

# Frances Eliza Hall

## *Postbellum Teacher in Washington, D.C.*

BY ALCIONE M. AMOS AND PATRICIA BROWN SAVAGE

Auburn, New York, lies at the north end of Lake Owasco. The Owasco River runs through the city, which averages more than 100 inches of snow each year. When a blizzard hit Auburn in the winter of 1867–1868, Frances Eliza Hall was snug in her family's large frame homestead on Orchard Street, for her carpenter father and brother had ensured that the house was not drafty. Nevertheless it's easy to imagine a 46-year-old, unmarried schoolteacher, living with her brother and his family, gloomy with cabin fever, and pondering the disheartening news of recalcitrant President Andrew Johnson's fight to suppress Reconstruction and to stifle black freedom in the South. Stories had drifted north through newspapers, church sermons, and returning travelers about how plantation owners fought against giving their former slaves economic or educational opportunity. For "Fanny" Hall, a schoolteacher herself, the failure to educate the former bondsmen was especially disturbing.

Though the war was over, Auburn in 1867 remained a hotbed of abolitionists, mostly Congregationalists and Quakers, with eager—but apprehensive—hopes for Reconstruction. Famed abolitionist Harriet Tubman had settled in Auburn after the war and lived at 180 South Street, two miles from the Hall homestead.<sup>1</sup> Hall read local

newspapers, broadsides, and sermons that vigorously promoted congressional Republicans' efforts to use federal resources to create a federal Freedmen's Bureau to help former slaves adjust to life after emancipation. President Johnson vetoed the Freedmen's Bureau bill in early 1867, arguing that the burden of educating, protecting, and supporting former slaves should not fall on the federal government.

Hall was incensed that Johnson trusted the southern states to care for uneducated former slaves. The November 1867 issue of the *Congregationalist*, her church's official newspaper, included an article arguing that the nation must send "thorough, Christian, Yankee teachers to the South" to work for the American Missionary Association or other philanthropic societies and uplift the former slaves.<sup>2</sup> The article, along with Johnson's continued resistance to Reconstruction, may have prompted Hall to offer her teaching skills and her experience to join this mission in the South.

Volunteering in mid-life to leave her safe, comfortable home and travel to some unknown southern place demanded courage and pluck. In early December, Hall wrote John Mercer Langston, whom she had met in Ohio while taking teacher training courses at Antioch College. Langston, a prominent black abolitionist who had helped

This 1866 engraving of a primary school for freedmen (children and adults) in Vicksburg, Mississippi, is one of the few available that show the northern white women who came south to educate the formerly enslaved. While no images have been found of Frances Eliza Hall, the New Yorker who lived and taught in Barry Farm for 40 years, the documentary record offers a telling portrait of her service educating African Americans in Washington. *Courtesy, Harper's Weekly*

recruit black soldiers for the Union Army, now served as inspector of schools for the Freedmen's Bureau. In response to her query about how to apply for a teaching position, Langston responded that she should apply to the New York City headquarters of the American Missionary Association with his endorsement. Delighted, she immediately wrote a letter, "at the suggestion of Mr. Langston, who kindly writes me, to use his name, by way of recommendation."<sup>3</sup>

With Langston's recommendation, the AMA accepted Hall and assigned her to the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Relief Association, which sent her on to a school for freed children in Washington, D.C. Bravely she moved—on her own—to Barry Farm, a newly created African American settlement on the eastern side of Washington, across the Anacostia River from the Capitol. She spent nearly 50 years living and working in the area, teaching multiple generations of African American children.

Hall descended from a civic-minded New England family with roots that stretched back to the Revolutionary War.<sup>4</sup> One of her ancestors, John Gibson, fought as a private in a New Hampshire regiment at the Battle of Saratoga in 1777. He was highly esteemed as a public-spirited gentleman and elected selectman. Another member of the family, Rebecca Gibson, married Jacob Hall in 1793 in Ashburnham, Massachusetts, and both

their sons married daughters of Israel Reeves. At the age of 22, one son, John Hall of Leominster, Massachusetts, married Tempe Reeves in 1819.<sup>5</sup>

