

**Henrietta Crawford:**  
**Radical Black Evangelist in Post-Civil War New Jersey**

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*Representing Black feminisms of the so-called, “First Wave era of American feminism,” forgotten icon Henrietta Crawford impacted Black political representation in southern New Jersey during the post-Civil War decades. As a noted evangelist, universal suffragist, Black community organizer, Civil Rights activist, homemaker, and intergenerational caregiver for minor dependents, Crawford crafted an intersectional legacy worthy of commemorative re-remembrance. Collectively, scattered bits and pieces of information recorded over the past eighty years in newspapers and in recent scholarly accounts offer an incoherent combination of disparate hints at Henrietta’s historical significance. Buttressed, however, by historical insight, contemporary newspaper accounts, Civil War pension file records, real estate deed transactions, federal and state census records, vital statistics data, the evidentiary record sheds light on Crawford’s important role in the operation of historically significant Mt. Pisgah [U.A.M.E.] Church in Vineland and her associated development and implementation of important social justice initiatives. In 1948, a fifty-year commemorative notation about James and Henrietta Crawford’s 1898 departure from Vineland was published in the Daily Journal newspaper. Twenty-five years later “New Jersey Mother of the Year Award” recipient Rebecca Lassiter noted the Crawfords’ important role in her life as foster parents. In year seventy-three since the Daily Journal’s acknowledgement, this essay conveys Henrietta Crawford’s legacy to students, scholars, and the general readership for current and future generations. As the present confluence of national political and economic crises resolves within an encapsulating global pandemic that is*

*exacerbating socio-economic inequalities, Crawford's life and record offers a critical example of faith-based social-justice activism and the seamless role of African American women in American history.*

## **Introduction**

In the mid-1800s, it may not have been foreseeable to most observers that George and Mary Green's ten-member household in Mannington Township, New Jersey was incubating a radical activist who would influence women's suffrage and African American socio-political life in south Jersey from the Reconstruction era to the end of the ninetieth century. Both George and Mary were Maryland natives and while nothing more about George's origins has been identified in the records, we know that Mary was born in Harford County and that this was her second marriage.<sup>1</sup> Hence, the family's oldest child James who was born in 1838 had the surname, "Anderson."<sup>2</sup> The second oldest child was future activist, Henrietta Crawford (nee Green) who came into the world in Mannington in 1842.<sup>3</sup> The 1860 federal census identifies Henrietta's mother as a widow, indicating the father's death sometime during the late 1850s. Younger household members in 1860 include one child, "George" (presumably Jr.), born in 1859.

Collectively, scattered bits and pieces of information recorded over the past eighty years in newspapers and in recent scholarly accounts, offer an incoherent combination of disparate hints at Henrietta's historical significance. Buttressed, however, by contemporary newspaper accounts, Civil War pension file records, real estate deed transactions, federal and state census records, and vital statistics data, the evidentiary record of Henrietta Crawford's impact on the operation of Mt.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Stevens's death certificates notes her father's name as Isaac Stevens. Her mother's name is listed as "Diana," without a maiden name. Mary A. Green, State of New Jersey Report of Death, 11 June 1897, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, New Jersey.

<sup>2</sup> Heirs-At-Law of Mary A. Green to Henrietta C. Crawford, *Cumberland County Deed Book*, vol. 247, 220.

<sup>3</sup> George and Mary Green household, 1850 federal census, Mannington, Salem County New Jersey.

Pisgah Church in Vineland and her associated development and implementation of social justice initiatives in the post-Civil War decades emerges.

At least two scholarly texts mention Henrietta Crawford. In Graham Hodges' recently published text, *Black New Jersey: 1664 to the Present*, Henrietta's husband of fifty years, James Crawford, is reported as having "died in service in Texas."<sup>4</sup> However, James Crawford married Henrietta in Vineland on May 5, 1866. Their wedding occurred five months after his medical discharge from the army.<sup>5</sup> In the doctoral dissertation, *Education and Agitation: The Woman Suffrage Movement In New Jersey*, historian Delight Dodyk notes, briefly, the presence of two Black speakers among participants at the 1867 founding convention of the New Jersey Woman Suffrage Association in Vineland, writing, "Black women, as well as white, were in attendance and spoke their minds on topics ranging from the futility of women's fashions (Sojourner Truth) to the meager wages of servants (Henrietta Crawford)."<sup>6</sup>

Considering that Truth's reputation as an abolitionist and women's rights advocate was international by 1867, philosophical or historical summations about the significance of her presentation on material representations at this conference deserves amplification. Biographer Nell Painter observes, "neither Truth nor her memorialists cemented her brilliant fragments into a whole, [moreover] successive purveyors of her memory have each magnified their favorite piece."<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Henrietta's attention to the economic plight of house servants as well as addressing her communicant's spiritual needs, securing civil rights for African Americans, and seeking the political empowerment for women, constitute the progressiveness of her radical feminist agenda.

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<sup>4</sup> Graham Russell Gao Hodges, *Black New Jersey: 1664 to the Present Day*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2019), 103.

<sup>5</sup> James Crawford Pension File, Adjutant General's Office, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D. C., Record Group 94. <https://www.fold3.com/image/273/263168358>.

<sup>6</sup> Delight W. Dodyk, *Education and Agitation: The Woman Suffrage In New Jersey*, Dissertation, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 1997), 135.

<sup>7</sup> Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol* (Rutgers University Press, 1996), 258.

Categorizing this perspective, Ula Taylor positions Henrietta's activism as a significant but marginalized representation of the "First-wave" of the American feminist movement centered in that temporal space overlaid from "the abolitionist movement..." to "the suffragists' securing passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920."<sup>8</sup> Succeeded four decades later by the Second-wave's association with "the modern civil rights and black power" era and then by the Third-wave's "post-civil rights era," these phases are "the primary expressions of black feminisms in the United States." Shaped within such theoretical extension, my essay focuses on Henrietta Crawford's role and impact on the African American's quest to shape their destiny in post-Civil War southern New Jersey.

### **The Early Years – Mannington, 1840s-1850s**

Crawford's parents likely met at Mannington where manifestations of Black feminist leadership had been asserted since the colonial era. Fifteen years after Great Britain's Queen Ann combined the East Jersey and West Jersey proprietorships into the royal colony of New Jersey, an enslaved woman named Hagar led a conspiracy to kill her enslaver, James Sherran, who was also the High Sheriff of Salem County.<sup>9</sup> The motive for the crime was likely one egregious transgression too many inflicted against Hagar's humaneness. However, convicted of murder under a brutal slave code enacted in 1695, Hagar was burned at the stake in Mannington and her compatriots John Hunt and Ben, a 12-year-old child, were hung and dismembered. Writing about that momentous event two centuries later, county historian Joseph Sickler notes, "There appears to have been no counsel assigned to the slaves but in view of the prevalent English custom this was not unusual." Remarkably, given the lack of defense for the accused, along with the known

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<sup>8</sup> Ula Taylor, "Black Feminisms and Human Agency" in *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*, editor Nancy A. Hewitt (Rutgers University Press, 2010), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bmzp2r.7>.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph S. Sickler, *The History of Salem County New Jersey: being the story of John Fenwick's colony, the oldest English-speaking settlement on the Delaware River* (Salem, NJ: Sunbeam Pub. Co., 1937), 76.

propensity for the unrequitable sexual abuse of enslaved women, Sickler proceeds to the absurd conclusion that, “undoubtedly the trial was fair and just.”<sup>10</sup>

About such injustice, historian Clement Price writes in his important compilation, *Freedom Not Far Distant*, “Harsh justice was meted out in these special courts from 1695 until 1768, when the New Jersey legislature abolished them.”<sup>11</sup> In recent scholarship, Graham Hodges assesses the historical basis for a 1714 enhancement of the draconian slave laws. Following a 1712 slave revolt in New York City, brutal repression followed and “two years later New York Colony passed a complete slave code, which New Jersey quickly copied.”<sup>12</sup> Closer in time to Henrietta’s birth was a deadly anti-slavery incident in early 1837.

