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Trailblazer: The Legacy of Bishop Henry M. Turner During the Civil War, Reconstruction, and Jim Crowism

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Abstract

When the Civil War began in 1861, the conflict evoked feelings of pride, patriotism, and hatred in both blacks and whites. As the war raged on, Reverend Henry McNeal Turner ministered to his brethren serving in the United States Colored Troops (USCT), segregated units of the Union Army. Although slavery ended in 1865 with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, Lincoln's plans for Reconstruction died with his assassination. The Ku Klux Klan and ex–Confederates not only regained control of the South but also resisted the federal government's early attempts at civil rights legislation by intimidating, murdering, and disenfranchising ex–slaves. In response to the brutality and the rise of Jim Crowism, Turner served as a beacon of hope for thousands of freedmen while respectively serving in state and local politics. Bishop Henry M. Turner's story deserves more attention because he is an overlooked transitional figure in American history. This paper will examine Turner's contributions to the A.M.E. Church, politics, and civil rights.

When the Civil War began in 1861, the conflict evoked feelings of pride, patriotism, and hatred in both blacks and whites. As the war raged on, African–American chaplains ministered to their brethren serving in the United States Colored Troops (USCT), segregated units of the Union Army. Although slavery ended in 1865 with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, Lincoln's plans for Reconstruction died with his assassination. The Ku Klux Klan and some ex–Confederates not only regained control of the South but also resisted the federal government's early attempts at civil rights legislation. In response to this retaliation, Henry M. Turner, a distinguished African–American chaplain, served as a beacon of hope for thousands of freedmen while respectively serving in state and local politics.[1] Turner's inspirational preaching and exemplary political career encouraged African–Americans to persevere during the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the rise of Jim Crowism.

Henry M. Turner was born free, in South Carolina, in 1834. When Turner was a young boy, his father died. This made Turner eligible to work in a plantation owner's cotton fields under the Guardianship Ordinance.[2] Turner worked alongside slaves and despised the humiliating work. He also worked as a blacksmith and carriage maker. Even though he was born free, he saw the injustices and abuses that slaves experienced on a firsthand basis. Thus, Turner's experiences as a young man probably laid the foundation for his jeremiad preaching style and bitter rhetoric denouncing white Americans, both northerners and southerners, in later years.[3]

In 1851, at age seventeen, Turner received salvation under the preaching of a Methodist Episcopal Church missionary named Samuel Leard. He was later licensed in the Methodist Episcopal Church as an itinerant preacher.[4] Turner eventually left the Methodist Episcopal Church after experiencing racism and prejudice. He later joined the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and found his home.[5] Turner received a modest education from two lawyers in a law firm, because the black slave laws in the Confederacy, especially South Carolina, prevented blacks from learning how to read and write. In spite of Turner's circumstances, Daniel Payne, the head bishop of the AME Church mentored Turner and encouraged him to study Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and theology in Baltimore, Maryland under the direction of black and white ministers at Trinity College. They all recognized the young man was destined for greatness. The ministers also observed that Turner's humility, potent preaching style, oratorical abilities, intelligence,

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[1] Gregory Mixon, "Henry McNeal Turner Versus the Tuskegee Machine: Black Leadership in the Nineteenth Century," *The Journal of Negro History 79.4* (Autumn 1994): 363–365.Turner's story deserves more attention because he is an overlooked transitional figure in American history.

[2] Stephen Ward Angell, *Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and African–American Religion in the South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 14–15; Jane Herndon, "Henry McNeal Turner's African Dream: A Re–Evaluation," *Mississippi Quarterly 22.4* (Fall 1969): 328; Melbourne S. Cummings, "The Rhetoric of Bishop Henry McNeal Turner," *Journal of Black Studies 12.4* (June 1982): 457. State laws in South Carolina required free blacks to have a white guardian, or patron, to advocate for their honorable behavior. Furthermore, free blacks were required to keep documentation with their guardian's testimony and signature if slave patrollers, bounty hunters, or police stopped them while traveling. Turner's guardian during his boyhood years is unknown.

