

**“TO START SOMETHING TO HELP THESE PEOPLE”:
AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND THE OCCUPATION OF HAITI,
1915–1934**

Brandon R. Byrd
Mississippi State University

On July 28, 1915, United States marines landed on the shores outside Port-au-Prince. US policymakers justified the invasion by pointing to the death of Haitian president Vilbrun Guillaume Sam at the hands of a mob incensed by the recent executions of political prisoners. But this unrest was more a convenience than a concern for the invaders. US government officials had spent much of the preceding decades either attempting to obtain territory in northwestern Haiti for use as a coaling station or sanctioning the seizure of Haitian finances by US banks. With the outbreak of World War I portending a German encroachment in the Caribbean, Woodrow Wilson now identified the insurrection in Port-au-Prince as a perfect excuse to realize longstanding US military and economic aspirations. He promoted the invasion as a humanitarian intervention, as a reluctant and impermanent means of bringing order out of chaos in Haiti. That Haitians could not accomplish this themselves seemed obvious to a Democratic president who excluded Blacks from positions of political authority, including the job of minister resident and consul general in Haiti previously occupied by John Mercer Langston, Frederick Douglass, and other Black diplomats.¹

Numerous works show that African Americans saw through yet another threadbare lie told in defense of white supremacy. In particular, they demonstrate the extent to which organizations established or led by Black men opposed the US occupation of Haiti. African Methodist Episcopal Church missionaries stationed in Haiti documented the abuse of Haitians by US marines. Their reports inspired the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to send field secretary James Weldon Johnson on an investigative mission to Haiti. Published in 1920, his account of the economic corruption, forced labor, press censorship, racial segregation, and wanton violence introduced to Haiti by the US occupation encouraged numerous African Americans to flood the State Department and the offices of Republican Party officials with letters demanding the

removal of US troops from Haiti. These protests were successful. In 1934, the activism of African Americans and the resistance of Haitians led to the liberation of a country that Johnson called “the one best chance that the Negro has . . . to prove that he is capable of the highest self-government.”²

Although welcome, this scholarship has obscured the complicated ways in which Black women confronted the US occupation of Haiti. To be sure, Black women throughout the United States became vocal antioccupation activists. The more prominent among them created a female domain in the antioccupation movement by promoting greater awareness of Haitian history, reporting on the excesses of the US marines stationed in Haiti, and making the restoration of Haitian independence the central goal of their organizations. At the same time, though, some of these same middle-class and elite Black women spoke of the need to civilize Haiti. The schools and philanthropic groups they created in Haiti not only emerged from imperialist discourses but also sometimes relied upon the ideological structures of the US occupation to fulfill their mission: the uplift of the Haitian masses from material and moral poverty to Victorian respectability.

In the end, these competing impulses—to demand Haitian independence while attempting to correct its perceived deficiencies—reveal a remarkable moment in Black intellectual history. The period between the two world wars was a time in which Blacks throughout the African Diaspora amplified their attacks on white supremacy. Haitian and African American intellectuals moved beyond the bourgeois Black nationalism of the nineteenth century toward a Black internationalism that featured critiques of capitalism, opposition to imperialism, and vindications of Black working-class culture. This process was, however, complex and uneven. Older ideas about racial progress lingered even as new understandings of gender, race, and nationality emerged. Nothing better illustrates this truth or better exposes the liminal state of Black thought in the interwar period than the antioccupation efforts sustained by Black women in the United States. Even as a cohort of African Americans articulated the roots of Black internationalist feminism, they struggled to transcend the faith in respectability, bourgeois culture, and Western imperialism that had pervaded the intellectual traditions and communities in which they were raised.

A FEMALE DOMAIN IN THE ANTI-OCCUPATION MOVEMENT

Ordinary Black women were incensed by what they read in the exposés on US imperialism produced by African Americans who lived in or traveled to Haiti. Some sent letters to Black newspapers decrying the unwelcome

intervention in Haitian affairs. Others voiced their discontent to leaders of the NAACP, members of the State Department, or other high-ranking US officials. These protestors included Ana La Condre.³ In an April 1920 edition of the *New York Age*, the leading Black paper, La Condre “noticed an account of some of the outrages that are being committed in Haiti by the American army of occupation especially against the children.”⁴ These outrages, chronicled by an AME missionary working in Port-au-Prince, included an instance wherein “nine little [Haitian] girls, 8 to 12 years old, died as a result of being raped by American sailors.”⁵ These reported abuses moved La Condre to immediate action. A day after encountering them, she wrote James Weldon Johnson to ask, “What can we do to put a stop to these heinous crimes?” Could the NAACP, she continued, “do something to have these men removed, and put colored soldiers in their place?” If La Condre failed to reflect on the futility of exchanging one occupying force for another, she did identify the behavior of US marines in Haiti as a pressing concern for Blacks throughout the African Diaspora. Her letter concluded with a succinct directive: if the accusations in the *Age* could be verified—and accounts of sexual violence against Haitians by US marines often were—then “surely we must do something.”⁶

Lillian Bermudez expressed similar disdain for the US occupation and even less willingness to accommodate it. In a letter to US secretary of state Charles Evans Hughes written two years after James Weldon Johnson published his investigative report, the Brooklyn resident reported that her son was a merchant seaman who witnessed the abuse of Haitians by US marines during his time stationed in Haitian ports. His attendant reports seemed all too familiar to Bermudez. In her estimation, they not only corroborated Johnson’s scathing critique of the occupation but also fit with a broader pattern of anti-Black racism in US politics and public life. Consequently, Bermudez informed Hughes that she recognized a clear link between the racism that she and other Blacks confronted at home and the oppression that Haitians were experiencing abroad. And she assured him that she was not willing to tolerate either.⁷

Defiant stances against the US occupation of Haiti also emerged from Black women who held leadership roles in national organizations. Besides serving as one of New York’s finest secondary school teachers, Layle Lane was a key organizer of the Empire State Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs. In 1927, she wrote a letter on behalf of her organization to Frank B. Kellogg, the current US secretary of state. Like his predecessor Charles Evans Hughes, Kellogg belonged to a Republican Party that had received substantial support from African Americans since the 1850s. He might have expected this support to continue, but Lane advised Kellogg that

the allegiance of Black Republicans was not to be taken for granted. In her letter, Lane coolly noted that “the Negroes of the United States are keenly interested in the actions of the American government in Haiti, and hope those actions will be such that we can support them with our approval and votes.”⁸ Lane insinuated that newly enfranchised women in the Empire State Federation and African Americans in general wanted an end to the occupation and a greater role in future policymaking decisions pertaining to Haiti. Any political party seeking the Black vote needed to act in accordance with those wishes.

