

AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE IN TRANSITION, 1865–1880

This volume offers the most nuanced treatment available of Black engagement with print in the transitional years after the Civil War. It locates and studies materials that many literary historians leave out of narratives of American culture. But as important as such recovery work is, *African American Literature in Transition, 1865–1880* also emphasizes innovative approaches, recognizing that such recovery inherently challenges methods dominant in American literary study. At the book's core is the recognition that many period texts – by writers from Frances Ellen Watkins Harper and William Wells Brown to Mattie Jackson and William Steward – are not only aesthetically striking but also central to understanding key socio-historical and cultural trends in the nineteenth century. Chapters by leading scholars are grouped in three sections – “Citizenships, Textualities, and Domesticities,” “Persons and Bodies,” and “Memories, Materialities, and Locations” – and focus on debates over race, nation, personhood, and print that were central to Reconstruction.

ERIC GARDNER is the award-winning author of *Unexpected Places: Relocating Nineteenth-Century African American Literature* (2009) and *Black Print Unbound: The Christian Recorder, African American Literature, and Periodical Culture* (2015) and editor of rediscovered works by several nineteenth-century African American writers. He teaches at Saginaw Valley State University.

AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE IN TRANSITION

Editor Joycelyn K. Moody, The University of Texas at San Antonio

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Across 17 authoritative volumes and featuring over 200 of today's foremost literary critics and social historians, *African American Literature in Transition* offers a critical and comprehensive revisionary analysis of creative expression by people of African descent. Reading transtemporally from the origins of "African American literature" by the first peoples calling themselves "African Americans," this series foregrounds change, and examines pivotal moments, years, decades, and centuries in African American literature and culture. While collectively analyzing both far-reaching and flash-forward transitions within four centuries, the multi-volume series replaces conventional historical periodization in African American scholastic and literary anthologies with a framework that contextualizes shifts, changes, and transformations in African American literature, culture, politics, and history.

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AFRICAN AMERICAN
LITERATURE IN
TRANSITION, 1865–1880

Black Reconstructions

EDITED BY
ERIC GARDNER
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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-42747-0 — African American Literature in Transition, 1865–1880
 Volume 5: 1865–1880
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
 UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi – 110025, India
 79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
 It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
 education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108427470
 DOI: 10.1017/9781108551724

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First published 2021

Printed in the United Kingdom by TJ Books Limited, Padstow Cornwall

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

NAMES: Gardner, Eric, editor.

TITLE: African American literature in transition, 1865–1880 : black reconstructions / edited by Eric
 Gardner, Saginaw Valley State University.

DESCRIPTION: Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2021. | Series: African American
 literature in transition ; 5 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2020039483 (print) | LCCN 2020039484 (ebook) | ISBN 9781108427470
 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108446211 (paperback) | ISBN 9781108551724 (epub)

SUBJECTS: LCSH: American literature—African American authors—History and criticism. | African
 Americans—Intellectual life—19th century. | African Americans in literature. | Reconstruction
 (U.S. history, 1865–1877) in literature.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC PS153.N5 A33648 2021 (print) | LCC PS153.N5 (ebook) |
 DDC 810.8/89607309034—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020039483>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020039484>

ISBN 978-1-108-42747-0 Hardback

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Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	page vii
<i>List of Contributors</i>	viii
<i>General Editor's Preface</i>	ix
<i>Chronology</i>	xi
<i>Black Reconstructions: Introduction</i>	I
by <i>Eric Gardner</i>	
PART I CITIZENSHIPS, TEXTUALITIES, AND DOMESTICITIES	I 3
1 Sketching Black Citizenship on Installment after the Fifteenth Amendment	17
by <i>Derrick R. Spires</i>	
2 Stories of Citizenship: The Rise of Narrative Black Poetry during Reconstruction	49
by <i>Stephanie Farrar</i>	
3 National Housekeeping: (Re)dressing the Politics of Whiteness in Nineteenth-Century African American Literary History	72
by <i>Rynetta Davis</i>	
4 Reconstructing the Rhetoric of AME Ministry	87
by <i>Eric Gardner</i>	
PART II PERSONS AND BODIES	II 3
5 Black Reform, Writing, and Resistance: Textual Politics in the Postwar Era	II 5
by <i>Kathy L. Glass</i>	