[3] Herndon, 327–328; Jordan Alexander, "Henry M. Turner," in *African–American Chaplains in the Civil War*, research booklet, (2014), 19; Cummings, 457–461; J. Minton Batten, "Henry M. Turner, Negro Bishop Extraordinary," *Church History 7.3* (Sep. 1938): 232– 234.

[4] Angell, 14–15. Before embarking on his journey as a Methodist circuit preacher in 1854, the Court of Common Pleas assigned John McLauren as Turner's guardian.

[5] Herndon, 327–328; Alexander, 19; Cummings, 457–461; Batten, 232– 235. Turner joined the AME Church in either 1857 or 1858.

hard work ethic, passion for learning, love for God, and desire to help people would inspire slaves and free blacks.[6]

Surprisingly, not many authors have written on Bishop Turner. Stephen Ward Angell published *Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and African–American Religion in the South* in 1992, the first book to treat Turner's life and work in depth.[7] Many of the journal articles and newspaper accounts of Turner focus on his legislative and ministerial work, but downplay his work in social justice and as a civil rights advocate. In addition, these accounts of Turner focus more on his rhetoric and less on his actions to advance the cause of civil rights. Turner created controversy with his critical statements regarding the stagnated pace of racial relations in the United States, but his disparity was a response to the apathy of many white Americans to aid disenfranchised African-Americans and the unwillingness of some black Americans to actively resist Jim Crowism. Thus, Turner sought to bridge the divide between blacks and whites by using his rhetoric not only in the political arena but also in the pulpit.

In 1862, Turner became the pastor of Israel Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C., which enabled him to establish friendships with Republican congressional representatives, especially Senator Charles Sumner.[8] Turner's emerging political influence and relationships in the city, as a young pastor, brought many Republican congressional representatives, along with army officers, to the church to hear him preach.[9] Along with abolitionist Frederick Douglass and several Republican senators, Turner petitioned President Abraham Lincoln to allow ex–slaves to serve in the Union Army. The young pastor strongly believed that blacks had an equal commitment to the Union as much as their white counterparts had and should be allowed to serve the Union Army.[10] Therefore, he vigorously petitioned for African–Americans' opportunities to fight on behalf of the Northern cause.[11] Lincoln reluctantly agreed, and in 1863, he selected Henry M. Turner to be a chaplain for the Union Army.[12] When he received his appointment, Turner became the first African-American chaplain to serve in the Union Army.[13]

Pastor Henry M. Turner served as the chaplain to the First Infantry Regiment of the United States Colored Troops during the Civil War. The War Department vaguely defined the roles and duties of Union chaplains, both black and white.[14] The chaplains were expected to fulfill their roles based on their abilities, the officers' needs, the soldiers' concerns, and the regiments' interests.[15] Despite the hardships of army life, Turner excelled in his chaplaincy

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[6] Herndon, 328; Redkey, 337; Cummings, 458.

[7] Stephen Ward Angell, *Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and African–American Religion in the South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

[8] E. Merlton Coulter, "Henry M. Turner: Georgia Negro Preacher–Politician during the Reconstruction Years," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly 48.4* (Dec. 1964): 372; Batten, 236; Herndon, 328; Redkey, 336–360; Stephen W. Angell, "A Black Minister Befriends the 'Unquestioned Father of Civil Rights': Henry McNeal Turner, Charles Sumner, and the African–American Quest for Freedom," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly 85.1* (Spring 2001): 29–31, 33, 36. Turner and Senator Sumner had a friendship for twelve years that ended with Sumner's death in 1874. Sumner may have been one of the Republican senators who supported the idea of allowing free and enslaved blacks to serve in the Union Army.

[9] Herndon, 328; Redkey, 337; Cummings, 458.

[10] Coulter, 372; Batten, 236; Herndon, 328–329; Redkey, 337–338.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Cummings, 458; Alexander, 19.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Redkey, 338.