Addie Hunton was one of several elite Black women who rallied support for the antioccupation cause among prospective Black voters. By the early 1930s, Hunton was an imposing figure in Black America. Her leadership positions included service as president of the International Council of Women of the Darker Races (ICWDR), the Empire State Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs, and the Circle for Peace and Foreign Relations. She was also a principal organizer of the Fourth Pan-African Congress in 1927 and held offices in the National Association of Colored Women (NACW) and the NAACP. She articulated the transnational nature of her commitment to racial equality and Black progress in her position as the vice president and national field organizer in the latter organization. Speaking before the NAACP annual conference in May 1932, she lamented that “in India, Africa, Haiti and other parts of the world we are constantly agasp at the flagrant violation of the rights of darker peoples.” The troubles of colonized and occupied colored people were not, however, insurmountable. Hunton praised members of the NAACP for ensuring that their organization “stretched its hands abroad to help in Africa, India and the Islands of the Sea.” With their continued vigilance, she implied, Black people the world over would transcend white supremacy. Haiti would once again be free.⁹

By making this hope for Haitian liberation clear, Hunton and her peers contributed to an emergent Black internationalism. During the years between the two world wars, Black intellectuals across the world voiced a common vision of freedom from and opposition to the residual effects of slavery and the immediate consequences of white colonialism and imperialism. They forged collaborations and solidarities across national and linguistic boundaries, in the process creating a transnational Black or colored identity.¹⁰ Black people in the United States—from ordinary people like Lillian Bermudez to luminaries like James Weldon Johnson—played a crucial role in crafting this Black international through their protests of the US occupation of Haiti. They drew parallels between the experiences of Haitians and African Americans while critiquing the capitalist culture

that seemed to serve white supremacy everywhere from Haiti to Harlem. Some even argued that Haitian schools needed to privilege Kreyòl rather than French. In insisting that a Haitian people educated in their vernacular were “splendid material for the building of a nation,” Johnson and his ilk rejected the traditional assumption that Black folk needed to rise to the standards of civilization set by bourgeois whites before they could assume any semblance of self-government.¹¹ For them, Black political and cultural autonomy required no excuse. Their validity was self-evident.

In fact, middle-class and elite Black women were not satisfied with blending into a crowd of Black internationals. They wanted to stand out. By 1922, Black clubwomen’s experiences in international organizations led by white women or Black men resolved them to the founding of a new organization. That year, Margaret Murray Washington, Booker T. Washington’s widow, encouraged the formation of the ICWDR. According to one member from Charlotte, North Carolina, the group’s objective was to establish “some kind of definite cooperation among the women of all the darker races for the purpose of studying the conditions under which each subgroup lived and progressed, of disseminating knowledge of their handicaps and of their achievements, and of stimulating by closer fellowship and understanding to higher endeavor.”¹² In other words, as white women asked Black women to advocate for their sex and as Black men implored Black women to support their race, the members of the ICWDR insisted that they would do both in tandem. “We,” Washington informed her peers, “have a mission for *our* women the world over” (emphasis added).¹³

The attempt to create a coalition of nonwhite women bound by a shared opposition to white supremacy would grow into a robust Black internationalist feminism linking Third World liberation struggles to women’s rights.¹⁴ More immediately, though, the ICWDR played a key role in the antioccupation movement. Its inaugural meeting brought together representatives from North America, Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. Members included Haitian women who joined their African American counterparts in ensuring that the ICWDR concerned itself with Haiti. Participants in ICWDR study groups held during the 1920s and 1930s read works by Jean Price-Mars, the famed Haitian ethnologist who worked tirelessly for the removal of US troops from Haiti. Select ICWDR members gave public lectures on Haiti throughout the United States while others worked to introduce Haitian history into the curriculum of US schools. Indeed, the ICWDR made the assessment of the “conditions of the women and children of Haiti” its priority during its inaugural year and launched several investigations into those conditions. Through these actions, the members of the ICWDR crafted a counternarrative to the anti-Haitian

propaganda promoted by the US government and the white press, built a greater understanding between Haitian and African American women, and constructed a stronger foundation for future relations between Haiti and the United States.¹⁵

In short, Black women created a female domain within the antioccupation movement. At a time when middle-class white women recognized an opportunity to use conventional notions of “women’s work” to shape US child welfare policy, middle-class Black women recognized a similar chance to impact Black political protest.¹⁶ They operated within a field—education—in which female leadership was more respected than in other areas of Black public life, but used their parallel roles as learners and educators in radical ways. The members of the ICWDR employed study groups, public lectures, school curriculums, and investigations to highlight the connections between African Americans and Haitians. Foreigners demanding Haitian liberation, they insisted, had to improve their understanding of Haitian life and history. Antioccupation activists also had to acknowledge the voices of Haitian women who experienced imperialism and oppression differently than their male counterparts. By ensuring that Black audiences concerned about Haiti’s plight heard strong messages about the lives and cultures of their Haitian sisters, Black clubwomen suggested that Black liberation and women’s liberation were complementary. They moved the discussion of Black nationalism out of a masculinist framework, making it more inclusive of Black women and more attuned to their ideas about racial progress.¹⁷

LIBERATING HAITI, UPLIFTING HAITIANS

New modes of Black thought and political protest were ascendant. Yet they were not quite triumphant. Limitations arose from the fact that the most prominent Black women involved in antioccupation organizing had been born and educated in the nineteenth century. For instance, Addie Hunton was born in 1866 and graduated from Philadelphia’s Spencerian College of Commerce. Fellow ICWDR officer Nannie Helen Burroughs was born in 1879 and graduated from the famous M Street High School in Washington DC before studying business at Kentucky’s Eckstein-Norton University. They came of age as male race leadership transitioned from Frederick Douglass, Alexander Crummell, Henry McNeal Turner, and John Mercer Langston to Booker T. Washington. Like those men—who possessed similar social if not educational status—these women assigned great importance to churches, missions, mutual aid societies, charities, colleges, and patriarchal households. They emphasized Protestantism, race pride, self-help, thrift, temperance, and chastity. In the parlance of their

day, adhering to the bourgeois values shared by Anglo-Americans and participating in the institutions that cultivated them defined individuals and communities as respectable or not. And African Americans had to be respectable. As US race relations deteriorated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Hunton, Burroughs, and their peers surmised that African Americans could improve their political and social status by augmenting protest with programs of racial uplift. Consequently, they assumed responsibility for reforming the morals and manners of Black sharecroppers, domestics, and laborers throughout the United States.¹⁸

The conditions of Black people abroad drew comparable attention from these self-perceived agents of civilization. Since the end of the US Civil War, middle-class and elite Black women had assigned themselves the task of redeeming their counterparts in Africa and the Caribbean. They believed that making other women of African descent adopt Western standards of dress, become model housewives, and ascribe to bourgeois ideas of virtuous behavior would not only help those foreigners but also reflect well upon their sisters in the United States.¹⁹ Missionary work became a chief aspect of this transnational politics of respectability. During the 1870s, the wives of prominent AME bishops and clergy established the Woman's Parent Mite Missionary Society (WPMMS), the first national organization led by Black women. Members made the success of Haitian missions a primary concern. In articles published in leading AME periodicals, the wife of the head AME missionary in Port-au-Prince decried the “current and peculiar customs [and] the unintelligible and musical dialect of the natives” while lamenting that “Haytian women as a rule are not model housekeepers.” She encouraged other Black women to join her in imbuing Haitians with Protestant faith and Victorian sensibilities. “Women of America,” the WPMMS officer declared, “this work of moral elevation concerns you!”²⁰ Only their guidance could ensure that the cultural standards of respectable African Americans prevailed in Haiti.

