished in the United States. The NACW utilized the philosophy of W. E. B. Du Bois in showing by example the ideals of “The Talented Tenth,” middle class and upper class women such as Mary Church Terrell used their time, money, and efforts to help uplift women, men, and children of their race (Hine, 1990, p. 168). The findings further show that issues developed to hinder African American women only increased their efforts and determination to change the racism and injustices of the time. The social times revealed that the ideal of “True Womanhood” which only applied to White women, could not apply to the African American women. She did not have the luxury of staying at home to raise her children and care for her husband. After slavery she often had to work alongside the men or in domestic positions to survive. African American women instead chose the ideal of Black Womanhood.

Implications of the Research

From this work, there were many lessons learned from the historical documents, literature, interviews, and with the contemporary women in NACWC. Through great struggle and sacrifice and under extreme racial conditions, Mary Church Terrell was an outstanding pioneer of African American early childhood education. Not only did she advance Froebelian kindergartens as the first president of the NACW. Terrell helped to
advance kindergartens far ahead of the study date of 1896-1901. This was accomplished through the establishment of the Colored Women’s League of Washington D. C. in 1892, where kindergartens and kindergarten teacher training centers were established for African American children and women using Froebelian methods. The founders were Mary Church Terrell, Helen Appo Cook, Charlotte Forten Grimke, Josephine B. Bruce, Mary J. Patterson, Anna Cooper, Evelyn Shaw and Ida D. Bailey. In 1898, Anna Evans Murray, the Education Committee chair of the National League of Colored Women (NLCW), successfully lobbied for a twelve thousand dollar federal appropriation to establish kindergarten classes. African American women did establish Froebelian kindergartens in the United States through the Colored Women’s League of Washington D. C., NACW, and Black colleges and universities.

Through the NACW Terrell raised funds for kindergartens by selling one of her speeches. The first department established in the NACW was kindergarten. Davis (1996) stated that,

…the printed address of Mrs. Mary Church Terrell on “The Progress of Colored Women” delivered at the fiftieth anniversary of the National Women’s Suffrage Association was offered for sale at ten cents a copy. Mrs. Terrell donated the proceeds of the sale to create a fund for the support of Kindergartens, thus providing for the First Department of the Organization. (pp. 46–47)

Haydie Campbell, the supervising principal of colored children in the St. Louis Public Schools, where Froebelian methods were used, was the first African American graduate of the St. Louis Kindergarten Training School, under the supervision of Susan Blow. She earned the highest score, among all White applicants, to secure the position. It was Haydie Campbell who was appointed the Kindergarten Organizer for the NACW.
She assisted, trained and encouraged African American club women to establish Froebelian kindergartens all over the United States.

Mary Church Terrell had a great love for children based on her family, education and religious training. She felt and knew that the kindergarten would assist in the natural growth of children developing the good that was in them. Through Froebelian methods using songs, games, stories, talks, gifts and occupations, lunch and garden work, positive qualities would develop in children. Terrell believed that children were the hope for the future and they must be nurtured. She believed that children had a dual nature which fails in line with the teachings of the Social Gospel. It is important that children be given good environments to thrive in for the betterment of the human race.

The following implications can be drawn from this study:

1. The African American women of the Progressve Era took great pride in their children and the education of them. They wanted to nurture them in their early years through the Froeblian kindergartens. It would be important for state governments to reconsider the importance of kindergartens. Today kindergartens are more like first grade and beyond. Many administrators, teachers and parents have forgotten that kindergarten should be concerned with the whole child. Because this is the year 2011 it does not mean that the basic emotional, social and physical attributes of a five or six year old has changed. Kindergarten play was also important. This however has gone out of the window. Kindergarteners are expected more and more to sit in classrooms doing worksheets all day.

2. For African American parents perhaps they should consider participating more in the politics of education. Mary Church Terrell and the women of the NACW were
child advocates. African American women should also band together and unite for the good of little ones.

3. For the historian, this study implies that the accomplishments of African American women have been largely omitted. The study findings show that there were outstanding African American educators, lectures, reformers, and writers doing wonderful things in the United States from the beginning of slavery up to and beyond this study.

4. The lack of scholarly discussion at major colleges and universities in the area of African American education, not only early childhood education, should begin to include the great accomplishments of African American women.

