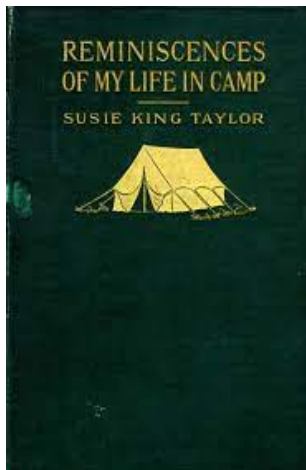

Essential Readings on Black Nurse History

This list is compiled by [members](#) of the Nurses You Should Know project and is designed as a resource to learn more about our professional history. The blue hyperlinks on nurses names throughout this document link to their Nurses You Should Know profiles. Please use the comment icon in the toolbar to add primary or secondary sources you would like to see included.

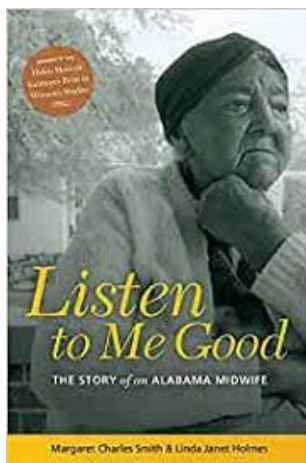
Autobiographies



The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole was published in 1857 by [Mary Seacole](#) to document her nursing experience leading the British Hotel during the Crimean War.

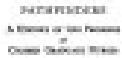


Reminiscences of My Life in Camp was published in 1902 by [Susie King Taylor](#) to document her nursing experience during the American Civil War.



Listen to Me Good: The Story of an Alabama Midwife was published in 1996 by [Margaret Charles Smith](#) and Linda Janet Holmes to document Margaret's decades-long midwifery career in Alabama.

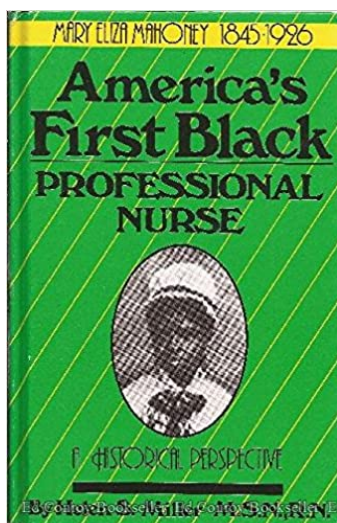
Biographies



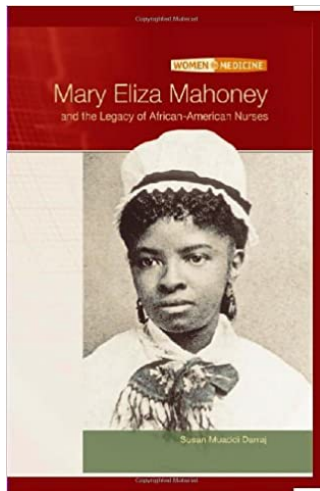
Pathfinders: A History of the Progress of Colored Graduate Nurses was published in 1929 by [Adah B. Thoms](#) to detail the work of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses (NACGN) in integrating the nursing profession.



Trailblazer: Negro Nurse in the American Red Cross by Jean Maddern Pitrone was published in 1969 on the life of [Francis Reed Elliott Davis](#), the first Black nurse enlisted in the Red Cross.

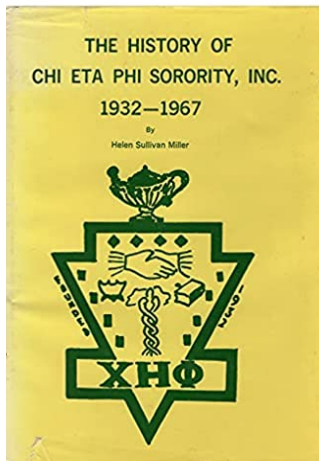


Mary Eliza Mahoney, 1845 - 1926: America's First Black Professional Nurse was published in 1986 by [Helen Sullivan Miller](#) to document the life of the first known Black nursing graduate.

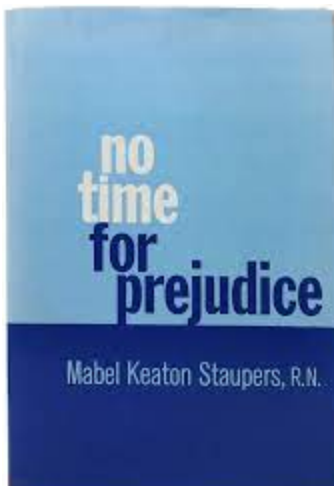


Mary Eliza Mahoney and the Legacy of African American Nurses by Susan Muadidi Duraj was published in 2005 to highlight the life of Mary Eliza Mahoney, the first Black professional nurse in the U.S.