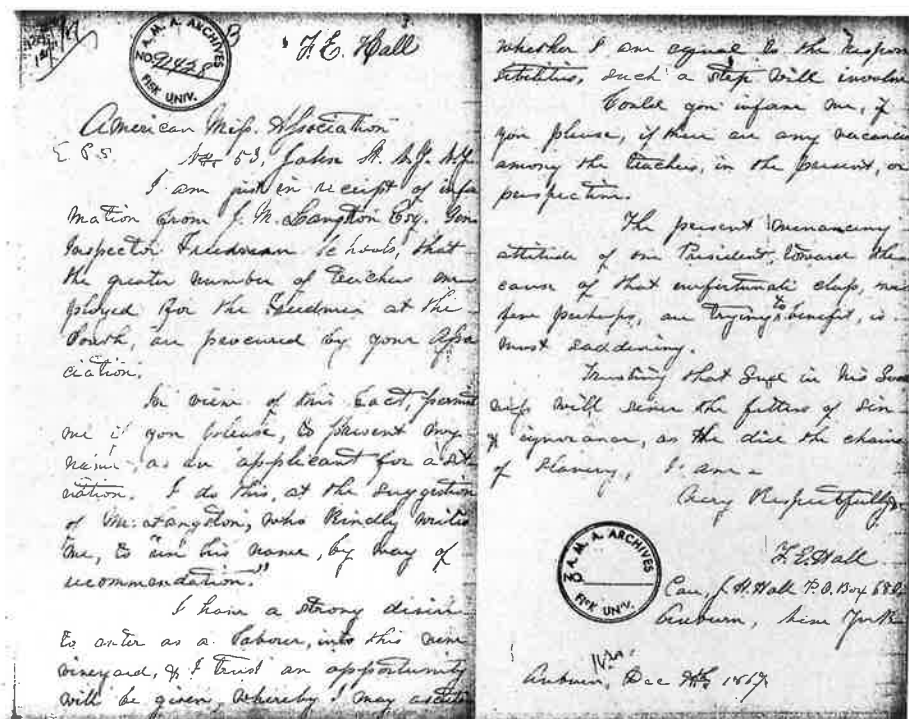
Israel Reeves, Hall's maternal grandfather, was born in Monroe, Michigan. Peripatetic Israel Reeves was a Revolutionary War soldier, a member of the Connecticut legislature, and sheriff of Cayuga County, New York. By 1793, he was married and living in Lyme, Connecticut, where Hall's mother Tempe was born, and the family later moved to Auburn, where Tempe met John Hall. Living on Orchard Street in Auburn, Tempe (née Reeves) Hall and John Hall had nine children, six of whom survived childhood. Frances Eliza was the second child, born on August 29, 1821. Remaining close to her family, Frances Hall lived in the Auburn family homestead on Orchard Street several times between her birth and her death.

Hall entered Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, in 1856 and attended its preparatory program until 1858. These two years in Yellow Springs gave her all the academic credentials she needed for a teaching career. After Antioch, Hall took a teaching job at nearby Xenia Female College, later known as the Old Female Seminary. Hall moved in with her brothers Frederick Jerome and George Gibson Hall, who were living in Xenia. Frederick was married and owned a grocery, and George was his clerk. When financial difficulties closed the pri-



John Mercer Langston, who recommended Frances Eliza Hall to the American Missionary Association. Courtesy, Library of Congress

Right: Responding to the need to free formerly enslaved children from "the fetters of sin and ignorance," Hall wrote the American Missionary Association for a teaching position on April 9, 1867. Courtesy, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans



vate seminary, Hall moved on to teach at a local public school. After a few years of teaching in Xenia, Hall moved back to Auburn to her brother John Henry's home on Orchard Street.<sup>6</sup>

When Hall wrote to John Mercer Langston about teaching, there were dozens of freedmen's relief organizations assigned to different hospitals, territories, towns, or schools. At the American Missionary Association headquarters in New York City, dedicated volunteers from various religious groups, freedmen's relief associations, and missionary organizations had coalesced to coordinate medical missionaries, nurses, teachers, and others for the education and support of newly freed African Americans. Heavily dominated by Congregationalists, the AMA had begun its relief work long before war broke out, and new AMA missionaries and teachers followed the Union armies south to create schools in captured areas. Missionary teachers were not just white New England schoolmarm; a third of them were men, and a number were black.<sup>7</sup>

Frances Hall wanted to join their ranks. "I have a strong desire to enter as a laborer, into this new vineyard," she wrote. But there was some competition for missionary teaching work. The AMA looked for teachers who were "abolitionist in conviction and practice," according to its monthly journal. "We need teachers, men of the 'right stamp,' actuated by pure philanthropic motives—*working men*—men who *hate* slavery ABOLITIONISTS! dyed in the pure dye—men who dare face this *miserable, wheedling conservatism* . . . who can see in the slave, blinded by ignorance . . . the future intelligent Christian citizen."<sup>8</sup>

Regrettably many applicants did not have AMA's "right stamp." Some applied in a spirit of adventure or curiosity, while others sought employment in the South for their health, believing that the warm weather would be beneficial. In July 1866 the AMA issued a warning to ward off such applicants: "This is not a hygienic association, to help invalids try a change of air, or travel at others' expense." Financial necessity also drove some teachers south: while not generous, a teacher's salary was attractive for the unemployed.<sup>9</sup> Although Hall was an experienced teacher with worthy credentials, it was likely her letter's religious and abolitionist arguments that gave her the "right stamp."

The AMA accepted Hall as a missionary teacher and assigned her to Barry Farm, a new African American settlement established by the Freedmen's Bureau in 1867 to help relieve the housing prob-

