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LEGACY PROFILE

Barbara E. Pope (1854–1908)

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A visitor to the American Exhibit of the Paris Exposition Universelle de 1900 could hardly have missed “The Exhibit of American Negroes,” located as it was on the right-hand side as one entered (Provenzo 2). But they could be forgiven for overlooking a very small, unusual volume tucked away on the low bookshelves of the exhibit. While most of the books assembled for the display represented earlier publications, this volume appears to have been produced exclusively for the exposition. Four stories, published in *Waverley Magazine* between July 1896 and May 1900, had been carefully cut from the magazine and bound for inclusion in the exhibit. When the list of works exhibited by African American authors was circulated and reprinted in the pages of the black press, the collection was titled simply *Storiettes*, the author identified as Barbara Pope. Undoubtedly, few—if any—in Paris had heard of her. Yet in a few years that name would become known to many in the United States as the primary player in the W. E. B. Du Bois–led Niagara Movement’s first challenge to interstate segregation laws. Just as quickly, within another decade, Pope would be forgotten, her contributions effaced, perhaps deliberately, with the result that today she is virtually unknown and completely absent from studies of African American literature. Yet her work engages explicitly with issues of race, class, activism, and racial uplift addressed by scholars of the New Woman in literature, such as Martha H. Patterson and Charlotte J. Rich, and in studies of late-nineteenth-century African American women’s literature by Hazel Carby, Carla L. Peterson, Claudia Tate, Frances Smith Foster, P. Gabrielle Foreman, and others. Such a silence around Pope and her life reflects more the realities of her era than of ours; recuperating her work for future study expands our knowledge of African American women writing in the late nineteenth century, especially

their negotiations of a world that was simultaneously changing rapidly and not changing fast enough.

Pope was born in January 1854 into a family determined to better their situation. Her father, Alfred Pope, was among those seventy-seven enslaved individuals who participated in the Pearl Affair, commandeering a ship and attempting to sail it north to freedom from Washington, DC. Although the attempt failed, Alfred and his wife, Hannah, were freed in 1850 by the death of the man who held legal title to them. Remaining in Georgetown, Alfred established himself as a savvy businessman, parlaying a business in waste removal into significant real estate holdings (Lesko, Babb, and Gibbs 23–26). The Popes were committed to education, with Alfred serving as an early trustee of the Colored Schools of Washington and Georgetown.¹ Thus it is not surprising that of their nine children, several served as school teachers. As of 2 September 1873, sixteen-year-old Barbara Pope was among them. According to records, it appears that by 1876 she was among the highest-paid teachers in the first or second district—above famed abolitionist and editor Mary Ann Shadd Cary—with the exception of Mary J. Patterson, a principal and Oberlin graduate.²

As a teacher and member of one of Washington's oldest established black families, Pope had several advantages. She and her sisters traveled and vacationed annually, with Silcott Springs in Loudon, Virginia, a favored destination. Many of those she socialized with were members of Washington's "black 400," the nation's most elite African American community—although the Popes appear to have been somewhat on the periphery of this exclusive group, not pursuing overt markers of privilege or belonging to a fashionable congregation.³ Unmarried, Pope turned her attention to her career. This included a one-year faculty appointment in 1884–85 at Tuskegee Normal School under the leadership of Booker T. Washington ("Faculty Roster"). There she taught a course titled "Rhetoric, Grammar, and Composition" (Chandler). Pope was probably aware her position was temporary, replacing another faculty member who was assuming new administrative duties (Willis); whatever the case, by 1886 she was again employed in the Washington school system, where she was granted another teaching certificate ("Meeting of the School Board").

