

The background of the entire image is a solid blue color. Overlaid on this background is a repeating pattern of musical notation. The notation consists of multiple staves, each with a treble clef on the left and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notes and rests are rendered in a light, semi-transparent white or light blue color, creating a subtle, textured effect behind the main text.

# BEYOND THE NOTES

Teaching and Learning Music at  
Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Paula A. Grissom-Broughton

# **Beyond the Notes**

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## **Teaching and Learning Music at Historically Black Colleges and Universities**

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**Paula A. Grissom-Broughton**



United Kingdom – North America – Japan  
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited  
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL

First edition 2026

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**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80592-590-3 (Print hardback)

ISBN: 978-1-80592-592-7 (Print paperback)

ISBN: 978-1-80592-589-7/978-1-80592-591-0 (Ebook)

Typeset by TNQ Tech

Cover design by TNQ Tech

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# CONTENTS

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About the Author.....	<i>vii</i>
Prelude .....	<i>ix</i>
Introduction.....	<i>xiii</i>

## **PART ONE: HISTORICAL AND SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON MUSIC EDUCATION AT HBCUS**

1. The Historical Foundations of HBCUs.....	3
2. Ebony Towers: The Missions and Relevance of HBCUs .....	25
3. Echoes of Heritage: The Musical Traditions of HBCUs.....	47
4. Entwined Realities: Curriculum, Community, Challenges .....	67
5. Music at HBCUs: Consciousness and Cultural Empowerment Pedagogy .....	85

## **PART TWO: EXEMPLARS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MUSIC AT HBCUS**

6. Affirming Identity .....	107
7. Valuing Cultural Assets.....	131
8. Transformative Empowerment.....	153

vi *Contents*

9. Implications, Recommendations for Policy and Practice.....	171
Postlude: Homecoming.....	193
Appendix A: List of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.....	195
Appendix B: Profiles of Eight Historically Black Colleges and University Exemplars.....	199
Appendix C: Historically Black Colleges and Universities accredited by the NASM.....	201

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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**Paula A. Grissom-Broughton** is an assistant professor and former chair of the Department of Music at Spelman College, where she teaches courses exploring the intersections of women, race, and music. A dedicated scholar and researcher, her work centers on race, gender, and identity in music education, with a particular emphasis on Black feminist pedagogy.

A proud product of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and a member of a multigenerational HBCU family, Dr. Grissom-Broughton is deeply invested in the study and preservation of HBCU music programs. Her research highlights how these institutions cultivate cultural pride, challenge dominant narratives in music education, and empower students as artists and leaders. Her book *Beyond the Notes* reflects her ongoing commitment to documenting and honoring the rich musical and educational traditions of HBCUs.

Prior to her role at Spelman, she taught piano, music theory, and history at Winston-Salem State University. She has also served as a music educator in Atlanta and Fulton County Schools, developing music programming for K–12 students. A former Atlanta Steinway Piano Competition winner, she remains an active collaborative pianist, guest clinician, and speaker. Across her teaching, performance, and scholarship, Dr. Grissom-Broughton continues to open doors for future generations of culturally grounded music educators and scholars.

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# PRELUDE

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*U-A-P-B! Who are you rootin' for... U-A-P-B!!!!*

*U-A-P-B! Who are you rootin' for... U-A-P-B!!!!*

Before I fully understood the significance of higher education, the rallying cry of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) was already a familiar sound. Originally called Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical, and Normal State College (Arkansas AM&N), UAPB is the second oldest land-grant institution in Arkansas. The first, the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville (established in 1871), is situated in the scenic Ozark Mountains of northern Arkansas.

Although the University of Arkansas was ostensibly open to African Americans, entrenched social norms and stringent laws substantially hindered their access to higher education in the state. Moreover, the post-Civil War climate of vigilantism in the Ozarks added a layer of peril for African Americans seeking education. In 1875, under the directive of Governor Augustus H. Garland, Joseph Carter Corbin established UAPB specifically for African Americans, then referred to colloquially as Negroes. This mission would lay the groundwork for a profound legacy of education and empowerment.