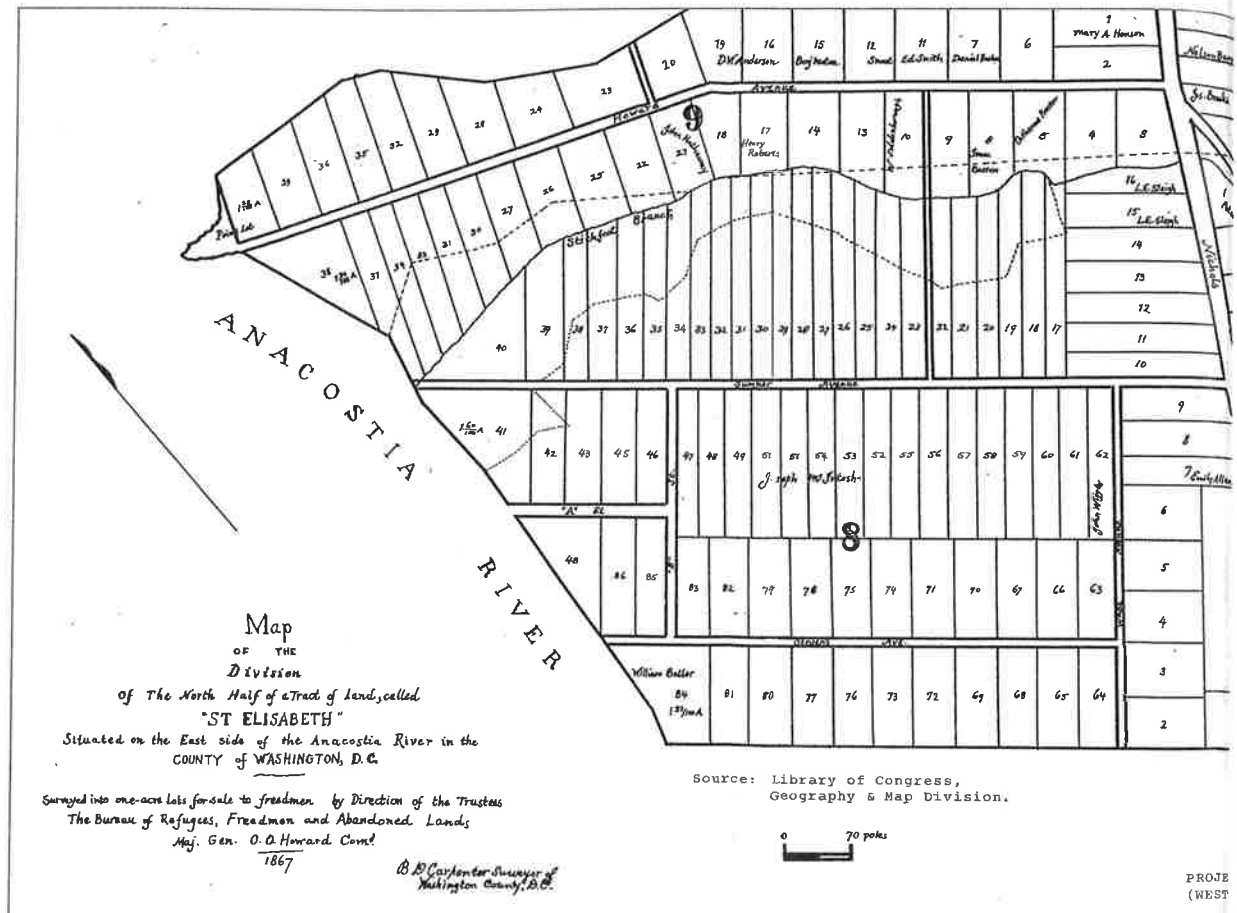
lem encountered by black refugees who had arrived in Washington in droves during the Civil War. The idea for the settlement grew out of a meeting between General O.O. Howard, commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, and a group of African American refugees living in a makeshift settlement on K Street between 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Streets. Howard told the group that they could not stay on land that was not theirs. They responded "very pertinently," according to Howard's autobiography, "'Where shall we go, and what shall we do?'" Howard replied with a question of his own: "What would make you self-supporting?" and heard an almost unanimous answer: "Land! Give us Land!"<sup>10</sup>

The Freedmen's Bureau responded by creating a settlement for newly arrived African Americans, offering to sell them lots and enough lumber to build a small house. In April 1867 the agency spent \$52,000 to buy 375 acres of farmland from the Barry family on the eastern bank of the Eastern Branch, as the Anacostia River was then known. The land was quickly surveyed into one acre lots that "were taken with avidity," Howard noted, because the prospect of owning land was an excellent stimulus for the newly freed African Americans. "Everyone who visited the Barry Farm and saw the new hopefulness with which most of the dwellers there were inspired," Howard recalled, "could not fail to regard the entire enterprise as judicious and beneficent."<sup>11</sup>

