

# Assimilative Rhetorics in 19th Century African American Literacy Manuals

**Amanda Athon,**  
Governors State  
University

---

*Near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, literacy manuals were marketed to African Americans who sought to improve their reading and writing skills outside of a traditional classroom setting. I argue these texts had a worthwhile goal of providing literacy instruction for learners, but they were problematic in that they also served as a source for assimilation into the dominant white culture. Via archival research methods, I examine three of these manuals to discuss how they taught literacy in addition to assimilating students regarding family, politics, and religion—a marked difference from more traditional literacy instruction in the classroom. The lessons represented the idea that discrimination was not necessarily a problem caused by whites but the result of a moral deficit on the part of African Americans. One selection, “Politics,” published in Hall’s Moral and Mental Capsule (1905), edited by Josie Hall, an African American teacher, instructs, “I think it would have been better far/If the Negro had let politics alone/For the first thing he needed was a home/An education and clothes” (173). Another text Sparkling Gems of Race Knowledge (1897), written and published solely by James T. Haley, an African American publisher, seems to be the exception, emphasizing a sense of community through point-counterpoints on language used to reference African Americans. These texts raise questions of how writing instruction past and present may assimilate students through the complicated idea of bettering oneself through education. I conclude that the texts represent a still-*

*present paradox in education; the social advantages students seek are often unattainable without some adoption of dominant social mores, even though it may unknowingly imply a student's own cultural identity is somehow deficient.*

---

Higher education is often promoted as a way of bettering oneself—and undoubtedly, it is beneficial for students. Education may also be seen as a type of activism because it provides class mobility and economic opportunity. In the United States, this linking of activism and bettering through education originated in post-slavery 19<sup>th</sup> century, when education began to be seen as a means of “social advantage” and an act of refinement, as Shirley Wilson Logan notes in her book *Liberating Language*. Those who provided the education were part of an upper class that the learners sought to join. This created a rhetoric of assimilation where the transfer of both knowledge and social norms from one dominant class to another class could assist in creating social equality. This rhetoric is perhaps best seen through textbooks printed in this post-slavery era. During this time period, self-education manuals similar to textbooks were marketed toward African Americans seeking an education outside of a traditional classroom setting. Logan asserts that these texts—while edited by African Americans—were compiled of selections written by white authors (55), creating a disconnect between author and audience. These texts, then, were not only a means of private learning but also a source for assimilation into the dominant white culture. Here I examine three African American self-education manuals to discuss how such artifacts instructed readers on how to behave on such issues as family, politics, and religion. The texts, *Hall's Moral and Mental Capsule for the Economic and Domestic Life of the Negro, as a Solution of the Race Problem* (1905); *The College of Life or Practical Self Educator: A Manual of Self Improvement for the Colored Race* (1896); and *Sparkling Gems of Race Knowledge Worth Reading: A Compendium of Valuable Information and Wise Suggestions that Will Inspire Noble Effort at the Hands of Every Race-Loving Man, Woman, and Child* (1897); provide an overview of the types of educational manuals available. Although these manuals cannot represent every reader published during the late nineteenth-century, they give current readers a sense of the educational and social values of the time period, just as our modern educational

texts do. Overall, the books emphasized that greater morality and an education would lead to acceptance by whites and financial wealth as rewards. Furthermore, these books seemed to represent the idea that discrimination was not necessarily a problem caused by whites but the result of a moral deficit on the part of African Americans. Comparatively, Haley's *Sparkling Gems* diverges from the others as it emphasizes a sense of community through point-counterpoints on language used by the African American community and editorials describing successful African Americans. This book was edited and published by Haley himself, showing that the pro-assimilation attitudes of the books were likely a result of the authors and publishers rather than the editors. Conversely, Northrop et. al's *The College of Life* is the most assimilative, while Hall's *Moral and Mental Reader* represents a middle ground. The texts raise questions of how our current teaching methods and materials assimilate students to a dominant culture through the idea of bettering oneself through education. Additionally, the literacy manuals reveal how manuals designed for a private audience—rather than public school houses—varied greatly in terms of content, with some having more traditional literacy instruction and others focusing on domestic responsibilities. In their book *Archives of Instruction*, Jean Ferguson Carr, Stephen L. Carr, and Lucille M. Schulz assert that unlike school readers of this time, which tended to “specify a narrow range of grade levels as their intended audience” (62), these readers made no mention of the audience and were more general in content. This was different from other sites of instruction. Similarly, in their essay “Reinventing The Master's Tools: Nineteenth-Century African-American Literary Societies of Philadelphia and Rhetorical Education,” Jacqueline Bacon and Glen McClish point out that classroom education in the 19<sup>th</sup> century had traditionally focused on rhetorical training or the emphasis of classical works such as Aristotle and Cicero, in order to teach eloquence, morality, and virtue (23), in contrast to the domestic and religious instruction presented in the three self-education manuals discussed in this essay.