As a girl in Pine Bluff, I became intertwined with UAPB culture unknowingly. My childhood home on Fluker Street was a stone's throw from UAPB's campus. The adjacent North Hickory Street, tranquil and undisturbed during the late 1970s, became an impromptu rehearsal ground for UAPB's marching band, The Marching Musical Machine of the Mid-South. As a child, I would excitedly run to the corner just to hear the band and watch their high-stepping routines set to the latest funk and R&B tunes. My friend Sylento would mimic the drum majors, while I mimicked the dance line, Golden Girls, who twirled and moved their hips to the beat. I would scan the rows of saxophones to spot out my sister, Alvena, proudly playing as part of the esteemed ensemble.

Alvena was just one of several siblings who attended UAPB, drawn by scholarships, proximity, and affordability. Seven of my eleven siblings were educated at UAPB. Another sister, Phyllis, received a choir scholarship to

attend UAPB and was crowned Miss UAPB; she represented the college as an ambassador at various civic and community service events. My father, Allen Grissom, a son of sharecroppers and an Army veteran, also walked its hallowed halls. A beneficiary of the G.I. Bill, his educational journey was a testament to the transformative power of access and opportunity. Graduating in 1953 amid family and work commitments, he epitomized the resilience and dedication that faculty and administration instilled in its students. His subsequent pursuit of a master's degree and careers in teaching and counseling marked a lifetime devoted to education as a teacher, principal in segregated schools, and counselor.

Our home's proximity to the college meant we were intimately connected to its community. My mother, warmly known as Mother Grissom, demonstrated othermothering (Case, 1997; Collins, 2000) long before the term was introduced to pedagogical research. She frequently cared for the children of single mothers studying at UAPB, and our house was a regular overnight stop for my siblings' friends following their lengthy band rehearsals or study sessions.

Homecomings were especially unforgettable, transforming our home into the meet-up hub, a gathering place for these celebrations. Homecomings were like week-long family reunions, with alumni flocking back to their alma mater to rekindle friendships and revisit cherished memories with former classmates and professors. The spontaneous step shows by Greek fraternities and sororities would erupt anywhere and attracted crowds that cheered them on. The halftime shows, often the highlight of the football games, showcased exceptional musicianship and unforgettable entertainment. These homecoming festivities enlivened the entire city, engaging community leaders and local business owners who joined in on the celebration.

The fabric of my formidable community was intricately woven within the Historically Black College and University (HBCU) heritage. My neighbors on Fluker Street and North Hickory, such as Gladys Alley, who taught at Philander Smith College in Little Rock, were all proud graduates of AM&N. My foundational music education began with Mittie Robinson, another AM&N alumna, who introduced me to the world of music notation. My journey continued under the guidance of Lola Gordon, who provided my first formal piano lessons, and Juana Johnson, who led the community youth choir where I honed my skills as the piano accompanist. Aria Thorns, who operated one of the first culturally responsive preparatory schools in Pine Bluff, offered me my first music teaching role while I was still in high school. There, my musical abilities were further refined under Michael Bates, a long-time member of UAPB's music faculty. These individuals, among many others, enriched my upbringing with their profound knowledge and exemplary leadership, all rooted in their AM&N or UAPB education.

When it came time to choose my own path for higher education, I was drawn to UAPB, the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, and Spelman

College. Despite offers of full scholarships closer to home, a visit to Spelman decided me. Viewing images of powerful African American women displayed around campus such as Ida B. Wells, Maya Angelou, Sojourner Truth, Leontyne Price, Jessye Norman, and Ella Fitzgerald awakened a profound connection to a heritage of empowerment and excellence. At Spelman, I saw that Blackness was celebrated, women empowered, and greatness expected. Spelman became the incubator that shaped my sense of a Black womanhood, developed me as a critical thinker, and inspired to leave a lasting impact on those I encounter—influences that would later define my professional and personal identity.

