



FLORIDA RUFFIN RIDLEY: SUFFRAGIST

by Felix Situ

Florida Ruffin Ridley was an African-American civil rights activists, suffragist, teacher, writer, and editor. Born on January 29, 1861, in Boston, her father was the first African-American graduate of Harvard Law School and the first African-American judge. She attended Boston schools and graduated from Boston Teacher's college in 1882. She was the second African-American teacher in Massachusetts. She taught at Grant School and moved to Brookline with her husband in 1896.

Ridley was involved in the women's suffrage movement in the 1920s. She co-founded Society for the Collection of Negro Folklore and several other non-profit organizations, including the National Association of Colored Women Clubs (NACWC) to preserve black culture and history. As a journalist, she edited her mother's newspaper, known as Women's Era, and became involved in both the women's suffrage movement and the anti-lynching movement. Through this work, she hoped to connect an understanding of history with social justice work. She believed all races deserved an equal place in society.

Did You Know? Ridley's home on Charles Street is a stop on the Boston Women's Heritage Trail, a self-guided tour of four centuries of Boston Women's History.

"All we ask for is justice. Not mercy or palliation. Simply justice."