[15] Ibid.

position.[16] He oversaw church services and prayer vigils, visited the sick and wounded in the makeshift battlefield hospitals, counseled the soldiers, conducted funerals, and taught the illiterate soldiers how to read and write. Turner also served as a war correspondent.[17] He wrote letters for the emerging African American newspapers, the *Christian Recorder* and the *Weekly Anglo–African*, to ensure that literate blacks, especially the families of his regimental soldiers, remained well informed of the Union Army's war efforts.[18] Thus, Turner served as a link between the African–American home front and the First Infantry Regiment.

Turner used his oratorical abilities and preaching style to inspire his soldiers to continue fighting for liberty and the enslaved African– American population in the South, as well as the North. [19] Likewise, Turner observed that African–American religious journalism, especially his war correspondence, was necessary, "in shaping public sentiment, developing the capacities of the contrabands, [and] moralizing our soldiers, whose unbridled lives … have almost hurled them headlong into the vortex of irrevocable profanity, vulgarity, and impoliteness."[20] Chaplain Turner utilized the newspaper articles from the *Christian Recorder* and the *Weekly Anglo–American* to inspire his soldiers to live godly, moral lives.[21] In addition, Turner used a jeremiad preaching style throughout much of his pastoral career.[22] He most likely preached jeremiad–type sermons to hold the soldiers accountable for their sins while encouraging them to surrender or re–dedicate their lives to God. Furthermore, Turner might have used the horror and danger of battles as the inspiration for his messages because death was a constant reminder of life's brevity; therefore, the soldiers needed to be mindful of their actions because their character and integrity would make an indelible impact in the struggle for black equality on the battlefield as well as American society.[23]

After the war ended, Turner became politically active during the early years of Reconstruction. President Andrew Johnson re–appointed Turner as a chaplain in the United States Army, and later assigned him as an agent of the Freedmen's Bureau, a Northern organization created to help recently freed slaves become acclimated to American society.[24] The Freedmen's Bureau established churches, built schools, and helped ex–slaves develop autonomous government with little to no encroachment from white northerners. Turner oversaw the organization of several African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Churches throughout the South,

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[16] Ibid., 338–339.

[17] Ibid., 339–343.

[18] Ibid. Turner also utilized the black newspapers as tools to enhance his soldiers' reading skills.

[19] Ibid., 338. The author commented, "In Washington [D.C.], Turner recruited vigorously for the local unit, urging both free–born and 'contrabands' to enlist in the 1st United States Colored Troops (USCT). While the men trained, he came regularly to preach for them, reminding them that the destiny of their race depended on their loyalty and courage."

[20] Henry M. Turner to Editor, May 15, 1865, in *Christian Recorder*, June 3, 1865, quoted in Edwin S. Redkey, "Henry McNeal Turner: Black Chaplain in the Union Army," in *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era*, ed. John David Smith (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 343.

[21] Redkey, 339–343.

[22] Angell, 15–23; Cummings, 457–462; Richard W. Leeman, "Speaking as Jeremiah: Henry McNeal Turner's 'I Claim the Rights of a Man,'" *The Howard Journal of Communications 17.3* (Jul 2006): 228–229. The jeremiad preaching style allowed Turner to encourage his congregation to reflect on their sins, repent, and reform their lives.

[23] Cummings, 465–467; Angell, 49–52, 58–59.

[24] Redkey, 347; Coulter, 374–376; Batten, 236–238. President Johnson assigned Turner to work with the Freedmen's Bureau in Georgia.

especially in Georgia.[25] He also ensured that white Methodists did not take advantage of the freedmen and coerce them into joining the rigid Methodist Churches.[26] Turner's goal was to equip the freedmen spiritually, politically, and educationally to combat the racism and prejudice that still plagued the South.[27] Turner realized that while the Confederacy may have been defeated in war, overcoming the social constraints imposed by slavery proved a much harder battle.[28]