Near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in post-slavery United States, segregation provided limited opportunities for African Americans to obtain an education through traditional settings. As a result, many joined reading circles, kept journals, or used literacy manuals to obtain an education outside of school (Logan 4). The literacy

manuals I describe in this essay functioned as textbooks for African American students who were unable to be in this privileged space of a classroom but still had a desire to learn through self-education. Although literacy manuals already existed for other audiences, opportunities grew for African American readers during this time period. The lessons included in these books show a shift from the more traditional lessons on eloquence to more practical applications, such as housework and employment.

Although education holds the promise of opportunity for students, it holds drawbacks as well, as knowledge is typically transferred from a dominant culture to a marginalized culture. In her book *Refiguring Rhetorical Education*, Jessica Enoch defines discourse cultures as “language and rhetorical strategies, practices, and approaches that enable persons and groups to engage in the world from a particular perspective,” while dominant discourse cultures additionally “reinforce the lifestyles and belief systems of those in power” and that the “histories, traditions, practices, and behaviors of those in power are not only good and right but also that they should continue to be prevalent” (24). Assimilation through education and discourse has been a frequent rhetoric throughout American history. In “From Rhetoric to Rhetorics: An Interim Report on the History of American Writing Instruction to 1900,” Suzanne Bordelon, S. Elizabeth Wright, and Michael Halloran discuss Native American schools that were intended to teach students English and prohibit the speaking of tribal languages (226), which in part led to the death of many rich languages and cultural traditions. Similar in purpose to educational manuals marketed to African American learners, these readers assimilated students to the cultures, norms, and values of white America without acknowledging the culture’s treatment of these same students. In this sense, the three manuals in this essay, while not necessarily representative of all literacy instruction, still provide valuable insight and examples as to how and why educational materials assimilated readers to a dominant culture.

## MORAL AND MENTAL CAPSULE FOR THE ECONOMIC LIFE AND DOMESTIC LIFE

Josie Brigg Hall's *Moral and Mental Capsule for the Economic Life and Domestic Life* presents detailed selections on child-rearing and the duties of female readers. Hall perhaps had intended women as the primary audience based on this content. Carr, Carr, and Schulz note that textbooks designed for home-schooled audiences "associated reading with leisure time and clean hands...a respite from manual labor or daily duties" (89). To this end, the books were compiled in short snippets and bursts of information, such as newspaper reprintings or abridged stories so that they could be studied in short sessions before returning to the duties of one's household. The books were not just for literacy instruction but also for how to be a member of polite society. For inspiration, Hall's book prominently featured photographs of successful African American women—with one woman being labeled as "useful to the race" (fig. 1, Hall 154)—alongside captions describing the women's professions, which were often a teacher, educator, or seamstress.



Fig. 1 Miss Sula Mae Porter, Hall's *Moral and Mental Capsule*. *Archive.org*, 23 Oct. 2015, *Web*.

It is likely that Hall chose to feature successful women because education was especially inaccessible to African American women, who were in charge of raising families and not necessarily expected to go to school. According to Logan, few opportunities existed for people of color to obtain higher education; by 1900, Southern universities had only graduated 131 African American students (224).