Upon her return to Washington, Pope became increasingly vocal about her dissatisfaction with the leadership of the local schools for African American children. A granddaughter of Pope's sister confirms, "All the women in my family who were teachers have battled the DC Colored School system at one time or the other. My mother was 'called on the carpet' repeatedly. I'm sure that partially fueling this was a sense of entitlement since Alfred Pope was a member of the Colored School Board. My grandmother, Martha Louise Pope

Nash, had a similar history. They were all rather outspoken women” (Chinn to author 19 Mar. 2014). In Barbara Pope’s case, it was an 1888 incident with an unruly student that led her vocally to denounce the trustees, with irreversible consequences. According to an account Pope shared with the *Washington Bee*: “It seems that Miss Pope was kicked in the abdomen or assaulted by one of her male pupils whom she suspended and refused to re-admit unless he apologized. It is said, notwithstanding the request she made and the courtesy due her as a teacher, she was requested by the authorities of the colored schools to re-enter the pupil without an apology. Presuming she had been imposed upon, hence her resignation” (“Trouble”). While the student did apologize, Pope found the apology insufficient; the trustees disagreed. She was open in condemning “the tyrannical conduct of trustees J. W. Francis and the artful persecution instigated by Mr. H. P. Montgomery” (“Somebody Scorched”); her resignation stood. Pope must have felt personally betrayed in the matter: even her acknowledged friend John F. Cook, a member of Washington’s most prominent black family, sided against her according to a report in the *Bee* (“Miss Popes’ [sic] Case”).⁴

The condemnation from the *Bee* must have been crushing: the editor, William Calvin Chase, made absolutely explicit that it had not been his decision initially to support her case in the paper; the item had appeared during his absence. Notoriously mercurial, Chase was also seen as pandering to those in power—perhaps even accepting incentives to forward particular views or individuals.⁵ If Pope was not already aware of the ways men of power might close ranks against complaints from women, then she certainly experienced it firsthand in this moment. Chase’s editorial characterized her as unreasonable, misguided, and plagued with suspect judgment clouded by anger—and downplayed the fact that she had the support of other teachers. Her Washington teaching career was over.

It is unclear if Pope sought alternate employment following her resignation, although we have some evidence of her private affairs. A letter from Robert Wesley Taylor to Booker T. Washington describes a failed engagement between Pope and William Hannibal Thomas that can be dated to about this time. Thomas must have initially seemed a good prospect. According to John David Smith, “In the early 1890s, [Thomas] seemed on course to become one of the leading black experts on the Negro problem” (154). The author of *Race and the Land* and of numerous articles in the black press, Thomas argued for government reform and proposed congressional bills intended to improve black life (J. D. Smith 151). Unfortunately, he also boasted a history of impropriety, both sexual and financial. As Taylor recounts, Pope arrived in Boston prepared to

marry Thomas, but Arianna C. Sparrow, an active Boston club woman with Washington ties, informed Pope of Thomas's relationship with another woman whom he had seduced into a sham marriage (Taylor 24–25).⁶ It is likely that the story of Pope's disappointment circulated through Washington's close-knit society, to the detriment of Pope's reputation.

Not surprisingly, Pope appears to have receded somewhat from public life following these events and the gossip they no doubt engendered: while she had been regularly listed in the City Directory previously, after 1888 she did not appear again for well over a dozen years. When Pope did emerge, it was as a writer, channeling her attention—and her frustrations—toward literature. Her first identified story, "The New Woman," printed below, appeared in the 18 July 1896 issue of *Waverley Magazine*. As the title suggests, the story takes as its theme the limited opportunities for women and the patronizing attitudes of men when faced with female competence. Pope's second short story, "The Coming of Mrs. Ferguson," appeared in the same venue in November of that year. By mid-1897 the *Broad Ax* declared Pope "A New Literary Star":

Our race has a new aspirant for literary fame in the person of Miss Barbara E. Pope, of Washington DC, whose works of fiction and Magazine contributions are receiving many complimentary notices. Miss Pope's latest contribution is to the *Waverley Magazine*, which is entitled "The New Woman." In this article the writer displays sound and sensible judgment, and brings out many strong points.

The chief characteristic of this young literary genius is her broad and liberal style of writing, a faculty which so few of our race have the courage to display. We are glad to see that Miss Pope has a mind of her own and does not entertain any fear of expressing her own ideas and opinions. *The Broad Ax* wishes her every success in her chosen field.

