

Promise of Racial Equality through Interracial Collaboration

John Mercer Langston (1829–1897) graduated from Oberlin Collegiate Institute in 1849 and was admitted to the Ohio bar in 1854. At the age of twenty-five, Langston became the first black American to hold elective office in the United States when in 1855 all-white voters elected him Brownhelm township clerk. A proponent of racial equality, he was a role model for black students who attended Oberlin during the mid- to late nineteenth century.



Courtesy of Oberlin College Archives



Left to right: James H. Fairchild, John Morgan, and James Monroe. In this 1857 ambrotype, college faculty members Fairchild and Morgan pose with one of their students, James Monroe, who received three degrees from Oberlin College. Monroe, an ardent abolitionist, worked with the American Anti-Slavery Society and Frederick Douglass.

Courtesy of Oberlin College Archives

Three Distinguished Oberlin Graduates Who Made Their Mark in Teaching

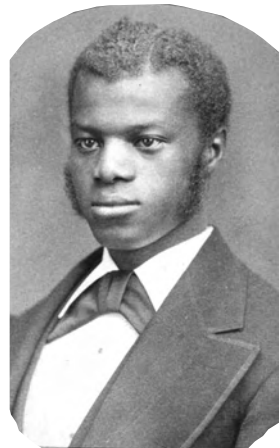


Educator Blanche V. Harris (Brooks/Jones) (1844–1918) was among the first five women selected by the American Missionary Association to teach the children of newly freed slaves in the “New South” between 1863 and 1867. She taught freedmen in Norfolk, Virginia, and Natchez, Mississippi.

Courtesy of Oberlin College Archives

1875 Oberlin graduate William Sanders Scarborough (1852–1926) was a little-known educator in a community dominated by Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois. Yet, he was the third person of African descent to become a member of the American Philological Association, in 1882, and the first to join the newly organized Modern Language Association, in 1884.

Courtesy of Oberlin College Archives



Anna H. Jones (1855–1932), class of 1875, was born in Chatham, Ontario. Her father, James Monroe Jones, was among the first Black graduates of the college. Devoted to teaching, Anna held a number of academic positions, including one at Wilberforce University in Ohio between 1885 and 1892.

Courtesy of Oberlin College Archives

Black Graduates Who Served Their Country and Race



Thomas L. Harris (d. 1884), like his two sisters, Blanche V. Harris and Frankie E. Harris, dedicated his life to giving service to his race. He became a physician following his graduation from Oberlin in 1865.

Courtesy of Oberlin College Archives

Rev. Benjamin F. Randolph (d. 1868) studied in the preparatory and collegiate departments of Oberlin College between 1854 and 1862. A Methodist minister, he became a chaplain in the Twenty-sixth Regiment U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War. After the war he was elected to the state senate of South Carolina and was deeply involved in Republican Party politics. He was murdered in 1868, probably for his political activities.

Courtesy of Oberlin College Archives



Three 1884 Graduates Who Challenged Racism and Sexism in the United States

Mary E. Church (Terrell) (1863–1954) was on the faculty of the M Street High School in Washington, D.C. She served as the first president of the National Association of Colored Women. As an educator and reformer in women's organizations she advanced suffrage and world peace efforts. In 1913 she challenged College President H. C. King about racially segregated campus housing arrangements for her two daughters Mary and Phyllis.

Courtesy of Oberlin College Archives



Anna Julia Haywood (Cooper) (1858–1964), born into slavery and of mixed race, after her graduation from Oberlin became a prominent author, educator, and social reformer. She insisted on greater academic excellence in African American schools. She wrote *A Voice from the South*, a feminist manifesto that many believe is the earliest articulation of black feminism.

Courtesy of Oberlin College Archives

Ida A. Gibbs (Hunt) (1862–1957), a personal friend of Mary Church Terrell, also promoted black education, civil rights, and woman's suffrage. Gibbs made her mark as an educator and Pan-Africanist. She gained an international perspective on racial justice as a consequence of her travels with her husband, William H. Hunt, who was a U.S. consul to Liberia, France, Madagascar, and Guadeloupe.

Courtesy of Oberlin College Archives

