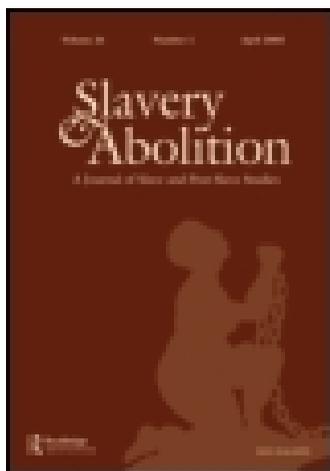


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Black Republicans, Black Republic: African-Americans, Haiti, and the Promise of Reconstruction

Brandon R. Byrd

This article examines the ways in which some African-Americans assigned great importance to Haiti from 1863 to 1877. At the outset of Reconstruction, a diverse cast of African-Americans derived inspiration from contemporary and historical signs of Haitian progress. But by the end of the era, middle-class and elite African-Americans, particularly urban northerners, demanded the reform of Haitian life and culture. This shift illustrates not only growing class politics within black communities but also African-Americans' varied attempts to understand and influence the immense transformations in US public life that occurred after emancipation.

Throughout the 1850s and 1860s, African-Americans in Chicago came together each August to celebrate the anniversary of the 1833 Slavery Abolition Act, which abolished slavery throughout the British colonies when it took effect on 1 August 1834. Hundreds – sometimes more than a thousand – black men, women, and children typically paraded through the city before travelling to a suburban grove. There they enjoyed an afternoon picnic accompanied by live music and orations by speakers of national renown. Finally the celebrants returned to the city, reconvening at a banquet hall for an evening of dancing and dining that sometimes lasted into the next day.¹

In 1863, black Chicago once again gathered for the annual emancipation festivities. That year, however, recent changes in US foreign and domestic policy gave new meaning to the event. On 5 June of the preceding year, Abraham Lincoln had appointed the first commissioner to Haiti. Then, three months after extending diplomatic recognition to the only independent black nation in the Western Hemisphere, the Republican President declared his intention to emancipate all slaves in any state

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that remained in rebellion by 1 January 1863. When the deadline passed, the Emancipation Proclamation took effect with the Confederacy still united.²

These developments seemed intertwined to the black midwesterners who gathered on 3 August. That summer morning, scores of black Chicagoans crowded onto six railroad cars bound for a suburban grove where they were joined by large delegations of African-Americans from Detroit, St. Louis, and Milwaukee. After arriving at the festival grounds, the attendees listened to speeches, sang hymns, and played sports. The jubilation was palpable as the substantial crowd celebrated not only the anniversary of emancipation in the British West Indies but also the Emancipation Proclamation and the diplomatic recognition of Haiti by the USA. These recent acts carried similar symbolic import for the excursionists. They understood that just as enslaved African-Americans had for centuries fought to gain their freedom, Haitians had struggled to secure international recognition of the independence won during the Haitian Revolution that culminated in 1804. With these historical travails rectified, the African-Americans gathered in Forest Bay Grove joyously filling the air with cries claiming 1863 as the year of jubilee and thanksgiving.³

Their joyous celebration was just one manifestation of a broader impulse permeating black communities throughout the USA. In the immediate wake of Emancipation, African-Americans of all classes eagerly drew connections between their seemingly improved status and the past and contemporary advancements made by Haitians. They voiced their support for the extension of diplomatic relations to Haiti, celebrated the arrival of the first Haitian diplomat sent to Washington, and produced and consumed sympathetic accounts of the Haitian Revolution. The efforts made to link the experiences of blacks in the USA to those of blacks in Haiti reflected a providential and transnational view of history shared by myriad African-Americans. Regardless of their former status or place of birth, African-Americans understood the Haitian Revolution, the recognition of Haitian independence, and the Emancipation Proclamation as related developments that foreshadowed the deliverance of black people from bondage and oppression to a state of freedom and political equality.

These celebratory assessments of black progress, the Haitian Revolution, and independent Haiti would, however, dwindle over the course of Reconstruction. Black leaders, especially those in the urban North, welcomed unprecedented federal action on behalf of African-Americans including the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the US Constitution. Gradually, though, they worried about the extent to which the freedom, citizenship, and voting rights now codified in law would exist in practice. Recognizing that white supremacists disparaged African-Americans by pointing to Haitian religious practices and political upheaval as proof of black inferiority, leading African-Americans attempted to reform the 'Black Republic', particularly through missionary work. By 1877, middle-class and elite black Protestants crafted a Haitian mission field that they hoped would vindicate African-Americans by making Haitians conform to bourgeois standards of piety and domesticity.⁴

In many respects, then, evolving interpretations of Haitian progress demonstrate the confidence and competing apprehension of African-Americans contemplating the postemancipation future. Prominent black urbanites claimed that they had

ascended to the vanguard of the black race, surpassing Haitians who worshipped a pantheon of spirits and expressed their political discontent through revolution. Yet, over time, such declarations became laced with anxiety. Unsure whether their new ascendant status would prove fleeting, black leaders assigned the much-maligned Haitian 'experiment in self-government' great importance. In essence, African-Americans speaking and acting on behalf of their communities attempted to strengthen fragile political fortunes and reinforce an uncertain relationship with the US government by affirming their connection to Haiti, a nation that they sometimes embraced, otherwise critiqued, but ultimately needed.

The feeling that 1863 was a watershed moment for black people resonated far beyond the suburbs of Chicago. In March of that year, ordinary African-Americans in Washington, DC, showed their enthusiasm for the diplomatic recognition of Haiti by welcoming Colonel Ernest Roumain to their city. They sent religious leaders to greet him and anticipated their own opportunity to meet the Haitian consul general and chargé d'affaires whom they considered kin.⁵ Yet, to the chagrin of these admirers, Roumain apparently rejected all visitors and confined himself to the company of his diplomatic peers and fellow communicants at St. Matthew's Catholic Church.⁶ Henry McNeal Turner sympathized with the popular anticipation surrounding Roumain's arrival even as he excused the reclusiveness of the Haitian official. On the one hand, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) minister understood that Roumain needed to conduct his designated duties without being inundated with social requests. At the same time, though, he acknowledged that the bevy of escaped slaves who identified Roumain as another welcome arrival to wartime Washington had it correct: it was, undoubtedly, the appropriate moment to give 'all hail and honor to Hayti'.⁷

Frederick Douglass, the most famous fugitive slave in Washington, had an equally difficult time suppressing the joy produced by the acknowledgment of Haitian independence. During a speech delivered in Philadelphia, he attempted to secure enlistments in the Union Army by assuring the young black men in attendance that they would be fighting for a government that respected their rights. According to Douglass, the recent actions taken by Lincoln proved his assertion. 'Events more mighty than men, eternal Providence, all-wise and all-controlling', he thundered, 'have placed us in new relations to the Government'. Douglass boasted that 'slavery in ten States of the Union is abolished forever' and 'the independence of Haiti is recognized'.⁸ For the venerable abolitionist, the establishment of diplomatic relations with Haiti and the Emancipation Proclamation were interconnected portents of imminent biracial democracy in the USA.