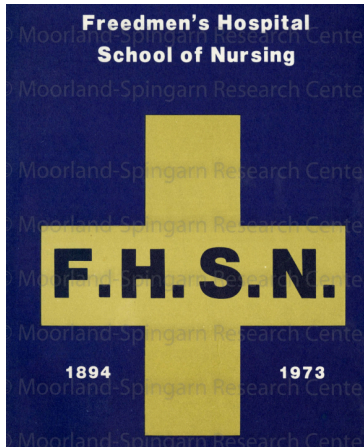
Histories



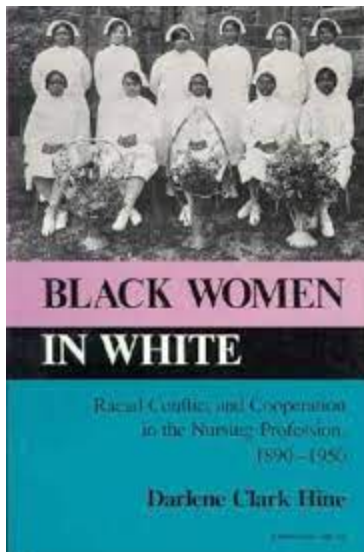
The History of Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc 1931 - 1967 was published in 1968 by [Helen Sullivan Miller](#) to document the history of the first three decades of America's Black nursing sorority.



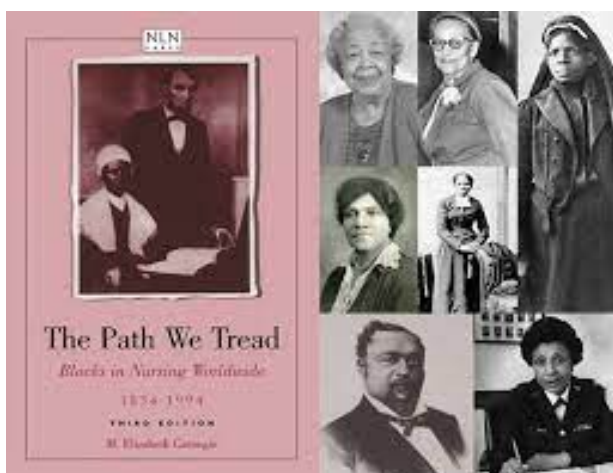
No Time for Prejudice: The Story of the Integration of Negroes in Nursing in the United States was published in 1961 by Mabel Keaton Staupers to document the history of nursing's professional integration efforts.



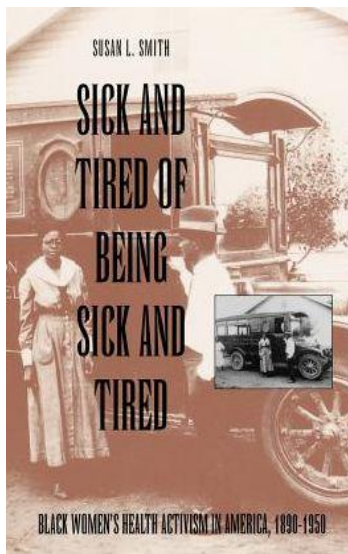
The history of the iconic Freedmen's Hospital School of Nursing, whose roots date back to the Civil War and the Freedmen's Bureau, was published in 1974. It was the first school of nursing in the country located as part of a university. Full text PDF can be found [here](#) courtesy of Howard University.



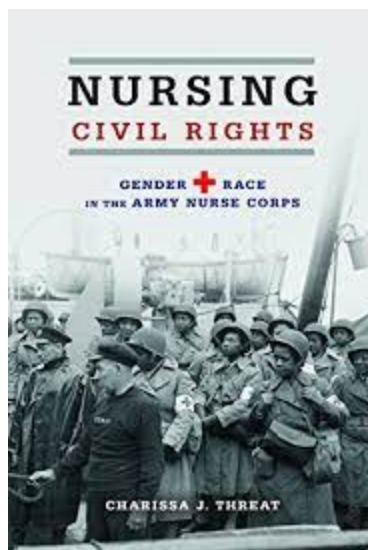
Black Women in White: Racial Conflict and Cooperation in the Nursing Profession, 1890-1950 was published in 1989 by historian Darlene Clark Hine has become a seminal text analyzing the impact of racism on the American nursing profession.