Hall's book detailed a woman's duties toward keeping her home tidy and raising children. In the poem "Women's Rights," the author discusses women's important role of "housewifery":

### **Woman's Rights**

With me on woman's rights

You all may not agree.  
But I think her principal duty

Is that of housewifery;  
For when she trains up a child in the right way

She has casted a vote in the right direction,  
And that vote's as powerful

As if casted at an election. (Hall 155).

This excerpt supports the cultural bias that women's suffrage is unnecessary, and that instead, a woman votes through raising a child or tending to her husband. The text instructed female readers that they had already gained a type of suffrage by raising a son who will vote according to the beliefs instilled in him and as a result, emphasized the culturally dominant view on the subject of women's suffrage. In this sense, lessons such as these suggest that the book's audience needed moral and civic instruction in order to raise families; African American women were expected to follow mainstream culture by believing that they needn't vote and instead, should focus on raising a family. The assimilative calls were not just focused on race but also gender, as seen in the many passages on home and housework. Jessica Enoch found that organizations assisting newly freed slaves

often encouraged female educators to help their students overcome vice and a lack of education, typically from a Biblical perspective (39); educators were not responsible for encouraging civic participation but instead helped students to meet minimum standards of social acceptance while maintaining civic passivity (42).

These books were meant to assist the reader in becoming a productive, educated member of society. Yet, they also enforced the existing class system and racial hierarches. Hall's book shows this through various pieces on politics and political engagement. Many excerpts extol the goal of acceptance and tolerance rather than equality. An example of this is the poem "Politics":

### **Politics**

...At the close of the war  
I think it would have been better far  
If the Negro had let politics alone;  
For the first thing he needed was a home,  
An education and clothes;  
I think these are things they should have chose.

He had not attained a sufficient amount of civilization  
To know what was best for the nation.  
But in the first place,  
He didn't know what was best for the race.  
Sometimes he voted against his own welfare,  
But if he got a few dollars he did not care (Hall 173).

Here, African Americans are discouraged from politics because they lack experience with political engagement and are then admonished by the author for not knowing what was best for the nation and their race. The author adds to his or her point by describing a fictional man who "voted against his own welfare" in exchange for money. Again, readers are encouraged to better themselves, as if their current social status was deficient by nature and not as a result of slavery, racism, and violence.

Clearly, Hall's text, as do other African American readers, displays racism and sexism. Yet, the manuals were nobly intended for its audience to gain an education despite its overall inaccessibility to minority groups. So while these texts are plainly recognizable as racist today, their function in this time period was assimilation with the desired result of acceptance and social mobility. As evidence of this desire to bring equality, Hall subtitled her book "As a Solution for the Race Problem." It's likely that the authors of these selections in Hall's text thought that if an African American woman was to mingle with "polite society," she would fit in better with her peers if she knew not to speak of women's suffrage and similarly be more likely to gain acceptance if she believed that a woman cast a vote through her husband and son. The selection indicates that African Americans were responsible for representing their entire race in every interaction, while failing to acknowledge the reasons for African Americans' poverty and lack of education. This idea is represented in education still through our teaching; students need our help and betterment in order to be successful members of society, an idea that generally refers to upward class mobility.

In this sense, the texts emphasized assimilation by including blatantly racist writings despite the editor, Josie Hall, having claimed, "no just mind would say that the race has received justice" (21). Later, though, Hall asserts that "through a careful analysis of race I have discovered that the majority of Negroes minds and hearts are affected with these infectious diseases...tis true that as a race we are morally and mentally weak" (5). It seems that even Hall herself felt that racism was at least partially the fault of African Americans. These "diseases" that Hall addresses were a lack of education, religion, and a proclivity for "immorality" (18). Hall's book embodies the idea that equality is now possible due to the end of slavery, along with the benefits of education; yet, there was limited discussion of the inequalities or injustices that African Americans experienced, and the selections speak little to the hardships experienced by African Americans.

Middle-class values, such as saving money and devoting one's self to Christ, were a prominent feature in all of the three readers discussed in this essay. Hall's book represents these moral lessons through various Biblical illustrations and narratives discussing the downfall



of those who were not pious or economical and provides a checklist for the reader to use as a means of reflecting on the progress of one's daily habits. The checklists include religion and frugality as virtues to strive for:

### **Daily Questions for Self-Examination**

Do I take advantage of opportunities?