Besides speaking on the providentialism of US foreign policy, Douglass clarified the importance of Haiti's ascendant status in *Douglass' Monthly*.⁹ Like other African-Americans who first assumed leadership roles in the antebellum era, Douglass knew that Anglo-Americans regarded the nation-state as the highest form of civilization, and he understood that white supremacists viewed African-Americans as incapable of self-determination because they could not claim a 'legitimate' nationality. Consequently, the diplomatic recognition of Haiti, long a subject of black nationalist interest,

assumed unparalleled significance for Douglass.¹⁰ In the March 1863 edition of his newspaper, he called the establishment of diplomatic relations between the USA and Haiti one of the most remarkable developments ‘in the history of the relation of this Government to the colored part of mankind’. In fact, for Douglass, the reception of the Haitian diplomat in Washington was not only a welcome acknowledgment of a sovereign black nationality but also an ‘unmistakable sign of the doom of caste and dawn of higher civilization’.¹¹

To be certain, Douglass’s editorial was based on longstanding nationalist discourses and rhetorical traditions that encouraged hyperbole and argumentation.¹² Nonetheless, it conformed to a burgeoning view that the ascension of African-Americans in the postemancipation era was inextricably linked to the fate of Haiti. In the same month that Douglass offered his reflections on Haitian recognition and ‘the dawn of higher civilization’, W.J. Davis wrote a letter to the *Christian Recorder*. The former slave and current minister told readers that he once called on Abraham Lincoln at his Springfield law office. Davis maintained that the future president, after hearing about his sale at auction, offered a strong condemnation of the ‘wretched system’ of slavery. Davis was thus unsurprised by what Lincoln had ‘done to free so many millions of our poor down-trodden people in the South’. Indeed, his previous encounter with Lincoln shaped Davis’s perception of the potential impact of a politician who not only commiserated in private with a former slave and issued the Emancipation Proclamation but also authorized the diplomatic recognition of Haiti. He asked readers of the AME organ whether any president had ever considered the prospect of general emancipation or entertained the thought of acknowledging Haitian independence. Certainly not, he replied. Implying that the recent acts of his old acquaintance were just the beginning of a new era in US race relations, he declared that ‘Ethiopia [was] stretching out her hands to God’.¹³

The prediction found in Psalm 68:31 that ‘Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch forth her hands unto God’ seemed to explain the abrupt recognition of black freedom and national independence.¹⁴ But with the apparent dawning of a period foreshadowed by the Ethiopian Prophecy, African-Americans now attempted to ensure that the promised renaissance of black self-determination would have the desired effect on US society. In particular, African-Americans who saw themselves as part of an ascendant community worthy of an equal standing in national life crafted and consumed new narratives about the Haitian Revolution.

As his peers contemplated the impact of Haitian recognition, William Wells Brown completed *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements*. The former slave described his work as a repudiation of ‘the calumniators and traducers of the Negro’ who claimed that blacks ‘were destined only for a servile condition, entitled neither to liberty nor the legitimate pursuit of happiness’. He intended to show that blacks could meet all the expectations placed on free citizens of a modern nation by presenting biographical sketches of ‘individuals who, by their own genius, capacity, and intellectual development, have surmounted the many obstacles which slavery and prejudice have thrown in their way’.¹⁵ Brown could have relied solely on

the achievements of African-Americans to prove his point. Yet he chose to highlight the leading figures in Haitian history.

The Black Man contains biographies of Toussaint Louverture, Jean Jacques Dessalines, and six other men of Saint-Dominguan or Haitian heritage. The account of Louverture describes the governor of Saint-Domingue from 1796 to 1801 as a man of great 'humanity, generosity, and courage' who attained leadership positions due to his unsurpassed 'genius'. Moreover, it contends that Louverture achieved success not only because he possessed 'high qualities of mind' but also because he had great capacity for self-development. Brown's treatment of Louverture points out that 'from ignorance he became educated by his own exertions' and 'from a slave he rose to be a soldier, a general, and a governor'.¹⁶ Louverture, then, did not merely demonstrate individual black genius and achievement. Instead, he made obvious the broader capacity of the black race to ascend from slavery, achieve the highest levels of civilization, and exercise one of the greatest expressions of citizenship, political leadership.

While his description of Louverture complemented standard treatments of the 'first of the blacks', Brown's interpretation of Dessalines was exceptional.¹⁷ The insurrectionist who assumed power after the death of Louverture gained a reputation for brutality based on the unrelenting military tactics he used to expel the French from Saint-Domingue as well as his harsh treatment of the population that remained in the country after it gained independence and the new name of Haiti. According to Brown, though, the 'untamed ferocity' that drove Dessalines to authorize the deaths of thousands of whites also made him an example of black intelligence. In particular, the 'savage' and 'barbarous' tactics employed by Dessalines matched the 'ferocious and sanguinary spirit' of the French and proved vital to the defence of independent Haiti. Brown thus concluded that Dessalines's violent vindication of 'the rights of the oppressed in that unfortunate island' was simply evidence that a free and autonomous black people could replicate the force and cunning that their white counterparts considered effective means of political and military leadership.¹⁸

Although the interests of a white publisher likely influenced *The Black Man*, the biographies found within it confirm that African-Americans found lessons for their future within the Haitian past. As the head of the Haytian Emigration Bureau, James Redpath had hired Brown as one of his agents. With the decline of emigrationist sentiment during the Civil War, the Scottish abolitionist turned his energies to publishing *The Black Man* and other works that presented Haitian history in a manner that would justify emancipation and the northern recruitment of black soldiers.¹⁹ It stands to reason, then, that he might have shaped how his former employee wrote about Louverture, Dessalines, and their peers. Nonetheless, the representations of Haitian history found in Brown's work ultimately reflect the experiences of a former slave attempting to navigate the treacherous path from slavery to freedom to full citizenship. Brown made it clear that noteworthy Haitians had become remarkable statesmen – even leaders of nations – despite feeling the callous whip of slavery or suffering from the residual effects of white racism. As he looked to a future in which African-Americans might have to fight for full political and civil equality

after transcending bondage, Brown asked white Americans a simple question: If Haitians could rise to such greatness then what might be the potential of blacks within the USA?

While often aimed at white audiences, *The Black Man* and similar works found a receptive readership among literate African-Americans. Throughout 1863 and 1864, the *Christian Recorder* placed *The Black Man* on its list of recommended books while *Douglass' Monthly* maintained that 'it should find its way into every school library – and indeed, every house in the land'.²⁰ At the same time, the *Recorder* also included a biography of Louverture on its list of recommended books for sale and the paper soon indicated that the demand for it had exceeded the available supply.²¹ In January 1864, the AME organ capitalized on this evident interest in Haitian history by offering a copy of the 'work that every colored lady and gentleman ought to have' to the first individual who could guarantee the paper 25 new subscribers.²² Three months later, a black Missourian proselytizing on the Mississippi River won the prize.²³

To be sure, the life of Toussaint Louverture was particularly relevant to a minister working in a border state where the transition away from slavery remained contested. But African-Americans in other parts of the country – in fact, the world – expressed a similar yearning for literature on Haiti. Daniel and James Adger were the sons of a former slave who had moved from South Carolina to Philadelphia and become a successful furniture dealer. After attending the renowned Bird school for coloured pupils, the two brothers decided to venture to Australia rather than join their father's business.²⁴ James opened a successful hairdressing salon in Melbourne while Daniel wrote as the *Christian Recorder's* 'Australian Correspondent' when he found time away from his shop-keeping job. In May 1864, Daniel ended one of his earliest reports on his experiences in Australia with a request for books on Toussaint Louverture, Fabre Geffrard, and 'many others of distinguished negroes, and any pertaining to Liberia, Africa, and St. Domingo, written by colored men, or of Hayti'.²⁵ It is possible that Daniel intended to sell the books to a settler community of African-Americans who had migrated to Australia in search of gold and 'better rights'. Or, perhaps, Daniel, who insisted 'that the darkest hours are but the preludes to brighter sunshine', intended to keep them for himself.²⁶ In either case, the request further suggests that African-Americans understood emancipation and the pursuit of political equality outside of conventional notions of time and space, as processes that connected blacks in Australia to their peers in the USA and their forbearers in Haiti.

Books were just one source available to African-Americans who found relevance in the Haitian Revolution. Following Emancipation, Haitian history was a popular topic for black public lecturers throughout the USA. In the winter of 1864, an 'octoroon orator' named William Jefferson Harlin travelled throughout Colorado delivering a lecture entitled 'Toussaint l'Ouvreture; or, the Hero of Hayti'. According to one audience member, the talks were well-attended and much 'appreciated by the intelligent people of color ... on account of the prejudice existing in the mountain cities against men of color'.²⁷ Black Virginians found lectures on Louverture timely as well. As the Civil War reached its final stages, African-Americans in Alexandria

heard Eliza Wood recount her escape from slavery before concluding with a 'glowing tribute to the memory of the *Negro hero, statesman, and martyr, Toussaint L'Ouverture*'. One attendee noted that the admission fees for the address went towards the establishment of a school for young women in Gonaïves, the Haitian 'City of Independence' that Wood now called home. Although he did not indicate the amount raised by Wood, it is likely that her lecture achieved not only 'great applause' but also financial profit.²⁸ By linking resistance to slavery in the USA, slave insurrection in Saint-Domingue, and black independence in Haiti, Wood attended to the intellectual needs of African-Americans contemplating life in a postemancipation society.