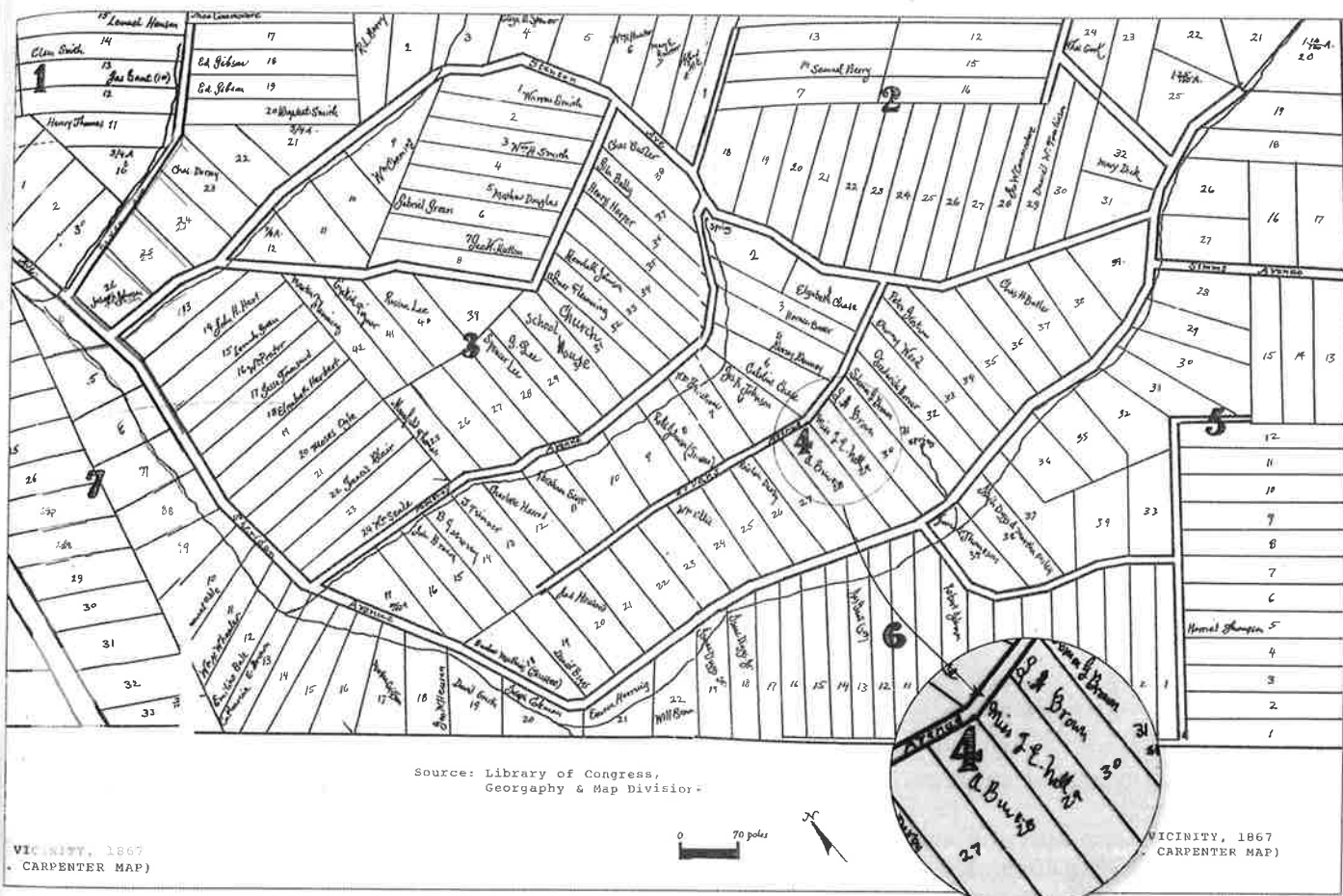
The Freedmen's Bureau provided loans to buyers of lots at Barry Farm. Upon providing a down payment, the buyers took on a one-acre lot for a price ranging from \$175 to \$300. Terms were monthly payments of \$10 spread over a period of up to two years. A first inhabitant of Barry Farm remembered in later years, "Many of the settlers came from the barracks in the city and worked on their lots in the night by lantern, lamp and candlelight, clearing off brush and putting up temporary board shacks."<sup>12</sup> After the Freedmen's Bureau had procured and sold lumber for the construction of more permanent dwellings, the settlers began building small 14x24-foot, two-room, A-frame houses to replace the temporary housing.

Until 1873 the settlement was called Barry Farm, but residents wished to rename their neighborhood because James Barry had been a slave owner. On June 5, 1873, at the request of Solomon G. Brown, a self-taught scientist and Smithsonian Institution employee; abolitionist, publisher, and diplomat Frederick Douglass; and other prominent residents, the District of Columbia Legislative





This small, A-frame house on Sheridan Rd. SE was photographed in 1941 by the Alley Dwelling Authority. It probably is a rare surviving structure from the beginnings of Barry Farm. At right is another typical original, photographed at the same time on Stanton Rd. Courtesy, National Capital Housing Authority



This surveyor's map of Barry Farm, ca. 1867, shows the names of the first settlers. The detail shows the property purchased by Frances E. Hall, lot 29, Section 4, or 29 Elvans Avenue (now Road). Courtesy, Library of Congress

Assembly approved an official act to change the name to Hillsdale. The new name, however, was not universally adopted and never appeared on official maps. On occasion real estate maps called the settlement Potomac City or Howard Town, but to this day "Barry Farm" endures. Deeds issued to house buyers in the area give Barry Farm as the location. As of this writing, however, the question of the best historic name is again under discussion, and Barry Farm/Hillsdale remains in use.<sup>13</sup>

Despite their distance from the seat of power on the other side of the Eastern Branch, Barry Farm/Hillsdale's residents were not immune from the tensions of the era. In June 1871 a white former slave driver named John W. Lanham attacked David Gainer, a 33-year-old African American. Lanham farmed a large garden on land he rented from Ignatius Fenwick Young at the Giesborough Plantation (today Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling). In addition to being a descendant of an old white aristocratic slave-holding family, landlord Ignatius

Young had just lost his run for the District's House of Delegates to black Republican Solomon G. Brown.<sup>14</sup>