Have I used my time to advantage?

Am I ashamed of my daily life?

Am I living right in God's sight?

Am I virtuous, industrious and religious?

Is my conduct always justifiable?

Am I truthful and honest?

Am I economical?

Do I do unto others as I would have them do to me?

Am I envious?

Do I dig ditches for my superiors simply because they are more successful than I? (Hall 234).

Again, as is often observed in these readers, the writer urges the reader to work hard, be pious, and to save money. Although participating in politics was obviously out of the question, as seen in the message of the aforementioned excerpt, readers could still participate in acts of consumerism as well as daily worship. While there was no mention of direct political involvement, African Americans were encouraged to be part of the economic system and to practice religion. These moral lessons, especially those centered on religion, were seen as a way to end discrimination. Hall wrote, "From a child, I have been inspired to do work in favor of the race. When I was a child, I would go to different houses in the city, and get old people to attend Sunday school" (Hall XI). Religion was crucial to improving one's position in life.

Another image discusses that the South educates "Afro-Americans" just as well as the north, but the only difference is that the South waited until it was mandatory by law. It reads: "To the credit of the South, she has been also liberal to Afro-American education. She has not dealt as unjustly to this cause as some have pictured.

The difference in the aid she has extended and that of the North is simply that Northern aid was voluntary..." (Hall 109). Though the book does note that the south is "compelled to provide for her black population," the Southern bias of the white editorial staff may reveal why there is little specific mention of slavery or the Civil War.

Moral and civic lessons made up the majority of the table of contents of the Hall's reader, with a greater emphasis on cultural assimilation rather than traditional lessons on reading and writing. Hall wrote in her introduction to her reader, "I saw that the race had been trampled, stigmatized, oppressed and discouraged so much... I discerned that effeteness had begotten poverty, poverty immorality, immorality, vice, vice crime, and crime illness" (Hall XII). Hall appears to agree that moral laziness gave rise to the hardships experienced by African Americans. Although the text calls for readers to meet the challenges they face through education and social mobility, its discussion of the lack of opportunity is limited. By following the lessons, African Americans could improve their race and gain equality with whites, emphasizing a kind of assimilation where African Americans needed to change.

## **THE COLLEGE OF LIFE OR PRACTICAL SELF EDUCATOR: A MANUAL OF SELF IMPROVEMENT**

*The College of Life or Practical Self Educator: A Manual of Self Improvement for the Colored Race* (1896) was a collection intended for the general population in its first printing, having later added a preface for African American audiences to the introduction in order to accommodate this new consumer group. The result was a book that had little relevance to the daily experiences of its readers except for the short introduction inviting African American audiences and a summary of achievements by African Americans. The book focused largely on etiquette and social graces rather than literacy instruction or educational issues. Sections included "Calls and Visits," "Proper Forms for Letters," and "Courtship, Marriage, and Domestic Life." In her book *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life*, Nan Johnson writes that letter writing was a particularly important part of home education and was typically viewed as a responsibility of women and its description was usually paired with lessons on domestic duties

for women (93 – 94). That the audience was so far removed from the text—represented only in the introduction with no say in the writings or editorial process of the text—is why this text is the most assimilative reader of the three reviewed in this essay.

The book's small section on African American achievements opens with an image of a white man shaking hands with an African American man, both dressed in formal attire (fig. 2).



*Fig. 2 The Brotherhood of Man, College of Life. Archive.org, 23 Oct. 2015, Web.*

This image echoes the ideas represented throughout all of the three readers discussed in this essay: Now that slavery is over, there is peace and equality amongst the races. This idea is prominently featured in a book that has little mention of African Americans except to encourage them to buy the book in a foreword.