Occurring only fifteen miles south of Mannington at the African American hamlet of Springtown,<sup>13</sup> in Cumberland County, a Black man named “Chaney” was killed by a male assailant identified as “Mews.” Also an African American, Mews had been cornered inside the home of his landlord Levi Bond, a well-known physician with a reputation for being “courteous in his manners, kind, honest,” and “much respected.”<sup>14</sup> Bond’s social standing, however, did not prevent his house from being surrounded by a force of armed Black women determined to exact revenge upon Mews for his life-altering betrayal of their community member. On Thursday, January 5, *The Monmouth Inquirer* summarized the incident:

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<sup>10</sup> Sickler, *The History of Salem County New Jersey*, 77.

<sup>11</sup> Clement Alexander Price, *Freedom Not Far Distant: A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey*, (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1980), 15.

<sup>12</sup> Hodges, *Black New Jersey*, 18.

<sup>13</sup> “Springtown, or Greenwich - as it desires to be known - is about five miles from Bridgeton, and is on the line of the New Jersey Central Railroad, an old colored settlement.” From Joseph Morgan, *Morgan’s History of the New Jersey Conference of the A. M. E. Church from 1872 to 1887* (Camden: S. J. Chew, 1887), 246.  
[http://www.njstatelib.org/slic\\_files/searchable\\_publications/ame/NJAMEn246.html](http://www.njstatelib.org/slic_files/searchable_publications/ame/NJAMEn246.html).

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Cushing and Charles E. Sheppard, *History of the Counties of Gloucester, Salem, and Cumberland, New Jersey, with biographical sketches of their prominent citizens* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1883), 557.  
[https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/15008/images/dvm\\_LocHist001679-00354-1?ssrc=&backlabel=Return&rc=94%2C1903%2C159%2C1927%3B159%2C1903%2C247%2C1929%3B336%2C1903%2C401%2C1931&pId=585](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/15008/images/dvm_LocHist001679-00354-1?ssrc=&backlabel=Return&rc=94%2C1903%2C159%2C1927%3B159%2C1903%2C247%2C1929%3B336%2C1903%2C401%2C1931&pId=585).

On Wednesday morning last, a warrant was placed in the hands of our Sheriff, for the arrest of a slave claimed by his owner from Maryland. The Sheriff with a Constable proceeded to the residence of the black in Springtown a negro [sic] settlement near Greenwich, for the purpose of arresting said slave, and succeeded in capturing him; but before he could be properly secured the door of the building was forced by the blacks, through the advice of a *white* [sic] man, and the negro rescued from the custody of the Sheriff and set at liberty...It appears that blacks became suspicious of...Mews, as an informant...and it was determined that he should be banished from among them. Mews had gone early to his work, before the fray had commenced, and on his return towards evening, he was met by a party of wenches armed with clubs, axes, etc., determined to drive him off. He took refuge from their fury in the house of Levi Bond where he boarded, which was immediately surrounded. Bond advised Mews to leave the place which he intended to do as soon as he could get his clothes together. It seems however, that it was not sufficiently expeditious, and...Chaney (?) to hurry him off. Mews told Chaney to keep away and not interfere, but the caution was not observed by the latter, who made some efforts to force Mews to leave the house. In defence [sic] Mews used his axe, inflicted a severe gash in the right breast and abdomen of Chaney, literally splitting him down...and then fled. Chaney lived about an hour after the wound was inflicted.<sup>15</sup>

Chaney's murder, however, was more than a 120-year bookend to Hagar's rebellion. A villain so deathly afraid of incensed antislavery womenfolk that he would commit murder to escape their wrath, demonstrates the impact and continuity of a long, radical, Black feminist leadership in South Jersey.

Contextualizing gender relations among the enslaved in their relation to modern struggles, Angela Davis explains that, "lessons gleaned from the slave era...shed light upon Black women's and all women's current battle for emancipation."<sup>16</sup> For example, "the slave system...discouraged male supremacy in Black men because husbands and wives, fathers, and daughters were equally subjected to the slave masters absolute authority."<sup>17</sup> At another event in year 1837, female evangelist Jarena Lee provided an additional measure of psycho-cultural influence on Black Mannington.

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<sup>15</sup> "The Slave Case and Murder In West Jersey," *The Monmouth Inquirer* (Freehold, New Jersey), 05 January 1837, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Angela Y. Davis, *Women Race & Class*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 4.

<sup>17</sup> Davis, *Women Race & Class*, 7-8.

Lee, the widely known itinerant evangelist, and first female preacher authorized to preach in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, provided a faith-based model of feminist leadership when she visited communities near Mannington. As Lee recounts in her published autobiography, *Religious Experience and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee*, she had traveled to southern New Jersey following a visit with her sister in Delaware. “I commenced traveling March 11, 1837...I then spent a few days with my sister, and left for Salem, N.J. Preached two Sermons on Sabbath day, two miles from Salem...On Wednesday I left for Greenwich, preached three times [Greenwich, Cumberland County]...From thence proceeded on to Port Elizabeth, and spoke in the Ebenezer Church...”<sup>18</sup> It is very likely that Henrietta’s mother attended, along with either her first or second husband, one or more of Lee’s sermons at a time when, “there...[was] no place of worship in the township belonging to white residents...”<sup>19</sup>

Expanding on the depth of Black presence in Mannington Sickler writes, “This township was the first point of settlement in the county for free Negroes...The colored race in Mannington...is not an insignificant Portion of the population, numerically...In different sections several colored churches have grown up...The members belong to different sects of colored churches.”<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, among Mannington Township’s Black churches there was a congregation at Marshalltown belonging to the African Union Church founded in the early 1800s

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<sup>18</sup> Jarena Lee, *Religious Experience and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee, Giving an Account of Her Call to Preach the Gospel* (Philadelphia: 1849), 80.

<sup>19</sup> Cushing and Sheppard, *History of the Counties of Gloucester, Salem, and Cumberland*, 441.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*



Henrietta Crawford's sequential residences in South Jersey

- 1 Mannington
- 2 Clarksboro
- 3 Vineland
- 4 Woodbury

Map showing the four locations of Henrietta Crawford's residences.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Farm Journal Map of Cumberland, Gloucester, and Salem Counties (1913), <https://www.gcls.org/farm-journal-map-cumberland-gloucester-and-salem-counties-1913>. Accessed 04 August 2020.

by Peter Spencer of Wilmington, Delaware. “In 1815 Spencer founded congregations in Christiana and New Castle, Delaware. The next year he moved into New Jersey and formed a congregation at Marshalltown, immediately across the Delaware from Wilmington and north of Salem.”<sup>22</sup> By the time of Spencer’s death in 1843, the A.U. Church had evolved into the African Union First Colored Methodist Protestant Church. In 1865, the AUFCMP split into the African Union Methodist Protestant Church (AUMP) and Henrietta’s denomination, the United African Methodist Episcopal Church (UAME).<sup>23</sup>

The Green’s mostly-Black neighborhood, where Chesapeake and dominant Eastern Shore style chicken and dumplings, fried oysters, and other ethnic traditions would have been strong, molded Henrietta Crawford’s early worldview. Also influential was the practice of doing the ring-shout at revivals and during the U.A.M.E.’s Big Quarterly weekend held annually in Wilmington and undoubtedly resisting the allure of popular culture of which Hodges writes, “Apart from aims toward self-improvement in education and manners and in the battle for civil rights was a growing black secular sociability.”<sup>24</sup> Striking against such security of place, Black children and their families had to be vigilant against getting kidnapped at play and [illegally] sold into southern enslavement. Living near each other allowed mutual assistance against slave raiders.

As demonstrated on the 1850 federal census, Henrietta was raised in the blackest section of the township. Census data on school attendance illustrates relative population size and school enrollment. At the mid-century mark, 750 African Americans were more than a third of Mannington’s 2,187 residents. Among African Americans, 204 individuals were of school age,

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<sup>22</sup> J. Gordon Melton, *A Will To Choose: The Origins of African American Methodism* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 84. See also, Janet L. Sheridan, “Marshalltown Historic District National Register Nomination,” 2012.

<sup>23</sup> “Union American Methodist Episcopal Church,” <https://uamechurch.org/about>.

