

assigning all missing post office coordinates within their counties of operation. Numerous maps and charts illustrating how postal geography changed over time are central to Blevins's argumentation. He effectively employs a wide array of engaging charts, ranging from traditional bar graphs depicting postmasters' removal to proportional area charts illustrating the flow of money orders, to communicate key concepts. One of the book's considerable merits is its attention to less commonly studied topics in the scholarly discourse, such as histories of decentralized government actors and ubiquitous social forces. *Paper Trails* is a must-read for postal historians and will intrigue both history professors and graduate students interested in communications, the state, and the Gilded Age and Progressive Era American West.

## African American Soldiers and the Long Civil Rights Movement

**Donaldson, Le'Trice D. *Duty beyond the Battlefield: African American Soldiers Fight for Racial Uplift, Citizenship, and Manhood, 1870–1920*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2020. 216 pp. \$29.50 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-8093-3759-0.**

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Le'Trice Donaldson's *Duty beyond the Battlefield* centers the experiences, activism, and communities of African American soldiers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While performing their military duty on the battlefield, African American soldiers had another duty: to uplift the Black community through their service by asserting their citizenship and becoming "race men." Thematically organized in two sections, Donaldson argues not only that African American soldiers saw themselves as citizens but that their experiences compelled generations of Black soldiers and veterans to work for racial uplift, the redefinition of manhood, and civil rights.

Scholarship on African American soldiers has grown in recent decades, but Donaldson sets herself apart from previous studies, like those of Chad Williams and Adriane Lentz-Smith, by emphasizing the need to incorporate the stories of African American soldiers prior to the First World War into the narrative of the Long Civil Rights Movement.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Chad Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

Moreover, Donaldson analyzes gender by demonstrating that African American soldiers enlisted in the U.S. Army “as a means of exercising their citizenship and as a means of demonstrating that they were real men in an era when proving one’s manhood was a national obsession” (4). The voices of African American soldiers provide the basis of Donaldson’s study, ranging from chaplains Allen Allensworth and George Prioleau to officers Henry O. Flipper and Charles Young. In doing so, Donaldson weaves a compelling narrative about what it meant for African Americans to serve in the U.S. Army. For these men, “the uniform offered a promise—a promise of status, citizenship, manhood, and full partnership in the grand American destiny” (14).

Donaldson’s first section recounts the transformation of Black servicemen from soldiers into community leaders and symbols of racial pride. She concentrates on the influence of African American chaplains for segregated regiments between the 1870s and the 1910s. African American chaplains, assigned to attend to soldiers’ religious and educational needs, introduced Black soldiers to uplift ideology, demonstrating how they could become race leaders through military service. With the U.S. Army’s emphasis on literacy among soldiers in the late nineteenth century, African American chaplains became central in encouraging Black soldiers to see themselves as individuals whose actions, military service, and membership in the larger Black community advanced the fight for civil rights and full citizenship for all African Americans. Encouraging African American soldiers to see their military service as representative of a much larger community allowed men to consider their sense of duty, despite misgivings about wars of empire, and their attempts to resist Jim Crow as the best ways to uplift the race. It also meant that they saw themselves as race men and leaders, examples for the wider Black community to emulate. In this section, Donaldson takes the reader from conflicts with Indigenous Americans to Cuba, the Philippines, and Mexico. The section concludes with a discussion on the legacy of soldier activism after World War I, tracing the shift from soldier to race man. Of particular note is her discussion of Corporal David Fagan and the tensions between loyalty to the United States and discomfort with military actions in the Philippines.

In the second half of *Duty beyond the Battlefield*, Donaldson delivers a comparative study of Henry O. Flipper’s and Charles Young’s careers as officers in the U.S. Army. This examination allows Donaldson to use the framing of racial uplift, citizenship, and manhood from the previous section to underscore how and why Flipper’s service and subsequent discharge from the U.S. Army seemed to go almost unsupported by the Black community, whereas that same community, a few decades later, widely criticized Young’s discharge. In Flipper’s case, the lack of support stemmed from his personal views on inequality and race: he believed that such problems resulted from intellectual and social inferiority, not from color, and that a formal education could therefore solve both problems. In contrast, Young was a race man dedicated to both racial uplift and education, seeing his military service as part of something much greater than himself and believing that the entire race could benefit from his success. That contrast played out further in their respective careers as officers: Flipper rejected attempts to aid in racial uplift, such as working at Wilberforce or serving in Liberia, whereas Young embraced such assignments—especially the opportunity to mentor younger Black officers. Young welcomed his role as race leader, an exemplar of manhood, and a citizen for the Black community, while Flipper sought personal success rather than racial uplift in his service.

*Duty beyond the Battlefield* represents an important shift in the historiographical discussion of African American military service “toward the actions [soldiers] performed and roles they held in their communities as soldiers/agents of the federal government”

(152). Adding these men to the larger narrative of the Long Civil Rights Movement and the Black freedom struggle provides a clearer understanding of what it meant for Black men to be citizens, race leaders, and men during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. With its comprehensive overview of Black military service after the Civil War as well as its emphasis on masculinity and the Long Civil Rights movements, *Duty beyond the Battlefield* would greatly benefit undergraduate classes on war and society or race and gender.

## Mary Church Terrell and Black Activism

**Parker, Alison M. *Unceasing Militant: The Life of Mary Church Terrell*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020. 464 pp. \$35.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-4696-5938-1.**

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Alison M. Parker's rich biography of African American activist Mary Church Terrell provides an important opportunity to revisit the long history of the American civil rights movement. Born in the waning days of the Civil War, Terrell lived long enough to see the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. As Parker notes, her story "shows us what activism looks like. ... [H]ardly a week went by during her adult life when she did not attend one meeting and often several on the same day" (294). Yet Terrell's role in African American social justice activism and American politics more broadly has often been slighted. While many histories of progressive African American female activism have acknowledged Terrell, she is often portrayed as an elite "grand dame" rather than as a skilled—albeit human—political operator. Parker's biography is an effective corrective that illustrates what true intersectional political histories look like.

Parker begins her project by acknowledging how slavery created deep and lasting tensions within white and Black families across the South. Both Terrell's father, Robert Church, and mother, Louisa Ayres Church, were fathered by white slaveowners. Rejecting standard historical clichés that light-skinned African Americans had privileges and opportunities due to their white parentage, Parker dives deep into Terrell's genealogy and reveals the everyday violence of slavery and the continuing traumas that shaped freedom politics over the following decades. The family stories that Parker reconstructs are harrowing. She shows how sexual exploitation, mob attacks, and ongoing physical and emotional crises shaped Mary Church Terrell's family life in Memphis, Tennessee. Little "Mollie," growing up in the late nineteenth-century South, witnessed the vestiges of slavery and her parents' struggle to navigate the slippery ground of freedom.