vi	<i>Contents</i>	
6	Post-Civil War Black Childhoods by <i>Nazera Sadiq Wright</i>	138
7	Disabling Freedom: Bloody Shirt Rhetoric in Postbellum Slave Narratives by <i>Keith Michael Green</i>	161
8	Radical Respectability and African American Women’s Reconstruction Fiction by <i>Brigitte Fielder</i>	187
	PART III MEMORIES, MATERIALITIES, AND LOCATIONS	211
9	The Civil War in African American Memory by <i>Cody Marrs</i>	213
10	African American Literature of the West and the Landscape of Opportunity by <i>Janet Neary</i>	233
11	Reconstructions of the South in African American Literature by <i>Sherita L. Johnson</i>	259
12	“This Is Especially Our Crop”: Blackness, Value, and the Reconstruction of Cotton by <i>Katherine Adams</i>	284
	<i>Index</i>	311

Figures

Figure i.1	Frances Ellen Watkins Harper	<i>page</i> 6
Figure 1.1	“The Fifteenth Amendment. Celebrated May 19th, 1870”	40
Figure 4.1	AME Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne	89
Figure 4.2	Henry McNeal Turner	103
Figure 6.1	Carte de visite of two unidentified children circa late 1860s	139
Figure 7.1	“Franchise. And not this man?”	168
Figure 7.2	Sojourner Truth	179
Figure 8.1	Frances Ellen Watkins Harper	190
Figure 9.1	Unidentified African American boy	216
Figure 12.1	“Cotton warehouse, drying cotton, Charleston, S.C.”	287

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Preface
African American Literature in Transition
Joycelyn K. Moody, General Editor

When I accepted the invitation to act as Series Editor for African American Literature in Transition, Barack Obama had several months more to serve as President of the United States. The US was in a time of tremendous transition, we knew, but the extent of the impact of the coming election and its outcomes on the lives of African Americans, we had yet to learn. In the years since, dozens of today's foremost literary critics and social historians have traced across this authoritative multi-volume series revisionary analyses of creative expression by peoples of the African diaspora. Reading transtemporally, African American Literature in Transition foregrounds change, and examines pivotal moments and eras in African American history and historiography, literature and culture, art and ideology. The contributors explore four centuries of far-reaching as well as flash-forward transitions, to replace conventional literary periodization with a framework that contextualizes shifts, changes, and transformations affecting African American people.

Taken singly or together, the more than 200 chapters of the series provide not customary synopses of African American literature but unprecedented, detailed analyses – each expansive, in-depth, engaging. Every contributor finds their perfect pitch. Where contributors are musicians, then, to quote John Lovell, Jr.'s *Black Song: The Forge and the Flame*, “music raise[s] both performer and audience far above routine emotion; the elderly throw away their sticks and dance.”

The central aim of African American Literature in Transition is to reorient readers' expectations of the literary critical and appreciative experience. The series emphasizes the importance of reading intertextually, transhistorically, and interdisciplinarily. In this way, we foster readers' comprehension of ways in which legal cases such as the *Dred Scott* Decision and *Plessy v. Ferguson*, for example, were forecast in David Walker's 1829 *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* and have reappeared in *Solitary: My Story of Transformation and Hope*, by Albert

Woodfox (2019). Truly distinctive, African American Literature in Transition offers rich demonstrations of how to read Black creative expression as a sequence of shifting contexts and dynamic landscapes.

I offer sincere gratitude to Ray Ryan at Cambridge University Press for selecting me to spearhead this project, and to Cassander Smith for seeing it through with me. I am grateful to Edgar Mendez and Cambridge interns Caitlin Gallagher and Rebecca Rom-Frank. I appreciate the enthusiastic support of my family, friends, and colleagues over the years: especially Lorraine Martínez, Roxanne Donovan, Kimberly Blockett, Barbara Neely, Cynthia Lockett, Rhonda Gonzales, T. Jackie Cuevas, and Howard Rambsy II. Colleen J. McElroy and my uncles Charles and Glenn inspire me in ways they cannot imagine. My son and my parents influence everything I undertake. To the African American Literature in Transition volume editors and contributors: your dedication to tracing transitions with me made all the difference.