<sup>24</sup> Hodges, *Black New Jersey*, 73.

between 6 and 17-years old. Seventy-two Black children, representing 35 percent of their school-age population, were attending school in 1850. This demographic calculation affirms historian Marion Thompson Wright’s argument in association with her compilation of state superintendent’s reports titled, “Number of Colored Children Who Attended School During the Years 1847, 1850, and 1860.” Tabulated in her book, *The Education of Negroes In New Jersey*, the figures for Mannington in 1847 and 1860 are 60 and 157 respectively. However, whereas my extraction of 72 students numerically fits where Thompson-Wright’s tabulation is left blank for the 1850, she nonetheless affirms the existence of such missing data, writing, “It is incorrect to infer that Negro children failed to attend schools in localities for which no figures appear, because in some instances answers to the questions concerning the attendance of colored children were not given.”<sup>25</sup> By racial contrast, 293 of the 469 White school-age children, representing 62 percent of this cohort, attended school in 1850.<sup>26</sup>

1	63	64	George Green	38	11	B	Saturday		Chapman		
2			Mary J Green	42	7	B			Chapman		1
3			James L Green	12	11	B			Ch. G.		1
4			Salomith Green	9	7	B			Ch. G.		1
5			Hennetta Green	8	7	B			Ch. G.		1
6			John Green	5	11	B			Ch. G.		
7			Zachariah Green	3	11	B			Ch. G.		
8			Caroline Green	2	7	B			Ch. G.		
9			Jacob Green	9/2	11	B			Ch. G.		
10			William Brown	30	11	B	Saturday	200	Ch. G.		1

George and Mary Green household, 1850 federal census, Mannington, Salem County New Jersey.

<sup>25</sup> Marion Thompson Wright, *The Education of Negroes In New Jersey* (New York: Teachers College Columbia University, 1941). Edition, Arno Press & the *New York Times*, 1971, 138.

<sup>26</sup> Author’s calculations of 1850 census data for Mannington, New Jersey.

### Coming of Age – Clarksboro, 1850s-1860s

The Green family's second residence was at Greenwich Township in Gloucester County where the matriarch is enumerated on the 1860 federal census as a 45-year-old "widow" living with 18-year-old Henrietta and four children between 10 and 15 who were attending school. But unlike Mannington, Clarksboro was nearly all-white. In this regard, the inverse magnitude of a Black presence is represented in a measure of school attendance by race in 1860. Of the 626 residents in the 6 to 17-year age range, 97 percent were White. Also, 73 percent of the 605 White school-age residents attended school in 1860. By contrast, 81 percent of the 16 African American school-age cohort, including Henrietta's siblings, John, Zacharia, Caroline, and Anna, had been enrolled in school during the year.<sup>27</sup> Completing the 1860 household were three toddlers (see census that follows on the next page). At this point in time, Blacks were still reeling from the United States Supreme Court's 1857 decision in *Dred Scott v. Sanford*. That infamous ruling, overturned with passage of the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 1868, declared that African Americans were non-citizens undeserving of any respect by White persons. Moreover, as the nation's unraveling over the question of slavery accelerated into civil war, an outspoken Henrietta Green was coming of age in the Swedesboro-Woodbury socio-cultural zone.

Clarksboro stood in the proximity of at least two African American houses of worship, Mt. Zion A. M. E. in Swedesboro and Bethel A. M. E. in Woodbury. Of the former edifice, church historian Joseph Morgan writes, "Dutchtown, Small Gloucester or Swedesboro was organized about 1831...it has always been associated with Woodbury and has had the same pastors."<sup>28</sup> That umbrella would have extended to the miniscule number of African Americans enumerated in the

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<sup>27</sup> Author's calculations of 1860 census data for Greenwich Township, Gloucester County New Jersey.

<sup>28</sup> J. H. Morgan, *Morgan's History of the New Jersey Conference A. M. E. Church, from 1872 to 1887* (Camden: S. Chew Printer, 1887), 90.

[http://www.njstatelib.org/slic\\_files/searchable\\_publications/ame/NJAMEn90.html](http://www.njstatelib.org/slic_files/searchable_publications/ame/NJAMEn90.html)



With the outbreak of the Civil War on April 12, 1861 and the subsequent organization and southern deployment of White New Jersey army regiments, the Dickersons aided the Union cause in a manner that was unique and perhaps unprecedented for Black northerners. Between July and early September 1862, the couple leased farm acreage property to the state for the organizing and training of New Jersey's 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. Raised across the breadth of south Jersey counties, the 12<sup>th</sup> participated in a host of battles including Chancellorsville and Gettysburg.<sup>30</sup> Subsequently, Clarksboro lives, including neighbors of the Green family, were permanently altered by the war.

Clarksboro members of 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment's F-Company included George W. Allen who was "working by the month on the farm of William G. Haines, near Clarksboro...His health interfered with...soldier life...until he was removed to the hospital at Ellicott's Mills, where he died December 9, 1862, and was buried the same day."<sup>31</sup> Quaker raised farm laborer Elwood "Griss" Griscom was a native Virginian who, "when the war broke out was living with Amos J. Peaslee on his farm at Clarksboro," rose through the ranks to First Lieutenant. Enroute to that distinction for his battlefield courage, "a bullet struck the visor of his cap, plowing a straight white furrow clear across the top of his head. That sent him to the hospital for many months and came near ending his life."<sup>32</sup> James K. Russell who "was a farm hand working about Clarksboro was badly wounded at Gettysburg..." After the war Russell "worked around Clarksboro for a year or more..." before moving to Philadelphia where he died in 1870.<sup>33</sup> For the Green family, such post-

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<sup>30</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment, New Jersey Infantry, Battle Units, Soldiers and Sailors, National Park Service.

<https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-battle> units.

<sup>31</sup> Haines, William P., *History of the Men of Co. F, With Description of the Marches and Battles of the 12<sup>th</sup> New Jersey Vols.* (Mickleton, NJ, Wm. P. Haines, 1897), 101.

<file:///E:/Books/historyofmenof%20Co%20F%2012th%20NJ%20Infantry.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> Haines, *History of the Men of Co. F*, 113-114.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

war knowledge about fellow Clarksboro residents who went to war would have been scant since by this time, they had relocated to Vineland.

### **Post-War Transitioning 1865-1867**

The first Green family members appear to have moved to Landisville sometime between September 1864 when Salome's husband James Lee left Swedesboro and joined the army and June 1865 when she and four other persons, including Henrietta by inference, were enumerated as Landisville residents on the New Jersey state census. At the time of her husband's enlistment with the 41<sup>st</sup> Colored Infantry Regiment, Salome and James Lee were living in Swedesboro where the couple had married on April 4, 1860.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, this marriage did not survive the war. Interestingly, Henrietta also married in 1860. At age 75 she recalled the brief union with her first husband:

At the time of my marriage to Jeremiah Collins were living in Woodbury...soon after our marriage [he] went to Philadelphia, Pa. and the enlisting officer took him to New Haven, Conn. And he enlisted there in the year 1861 as near as I can remember. I know he died during his service in the army because the authorities at Washington, D. C. notified me of this fact.<sup>35</sup>

Evidence from two sources suggests that Crawford bore two children in her mid-to-late-teen-years. First, on the 1900 federal census, Crawford affirms the birth of two children with one still living. Secondly, on an army pension application submitted in 1915, James Crawford explained that [my] "wife has one [child] living, 3 grand children."<sup>36</sup> Confirming the identity of Crawford's biological offspring is complicated because children abound in the Crawford household on every census enumerated. For example, when university professor Rebecca Lassiter, a protégé and ordained

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<sup>34</sup> New Jersey Marriages Records index New Jersey State Archives, Trenton, New Jersey, [https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/1107/31039\\_17484000135/188253?backurl=&ssrc=&backlabel=Return#?imageId=31039\\_174840-00148](https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/1107/31039_17484000135/188253?backurl=&ssrc=&backlabel=Return#?imageId=31039_174840-00148).