My principal teaching mentor, Joyce Finch Johnson, a distinguished alumna of Fisk University and one of the longest-serving faculty members at Spelman College, exemplified the quintessential HBCU music educator. She was instrumental in refining my musical abilities and broadening my horizons with a wealth of experiences and opportunities. Johnson was my first and most impactful example of how transformative teaching can extend far beyond mere musical notes. Johnson exemplified that impactful teaching transcended beyond mere instruction; it shaped character. Our post-lesson discussions emphasized pursuing excellence: “Paula, we must strive to be better than the best,” Johnson would insist. She seized spontaneous moments in the hallways for personal encouragement. A quick glance into the practice rooms was not merely a check-in, it was a reminder that the standards were high and that exceptional musicianship and scholarly excellence was expected, despite *any* adversities.

My personal journey is more than a backdrop; it is the driving force behind this book. I am a living testament to the transformative experience that takes place in a nurturing environment, absent of gender and racial stereotype threats, taught with a culturally inclusive curriculum with positive professor-student interactions (Stewart et al., 2008). *Beyond the Notes* delves into the transformative role HBCUs play in cultivating skilled musicians, educators, and scholars, and examines both their pedagogical practices and their challenges. Through these explorations, I celebrate HBCUs’ profound impact on education and aim to inspire a new generation to continue this legacy of excellence.

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# INTRODUCTION

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Along with the growing body of literature indicating that attending a Black colleges and universities offers students benefits not found at predominately White institutions (Gasman & Esters, 2024; Hale, 2023; Koch & Swinton, 2022; Palmer, Hilton, & Fountaine, 2012; Williams & Ashley, 2004), Audre Lorde (2007) remind us to consider how differences can bridge gaps rather than widen them. In music education programs in institutions of higher education, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have played an integral role in the musical development of African Americans since the 19th century. The implications associated with differences (i.e., understanding people more holistically, embracing broader viewpoints) need to be assessed and utilized to understand the teaching of HBCU students in music programs. Such an approach provides the necessary insights to further understand the implications of incorporating expanded research methodologies outside of traditional disciplinary boundaries (e.g., areas of study limited by social and cultural constraints) in HBCUs.

The omission of HBCUs' from mainstream music education research diminishes both the visibility and the perceived legitimacy of their vital contributions to music education. Specifically, the experience of African Americans in HBCU music programs remains underexplored. With the ever-increasing racial diversity of the college environment, such challenging issues demonstrate a need to examine how HBCU students experience their music programs. To gain further perspectives on whether broadly accepted methodological teaching and learning tools, including African American cultural phenomena (e.g., oral traditions), need to be studied or will continue to remain absent from or underutilized in the major research literature.

Marybeth Gasman is a leading scholar of minority students in higher education with a focus on the contributions and benefits of an HBCU education. Gasman has conducted numerous studies of HBCUs to better document the role these institutions continue to play in shaping higher education and contributing to the success of their students (Gasman, 2009; Gasman &

Esters, 2024; Gasman et al., 2007). Yet, Gasman (2025) and other HBCU scholars (Allen et al., 2018; Hale, 2023; Palmer & Young, 2023) suggest that not enough is known of how HBCUs' unique environments translate into their graduates' academic and later professional success. One goal of *Beyond the Notes: Music at Historically Black Colleges and Universities* is to expand this knowledge base, especially as it relates to teaching and learning music at these institutions (See Appendix A for a list of all HBCUs).

A second goal of this book is to further demonstrate that nontraditional, less prevalent models of teaching can impact the broader society. Understanding the historical and socio-cultural influences of HBCUs as told by those who reflect the experiences in the musical world can help clarify why systematically oppressed groups have been left out of the musical canon and how the past still influences current professional practices. Coeyman (1996) notes that the voices of systematically oppressed people are often excluded from music education research. The author suggests that critical dialogue regarding the position of underrepresented students can address marginalized voices in music classrooms. This means examining the structures of formal music education, systems of thought and actions that have historically and systematically oppressed voices, and diverse ways of knowing in the field.