5. This study also implies that many events which have occurred in United States history have not always been positive or pleasing to the ear. However, great accomplishments and struggles should not be hidden away because of the unpleasant social, political or economic context surrounding them. It is more than time for a change.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Elizabeth Peabody and Susan Blow along with many other Caucasian women were hailed as great educators during the progressive years that Froebelian kindergartens were flourishing in the United States. And although they were great educators, they were not alone in their quest to educate young children. Extraordinary African American women such as: Mary Church Terrell, Josephine Yates Silone, Anna E. Murray, Haydie Campbell, Anna Julia Cooper, Lucey Laney, Margaret Murray Washington, Lugenia
Hope, and Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin stood beside Elizabeth Peabody and Susan Blow as outstanding early childhood educators and supporters of Froebelian kindergartens in the United States. As a result I offer the following recommendations based on the results of this historical case study:

1. That African American early childhood history is included in the history and text books for children and adults on various levels.

2. That outstanding pioneering African American women such as, Mary Church Terrell, Haydie Campbell, Josephine Silone Yates, Anna E. Murray, Margaret Murray Washington, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin, Ida B. Well-Barnett, Anna Julia Cooper, Charlotte Hawkins-Brown, Josephine B. Bruce, Cornelia Bowmen, Lucy Craft Laney, Fanny Hall, Lugenia D. Hope and countless other pioneering African American women, be recognized on a larger scale in the discussion of great thinkers and intellectuals in colleges and universities.

3. That more research be undertaken to explore the rich history of African American children and their teachers.

4. That the work of the National Association of Colored Women be recognized all over the World for the tremendous service they have rendered for over 110 years.

5. That workshops will be conducted to equip teachers with the tools they need to embrace the life sacrifices of Mary Church Terrell and share it with their students.

6. That programs be developed on African American women pioneers to be used in public and private schools with an emphasis on her firsts.
Mary Church Terrell Firsts:

1. First African American appointed to the Board of Education of the District of Columbia serving 11 years.
2. First President of the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs.
3. First to sell her speech to raise funds for kindergartens and kindergarten teacher training schools.
4. First to coin the motto, “Lifting As We Climb.”
5. First African American delegate of the Woman’s Peace Party with Jane Addams and other club women, to the International Congress of Women in Zurich (Knight, 2010).

Summary

The history of the African American experience for Black women was a very difficult one. Untold obstacles and restrictions were inflicted on them since the beginning of slavery, as this historical case study has shown. In spite of their difficulties they united as one to form the NACW to uplift the African American race and uplift they did. However, their number one priority was the children. The children were their future and they saw their growth and development in Froebelian kindergartens. African American club women of the NACW saw children as growing plants that must be nurtured and provided with environments which encourage and promote learning. The establishment of free Kindergartens for African American children was one of the primary goals of the National Association. Mary Church Terrell helped to fund several Froebelian kindergartens for African American Children. Funds from her speeches were used to
support kindergartens such as the: Maggie Murray Kindergarten named after Mrs. Booker T. Washington and founded by Mrs. Alice Carey and the Alice D. Carey Kindergarten in Charleston, South Carolina (Yates, 1905, p. 310). The progress of African American club women continues today to provide service to all humanity.
REFERENCES


Historical records of conventions of 1895-96 of the Colored women of America (1902)


APPENDIX A

APPROVAL LETTER FROM
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM
Form 4: IRB Approval Form
Identification and Certification of Research
Projects Involving Human Subjects

UAB's Institutional Review Boards for Human Use (IRBs) have an approved Federalwide Assurance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). The Assurance number is FWA00005960 and it expires on October 26, 2010. The UAB IRBs are also in compliance with 21 CFR Parts 50 and 50 and ICH GCP Guidelines.

Principal Investigator: CURRY, VERNESSA E.
Co-Investigator(s):
Protocol Number: X100629001
Protocol Title: Mary Church Terrell: A Historical Case Study of a Pioneer of Froebelian Kindergartens for African American Children 1896-1901

The IRB reviewed and approved the above named project on 7/7/11. The review was conducted in accordance with UAB's Assurance of Compliance approved by the Department of Health and Human Services. This Project will be subject to Annual continuing review as provided in that Assurance.

This project received EXPEDITED review.

IRB Approval Date: 7/7/10
Date IRB Approval Issued: 7/7/11

Marilyn Doss, M.A.
Vice Chair of the Institutional Review Board for Human Use (IRB)

Investigators please note:

The IRB approved consent form used in the study must contain the IRB approval date and expiration date.