Chronology

- 1861 New editor Elisha Weaver resuscitates African Methodist Episcopal Church's weekly newspaper, the *Christian Recorder* (January)
 Provisional constitution of the "Confederate States of America" approved; Jefferson Davis selected as President (February)
 Rebels attack Fort Sumner, beginning the Civil War (April)
 General Benjamin F. Butler accepts self-emancipating African Americans at Fort Monroe, Virginia, calling them "contraband of war" (May)
 Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
- 1862 Congress abolishes slavery in the District of Columbia and implements a compensated emancipation program for slaveowners (April)
 Philip Bell and Peter Anderson found the San Francisco *Pacific Appeal* (April)
 War Department approves recruiting African American soldiers from the Sea Islands of South Carolina (August)
 Lincoln issues preliminary Emancipation Proclamation (September)
- 1863 Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation (January)
 Fifty-fourth Massachusetts storms Fort Wagner (July)
 Lincoln issues Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, the "Ten Percent Plan" (December)
 William Wells Brown, *The Black Man: His Antecedents, His Genius, and His Achievements*
- 1864 Fort Pillow Massacre (April)
 Fugitive Slave Laws repealed (June)
 National Convention of Colored Men held in Syracuse (October)

- Congress sends Wade-Davis Bill to Lincoln (July), but he pocket vetoes it as too radical
 William Wells Brown, *Clotelle: A Tale of the Southern States*
- 1865 General William T. Sherman issues Special Field Order 15 after meeting with Black leaders in Savannah (January)
 Thirteenth Amendment submitted to states for ratification (January)
Christian Recorder begins serializing Julia C. Collins's *Curse of Caste* (February)
 Lincoln inaugurated for second term as President (March)
 Congress establishes the Freedmen's Bureau (March)
 Lee surrenders to Grant at Appomattox (April)
 Lincoln assassinated; Andrew Johnson becomes President (April)
 Philip A. Bell founds the San Francisco *Elevator* (April)
 Mississippi introduces state Black Codes; South Carolina soon follows suit (November and December)
 Thirteenth Amendment ratified (December)
 Ku Klux Klan organized (December); first national convention in April 1867
 Congress forms joint committee on Reconstruction, spurning Johnson's claims that the Union had been fully restored (December)
- 1866 Fisk University founded as Fisk Free School. Atlanta University, Howard University, and Morehouse College would follow the next year.
 Civil Rights Act passed over Johnson's veto (April)
 Memphis Riots (April)
 Fourteenth Amendment sent to states for ratification (June)
 Tennessee readmitted to Union (July)
 New Orleans Massacre (July)
 Mattie J. Jackson and Lucy S. Thompson, *The Story of Mattie J. Jackson*
- 1867 James Madison Bell, *The Progress of Liberty*
 Congress passes Tenure of Office Act (March)
 Congress passes Military Reconstruction Acts (March–May)
 Frances E. W. Harper begins giving public recitations of *Moses* (December)
 James Madison Bell, *Modern Moses; or "My Policy" Man*
 William Wells Brown, *The Negro in the American Rebellion*

Chronology

xiii

- William Wells Brown, *Clotelle; or, the Colored Heroine*
 Benjamin Tucker Tanner, *An Apology for African Methodism*
Slave Songs of the United States (eds. William Allen, Charles
 Ware, and Lucy Garrison)
- 1868 John Willis Menard of Louisiana becomes first elected African
 American congressman, though he was never seated
 Impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson (March–May)
 Fourteenth Amendment ratified (July)
 Elizabeth Keckley, *Behind the Scenes, or Thirty Years a Slave, and
 Four Years in the White House*
 Frances Anne Rollin Whipper, *Life and Public Services of Martin
 R. Delany*
- 1869 National Convention of Colored Men meets in Washington,
 DC (January)
 U. S. Grant inaugurated as President (March)
Christian Recorder begins serializing Frances E. W. Harper’s
Minnie’s Sacrifice (March)
 Ebenezer Don Carlos Bassett named US Minister to
 Haiti (April)
 Democrat “redeemer” governments take power in Tennessee
 and Virginia (October)
 National Negro Labor Convention held in Washington, DC
 (December)
 Harriet Tubman and Sarah Elizabeth Bradford, *Scenes in the Life
 of Harriet Tubman*
- 1870 *New Era* founded by J. Sella Martin; purchased by Frederick
 Douglass and renamed *New National Era*, which runs
 until 1874
 Hiram Revels of Mississippi seated as first African American US
 Senator (February)
 Fifteenth Amendment ratified (March)
 Congress passes first Enforcement Act (May)
 James Madison Bell, *The Triumph of Liberty*
- 1871 Congress passes second and third Enforcement Acts (February
 and April)
 Thomas Detter, *Nellie Brown; or the Jealous Wife with Other
 Sketches*
 Frances E. W. Harper, *Poems*
- 1872 Congress passes Amnesty Act (May)
 Freedmen’s Bureau closed (June)