Even as Black women critiqued the US occupation of Haiti, some demonstrated a lingering commitment to these traditions of racial uplift and civilizationist pan-Africanism. Nannie Helen Burroughs was one of them. On October 19, 1909, the future ICWDR executive board member became the first principal of the National Training School for Women and Girls (NTS) in Washington DC. The curriculum established by the Virginia native and her colleagues in the Woman's Convention of the National Baptist Convention (NBC) had two principal components. First, the working-class women who attended the NTS gained employable skills through training in domestic science. Second, they practiced public speaking, read about current events, and took academic courses that

stressed self-help, race consciousness, and Christian charity. Altogether, the NTS experience was meant to uplift the very least among Black women.²¹

Indeed, NTS students were meant to profit from this combination of vocational and academic training in several ways. Burroughs's pupils would ideally grow averse to idleness while taking greater pride in their domestic labor in white households. In turn, this increased satisfaction in their labor would allow Black domestics to comport themselves as skilled professionals rather than menial laborers. NTS graduates would also realize that their professionalization served a greater race cause. Overall, the NTS experience reflected and reinforced a belief that the deliverance of Blacks from their social and political degradation required the elevation of the lowest members of the race. In the estimation of Burroughs, the "properly educated Negro woman" and "an army of skilled workers" able to command respect from white employers were just as instrumental to race progress as Black "teachers, preachers and 'leaders.'"²²

Haitian women were conspicuous among those to whom Burroughs sought to impart the lessons of the "Bible, bath, and broom." Between 1909 and 1920, two cousins, Alice Pierre Alexis and Christina François, attended the NTS. The two women received high marks in scholarship, deportment, laundering skills, and other categories upon which NTS teachers evaluated their charges.²³ Alexis, in particular, did much to distinguish herself. The granddaughter of former Haitian president Pierre Nord Alexis, she earned certificates in subjects ranging from hairdressing and manicuring to millinery and domestic training during her time in Washington DC. At the 1916 NTS commencement ceremonies, Alexis was even awarded a cash prize for outstanding performance in the domestic science curriculum and tasked with explaining "Why We Teach Practical Housekeeping and Home Making."²⁴ This recognition was not unusual. Year after year, Burroughs and her peers lauded Alexis for meeting their lofty expectations. The Haitian woman garnered acclaim for being "skilled with the needle and industrious in her general habits" and earned commendations for speaking French "fluently" while eschewing Kreyòl. Alexis was, in the estimation of Burroughs, "a very cultured little lady."²⁵

A unique set of expectations came with this honorific. Burroughs wanted most African Americans at the NTS to focus on becoming respectable representatives of Black people in the United States but she anticipated that a lady such as Alexis would uplift her benighted compatriots in Haiti. Completion of the certificate program in missionary training became the means of accomplishing this task. In reports given to annual meetings of the Woman's Convention, Burroughs praised Alexis as

“desirable material out of which to make a cultured, consecrated, faithful missionary.” She noted that Alexis did “beautiful needlework” and insisted that the participation of her Haitian pupil in a “literary and missionary training course” along with a class in millinery would “be great help to her in the Mission School.” In fact, Burroughs believed that Alexis might become one of the greatest promoters of the gospel of respectability abroad. Just a few years before the US occupation, she assured her fellow Black Baptist women that Alexis would “imbibe the American spirit of energy and aggressiveness that will make her a power on the Haytian mission field.”²⁶ The danger of US “aggressiveness” overseas was becoming quite clear at the outset of the twentieth century. Yet it was just as apparent that the idea of American exceptionalism that emboldened US military interventions in the Caribbean would continue to resonate with the NTS principal and her peers.

To be sure, Black women across the United States lent generous support to Haitian students at the NTS. Throughout the 1910s and 1920s, Black women’s organizations including the Frances Harper Women’s Club of Ithaca, New York, helped fund the education of Burroughs’s Haitian pupils. The donations of its members went towards the clothing, room, board, tuition, and incidental expenses accrued by Alexis and François in Washington DC.²⁷ Black women remained just as committed to the two Haitian missionaries after they left the US capital to take positions with the African American–led Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention in Haiti.²⁸ In 1922–1923, approximately one-tenth of the \$1,216.99 donated to the Haitian missions established by the NBC came directly from Black women like Mrs. L. S. Scott of the First Baptist Church of Henderson, North Carolina. That fiscal year, she pledged \$25 to the Haitian missions fund. It is probable, too, that female churchgoers like Scott helped secure the even larger donations given by prominent Black churches including White Rock Baptist Church in Durham, North Carolina, and Washington DC’s Third Baptist Church.²⁹ These patrons viewed Alexis and François as ideal beneficiaries of their largesse. If the two could instill the value of housework and Protestantism in their countrywomen, they might save the “long neglected . . . land of Toussaint L’Ouverture” from “Romanism,” “Voodooism,” and “final destruction.”³⁰

Indeed, Black Baptist leaders promoted the US occupation of Haiti as a unique opportunity even after it became clear that Haitians suffered under it. Haitian missions were a main topic of discussion at the 1917 meeting of the NBC. The report provided to the main body of Black Baptists by the Lott Carey Convention revealed that it hoped “to begin work in Haiti on a very large scale” because “that island at our very door needs the Gospel,

and needs it now.” The dissolution of Haitian sovereignty was presented as an incentive for rather than a deterrent to missionary work. “Because our own Government is exercising a kind of protectorate over Haiti,” the Convention reported, “we believe they may be induced to co-operate with a united effort on our part to aid in a great industrial and religious awakening among the people of that island.”³¹ This report came in the same year that US officials in Haiti sentenced Charlemagne Péralte to the system of slave labor known as the *corvée*. As the future nationalist rebel planned his escape and plotted an imminent attempt to drive the marines out of his country, some Black Baptists still tried to accommodate the intervention in Haiti. Outspoken leaders even attempted to use it to their—and what they assumed to be Haitians’—best advantage. In their estimation, a foreign occupation could be benevolent. It could impart civilization upon ordinary Haitians in dire need of it.