At the end of the Civil War, the transnational visions of freedom articulated in festivals, newspapers, books and lectures found further expression in official political gatherings. At coloured state conventions, a burgeoning leadership class consisting of abolitionists, veterans of the Union Army, editors, ministers, independent businessmen, and skilled artisans pressed for full political and civil rights for African-Americans.²⁹ They frequently did so by alluding to the recognition of Haitian independence. In October 1865, the leaders of North Carolina's Colored State Convention hailed 'the event of Emancipation, the establishment of the Freedmen's Bureau . . . [and] the recognition of the independence of Hayti'.³⁰ Leading black Pennsylvanians and Californians subsequently echoed the sentiments of their southern counterparts. While a speaker at Pennsylvania's State Equal Rights Convention hailed the fact that Haiti was now 'placed in the same category with other nations of the earth', participants at the California Colored State Convention called for the extension of the franchise to all African-Americans. They held out hope that a federal government that abolished slavery in Washington, DC employed black troops in the Union Army, and formally recognized Haiti would heed their call for voting rights and demonstrate a sustained commitment to racial equality.³¹

Despite their geographical separation, the participants in these conventions articulated similar goals through a shared transnational language. As the 13th Amendment garnered sufficient support for adoption into the US Constitution, leading African-Americans drew connections between their changing fortunes and the contemporary and historical signs of black progress they saw in Haiti. In particular, they derived inspiration from the diplomatic recognition of a nation founded by former slaves. From North Carolina to California, black leaders suggested that a federal government willing to acknowledge an independent black nation should also extend African-Americans the rights and protections needed to evolve from an oppressed people into a self-determining community.

Achieving this goal would prove more complex than perhaps expected. Black spokespeople who desired the same political autonomy won by Haitians confronted the obduracy of Andrew Johnson, a former slave-holding president who warned Congress that extending the franchise to African-Americans would be a mistake because the black race had never formed a successful independent government in Haiti or elsewhere.³² At the same time, they faced the vitriol of white Americans who predicted that the South would become a dreaded imitation of Haiti if African-Americans were given voting rights to augment their undeserved freedom. In one representative

piece from January 1868, the editors of the *Charleston Courier* insisted that Haiti warns ‘this republic of the danger of extending the privilege of the ballot to great masses of the blacks without reference to any preliminary qualifications whatever’.³³ In essence, concerned African-Americans could not escape a truth that has since eluded historians: Reconstruction and the spectre of racial equality transformed the meaning of the Haitian Revolution and Haiti for white Americans.

These racist renderings of the Haitian past and present were intertwined with persistent attempts to restrict black freedom following the defeat of the Confederacy. Nonetheless, they could not obscure the demonstrable progress made by African-Americans in the years after the Civil War. As white Democrats alleged that ‘negro anarchy’ in Haiti proved the absurdity of the ‘atrocious negro supremacy policy of our radical Congress’, thousands of black citizens realized the promises of the 14th and 15th Amendments, voted for public officials, assumed elected office themselves, and helped create the first instance of biracial democracy in US history.³⁴ For the moment, middle-class and elite African-Americans, particularly those in the urban North, did not express undue concern about the condemnations of Haiti offered by foreign observers. Instead, they attempted to reinforce their ‘Americanness’ and strengthen their position in national life by reconceptualizing Haiti as a site of African-American political and cultural progress.

At the outset of 1869, black politicians vied for the job of US minister resident and consul general to Haiti. Attempts to gain diplomatic appointments in preceding years had faltered but leading African-Americans now felt confident that they had accrued enough goodwill with Ulysses S. Grant to benefit from the patronage politics of the era.³⁵ A committee of black Republicans from Baltimore presented the Republican President with a number of black leaders deemed suitable for diplomatic positions in the Caribbean, Africa, and Central and South America. While the black Baltimoreans looked favourably on the posts in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Columbia, and other countries, they preferred that black leaders including Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett, George T. Downing, and Frederick Douglass first receive consideration for an appointment to Haiti. In their estimation, sending any of these men to the ‘Black Republic’ would affirm the position of equality ‘occupied by our people’ and prove ‘the competence of the leading men of our race’.³⁶

The pursuit of the Haitian post was competitive but Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett, the principal of Philadelphia’s Institute for Colored Youth, received widespread support from his peers.³⁷ Black Republicans in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, DC, petitioned Grant, asking him to give the prominent black Philadelphian a job that, in their opinion, a white man could not ably fill. George T. Downing, President of the National Executive Committee of Colored Men, informed Grant that African-Americans would view Bassett’s appointment as an acknowledgement of their enhanced political status.³⁸ Bassett echoed these sentiments when he submitted a petition on his own behalf. He assured Grant that his appointment or that of another ‘representative colored man’ would ‘be hailed . . . especially by the recently enfranchised colored citizens, as a marked recognition of our new condition in the Republic and an auspicious token of our great future’.³⁹

With the support of Downing, Douglass, and other would-be competitors, Bassett eventually became the minister resident and consul general to Haiti. His appointment received an enthusiastic reception among African-Americans, particularly in northern cities. In May 1869, the Philadelphia Bethel AME Church held a banquet at which a band played in honour of the local hero who had become the first African-American appointed to a US diplomatic post.⁴⁰ Later that month, AME officials invited Bassett to deliver a speech at their Annual Conference. They reported that his address met the expectations of the many attendees at the Philadelphia event who had supported Bassett and now felt confident that he would 'reflect credit upon his race and government'.⁴¹

Bassett received a comparable reception in New York City. Shortly after the Philadelphia banquet, black New Yorkers hosted a celebration in the new minister's honour at Shiloh Church. Reverend Charles B. Ray introduced Bassett to the energized crowd by stressing the importance of his appointment for all African-Americans. The reverend told the audience that he felt 'a deep sense of no ordinary pride and heartfelt gratification in being selected to preside over the deliberations of one of the most auspicious events with the history of American civilization'. He proceeded to welcome Bassett to the stage and boast that Grant's appointee was going to Haiti as a US citizen as well as 'one of the colored race'.⁴² The audience burst into applause and cheers, expressing their confidence that Haiti would become a place for African-Americans to showcase their ascending status. Bassett, overwhelmed by the support, assumed his place at the podium, thanked the audience, and voiced his pleasure that seemingly every African-American was praying for his success.⁴³

If some African-Americans relied on prayer to help Bassett, others mobilized the black press in his support. Although Haitians welcomed Bassett – he later wrote that nearly all of Port-au-Prince greeted him at the city's docks or visited him during his first two days in Haiti – white Americans cast immediate doubt upon his qualifications.⁴⁴ George T. Downing countered these critics by assuring black newspaper readers that 'the proud representative of the whole people' was already demonstrating impressive skill in his initial dealings with Haitian President Sylvain Salnave.⁴⁵ A correspondent of the *Elevator* concurred with Downing's assessment and insisted that Bassett was proving 'weak-kneed [white] Republicans' wrong by ably fulfilling his responsibilities in Haiti. He assured readers of the leading black journal in San Francisco that they should expect nothing less from a black diplomat who was also a professor of mathematics, a 'thorough student of history and literature', and a polyglot possessing 'high intellectual, moral, and diplomatic qualifications'.⁴⁶

To those who believed this assessment, the anticipation and eventual realization of Bassett's appointment confirmed a new stage in the relationship among African-Americans, the US government, and Haiti. Once a haven for free and enslaved blacks seeking refuge from slavery and oppression, Haiti had become a place where black leaders could validate their political capabilities and solidify their place within the Republican Party. Even though Bassett and subsequent appointees to the Haitian post still needed to perform up to the prejudiced standards of white Americans, African-Americans cognizant of domestic and international politics could point to potential and,

subsequently, actual black diplomats as the embodiment of their citizenship rights and more equitable standing in US public life. These signs of progress and their longstanding exposure to Anglo-American culture imbued leading African-Americans with a belief that they, not Haitians, now stood at the vanguard of the black race.

