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William Monroe Trotter.	

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RACIAL ATTITUDES IN AMERICAN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS OF THE SOUTH

This paper is a reduced account of the first wing of a project to ascertain the nature of the attitudes relative to the Negro as reflected in American History textbooks. The investigation has been limited to those books used in the states of Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri. These states, in a rough manner, constitute what is known as the *South*.

In any study of racial attitudes relative to the Negro, it is natural that one should turn to the South. Here the presumption is that such attitudes will be found and the reflections of them more clearly defined than elsewhere. In both the past and present the bulk of the Negro population has been concentrated in this area. Eleven of these states were members of the Confederacy. All of the sixteen States have separate school systems. Moreover, if the interpretation of Ulrich B. Phillips is to be accepted, the South “. . . is a land with unity despite its diversity, with a people having common joys and common sorrows, and above all, as to the white folk a people with a common resolve indomitably maintained—that it shall be and remain a white man's country. The consciousness of a

THE SECOND MARRIAGE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS

In connection with the last anniversary of Mr. Douglass' birthday, I became reminiscent, and recalled many events, and among them the marriage of Mr. Douglass. While he was Recorder of Deeds, one day, while I was in the neighborhood of his office I thought I would drop in and pay my respects to him. When I entered the room he was seated at his desk eating his lunch, and by his side was a lady seated in conversation with him. In a few minutes she left the room. On seeing me, Mr. Douglass said, "You are just the man that I want to see. I was just thinking about calling on you." To which I said, "Well, what's up?" He said, "I am thinking about getting married, and I want you to perform the ceremony." I said, "I will be delighted to do so."

I then said to him, "and who is the fortunate lady?" There were rumors afloat in the community that he was interested in one of two prominent women of the race, and that one or the other, if he ever got married, would be his choice. I was curious to know which of them. But to my surprise, neither of them was mentioned. He said, "Did you see the lady that was sitting by me when you came into the room?" I said, Yes. "She is the one."

And then he went on to tell me her name, Miss Helen Pitts. He said also that he had known the family for years. The father was a well-to-do farmer in Western New York, and was a staunch abolitionist. He had often been at her father's house; and remembered her well, little dreaming, that in the years to come, she was to be his wife. The time fixed for the wedding was January 24, 1884. Mr. Douglass was sixty years of age, and she was forty-six.

On the evening set for the wedding, two carriages drove up to my door, 1608 R Street, N. W. The bell rang, and Mr. Douglass, Miss Pitts, and Senator and Mrs. B. K.

Bruce entered. After bidding them welcome, and chatting for a few minutes, the ceremony was performed. Miss Pitts became Mrs. Douglass.

Senator and Mrs. Bruce were the only parties that were invited to witness the ceremony. Mrs. Grimké, of course, was present, and also Mrs. J. Sella Martin and daughter, Josie, not, however, by invitation, but living with us at the time, were present. The contracting parties left the house, after being warmly congratulated, all radiant and joyful.

That night after we had all retired, there came a violent ring at the door bell. The news had gotten out, and the reporters were in search of the particulars. All I said to them, without coming down to the door, was, "Yes, it is true that Mr. Douglass and Miss Pitts were married by me here this evening."

The next day the papers, of course, were full of it. One of the incidents connected with it, was that shortly afterwards I received a letter from a white southerner denouncing me for having performed the ceremony. He, evidently, thought that I was white, for he said, "Any white minister who would marry a Negro to a white woman ought to be tarred and feathered." I was not, however, tarred and feathered, but lived to spend many pleasant days with Mr. and Mrs. Douglass in their beautiful home at Cedar Hill, Anacostia.

The colored people, generally, did not approve of his marriage to a white woman. They said it was showing contempt for the women of his race; and that he had married only a common, poor white woman. Mr. Douglass was the last man in the world to feel any contempt for the women of his race. He had come in contact with too many splendid women of the race to give ground for any such feeling. Why he decided, in his second marriage, to select a white woman as his helpmate, was a matter which concerned him only. If he wanted to marry a white woman, and she wanted to marry him, it was a matter between

them only. It was nobody's else business. The intermarriage of the races may not be a wise thing, in this country, in view of present conditions, but the right to marry if they want to is inherent, God-given. No one may rightfully forbid it.

As to Mr. Douglass's marrying only a common, poor white woman, I want to say, and say emphatically, and, as one who knew Mrs. Douglass well, there is not a word of truth in the statement, which is intended as a slur upon her. That she was poor, in the sense that she had to work as a clerk to earn her living, as the best women of the colored race have to do, as teachers, clerks, stenographers, etc., is true; but that was no dishonor to her. It was to her credit that she was not ashamed to work for her living.

As to his marrying a common, ordinary white woman, I want to say that this is also false. She came from a highly reputable family, a family that respected themselves, and that were respected by all who knew them. Helen Pitts was no common, ordinary white woman. She was educated, a graduate of one of the best colleges in the country, and well read, refined and cultivated, a lady in the best sense of the term. Those who speak of her, as some colored people do, do so because they knew nothing of her personally, had no contact with her.