Similar ideas emerged among Black clubwomen who bore witness to the occupation. In 1922, ICWDR education committee chair Emily Williams traveled to Haiti along with her husband, Tuskegee Institute dean W. T. B. Williams. There, in accordance with her organization’s stated mission for its inaugural year, she made the observation of Haitian women and children a point of emphasis. What Williams saw astonished her. In a letter to Margaret Murray Washington, Williams disclosed that the Haitians whom she encountered “live[d] as in darkest Africa.” Assuming that the ICWDR president would react to this revelation with the appropriate level of discomfort, she advised Washington to “begin the day you get this letter to talk to the Haitians now in school [at Tuskegee] about returning to their own country as teachers.”³² It is possible that Williams did not see evidence of the toxic relationship between US marines and Haitians during her visit to Haiti. It is just as likely, though, that she was not conditioned to perceive or prioritize it. For her and like-minded reformers, the “work of moral elevation” continued to function as a preferred means of achieving racial progress at home and overseas.

The writings of Addie Hunton and Charlotte Atwood demonstrate as much. In 1926, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) organized a committee to travel to Haiti for a three-week investigation of the occupation. The eclectic group emerged from the various subsets of the interwar liberal reform movement. It consisted of a Quaker professor of economics from the University of Chicago, two representatives of the US branch of the WILPF, and one member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a leading peace organization. The committee also included two “representative colored women,” Hunton and Atwood. By the time of the investigation, Hunton was the ICWDR president and the

NACW vice president. Atwood had become an English teacher at Dunbar High School (formerly the M Street High School) after graduating from Wellesley, the prestigious private women’s liberal arts college in eastern Massachusetts. Both Black elites made significant contributions to a report that presented the committee’s findings about the military occupation and offered their final recommendation for the restoration of Haitian independence. But, in doing so, they also revealed a lingering ambivalence about the role of foreigners in Haiti.³³

Atwood’s contribution to *Occupied Haiti*, the report published a year after the committee returned to the United States, was a chapter on health and sanitation. In it, she detailed the myriad diseases that afflicted ordinary Haitians. Malaria, syphilis, yaws, tuberculosis, hookworm, ringworm, and dysentery, she reported, remained far too prevalent due to a number of factors including malnourishment, lack of medical care, and the contamination of water, soil, and food with human excrement. The English teacher noted the efforts made by US physicians to combat these diseases. In particular, she focused on the work of the Service d’Hygiène, the US public health department in Haiti. Initially established as a way of ensuring that the US marines did not suffer the same fate as past foreign armies who were ravaged by disease in their attempts to conquer Haiti, the Service d’Hygiène had begun to shift its attention towards the Haitian population. Atwood acknowledged that, by the time her committee made its investigations, US officials had established ten public health districts, eleven hospitals, sixteen rural dispensaries, and more than one hundred rural clinics. The Service d’Hygiène served hundreds of thousands of Haitians each year at those sites and it had plans to construct a new insane asylum, establish a leper colony, increase the number of rural dispensaries, further extend sanitation services in the Haitian countryside, and improve its oversight of health conditions in Haitian schools.³⁴

These efforts were perhaps more shrewd than magnanimous. US marines killed as many as eleven thousand Haitians while stationed in Haiti. Several testified that it was common for their drunken comrades to rape Haitian women. Many Southerners in the occupying forces even boasted that they thought nothing of shooting “niggers” who would have been subject to the same treatment back home. In fact, they ensured that the mistreatment of the Haitian masses continued even after the restoration of Haitian sovereignty. In the ensuing decades, countless more Haitians would die from violence inflicted by the Gendarmerie, the Haitian military force reorganized and reinforced during the occupation. Making preventative and curative health care more accessible to ordinary Haitians thus became an effective way for the US government to hide these

realities of the occupation from casual observers. In effect, the outreach of the Service d'Hygiène was a thin veneer of altruism and so-called civilization placed over the brutal subjugation of a sovereign nation.³⁵

Atwood was not entirely taken in by this propaganda. But she was not unimpressed by it, either. In her chapter, Atwood remarked that the financial priorities of the US occupation officials led to an “inability” on the part of the Service d'Hygiène to “provide a living wage” for the Haitian physicians it hoped to assimilate into its medical program. Moreover, she decried the lack of funds devoted to public health in occupied Haiti. She pointed out that the paltry \$8,000 afforded to the National Medical School each year was “inadequate to provide any equipment worthy [of] the name, or to pay full-time professors.”³⁶ Worse still was the dearth of medical supplies in the countryside. Atwood reminded her readers that “it would seem to be in the interest of economy and of sound building for the future” to “look first to the health of the people on whom the future of Haiti must of necessity depend.”³⁷ This was a key issue for Atwood. Despite her misgivings about the Service d'Hygiène, she remained optimistic that it was a benefit to Haitians. Atwood applauded that organization for “overcoming the serious health conditions as rapidly as the nature of things and their budgetary allowance will permit.” She even cited agreement from Haitians. “From what I could see and hear,” Atwood insisted, “there is more good feeling, and less hard feeling among Haitians toward the Service d'Hygiene, than toward any other branch of the American Occupation” due to “the nature of the work,” the genuine selflessness of the US participants, and “the definite steps this service is taking to turn over its work to Haitians themselves.”³⁸ Put simply, some Haitians were appreciative beneficiaries of the gifts of US imperialism.

The sources that informed Atwood's opinion matter a great deal in hindsight even if she downplayed their influence at the time. The WILPF investigative committee claimed to have made “every effort to meet informants of different shades of opinion.” It did not, however, attempt to speak with people from different walks of life. The “many types” of people encountered by the US investigators included “French priests, Protestant missionaries, technical employees of the Occupation, and Haitian teachers, professors and doctors.”³⁹ Atwood thus had little basis to claim that there was “more good feeling, and less hard feeling among Haitians toward the Service d'Hygiene,” at least not without modifying “Haitians” with “elite.” Yet she did make that sweeping claim. For Atwood and her peers, educated foreigners and the Haitian professionals in whom they confided were more than qualified to speak on behalf of the Black masses. This

myopia shaped their attitudes toward the occupation. Atwood finished her report on health and sanitation by insisting that

whatever of money or time or energy is spent in getting a common viewpoint for Americans and Haitians, and in working shoulder to shoulder to a common end, is not only not a useless expenditure, but the only way to safeguard what America has put into Haiti in the last ten years, and plans to continue putting in so long as the Occupation lasts. When Americans learn to work *with* and not merely *for* Haitians, and not until then will their efforts be truly fruitful.⁴⁰

This statement suggests that the occupation had worthwhile elements. It implies that people from the United States needed to retain a leading role in shaping Haitian public policy. Overall, it reveals the tenuous relationship between Atwood’s genuine support for Haitian independence and her competing commitment to a program of uplift that relied on cooperation among US imperialists, Black reformers, and Haitian elites.