A third goal is to focus on how certain educational practices, particularly those found in music education, exclude certain voices while privileging others. These practices position certain kinds of knowledge as objective, devoid of dynamics of race, gender, class, and sexuality. In addition, the exclusion of particular issues from the curriculum continues to perpetuate the silencing and further marginalizing of collective voices. *Beyond the Notes* is thus structured into two parts and will provide in Part One, a historical and sociocultural critique of HBCUs and their music programs, and in Part Two, teaching and learning exemplars of eight HBCU music programs.

In Part I, which encompasses Chapters 1–5, I examine the pivotal role of HBCUs in nurturing African American musical talent, and I highlight their unique position in broader narratives of higher education. Chapter 1 provides a historical and sociocultural context for the founding of specific institutions dedicated to educating African Americans and highlights the conditions that necessitated their creation. Chapter 2 examines the missions of HBCUs in order to offer a deeper understanding of how these institutions intentionally create intellectual spaces in which students can critically analyze their unique positions in society. Chapter 3 explores the significant contributions of HBCUs in shaping diverse music genres and fostering cultural expression, positioning these institutions as vital forces in the development of American musical identity. In Chapter 4 I investigate the evolution of music curricula at HBCUs and address the challenges these programs face in adapting to contemporary educational demands, integrating technology, and staying responsive to the shifting dynamics of the music industry.

Rather than provide a historiography of the teaching and learning experiences at HBCUs, I further investigate this phenomenon through the pedagogical practice of what I call cultural and consciousness empowerment, a transformative pedagogical approach grounded at the intersection of three foundational theories: W. E. B. Du Bois' concept of double consciousness (1903/1994), Tara Yosso's model of community cultural wealth (2005), and Barbara Omolade's Black feminist pedagogy (1987). Chapter 5 explains how together these frameworks provide a holistic lens to understand empowerment, identity, and resistance within historically and systematically oppressed communities.

Part II (Chapters 6–9) is devoted to the fact that, while cultural and consciousness empowerment can be traced in nearly all HBCUs (and several will be mentioned in this work), the following eight colleges have been identified for their importance among HBCUs: Fisk University, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Howard University, Jackson State University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, Tennessee State University, and Tuskegee University (See Appendix B for an overview of the eight HBCU exemplars highlighted in this book). They represent a unique musical quality in the American higher educational system. Part II's chapters highlight the cultural and consciousness empowerment's converging themes of affirming identity, valuing cultural wealth, and transformative empowerment. Finally, Chapter 9 offers an explanation as to how these eight institutions reflect a broader vision for music education and how they serve as templates for challenging negative ideologies in the field.

My hope is that *Beyond the Notes* will provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and perspectives of the individuals involved in music at HBCUs in the 21st century. I seek to acknowledge both the triumphs and challenges faced by these institutions and to highlight their resilience in overcoming obstacles to foster artistic and educational excellence. More importantly, I aim to shed light on pedagogical practices that contribute to their unique educational impact. Through these pages, we celebrate the profound impact of HBCUs on their communities and beyond and underscore their critical contribution to both musical culture and higher education in America.

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PART ONE

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**HISTORICAL AND  
SOCIOCULTURAL  
PERSPECTIVES ON MUSIC  
EDUCATION AT HBCUs**

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## CHAPTER 1

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# THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF HBCUs

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### ABSTRACT

Chapter 1 explores the historical and sociocultural foundations of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and emphasize their role as counter-institutions to the exclusionary practices of early American higher education. Beginning with the colonial period, the chapter reveals how the nation's first colleges were built on wealth generated through slavery and upheld academic traditions that reinforced racial hierarchies. In contrast, HBCUs emerged as a response to systemic barriers that denied African Americans access to education, becoming critical spaces for intellectual growth, cultural affirmation, and social advancement.