In 1867, he organized the Republican Party in Georgia, and was later elected to the Georgia State Senate in 1868 as one of twenty–nine African Americans. J. Minton Batten observes that, "Turner began his political career in 1867 by writing a pamphlet which described the attitudes of the Democratic and Republican parties toward the freedmen. The Republican Executive Committee placed Turner in charge of the task of organizing the colored voters of Georgia."[29] Turner's ministerial and political work among the newly enfranchised freedmen caught the attention of several Republican officials. Because of his hard work, Turner was one of the African–American delegates sent to the Georgia Constitutional Convention (December 9, 1867 – March 11, 1868) in Atlanta to help rewrite the state's constitution under the Republican–dominated state government.[30] Once again, Republican officials noted that Turner, even though he did not have a prominent role in the convention, was dedicated to reforming the state government and advancing the freedmen's cause through educational empowerment.[31] He campaigned for and won a seat in the Georgia State legislature in 1868 based on changing the state government internally, helping black and white constituents live in peace, and simultaneously ensuring that the freedmen knew about, and exercised, their constitutional rights protected by the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments.[32]

Turner had a short–lived political career because an alliance of Republicans and Democrats prevented the African–Americans from serving their terms due to political disqualifications. He served in the Georgia legislature and sponsored bills such as legal protection for sharecroppers, an eight–hour workday, a charter for African–American cooperative joint–stock companies, an end to the convict lease system, and grants for African–American colleges and universities; subsequently, his bills were defeated.[33] The Democratic and Republican state congressional leaders withheld the twenty–eight black representatives from taking their seats in the Georgia House of Representatives.[34] The Republicans and Democrats argued that black representatives were too ignorant to understand the complex legislative process of making laws.[35] Furthermore, the congressional representatives contended that the right of suffrage did not guarantee the right of African-Americans to campaign and hold political office.[36] Turner gave an impassioned speech on the consequences of expelling the black

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[25] Coulter, 374–376.

[26] Redkey, 347–350; Batten, 236–238. If the freedmen joined the predominantly white Methodist churches, the churches, through coercion and intimidation, would have forced the blacks to abandon their emotional styles of worship for stricter forms of conducting church services.

[27] Batten, 236–240; Redkey, 347–357; Angell, 39–40.

[28] Angell, 31–32, 58–59.

[29] Batten, 237.

[30] Coulter, 381–382; Batten, 236–237; Leeman, 228–229.

[31] Coulter, 381–382; Herndon, 329; Leeman, 228–229.

[32] Batten, 236–237; Coulter, 381–382; Herndon, 329. Congress passed the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865 and the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868. Congress later passed the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870.

[33] Leeman, 229.

[34] Coulter, 383; Herndon, 329.

[35] Coulter, 383; Redkey, 237; Herndon, 329.

[36] Herndon, 329–330; Coulter, 383; Leeman, 223–224.

legislators, but his words were ignored. The congressional representatives illegally expelled the twenty–nine black representatives after taking a vote. Turner's negative experiences in the Georgia state legislature increased his disillusionment over racial harmony between blacks and whites.[37]

As Jim Crowism grew throughout the South, Pastor Turner encouraged African–Americans with his soul stirring preaching and speeches.[38] In 1880, the AME Church elected Turner as a bishop of a church in Georgia for his hard work in advancing the cause of African–Americans' civil rights from the pulpit and the halls of the Georgia state legislature.[39] In 1883, the Supreme Court declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional.[40] In response, Turner gave a scathing interview that criticized the Supreme Court's decision and ominously foreshadowed the backlash that African–Americans would receive from those bent on revenge. He commented, "Mark my word, there will be bloodshed enough over that decision…. It absolves the allegiance of the negro to the United States. … Now, I ask, shall we sit still and be conservative, hold our peace and submit to this degradation? … No, not … a member of the negro race."[41] Turner encouraged African–Americans to prepare themselves to fight the injustices that were about to test their resolve.[42] The Supreme Court's decision eroded his hope in the United States government and the possibility of ever allying with white Americans, both northerners and southerners, to address injustices related to civil rights.[43]

Turner inspired his church members (and the larger African–American community) to resist Jim Crowism through protests, demonstrations, and hard work. He became angry over the growing number of African–Americans who were increasingly apathetic about their civil rights.[44] He sought to empower the majority of working class blacks, in both the South and the North, with the educational, spiritual, and mental resources to fight back against Jim Crowism's attempts to not only break their spirits but also steal their dignity.[45] Even though he was born free, Turner worked alongside slaves as a young man and saw slavery's detrimental effects