<sup>35</sup> James Crawford Pension File, "General Affidavit" March 31, 1915, Adjutant General's Office, Record Group 94, National Archives and Records Administration, (NARA) Washington, D. C.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

minister, was featured in a 1961 publication of *The Daily Journal*, she had the following to say about Henrietta Crawford: “My mother passed away when I was four years old...My father...boarded me with a family. Mr. and Mrs. James Crawford of Montrose St. Mrs. Crawford was an evangelist at the U.A.M.E. church on Plum St. She was a wonderful mother to me.”<sup>37</sup>

Henrietta probably knew second husband James Crawford before the war since they both lived in Greenwich Township in 1860. The common social venue for the pair would have probably been Bethel A. M. E. Church in Swedesboro rather than any of the local dives where secular dance music and entertainment prevailed. However, it was probably a mystery to most who knew James Crawford before the war how he was able to enlist in the army at all because the six-foot tall farmer only had three toes. Seven of James’s toes had been amputated years earlier in his native Baltimore following severe frostbite. The disability did not serve him well as an infantryman. Marching with Company F, Twenty-second Colored Regiment, Private Crawford fell ill and was hospitalized for most of his twenty-two months enlistment. In October 1865, six months after the war ended, James Crawford received a medical discharge from the military. One month later, African Americans occasioned an historic rally at Bethel AME in Woodbury. The celebratory political event was held to meet two objectives. First, people paid homage to their Colored Civil War veterans.

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<sup>37</sup> “Vineland Native Honored,” *The Daily Journal*, 27 May 1961, 3.

NAME OF HEAD OF FAMILY	of each person whose place of abode on June 1, 1900, was in this family. Enter surname first, then the given name and middle initial, if any. INCLUDE every person living on June 1, 1900. Omit children born since June 1, 1900.	Relationship of each person to the head of the family.	Color or race.	Sex.	DATE OF BIRTH.		Age at last birthday.	Whether single, married, widowed, or divorced.	Number of years married.	Mother of how many children.	Number of these children living.
					Month.	Year.					
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		
62 Crawford James M.	Head	B. M.	Oct.	1830	69	M.	30				
— Minnie	Wife	B. F.	Apr.	1843	57	M.	30		2	1	
Platon James O.	Son	B. M.	Dec.	1874	25	M.	0				
— Cora M.	Daughter	B. F.	Feb.	1881	19	M.	0		0	0	
Still Era	adopted son	B. F.	Apr.	1893	7	S.					

1900 census Henrietta Crawford reports 1 of 2 children living<sup>38</sup>

The second goal of the rally was to promote and raise money for the one-year-old civil rights organization, New Jersey Equal Rights League. Conference resolution numbers 2, 3, and 7 captured the saliency of the moment and the times.

*Resolved, 2.* We view with peculiar pride and admiration, the part our fathers, brother and sons have borne in the late war, showing forth to the world the possession of the qualities of soldiers, as displayed in their indomitable courage and endurance in the many hard fought battles, viz.: Fort Fisher, Port Hudson, Fort Wagner, Olustee, Petersburg, Milliken's Bend, and others.

*Resolved, 3.* This meeting, represents the feelings and opinions of the Colored people of Gloucester county, state of New Jersey, in which we are denied the same rights that are enjoyed by others whose skin is a different color from ours.

*Resolved, 7.* We...pledge ourselves to each other, to use all honorable means in our power to obtain the Elective Franchises.<sup>39</sup>

With narrowly won Republican victories securing both houses of the state legislature in 1866, as well as “progressive” Marcus Ward’s winning of the governorship that year, campaigning for African American voting rights intensified.

<sup>38</sup> Henrietta Crawford, Deptford, New Jersey, 1900 Federal census, *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>39</sup> “Letter From Brother Grimes,” *The Christian Recorder*, 8 December, 1866.

On April 3, 1867, Black citizens rallied in Camden City under a Republican Party sponsored event celebrating the recent achievements of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Congress. Those objectives included the First Reconstruction Act passed on March 2. Establishing military rule, Congress guaranteed, among other things, voting rights without regard to color for all eligible residents in the former Confederate states.<sup>40</sup> Congressman James P. Scovel of Camden delivered an hour-long address to the Monday evening crowd and state senator Charles Haight “thought immediately the colored men should organize and request Governor Ward to use his influence in favor of striking out the word ‘white’ from the Constitution of New Jersey.”<sup>41</sup> Historian William Gillette has assessed the potential impact of Black male suffrage on New Jersey’s Electoral College following the re-ascendancy of Democrat power in Trenton. “4,200 potential Negro voters might well overturn an 1868 Democratic presidential majority of 2,800...In 1870 there were 30,658 Negroes in New Jersey. One-fifth of them (4,226) would probably be eligible for suffrage. The Democratic presidential majority in New Jersey in 1868 was a mere 2,880.”<sup>42</sup> Under such exigencies Black New Jerseyans continued building families and community institutions even as they struggled for political equality and its derivative benefits.

On May 5, 1867, 23-year-old Henrietta Collins and 28-year-old James Crawford were married at the home of Episcopal minister E. R. Chubbuck in Vineland.<sup>43</sup> Before moving to 123 Montrose Street where they resided longest, the couple’s first residence of record was a house on Elmer street at the corner of East Avenue.<sup>44</sup> There, Henrietta Crawford organized her argument for

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<sup>40</sup> “The Colored People of New Jersey Awake - Large Meeting of the Blacks,” *The Evening Telegraph*, 23 April 1867, p. 3. <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/16248503/the-evening-telegraph/>.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> William Gillette, *The Right to Vote: Politics and the Passage of the Fifteenth Amendment* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), 113.

<sup>43</sup> In 1916, Henrietta completed an application for widow’s pension stating “May 5, 1869” as the date of her marriage to James Crawford. “Widow’s Application for Accrued Pension,” James Crawford Pension File, Record Group 94, Adjutant General’s Office, National Archives and Records, Washington, D.C.

<sup>44</sup> Vineland City Directory 1870, Vineland Historical and Antiquarian Society, Vineland, New Jersey.

fair wages for servants. The 1867 women's meeting was the first of her documented blows for social justice.<sup>45</sup>

### **Making the Case for House Servants, 1867**

On the 1870 federal census for Landis Township, 74 women listed their occupation as "House Servant." In making the case for improving their compensation and work conditions Henrietta represented the interests of a diverse group of women wage earners that included 10 African Americans, 44 native born Whites, and 20 European immigrants. More than 90 percent of these workers were live-in servants residing within an employer's home. At 10 individuals, African Americans comprised 15.6 percent of this female cohort. Only seven of the house servants, including Henrietta's sister Salome, resided with inferred relatives and of the 22 servants between 12 and 17, none attended school during the year.

As suggested in an 1869 news article, the disparate birth origins of female servants did not preclude the emergence of common socio-economic class demands. In late 1869, Vineland's newspaper *The Evening Journal* published a rendition of the stereotypical Chinese house servant. Articulated by Boston minister A. L. Stone, the article ignored the intermittent labor strikes by Chinese railroad workers on the transcontinental railroad. Instead, it extolled the supposedly Chinese workers' virtue of submissiveness towards their employers. From Chinese servants Stone asserted, "There is no demand for evenings out, or halfdays [sic] for private sewing or mending. There is no answering back... There is no complaint of large washings... or irregular meals. There is no entertaining of company, making high life below stairs."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Attempting to locate Henrietta Collins (or Green) on the 1865 New Jersey state census roll has been a reliably speculative observation. She is probably one of the four [unnamed] females enumerated for the Lee household in 1865. Unlike the method used in Woolwich Township where household members were individually identified on the 1865 census and where Mary Ann Green still resided at the time. Landis census takers only recorded one name per household and alongside the head-of-household's name were recorded the total numbers of males and females.

<sup>46</sup> "The Chinese As House Servants," *The Monmouth Inquirer*, 02 December 1869, 2.

At century's end, W. E. B. DuBois published his pathbreaking report about the wages of female servants in Philadelphia's Seventh Ward. "In...women's wages the skilled specialists are cooks and laundresses while the office of trust is held by the janitress and these are seen to head the list in the matter of pay, being the only women domestics who receive on the average more than \$4.00 [per week]."<sup>47</sup> Situated only forty miles south from the City of Brotherly Love, the

Number	Category	Percent
17	Born in New Jersey  (Includes 5 African Americans)  Lucy Stone, Mary Branson, Fanny Wilson,  Harriet Mitchell, Elmira Woodlin	23
37	Born in states other than New Jersey  (Includes 5 African Americans)  Katie Black, Susan Black, Lydia Branson,  Josie Robinson, <i>Salome Green</i>	50
20	European Immigrants	27
	*****	
67	Live-in House Servants	91
7	House Servants living independently	9

**House Servants, Landis Township census, 1870**

<sup>47</sup> W. E. B. DuBois, "Special Report On Negro Domestic Service In the Seventh Ward," *The Philadelphia Negro A Social Study* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1899), 448.

female servant class in Vineland had more similarity than difference with their socio-economic counterparts in Seventh Ward Philadelphia. The women's mock election in Vineland in 1868, however, has ranked as the signature moment in Henrietta Crawford's colorful career.