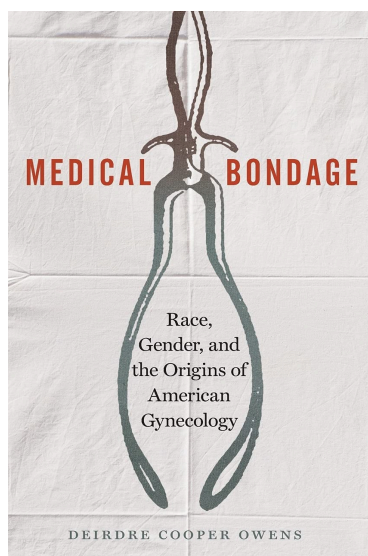
The Path We Tread: Blacks in Nursing Worldwide 1854 - 1994 was originally published in 1995 by [Mary Elizabeth Carnegie](#) and had a total of three editions. This seminal work serves an encyclopedic role in detailing 140 years of Black nurse history.



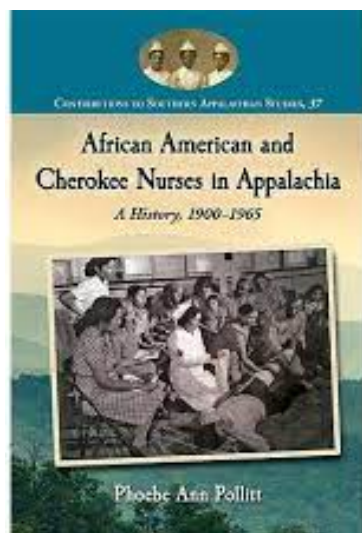
Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired: Black Women's Health Activism, 1898-1950 by Susan L. Smith was published in 1995 and highlights the ways black health activists created public health programs and influenced public policy at every opportunity.



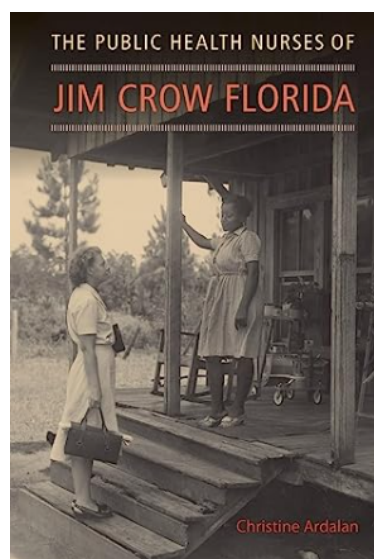
Nursing Civil Rights: Gender and Race in the Army Nurse Corps was published in 2015 by historian Charissa J. Threat to document the history and impact of the integration of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps between World War II and the Vietnam War.



Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology by Deirdre Cooper Owens was published in 2017 and examines the rise of gynecology and intersections with slavery and the role of enslaved Black women (who were used as both experimental subjects and surgical nurses) and Irish immigrant women.



PhD nurse historian Phoebe Pollitt provides a succinct history from 1900 - 1965 of the ways African American and Cherokee nurses navigated their education and careers within a profession that tried to prevent their entry.



Historian Christine Ardalan describes the climate for public health nurses in Florida during Jim Crow and their impact on maternal and infant mortality in rural communities.

Select Articles

CHAPTER XIX
STATUS AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE NEGRO NURSE
ESTELLE MASSEY OSBORNE
Instructor, Department of Nursing Education, New York University

In this 1949 article published in the Journal of Negro Education, [Estelle Massey Osborne](#) details the progress of Black nurses in the profession and the status of integration efforts.

THE ETHEL JOHNS REPORT: BLACK WOMEN IN THE NURSING PROFESSION, 1925

Darlene Clark Hine*

In 1982 historian [Darlene Clark Hine](#) examined the 1925 Rockefeller-funded Ethel Johns report in *The Journal of Negro History*.

Racism in U.S. Nursing

Although the problems of racism are being confronted in a number of venues, the word and the topic are taboo in American nursing. This article uses historical, personal, and anecdotal data to explore racism in American nursing. It examines how four attributes of nursing: (1) an emphasis on empathy; (2) an individual orientation; (3) a preference for homogeneity; and (4) a need to avoid conflict, provide a climate that allows nurses to avoid openly dealing with racism in the profession. [nursing, racism, Black women, United States]

EILEEN M. JACKSON
Faculty of Nursing
University of Alberta

Evelyn Barbee, a nurse PhD in anthropology, wrote this [seminal piece](#) in *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* in 1993 in which she explicitly outlines how the profession has preserved white privilege as its cultural identity.