Similar ideological tensions appear within ICWDR president Addie Hunton’s contribution to the WILPF investigative report. The chapter of *Occupied Haiti* she co-authored with white peace activist Emily Greene Balch focused on race relations in Haiti. It began by noting that Haitians were “like the colored people of the United States in having an African inheritance with an intermixture . . . of white blood and Western civilization” while stressing that they were unlike their African American counterparts in one crucial regard: Haitians had been a free and independent people for more than a century. Consequently, “there was almost nothing before the Occupation to make Haitians racially self-conscious or to create an ‘inferiority complex’ with its inconsistent but equally natural resultants—a morbid lack of self-confidence and self-assertiveness.”⁴¹ This changed with the occupation. According to the two authors, “friendly” relations between Haitian elites and US officials soured once the wives of those officials arrived in Haiti. At that point, Haitians concluded that white US Americans spooked by the specter of interracial sex drew “the color line . . . much as it is in the southern part of the United States.”⁴² The investigative committee observed the same. Hunton and Balch quoted another member of the WILPF delegation as saying:

The race situation in Haiti is what one would expect under existing conditions: a black people and white Americans; moreover, a black people, the more powerful group of whom are educated, cultured, ambitious, proud; the white

American of the group particularly noted for its caste system—the military—and of the division of that group that prides itself on absolute exclusion of the black American.⁴³

The investigators understood that US whites would not embrace cultured Blacks abroad when they constructed a vicious stereotype—Zip Coon—to lampoon refined Blacks at home. They knew that marines from the US South would never operate on an egalitarian basis with Haitians. More than anything, they realized and lamented that occupied Haiti looked no different than the Jim Crow United States.

And yet, even as Hunton and Balch protested these realities and called for the restoration of Haitian independence, they held out hope that a US presence in Haiti need not be detrimental to Haitians. To their credit, both women challenged US officials who claimed widespread support among Haitian peasants as well as the few Haitian elites who profited from complicity with the occupiers. They pointed out that it was “hard to believe that given the deep-seated traditional belief that the return of the white men spelled a return of slavery . . . the peasants do not feel uneasy under their new white masters. They certainly do not appear . . . pleased as one passes them on the road.”⁴⁴ The latter sentence, however, again revealed the shortcomings of the WILPF investigation despite its more useful insights. Like Atwood, Hunton and Balch passed by but did not speak with ordinary Haitians during their three weeks in Haiti. Instead, the two reformers found it more appropriate to speak for them. Their report concluded that “the Americans needed in Haiti are men broad in interracial understanding, able not only to meet the upper class Haitian in his social environment but to help him to a fuller recognition of his responsibility toward the great peasant mass of the island.”⁴⁵ This sanguine conclusion was a well-intentioned recommendation for improving US foreign policy. But it missed a key point. At the time, there was little evidence that people in the United States were interested in or capable of supporting programs of social uplift in Haiti without also receiving some form of political or economic benefits in return.

Thus Hunton and her peers remained adamant that a transnational program of racial uplift was an excellent way to guarantee the vitality of an independent Haiti. In particular, ICWDR officer Harriett Gibbs Marshall, graduate of Oberlin College and founder of the Washington Conservatory of Music, took it upon herself to guarantee that Haitian elites and their African American collaborators realized their “responsibility toward the great peasant mass of the island.” Arriving in Haiti in 1922, after her husband became the clerk at the Port-au-Prince legation and the

sole Black member of the occupation regime, Marshall wasted little time in advertising the perceived social underdevelopment of her new city. She penned letters back home claiming that only 5 percent of Haitians were “highly cultured” while the rest toiled in a state “sad to behold.” Popular misrepresentations of Haitian history encouraged this opinion. Marshall insisted that the devastation of the Haitian Revolution and the “inhuman treatment” that inspired the slave insurrection had left Haitians “ill prepared for establishing and maintaining a republican government where head, heart, and hand would be joined to develop the country, educate and protect its citizens.” They had left the Haitian masses neglected. Marshall characterized Haitian peasants as primitive, as a people “longing for the gifts of this era, for breadth of vision, for modern methods, for opportunity . . . for justice and assistance.” In her rendition, Haitian peasants who had maintained a vibrant counter-plantation system for generations became an amorphous entity subordinate to Haitian elites who lacked “the technique and resources for development of social work for the masses.”⁴⁶

For Marshall, the dearth of social service organizations and the prevalence of US marines were comparable obstacles to Haitian progress. She found that the “majority [of Haitians] . . . cannot read or write.” These high rates of illiteracy, Marshall surmised, indicated poor domestic training rather than problems in the Haitian educational system that US officials ignored. She alleged that Haitian “homes and family life are in a primitive condition,” clear evidence that Haitians were in “need [of] all kinds of home and occupational training.” In turn, the deficiencies of domestic life in Haiti suggested to Marshall the failings of ordinary Haitian women. Instead of imbuing their husbands and children with sound morals, they were “seen dressed in burlap and flour bags or tattered rags hardly covering their bodies.” That Marshall provided an explanation—the low wages received by Haitian laborers—for the inappropriate dress she claimed to have observed does little to alter the substance of her message. The Black clubwoman speculated that the interrelated absences of education, domestic training, and Victorian models of womanhood placed strict limitations on Haitian prosperity. How, she seemed to ask the recipients of her letters, could Haiti maintain a prosperous independence even if it cast off the yoke of US oppression? The obvious response was that it could not. And so Marshall attempted, “with God’s help, to start something to help these people,” save their country, and, in the process, vindicate Black self-government.⁴⁷

More specifically, Marshall tried to establish “some form of social work organization . . . which would show the educated, cultured few [Haitians] how they can help the impoverished many.” She visited the most prominent

families and the most elite clubs in Port-au-Prince, selling them on the idea of building new social welfare projects in the Haitian capital. Not content with the promises of patronage that she received from former Haitian presidents, leading diplomats, and wealthy businessmen and their families, Marshall also solicited support from philanthropic groups in the United States. Marshall advised the American Association for Organizing Family Social Work, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, and the Protestant Episcopal Church that they could engage in selfless Christian charity and prove a “blessing to these people [Haitians]” by lending their financial help to her.⁴⁸ She also appealed to Black organizations including the Empire State Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs. It was her expectation that her peers would understand what was at stake in helping Haiti, a country that one of her correspondents, the director of the first school of social work for African Americans, called “an example of the Negro’s inability to develop any sort of civilization” to some observers and “a concrete example of the possibilities of the Negro in self-government” to others.⁴⁹