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[37] Alexander, 19; Coulter, 383–384; Redkey, 237; Herndon, 329–330; Angell, 86–99. President Ulysses S. Grant appointed Turner as Macon, Georgia's postmaster, but harassment by local Democrats, as well as allegations of adultery, bribery, and misuse of funds, forced his resignation. In 1870, Turner regained his position as a state representative with Congress's help, but he lost reelection due to a fraudulent campaign. After dissolving his relationships with the Republican Party, Turner left the political arena and resumed pastoring. The allegations of adultery and bribery severely tarnished his reputation in the AME Church and as a politician. To some extent, Turner was able to regain the black community's trust in later years, but the damage took a long time to repair.

[38] Leeman, 224–229, 237–241; Cummings, 457–462; Coulter, 404. Turner relied heavily on his jeremiad preaching style to encourage his congregation.

[39] Redkey, 273–274; Edwin S. Redkey, foreword to *Respect Black: The Writings and Speeches of Henry McNeal Turner* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971), vii–viii; Coulter, 403. In addition to becoming a bishop, Turner served as the president of Morris Brown College, an African–American college in Atlanta, from 1880 to 1892. He also founded Turner Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia.

[40] Angell, 56–57. Senator Charles Sumner sponsored the Civil Rights bill, but he died in 1874 and did not live to see its passage in 1875. Congress approved the bill in a lame duck session, but later the Supreme Court declared Sumner's bill unconstitutional in an attempt to ease white southerners' fears at the expense of undoing the African–American community's early civil rights victories.

[41] Turner, "The Barbarous Decision of the Supreme Court," (1883), in *Respect Black*, 62–63.

[42] Turner, 60–63; Henry M. Turner, "Emigration to Africa," in *African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness*, 2nd ed., ed. Milton C. Sernet (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 289–295; Angell, 90–91, 99, 167–169. Bishop Turner strongly encouraged African–Americans to emigrate to Africa.

[43] Turner, 60–63; Coulter, 404.

[44] Redkey, 329–332; Cummings, 458– 461; Herndon, 329–332.

[45] Herndon, 327–329; Cummings, 457–462, 464–465; Batten, 238–241; Mixon, 366; Angell, 160–163.

firsthand; now that he was an older man in the early nineteenth century, he despised Jim Crowism's debilitating influence because the legalized institution relegated African-Americans to the status of second–class citizens.[46] He supported African-Americans' protests and demonstrations that brought awareness to segregation, and lectured on dismantling the oppressive system through hard work and education.[47] He used many occasions to not only teach his congregation about their history, their greatness, and their flaws, but also suggested reasons for why God allowed blacks to remain enslaved for two and half centuries.[48] Nevertheless, Turner always reminded his audiences to continue working hard, learning about their history, developing a strong Christian faith, ensuring that their character and integrity remained impeccable, and setting examples for their children.[49]

Disillusioned with the idea of civil rights in the United States, Turner not only advocated the proposal that African-Americans should emigrate to Africa to start new lives but also planned and led failed voyages to Liberia. Many African–Americans viewed Turner's emigration plans as undesirable because they enjoyed comfortable lifestyles in the United States.[50] During the 1890s, the growing black middle class belittled his plans because they did not want to sacrifice their status in American society for an opportunity to start afresh in Africa.[51] The middle class blacks respected Turner's position, but disagreed with his plan to address segregation.[52] His largest group of supporters was among the working class blacks in the South who dealt with Jim Crowism's harshness, violence, and humiliation on a daily basis; however, they had neither the money nor means of getting to Africa.[53] Moreover, Turner did not want the entire African–American population to emigrate because the move would have overwhelmed the African-Americans and the African tribes that were falling victim to European imperialism.[54] He wanted two to three million hard working, intelligent, and self–reliant African-Americans to emigrate over a set timeframe.[55] Turner sponsored, funded, and led two voyages to Liberia from 1895 to 1896, but the experience disheartened the large travel groups of African-Americans, who then blamed him for the waste of money, resources, and time.[56] Consequently, after the groups returned to the United States, their negative reports began undermining Turner's credibility and influence within the black community, as well as the AME Church.[57]

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[46] Herndon, 327–328; Alexander, 19; Cummings, 457–461; Batten, 232–234.

