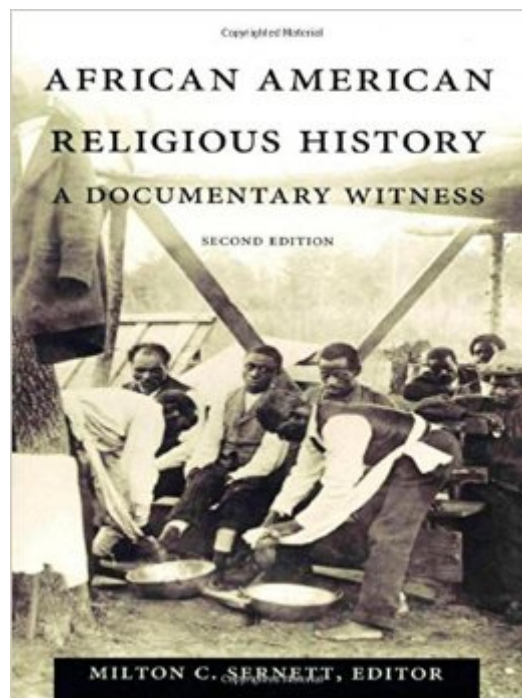


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# African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness (The C. Eric Lincoln Series On The Black Experience)



## Synopsis

This widely-heralded collection of remarkable documents offers a view of African American religious history from Africa and early America through Reconstruction to the rise of black nationalism, civil rights, and black theology of today. The documents—many of them rare, out-of-print, or difficult to find—include personal narratives, sermons, letters, protest pamphlets, early denominational histories, journalistic accounts, and theological statements. In this volume Olaudah Equiano describes Ibo religion. Lemuel Haynes gives a black Puritan's farewell. Nat Turner confesses. Jarena Lee becomes a female preacher among the African Methodists. Frederick Douglass discusses Christianity and slavery. Isaac Lane preaches among the freedmen. Nannie Helen Burroughs reports on the work of Baptist women. African Methodist bishops deliberate on the Great Migration. Bishop C. H. Mason tells of the Pentecostal experience. Mahalia Jackson recalls the glory of singing at the 1963 March on Washington. Martin Luther King, Jr. writes from the Birmingham jail. Originally published in 1985, this expanded second edition includes new sources on women, African missions, and the Great Migration. Milton C. Sernett provides a general introduction as well as historical context and comment for each document.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sernett's volume is the single-best collection of primary materials related to the African-American religious experience. It attempts to piece together important religious narratives from colonial time

until the present. As such, documents include slave narratives, narratives from early church founders (Allen, Jarena Lee, etc.), and documents from the civil rights and black power movement. The documents are all fairly condensed and, as such, it is ideal for the class room. It would be an excellent text to use in an African American religion, African American history, Black Church, or American Religious history survey course.

This text is an excellent and comprehensive survey of African American History. From Olaudah Equiano's slave narrative to essays on Black Theology, this book offers the reader insight into the heart of African American identity.

History has a way of repeating itself. So in reading through the interlocking stories of Religion and Race Relations it offers ways to decipher the turns of the future that maybe challenging and difficult to maneuver.

The following is an excerpt from the book about Mahalia Jackson's experience with D B. Dubois. It made me laugh. In reading some of dubious work, especially the Soul of Black Folks, he annoyed me to no end. He appeared to be very pretentious and elitist. I did not like him much from his works. I see Mahaila did not care much for him as a person either. "People who heard me sing were always complimenting me on my voice and telling me I should take lessons. One night in 1932 we each had made \$4 singing at a church, my girlfriend and I took our money and went around to see Professor Dubois about some singing lessons. Professor Dubois was a great Negro tenor who had a music salon on the South Side. He was a tall, light-skinned Negro who had a very grand way about him. He was very proud of his career as concert and operatic and did not take and did not take long to find out that he didn't think much of my way of singing a song. First off he had me sing the spiritual "Standing in the need of prayer." I had such rhythm inside of me I kept picking up the beat and out of the corner of my eye I could see the Professor frowning. He held up his hand. "That is no way to sing that song," he said. "Slow down, and sing it like this." He clasped his hand together and sang in a real sad and solemn kind of way. I tried again, but his way was too slow and mournful for me. I got going again with my rhythm, but the Professor shrugged his shoulders and broke me off in the middle. "You try it," he told the girl who had come with me. My friend had a nice voice and she sang the song sweet and slow just the way the professor wanted it. "Now that is singing!" he exclaimed. "You've got a fine voice and great possibilities." Turning to me, he said "And you got to learn to stop hollering. It will take time to build up your voice. The way you sing is not a credit to the Negro race.

You have got to learn to sing songs so that the white people can understand" I felt all messed up. How can I sing songs for white people to understand when I was colored myself? It did not seem to make any sense. It was a battle in me to sing a song the formal way. I felt it was too polished and I didn't feel good about it. I handed over my four dollars to the Professor and left. "Wasn't it wonderful?" exclaimed my friend as we went down the stairs. "I am going to take some more lessons as soon as I can." The numbness in me was wearing off and I felt hurt and angry. "Not me," I snapped back. "I don't want to sing none of his high class music!" It was a long time before I had another extra four dollars, but even when I did, I never went back to Professor's Dubois music salon. It turned out to be my one and only music lesson. I have not had one since."

I recommend this to anyone wanting to know more, historically, about African American religion from primary resources. It is befitting for high school to graduate school. I thought about selling my books after using them, but this one I will definitely hold on to.

interested in African American History or Religion. I love this book! Will be ordering more copies for friends and family. I think everyone interested in African American History and all Theology Students should have this book!

As African American Ministers we need to know our Religious Heritage. This book looks deeply into that heritage and brings it to life for us as African American Ministers and Teachers.

Every section of the book was amazingly written. It had everything I need for my class. Thank you for your service.

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