Lanham might be described as excessively loyal to his landlord, or possibly a member of the local Ku Klux Klan. The *New National Era*, a local black newspaper, in fact ascribed the attack to the Klan. According to news reports, Gainer had walked to Giesborough to buy some sweet potato plants. Upon entering Lanham's property, Lanham's wife Amelia warned him that "John is a-going to tie you and shower you to death." Indeed, Lanham and his accomplices seized Gainer and proceeded to hold a water hose so close to his face that he almost suffocated. In the struggle that followed Gainer's clothes were torn to shreds and he suffered a head wound. On releasing Gainer, Lanham warned: "Any n\*\*\*\*r who dared come on his place who had voted for . . . [Solomon G.] Brown would receive like treatment and that there was no law in the District to prevent it."<sup>15</sup>



The fact that she took a 50 percent cut in pay shows her dedication. Her classroom immediately was full to the brim with 66 students. "The rapid influx of people at Barry Farm has filled this school to repletion," she wrote in June 1869. "The capacity of the building will scarcely accommodate the pupils another school year."<sup>19</sup>

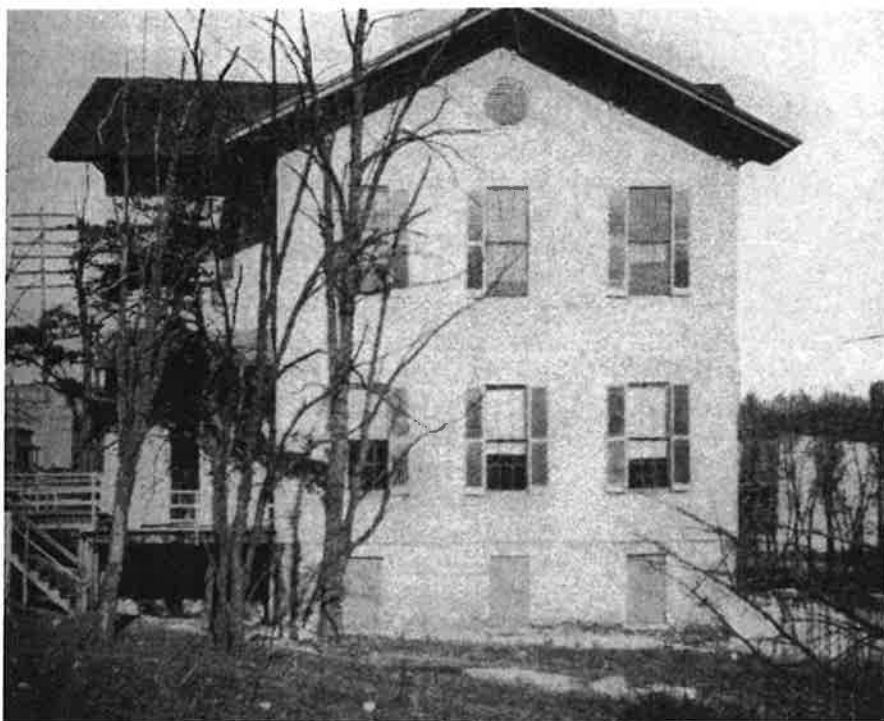
From all appearances, Hall's sole motivation was to help African American students learn to read and write. Even after moving to D.C., where she could have taken courses at Miner Normal School or Howard University (the white-only Washington Normal School also opened in 1873), she elected to devote her time to her students instead. She remained a teacher in the lower elementary grades, and records show no increase in her salary during the dozen or so years she taught at the Hillsdale School until she retired in 1881.<sup>21</sup>

Hall seems to have been relatively unusual among the more than 2,000 northern white female teachers who came south to teach freed children. The median age of these teachers was 27 years, and on average they taught for 2.5 years. Hall, on the other hand, arrived in her mid-40s, and her dedication and compassion held her steady in the community for four decades.<sup>22</sup>

In her classroom, Hall offered sensitivity, sympathy, and nurturing for her students' self-confidence. Although "their curriculum was doubtless old-fashioned," wrote W.E.B. Du Bois about Reconstruction-era teachers such as Frances Hall, "in educational power it was supreme, for it was the contact of living souls."<sup>23</sup>

Hall knew intellectual ability when she saw it. At one point Hall told her Hillsdale School student, Georgiana R. Simpson, that she had a first-class mind and motivated her to continue her studies in earnest. Georgiana was born in Washington around 1866, the daughter of David and Catherine Simpson, who came from Virginia most likely as part of the mass exodus of refugees fleeing slavery during the Civil War. Her parents bought a lot on Howard Road near the Anacostia River, where they ran a dairy farm. To supplement the family's income, her father also worked as a laborer at the Botanical Garden and later as a hostler. Her mother was a washerwoman. They were intent on having their children attend school.<sup>24</sup>

After completing the eighth grade at Hillsdale School, Georgiana attended M Street High School across the Anacostia River in Northwest Washington. From there she went to teachers' training at Miner Normal School, where Dr. Lucy E. Moten