Benjamin Tucker Tanner captured this chauvinism in his editorials. Just before Bassett accepted his appointment, the editor of the *Christian Recorder* argued that African-Americans had become the 'best type' of their race due to their exposure to 'the cool, aspiring, all-conquering Saxon'. They had, he maintained, 'learned the *modus operandi* of Republican government, of Protestant faith', from Anglo-Americans and could now demonstrate their political acumen and cultural refinement in the nation's public sphere. Conversely, 'the land of Toussaint' was incapable of fulfilling its promise as 'the home of freedom, of government, and of true religion' because civil strife and Vodou, a creolized religion entailing intricate rites of prayer, song, dance, and spirit possession, plagued it.⁴⁷ These perceived shortcomings left Tanner unconvinced that Haitians could produce a stable example of black self-government. The editor thus called on African-Americans to mentor Haitians and embrace the responsibilities that came with their position as a 'candle in the great house of Negro darkness and barbarity'.⁴⁸

Such statements showed little regard for the complexities of Haitian identity or the realities of Haitian political and social life. Tanner portrayed Haitians as uniformly impoverished, ignorant, and militaristic; as a homogenous population inferior to their African-American counterparts. In truth, the social stratification that existed among African-Americans during the late 1860s was even more acute in Haiti. Some Haitian politicians, intellectuals, and military officers derided black popular culture, particularly Vodou, and helped consolidate economic power, political leadership, and social prestige among a small class of educated urban elites. Like the AME members who established missions in the postemancipation South, Haitian leaders often saw themselves as bearers of culture whose fluency in Western languages, arts, politics, and religions demonstrated the equality of their race and gave them a mandate to lead its less-developed members. For these elites, then, accusations that all Haitians were backwards would have seemed absurd or even comical.⁴⁹

Yet Tanner expressed scant interest in collaborating with Haitian elites or exploring the similarities between black leaders in Haiti and the USA. The freeborn native of Pittsburgh accepted dominant discourses of American exceptionalism, highlighted the material and moral achievements of his country, and defined civilization by the same standards as middle-class white Americans. Merging the 'fortune fall' doctrine with a belief in the 'black man's burden', he insisted that slavery had prepared educated African-Americans to show their level of acculturation and introduce Anglo-American culture to benighted black people abroad. Martin Delaney, Alexander Crummell, and Henry McNeal Turner articulated similar ideas. These black nationalists promoted the development of African culture through Christianity and commerce while emphasizing the special responsibility that African-Americans of their ilk possessed as leaders of this proposed redemption of Africa. Much attention has been given to the complexities of these black nationalists who combined affection for Africa with a commitment to

ideals rooted in their US experience. But this ideological conflict also had ramifications for Haiti.⁵⁰

In January 1869, an AME Colored Men's Convention held in Tanner's home city advocated for the annexation of Haiti by the USA. The *Recorder* editor immediately lauded this suggestion, arguing that the annexation spirit 'should predominate in the heart of every civilized and Christian Negro of the world'. Moreover, he stressed that 'we Christian Negroes are to act the mother to our race, to bring it up to a well-developed manhood'.⁵¹ Whereas free and enslaved black émigrés once welcomed the appeals of Haitian officials who insisted that Haiti would 'become . . . a tender Mother' to them, at least one prominent advocate of annexation now transposed this familial metaphor and claimed a patriarchal place at the forefront of the black race.⁵²

Efforts made by Grant to annex the Dominican Republic intensified Tanner's desire to bring an infantilized Haiti into a nurturing US and African-American political sphere.⁵³ In February 1869, Tanner asked readers of his *Recorder* whether 'the countrymen of Toussaint' should join the Dominicans, 'be taken by the hand, and be accounted American citizens?' 'With all our heart', came his immediate reply, 'we say, *Yea Lord, and Amen*'.⁵⁴ The editor maintained that 'the annexation of Hayti is but a continuation of the good work which God has begun to do for the Negro and for the word'. The purported benefits of annexation included the cessation of civil strife, the expansion of international trade, the construction of better schools, and the unencumbered spread of Protestantism in Haiti.⁵⁵

In fact, Tanner felt that missionary work would provide the perfect complement to US intervention in Haitian affairs. As Tanner contended that foreigners should control Haitian political life, he lamented that the AME Church had 'never yet risen to the high work imposed upon the Christian Church – even the conquest of the world to Christ'. The prospect of annexation, however, gave AME members renewed opportunity to fulfil their foreign mission. Tanner asserted that church bishops were ready to 'reap our missionary conquest' as the 'drum of the Lord' could be 'heard beating up volunteers' to go to Haiti. He asked church treasurers whether they would respond to the drumming and 'send one or more missionaries to Hayti along with the starry flag'.⁵⁶ By anticipating the militant expressions of imperialism and evangelism that intensified in subsequent decades, Tanner implied congruence between the spiritual renewal of Haiti and an aggressive policy of national expansion in the Americas.⁵⁷

While some black leaders decried foreign intervention in coloured nations, the declarations of the Pittsburgh Colored Men's Convention and Benjamin Tucker Tanner demonstrate the appeal of Haitian annexation for others.⁵⁸ These black elites either ignored or remained ignorant of the attitudes of Haitian politicians who scrutinized US interest in the neighbouring Dominican Republic and fretted about a potential encroachment on Haitian sovereignty.⁵⁹ They were not alone, however, in thinking that all nations could find opportunity under the US flag during Radical Reconstruction. Tanner and his allies found themselves in agreement with Hiram Revels, John Rainey, the delegates of two National Conventions of Colored Men, and Frederick Douglass, who was an official representative on Grant's

investigative commission on Dominican annexation.⁶⁰ In many respects, then, support for US expansion complemented a broader outlook on citizenship. By insisting that an army of black missionaries could help mould Haitians into Protestant republicans fit for integration into US life, Tanner essentially implied that middle-class and elite African-Americans had already placed their own fitness for citizenship as well as their quintessential 'Americanness' beyond any reasonable doubt.

This moment of hope in racial equality and national democracy proved fleeting, however. Between 1869 and 1875, Congress removed restrictions on the voting rights of ex-Confederates and Democrats returned to power in several southern states. Moreover, white vigilantes drove black political officials out of office in South Carolina, threatened black voters in Kentucky with whippings, maiming, and hanging, and brought Mississippi and Louisiana to the brink of civil war. At the same time, northern Republicans grew less committed to the idea of racial equality and more willing to allow white southerners governance over their own affairs. In short, by the mid-1870s, white Democrats could boast that they had restored white supremacy to the South and 'redeemed' their region.⁶¹

Those who sanctioned the overturn of black political gains disparaged Haitian culture at every opportunity. As economic depression, political corruption, and paramilitary groups devastated the South, even liberal white northerners argued that Haitian cultural backwardness showed that blacks were unprepared for political responsibility. For instance, Horace White, a Republican who had supported emancipation and helped Lincoln gain office, decried the 'sad state of Hayti'. Citing the alleged prevalence of infanticide and cannibalism among Vodou practitioners, the editor of the *Chicago Tribune* lamented that the condition of most Haitians was 'that of barbarism'.⁶² The pervasiveness of superstition not only explained the inability of Haitians to maintain a stable republican government but also offered insights into the perceived failure of Reconstruction. For White and other white Americans who ascribed to romantic racialist views of blackness, the ascension of ignorant and childlike African-Americans to political power would have the same undesired results as 'negro rule' in Haiti.⁶³

Such scrutiny of and attacks upon black citizenship affected the ways in which leading African-Americans perceived themselves in relation to Haiti. Although middle-class and elite African-Americans remained confident in the superiority of their bourgeois Protestant culture, they found it difficult to make unequivocal claims that they were at the political or social vanguard of the black race. For some, the discrepancy between their travails and the independence of Haiti was increasingly glaring. One black Republican noted that while African-Americans struggled to establish themselves as equal citizens, Haiti had solidified its 'place among the nations'.⁶⁴ In fact, in order to affirm their right to the ballot and self-government, African-Americans now needed to rely on Haitians. If they could somehow confirm their material and cultural advancement, Haitians would disprove white supremacists who argued that the cultural inferiority and technological incompetence of all black people justified the political subjugation of African-Americans.