In her book *Love and Eugenics in the Nineteenth Century*, Angelique Richardson points out that eugenics was considered a means of “racial improvement” during this time period and that selective reproduction was a means of advancing one’s own class (3). *The College of Life* had an extensive section on eugenics titled “Who Are, and Are Not, Adapted to Each Other” (138). The section established principles for who, based on personality and physical characteristics, could and could not marry—and to whom. For example, the manual noted that men should marry women of great beauty but that women could marry men of only fair physical appearance. The book also cautions against the marrying of cousins, claiming that while some may find love “there are plenty of others quite as lovable as cousins” (130). Like many of the manuals, the author used the Bible as a justification for his argument, noting, “God ordained the family, and therefore its natural laws, and thereby a family science, as much as mathematical” (138). The collection detailed why those with “diseases or deformities, physical or mental” should not marry or have children, stating “society, by righteous custom, if not by statute law, has a right to prevent, to forbid the multiplication of monstrous specimens of humanity. That mewling, puking, drooling, wailing baby ought not exist; it is no blessing, but a curse of nature and God on the misdoing of men and women” (142). While not focused on race, the manual still emphasizes assimilation. There is a single standard of acceptable behavior, appearance, and class that readers should aspire to. Later, the section provided sketches to represent these ideas such as one man with disheveled hair and clothes labeled an “ignoramus” due to his “low, narrow head; animal face; obstinate disposition” and “entirely unsuited to an educated woman” (see fig. 3).

Again, the book ties in social norms to a book intended for literacy instruction, with a lack of direct address to its intended audience, unlike Hall’s manual.

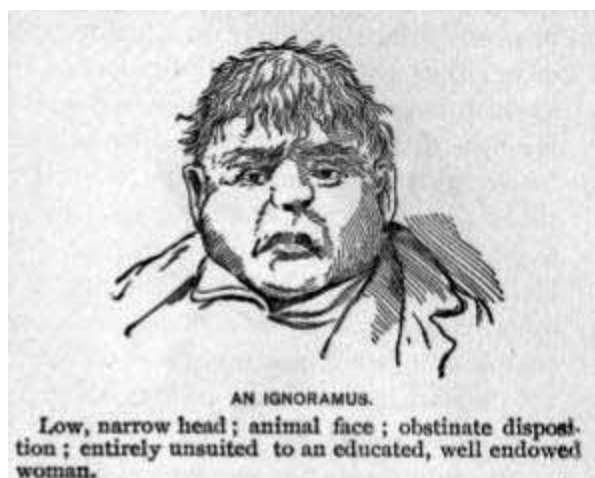


Fig. 3 *An Ignoramus*, College of Life. *Archive.org*, 23 Oct. 2015, *Web*.

These sketches showed that the visual rhetoric of the texts emphasized that an entire race or group of people could be judged by a single example—whether women, African American, or people differently abled. These images of various men and women paired with descriptions of why facial characteristics did or did not make the person a suitable partner, labeling one a “Crabbed Old Maid” (135) another “An Idiot” (140) and a drawing of a Native American man with the caption “Low intelligence; deficient in moral faculties” (171). However, these sections made no reference to African Americans, again showing that this particular text had been previously published for a white audience and later adapted for African American readers.

## SPARKLING GEMS OF RACE KNOWLEDGE WORTH READING

Rarely, a manual did emphasize community. James T. Haley’s *Sparkling Gems of Race Knowledge Worth Reading: A Compendium of Valuable Information and Wise Suggestions that Will Inspire Noble Effort at the Hands of Every Race-Loving Man, Woman, and Child* focused on the accomplishments of African Americans almost exclusively, rather than chidings of what African Americans should be doing to earn the respect of others. Haley may have been in a favorable position due to owning the publishing company that printed the book. *Sparkling Gems* was not Haley’s first book; in 1895, he published the *Afro-American Encyclopaedia*. His books emphasized conversation within

the African American community. One example of this is a point-counterpoint style feature titled “Race Name—What Shall it Be?” The first author writes that “Colored American” is his preferred term because it indicates “native born” Americans rather than immigrant. Another author prefers “Afro-Americans” as readers are “Africans by descent and Americans both by birth and adoption” (174). That there is conversation at all sets this book apart from other readers. That the conversation seeks to empower African Americans and enable decision-making amongst the community is rare.