Marshall’s efforts bore fruit in March 1926. That year, the Oberlin graduate and her Haitian collaborators, a group of elite women that included a Haitian member of the ICWDR, formed *L’Oeuvre des Femmes Haïtiennes pour l’Organisation du Travail* (The Charity of Haitian Women for the Organizing of Labor). Branches throughout Haiti promoted “native industry” and assisted Haitians “without means,” especially youth who could not afford a “practical education.” In addition, Marshall, who became the vice president of the social service organization, advanced a US auxiliary that she hoped would not only provide financial support for the Haitian branches but also establish a model for improved relations between US citizens and Haitians.⁵⁰ Despite the assertions of some historians, such efforts were far from “strictly charitable.” As US politicians attempted to disrupt solidarities among African Americans and Haitians, Marshall insisted that the plight of occupied Haiti was a matter “in which every colored American is interested.”⁵¹ Her reform initiatives were a reflection of this pan-African spirit. They confirmed the attitudes of Haitian journalists who insisted that “the Black Party in the United States is still the only organization which naturally, sincerely and automatically sympathize[s] with the republic of Haiti” and “understand[s] the true needs of the Haitian Negroes.”⁵²

There is little doubt that Marshall thought herself well aware of the needs of the “Haitian Negroes.” Months after its founding, *L’Oeuvre* opened the Jean Joseph Industrial School in Port-au-Prince. On the one hand, this was a national institution with a broad mission to “develop

Native Industries and afford a practical education for the [Haitian] Masses.” To that end, it featured programs of business, health and strength training, English, hygiene, and social service while emphasizing a department of native arts that instructed “unlettered” pupils of both sexes in the “production and sale of active products and the fabrication of native materials into paper.” At the same time, though, the Jean Joseph was a female-centered organization. Marshall assigned great importance to the education of Haitian girls by female instructors at the industrial school because she thought that there was no historical record of “outstanding achievements” by Haitian women.⁵³ This was, of course, a hindrance to the progress of Haiti. One of her Haitian colleagues explained why, stressing that

it is important to initiate young girls to the basic principles of housekeeping that are the foundation of the good and healthy family life. They will learn to properly do the work that is becoming of women, suggesting to them the noble ambition of becoming a “mama” one day. They would learn how to wash, iron, and cook without thinking. To this last point, we will never know enough how much influence one “good broth” can have on husbands.⁵⁴

The Jean Joseph was, in other words, the manifestation of the belief that working-class Black women had a special role in their communities. By achieving respectability—as housewives and homemakers, educators and mothers—they would not only deflect racist accusations of immorality but also ensure that their compatriots would have bourgeois moral values along with technical skills.⁵⁵

From the perspective of Marshall and the officers of L’Oeuvre, the effort to create an export-oriented, self-sufficient Haiti was futile unless accompanied by an attempt to mold respectable Haitian women. Accordingly, they assumed that their initiatives deserved the full support of all those who sympathized with Haiti. Pamphlets for the Jean Joseph school produced under the watch of Marshall, the head of its executive committee, insisted that Haitians had responded to “the call of the oppressed [and] to the call of liberty” by helping the Continental Army lay siege to British forces in Savannah during the American Revolution. This aid had gone unrecognized but US citizens now had the chance to rectify that wrong. Annual donations ranging from one to one hundred dollars would repay Haiti for its contributions to US independence, augment its “meager national resources,” and aid Haitian peasants hoping to earn an “honest livelihood.”⁵⁶ The latter expectation was of special importance. As other

Black activists chastised Calvin Coolidge for maintaining the occupation, Marshall implored the Republican US president to recognize the good that his Black compatriots could still accomplish in Haiti. She insisted that African Americans had found “the Haitian of thought and vision ready to cooperate enthusiastically in any work for the development of their country.”⁵⁷ So they could not abandon the work of uplift now.

Although Coolidge was unresponsive to this message, Marshall found many Black women in the United States receptive to it. Hunton assured Marshall that she never “made an address without referring to Haiti” or missed an opportunity to disseminate “propaganda in behalf of Haiti.” Mary McLeod Bethune (president of the National Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs and the Bethune-Cookman Institute) joined the Jean Joseph Industrial School’s American Patrons Advisory Committee.⁵⁸ Together she and Marshall, the chairwoman of the Jean Joseph’s American Patrons Executive Committee, helped make the industrial school a minor cause célèbre within the Black women’s club movement. Besides establishing headquarters in New York and claiming auxiliary branches in New Jersey, Maryland, Washington DC, Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee, the American Patrons received financial support from the Bethune-Cookman Institute, the NACW, the ICWDR, and the Empire State Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs. Members of the last group held showers where “friends of Haiti” donated school supplies, kitchen utensils, gardening tools, pillowcases, and other goods that the club could then ship to the schoolchildren in Port-au-Prince.⁵⁹ Such efforts were a welcome complement to the hundreds of dollars that dues-paying members of the American Patrons raised annually for building infrastructure, water, and classroom equipment at the Jean Joseph.⁶⁰

Just as Burroughs, Williams, Atwood, and Hunton articulated a vision of reform in occupied Haiti, Marshall, too, had a clear interest in empowering Haitian women and uplifting the Haitian masses. But, like her peers, Marshall also assumed a tenuous position between complete opposition to the occupation and unintended complicity with US imperialism. In the summer of 1924, Marshall wrote to US officials, hoping to gain permission to ship secondhand clothing from the United States to Haiti without it being subject to existing duties. She received mixed responses to her initial inquiry. In May 1924, Marshall heard from the office of the US secretary of state that the US navy could provide free transport for “barrels of clothing, to be made over for poor children in Haiti.”⁶¹ Two months later, though, John H. Russell delivered less welcome news to Marshall. The US High Commissioner in Haiti lamented that he was “in entire sympathy with the charitable object of [her] work” but had

been told by US customs officials that there was no way to “provide for the free entry of clothing for charitable purposes.”⁶² There is little reason to question Russell’s genuineness. Offering US largesse and extending a broader civilizing mission to Haitians cohered with the entrenched worldview of the white marine officer who believed that the average Haitian was “more or less an animal,” possessing “the mentality of a child,” and bordering “on a state of savagery.”⁶³

Cooperation between Marshall and such men in charge of the occupation would materialize despite the initial uncertainty. By 1927, officers of the Empire State Federation of Colored Women’s Clubs assured members that goods donated to L’Oeuvre and the Jean Joseph would not be subject to duties. Those goods presumably included the secondhand clothing that Marshall spoke so passionately about in her letters to the US secretary of state and the High Commissioner. It is unfair to assume that Marshall and her collaborators could have foreseen the ways in which their donations of used clothing and similar forms of foreign aid would undermine Haitian industry or even discourage its development. But it is worthwhile to consider the immediate implications of their philanthropic initiatives. By shipping clothing on the same vessels that transported men who prided themselves on subduing Haitians, Black charity organizers avoided steep customs duties that might have been unavoidable otherwise. At the same time, though, they lent tacit support to US imperialism. The paternalistic US officials who approved or sympathized with Marshall’s interest in using their ships wanted to portray the occupation as a benevolent protectorate rather than a racist occupation, as a dispassionate means of helping those who could not help themselves. Cooperation with Black charities helped them to do just that.