The chapter also examines the founding of early HBCUs, the significance of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, and the impact of pivotal legislation such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Higher Education Act of 1965. It traces how policy shifts, abolitionist movements, and racial segregation laws shaped access to education and led to the development of parallel institutions for African Americans. Despite ongoing challenges—including underfunding, marginalization, and opposition to affirmative action—HBCUs have remained vital in educating generations of Black students and affirming their cultural and intellectual identities.

By situating HBCUs in a broader historical and policy context, this chapter underscores their enduring significance as sites of resistance, resilience, and educational justice. It lays the groundwork for understanding how these institutions continue to shape music education and affirm Black excellence in American academia.

#### 4 *Beyond the Notes*

Music at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) is a testament to the school's resilience, cultural richness, and legacy. One cannot engage in a meaningful discussion about the current state of music education at HBCUs, however, without exploring its historical and sociocultural context. To fully appreciate their unique role in music education today, we must investigate the past to uncover academic traditions and how they intertwine with the African American experience and shape a distinctive educational and musical landscape. Examining the founding principles of higher education is essential to comprehend how HBCUs have contributed to music education in the United States.

Research suggests that to fully appreciate the complexities of HBCUs, it is crucial to recognize their historical origins and development (Brown et al., 2001; Drewry & Doermann, 2001; Ricard & Brown, 2023). HBCUs have played a significant role in the landscape of Americas colleges and universities since the 19th century, but, despite their profound contributions to academic excellence, cultural enrichment, and the advancement of social justice, they are often erased from the historical narratives of higher education institutions. We must explore the historical and socio-cultural reasons behind the establishment of specific institutions for African Americans.

#### **Chains and Colleges (1619–1830)**

Systematic oppression in higher education in the United States is a deeply entrenched national phenomenon rooted in the foundational educational and social systems established during the colonial period when the earliest colleges and universities were founded. When enslaved Africans were trafficked to the ports of North America in 1619, they quickly understood that education was the pathway to freedom in a new land (Hannah-Jones, 2021). Proponents of slavery also knew this. A mere 17 years after the first trafficking of enslaved Africans to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619, the establishment of higher education in the United States began. In 1636 Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was founded. Using the model of European academic institutions as their template, Harvard and its fellow colonial colleges were established to provide education to predominantly White middle- and upper-class men, preparing them for clerical and civil service positions. This alignment with European traditions not only shaped the curriculum and ethos of these institutions, but also reinforced existing social hierarchies and exclusionary practices.

The classic text *A History of American Higher Education* Thelin (2019) looks at how America's colleges and universities were founded, their triumphs and

challenges, as well as how these institutions have evolved. [Thelin \(2019\)](#) explains that the students who attended colonial colleges were a “relatively privileged group of young men who were expected to be serious about their studies and their religion” and that the “family background of these students at colonial Harvard, Yale, and Princeton tended to be one of mercantile wealth” (p. 24). What Thelin did *not* mention was that the mercantile wealth acquired by these colonial families was directly tied to the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

In the groundbreaking book *Ebony and Ivy*, [Wilder \(2013\)](#) chronicles that “The first five colleges in the British American colonies...[were] instruments of Christian expansionism, weapons for the conquest of indigenous peoples, and major beneficiaries of the African slave trade and slavery” (p. 17). Wilder further asserts that these schools exhibited the

institutional ownership of slaves; the use of enslaved laborers to build and serve institutions; students, faculty, administrators, and trustees who were enslavers and slave-traders; acceptance of donations from those involved in the transatlantic slavery economy and “triangle trade,” such as merchants, insurers, shippers, investors, and plantation owners. (p. 67)