[47] Batten, 238–241; Mixon, 366; Angell, 160–163.

[48] Cummings, 457–462; Herndon, 330; Anthony B. Pinn, "'Double Consciousness' in Nineteenth Century Black Nationalism: Reflections on the Teachings of Bishop Henry McNeal Turner," *Journal of Religious Thought 52.1* (Summer/Fall 1995), 19–20.

[49] Cummings, 457–462, 465, 467.

[50] Batten, 241–243; Herndon, 330–332, 334–335.

[51] Redkey, 272–276; Cummings, 460–462; Herndon, 330–332, 334–335.

[52] Ibid.

[53] "Bishop Turner's Defense: Reply to Recent Charge against the Colonization Society," *Washington Post*, March 20, 1892; "Bishop Turner's Scheme: The Negro Problem to be solved by Emigration to Africa," *Washington Post*, February 15, 1893; Redkey, 276–280.

[54] Batten, 242–243; Redkey, 279; Turner, "Turner and His Critics," (1895), in *Respect Black*, 161–163.

[55] Herndon, 330–333; Redkey, 279–280; "Bishop Turner's Scheme: The Negro Problem to be solved by Emigration to Africa," *Washington Post*, February 15, 1893.

[56] Herndon, 334–335; Mixon, 370–372, 377. Turner strongly believed that blacks did not have any value in the United States and needed to rediscover their heritage. In order to dispel white Americans' notions that blacks were lazy, shiftless, and undeserving of civil rights, Africa gave black Americans the opportunity for a fresh start. Bishop Turner seemingly raised most of the funds himself for the two trips to Liberia.

[57] Batten, 243; Coulter, 405–406; Cummings, 459–464; Herndon, 330–333; Redkey, 280–281; "Bishop Turner's Scheme: The Negro Problem to be solved by Emigration to Africa," *Washington Post*, February 15, 1893.

In later years, Bishop Turner made some rash statements on African–Americans' future in the United States, thereby alienating himself from much of the working class, and the growing black middle class, in the AME Church. Turner did not know how to express properly his anger and frustration with the federal government's gradualist response to lynchings, lack of protection for civil rights, and idleness over Jim Crowism.[58] He denounced the United States and the national leadership for its apathy toward civil rights in the newspapers he founded, the *Voice of Missions*, and later, the *Voice of the People*.[59] The once loyal support system of working class African–Americans, in addition to the rising black middle class, deserted Turner for new leaders, such as Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and later, Marcus Garvey.[60] For example, Turner once stated, "to the Negro in this country, the American flag is a dirty and contemptible rag," and … hell is an improvement over the United States when the Negro is involved."[61] His contempt for the federal government angered President Theodore Roosevelt, who criticized Turner's behavior to Booker T. Washington, the president's advisor on racial matters.[62] Washington helped mediate the conflict, but the damage to Turner's reputation among moderate Caucasian-Americans, many working class African-Americans, the intellectual elite, and the growing black middle class was irreparable.[63]

Turner's bitterness and disappointment with the federal government's lack of protection for civil rights was his motivation for advocating African-Americans' rights to defend themselves. He allowed his anger to fester and urged the majority of his working class black followers to defend their rights, as well as their families, with violence if necessary.[64] In 1896, the Supreme Court's ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* destroyed Turner's hopes of racial reconciliation and healing.[65] He became increasingly disillusioned with the federal government, apathetic working class blacks, and the growing class of intellectual elites, led by educators such

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Liberia was a model colony that former slaves had founded in the early 1800s. Because the Liberians and black Americans were from two different cultures, both groups had a hard time being acclimated to each other. Furthermore, black Americans realized that regardless of wherever they settled in Africa, they would have to uproot their families and start over in a new continent. The travel groups respectfully disagreed with Turner's emigration plans because the move would have placed too much stress on themselves and their families. Furthermore, black Americans did not want to emigrate because of fear, the anticipated reception of the African tribes, and the unfounded stories by Caucasian–Americans that Africa was plagued with diseases, humidity, and unending jungles. After the failed voyages to Africa, Turner's rhetoric became harsher, and he became increasingly bitter over the state of African–Americans affairs.