Another selection from Haley’s book discusses the rise of “colored physicians in the south” (113). The book wasn’t saying that African Americans should behave as whites in order to one day become physicians—rather, it was pointing out the achievements of African Americans who had already found success. The author, a physician, notes that “he is even frequently called to see white patients” and that African American doctors have “fine horses, carriages, and beautiful homes... some own plantations” (117). This emphasis was repeated in the book’s reader responses culled from African American newspapers. One response notes the importance of pride in African American history: “Our children should know the history of the race. It will instill a spirit of race pride. They should know that the foundations of this republic were made secure by the blood of our fathers as well as that of the Anglo-Saxon race. (Clipper, Athens, Ga.)” (79). Pride in one’s community seemed to be a radical idea, and was presented in contrast to the more aggressive assimilatory calls in the previous two readers. The book’s message was positive.

A similarity between Haley’s text and the others is that the purpose of visuals was to show that things were better post-slavery. Images of successful African Americans were included to inspire readers. The latter is especially evident in Haley’s book. In the beginning of the book, two images are shown: one features a dilapidated home with the caption “As it once was—the life of a slave” and another image of a large mansion with the caption “As it is now—home of a freeman” (figs. 4 – 5).



AS IT ONCE WAS—THE LIFE OF A SLAVE.

*Fig. 4 As It Once Was, Sparkling Gems. Archive.org, 23 Oct. 2015, Web.*



AS IT NOW IS—HOME OF A FREEMAN.  
Residence of R. R. Church, Memphis, Tenn., the  
wealthiest colored man in the state; estimated at  
\$250,000.

*Fig. 5 As It Is Now, Sparkling Gems. Archive.org, 23 Oct. 2015, Web.*

This idea echoes Hall's writings that things were significantly better post-slavery. Still, this idea may fail to relay the hardships still experienced by readers due to racism and segregation. One criticism of Haley's book may be that it took the idea of class mobility too far, implying that African Americans experienced few difficulties post-Civil War. Yet, the book also had an inspirational purpose, showing readers what was possible now. Again, the book echoed the call to better oneself through education for the possibility of rising in social rank as shown by the previous excerpts.

The repeated examples of racism, sexism, and classicism displayed by these texts are clearer when observing them 100 years later. The value of a textual analysis via archival research is that it allows us to see that if assimilation was such a prominent feature of our teaching materials then, likely it still is now. This project raises questions for further research, such as notions of how our current teaching materials force assimilation via language, gender, and class. For instance, what ideas do we provide students that assume they are deficient in some way and suggest that assimilation with a dominant culture will lead to greater acceptance, rather than acknowledging our own biases and prejudices as a reason for teaching these ideas? The project also asks us to consider how we can foster dialogue *amongst* students and not just *about* students—how can we value student voices not just in the classroom but in our research and scholarship as well? Hall and Haley wanted to help their readers to end racism by giving readers the tools that they felt was necessary for success in society. These tools did, of course, reflect societal expectations of what African Americans should do to better fit in with society. Yet, the books did very little to acknowledge the cause of these racist attitudes. The fault seemed to lie on the shoulders of African Americans. Stereotypes were embedded in the texts and perpetuated by the authors and editors. Similar examples are evident in our classrooms today. Often, we teach our students one standard, academic English, and ask them to resign their home languages with the goal of acceptance in mainstream society. While many have done important work in this area, there is still much to do in dominant discourse communities. By acknowledging that our teachings do assimilate and having students write and talk about these ideas, we can better foster a sense of community and ownership amongst students. As Jessica Enoch posits, we must encourage educators to



consider their own privileged social and cultural positions (20) in order to foster dialogue and affect change. Haley's *Sparkling Gems* was the most socially advanced of the three texts because it allowed for community discourse about and by its audience.

Self-education manuals intended for African American readers intended to instill culturally relevant values upon readers. By instilling these values, the African American editors intended to show readers how to behave according to the principles prescribed by the dominant white culture, with the ultimate rewards of acceptance by society and class mobility. Throughout these books, the lessons indicate that readers can gain acceptance by improving their own moral character rather than others adjusting their behavior. By examining the bias found in these turn of the century textbooks, it is possible to consider the kinds of bias and assumptions weaved into our own educational materials today. We should caution ourselves that by "bettering" students, we may be placing our own values and attitudes upon them.