If there were additional contributions beyond the pages of the *Waverley*, as the *Broad Ax* suggests, they have yet to be located. One of Pope's nieces claims Pope wrote under a pseudonym, but no trace of that name has been found (Chinn to author 19 Mar. 2014). It seems unlikely she was a contributor to the *Washington Bee*, which was edited by Chase. He and Pope remained at odds following his repudiation of her in 1888. Pope was frank about her opinion of Chase, writing to a commission investigating DC's schools:

There is a colored man in this city by the name of William Calvin Chase. He is a local politician and the editor of a trashy newspaper. It is whispered on all sides that this man is the "boss" of the colored schools. Over superintendent and trustees he seems to exercise a powerful influence. His influence is certainly not beneficial to his race, and I beg you to summon trustees and others before you and inquire of them the secret of this man's power. (Letter on schools)

Chase did acknowledge Pope's aspirations as a writer, suggesting at least one of her sisters may have also had literary ambitions; in August 1896 an editorial in the *Bee* proclaimed it would like to see the "Misses Pope [become] great journalists" ("What the Bee" 4). However, the *Bee* did not publish Barbara Pope or report on her subsequent publications, including the short stories "Cornelia" and "Campbell's Experiment," both of which also appeared in the *Waverley* (in 1899 and 1900, respectively). It therefore seems unlikely this was a genuine statement of support.⁷

Personal conflict aside, it is also possible that Chase had reservations about the *Waverley* as a venue worth reporting.⁸ According to its editor, the *Waverley Magazine's* "impartial and liberal policy, combined with its extensive circulation, furnished an avenue for the promotion and encouragement of genius before unknown. It brought forth from almost obscure retreats,—from the farm-house, the work-shop, and the counting-room, as well as from the seminaries of learning,—a host of talent, of the existence of which the public had hitherto been unconscious" (Dow v). Others have been less kind in assessing the relationship between the contributors and editorial practices. Frank Luther Mott writes:

For half a century the *Waverley Magazine* (1850–1908) was the favorite of amateur writers. Moses A. Dow, a Boston printer, purchased \$4000 worth of type and machinery on credit in the early months of 1850, and created a magazine which he threw open to the unpaid contributions of schoolgirls and their swains. The *Waverley* was a success almost from the start, its contributors and their friends and admirers willingly paying their \$3.00 a year to see these efforts in print. (41–42)

While more recent research by Ronald J. Zboray and Mary Saracino Zboray suggests Mott was overly severe in his assessment, this does not mean the *Waverley* ever escaped its reputation as an amateur journal—even as it made its editor rich, something Chase may have both envied and disdained. Evidence also suggests that some contributors were paid, including African American authors (Hodges 6).

No full-length study has been undertaken on Dow and the *Waverley*, but Pope's choice of it as a publishing venue is noteworthy. First, the liberal editorial policy claiming to welcome authors from "almost obscure retreats" encouraged—deliberately or not—submissions from African Americans who might be denied space within other pages. As Amelia Etta Hall Johnson demonstrated in an 1892 essay for the *Richmond Planet*, many white-owned journals would not publish work by African American authors.⁹ For those nineteenth-century African Americans who did not wish to write on themes preferred by the black religious press, publishing opportunities contracted significantly.

Those who aspired to publish in elite literary venues faced a different kind of censorship. As Elizabeth McHenry has demonstrated, elite white editors and publishers were reluctant to publish works by African American authors that might “give offense” to white southern readers. Of *Harper’s Monthly* she writes: “While it included in its pages stories about African Americans, these were typically in the tradition of plantation fiction; written exclusively by white authors, they romanticized slavery and depicted blacks as happy-go-lucky ‘darkies’ themselves nostalgic for the well-ordered agrarian world of the antebellum era” (397–98). African American authors might tailor their subject matter and obscure their race when submitting work elsewhere, but sending unsolicited writing was not the most effective way of seeking the attention of editors, who often relegated such submissions to the slush pile. Thus the *Waverley* provided an opportunity to authors like Pope, who might find herself excluded from other venues for personal or professional reasons. In turning to the *Waverley* as a site for publication, she was not alone: other African American authors who appeared in its pages included Victoria Earle Matthews and Augustus Michael Hodges (better known as B. Square); more are waiting to be identified. The possibility exists that the *Waverley* is an unmined source for nineteenth-century African American writing.¹⁰