[58] Cummings, 461–463; Turner, "The Negro and the Army" (1899), 184–185, and "The Afro–American Future," (1902), in *Respect Black*, 188–191.

[59] Cummings, 463; Turner, 184–185, 188–191.

[60] Mixon, 363–364; Redkey, 271–272; Herndon, 333–335.

[61] Redkey, 289–290.

[62] Turner, "The American Flag," (1906), 196–199, in *Respect Black*; Redkey, 290.

[63] Turner, 196–199; Herndon, 333–335; Redkey, 286–287, 289–290; Pinn, 21.

[64] Redkey, 286–287, 289–290; Batten, 239–241; Herndon, 333–336; Mixon, 363–366, 370, 371–373. African–American educator Booker T. Washington gave a speech in 1895 at the Atlanta Exposition, encouraging blacks to accept the reality of Jim Crowism's permanence. His speech won praise from the moderate white Republicans and middle class black Americans, but the working class blacks despised his speech because they dealt with segregation's abuses on a daily basis. Turner's anger was in response to Washington's speech, the apathy of the black middle class, and Washington's paternalistic tone toward black Americans. The educator did not fully realize the controversy he created by seemingly encouraging black Americans to passively submit to white Americans' stereotypes. Thus, his speech created a rift within the black community.

[65] Batten, 242–243; Redkey, 328–329, 331–332.

as Booker T. Washington.[66] W.E.B. Du Bois, a college professor and the first black doctoral graduate from Harvard University, once commented that Turner was "the last of his clan" as Turner's popularity began fading after his death in 1915.[67] Although Turner's rhetoric and actions eroded his reputation among his followers, he continued to have an influence among working class blacks who suffered humiliation from Jim Crowism, especially disfranchisement.[68] Turner knew that blacks could not live in peace by accommodating legalized segregation, and advocated that African-Americans defend themselves if a racial war erupted.[69] Many working class African-Americans, especially in the South, agreed with Turner's message, and prepared to defend themselves and their families against segregation's humiliations.[70]

As a self–made man, Turner encouraged the disenfranchised, working class blacks to resist segregation through various methods in response to Booker T. Washington's strategy of appeasement for the middle class and the intellectual elite. Because of his life experiences, Turner strongly believed that African–Americans had earned their rights, and should not have to conform to stereotypes imposed on them.[71] On the other hand, the growing class of black intellectual elites, led by Booker T. Washington, did not want to anger the moderate white politicians who supported African–American institutions of higher learning.[72] Turner and Washington were political rivals over their plans for the advancement of the African–American population; for example, Washington advocated that the black middle class (and larger black population) obtain an education, work hard, and passively submit to Jim Crow laws.[73] Turner, on the other hand, always encouraged his predominantly working class black congregations and audiences to develop a sense of racial pride, continue working hard, make progress for their race,

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[66] Angell, 239–241. Stephen Ward Angell has some gaps in his work. He observes that Turner would have frequently agreed with Booker T. Washington on most issues regarding education; however, Angell does not adequately assess Turner's thoughts on W.E.B. Du Bois. The author makes the statement, "He [Turner] deplored the notion, then advanced by DuBois [classical education, i.e. science, literature, mathematics, grammar, and history] […]." In a previous chapter, Angell noted that Turner not only supported but also implemented education reforms in the AME Church. Liberal arts education, [i.e. book knowledge], combined with hard work and industrial education [i.e. a trade] had the ability to transform the African–American community. Turner strongly encouraged black Americans to obtain an education. Furthermore, he received a modest education as a young man and reaped the benefits. For Bishop Turner, either a liberal arts or industrial education would develop the well roundedness of black citizens and empower them to resist Jim Crowism. He did not agree with Washington's views of accommodation. Simultaneously, Turner disagreed with Du Bois's militant stance at various times because Turner was a moderate in some of his views. Bishop Turner believed that black Americans needed to develop a strong Christian faith, work hard, and gain an education, whether liberal arts, industrial, or a combination of both. In reference to education, Turner would have agreed with various aspects of Washington's and Du Bois's philosophies. On the issue of Jim Crowism, Turner's thoughts would have aligned more with Du Bois.