IRB approval is given for one year unless otherwise noted. For projects subject to annual review research activities may not continue past the one year anniversary of the IRB approval date.

Any modifications in the study methodology, protocol and/or consent form must be submitted for review and approval to the IRB prior to implementation.

Adverse Events and/or unanticipated risks to subjects or others at UAB or other participating institutions must be reported promptly to the IRB.
APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT
TITLE OF RESEARCH: Mary Church Terrell: A Historical Case Study of a Pioneer of Froebelian Kindergartens for African American Children 1896-1906

IRB PROTOCOL NUMBER: X100629001

INVESTIGATOR: Vernessa Elaine Curry

SPONSOR: UAB School of Education

Introduction

The focus of this study is to explore the role of Mary Church Terrell in advancing Froebelian Kindergartens for African American children from 1896-1901. The study will examine the social context of the time period and the effect that it had on the early childhood education of African American children.

Explanation of Procedures

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This historical case study will explore Froebelian Kindergartens for African American children between 1896 through 1901. In addition to a recruitment letter your signature will be required on this consent form at the interview. If you are interested in participating in this study you may reach me by email at mytea@uab.edu or by telephone at (205) 447-8942. You will be given five questions to preview two days before the interview. The interview will be conducted in two phases. Phase 1 will be the actual interview. Phase II will be a review for accuracy of the information collected during the interview. Your responses will be recorded using a digital recorder. This study will enroll 3 participants familiar with the National Association of Colored Women’s Clubs and the Alabama Federation of Women’s Clubs.

Risks and Discomforts

There is a risk of loss of confidentiality. Information obtained about you for this study will be kept private to the extent allowed by law. However, research information that identifies you may be shared with the UAB Institutional Review Board (IRB) and others who are responsible for ensuring compliance with laws and regulations related to research, including people on behalf of the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). The confidentiality of participants will be maintained through use of pseudonyms. All recordings and records will be kept in a locked metal box. All recordings will be destroyed after six months.

Benefits
APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL
Dear Research Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of Mary Church Terrell in advancing Froebelian Kindergartens for African American children from 1896-1901. I will be asking you five questions on today. These are questions that you were given earlier for review. I will open by asking you to tell me a little about yourself before beginning. Once again I would like to thank you. Let’s begin.

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about the work of Mary Church Terrell in the National Association of Colored Women Clubs?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. Can you tell me about her role as the first president of the National Association of Colored Women Clubs?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. Can you explain the philosophy held by the National Association of Colored Women Clubs concerning the education of young children?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

4. Can you describe the work of the National Kindergarten Association?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
5. Will you describe the progress made by the National Association of Colored Women through the efforts of the first president, Mary Church Terrell?
APPENDIX D

PHOTO OF FROBELIAN CLASSROOM
African American Frobelian Kindergarten Class (See Froebel’s Photograph)

http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3c30000/3c32000/3c32400/3c32449v.jpg
APPENDIX E

POEMS BY VERNESSA CURRY
My Destiny

I tried to walk a walk
I’ve never walked before
To tell a story that needed to be told
To stare racism 2011 in the face
Hiding in scholarly gab behind the masquerade
Of liberty and justice for all
For it is liberty for some
Not all…
Wondering why the story’s not been told
Too much to face of old
Like a gallon overload of
Sodium phosphate in a
Tiny teaspoon of H2oooo
But I know,
What I know
And I must go on
Like others more worthy than I
To hold the banner high and
Wipe away bitter tears that if held
Will sap me dry
For I am called for a destiny

Greater than I

By Vernessa E. Curry
3/10/11
The Hidden Diamond

I was searching for hidden diamonds among the African American race.
I was searching for hidden diamonds till I finally found a trace, in the face, of Mary
Church Terrell.
She was elegant and charming, possessing magnificent grace.
She was highly intelligent and dedicated to making the world a better place
Oh, yes, she was more than a diamond,
pure gold, tried in the fires of;
Black Codes
Jim Crow
Segregation
Convict Lease
Lynching
Chain Gangs and the.........................Civil Rights laws of her time
When she wrote and spoke out
against these things she was never crude or rude
but always direct with effect
As she spread the good news of racial progress
and exposed the unjust consequences of
racial hate and prejudice
She lead the way, for a better day
never ceasing to grow strong
taking thousands along in
her quest to help her race become
the very best it could be
For she never failed you see
to uphold the motto that she
coined so many years ago
a motto which is quite sublime…”Lifting As We Climb”

by: Vernessa E. Curry