



*Lucy Laney Craft*

*Mary Mcleod Bethune*



*Marva Collins*

# THE WOMEN WHO BUILT EDUCATION

A Monthly Series Presented by,  
The National Black Home Educators

*Ida B. Wells*



*Charlotte Hawkins Brown*

*Charlotte Mason*





Lucy Craft Laney was a pioneering African American educator and advocate for equal education. Born in 1854 in Georgia, she was one of the first graduates of Atlanta University. She founded the Haines Normal and Industrial Institute in Augusta, Georgia, which focused on providing high-quality education to Black students. Laney believed in the transformative power of education and emphasized the importance of character, discipline, and hard work. Her leadership inspired generations and contributed significantly to the progress of Black education in the post-Reconstruction South.

Questions :

1. What was Lucy Craft Laney's primary contribution to education? 2. Where and when was Lucy Craft Laney born?
3. What institution did Laney establish, and what was its purpose? 4. How did Lucy Laney view the role of education in society?
5. In what ways did Laney influence the progress of Black education in the post-Reconstruction South?



Mary McLeod Bethune (1875–1955) was an influential educator, civil rights leader, and advocate for African American and women’s rights. Born to parents who were formerly enslaved, she overcame significant obstacles to become one of the most prominent African American women of her time. Bethune founded the Daytona Normal and Industrial Institute for Negro Girls, which later became Bethune–Cookman University. She was a close advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the founder of the National Council of Negro Women. Her work focused on education, racial equality, and empowerment, leaving a lasting legacy in these fields.

#### Questions:

1. What obstacles did Mary McLeod Bethune face in her early life? 2. What institution did Mary McLeod Bethune establish, and what was its significance?
3. How did Mary McLeod Bethune contribute to the advancement of African American women?
4. What role did Bethune play in advising President Franklin D. Roosevelt?
5. Why is Mary McLeod Bethune considered a pivotal figure in the civil rights movement?



Marva Collins (1936–2015) was a pioneering educator known for her innovative teaching methods and dedication to improving education for underserved children. Born in Alabama during segregation, she eventually moved to Chicago, where she founded the Westside Preparatory School in 1975. Frustrated with the public education system's failure to meet students' needs, Collins used her own money to create a school focused on rigorous academics, critical thinking, and discipline. Her methods emphasized high expectations, individualized attention, and the use of classical literature. Her work gained national recognition, inspiring educators and reformers to rethink teaching strategies for at-risk students.

#### Questions

1. What motivated Marva Collins to start the Westside Preparatory School?
2. How did Marva Collins' teaching methods differ from traditional public school approaches?
3. What challenges did Marva Collins face while founding and running her school?
4. Why did Marva Collins focus on classical literature in her curriculum?
5. How did Marva Collins' work influence education reform in the United States?



Ida B. Wells (1862-1931) was a pioneering journalist, educator, and civil rights activist known for her fearless fight against racial injustice and lynching in the United States. Born into slavery in Mississippi during the Civil War, she later became a teacher and an investigative journalist. Her powerful writings and speeches exposed the horrors of lynching and challenged racial inequalities. Wells co-founded organizations like the National Association of Colored Women and played a critical role in the early stages of the NAACP. She remains an enduring symbol of courage and advocacy in the struggle for justice.

#### Questions:

1. What early life experiences shaped Ida B. Wells' commitment to civil rights?
2. How did Ida B. Wells use journalism to combat racial injustice?
3. What specific injustices did Wells expose in her anti-lynching campaigns?
4. What organizations did Ida B. Wells help establish, and what were their goals?
5. Why is Ida B. Wells considered a trailblazer in the fight for racial equality?



Charlotte Hawkins Brown (1883–1961) was an influential educator, author, and civil rights advocate who worked to improve education for African Americans in the segregated South. Born in North Carolina and raised in Massachusetts, she returned to the South to establish the Palmer Memorial Institute in 1902, a boarding school for African American students. Brown emphasized academic excellence, cultural enrichment, and character development. She was also an outspoken advocate for racial equality and empowerment, using her platform to challenge segregation and advocate for social change. Her work left a lasting impact on education and civil rights.

#### Questions:

1. What inspired Charlotte Hawkins Brown to establish the Palmer Memorial Institute?
2. How did the Palmer Memorial Institute differ from other schools for African Americans at the time?
3. What were Charlotte Hawkins Brown's views on education and character development?
4. How did Charlotte Hawkins Brown advocate for civil rights and racial equality?
5. What is Charlotte Hawkins Brown's legacy in education and social reform?



Charlotte Mason (1842-1923) was a British educator and reformer best known for her innovative approach to education, emphasizing the development of a well-rounded, curious, and thoughtful individual. She believed in providing children with a broad curriculum that included literature, nature study, art, music, and physical activity, alongside traditional academic subjects. Mason's philosophy prioritized nurturing a child's natural love for learning rather than relying solely on rote memorization or rigid discipline. Her ideas became the foundation of the modern homeschooling movement and continue to influence education worldwide through the "Charlotte Mason Method."

#### Questions:

1. What were the key principles of Charlotte Mason's educational philosophy?
2. How did Charlotte Mason's approach differ from traditional methods of her time?
3. Why did Charlotte Mason emphasize the use of literature and nature in education?
4. What subjects did Charlotte Mason believe were essential for a well-rounded education?
5. How has Charlotte Mason's philosophy influenced modern education, particularly homeschooling?