### **Suffrage Leadership - 1868, 1894**

Having lost the right to vote in 1807 along with African Americans, New Jersey women had their cause brought to the forefront of public attention in 1858 when Lucy Stone protested woman disfranchisement by refusing to pay the property tax on a home shared with her husband in Orange, New Jersey.

Enclosed I return my tax bill, without paying it. My reason for doing so is, that women suffer taxation, and yet have no representation which is not only unjust to one half of the population... For years some women have been paying their taxes under protest but still taxes are imposed and representation is not granted. The only course now left us is to refuse to pay the tax.<sup>48</sup>

Nearly a decade later Stone delivered an address on the subject before the state legislature.

Quoting a typical refrain of White men, Stone mocked their standard on March 6, 1867. "Women and negroes [sic] don't know enough to vote.' As though it were possible for us to do worse for ourselves than they have done for us. Do they fear we shall return evil for evil?"<sup>49</sup> Responding to Stone's entreatment, a special committee of the Ninety-First New Jersey Legislature concluded that it had "failed to discover any reason why women should not vote...As a matter of justice it should be granted."<sup>50</sup> Continuing, the committee's report acknowledged the decades-long struggle by Black New Jerseyans to obtain voting rights; a fight now capped by their role in winning the pivotal Civil War: "If ever a people have won for themselves a right to elective

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<sup>48</sup> New Jersey Women's History <http://www.njwomenshistory.org/discover/topics/activists/lucy-stones/#:~:text=>.

<sup>49</sup> Stone Lucy, *Woman Suffrage In New Jersey*, (Boston: C. H. Simonds & Co., 1867), 10-11.

<sup>50</sup> "Report from the Special Committee regarding striking the words "white male" from the New Jersey Constitution," in *Minutes of Votes and Proceedings of the Ninety-First General Assembly of the State of New Jersey*, (Camden: N.J. S. Chew, Steam-Power Printer), 636. New Jersey State Library, <http://hdl.handle.net/10929/50476>.

franchise these black men of our country did, when...they faced the iron hail at Fort Wagner, Port Hudson, Richmond, and a hundred other fields, where they gave themselves a willing sacrifice, and suffer to-day the scorn of their former oppressors.”<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, the special committee’s social-justice potential was curtailed when it acceded to an opposing view and voted to allow the report to “lay on the table” – effectively burying any consideration of its conclusions. That rejection was reinforced when one committee member successfully moved to “indefinitely postpone said report.”<sup>52</sup> Nonetheless, Black suffragists, in tune with Stone’s progressive woman’s platform as well as the legislative committee’s initial report, responded to her March 1868 call for a women’s action convention to be held in Vineland in November during the first presidential election of the Reconstruction era.

Rising to participate in New Jersey’s most dramatic challenge for women suffrage, Henrietta Crawford, her mother Mary Green, sister-in-law Anna Green, and co-activist Lydia Jones expanded the campaign for social justice. Representing First-wave African American suffragists, their staccatoed presence at the voting booth drew the attention of event recorder E. A. Kingsbury. Writing for what would become an increasingly racist newspaper, *The Revolution*, edited by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Parker Pillsbury, Kingsbury wrote a singularly simplistic summary of the Black women’s actions and viewpoints. Moreover, unlike the White compatriots mentioned by name in Kingsbury’s report, the Black quartet remained anonymous. “One circumstance was especially delightful. At different times in the afternoon, four colored women came into the hall and cast their votes. They were received with cheers by the crowd, and with warm welcome by us. On being asked if they would vote the republican or democratic [sic] ticket,

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<sup>51</sup> “Report from the Special Committee regarding striking the words “white male” from the New Jersey Constitution,” 638.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

they replied ‘O we go for Grant!’”<sup>53</sup> Henrietta, as a 25-year-old firebrand at this stage of her activism, continued her ceaseless regimen of church leadership, community activism, and suffrage campaigning. A quarter century later however, Henrietta immortalized her identity as a veteran 51-year-old suffrage leader.

By legislative action on April 8, 1887, New Jersey women gained the right to vote in school district elections. That partial enfranchisement was acquired under, “An act giving the right of suffrage to all persons whether male or female, in any school meeting in any school district of the state.”<sup>54</sup> The seven-year-old law was firmly tested at Vineland on July 28, 1894 when women insisted on voting for school board trustees despite opposition from Republican mayor Charles P. Lord and his anti-suffragist male alliance. However, Henrietta Crawford and other leading suffragists challenged their exclusion from the voting booth in historic proportion. Recounting the incident 23 years later, chronicler Frank D. Andrews, shared a “special telegram sent...to *The Times*” that mentions Henrietta Crawford’s front-line suffragist leadership in July 1894. “The women-several hundred strong-lined up and, marching to the ballot box, endeavored to vote their ticket...A colored woman named Crawford, who has great influence with the colored voters, managed to force her ballot into the box and then struggled out of the crowd and jeered the officers.”<sup>55</sup> “Crawford” is one of the few African American surnames mentioned by Andrews who commonly wrote about Blacks stereotypically and anonymously. Nonetheless, Henrietta’s leading role in the 1894 revolt cements her status as a major personality among First-wave feminists.

### **Socio-Political, Church-Life 1870s – 1880s**

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<sup>53</sup> “Voting of Vineland Women,” *The Revolution*, vol. 2, no. 20, 19 November 1868, 307.

[https://archive.org/stream/revolution-1868-11-19/1868-11-19\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/revolution-1868-11-19/1868-11-19_djvu.txt). My appreciation for this source extends to the Campbell Library staff at Rowan University.

<sup>54</sup> See: <https://dspace.njstatelib.org/handle/10929/50455>.

<sup>55</sup> Frank D. Andrews, “History of Cosmopolitan Hall, Formerly Plum Street Hall Now the Auditorium: With Some Account of the Society Who Built the Hall and the Men, Women, and Events that have Made It Famous in the Annals of Vineland,” Part 126, *The Evening Journal*, 16 June 1917, 3.

In April 1992, more than 500 persons from local and regional churches participated the culminating ceremony of Mt. Pisgah's week-long mortgage burning celebration.<sup>56</sup> That joyous event commemorating decades of interchurch relations, belied a history of local church rivalry operative during Henrietta Crawford's lifetime. Reflecting the growing pains observed in many post-war institutions, Vineland's two Black churches, Mt. Pisgah U.A.M.E. and Bethel AME had, by the mid-1870s, developed a rivalry in attracting new members and for commanding local Black political influence.

An 1876 public meeting ostensibly spearheaded by Bethel leaders including George W. Green and George W. Crawford<sup>57</sup> was a case in point upon publication of the details. "The colored people held a meeting last night at Union Hall. The meeting was called to order by Solomon Royal. Geo. W. Green was chosen chairman, and R. C. Sykes (white) [sic] Secretary. Remarks were made by Messrs. Douglas, Bryant, Parsons, Crawford and others."<sup>58</sup> After stating the meeting's organizing objective beyond garnering the Black vote for spring elections, attention turned toward a critique of the situation whereby an absence of Black Vinelanders in municipal operations existed.

The spirit of the meeting seemed to be that the time had now come in our local politics, when...There was manifested a desire to see elected for some of our local offices of importance, some one man, or more from their race, as it was well known that there are colored men in Vineland who are capable of filling a higher position than Pound Keeper, which was no longer an honor, but an insult to them.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *The Daily Journal* 24 Apr 1992, 18.

<sup>57</sup> George W. Green was a Salem County-born sailor and Civil War veteran. George J. Green was Henrietta Crawford's youngest sibling. George W. Crawford was Maryland-born Civil War veteran and chairman of Bethel A.M.E.'s Board of Trustees in 1877.