The Waverley’s editorial policy also appeared to welcome contributions that we might recognize as implicitly coded as African American in subject. Pope did not necessarily go to great lengths to write about white characters in the stories she submitted. Of all her stories, “Campbell’s Experiment” is the most obviously about white people, but in a way that signifies on African American vernacular usage, the legacy of slavery, and the teachings of Booker T. Washington. While the heroine of “Cornelia” is blonde, a visitor remarks to the heroine of another character: “His complexion is dark, and he has jet black eyes, but there is something about him that always puts me in mind of you.”¹¹ It seems possible her world is that of the black upper classes, where individuals light enough to pass as white were not uncommon. Another story, “The Coming of Mrs. Ferguson,” is very obviously set in a vacation spot like those frequented by Pope and her friends. These stories all comment in interesting ways on the class beliefs and prejudices of Pope’s own social circle, which historian Willard Gatewood describes as “disdainful of the gaudy and ostentatious” and “quick to detect among the nouveau riche any lack of ‘good taste’” (44).

Pope’s short story “The New Woman” is similarly a product of social trends, as well as a commentary on them. The figure of the New Woman emerged in the 1880s and 1890s, characterized as bourgeois, educated, and possessing an awareness of new possibilities for employment, political activity, and self-expression (Smith-Rosenberg 176–77). However, as Patterson has observed,

the New Woman was also embodied as white in the mainstream press (52). Her racial identity was signaled by, among other things, the organizations she might belong to, which did not generally admit African American women (Rich 21). As Mary Church Terrell, the first president of the National Association of Colored Women, opened her autobiography, “A white woman has only one handicap to overcome—that of sex. I have two—both sex and race” (*Colored Woman* vii). For many the progress of the race was measured by the progress of its women (White 113). Accordingly, African American women drew upon possibilities offered by the New Woman, as well as the rhetoric of racial uplift, to craft their own figure, sometimes referred to as the “New Negro Woman,” a pillar of bourgeois respectability. Nellie McKay argues of black club women, the model of New Negro Womanhood, “these women redefined themselves as ‘New Women’: independent, purposeful, and capable of effecting social change. Educated and self-reliant, they estimated that their training and abilities entitled them to a role in the public debates and in activities concerning the advancement of women and the ‘colored’ race” (xxv). African American activist Fannie Barrier Williams observed, “The Negro Woman is really the new woman of the times, and in possibilities the most interesting woman in America” (546). Accordingly, as Claudia Tate in particular has demonstrated, female African American authors of the era, from Katherine D. Tillman to Pauline Hopkins, explored the meaning of these new women in their fictions. In the context of the era, it would be easy to read “The New Woman” as a straightforward commentary on how capable women’s opportunities are thwarted by well-meaning husbands, consistent with the prevailing New Woman discourse. At the same time, there is a complicating facet: of all Pope’s stories, “The New Woman” is most obvious in its coding of its heroine, Margaret, as non-white:

A European might have been puzzled as to her nationality; not because of the tiny mouth with its dainty curves, or the nose, whose contours deviated from the purely Grecian only enough to impart brightness of expression. Her complexion was brownish yellow, with skin soft and clear; she had large black eyes shaded by the longest and silkiest lashes; her hair was black and glossy as the raven tresses of the Mongolian, but finer in texture, and possessed of that much coveted quality, slight waviness; she wore a pale cream house gown of soft material the bodice tastefully trimmed with dark red velvet and chiffon. (299)

