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An architecture of education: African American women design the new south, by Angel David Nieves, New York, University of Rochester Press, 2018, 256 pp., £40 (hardcover), ISBN 13:978-1-580-46-909-8

This book was an illuminating read. The author has drawn compelling material from limited archival records and written a convincing historical account of female involvement in the funding and construction of post-slavery educational institutions in the Southern States of America. The monograph's premise is that African American women contributed significantly towards the founding and construction of a number of the American southern states' historically black schools and colleges, but that their contribution has not been adequately recognised in historical narratives of educational uplift and progress.

African American male anti-slavery protagonists include revered names such as Booker T. Washington, Marcus Garvey, Frederick Douglas and Du Bois. These notable 'fathers' are often thought of as those who were most important in funding and setting up education projects after the emancipation and abolition of slavery in America's Southern states. Nieves challenges and counters this assertion in her detailed study. She contextualises the post-slavery era, explaining challenges that were faced by black communities throughout the south, and highlights the agency through which black women contributed to, and in the two case studies presented, initiated and led school projects in America's former slave-owning Southern States.

An Architecture of Education focuses on two Black women who initiated school projects: Jennie Dean (1848–1913) and Elizabeth Wright (1872–1906). The latter's extant memoirs are scant as she died relatively young; it must have been difficult for Nieves to gather the material to develop a sketch of her life. These pioneering women educational instigators and school builders suffered the triple intersectional binds of gender, race, and class. Neives suggests that, like most black women of this era, they were less educated than their male peers. This was the case for Jennie Dean, but Elizabeth Wright had attended the Tuskegee institute, run by the Black American educationist, Booker T. Washington, and would have had an equivalent education to her male peers. The founding of vocational college education institutions in the South was both women's ambition. Wright's efforts to found Mayfield (latterly renamed Voorhees) College focused on developing a general vocational education that would help ensure employment of newly freed African families in the Southern states (most blacks moved north for employment, as without vocational training they could only become sharecroppers in the post-slavery economy). Dean set up the Manassas Industrial School, which had more of an industrial focus than Mayfield. Manassas was founded to train African American children to acquire specific industrial skills that would give them access to a wider range of jobs across the USA than was possible with general vocational

skills. Although Dean died before its full realisation, Manassas was supported by African American luminaries such as Frederick Douglas.

Nieves has done a good job in finding the archaeological remains of the buildings of Dean's Manassas College, which were razed to the ground by fire. He has also managed to find and record key buildings at Wright's Voorhees College, which today remains in a precarious financial position and struggles to secure adequate government funding. Nieves establishes that unexplained fires, other mishaps and limited or no government funding, have led to the closure of most of the early African colleges. The histories of these colleges - symbols of post-war struggles for the empowerment of African Americans - have been forgotten as there are few remaining physical traces of their existence today. The illustrations and architectural descriptions provided in the book help evidence the educational infrastructure that Nieves describes, although the reproduction quality is variable throughout the volume.

The schools founded by Wright and Dean were funded by philanthropic donations from various anti-slavery organisations of the time, and also in the case of Voorhees College, from within the African American community. A key point not addressed by Nieves is that both Wright and Dean developed their vocational-technical schools to operate within a residential campus model, similar to early (white) American universities such as Virginia, and historically black ones such as Tukesgee. This was a novel educational approach - the separation of educational institutions from the 'town' and the creation of model educational communities – and was promoted at national and international levels. Indeed, the Carnegie trust and other philanthropic organisations funded the Phelps Stokes reports in 1911 and 1923 to investigate whether this technical-agricultural residential college model might be used to promote educational development and training in schools across Southern and Western Anglophone Africa. Both reports concluded that education in sub-Saharan Africa had not yet reached the standard of the vocational-technical school typologies that DuBois, Wright and Dean championed. Unfortunately, little is remembered of this history, which is why Nieves's contribution is so timely.

Black American women contributed to the creation of African American schools and to the development of the new post-slavery South by securing funding for, and promoting the development of, educational institutions for Black education; implicitly, these initiatives also promoted the empowerment of Black people. Through sheer hard work and determination, Wright and Dean raised monies and saw to the planning and construction of a new set of schools and colleges with the explicit aim of creating the physical infrastructure to support African American vocational education. Their involvement in the planning and design of these colleges as residential educational communities would seem to be in keeping with the planning of campus institutions across America; both the historically white, (Virginia) and the historically black (Tukesgee) were already planned on the campus mode. What may be more relevant to note is that these women and other unrecorded actors worked relentlessly to support the creation of educational institutions that were equal in design style to higher education institutions being built elsewhere. This was a way to signal that African Americans were free to gain their education in institutions of equal symbolic status to white campus institutions in the South and across America. Nieves' claim that these women contributed to the architectural design of these schools thus has to be further contextualised in relation to these being part of a number of post slavery institutions, such as Tuskegee, which were designed to this new campus model.

This book is to be welcomed. It is valuable in helping the lay person understand better the context and challenges to education provision in America's deep south, including attitudes to the education of African Americans at the time, and the pervasive effect of Jim Crow laws and organisations such as the Ku Klux Klan. The histories of Dean and Wright show how, despite challenges and considering the intersectional issues of race, gender and class, these women

contributed as much, if not more, than their revered male peers to the history of school provision in America's South.

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