- New York *Sun* exposes Credit Mobilier scheme (September)
 P. B. S. Pinchback becomes Governor of Louisiana (December)
 Frances E. W. Harper, *Sketches of Southern Life*
 William Still, *The Underground Rail Road*
- 1873 U. S. Grant inaugurated for second term as President
Christian Recorder begins publishing Frances Harper's occasional
 "Fancy Etchings" / "Fancy Sketches" series (February; at least
 eight published before February 1874)
 Colfax Massacre in Grant Parish, Louisiana (April)
 Supreme Court rules 5–4 in the consolidated Slaughterhouse
Cases decision to limit Fourteenth Amendment's scope (April)
 Panic of 1873 begins (September)
 William Wells Brown, *The Rising Son, or The Antecedents and
 Advancement of the Colored Race*
 Nicholas Said, *The Autobiography of Nicholas Said, A Native of
 Bournou*
 James Williams, *Life and Adventures of James Williams*
- 1874 Democrats seize control of Texas capitol (January)
 Democrats gain control of Congress
 Vicksburg Riots (December)
 Founding of paramilitary white supremacist organization, the
 White League
 Mary Frances Armstrong and Helen W. Ludlow, *Hampton and
 Its Students*
- 1875 Civil Rights Act passed (March)
 Convention of Colored Newspapermen meets in Cincinnati
 (August)
 Tennessee passes Jim Crow laws
 Founding of paramilitary white supremacist organization, the
 Red Shirts
 Sojourner Truth, revised version of *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*
 (with Olive Gilbert and Frances W. Titus)
- 1876 Supreme Court narrows interpretation of Fourteenth
 Amendment in another blow to Reconstruction in *US*
v. Cruickshank (1876)
 Frederick Douglass speaks at the unveiling of the Freedmen's
 Monument in Lincoln Park (April)
 Hamburg Massacre in South Carolina (July)
Christian Recorder begins serializing Frances Harper's *Sowing
 and Reaping* (August)

Chronology

xv

- 1877 Rutherford B. Hayes inaugurated as President (March) and soon after orders removal of federal troops supporting Reconstruction in the South
 T. G. Steward, *Memoirs of Mrs. Rebecca Steward*
 Albery Allson Whitman, *Not a Man, and Yet a Man*
- 1878 *Christian Recorder* begins serializing William Steward's "Gem of the Alley" (April)
Christian Recorder begins serializing Steward's *John Blye* (July)
- 1879 Exodusters move to Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado, often passing through St. Louis
 Pauline Hopkins's musical *Slaves' Escape* (later titled *Peculiar Sam*) first performed
 Julia A. J. Foote, *A Brand Plucked from the Fire*
 Maria W. Stewart, *Meditations from the Pen of Mrs. Maria W. Stewart . . . Now Matron of the Freedman's Hospital*
- 1880 Hallie Quinn Brown, *Bits and Odds: A Choice Selection of Recitations*
 William Wells Brown, *My Southern Life*
- 1881 Booker T. Washington founds Tuskegee (July)
 Tennessee expands Jim Crow laws; other Southern states soon follow suit
 Frederick Douglass, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*
- 1883 In an 8–1 decision in the consolidated *Civil Rights Cases*, Supreme Court further narrows interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment and finds Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional, opening the door for expansions of Jim Crow