A European might be puzzled, but the implication is that the American reader should not be. Margaret is also a product of what she describes to her husband possessively as “our schools,” with manual training components, not unlike Tuskegee, where Pope had taught (299). Such programs are utterly unfamiliar to him, implying he is not included in “our.”¹² The suggestion of an interracial

marriage is clear; at the same time, it is notable that it is not the primary conflict in the story. While the couple's "short courtship" has led to a mismatch, it is not a matter of race but rather a result of their different beliefs about women's sphere (298). He finds "rather to his dismay, that the little peculiarities which had amused him in the days of his short courtship, and which had occasionally called forth a hearty laugh while on the wedding tour, were not mere girlish whims and fancies" (298). Yet Frank continues to misjudge Margaret based on her appearance and manner, which Pope characterizes as exceptionally feminine. Margaret is not strident in her assertions but gentle in her remonstrances and attempts to sway Frank's beliefs. As the story progresses, physical descriptions of Margaret are supplanted by exposition that is both stark and modern. Having established that Margaret's behavior conforms to traditional standards of femininity, Pope shifts the focus of the story to the argument over women's abilities, not the encoded bodies of the speakers.

In crafting Margaret as she does, Pope is engaging with ideas of the New Woman, although she does so in a way that explicitly signals her investment in the public perception of the New Negro Woman. The black press criticized the figure of the New Woman as selfish, prioritizing "sexual freedom and individual accomplishment," while African American authors like Pauline Hopkins rejected the associated practices of self-actualization through the exercise of purchasing power (Patterson 59, 51). The New Negro Woman does not derive power from her actions in the marketplace—whether political or economic—but from her success in advancing the race. In this way, the New Negro Woman is engaged in a communal project. Margaret, with her desire to assist her husband as she once helped her father and then her family, imagines herself as part of a coordinated effort. Her desire for a "purpose," however, is constantly met with opposition: as her new husband sees it, she is ornamental (300).

In many ways, Margaret's plight is a domestic version of Pope's own situation. Pope was raised in a culture that forwarded impeccable behavior for women as a means to counter the racist stereotypes that circulated in dominant culture. Her father reputedly saw her challenges to authority as violations of genteel modes of respectability (Chinn to author 10 June 2014). In the character Frank we see no maliciousness: he and Margaret sing and read together; he humors her by trying his hand at the domestic handicrafts, which signal her productive leisure. Presumably Alfred Pope, in supporting his daughters' education and their careers, might also be seen as lenient. However, Margaret is told to shop, take naps, and read; Pope is instructed to leave politics to men. Margaret's demonstrations of competence are ineffective when faced with her husband's refusal to interpret them as such; Pope's vocal assertions are met with derision and dismissal by men in power. It is up to the reader to determine how effective Margaret's attempts to

win through feminine suasion will be. In hindsight, the title of the story conveys a certain irony: women may have moved on; men have not. Pope appears to be suggesting the New Woman must be more than just capable: she must be loud when agitating on behalf of her own interests.

In submitting her work for inclusion in the Paris Exposition, Pope was putting such a philosophy into action, defying those—whether school board trustees or mercurial newspaper editors—who had deemed her too contrary or opinionated and refused to accord her opinion appropriate respect. The exhibit was the idea of Thomas J. Calloway, a lawyer and vice president of Tuskegee. Upon receiving approval from President McKinley, Calloway worked with both W. E. B. Du Bois and Daniel A. P. Murray, personal assistant to the Librarian of Congress, to assemble the materials for the exhibit (Provenzo xi–xii, 178).¹³ As Shawn Michelle Smith has observed, in direct contrast to the practice of representing African peoples through exoticized artifacts and transplanted huts, the American exhibit used “maps, charts, models, photographs, and detailed descriptions of work in African American education, as well as hundreds of examples of African American literary production” to “present the progress made by African Americans in the terms of white Western culture” (59–60). The exhibit served as a record of African American achievement and a rebuke to those who would still deny the rights of belonging to such cultivated people. It seems likely that Murray, a Washington resident and member of the elite, was known to Pope—certainly they had friends in common—and news of his project must have made its way to Pope, who would find satisfaction in knowing her work was among the two hundred volumes sent to Paris. At least initially, the move appeared profitable; Pope found herself in the pages of the *Boston Evening Transcript*: “There are scores of colored people who earn money with their pens, in magazines and weeklies, but who are not bookmakers. Among these are Miss Barbara Pope and Mrs. William E. Matthews, Mrs. Victoria Earle Mathews of New York, Miss Ida Platt of Chicago, and Prof. R. T. Greener” (G. M. H. 12). Despite the initial press, her reputation did not flourish as she might have hoped; mentions of Pope’s writings waned with the memory of the exhibition.