When Mount Zion Hill School closed, Hall moved with its students to the new Hillsdale School, seen here in 1908. The two-story, six-room frame building operated on Nichols (now Martin Luther King) Ave. at the corner of Sheridan Rd. until it closed in 1913.<sup>20</sup> *Report of the Schoolhouse Commission, 1908*

was her mentor. Simpson's career began in the D.C. school system in 1885. First she returned to the Hillsdale School to teach elementary pupils, then she taught at Dunbar High School. Georgiana continued her education, earning a bachelor's degree from the University of Chicago in 1911. Ten years later, she was awarded a Ph.D. in German from the University of Chicago, one of the first three African American women to receive a doctorate. Howard University hired her as a professor of German language and literature. Dr. Georgiana Simpson died in 1944 after a distinguished academic career.<sup>25</sup>



Howard University Professor of German Dr. Georgiana R. Simpson. Courtesy, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University Archives

**T**o what kinds of families did Frances Hall's Barry Farm/Hillsdale students belong? Federal censuses and oral histories archived in the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum reveal that families divided themselves based on whether forebears had been enslaved. In fact some descendants of families who had been free



before the Civil War believed they held a higher social status. In an oral history interview, Ella Howard Pearis, whose family lived on Elvans Avenue for generations, said in describing her ancestor, "She was a free. She wasn't slave. . . . in those days [there] was the discrimination among Negroes, whether you were slave or whether you were free. Free before the Civil War."<sup>26</sup> Some of Hall's neighbors had a smattering of education; others, such as Solomon G. Brown, were highly self-taught. For some children, sitting in a classroom was a novel, uncomfortable, and unwelcome experience. Others, such as Simpson, craved knowledge; they made dedicated and diligent scholars.

The community's families were large and close knit. "Most families ran five on up with both parents present, if alive," according to resident Thomas Taylor.<sup>27</sup> The U.S. Census takers recorded in 1870 and again in 1880 that literacy was higher on average among African Americans in Barry Farm/Hillsdale than in Washington City and Georgetown. Winifred Conkling explained why so many former slaves were listed as able to read but not write. "Writing was considered a sign of status and deemed unnecessary for black Americans, free or enslaved. Reading, on the other hand, was encouraged . . . so that slaves could become familiar with the Bible."<sup>28</sup>

According to the 1870 Census entries for those families where a child "attended school," the number of women reported as able to read and write

exceeded the number of men who could do so. The census does not address numeracy. Essential for business and trade, accurate arithmetic likely was common in the community because men and women often dealt with money. Moreover, carpentry, construction, and other skilled jobs required arithmetic skills. Among the occupations listed for these parents and guardians were blacksmiths, carpenters, government employees, domestic workers, farmers, gardeners, gospel ministers, plasterers, sailors, schoolteachers, seamstresses, teamsters/draymen, whitewashers, stewards, cooks, and barbers, as well as farm and day laborers. In the earliest days, hucksters raised crops and small livestock on their large lots, carried them across the 11th Street Bridge, and sold them in open-air markets downtown. Perhaps testifying to the harshness of conditions in this period, the Census also recorded a large number of neighbors who adopted children or took them in as wards.

Census data also show that Hall's neighbors—unlike most African Americans who had migrated to Washington during Reconstruction—already had jobs and trade skills. The nearby Hospital for the Insane, known informally as St. Elizabeths Hospital until Congress adopted that name officially in 1916, employed cooks, gardeners, coachmen, and guards.

Hall was the only white person to buy an original lot in Barry Farm/Hillsdale, though she was not the only independent woman to do so. By 1871 46 women had purchased lots in the new settlement. Some of them bought lots together or side by side with their husbands, but others were single women who decided to take a chance at a new life.<sup>29</sup>

One such case was that of Elizabeth Chase, a neighbor of Hall who bought a lot at the corner of Elvans and Stanton Avenues. Chase was a free African American who was listed as a young child under her mother, Caroline Chase, in the 1840 census.<sup>30</sup> In 1860 on the eve of the Civil War, Caroline, Elizabeth, and two brothers in their twenties were still living in Ward 2 in Northwest Washington. Caroline and Elizabeth worked as washerwomen, and the young men were laborers. By 1860 Caroline had acquired a personal estate of \$75.<sup>31</sup>

Although Caroline and Elizabeth still appeared in the 1870 Census as residing in Ward 2, on June 2, 1868, Elizabeth Chase had already purchased the lumber for her lot in Barry Farm/Hillsdale. Perhaps Elizabeth did not have the means to build her house immediately and was still living with



Ella Howard Pearis posed in front of her family home, 2536 Elvans Rd., in 1976. The two-story house, since demolished, was typical of a second wave of house building in Barry Farm. *Courtesy, Washington Post*

her mother in 1870. By 1873, however, she had moved to her new home, opened an account with the Freedmen's Bureau Bank, and established a restaurant in Uniontown, the white neighborhood adjacent to Barry Farm/Hillsdale.<sup>32</sup>

Hall would have known Elizabeth Chase not only because of the proximity of their households but because they were both single women in a neighborhood where families dominated. Literate and entrepreneurial, Chase would have much in common with the white teacher who had come alone from the North and settled in the neighborhood.