## WORKS CITED

- Bacon, Jacqueline and Glen McClish. "Reinventing the Master's Tools: Nineteenth-Century African-American Literary Societies of Philadelphia and Rhetorical Education." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 30.4 (Autumn, 2000): 19-47. Print.
- Bordelon, Suzanne. Elizabeth Wright, S. Michael Halloran. "From Rhetoric to Rhetorics: An Interim Report on the History of American Writing Instruction to 1900." *A Short History of Writing Instruction from Ancient Greece to Contemporary America*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Ed. James Murphy. New York: Routledge, 2012. 209-232. Print.
- Enoch, Jessica. *Refiguring Rhetorical Education: Women Teaching African American, Native American, and Chicano/a Students, 1865-1911*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008. Print.
- Ferguson Carr, Jean, Stephen L. Carr. Lucille M. Schulz. *Archives of Instruction: Nineteenth-Century Rhetorics, Readers, and Composition Books in the United States*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005. Print.
- Hall, Josie Briggs. *Hall's Moral and Mental Capsule for the Economic and Domestic Life of the Negro, as a Solution of the Race Problem*. *Archive.org*. ii – 237. Web. 19 Feb. 2013.
- Haley, James T. *Sparkling Gems of Race Knowledge worth Reading a Compendium of Valuable Information and Wise Suggestions That Will Inspire Noble Effort at the Hands of Every Race-loving Man, Woman, and Child*. *Archive.org*. Web. 19 Feb. 2013.
- Haley, James T. *Afro-American Encyclopaedia; Or, the Thoughts, Doings, and Sayings of the Race, Embracing Lectures, Biographical Sketches, Sermons, Poems, Names of Universities, Colleges, Seminaries, Newspapers, Books, and a History of the Denominations, Giving the Numerical Strength of Each. In Fact, it Teaches Every Subject of Interest to the Colored People, as Discussed by More Than One Hundred of Their Wisest and Best Men and Women*. *Guttenberg.org*. Web. 19 Feb. 2013.
- Logan, Shirley Wilson. *Liberating Language: Sites of Rhetorical Education in Nineteenth Century Black America*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008. Print.

- . *We Are Coming: The Persuasive Discourse of Nineteenth-Century Black Women*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999. Print.
- . “By the Way, Where Did You Learn to Speak?” *Calling Cards: Theory and Practice in the Study of Race, Gender, and Culture*. Jacqueline Jones Royster, Ann Marie Mann Simpkins, eds. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005. Print.
- Northrop, Henry Davenport, Joseph R. Gay, and I. Garland Penn. *The College of Life: or Practical Self-educator Manual of Self-improvement for the Colored Race*. *Archive.org*. Web. 19 Feb. 2013.

## WORKS CONSULTED

- Anderson, James D. *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860- 1935*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988. Print.
- Bacon, Jacqueline. *The Humblest May Stand Forth: Rhetoric, Empowerment, and. Abolition*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002. Print.
- Black, Edwin. “The Aesthetics of Rhetoric, American Style.” In *Rhetoric and Political Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. Thomas W. Benson. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1997. 1 – 14. Print.
- Loewenberg, Bert James, and Ruth Bogin, eds. *Black Women in Nineteenth-Century American Life: Their Words, Their Thoughts, Their Feelings*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976. Print.
- McHenry, Elizabeth. “Rereading Literary Legacy: New Considerations of the 19th-Century African-American Reader and Writer” *Callaloo*. 22. 2 (Spring, 1999): 477-48. Print.
- Murphy, Jerome James. *A Short History of Writing Instruction: From Ancient Greece to Contemporary America*. New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2012. Print.
- Richardson, Elaine. “‘To Protect and Serve’: African American Female Literacies.” *CCC* 53.4 (2002): 674 – 704. Web.
- Royster, Jacqueline Jones and Simpkins, Ann Marie Mann. *Calling Cards: Theory and Practice in the Study of Race, Gender, and Culture*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005. Print.

Amanda Athon is an Assistant Professor of English at Governors State University, where she teaches undergraduate and graduate coursework in composition and rhetorical theory. Her research interests include contemporary and historical assessment practices, digital writing, and feminist theory.