In the aftermath of the exposition, Pope was swept up in the political debates that characterized middle- and upper-class African American life in the era. As black residents of Washington, DC, attempted to negotiate their allegiances to Booker T. Washington and Du Bois, many felt the pull of family, friends, and social circles. Thus, in this Pope was not alone. By 1900 she was increasingly drawn to Du Bois and his politics, much to the dismay of her father.¹⁴ It is perhaps due to her father’s influence that she did not attend the initial meeting of the Niagara Movement in 1905, although black Washington was represented. The Niagara Movement positioned itself in opposition to what many saw as the

accommodationist politics of Washington. As F. H. M. Murray described it in a fund-raising form letter, "The Niagara Movement is not merely an academical body. It is militant. Our fight is waged and to be waged against the outer enemy and the inner racial indifference and tendency to lethargy" (Murray). Belonging to the Niagara Movement was not without consequences: a letter from a rank-and-file member to Du Bois raises the possibility of secret membership, to accommodate those who would join but for whom the stakes were too high to be open members (Wallace).

It is not clear if Pope undertook her very public act of defiance with support of the Niagara Movement or independent of them.¹⁵ But on 7 August 1906 Pope bought what would be a life-changing train ticket: "A woman, whose color indicated that she was a negress, was turned over to State officials at Falls Church, yesterday for refusing to occupy a seat in the 'Jim Crow' section of a car. She said her name was Barbara E. Pope, that she was a clerk in the interstate commerce commission, and had been informed at that office what her rights were. She had a ticket for Paeonian Springs" ("Virginia News"). It is unknown if the act was planned or spontaneous. Many women of the era complained of the indignities of the Jim Crow car. Another Washington resident who no doubt knew Pope, Mary Church Terrell, wrote at some length of the privations and potential assaults an unaccompanied woman might experience in the dreaded car (*Colored Woman* 296–99). In refusing to move to the lesser accommodations, Pope was not simply attempting to integrate first class; rather, she was asserting her right to safe travel. The judge of the town did not see it this way, fining her ten dollars ("Niagara Movement"). The Niagara Movement embraced the opportunity Pope presented, inviting her to the 1906 meeting at Harpers Ferry. William Monroe Trotter addressed the audience, stating "[h]e hoped the movement would assist her in her appeal," a suggestion met with applause by the audience ("Niagara Movement"). Supported by the Niagara Movement, Pope contested the fine, which was upheld by the trial court in October of the same year. This allowed Pope to pursue the case in the Supreme Court of Virginia. As reported in an article tellingly headlined "Virginia Jim Crow Law Smashed," the court issued a writ of error and *superdeas*, supporting her lawsuit, and ordered that she be reimbursed for the original fine. The Niagara Movement hailed the judgment as a blow to segregation in interstate travel.

Despite the Niagara movement's coordination of the defense, Pope was not a passive prop throughout this experience. She defended herself and her reputation while also critiquing her presentation within the press. In a letter to the *Washington Post* she wrote:

Editor Post: Again I have read in your paper that I claimed to be “a clerk in the Interstate Commerce Commission” and again I call on you to correct the false statement. I made no such claim and I request you to give the denial as much publicity as you have given the false statement. The “woman” as you politely term me, is a lady who has never claimed to be what she is not.