TO SAVE BLEEDING HAITI

In 1929, after returning to the United States, Marshall and her husband established the Save Haiti League. Its goal was simple: to restore Haitian independence. Advertisements for the antioccupation organization implored US citizens to live up to their “ideals of justice and liberty,” to “protest,” and to avoid assuming the “role of imperialistic overlord” in the Caribbean. League petitions appearing in the Black press helped would-be activists take this preferred stance. They asked individuals to place their signature and address below the following statement—“I hereby petition President Hoover to withdraw the military occupation from Haiti.” Many did. The Harlem offices of the Save Haiti League received petitions from small towns and cities in Virginia, Missouri, and everywhere in between. Indeed, the Marshalls rallied their most prominent peers to

their cause. The membership of the Save Haiti League included Mary McLeod Bethune, *Baltimore Afro-American* editor Carl Murphy, *Pittsburgh Courier* editor Robert L. Vann, *New York Amsterdam News* editor William M. Kelley, historian Rayford Logan, and businesswoman Maggie Lena Walker. The organization was, in effect, a “who’s who” of interwar Black America.⁶⁴

And there is no mistaking that Harriett Gibbs Marshall stood at its forefront. Besides cofounding the Save Haiti League, Marshall was the featured speaker at events hosted by the group. That included a mass meeting held at Harlem’s St. James Presbyterian Church where attendees were asked to “Help! Help! Help! Save Bleeding and Defenseless Haiti.”⁶⁵ Moreover, Marshall worked as the League’s corresponding secretary. It is fair to assume that in this position she not only handled communications for the antioccupation organization but also influenced the tenor of promotional material unabashed in its radicalism. One public release from the Save Haiti League prodded African Americans to realize that “the cause of Haiti and our cause is a common one” and show the US government that “twelve millions of Americans are awake to the situation.” “The moment is at hand,” it blared, to “ask for the liberation of Haiti.” The occasion, it implied, had arrived to demand that all Black people be able to enjoy political and cultural autonomy.⁶⁶

Countless African Americans of the era were taken by such impassioned pleas for racial justice. Many scholars of the US occupation of Haiti have been, too. Brenda Gayle Plummer has insisted that sources like the public declarations of the Save Haiti League prove that “increasing numbers of Blacks abandoned the notion of participation in the [occupation] regime as they came to see it as undemocratic, racist, and unproductive.” From her point of view, the heightened opposition of African Americans to the occupation was a reflection of their shifting attitudes about political protest in the United States. African Americans, Plummer continues, “foreswore the belief that Haitians could profit from accommodationism, as they likewise rejected this formula for themselves.” Put simply, “militancy among Blacks in the 1920s underlined the Afro-American response to the Haitian question.”⁶⁷

Upon closer inspection, however, the actions and words of middle-class and elite Black women belie Plummer’s assertions and similar arguments offered by other scholars. The “evaluations” of Haitians by leading African Americans did not change entirely with the “decline of the accommodationist outlook, the greater prominence of civil rights organizations, and resurgent Black nationalism” after World War I.⁶⁸

Some African Americans still regarded Haitian peasants as a people in dire need of the type of racial uplift programs that emerged in the late nineteenth century. Some continued to insist that religious ideologies and social welfare organizations imported and initiated by foreigners would ensure that a liberated Haiti was a “better” Haiti. In general, then, a cohort of leading Black women in the United States did not complete the transition from “racial uplift ideology” to an internationalism that recognized fully the “shared history of oppression against European and American imperialism.”⁶⁹ They persisted in the assumption that they had transcended their own oppression to an extent that allowed them or even required them to redeem Black women of different nationalities and social statuses.

There is no doubt that college-educated and middle-aged Black women did oppose the US occupation of Haiti. But it is a mistake to assign our hopes to the women of an earlier era, to contend that their reaction to the occupation reflected an unambiguous “political maturation.”⁷⁰ It was not always clear from whom or from what the officers of the ICWDR or the Women’s Convention of the National Baptist Convention or the Jean Joseph Industrial School thought Haiti needed saving. Was it the imperialism and capitalism that reinforced white supremacy? Was it the failings of Black leaders who had not provided appropriate solutions to the problems facing their communities? Or was it both? For Black women raised in a period when white supremacists used innumerable legal and extralegal means to reconfigure the racial domination weakened by the abolition of US slavery, the answers were not so simple. Still invested in an older strategy of contesting Jim Crow—emphasizing respectability and prioritizing Western theories of civilization, promoting elitist visions of pan-African organizing, and spreading the gospel of racial uplift—they could not fully form a Black feminist internationalism that would address the plight of colonized and oppressed Black women in a more egalitarian way. That is not an indictment of those women who sought solutions to a transnational “race problem,” who hoped to deliver Blacks in the United States and Haiti from racism and occupation. Instead, it is an acknowledgment of their key role in a moment of transition in Black intellectual history. In considering ways to not only improve but also free Haiti, Marshall, Hunton, Burroughs, Williams, and their colleagues laid the groundwork for a subsequent generation of middle-class and elite Black women who would construct an activist program more inclusive of working-class Haitians and less shackled to the social conservatism that privileged the hegemonic values and national chauvinism of bourgeois US Americans.

Notes

- ¹ The authoritative English-language treatment of the occupation remains Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti*.
- ² Johnson, “The Truth about Haiti,” 224. On African American protest of the US occupation of Haiti, see Plummer, “The Afro-American Response to the Occupation of Haiti,” 125–143; Pamphile, “The NAACP and the American Occupation of Haiti,” 91–100.
- ³ It is difficult to verify the race and ethnicity of La Condre. But several factors suggest that she was of African descent. La Condre was a member of the NAACP and subscribed to the *New York Age*. Moreover, contemporaries from the West Indies sharing her last name appear in naturalization petitions and other city records. I have searched the census for an Ana La Condre (or Anne LeCondre as she is addressed in a return letter from the NAACP) but have not found her. A boarder in Manhattan named George Lacondre does appear in the 1940 New York census. It registers his birthplace as the Dutch West Indies and lists his race as Black.
- ⁴ Ana L. La Condre to the Secretary of the NAACP, April 18, 1920, in the Records of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Administrative Files, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as NAACP Papers).
- ⁵ “Charge Americans Commit Grave Offenses in Haiti,” *New York Age*.
- ⁶ La Condre to the Secretary of the NAACP.
- ⁷ Lillian Bermudez to Charles Evans Hughes, February 14, 1922, Records of the Department of State relating to the Internal Affairs of Haiti, 1910–1929, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, Washington DC (hereafter cited as Decimal File, Haiti).
- ⁸ Layle Lane to the Secretary of State, December 17, 1927, Decimal File, Haiti.
- ⁹ Addie Hunton, Speech at Annual Conference of the NAACP, May 1932, NAACP Papers.
- ¹⁰ Key works on Black internationalism include von Eschen, *Race against Empire*; Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora*; West, Martin, and Wilkins, *From Toussaint to Tupac*; and Makalani, *In the Cause of Freedom*.
- ¹¹ Johnson, “Self-Determining Haiti,” 345–357.
- ¹² Mary Jackson McCrorey to Margaret Murray Washington, May 16, 1924, in the Mary Church Terrell Papers, Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, Howard University.
- ¹³ Margaret Murray Washington to Mary Church Terrell, April 28, 1924, Mary Church Terrell Papers, Library of Congress.
- ¹⁴ Notable works on female Black internationals include Higashida, *Black Internationalist Feminism*; Sanders, “La Voix des Femmes”; and Blain, “For the

Freedom of the Race.”