The collision of African-American cultural chauvinism and the mounting anxiety caused by the redemption measures intensified calls for the reform of Haitian society. Black leaders believed that a sound representation of black self-government needed to be capitalist, republican, and, most importantly, Protestant. Building upon antebellum notions of elevation and respectability and presaging the racial uplift doctrines of the Jim Crow era, these middle-class and elite African-Americans thus committed themselves to missionary work in Haiti. Desperate to use the Western Hemisphere's only independent black nation to confirm their political capabilities, they often struggled to perceive how their attempts to replace notions of inherent racial inferiority with evolutionary views of cultural assimilation often replicated the very racist ideologies that they opposed.⁶⁵

Black Protestants had looked at Haiti as an inviting missionary field for decades but they did not commit themselves to that country until the 1870s. Although many of the African-Americans who flocked to Haiti during the antebellum era were AME members, they maintained loose connections to Haitians as well as AME leaders in the USA. By the 1860s, African-American émigré James Theodore Holly established Holy Trinity Church in Port-au-Prince, organized missions across Haiti, and secured three native converts to the clergy. Yet his Protestant Episcopal denomination lacked a sizeable black influence. AME leaders who wanted to augment Holly's work because Haiti 'demonstrated the truth that colored men are capable of self-government' found little support⁶⁶ Even as Benjamin Tucker Tanner lauded the evangelical benefits of annexation, the largest black religious organization of the era devoted its limited resources to domestic missions in the South.⁶⁷

Foreign missions achieved heightened salience as the AME infrastructure and financial state improved and African-Americans saw their political rights challenged. In 1872, Theophilus Gould Steward asked the AME General Conference to invigorate the church's missionary work in Haiti with new life. Steward had established missions in Georgia and South Carolina since entering the ministry nearly a decade earlier but he came to the Philadelphia convention with a proposal to aid a people who he considered even more benighted than the southern freedman. The *Christian Recorder* reported that 'the heart of the whole [Conference] body seemed to throb with renewed life' after the minister introduced his resolution.⁶⁸ Like tens of thousands of other Americans of the era, the men and women who heard Steward's appeal felt compelled to take an active role in the foreign missionary movement, save heathen souls abroad, and strengthen their churches at home. These goals finally seemed attainable when, after a year of fundraising, the AME Church amassed enough money to send Steward to Haiti.⁶⁹

The freeborn New Jersey native was an admirer of Haitian history but his disdain for contemporary Haitian society quickly surfaced following his arrival in Port-au-Prince.⁷⁰ After enjoying the company of Bassett and various African-American émigrés, Steward travelled about the Haitian capital, using a journal to record his observations of the customs and habits of its occupants. He noted the 'dirty' food found in Haitian markets and remarked that elite Haitians were polite but 'very ostentatious, superstitious and overbearing in their manners'. Even when

Steward attempted to identify positive aspects of Haitian life, he struggled to transcend his prejudice. Within a day of arriving in Port-au-Prince, the AME missionary labelled Haitians as a thrifty and enterprising 'nation of traders' who were 'the only people who can beat the Jews'.⁷¹

These disparaging views on Haitian culture persisted throughout Steward's time in what he considered a 'military establishment' masquerading as a republic. His journal contains scathing denunciations of Haitian women's alleged lack of modesty, condemnations of public sanitation in Port-au-Prince, and shock at evidence of interracial marriage. The proliferation of Vodou further infuriated Steward. He argued that other nations might not be able to conquer Haiti but 'liquor, licentiousness, and superstition' certainly would. In sum, Steward concluded that Holly, his primary confidant in Haiti, was that country's lone example of Christian virtue.⁷²

Negative assessments of Haitian life reflect a broader perspective on racial advancement as well as a common religious worldview. To a great extent, Steward's reaction to perceived cultural deficiencies in Haiti cohered to a civilizing impulse that animated many conservative evangelicals and liberal Protestants in ensuing decades.⁷³ At the same time, though, the propagation of Anglo-American culture in Haiti served a practical purpose. As Steward extolled the superiority of Protestantism abroad, African-Americans faced allegations that they exhibited the same proclivity for immoral behaviour as Haitians. Steward understood that these charges of cultural backwardness could negate any claims for black political autonomy in the USA. So, while contemporary black nationalists found it necessary for African-Americans to become the bearers of civilization in Africa, Steward represented the interests of black political leaders by identifying Haitian cultural deficiencies and proposing reforms of them.

This adherence to bourgeois notions of civilization makes the subsequent actions taken by Steward appear contradictory. Although all missionaries needed to raise interest in their field by stressing its importance, Steward's public insistence that the work of black Protestants in Haiti would have 'mighty consequences' suggests his understanding of the political implications of Haitian uplift. Yet, even though he acknowledged the significance of Haitian missions, Steward abandoned his post after six months. In the end, the efforts to acquire more funding while reconciling the troubling discrepancy between Haiti as a symbol of black self-government and Haiti as an imitable social model proved too much for him to handle.⁷⁴

In the wake of Steward's flight from Port-au-Prince, Benjamin Tucker Tanner demanded the creation of a 'Women's Missionary Society' that would assume responsibility for Haitian missions. He would ultimately get more than he bargained for. While ostensibly advocating for increased female authority within the AME community, the *Christian Recorder* editor wanted women to take a greater role in church affairs because he thought they were idle, indolent, and irresponsible parishioners. Moreover, the future bishop envisioned a missionary society that would operate as a dependent part of a larger patriarchal church structure rather than an autonomous site of female organizing. Ordinary female members of the AME Church, however, denounced Tanner's views and pointed to their support of temperance and home missions as evidence of their commitment to their churches. Upon agreeing to organize

foreign missionary work, the wives of leading bishops and clergymen made it clear that they too rejected the editor's paternalism. Their Woman's Parent Mite Missionary Society (WPMMS) – the first national organization established by black women – would respond to gender and racial concerns.⁷⁵

Indeed, WPMMS members understood their group not only as a continuation of the work begun by Steward but also as a means of addressing women's issues and proving the importance of women's organizing. The primarily educated and northern-born women of the WPMMS recognized that all African-Americans were invested in the fate of Haitians, inhabitants of an 'historic island ... whose blood flowed so freely for the emancipation of our race'.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, WPMMS President Mary A. Campbell implored black women to embrace a leading role in reforming Haitian society. The mother of four from Philadelphia spoke directly to the perceived concerns of her peers when she accentuated the plight of her 'Haytian sisters', characterized other Haitians as 'sable children', and highlighted allegations of rampant infant sacrifice in Haiti.⁷⁷ Anticipating subsequent representations of missionary work in Africa, Campbell implied that black churchwomen had a 'special mission' to save Haitian children from their terrible fates and redeem the women responsible for raising future generations of Haitians.⁷⁸ Once Haitian domestic life improved, political stability would follow. In this view, female missionaries could address the needs of Haitian women and assume leadership positions even as they focused on vindicating black self-government in Haiti and the USA.⁷⁹

Campbell's male counterparts demonstrated less interest in female empowerment but an equal proclivity for stressing the immediate need for reforms in Haitian society. In September 1874, AME minister T.A. Cuff delivered a speech on temperance before other church ministers in New Jersey. While decrying the corrosive impact of intemperance on the human soul, he paid particular attention to its tangible effect on black populations. African-Americans, Cuff argued, needed to stop spending money on spirits and invest in foreign missions. If not for intemperance in the black community, 'the gospel of Christ, religion, science and literature would flourish' in Haiti while 'heathenism would disappear as the snow before the sun'.⁸⁰ The expected benefits for African-Americans needed little explanation. As other church leaders asked Haiti's competing political factions to 'simmer down ... for the sake of the race', AME members understood that Cuff hoped to elevate the status of blacks in the USA by ensuring that an evangelized Haiti gained respect from other nations.⁸¹

Within this vision of racial uplift possessed by male AME leaders, the performances of female Haitian lecturers also assumed particular importance. During the mid-1870s, a Haitian woman known simply as Madame Parque travelled throughout the South speaking to audiences at courthouses and churches on the subjects of 'The Negro, Past, Present, and Future' and 'Hayti and the Haytiens'.⁸² The black men in attendance took interest in the subject matter but their reports on the lectures focused on the Haitian woman's demeanour and speaking abilities. AME Bishop Daniel A. Payne characterized Parque as 'the Haytien lady of high culture and great eloquence' while two other AME ministers highlighted her 'intelligent' and 'eloquent' elocution.⁸³ Payne and his colleagues further noted that whites who attended Parque's

talks acknowledged her admirable qualities, too. Consequently, one AME minister concluded that, ‘with such an example as this woman ... the colored people should be inspired to a tempt [*sic*] at least, to demonstrate the capability of the race to attain more than it has ever yet done.’⁸⁴

The refinement demonstrated by Parque and acknowledged by her white observers assuaged the patriarchal anxieties of black leaders and confirmed the link between Haiti and black progress. On the one hand, responses to her lectures occurred at a moment when black audiences placed great importance on elocution. At the same time, they indicate growing assumptions about the relationship between femininity and racial uplift. The public activities of black women challenged conventional definitions of black progress that were based on a Victorian notion of separate spheres. In the minds of middle-class and elite black men, public lectures by a black woman could damage their race’s ability to conform to a patriarchal ideal that assigned men dominion in politics, the economy, and the military while confining women to the home. Parque, however, was exceptional. AME leaders pleased with her comportment and impressed that white audiences deemed her respectable concluded that Haitian women could bring credit to the race, even as actors in the public domain.