(Miss) Barbara E. Pope. (“Denies Having”)

Accordingly, the return of her ten dollars was followed by a civil suit against the Southern Railway Company for \$50,000 in damages. The case was tried in the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia in June 1907, and again the verdict was in Pope’s favor. However, the victory was delivered with what all would have recognized as a stunning insult: Pope was awarded only a single cent in damages.¹⁶

Despite the affront of the Supreme Court, it is clear there was significant sympathy for Pope’s cause among Washington’s African American community. When Du Bois spoke to Washington’s Niagara Movement membership in 1907 he explicitly addressed interstate travel and may have touched on the Pope case. Moreover, the 1907 membership roster for Washington implies that many of the district’s women were firmly in support of Pope: of the eighty-three members listed, fifty-nine—over 70 percent—were women. The leading families were represented, suggesting that the female members at least broke ranks with the local trend toward supporting Washington over Du Bois (“W. E. B. Du Bois General Secretary”). Reviewing the women’s names, it seems plausible that Pope’s championing of a cause they felt deeply about may have contributed to the disproportionate numbers of women. At the same time, Pope’s family felt her reputation had been destroyed by the suit.¹⁷ The *Bee*, which firmly supported Washington and openly mocked Du Bois and the Niagara Movement, waited until the case was complete before finally summarizing it in June of 1907 (Lewis 416, 427; “Pope Case”).¹⁸ Whether due to the stress of public exposure, social disgrace, family tensions, or pure exhaustion, in June of 1908 Barbara Pope retreated to Winchester, Virginia, to recover. Unfortunately, she was plagued by an inability to sleep from January to August of that year; she committed suicide on 5 September 1908 (“Hangs Self”), almost a month after the DC branch of the Niagara Movement met and once again affirmed strongly their commitment to fighting discriminatory practices in interstate transit (Hershaw). In reporting her death, the *Bee* acknowledged Pope’s writing for the first time in twenty years, noting: “She had a remarkable intellect, having written several stories which commanded her liberal pay” (“Miss Pope Dead”).¹⁹

Pope’s suicide was the end in more ways than one. Whereas she might have been preserved in the annals of black Washington as an author and activist, it

was considered impolite to discuss suicides, so her story—and stories—faded into obscurity. This is not without irony given that her life was committed to speaking out on the behalf of herself and others. In this way, Pope exemplifies exactly what we mean when we talk about the price women pay for speaking—or not speaking—the consequences of which form the substance of her stories: Margaret of “The New Woman” must suppress her abilities; the heroine of “Cornelia” only blossoms when she overcomes the prejudices against female learning; other women characters embody similar themes. If we consider Pope’s civil disobedience in the light of her writing, it suggests the suit was nothing new; Pope had been a fierce critic of expectations of women for decades. If the Chases of her era could not appreciate her and benefit from her literary contributions, we certainly can.

NOTES

1. Her birthdate is given on the 1900 Census. For Alfred’s election, see “The District Officers.”

2. The 1870 Census lists eight children; presumably, Jedidah, the eldest (present in the 1860 Census), was working elsewhere or married. At that time the eldest daughter, Catherine, was already teaching. Martha Louise would become a teacher at the Wormley School (Lesko, Babb, and Gibbs 26). By 1876 Barbara was making \$750 per annum (Board of Trustees of Public Schools 272–73). Patterson is the first identified African American woman to graduate with a BA, which she did in 1862 (Brown 145).

3. Pope’s name appears alongside that of Furman J. Shadd, John T. Cook, William Wormley, Annie Sprague (Frederick Douglass’s granddaughter), and other members of the elite wishing to arrange a benefit concert. At the same time, the Popes are absent from accounts of leading social events and are not reported vacationing in the exclusive locales frequented by the highest-status community members (“A Complimentary Testimonial Concert”; Gatewood 38–40). According to a family member, the Popes deliberately avoided elite practices and organizations (Chinn to author 10 June 2014). Alfred Pope was a trustee of the Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church (“Condensed Locals”); it was not among the fashionable (Kerr 104–11; Moore 16).

4. For more on Cook, a trustee of Howard and the richest African American man in Washington, see Gatewood 38–39 and Moore 11.