- ¹⁵ On the collaboration between elite Black women in Haiti and the United States in the ICWDR, see Sanders, “La Voix des Femmes,” 80–94.
- ¹⁶ Robyn Muncy has shown how white middle-class women influenced child-welfare policy during this same era, consequently creating what she calls “female dominion” in an otherwise masculine world of policymaking. See Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform*.
- ¹⁷ Nineteenth-century Black nationalist discourses including those about Haiti receive excellent treatment in Rael, *Black Identity and Black Protest*.
- ¹⁸ The best treatments of the politics of respectability and racial uplift remain Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*; and Gaines, *Uplifting the Race*.
- ¹⁹ Bettye Collier-Thomas examines the ideas about the redemption of women of African descent held by Black churchgoing women in *Jesus, Jobs, and Justice*, 188–255.
- ²⁰ *The Christian Recorder*, August 16, 1877; and Mossell, “Domestic Life in Hayti,” 393–398.
- ²¹ The extensive scholarship on Burroughs and the NTS includes Higginbotham, “Religion, Politics, and Gender,” 140–157.
- ²² Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent*, 213.
- ²³ Student Records, Nannie Helen Burroughs Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Boxes 147 and 165 (hereafter cited as Burroughs Papers).
- ²⁴ *Washington Bee*, “National Training School Closing a Brilliant Affair”; *Washington Bee*, “The Closing Week”; Graduate Certificates, Burroughs Papers.
- ²⁵ Journal of the 10th Annual Session of the Woman’s Convention, September 14–19, 1910, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, Annuals/Journals of Black Baptist (National) National Conventions in America, microfilm reel 14 (hereafter cited as SBHLA).
- ²⁶ Burroughs, “Our Foreign Students,” Journal of the 11th Annual Session of the Woman’s Convention, September 1911, in the SBHLA.
- ²⁷ Donors to the Haitian Fund, Annual Report of the Corresponding Secretary, Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Society, 1922–23, in the SBHLA.
- ²⁸ Clarice Gooding worked in the Lott Carey’s West African missions.
- ²⁹ Journal of the 21st Annual Session of the Woman’s Convention Auxiliary to the National Baptist Convention, December 1922, in the SBHLA.
- ³⁰ Journal of the 28th Annual Session of the National Baptist Convention, September 1908, in the SBHLA.
- ³¹ Journal of the 36th Session of the National Baptist Convention, September 1917, in the SBHLA.

- ³² Emily Williams to Margaret Murray Washington, December 12, 1922, box 102-12, folders 239–240, Mary Church Terrell Papers, Library of Congress.
- ³³ Balch, *Occupied Haiti*, v.
- ³⁴ Atwood, “Health and Sanitation,” 86–92; Davidson, “Public Health under United States Occupation.”
- ³⁵ The best treatment of the paternalistic and racist violence inflicted on Haitians during the occupation appears in Renda, *Taking Haiti*.
- ³⁶ Atwood, “Health and Sanitation,” 89.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 89, 90–91.
- ³⁹ Balch, *Occupied Haiti*, v.
- ⁴⁰ Atwood, “Health and Sanitation,” 92.
- ⁴¹ Hunton and Balch, “Race Relations,” 113–114.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 115.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 116.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 118.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 120.
- ⁴⁶ Letter from Harriett Gibbs Marshall to Mrs. John M. Glenn, August 4, 1924, in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records, box 112-2, Howard University, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Manuscript Division (hereafter cited as Washington Conservatory of Music Records).
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁹ Letter from Forrester B. Washington to Harriett Gibbs Marshall, January 30, 1928, in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records.
- ⁵⁰ L’Oeuvre de Femmes Haïtiennes pour L’Organisation du Travail Pamphlet, in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records.
- ⁵¹ Plummer, “The Afro-American Response to the Occupation of Haiti,” 137; Letter from Harriett Gibbs Marshall to Calvin Coolidge, September 12, 1924, in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records.
- ⁵² *Nouveliste*, “Another Error Accredited to the United States by Design,” in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records.
- ⁵³ Marshall, “Women of Haiti,” unpublished and undated, in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records.
- ⁵⁴ Letter from Rosina Jean Joseph to Mrs. John M. Glenn, quoted in Sanders, “La Voix des Femmes,” 93.

- 55 On the discourses surrounding Black home life during that time, see Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation*, 141–173.
- 56 Jean Joseph Industrial School Pamphlet, in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records. The pamphlet’s statement that “eight hundred brave Haitians gave their lives for American independence at Savannah” is imprecise. Approximately 750 free men of color from Saint Domingue did volunteer to fight alongside Patriot forces at Savannah. At that point, however, they fought as French colonial subjects, not as citizens of an independent Haiti.
- 57 Letter from Harriett Gibbs Marshall to Calvin Coolidge.
- 58 Letter from Addie Hunton to Harriett Gibbs Marshall, June 19, 1926, in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records.
- 59 Jean Joseph Industrial School Publicity and Letter from Layle Lane, October 24, 1927 in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records.
- 60 Jean Joseph Industrial School Publicity, in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records.
- 61 Edwin Clockson, on behalf of the Secretary of State, to Harriet Gibbs Marshall, May 19, 1924, in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records.
- 62 Letter from John H. Russell to Harriett Gibbs Marshall, July 15, 1924, in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records.
- 63 John H. Russell, quoted in Schmidt, *The United States Occupation of Haiti*, 125.
- 64 Petitions, Save Haiti League Business Records—Publicity, Washington Conservatory of Music Records; National Committee List, Save Haiti League Business Records—Membership, in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records.
- 65 Advertisement, Save Haiti League Business Records—Membership, in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records.
- 66 Public Release, Save Haiti League Business Records—Activities, in the Washington Conservatory of Music Records.
- 67 Plummer, “The Afro-American Response to the Occupation of Haiti,” 142.
- 68 *Ibid.*, 125.
- 69 Materson, “African American Women’s Global Journeys,” 39.
- 70 Plummer, “The Afro-American Response to the Occupation of Haiti,” 143.

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