Prominent AME officials assumed that their influence would ensure that all Haitians achieved the same level of cultural refinement needed to vindicate African-Americans. By August 1876, the male leadership of the AME Church was moving to strengthen its oversight of the Haitian mission field and the Ladies’ Mite Missionary Society in Port-au-Prince.⁸⁵ To a certain extent, the AME churchwomen in Port-au-Prince welcomed a greater association between their community and the church body in the USA because it might ensure enhanced prestige and funding for their endeavours. This attitude did not, however, mean that they were willing to leave the selection of a lead resident missionary to the men back home. Eventually, conversations between WPMMS members and AME officials resulted in the selection of Reverend Charles W. Mossell as the appropriate man to assume leadership in Haiti. Upon departing for Port-au-Prince, the native Marylander and graduate of Lincoln University made sure that he had enough provisions and sufficient prayers that Jesus might grant him ‘great success’ in his ‘efforts to assist in making the Haytians a great nation.’⁸⁶

While Mossell placed ample faith in the power of prayer, he also recognized that certain material elements of the missionary project required immediate attention. Shortly after arriving in the Haitian capital, he reported that none of the church literature accessible to him was published in ‘the tongue that is vernacular’ to Haitians.⁸⁷ That Mossell assumed French, not the Kreyòl spoken by most Haitians, to be the local vernacular indicates the shortcomings of a missionary movement shaped by a mixture of prejudice and compassion, politics, and faith.⁸⁸

In fact, the lack of resources was so disheartening precisely because Mossell did not distinguish between the political and spiritual dimensions of his task. The new leader of AME missions in Haiti maintained that ‘every American Negro ought to be deeply interested in the republic of Haiti’ and he devoted some of his energy to writing a report on Haitian history and contemporary life that the *Recorder* published in a

seven part series. While presenting a rather positive view of the economic initiatives of various Haitian presidents, he lashed out at the reign of 'Roman Catholicism, French Infidelity, and Voudouism' in Haiti. Relying on the racist accounts of Haiti provided by Martinique-born slaveholder Moreau de Saint Mery and other white Europeans, Mossell reserved special condemnation for the alleged proliferation of Vodou and cannibalism in the 'Black Republic'. The evidence of the 'painful and present moral status of the Haitian people' troubled a black missionary who was convinced that 'the religion of a people ... determine [*sic*] not only their future destiny; but their present and comparative worth'.⁸⁹ For Mossell, the absence of French bibles in Haiti could have damning repercussions for the advancement of an entire race.

As Reconstruction ended with the election of Rutherford B. Hayes and the removal of federal troops from southern state capitals, Mary Ella Mossell took a trip around Port-au-Prince. The graduate of Baltimore's well-known Colored Normal School would soon begin her work as the principal of the AME mission school but, for now, she was preoccupied with absorbing the unfamiliar sights and sounds of the Haitian capital.⁹⁰ Mossell left her husband, Charles, to his work and travelled alongside a member of the Mite Missionary Society who introduced her to the central market, a bustling place congested with stalls, abundant produce, ornate architecture, and a ceaseless stream of pedestrians.

Overwhelmed by the scene, Mossell voiced her disapproving views on Haitian life. In a report published in the *Recorder*, she characterized the observed Haitian mode of transportation – horses and donkeys – as 'very inferior to that of our own country'. Mossell further decried the lack of men in the marketplace and identified the efforts of the Haitian market women as 'amusing' rather than indicative of female social and economic empowerment. To her, the language and decorum of these women and their children was even more alarming. She lamented 'the current and peculiar customs, the unintelligible and musical dialect of the natives' and remarked with astonishment that 'children are seen running hither and thither; naked'.⁹¹

Mossell was certain that her peers needed to rectify this situation. Apart from James Theodore Holly, black Protestants did not seem to be allotting sufficient attention to the cultural improvement of Haitians. The Haitian response to these inadequate efforts had, however, convinced Mossell that an increased presence of genteel African-Americans in Haiti could bear fruits. By the time she arrived in Haiti, Holly's Haitian Orthodox Apostolic Church boasted of 11 Haitian clergymen, 10 parishes throughout Haiti, and dozens of confirmations and baptisms each year.⁹² The burden now rested on other middle-class and elite African-Americans to join Holly and provide resources for Haitians who identified Protestantism as an appropriate antidote to poverty and political turmoil.⁹³ Mossell thus challenged Mite missionaries in the USA to join the ongoing struggle for racial uplift in Haiti. She reiterated the declarations of other WPMMS leaders and declared, 'Women of America, this work of moral elevation concerns you!' Only the strength of black women could ensure the ascendance of bourgeois American values in Haiti.⁹⁴

Mossell's outlook confirms that much had changed in the years since attendees at the Chicago Emancipation Day festivities celebrated Haiti. Mossell and her peers

faced the increasingly difficult challenge of realizing the promise of Emancipation and, in their opinion, a Haitian state lacking in moral and material progress hurt their cause. The proposed solution to this vexing problem was to take up the mission of ‘moral elevation’. As white Americans derided the notion of black self-government, African-Americans speaking on behalf of their communities articulated the belief that the salvation of Haitian souls could resurrect their political prospects.

This optimism was misguided albeit revealing. In the ensuing decade, developments in US social, cultural, and political life would increase the uncertainty that many African-Americans felt about their prospects for political and civil equality and, subsequently, lead some to reconsider their assessments of Haiti and Haitians. But, perhaps more importantly, the interest in Haiti expressed by Mossell and her contemporaries illustrates how African-Americans understood and attempted to influence America’s transition from a slaveholding nation to a biracial democracy. For them, Reconstruction was not a matter confined to the South or even the USA. Instead, the fulfilment of Emancipation’s promise – the attainment of full political and civil rights for black citizens – was a process that transcended national boundaries. While black festival attendees, admirers of Haitian diplomats, bibliophiles, editors, politicians, and missionaries might have disagreed about the state of Haitian progress at different moments, they concurred that black independence in the Caribbean and black autonomy in the USA were intertwined. Consequently, as we rightfully attempt to tell the story of Reconstruction from the perspectives of the black people who experienced it, we would be wise to heed the chorus of African-Americans who spoke about Haiti and broaden our own outlooks on the tumultuous years that followed the demise of slavery in the USA.

Notes

- [1] Contemporary accounts of the celebrations are found in *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 4, 1857; ‘Grand State Celebration’, *Chicago Press and Tribune*, July 31, 1860; ‘Emancipation in the West Indies Celebration’, *Chicago Press and Tribune*, August 1, 1860; ‘Emancipation Day’, *Chicago Press and Tribune*, August 2, 1860; ‘Emancipation Day’, *Chicago Tribune*, August 2, 1861; and ‘The Chicago Liberty Club Excursion to Canada’, *Chicago Tribune*, August 7, 1862.
- [2] On Lincoln’s wartime measures, see Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and the End of Slavery* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010). The prolonged struggle for Haitian recognition is recounted in numerous scholarly works including Leslie M. Alexander, ‘The Black Republic: The Influence of the Haitian Revolution on Northern Black Political Consciousness, 1816–1862’, in *African Americans and the Haitian Revolution: Selected Essays and Historical Documents*, ed. Maurice Jackson and Jacqueline Bacon (New York: Routledge Press, 2010).
- [3] ‘Annual Excursion and Picnic to Forest Bay Grove, August 3’, *Chicago Tribune*, August 3, 1863; ‘The Emancipation Celebration’, *Chicago Tribune*, August 4, 1863. On African-American emancipation celebrations, see Mitch Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations, 1808–1915* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003). Kachun notes that African-Americans in the antebellum era could not incorporate Haiti into their emancipation celebrations due to the revulsion with which white Americans regarded the Haitian Revolution. Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom*, 57, 92.

