(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.

Susan Bragg

Georgia Southwestern State University, Americus, GA, USA

doi:10.1017/S1537781421000633

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.

Biography and family histories work particularly well in providing a more complex history of the gendered workings of Jim Crow. Robert Church's economic success as a landowner and businessman has been touted as one of the great African American success stories of the late nineteenth century, but Parker details the continuing violence he faced as well as family tensions stemming from past racial trauma. Parker also brings new light to the story of Louisa Ayres Church, Mollie's mother. Like Robert Church, Louisa Ayres Church established successful business ventures, even while struggling with discrimination and family violence. Robert Church's own cruel behavior, however, contributed to the couple's divorce in the 1870s. Throughout her childhood, Mollie found herself on the move. She was sent to boarding schools and shuttled between her parents.

Providing a tight focus on Terrell's family life allows us to move beyond the Horatio Alger–type stories of Black success and better understand Terrell's activist roots. As Parker notes, Mollie Terrell lived in a world of racial instability where entrepreneurialism was grounded in Jim Crow survival strategies. As a young African American woman of means, she attended Oberlin College and traveled widely before marrying Robert "Berto" Terrell, an esteemed lawyer and later a judge in Washington, DC. By the early twentieth century, the Terrells were a power couple involved in a wide variety of forms of social justice activism, yet they still fretted over their precarious status in a white-dominated culture. At the end of Berto Terrell's life, in 1925, he and Mollie planned for her continued political involvement as both a social and economic lifeline.

Parker's biography provides a nuanced perspective on race reform and partisan politics in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Readers may be familiar with Terrell as one of the founders of the National Association of Colored Women (NACW), which she helped establish in 1896. This important network of local clubs channeled Black women's social justice activism into a wide variety of political campaigns, including temperance, woman suffrage, educational reform, and civil rights. Yet the story of the NACW and Terrell herself are often still relegated to specialized studies of female politics or simply dismissed as an elitist project driven by petty rivalries and personal ambitions instead of deep-seated convictions.

Parker's detailed account of Terrell's activism rejects these stereotypes even as she documents the personal and professional tensions of leadership that existed within the era's social reform networks. This history is often a difficult reminder of African American women's vulnerability to both racism and sexism. For example, Parker notes Terrell's uneasy relationship with W. E. B. Du Bois despite her critical support for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in the early twentieth century. Similarly, when Terrell was hired to promote Illinois congresswoman Ruth Hanna McCormick's Senate campaign in 1929, a fellow African American Republican activist dismissed her communications as "the prattle of a child" (172). Terrell found herself constantly negotiating for recognition and respect with white female social reformers in woman suffrage and peace movements across much of the twentieth century, such as when Terrell fought to join the Washington, DC, chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in the late 1940s. Even white allies often hedged their support of Terrell. The struggle took an emotional toll on her.

In *Unceasing Militant*, Alison Parker situates Mary Church Terrell at the heart of twentieth-century American politics. By extending the story of Terrell's activism from her family's experience under slavery to well beyond the NACW and into the Cold War years, Parker demonstrates that Terrell's commitment to racial justice was deeper, more complex, and more fluid than heretofore assumed.