5. Chase attacked Frederick Douglass, among others, and was sued five times for libel (Chase 32, 44). His biographer recounts his reputation as “erratic, controversial, and vitriolic,” adding that he was “proud, vain, ambitious and combative” (Chase 42). It is possible Chase and Pope had a history: born in Washington, DC, the same year, they both had experience teaching, and three of Chase’s sisters were teachers, as was his wife (Chase 10–18).

6. Taylor identifies her only as “Mrs. A. C. Sparrow,” but Arianna C. Sparrow (1841–1927) is the only match in US Census records and would be known to Taylor, who had been asked by Washington officials to investigate Thomas following the publication of Thomas’s scurrilous 1902 book *The American Negro: What He Was, What He Is, and What He May Become: A Critical and Practical Discussion*. The “wife” in question was Zenette Williams; no record of their marriage has been found.

7. Pope’s achievements are also absent from the pages of the *Colored American* newspaper, the *Bee*’s rival, which ran from 1893–1904, and was edited by Edward Elder Cooper.

8. Chase did, on at least one occasion, reprint an essay from the *Waverley* (“The Realities of Wedded Life”) in the *Washington Bee*.

9. For more on Johnson, and claims that white publishers rejected work by black authors, see Wagner 98–100.

10. The African American press reprinted from the *Waverley*, as did other journals. The *Waverley* also advertised in at least one African American newspaper. While Matthews and Hodges both had success beyond the *Waverley*, it appears to be the only venue in which some other African Americans, such as Edward Simpson, published (“Notes”).

11. The page numbers for Pope’s publications in the *Waverley* are unknown. When the stories were originally mounted for the Paris volume, the page numbers were cut off. Nonetheless, it is fortuitous that some of her work was collected for *Storiettes*, or it might not have been found at all. I have not yet been able to confirm that copies survive of the *Waverley* issues in which Pope published. The bound volume *Storiettes* resides in the Library of Congress.

12. It is possible to read Margaret’s husband, Frank, as black. However, an African American man of his status would have been familiar with African American schools, if not firsthand then through friendships formed with those in black fraternal organizations.

13. According to the Library of Congress, it was Herbert Putnam who in 1899 “asked Murray to compile a collection of books and pamphlets by black authors for an exhibition of ‘Negro Authors’ at the 1900 Paris Exposition” (“Daniel A. P. Murray”).

14. Family lore states that when Du Bois interviewed with the Washington, DC, school system in 1900, Alfred Pope was opposed to his hiring due to his influence on Barbara’s politics (Chinn to author 14 Apr. 2014).

15. Pope was not on the membership rolls until 1907, when she appeared on the Ladies Committee of the National Organization (“Secretaries and Committees”).

16. This summary of Pope’s case is based on a synopsis published in the *Washington Bee*, which refrained from reporting it until the final verdict was issued (“Pope Case”), and on Carle’s discussion of the case (202–10). Despite Booker T. Washington’s attempts

to suppress coverage of the Niagara Movement in the black press, Pope's lawsuit was reported in black and white newspapers alike.

17. The family suggests she lost her position teaching because of this action. It is possible Pope had returned to teaching. The 1900 Census lists her occupation as "teacher" although no other evidence has been found. She may have been teaching privately. Pope's father died just months after her initial arrest.

18. The *Bee's* editor had been invited to be one of the fifty-nine people to whom Du Bois sent the original call for the formation of the Niagara Movement, but he refused to sign, a move his biographer attributes to his dislike for Du Bois. The *Bee* reprinted support for the movement, but its own editorial columns initially remained uncommitted, before turning critical (Chase 253–55).

19. The personal papers of Mary Church Terrell, a Washington, DC, resident, are silent on Pope's actions and death. There are no surviving diaries by Terrell for 1906 and 1907; on 6 September 1908, the day Pope's death became public knowledge, Terrell abruptly stops writing and does not resume until the seventeenth with no explanation for the gap (see Terrell, *Diaries*). Terrell felt deeply about the inequities of transit, writing about it in her autobiography, *A Colored Woman*, and, in her diary for 27 July 1908 she records slapping a white man in an altercation on public transit.

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