- [4] Throughout this work, I demarcate class in much the same way that other scholars have done so. Middle-class applies to workers who saved some money and strived for respectability and elite describes educated professionals, many of whom led national organizations.
- [5] 'News from Washington', *The New York Herald*, March 17, 1863; 'The Minister from Hayti', *The Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph*, May 15, 1863.
- [6] White newspapers alleged that Roumain's reluctance to accept visitors caused a rift between the Haitian diplomatic representative and African-Americans. Various newspapers repeated a white correspondent's quotation of one contraband who allegedly cursed Roumain and his entourage as 'niggers tink demselbs better dan de President'. See 'The Minister from Hayti', *The Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph*, May 15, 1863; *The Weekly Vincennes Western Sun*, April 4, 1863, and 'The Minister from Hayti', *The (Jackson, MS) Daily Southern Crisis*, March 28, 1863.
- [7] 'The Haytien Minister', *The Christian Recorder*, March 28, 1863; Henry McNeal Turner, 'Washington Correspondence', *The Christian Recorder*, March 28, 1863. Newspaper reports indicating that some of Roumain's callers were former slaves are corroborated by demographic data. During the course of the war, as many as 40,000 freedmen and women made their way to the nation's capital. Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980).
- [8] Frederick Douglass, 'Address for the Promotion of Colored Enlistments', in *Frederick Douglass: Selected Speeches and Writings*, ed. Philip S. Foner (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1999), 536. Along with lauding the diplomatic recognition of Haiti, Douglass and other black leaders contemplated the metaphorical link between the Civil War and the Haitian Revolution. On the rhetorical connections among Toussaint Louverture, the Haitian Revolution, and black service in the Union Army, see Matthew J. Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War: The Promise and Peril of a Second Haitian Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).
- [9] Douglass, 'Address for the Promotion of Colored Enlistments'.
- [10] Discourses on nationalism and Haiti produced by northern black leaders in the antebellum era receive excellent treatment in Patrick Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest in the Antebellum North* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 220–6.
- [11] *Douglass' Monthly*, March 1863.
- [12] Nan Johnson, *Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric in North America* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991); Shirley Wilson Logan, *Liberating Language: Sites of Rhetorical Education in Nineteenth-Century Black America* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008).
- [13] W.J. Davis, 'Bloomington Correspondence', *Christian Recorder*, March 21, 1863.
- [14] On the prevalence of this passage in black thought, see Roy Kay, *The Ethiopian Prophecy in Black American Letters* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012) and Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *The Golden Age of Black Nationalism, 1850–1925* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1978).
- [15] William Wells Brown, *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements* (New York: Thomas Hamilton, 1863), 5–6.
- [16] *Ibid.*, 99, 105.
- [17] White abolitionist Wendell Phillips delivered perhaps the most famous favourable treatments of Louverture during the antebellum and Civil War eras.
- [18] Brown, *The Black Man*, 111, 116–17. Dessalines had long assumed a nightmarish quality in the American imagination. See Alfred Hunt, *Haiti's Influence on Antebellum America: Slumbering Volcano in the Caribbean* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 90–91.
- [19] Redpath's career is covered in John R. McKivigan, *Forgotten Firebrand: James Redpath and the Making of Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).
- [20] 'Books for Our Times', *The Christian Recorder*, January 2, 1864, and 'The Black Man, His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements', *Douglass' Monthly*, January 1863. In 1865, James

- Meriles Simms, a former slave and Union soldier, published an edition of *The Black Man* in Charleston, South Carolina. Phillip Lapsansky, 'Afro-Americana', *Annual Report of the Library Company of Philadelphia* (1989), 23–31.
- [21] 'Books for Our Times', *The Christian Recorder*, January 2, 1864; 'Prize', *The Christian Recorder*, January 30, 1864. The unnamed biography advertised was likely John Rely Beard's *The Life of Toussaint L'Ouverture: The Negro Patriot of Hayti*. This work was also published in 1863 by James Redpath.
- [22] 'Get Subscribers', *The Christian Recorder*, January 16, 1864.
- [23] 'Rev. Page Tyler, on the Mississippi, Takes the Premium', *The Christian Recorder*, April 16, 1864.
- [24] Daniel R. Biddle, *Tasting Freedom: Octavius Catto and the Battle for Equality in Civil War America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 101, 185, 201–2.
- [25] Daniel P. Adger, 'Letter from Australia', *The Christian Recorder*, May 7, 1864.
- [26] *Ibid.*
- [27] *Colorado Daily Miners' Register*, October 21, 1864; Rover, 'Letter from Denver City, Col.', *The Christian Recorder*, December 10, 1864.
- [28] J.H.H., 'Alexandria Correspondent', *The Christian Recorder*, April 25, 1863.
- [29] In occupation and ideological orientation, this group of postbellum leaders would share many of the characteristics of the antebellum African-American spokespersons examined by Rael in *Black Identity and Black Protest*.
- [30] 'Colored Convention in North Carolina', *The Christian Recorder*, October 28, 1865.
- [31] 'Proceedings of the State Equal Rights Convention of the Colored People of Pennsylvania' (Philadelphia: Printed for and by the order of the Convention, 1865), 22, in *From Slavery to Freedom: The African American Pamphlet Collection, 1822–1909*, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress; 'Colored State Convention', *The Christian Recorder*, November 25, 1865.
- [32] Kenneth Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865–1877* (New York: Knopf, 1965), 87. On the broader views on African-Americans during Reconstruction, see George Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), 165–97.
- [33] 'The Warning From Account', *The Charleston Courier*, September 3, 1868.
- [34] 'Serious Troubles in Hayti – The Negro a Disturbing Element Everywhere', *New York Herald*, January 27, 1868.
- [35] In 1867, Ebenezer Bassett formally requested the Haitian post. Christopher Teal, *Hero of Hispaniola: America's First Black Diplomat, Ebenezer D. Bassett* (Westport, CT: Praeger Press, 2008), 49–50. John Mercer Langston had previously declined the position due to his desire to aid emancipated black southerners and avoid aligning himself with a Democratic administration. See John Mercer Langston, *From the Virginia Plantation to the National Capitol* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 276; 'The Mission to Hayti', *Georgia Weekly Telegraph*, February 12, 1869.
- [36] Republican Committee of Baltimore, Maryland, letter to Ulysses S. Grant, May, 1869 in *Letters of Application and Recommendation During the Administration of Ulysses S. Grant* (National Archives Microfilm Publication M968, 69 rolls), hereafter cited as *Letters of Application*.
- [37] Some journalists reported that New Orleans resident F.E. Dumas was Bassett's primary competition for the post. Dumas seems to have declined an appointment for the position of minister resident and consul general to Liberia.
- [38] The National Executive Committee of Colored Men, letter to Ulysses S. Grant, March 15, 1869 in *Letters of Application*.
- [39] Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett, letter to Ulysses S. Grant, March 17, 1869 in *Letters of Application*.
- [40] 'City Items', *The Christian Recorder*, May 1, 1869.
- [41] Charles Spencer Smith, *A History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Philadelphia: Book Concern of the A.M.E. Church, 1922), 87. 'Minister to Hayti', *The Christian Recorder*, March 27, 1869.

