



CHAPTER *Biography*

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Josephine White Griffing

FRIEND OF THE FREEDMEN

Many officials of the Freedmen's Bureau were white northerners who had been abolitionists before the war. One of the most influential was Josephine White Griffing. Read the paragraphs below. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.

For most of her life, Josephine White Griffing confined herself to traditional roles. At age 36, however, she started on a new course. It led her to become one of the leading figures in the struggle for equality in the United States.

Josephine White was born in 1814. At age 21, she married Charles Griffing, with whom she eventually had five daughters. Then, around 1850, Josephine Griffing heard a speech that changed her life.

A group of abolitionists was touring the nation, trying to gain support to end slavery. Griffing attended one of their lectures. Inspired by what she heard, she was determined to help.

Griffing joined the Western Anti-Slavery Society. She also began to write for an antislavery newspaper. The Griffing's Ohio home became a stop on the underground railroad, offering rest and safety to escaped slaves on their journey to freedom.

Griffing became a powerful speaker. She addressed hundreds of antislavery meetings, moving audiences with her accounts of the cruel separation of slave families. She also learned how to lobby Congress for her cause. Toward the end of the Civil War, she moved to Washington, D.C.

After the war, Griffing worked to help newly freed slaves rebuild their lives. She tried to convince influential senators to set up the Freedmen's Bureau. Later, impatient with the Bureau's inefficiency, she asked private charitable groups for additional help.

Griffing personally led groups of southern black citizens to northern cities and helped them find jobs. When all else failed, she opened her home to former slaves who were too old or too sick to care for themselves.

The nation had to redress its past treatment of African Americans, she said. Just freeing them was not enough.

Griffing was also active in the struggle for women's rights. She

helped to found the Ohio Women's Rights Association and became its president. Like other women in the antislavery movement, Griffing had learned that she could influence political affairs. As a result, she turned her efforts to winning for women the right to vote.

Griffing's endless labors cost her dearly. She separated from her husband, and her health began to fail. When Josephine White Griffing died in 1872, at the age of 57, the fight for equality was just beginning. She had, however, done more than most people to help ensure its victory.

The nation had to redress its past treatment of African Americans, said Griffing. Just freeing them was not enough.

Define underlined terms here:



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Blanche K. Bruce

ADVOCATE OF JUSTICE FOR ALL

For a brief period after the Civil War, African Americans in the South enjoyed full political freedom. One African American who won public office during this era was Blanche K. Bruce. Read the paragraphs below. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.

The date was March 4, 1875, and the newly elected members of the Senate were about to take their seats. As each new senator walked down the aisle, he was accompanied by the senior senator from his state. Suddenly, newly elected Senator Blanche K. Bruce from Mississippi was headed down the long aisle. But where was senior Senator Alcorn?

Blanche K. Bruce had come a long way to reach the United States Senate.

Alcorn was sorting papers at his desk. He took great pains to avoid watching Bruce, the first African American to be elected to the United States Senate.

Bruce continued down the aisle, ignoring Alcorn's insult. Then, Senator Conklin of New York stepped up. "Excuse me, Mr. Bruce," he said. "I did not until this moment see that you were without escort. Permit me." Together, they walked the rest of the way.

Blanche K. Bruce had come a long way to reach the United States Senate. He had been born into slavery in Virginia in 1841. During the Civil War, he escaped to Missouri. Later, he attended Oberlin College in Ohio.

Bruce moved to Mississippi after the Civil War. There, he began his career in public service, serving at various times as tax assessor,

sheriff, and sergeant-at-arms of the state senate. In 1874, he was elected to the United States Senate. As a senator, he took an interest in issues such as tariffs, soldiers' pensions, and internal improvements.

Bruce was one of the few senators who spoke out against the forced removal of Native Americans from their homes. "Our Indian policy and administration seem to me

to have been inspired . . . by a stern selfishness," he said. He also campaigned against a measure to restrict Chinese immigration. He commented:

Representing as I do a people who but a few years ago were . . . essentially disqualified from enjoying the privileges . . . of American citizenship . . . I shall vote against this bill.

After Bruce left the Senate in 1881, he continued to serve his country. He was twice appointed Recorder of Deeds in Washington, D.C. He also served as Registrar of the Treasury. He died in 1898, having dedicated his life to working for justice and equality.

Define underlined terms here:

Josephine White Griffing

1. How did Josephine White Griffing become active in the antislavery movement? Use two pieces of textual evidence to support your answer.
2. How did Griffing help newly freed slaves? Defend your answer with at least 2 pieces of textual evidence.

Blanche K. Bruce

3. What position did Bruce take on the treatment of Native American's? Use textual evidence to support your answer
4. How did Bruce's fellow senators react to his election? Use 2 pieces of textual evidence to support your answer.

Comparing the Two Readings

5. Both Josephine White Griffing and Blanche K. Bruce overcame adversity (hardship) to become leaders. How did their past experiences influence their leadership? Use textual evidence from each reading to support your answer.