Ironically, or perhaps not, the economic prosperity that fueled the establishment of institutions such as Harvard, Dartmouth, and Princeton was built and maintained by the violent human trafficking of Africans and the disruption, dominance, and dispossession of Indigenous people from their lands ([Stein, 2022](#)). In addition to the financial backing from plantation owners and other trades involving slave labor, America’s first institutions used labor to maintain daily operations and the functionality of the colleges and universities (e.g., groundskeepers, maids, and cooks). In fact, the use of slave labor in colonial colleges was a common practice ([Edwards-Ingram, 2019](#); [Wilder, 2013, 2019](#)). Much work needed to be completed daily, and enslaved people were designated to carry out the most labor-intensive tasks. These persons were typically housed in designated slave quarters located on campus.

The trenchment of systematic oppression was experienced by students and faculty at these institutions. Perhaps more astonishing than the visible signs of systemic oppression that took place on the outside, such as on-campus slave quarters, were the teachings inside the classrooms. The production and reproduction of knowledge rationalized scientific racism as proof of non-White inferiority. Scientific racism, as taught during the colonial era, was a pseudoscience that promoted the superiority of White people ([Jackson et al., 2005](#)). Harvard’s anatomist John Collins Warren, founder of the Harvard Medical School, taught multiple courses that placed the physical development, cultural accomplishments, and intellectual potential

of White men as God-ordained and supreme (Wilder, 2013). These ideas lasted for decades, well into the 20th century. Harvard President Abbott Lawrence Lowell (1909–1933) implemented the creation of a residential college system that excluded Black students and was a leader among Harvard faculty supporting eugenics (Presidential Committee on the Legacy of Slavery, 2022). Blacks were believed to be naturally placed at the bottom of humanity. Other colleges often used false sciences, theologies, and manipulated histories to justify the supremacy of Europeans above non-Europeans. Unfortunately, these views distorted science, theology, and history. Harvard and other Ivy League schools sustained a deeply ingrained narrative that reinforced systemic norms of oppression, and left a lasting impact on American academia.

Enslaved Africans came to North America as accomplished scientists, mathematicians, and virtuoso musicians, fluent in multiple languages of their indigenous regions. They did not initially speak English, however, and eugenic teachings and restrictive laws were established to keep them illiterate in the English language, often preventing them from even considering attendance at America's first colleges and universities (Williams, 2007). Both enslaved people and even many freed Blacks were subject to educational restrictions enforced by deliberate policies and slave codes. These restrictions extended to those who attempted to teach them to read and write. For instance, in Maryland, teachers could be fined for assembling Black students in school settings. South Carolina and Georgia followed suit by enacting laws that made educating Blacks on any level illegal.<sup>1</sup>

According to Juan Williams and Dwayne Ashley in *I'll Find a Way or Make One* (2004),

if slaves couldn't read [English], they wouldn't know a better world was out there. And if they couldn't write, they couldn't forge travel passes that would allow safe travel to freedom. Literacy—education—was a way to escape slavery. . . it was a way out. (pp. 20–21)

Ultimately, enslavers viewed literacy and education as a threat to the slave-based economy, believing it would lead to insurrection (Williams, 2007). As the desire for literacy among newly freed Blacks became an insistent demand, Black schools were established to offer basic literacy and math skills, but also training in social and trade skills. These early educational establishments for Blacks received crucial support from anti-slavery abolitionist groups who bravely faced arrest, persecution, and even death to fight racism in order to provide education for enslaved and freed Blacks. These abolitionist-educators who established schools for Blacks knew of the eventual need to create Black institutions of higher learning because

Southern Whites, as well as many Northern Whites, did not want Black people in their schools (Williams & Ashley, 2004).

During the Revolutionary War period (1775–1783) and its aftermath, a significant movement appeared aiming to end slavery and improve the status of free Blacks, particularly in the realm of education. A growing conflict emerged between Christian beliefs and the practices of slavery. Many Christians, influenced by the teachings of equality and compassion in their faith, began to see the inhumane treatment and enslavement of African individuals as fundamentally incompatible with their religious principles. According to Williams and Ashley (2004) “both Blacks and White educators pushed aside any fear they had for their own safety and followed their moral and biblical convictions” (p. 14).