- [42] 'Public Reception of the Hon. Ebenezer D. Bassett, Minister and Consul General to Hayti, at Shiloh Church New York', *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, June 19, 1869.
- [43] *Ibid.*
- [44] Ebenezer D. Bassett, letter to Frederick Douglass, July 3, 1869, in *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, Series: General Correspondence, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, hereafter cited as Douglass Papers.
- [45] George T. Downing, 'Mr. Editor', *The Elevator*, October 29, 1869.
- [46] W.H.H., 'The Negro in a New Attitude', *The Elevator*, July 16, 1869.
- [47] 'The American Negro', *The Christian Recorder*, November 21, 1868. The *Recorder's* charges of Haitian political instability were exaggerated but not unfounded. Haiti had 12 presidents and 8 different constitutions between 1843 and 1889. Change typically came as a result of military action. Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012), 168. Of course, violence was an even greater part of US political culture as evidenced by the US Civil War, the assassinations of Abraham Lincoln and James A. Garfield, and white vigilantism in the South.
- [48] 'The American Negro'.
- [49] The extensive literature on Haitian politics and class conflict includes David Nicholls, *From Dessalines to Duvalier: Race, Colour and National Independence in Haiti* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Haiti: State Against Nation: The Origins & Legacy of Duvalierism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990).
- [50] On Tanner and these developments in black thought, see August Meier, *Negro Thought in America 1880–1915* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963); William Seraile, *Fire in His Heart: Benjamin Tucker Tanner and the A.M.E. Church* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998); Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Creative Conflict in African American Thought: Frederick Douglass, Alexander Crummell, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and Tunde Adeleke, *UnAfrican Americans: Nineteenth-Century Black Nationalists and the Civilizing Mission* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1998).
- [51] *The Christian Recorder*, January 30, 1869.
- [52] *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, 3, no. 4 (1824). Benjamin Inginac to John Kenrick, January 20, 1824 in the *Genius of Universal Emancipation* 3, no. 14 (June 1824): 178. The antebellum emigration movement to Haiti receives its fullest treatment in Chris Dixon, *African America and Haiti: Emigration and Black Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000).
- [53] In the late 1860s, Dominican President Buenaventura Báez tried to annex his country to the USA. For their part, Wall Street investors desired control over the Dominican Republic's natural resources while Grant felt that the Dominican Republic could become a site for African-American emigration. In 1870, Congress thwarted the goals of Grant and US business interests by voting against an annexation treaty. See Eric T.L. Love, *Race over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 27–72.
- [54] 'Hayti at Dominica', *The Christian Recorder*, February 13, 1869.
- [55] *Ibid.*
- [56] 'Our Mission Work', *The Christian Recorder*, February 13, 1869.
- [57] The best treatment of the rise of foreign missionary work by American Protestants remains William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
- [58] In fact, some black leaders credited Bassett with helping avert Dominican annexation and supporting black independence. 'Reception of Hon. E.D. Bassett, the Colored Minister to Hayti', *New York Times*, September 23, 1870.
- [59] On the reaction of Haitian politicians to US incursions in the Dominican Republic, see Rayford Logan, *The Diplomatic Relations of the United States with Haiti, 1776–1891* (Chapel Hill:

- University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 332–47. According to Logan, Stephen Preston, Haiti's minister to Washington solicited the support of American newspaper editors and even resorted to bribery in an attempt to defeat the US government's annexation scheme.
- [60] On Frederick Douglass, Pan-Americanism, and Dominican annexation, see Millery Polyné, *From Douglass to Duvalier: U.S. African Americans, Haiti, and Pan Americanism, 1870–1964* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010), 25–56.
- [61] The best treatments of Reconstruction remain Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988) and Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).
- [62] 'Sad State of Hayti', *Chicago Tribune*, June 15, 1873. On White, see Joseph Logsdon, *Horace White, Nineteenth Century Liberal* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971).
- [63] Romantic racialism and its effects on Reconstruction policy receive their best treatment in Frederickson, *The Black Image*.
- [64] Thomas S. Malcolm, 'The Republic of Haiti', *The Christian Recorder*, May 8, 1873.
- [65] On black leaders and respectability in the antebellum era, see Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest*, 157–208. The best treatment of racial uplift ideology in the Jim Crow era remains Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).
- [66] Smith, *A History*, 444.
- [67] On the mixed success of the AME's missions to the freedmen and women of the South during and after the Civil War, see Clarence E. Walker, *A Rock in a Weary Land: The African Methodist Episcopal Church During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).
- [68] 'Our Missionary Work', *The Christian Recorder*, May 11, 1872.
- [69] Seraile, *Voice of Dissent: Theophilus Gould Steward (1843–1924) and Black America* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1991), 49.
- [70] See Theophilus Gould Steward, *How the Black St. Domingo Legion Saved the Patriot Army in the Siege of Savannah, 1799* (Washington, DC: American Negro Academy, 1899), *The Haitian Revolution 1791 to 1804; or Sidelights on the French Revolution* (New York: Cromwell, 1914), and 'The Message of San Domingo the African Race', in *Papers of the American Negro Academy 18–19* (Washington, DC: American Negro Academy, 1916).
- [71] Theophilus Gould Steward, *Journal of the Voyage to Port-au-Prince from New York*, June 14–16, 1873 in Theophilus Gould Steward Papers, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library, hereafter cited as Steward Papers.
- [72] *Ibid.*, June 15, June 20–23, July 1–4, July 5–8.
- [73] Hutchison, *Errand to the World*, 91–124.
- [74] Steward, 'Hayti', *The Christian Recorder*, October 3, 1874; Laurie Maffly-Kipp, *Setting Down the Sacred Past: African-American Race Histories* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 152.
- [75] Bettye Collier-Thomas, *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice: African American Women and Religion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 152–4.
- [76] Mary Quinn et al., 'An Open Letter', *The Christian Recorder*, May 14, 1874.
- [77] Mary A. Campbell, 'An Address to the Auxiliary Mite Societies and the Women in General of the A.M.E. Church', *The Christian Recorder*, June 29, 1876; Richard R. Wright, *Centennial Encyclopaedia of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Philadelphia: Book Concern of the AME Church, 1916), 59. 'A Brief Biographical Treatment of Campbell Can Be Found', in *Notable Black American Women, Book II*, ed. Jessie Carney Smith (Detroit: Gale Research, 1996), 80–1.
- [78] By the turn of the twentieth century, the AME Church had an established missionary presence in Africa. On the rise of AME missions in South Africa, for instance, see James T. Campbell,

Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

- [79] Collier-Thomas, *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice*, 188–90.
- [80] T.A. Cuff, ‘Temperance’, *The Christian Recorder*, November 12, 1874.
- [81] *The Christian Recorder*, June 11, 1874; ‘Quit You Like Men’, *The Christian Recorder*, November 4, 1875.
- [82] J.W. Randolph, ‘Letter from Savannah’, *The Christian Recorder*, November 16, 1874; *Georgia Weekly Telegraph*, November 23, 1875; ‘Madame Parqe’, *Weekly Louisianan*, April 18, 1874; R. Harper, ‘A Note from Dalton’, *The Christian Recorder*, December 23, 1875; F.M. Henderson, ‘Madam Parqe’, *The Christian Recorder*, February 17, 1876.
- [83] ‘Madame Parqe’, *Weekly Louisianan*; Harper, ‘A Note from Dalton’; Henderson, ‘Madam Parqe’.
- [84] Henderson, Madam Parqe’.
- [85] Isabella Noel, ‘The Letter From Port-au-Prince Hayti’, *The Christian Recorder*, October 5, 1876.
- [86] Daniel Alexander Payne, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville: Publishing House of the A.M.E. Sunday School Union, 1891), 479.
- [87] Smith, *A History*, 123; Llewellyn L. Berry, *A Century of Missions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1840–1940* (New York: Gutenberg, 1942), 78; ‘Brevities’, *The Christian Recorder*, August 16, 1877.
- [88] Other black missionaries also relied on French. Holly, for instance, knew that most Haitians spoke Kreyòl but he still favoured French catechisms and Bibles.
- [89] Charles W. Mossell, ‘Haiti’, *The Christian Recorder*, January 4 and February 1, 1877.
- [90] Payne, *History*, 479.
- [91] *The Christian Recorder*, August 16, 1877.
- [92] James Theodore Holly, Triennial Report for the Haitian Mission for the Years Ending August 1875–1877, The Archives of the Episcopal Church, Record Group 68, Haiti Mission Records 1855–1967 (hereafter cited as Haiti Mission Records).
- [93] Holly argued that some Haitians ‘seeing their country so long a prey to revolutions, begin to feel that the dissemination of the Gospel is just the ballast needed in the body politic, in order to right the Ship of State’. Holly, ‘Missionary Notes from Haiti’, *The Spirit of Missions* 32 (September 1867). Some Haitians clergy corroborated Holly’s statement. For instance, Julien Alexandre, a Haitian Episcopalian in Cabaret Quatre, reported that
- the troubles that Providence has sent upon this country, has produced such a searching of hearts, that at the last visitation made to this congregation in the mountains ten men, heads of families presented themselves to be enrolled as members of the Church.
- Alexandre, Annual Report, Church of the Good Shepherd Cabaret Quatre, May 12, 1869, in the Haiti Mission Records.
- [94] Ibid.