<sup>58</sup> Richard C. Sykes was elected to a local judgeship in 1876. *The Evening Journal*, 07 December 1876, 3.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

When “James Crawford, No. 123 Montrose Street” was appointed by the mayor in 1892 “to catch and impound all dogs found at large within said Borough,” little had changed regarding African American participation in local governance.<sup>60</sup>

The rivalry between Mt. Pisgah and Bethel went public on March 28, 1877 when George W. Crawford, published an unflattering letter about Mt. Pisgah in *The Evening Journal*.

We would like to have it understood that the parties out begging are not begging for the church on the corner of Park Avenue and Seventh street, but for a party that split off and tried to buy the old school house on the corner of Park and West Avenue and failed, and now they are begging for our church they say. We say it is all nonsense for the little handful of colored people in this town to try to get up two churches, for it will take all of them to support one church in good shape. This party call themselves the A.M.E. Union. The A.M.E. Church have out no collectors as collectors. By order of G. W. Crawford, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Thomas Liggin, Sec’y.<sup>61</sup>

Responding to Bethel’s accusation, Mt. Pisgah’s published a counter missive above the name of its board of trustees’ chairman, Civil War veteran John D. Williams. Secretary Zachariah Green, Henrietta’s sibling, submitted the response.

In reply to the communication, which was published in yesterday’s Journal, stating that the American Union Church have parties out begging in the name of the A.M.E. Church, we wish to say that the report is false. In 1805 this society was organized, and has been known ever since as a religious organization. There is as much difference between these two churches as there is between the Baptist and Methodist churches. We wish to express our best wishes to our sister church, and hope they will speak nothing but the truth hereafter, for peace and harmony is the strength of all institutions. So I just call your attention to the correction. By order of John D. Williams chairman of the board of Trustees. Zachariah Green, Sec’y.<sup>62</sup>

Disagreements which sometimes occur between and within churches and other organizations are often based on issues other than the matter ostensibly at hand. Theology scholar William Love Banks writes that church disagreements are understandable when viewed across time and space through the prism of human nature, and that “the struggle for power...has long been part of the

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<sup>60</sup> *The Evening Journal*, 19 December 1883, 3; *The Evening Journal*, 02 March 1897, 3.

<sup>61</sup> *Evening Journal*, 28 March 1877, 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Evening Journal*, 28 March 1877, 2.

life of the black church.<sup>63</sup> Pre-existing relationships in the military, for example, offer one plausibility for such post-war antagonisms.

Several members of each church were military veterans who may have known each other in the south or in Philadelphia at the Summit House military hospital. Mt. Pisgah members James Crawford and John Williams as well as Bethel's George W. Green were patients at the same time in the Summit House Army Hospital situated in West Philadelphia. Williams, a private in Company C, 43<sup>rd</sup> Colored Infantry, was hospitalized for a non-combat related asthma condition which the Ohio native probably had when he enlisted. Salem, New Jersey-born Green, by contrast, was a combat wounded 1<sup>st</sup> sergeant who had served in three infantry regiments (Company G 45<sup>th</sup>, Company H 22<sup>nd</sup>, and Company K 118<sup>th</sup>). His hospitalization was for a fractured right clavicle sustained from a "shell" during the 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment's heralded charge against Confederate forces at Petersburg on June 15, 1864. Since these veterans had no apparent pre-war relationships, the possibility of the 1877 antagonisms having roots in the Civil War experience is a tangible notion for consideration.<sup>64</sup>

### **Francis Murder**

As the Reconstruction period closed, Henrietta Crawford's leadership in church and community affairs was recognized in local news such as the mid-1876 announcement, "Mrs. Crawford (colored) lectured in Union Hall last night."<sup>65</sup> But all semblance of progress evaporated during hunting season in early fall the following year. On Thursday afternoon, September 13 Henrietta's brother-in-law, Charles Francis, was shot and killed while hunting. Married to

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<sup>63</sup> William Love Banks, "A Survey of the Attitudes of Black Baptist Pastors of Philadelphia Regarding the Use of the Courts To Settle Intrachurch Disputes" (doctor of divinity, The Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982), 98, Charles Blockson Collection, Temple University.

<sup>64</sup> James Crawford Co F 22<sup>nd</sup>, <https://www.fold3.com/image/273/263168353>; George W. Green Co K 22<sup>nd</sup>, <https://www.fold3.com/image/273/263451355>. John Williams Co C 43<sup>rd</sup>, <https://www.fold3.com/image/273/263749791>.

<sup>65</sup> *Evening Journal*, 17 May 1876, 1.

Henrietta's younger sister, Caroline, Francis was killed under controversial circumstances by White farmer James Dixon. The suspiciously based shooting occurred more than a quarter mile away from Dixon's property. Francis was a well-known family man and Dixon was an individual with a reputation for confronting those he considered poachers. The situation drew the wrath of African Americans. On Friday, the *Journal* noted that, "The announcement yesterday afternoon that Jas. N. Dixon had shot and killed Chas. Francis, created great excitement among the colored population, who became quite demonstrative."<sup>66</sup> Few Blacks believed, as the *Journal* further reported, "that the gun went off accidentally in a scuffle," and they were suspicious of the report that the "one witness to the affair...was some little distance away."<sup>67</sup> Dixon was charged with murder and lodged in the county jail at Bridgeton till his bail was posted.

Almost immediately news organs began to paint the incident as an accidental shooting. A brief notice in the newspaper connected Crawford and, by inference, Mt. Pisgah, to Charles Francis. "Mrs. H. C. Crawford and John Stevenson are the only persons authorized to circulate subscription papers to defray the funeral expenses of Chas. Francis."<sup>68</sup> Then, in ways eerily similar to present times, newspapers portrayed the White shooter as a victim of the Black man's aggressiveness. On September 18, *The New York Times* ran a page-1 pro-Dixon article, subtitled, "Dixon's Condition!"

Mr. Dixon has lived on the farm fourteen years and had always been very much opposed to having hunters in the vicinity. We understand that he has had some previous trouble with this man and some others. On the other hand, Francis had experienced serious trouble with other properties for shooting on their properties.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> *Evening Journal*, 14 September 1877, 3.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> *Evening Journal*, 21 September 1877, 3.

<sup>69</sup> *The New York Times*, 18 September 1877, 1.

The in-depth article centering on the shooter's plight and humanity concluded with a telling three-sentence focus on his victim and the African American community. "Funeral services were held yesterday over the remains of Charles Francis. The services were held in the colored people's church and a large concourse of people attended from here and neighboring towns. The colored population turned out en masse."<sup>70</sup>

Prejudicial news reports and resilient anti-Black sensitivities notwithstanding, most citizens expected, minimally, that a conviction for manslaughter would prevail based on the evidence. However, to everyone's amazement including the shooter's, an all-White jury acquitted Dixon of any wrongdoing. Strong objection to the legal injustice was palpable in the Black community. Henrietta was likely with her sister Caroline when she confronted her husband's killer. "As they entered, Dixon was confronted by the wife of Francis, toward whom he advanced with expressions of regret for her bereavement and sorrow for his act. She drew back from him with expressions of horror, and then addressed herself to Dixon's wife in the harshest terms. Friends of Dixon again interfered, and Mrs. Francis was removed from the room."<sup>71</sup>

Caroline's supporters could envision the depth of irreconcilable grief over the death of her husband; however, few might have immediately noticed at this point, a resultant deterioration of her mental stability. As they waited to escort the widow to her residence, a restless crowd of her supporters expressed frustration over the matter. A disturbance arose among the colored people, who by this time were crowding the corridors of the hotel, and men and women

forced themselves into the room where Dixon and his wife were, and a burly negro threatened to lay violent hands on him. With the assistance of a Constable and others in the hearing, the room was cleared and Dixon and his family were taken out at a side door to their carriage and started for this place. Here they are at present. Some fears are entertained

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> "Colored People Unduly Excited. Result of a Murder Trial in New Jersey-A Verdict of Not Guilty-How the Result Was Received. Special Dispatch to the *New York Times*" *New York Times*, 10 October 1877, 1.

that colored members of the community may seek to do personal harm to Dixon, but his safety will be looked to by those interested.<sup>72</sup>

For Caroline, the time-honored refrain, “time heals [emotional] pain,” never materialized.