Eileen Jackson, a nurse PhD in anthropology, wrote this formative article in *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* in 1993.

Whiting-Out Difference: Why U.S. Nursing Research Fails Black Families

➤ *J Natl Black Nurses Assoc.* Fall-Winter 1994;7(2):10-20.

Despite all odds: a three-part history of the professionalization of black nurses through two professional nursing organizations, 1908-1995

M O Mosley ¹

Marie O. Pitts Mosley amplified Black nurses' legacy. As well as this 3-part series, note her 1996 article *Satisfied to carry the bag: Three black community health nurses' contributions to health care reform, 1900-1937* published in *Nursing History Review*

A Retrospective on Civil Rights: *Pride and Progress*

Fondiller, Shirley H. EdD, RN, FAAN

This 2000 article published in *Nursing and Healthcare*

► Author Information

▼ Abstract

The involvement of black nurses in the activities and programs of the NLN dates back several decades to its predecessor organization, the National League of Nursing Education (NLNE), formerly the American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools for Nurses.



Perspectives synthesizes integration efforts at the NLN and how the decrease of Black nursing schools prompted the need for non-discrimination efforts to become part of accreditation criteria.

'The Hands That Might Save Them': Gender, Race and the Politics of Nursing in the United States during the Second World War

August 2012 · [Gender & History](#) 24(2)

Dr. Charissa J. Threat examines the integration of Black nurses and males into the Army Nurse Corps.

[Review](#) > [J Perinat Neonatal Nurs.](#) Apr/Jun 2019;33(2):108-115.

doi: 10.1097/JPN.0000000000000394.

The Ethics of Perinatal Care for Black Women: Dismantling the Structural Racism in "Mother Blame" Narratives

[Karen A Scott](#) ¹, [Laura Britton](#), [Monica R McLemore](#)

Scott, Britton, & McLemore astutely connect the impact of how nurses who “blame” Black mothers for poor outcomes become part of the structural racism that impacts equitable perinatal nursing care.

> [Am J Nurs.](#) 2020 Aug;120(8):40-47. doi: 10.1097/01.NAJ.0000694564.56696.ad.

'You Don't Have Any Business Being This Good': An Oral History Interview with Bernardine Lacey

[Sandra B Lewenson](#) ¹, [Ashley Graham-Perel](#)

Nurses [Graham-Perel](#) and [Lewenson](#) published this oral history of nurse pioneer [Bernadine Lacey](#), which was featured in *American Journal of Nursing*, a year before her death.

Beyond Florence

Constructing the Modern American Midwife: White Supremacy and White Feminism Collide

By [P. MIMI NILES](#), and [MICHELLE DREW](#) • October 22, 2020

In [NursingClio's Beyond Florence](#) series, midwives Dr. [Niles](#) and Dr. [Drew](#) outline the impact of white feminism and white supremacy on establishing a majority white nurse midwifery workforce.

An Overdue Reckoning on Racism in Nursing

Canty, Lucinda PhD, RN, CNM; Nyirati, Christina PhD, RN; Taylor, Valorie MN, RN; Chinn, Peggy L. PhD, RN, FAAN

[Author Information](#) 

Accompanied by original artwork by [Dr. Canty](#), this article describes the implementation and outcomes of the

[Overdue Reckoning on Racism in Nursing](#) initiative launched online in May 2020.

Hidden figures of nursing: The historical contributions of Black nurses and a narrative for those who are unnamed, undocumented and underrepresented

Diana-Lyn Baptiste  Sasha Turner, Nia Josiah, Joyell Arscott, Carmen Alvarez, Ruth-Alma Turkson-Ocran, Tamar Rodney, Yvonne Commodore-Mensah, Lucine Francis, Patty R. Wilson ... [See all authors](#) ▾

First published: 10 February 2021 | <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14791> | Citations: 3

This collective of nurse authors published his article in the Journal of American Nursing in order to reclaim the contributions of Black caregivers and nurses.

Commissions



National Commission to Address
Racism in Nursing

The draft of the history of racism in nursing report can be found [here](#) and is open for [public comment](#) through February 14, 2022.