[67] Mixon, 364; Redkey, viii–ix. Turner became increasingly cantankerous in old age, but Du Bois had a respect for him and appreciated his ideas of resistance, even though the two men did not always agree politically. They both denounced Washington's ideas of passivity and conformity to white American' stereotypes as the worst strategy for African–Americans' advancement in politics, as well as society. Du Bois's statement about Turner as "the last of his clan" refers to the generation of AME pastors that grew up enslaved and later experienced freedom during Reconstruction.

[68] Batten, 239–242; Pinn, 21–26; Mixon, 363–366, 370, 371–373, 377.

[69] Herndon, 330–334; Cummings, 460–464, 466–467; Mixon, 363–366, 370, 371–373, 377.

[70] Mixon, 363–366, 370, 371–373, 377; Cummings, 460–464, 466–467; Turner, 60–69, 165–166, 188–191; Angell, 90–91, 99; Redkey, 286–287, 289–290; Batten, 239–241; Herndon, 333–336.

[71] Mixon, 370, 371–373.

[72] Turner, "Critique of 'The Atlanta Compromise,'" 165–166; Mixon, 367–370, 374–377.

[73] Mixon, 367–370, 374–377; Turner, "Critique of 'The Atlanta Compromise,'" 165–166; cf. footnote sixty.

and prepare to defend themselves against racial injustices.[74] Although many of the intellectual elite and growing black middle class disdained Turner and ignored his warnings of the dangers of appeasement, he realized that the future of African–Americans was at stake, and appeasement would further hinder their efforts to regain stolen civil rights.[75] Therefore, he risked his reputation to advance the cause of civil rights, and encouraged African–Americans to defend themselves through his rhetoric, sermons, and political action.[76]

  Bishop Henry M. Turner is an overlooked transitional figure in American political and religious history. He not only pastored AME churches but also served as a chaplain in the Civil War. His experiences working as a carpenter, carriage maker, and laborer on a South Carolina plantation in his early life exposed him to slavery's injustices.[77] These life experiences inspired Turner to advocate strongly for the advancement of African–Americans in politics and society from the pulpit; simultaneously, his sermons and rhetoric changed over the years, reflecting his outlook on the changes in American society in the aftermath of the Civil War.[78] His short–lived political career in the Georgia state legislature alerted him to the intensity of many Caucasian-Americans' prejudice, and African–Americans' easily placed trust in Democrats and Republicans. Furthermore, the failure of Reconstruction, followed by the Supreme Court's ruling of the Civil Rights Act of 1875 as unconstitutional, eroded his faith that black and white Americans could be reconciled.[79] Turner advocated that a remnant of the black American population emigrate to Africa to escape the rise of Jim Crowism and regain a sense of racial pride during the mid– to late 1890s; subsequently, the growing black middle class and intellectual elite, especially the educators Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois, criticized his emigration plans.[80] In spite of his flaws, temper, and unbridled passions, Bishop Henry M. Turner's courageous political leadership and preaching served as a beacon of hope for many African–Americans who experienced injustices during the Civil War, Reconstruction, and beyond.

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[74] Turner, 165–166; Mixon, 363–367, 370, 371–373, 377; cf. footnote fifty–nine.

[75] Mixon, 367–370, 374–377; Turner, 165–166, 188–191.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Herndon, 327–328; Cummings, 457–461; Batten, 232– 234.

[78] Leeman, 224–229, 237–241; Cummings, 457–462, 464–465; Coulter, 404; Herndon, 327–329; Batten, 238–241; Mixon, 366.

[79] Redkey, 328–329, 331–332; Cummings, 457–462, 465, 467; Batten, 242–243.

[80] Herndon, 330–332, 334–335; Redkey, 272–276; Cummings, 460–462.

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