A subsequent marriage did not restore her mental health and by 1883, Henrietta was compelled to use her knack for making difficult things happen. In mid-December Henrietta used the following publication to get help for her sister and the family.

In a communication to the *Journal* Mrs. Henrietta Crawford sets forth the statement that the authorities refuse to aid her in securing the incarceration of her demented sister, who it will be remembered, ran away some time ago and was captured after much trouble. Mrs. Crawford now says the crazy woman threatens the lives of the household and constant watch must be kept on her movements. She appeals to the public for help.<sup>73</sup>

Events moved quickly after this publication and one week later the public was informed that, “Mrs. Frances, the colored woman who has been living with her Sister Mrs. Crawford, will be taken to the asylum by officer Fowler. The commitment was made in the name of Caroline Chambers, her last marriage name.”<sup>74</sup> Despite this tragic distraction, Henrietta’s reputation grew and her voice as a spiritual leader was invited by churches from as far away as central Pennsylvania.

### **Socio-Political Church-Life 1880s–1890s**

By the 1880s, Henrietta was a regionally known preacher accepting invitations from as far away as Columbia, Pennsylvania along the Susquehanna River. In announcing her appearance there in June 1883, the local newspaper published: “At 3 o’clock p.m. Mrs. Henrietta Crawford, of Vineland, N.J., an evangelist will preach.”<sup>75</sup> Back home, Crawford’s outreach ministry extended to doing temperance organizing as mentioned in the newspaper on October 24, 1891: “The four o’clock meeting at Temperance Hall will be led by Mrs. Henrietta Crawford. A cordial invitation

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> *Evening Journal* 11 December 1883, 3.

<sup>74</sup> *Evening Journal* 18 December 1883, 3.

<sup>75</sup> “The News From Columbia In Brief,” *Lancaster Daily Intelligencer*, 02 June 1883, 2.

is extended to all and especially the colored people of Vineland.”<sup>76</sup> By now Crawford was also inviting nationally known individuals such as Burnham Wardell, a New England progressive who frequently traveled the area advocating for non-punitive prison reform and for humane policies in the treatment of paupers and the insane. “The exercises were opened by the pastor, Mrs. Henrietta Crawford, who gave an appropriate scripture reading and offered prayer. She then introduced Mr. Wardell...who said it gave him pleasure to address the colored people of Vineland...The meeting closed with a benediction by Mrs. Crawford.”<sup>77</sup>

Perhaps, no greater moment of excitement surpassed the arrival in Vineland than that of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper as guest speaker on Henrietta’s program at Cosmopolitan Hall in December 1891. It is unthinkable that radical activist and writer Harper did not dine or have tea at least once at the Crawford residence and perhaps stayed at their home during her visit to Vineland. As newspapers noted, “Frances Harper and others will lecture on the Progress of the Colored Race Wednesday evening Dec. 9 at Cosmopolitan Hall. An invitation is extended to all the political parties.”<sup>78</sup> Frances Harper’s and Henrietta Crawford’s topics at that political event are presently unknown. We do know, however, that the 66-year-old Harper had just delivered a talk in Boston only five days before speaking in Vineland. As reported in the December 4 issue of the *Boston Globe*: “Helps and Hindrances was the subject of a lecture delivered to a large audience last night in Ebenezer Baptist Church...by Mrs. Frances E. W. Harper of Philadelphia.”<sup>79</sup> Given Harper’s itinerary, the “Helps and Hindrances” lecture was likely the keynote address that the 66-year-old activist and writer delivered that evening. Also, it is not surprising to read that “Mrs. H. C.

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<sup>76</sup> *The Daily Journal* 24 October 1891, 6.

<sup>77</sup> “Burnham Wardell Talks to the Colored People,” *The Daily Journal*, 19 October 1885, 1.

<sup>78</sup> *Evening Journal* 08 December 1891, 3.

<sup>79</sup> *The Boston Globe*, 04 December 1891, 8.

Crawford will make some speech on political matters” on the program.<sup>80</sup> On balance, Crawford’s accomplishments at this juncture belied her recent troubles at Mt. Pisgah.

Intra-church discord surfaced at Mt. Pisgah following the election of church officers in spring 1890. Discussed on the pages of the *Evening Journal* during the first week in May, the humiliating results of the church election threw Henrietta Crawford and her supporters out of the church. “The congregation of the African Mount Pisgah Church have expelled Asbury Brown and Mr. Crawford and elected these officers: Trustees George Miller, Eli Smith, Cyrus Brown, Jacob Johnson, and William Jones; Secretary, Jacob Johnson; Treasury, Geo. Miller.”<sup>81</sup> Continuing, the *Journal’s* notification suggested that Henrietta Crawford was a legal strategist in the affair. “Mrs. Crawford was instrumental in building the church and has the deed in her charge. She claims to have been expelled without a hearing and lays the blame to the pastor of whom she has a very small opinion, and shows the proceedings of the last conference to prove some assertions she makes in regard to his conduct in the past.”<sup>82</sup>

Following her farewell sermon delivered on Sunday evening May 11, Crawford appealed the election results to the U.A.M.E.’s Conference authority. Her effort drew a favorable decision nullifying the election results. “Rev. Mr. Lomack, the A.M. E. minister over whom so much fuss was made recently, was expelled from the conference and will not be allowed to preach. This is a complete vindication for Mrs. Crawford and the others whom Mr. Lomack turned out of the church. The new pastor Rev. Gaston has reinstated all those reputable citizen [sic] who were turned out of church.”<sup>83</sup> In concluding its coverage of the Mt. Pisgah strife, the *Journal* indicated Crawford’s expanded role as the regional face of UAME proselytizing. “Mrs. Crawford has been

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<sup>80</sup> *Evening Journal* 08 December 1891, 3.

<sup>81</sup> *The Evening Journal*, 07 May 1890, 3.

<sup>82</sup> *The Evening Journal*, 07 May 1890, 3.

<sup>83</sup> *The Evening Journal*, 22 May 1890, 3.

set at her mission work at Holly Beach.” Underneath the disputed issues, however, and similar the motive suggested in the inter-church conflict of 1877, the intra-church contention in 1890 may have also been rooted in interpersonal relations that were spawned in the military.

Along with his life-long associate George W. Green, Mt. Pisgah’s Jacob Johnson had made the 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment’s heralded frontal assault at Petersburg on June 15, 1864. Assigned to Company C, Johnson sustained a gunshot wound to the left thigh. Hospitalization for Johnson’s wound occurred in the south and he was subsequently returned to duty and discharged with his unit at Brownsville, Texas in October 1865.<sup>84</sup> At five ½ foot tall, Johnson’s diminutiveness was magnified in the presence of James Crawford, one of the tallest Black men in Vineland. It is legitimate to speculate that Johnson’s antagonism toward trustee James Crawford was stemming from a combination of the latter’s non-combat hospitalization in the war as well as their significant difference in height, and perhaps, most importantly, Crawford’s being burdened with such an unnaturally outspoken and influential wife as Henrietta.

<i>Soldier –Trustee</i>	<i>Regiment</i>	<i>Birthplace</i>	<i>Ally</i>	<i>Spouse</i>	<i>Church</i>	<i>Era</i>
George W. Crawford*	Co. H-22 <sup>nd</sup>	Maryland	No	Sarah	Bethel	1870s
James Crawford	Co. F-22 <sup>nd</sup>	Maryland	Yes	Henrietta	Pisgah	1870s, 1890s
George W. Green	Co. K-22 <sup>nd</sup>	Salem, NJ	No	Elizabeth	Bethel	1870s
Jacob Johnson	Co. C-22 <sup>nd</sup>	Salem, NJ	No	Mary E.	Pisgah	1890S
John D. Williams*	Co. C 43 <sup>rd</sup>	Ohio	Yes	Sarah	Pisgah	1870s

\* Chairman of Trustee Board

#### **Civil War Veteran/Church Trustees and Henrietta Crawford Alliances, 1870s & 1890s**

<sup>84</sup> Jacob Johnson muster-out document, <https://www.fold3.com/image/273/263431214>.