A notable example of this collaboration was the attempted founding of the first college specifically for African Americans. In 1829, Samuel Cornish, an African American newspaper editor, and Simeon Jocelyn, a White minister at a Black congregationalist church in New Haven, conceived the idea of the Negro College. Jocelyn was a Yale alumnus, so they chose New Haven because of its established higher education environment. Despite securing financial backing for land and construction, the proposed college faced a formidable obstacle: entrenched interests from local White educators. Influential Yale alumni, faculty, and administrators, fearing competition for resources and prestige, fiercely opposed the new institution. Resolutions were passed to bar the college from the town that prioritized the financial well-being of existing institutions over the potential benefits of a new educational venture for Blacks.

The antislavery movement in the North, which advocated for educational opportunities for all people, began to place pressure on colonial colleges that had previously excluded Negroes. This advocacy paid off in 1828 when Dartmouth College admitted its first student of African descent, a milestone followed by Harvard University in 1847. These moments set a precedent for other institutions to follow. Many colleges, especially those founded on Christian principles, came to realize the moral inconsistency in barring African Americans. The interplay of “moral philanthropy and racial animosity” in these institutions, as noted by Wilder (2013, p. 262), underscores the complexity and contradictions in early American social and educational ethos. Years of deeply ingrained social constructs posed challenges to Blacks’ full integration. In many cases, oppressive social constructs prevailed over moral Christian standards.

The positions of Black women in higher education must be recognized. Before 1800, women of all backgrounds—White, Black, enslaved, or free—were systematically excluded from colleges by statute (Thelin, 2019). Instead of chartered colleges, many early institutions for women’s formal education

began as academies or teaching seminaries, offering curricula at a level equivalent to secondary schools. Oberlin College's (established in 1833) forward-thinking community was among the most progressive and inclusive of its time. Oberlin was coeducational from its inception and began admitting Black students in 1835 and its first group of Black women in 1837. In the same year, Mary Lyon founded Mount Holyoke in Massachusetts, where an unspoken rule had dictated that Black women not be admitted (Perkins, 1997). This policy was formally adopted in 1845 when the trustees voted against admitting Black women.

The pathway to formal education for Black women was significantly advanced by Myrtilla Miner, who established the Miner Normal School for Colored Girls in Washington D.C. in 1851. Miner was a pioneer in education for Black women who believed that if the influential men running the country could see that African American women were capable of intellectual and industrial achievements, they would support Black educational institutions (Williams & Ashley, 2004).

The drive to uplift African Americans through education was often tainted by pervasive racial biases and exclusionary practices. The admission of Black students into predominantly White institutions, although a progressive step, was not universally welcomed in these academic environments. As a result, many such students endured overt discrimination and sometimes violent treatment. For example, in 1832, a year after the founding of Wesleyan University, the institution accepted its first Black student, Charles B. Ray. He became a prominent abolitionist in the North. It would be encouraging to report that Ray's experience at Wesleyan set a positive precedent for other institutions, but the reality was far different (Work, 1919). His enrollment was met with such intense, and sometimes dangerous, protest from his peers that Ray left the university only seven weeks after his arrival. This episode is one of many that illustrate the profound challenges African Americans faced when attending traditionally White colleges.

### **Hurdles to Liberation (1830–1890)**

Unlike the colonial colleges and universities, which trace their origins to 1636 with the founding of Harvard University, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) would not emerge until nearly 200 years later. The period between 1830 and 1865 was a time of significant societal transformation in U.S. higher education. Debates about how to treat African Americans, particularly in terms of education, intensified. Despite many obstacles, Northern Blacks and supportive Whites found ways of educating African Americans. In the North, several elementary schools were founded