



A TIMELINE OF THE WOMEN
WHO CHANGED AMERICA



June 2022 Her Story ENewsletter Education Advocates

Higher levels of education have consistently led to better lives. In this month's newsletter, we profile two advocates for education: Fanny Jackson Coppin and Grace Hoadley Dodge.



The first Black woman to head an institution of higher learning in the U.S., **Fanny Jackson Coppin** was born a slave. She was a domestic and she struggled to get an education. "It was in me to get an education and to teach my people. This idea was deep in my soul." Coppin was able to attend Oberlin College through a scholarship from the African Methodist Church as well as financial support from her aunt. She was the first Black person chosen to be a pupil-teacher at Oberlin. In addition, she organized evening classes to teach freed African Americans. Coppin graduated in 1865 and went to Philadelphia where she taught and shortly became an administrator at the Institute for Colored Youth (today Cheyney University of Pennsylvania). When she was named head principal in 1869, she became the first African American woman to become a school principal, and later the first African American woman superintendent.

An educator, missionary and life-long advocate for female education, Coppin said "I feel sometimes like a person to whom in childhood was entrusted some sacred flame... This is the desire to see my race lifted out of the mire of ignorance, weakness and degradation; no longer to sit in obscure corners and devour the scraps of knowledge which his superiors flung at him. I want to see him crowned with strength and dignity; adorned with the enduring grace of intellectual attainments." Coppin State University in Baltimore, Maryland, is named in her honor.



A philanthropist who lived her family's philosophy of leadership work in organizations for the betterment of the human condition, **Grace Hoadley Dodge** left behind her society roots to enter a life of service. Dodge grew up in a wealthy family in New York City. After education at home, she entered the teaching profession. Inspired by an evangelist who visited the Dodge home, she decided to enter a life of service. She regarded her charitable work as her job and only took a two-week vacation. In addition, she avoided publicity and made many of her donations anonymously.

Dodge became an instructor at Emily Huntington's "kitchen garden" classes. The objective was to teach immigrants and working-class women basic domestic and cooking skills. These classes used techniques such as would be found in kindergarten, in order to entertain and instruct. In addition, she helped found the Kitchen Garden Association in 1880. It later became the Industrial Education Association. The I.E.A. formed the basis of the New York College for the Training of Teachers, which was renamed Teachers College in 1892. Today it is part of Columbia University.

Fanny Jackson Coppin and Grace Hoadley Dodge are among the more than 850 women profiled in our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America* Women's accomplishments continue to inspire and encourage us all. Continue to help us tell women's stories!

Charlotte Waisman and Jill Tietjen

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