Religion was a large part of the community's life. Like many Auburn abolitionists, Hall was probably a Congregationalist. But sharp divisions among denominations did not exist in her new community. Beatrice Price, a resident of Barry Farm/Hillsdale, remembered how Catholics went to Protestant funerals and sometimes "we would steal out, after we were grown, and go to camp meetings where Methodists had singing and tambourines" out in a big yard. Similarly, Ethel Green, when asked what church most early residents of Barry Farm/Hillsdale attended, replied: "Well, I went to about five or six different churches. My father was Baptist, my mother was Episcopal. Many of our friends were Methodist, some were Catholics. And so, in order that the group was all together, most of us attended everybody's church—it just didn't matter too much in those days."<sup>33</sup> Hall probably went to several different nearby church services and picnics on the invitation of her students. Macedonia Baptist, Universal Holiness, and Campbell AME were the closest to her house. Her first church on arrival was probably the one next door to her school on Mount Zion Hill. After moving over to Hillsdale School, she likely circulated among more churches, as Solomon G. Brown did.

Public speeches, musicals, and plays presented at churches and schools entertained Hall. There were Christmas pageants and Easter egg rolls. Boating, blackberry and wild cherry picking, picnics "down the river," church dinners, ball games—especially rugby—and horseshoes were popular recreations. In the winter, Hall could join her students ice skating on Stickfoot Creek or sledding on the community's lovely steep hills. In summer, she could fish or swim in Stickfoot Creek or the Anacostia River, which later residents say was popular.<sup>34</sup>

Hall lived for 40 years on Elvans Avenue, a short dead-end lane winding down from Stanton

Avenue. Elvans was a supportive enclave of about two dozen families within the larger close-knit, interrelated community. Everyone knew and helped each other. Living next door, Hall enjoyed friendship and society with Lucinda and Solomon G. Brown. William J. Simmons, who boarded with the Browns a few years after she did, described the household as a happy home and added, "No period of my life was more pleasantly spent than in his house. Surrounded as he is with musical people, with the choicest library, pictures and other evidences of culture, one could not but enjoy life. His home is indeed a pleasant one."<sup>35</sup> Rev. Simmons was born a slave in South Carolina, escaped with his mother to Philadelphia, fought in the Civil War, and eventually graduated from Howard University in 1873. He taught briefly along with Hall at the Hillsdale School and later became president of a Kentucky college that was later renamed Simmons College in recognition of the school's progress during his tenure.<sup>36</sup>

Hall retired from the public school system in 1881, but she continued to teach, most likely in her friend Solomon G. Brown's Pioneer Sunday School Institute on Nichols Avenue. *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia* from 1891 to 1895 and again in 1900 lists her as a teacher. She remained in her Barry Farm/Hillsdale home until 1909, when she sold her house to her Elvans Road neighbor John T. Culley.

Then 88 years old, Frances Hall moved back to the Auburn family home to live with her niece Ella Adaline (Hall) Pullman, John Henry's daughter, who had married Charles Spenser Pullman in 1875. Her grand-nephew Herbert Hall Pullman and his wife Nellie also lived there. All of them must have cared for her until she died on November 11, 1919. Her death certificate records that she had dementia.<sup>37</sup>

Decades after her death, "Miss Hall was remembered fondly" by local residents as a warm and generous person. She was also an inspiring teacher and cherished for years after her retirement. Della Lowery who moved to Elvans Avenue too late to know Hall personally, told her daughter, Habeebah Muhammad, that she had heard repeated

CLARK, 1015 31 TO 35, SQUARE 1043; \$10.  
**BARRY FARM—Frances E. Hall to John**  
**T. Culley, lot 20, section 4; \$10.**  
**C. STREET NORTHWEST between 21st**

Notice of sale of Frances Eliza Hall's House, *Washington Sunday Star*, Nov. 14, 1909. The \$10 was a closing fee, not the sale price. Courtesy, DC Public Library

“fond” neighborhood memories of the school teacher who had lived up the hill. Muhammad did not know Hall was not black until shown the 1900 U.S. Census records in 2009.<sup>38</sup>

Frances Hall’s legacy lived on in her students, many of whom became teachers and community leaders. James Thomas Howard, whose family lived on Elvans Avenue, attended Mt. Zion School. Howard was later a minister of Macedonia Baptist Church, organized by his father James William Howard as the first Baptist church built in the community.<sup>39</sup>

Another of her students was Emma V. Smith. Born around 1858, Smith attended the local schools (Mt. Zion Hill and Hillsdale) and then went on to Howard University to attend its “Preparatory and Normal Course.” Although she started her teaching career in Prince George’s County, Maryland, by 1876, she was teaching at Hillsdale School alongside Hall, her former teacher and mentor. Smith continued teaching at James Gillespie Birney Elementary, built in 1889 on Nichols Avenue between Talbert and Howard Avenues, until her retirement in 1928. A dedicated member of the

community who started a program to collect shoes and garments for needy students, Smith was a member of the Pioneer Sunday School Institute, as well as a founder and a lifetime member of the St. Philip Episcopal Evangelist Church. After retirement, Smith continued as an active member of the Hillsdale Citizens Association and the Birney PTA.<sup>40</sup>

Frances Eliza Hall and the students she taught and encouraged to become teachers, in turn, made a valuable contribution to the education of African Americans in Washington in the first decades coming out of slavery. She stands out among the post-bellum missionary teachers because she devoted her life and career to Barry Farm/Hillsdale students—adults and children. Although by 1870 most relief and aid societies had disbanded, Hall’s dedication to her students and community lasted another four decades.<sup>41</sup>