As to the standing of her family, the fact may also be mentioned, that one of her sisters was a highly valued teacher in the white high school in Washington, D. C., for years, and her brother was a prominent lawyer in the West. I had the pleasure also of meeting her mother, who came, some time after the marriage, to Cedar Hill to live with her daughter, where she died. She was a refined and lovely old lady. There was nothing common about her, as there was nothing about her daughter, Mrs. Douglass.

And just here, let me say, had it not been for Helen Pitts, the white woman who has been spurned by so many colored people, Cedar Hill, now the pride of the Negro

race and preserved as a perpetual memorial to Frederick Douglass because of what he was as a man, and of the great services which he rendered humanity, would have been lost to the race.

Mr. Douglass by his will left Cedar Hill to Mrs. Douglass. It turned out after his death that the will was defective, not having the requisite number of witnesses in the case of realty. When Mrs. Douglass found out that the will was defective, and that the property was not hers, she called the members of the family together, and suggested to them, that they should all agree to set Cedar Hill apart as a perpetual memorial to their father, and to appoint a board of trustees to whom the property should be deeded to be held as such. But they declined to do it, insisting that it should be left as a part of the estate and sold, and divided among the heirs. This was done. And Mrs. Douglass, determined if possible to save it as a memorial to Mr. Douglass, bought it in. She took what money she had, with what she could borrow on the place and secured money enough to satisfy the claims of the heirs, and other members of the family.

Mrs. Douglass had her heart set on saving to the race the place where Mr. Douglass had lived for some twenty-five years. She saw what it would mean in the coming years to a struggling race to have such a mecca to come to, which would be a constant reminder to them of the great struggle through which they had passed and were still passing, and of the spirit necessary, if ultimate success is to crown their efforts. She saw that Cedar Hill, the home of Douglass, great Douglass, would be a great educational force, a center from which could radiate influences that would keep the race steadily pressing on. She had great ideas as to the significance, the value to the race of such a memorial. It was the saving of it for this purpose, that more than anything else engaged her thought during her last days. It possessed her, she could not throw it off.

I remember, during the last year of her life, when her health was rapidly failing, and when funds were slow in coming in, we talked to her of how difficult it was to raise money for memorials of any kind. We called to her attention the difficulty of raising funds for the completion of the Washington Monument in our city. Though it had back of it some of the most influential people in the country, it remained unfinished for years until Congress was obliged to come to the rescue, and appropriated sufficient money to complete it. We spoke also of the hard struggle there was to complete the monument to General Grant in New York City. And finally got her to agree, that if ultimately the money could not be raised to lift the mortgage, that the property be sold, and two scholarships be established in some reputable university as memorials to herself and Mr. Douglass. She finally agreed to this arrangement only on the condition that the scholarship should be named for Mr. Douglass only, as she wanted nothing for herself. It was not of herself that she was thinking, but of Mr. Douglass and the colored race only.

We supposed that the matter was settled, and that her will would be drawn to that effect. But as she grew weaker, as the end was approaching, she sent for us, and said, that she had changed her mind; that she had cut out the provision in her will about selling the property and establishing a scholarship. She said, with considerable emphasis, "If the colored people think so little of Mr. Douglass and his great services, as to be unwilling to raise the comparatively small sum to pay off the mortgage, it will be lost as a memorial to Mr. Douglass, but would stand as an everlasting disgrace and reproach to the race."

Among the very last things that she said, as she lay on her dying bed, was: "See to it that you do not allow my plan for Cedar Hill to fail. That was her dying admonition. I can see the look in her eyes now, and hear afresh the touching tones of her voice as she uttered those words. And it is gratifying to be able to say, "It has not failed."

When she died, after living a life of great self-denial for the sake of saving Cedar Hill, there was a mortgage of fifty-five hundred dollars on it. This was afterwards cut down to four thousand. It was at that juncture, that the National Association of Colored Women, meeting in Baltimore, came gloriously to the rescue under the enthusiastic and masterful leadership of Mary B. Talbert, of Buffalo, who was then the president of the organization. In a very short time the money was raised and the mortgage wiped out.

This is the way Cedar Hill came to be saved to the race. It was by the self-sacrificing devotion and tenacity of purpose on the part of a white woman, and the prompt and energetic support on the part of a group of loyal, race-loving women. All honor to them. It is a monument to Mr. Douglass, made possible by the joint effort of this one white woman, and the great National Association of Colored Women in this country.

It should also be said, in making this record, that Mr. Douglass's family had no part in it, took no interest whatever in the movement, but, on the contrary, did everything they could to defeat the project. Mrs. Talbert, under whose leadership the money was raised, told me herself, how everywhere she was hindered through the influence of some member of the family.

I may be permitted to say also before leaving this matter, that, very naturally, I felt complimented in being selected by Mr. Douglass out of all the ministers then living in Washington, and, being comparatively a young man and not quite seven years in the ministry, to officiate on this occasion. Why I was selected, how, in what way I had commended myself to him, I do not know; but all I know is that I was selected. Naturally, as a young man, I felt flattered, and have regarded it ever since, as an honor that I was selected by the greatest man of the race to play this part in his illustrious career. It is thus that I have become linked up with the history of this great man.

FRANCIS J. GRIMKÉ