The inter-church rivalry of these churches abated noticeably with passing of the Civil War generation. Thus, by the end of the century Henrietta's brother George J. Green, his wife Laura, and their daughter Leonora, were active members at New Bethel. Keeping within family tradition, in 1906 Leonora was elected superintendent of Sunday schools for the A.M.E.'s large Camden district.<sup>85</sup>

### **Fading Era of Vineland Activism, Late 1890s**

In June 1897, Crawford's mother died suddenly from a lingering heart ailment. Her passing was reported in *The Evening Journal*.<sup>86</sup> In thanking the pastor of the White Methodist Church, Mary's daughter Simoleth Lee wrote, "We wish to thank Mr. McDougall of the Free Methodist Church, for the use of the church for holding the funeral services of the late Mrs. Green, and the kind friends who assisted in our bereavement. Mrs. S. Lee and family."<sup>87</sup> In the following week George Green published a similar appreciation for the rapid and effective response of his mother's life insurance company.<sup>88</sup> Such publications denote the [extended] Green family's middle-class status and community standing. Their gracious missives, however, obscured the fact that family leader Henrietta and James were flat broke by this time.

The Crawford's economic implosion seems related to a mortgage foreclosure and James's declining health along with the subsequent collapse of his physically demanding well-digging and maintenance business.<sup>89</sup> By the end of the century their reduced income largely derived from renting rooms in Henrietta's spacious remortgaged domain. Purchased by Henrietta in 1884 and described in 1916, the residence was a "large eight room, two-story frame dwelling...capable of

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<sup>85</sup> *Evening Journal*, 18 September 1906, 3.

<sup>86</sup> *The Evening Journal*, 11 June 1897, 3.

<sup>87</sup> *The Evening Journal*, 15 June 1897, 3. Various spellings of Semolith's name are rendered among primary source records including state and federal censuses and military records relating to her husband's service in the Civil War.

<sup>88</sup> *The Evening Journal*, 15 June 1897, 3.

<sup>89</sup> Deeds, Mortgages and Records, Cumberland County Clerk's Office: Cumberland County Courthouse, 60 W. Broad Street, Bridgeton, N.J.

being divided and making a good double house.”<sup>90</sup> In addition to boarders’ rent the household income was supported by James’s military pension, which started around 1891.

Seeking an increase decades later James recalled, “It was increased up to \$12.00 and after that I got aged pension.”<sup>91</sup> On that 1913 application the veteran also stated, “I would not ask for the increase if I was able to work. My wife and I are both old and unable to do any work.”<sup>92</sup> In 1898, however, Vineland locals were undoubtedly stunned at the announcement published in October; “Mr. James Crawford and his wife Henrietta, the preacher, have moved to Woodbury.” The notification concluded, “The Crawfords were among the best colored people in town.”<sup>93</sup>

### **Education Reform and Redirection 1900-1917**

In 1900, the Crawford’s five-member household included an adopted daughter who needed to be enrolled in school. Situated at 118 Cherry Street in north Woodbury, their new home was within walking distance to the all-white Walnut Street Elementary School. Attendance at this school would mean a much shorter trip for 7-year-old “Eva” since the two African American schools were at least 2-and-a-half miles away at either the Carpenter Street School in south Woodbury or the Park Avenue School 2 miles away in Deptford Township. Eva attended the latter school which, on May 1, informed its north Woodbury students that they could no longer attend Parkside without an official transfer from the Woodbury school district. Moreover, such transfers would limit enrollment of the affected students to, “attend [until] the balance of the term.”<sup>94</sup> Henrietta felt that something had to be done about the situation. By contrast, most of the of Black families in the neighborhood did not join the ensuing struggle to integrate the Walnut Street

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<sup>90</sup> *Evening Journal*, 16 February 1916, 1.

<sup>91</sup> James Crawford Pension File, “General Affidavit” December 26, 1913.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *The Evening Journal*, 06 October 1898, 3.

<sup>94</sup> *Woodbury Daily Times*, 29 May 1900. Gloucester County Historical Society, Woodbury, New Jersey.

Elementary School. A majority of African Americans may have preferred the nurturing environment provided at their own schools. Neighbor Mattie Bowman of 65 Green Street, however, felt the same way about the matter as Henrietta and they joined forces to integrate the Walnut Street School.

The twenty-six-year-old Mattie Bowman and her New Jersey born husband, Francis, were caring for two school-age children and a 1-year-old named “Mae” in 1900.<sup>95</sup> In collaborating with the nearly 60-year-old Crawford, Bowman co-launched one of the earliest campaigns for multiracial education in Woodbury. On Saturday, September 29 *The Philadelphia Inquirer* detailed the cloudy but spirited Friday morning event. With its banner reading, “COLORED WOMEN BRING THEIR CHILDREN TO WHITE FOLK’S SCHOOL,” *The Inquirer* highlighted the encounter. “To force an issue on the color question Mrs. Mattie Bowman and Mrs. Henrietta Crawford, colored, led their children to the Walnut Public School this morning and demanded their admission. The teachers told the colored women they must have permits from the Board of Education, and after a wordy discussion they took the children away.”<sup>96</sup> The newspaper report ended with a focus on the aging veteran, “Mrs. Crawford, who is a taxpayer, says she will appeal to the court.”<sup>97</sup> Although immediate and short-term legal results are unknown, it is worth noting one long-range impact of their effort. In the mid-1920s, the Bowman’s youngest child, Mae, graduated Trenton Normal School and became a teacher at the Park Avenue school.<sup>98</sup>

From Woodbury, James and Henrietta shared a series of domiciles with extended family members, first in Atlantic City in 1905 and in South Philadelphia in 1910. By 1915 the now aged

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<sup>95</sup> Fran and Mattie Bowman household, 1900 federal census, Woodbury, New Jersey.

<sup>96</sup> *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 29 September 1900, 4.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Courier Post*, 15 May 1936, 15.

couple was living at East Orange in Essex County New Jersey. There, James and Henrietta lived out the evening phase of their lives before passing away in 1916 and 1917, respectively.<sup>99</sup>

### Legacy

Knowledge of Crawford's life and record of faith-based social-justice contributions serves a critical twenty-first century need to enrich our understanding of the African American and Women's experiences and their variegated impacts on national, state, and local histories. Historian Lonnie Bunch contends there is a great benefit and "need to draw inspiration and guidance from the past. And through that inspiration, people will find tools and paths that will help them live their lives."<sup>100</sup> That observation has never been more important than now, in the current climate of unprecedented political, ecological, and economic crises.

It is noteworthy to observe that a fifty-year commemorative notation about the Crawford's departure from Vineland was published in the *Daily Journal* in 1948. It simply read, "James Crawford and his wife, Henrietta, the preacher, moved to Woodbury."<sup>101</sup> Also, when named "New Jersey Mother of the Year 1973," Rebecca Lassiter (cited above) reiterated on the pages of *The New York Times*, Crawford's affective maternal role in her life.<sup>102</sup> Collectively, Crawford's manifold commitments to social justice admit her entry into a pantheon of women and men in who significantly influenced New Jersey history in the transitional post-Civil War decades.

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<sup>99</sup> See George and Mary Green households in respective municipalities on the 1905 New Jersey State Census, 1910 federal census, and the 1915 New Jersey State Census.

<sup>100</sup> Lonnie Bunch, "Knowing the Past Opens the Door to the Future The Continuing Importance of Black History Month," National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian, Blog, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/knowing-past-opens-door-future-continuing-importance-black-history-month>, Accessed, 04 Aug 2020

<sup>101</sup> "Today In Vineland's History: '50 Years Ago,'" *The Daily Journal*, 23 October 1948, 3. [https://www.newspapers.com/clip/41223766/the\\_daily\\_journal/](https://www.newspapers.com/clip/41223766/the_daily_journal/).

<sup>102</sup> "Preaching Through Music," *New York Times*, 25 February 1973, 75.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1973/02/25/archives/preaching-through-music-long-a-madison-resident.html>.



**No known portraits of Crawford exist. This representation of Henrietta Crawford was drawn by Mehki Coleman, Grade 7, Cedarbrook Middle School, Cheltenham School District, Wyncote, PA.**

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