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Reverend James Thomas Howard, once a student of Frances Hall, and his wife Jane were photographed in front of Macedonia Baptist Church, date unknown. *Courtesy, Anacostia Community Museum Archives*



Emma V. Smith, top row, right, joined fellow teachers for a picture on the steps of the second Birney School, about 1910. Today the building is occupied by Thurgood Marshall Academy, a charter high school. *Courtesy, Museum of African American History, Boston and Nantucket*

## NOTES

1. Marian W. Taylor, *Harriet Tubman: Antislavery Activist* (Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 2005), 82.
2. *Congregationalist*, Nov. 28, 1867.
3. Frances E. Hall to AMA, Dec. 9, 1867, Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans.
4. Mehitabel C.C. Wilson, *John Gibson of Cambridge, Massachusetts and his descendants, 1634–1899* (Washington: McGill & Wallace, 1900), 242f.
5. Wilson, *John Gibson of Cambridge*, 243.
6. *Register of Alumni and Ex-Students of Antioch College*, 1922, 65; *Catalogue of Antioch College for the Academic Year, 1856–57*, 31; 1860 U.S. Census, Xenia, Greene Co., Ohio via *FamilySearch.org*; "Hall, F.E. Miss, 1861 Xenia West Building, Secondary Dept," Arthur R. Kilner, *Greene County, Ohio—Past and Present* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, Inc., 1997), 276; R.S. Dills, *History of Greene County Together with Historic Notes on the Northwest, and the State of Ohio* (Dayton, Ohio: Odell & Mayer Publishers, 1881), 276, 944.
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11. Howard, *Autobiography*, 420–21.
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16. Hutchinson, "Barry's Farm"; "Report of Persons Hired at Barry Farm, D.C. Employed in School Construction Oct.–Dec. 1867"; "Teacher's Monthly School Report: for the month of April 1868"; "Teacher's Report, Frances Hall"; Anacostia Story records, ACM; Hutchinson, "Barry's Farm"; Major Eldridge to Freedmen's Bureau, Dec. 14, 1867, reprinted in Louise Daniel Hutchinson, *The Anacostia Story: 1608–1930* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1977), 80; U.S. Office of Education, *Special Report of the Commissioner of Education on the Condition and Improvement of Public School in the District of Columbia, submitted to the Senate June 1866, and to the House with additions June 13, 1870* (Washington: GPO, 1871), 279; Freedmen's Teacher Project, "Data on the teachers who worked among the freed people of the District of Columbia between 1861 and 1876," June 15, 2014, unpub. ms., "How the Civil War Changed Washington," research files, ACM Archives.
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## Best of the Web

### Clio Visualizing History

www.cliohistory.org/



**PRESENTING:** A history museum gone digital! Clio Visualizing History brings interactive history exhibits to a digital platform. Covering a variety of American history topics from Lawrence of Arabia to feminism to quilts, Clio provides an enriching multimedia experience right on your personal computer.

**WHAT YOU SEE:** A handful of heavily illustrated online exhibits covering different topics in American history divided into "Featured," "Photography," and "Illustrated History" categories. The current selection includes "Lowell Thomas and Lawrence of Arabia: Making a Legend, Creating History," "Click! The Ongoing Feminist Revolution," and "Picturing the Past: Illustrated Histories and the American Imagination, 1840-1900," among many others. Each exhibit has enlargeable images, some short videos and film clips, and links to follow for additional information. Visitors can progress through each exhibit at their own pace for a deeply interactive experience.

**CREDENTIALS:** Founded by Lola Van Wagenen, Ph.D., who currently serves as the organization's president and exhibit producer, Clio also benefits from the editorial and content contributions of a large board of scholars and professors from New York University, Oxford University, and the University of Massachusetts among others.

**AUDIENCE:** Students, educators, and the public at large interested in American history.

**STRENGTHS:** Clio offers an engaging history experience filled with dynamic images, stimulating narratives, and relevant video and audio supplements. The structure and quality of the exhibits provide all the educational fun of a cutting-edge museum without needing to leave the comfort of your own computer chair. It could also serve as a useful tool for educators seeking quality multimedia accompaniments to their lesson plans. Additionally, the site is free of distracting ads, providing a refreshingly uncluttered screen.

**WEAKNESSES:** While jam-packed with exciting content, some exhibits are a bit tricky to navigate through. Also it is not always obvious how to return to the home page from within an exhibit.

**BOTTOM LINE:** If you find yourself unable to travel to your favorite American history museum or just want a similar experience while at home in your PJs, Clio Visualizing History has got you covered.

—Kathryn C. White, Curatorial Intern  
Albert H. Small Washingtoniana Collection,  
George Washington University Museum

#### FRANCES ELIZA HALL, *continued*

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38. Interview, Patricia Brown Savage with Habeebah Muhammad, 2009.
39. "History of Macedonia Baptist Church, Anacostia, D.C.," by Mrs. Marguerite Duckett" and "Research in Anacostia History," Anacostia Story, exhibition records, ACM; Pearis, Anacostia Oral History Project, ACM.
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