

# Florida Ruffin Ridley (1861-1943)



Florida Ruffin Ridley was born on January 29, 1861 and educated in Boston, MA. Her mother, Josephine, was an abolitionist, an anti-lynching crusader, club leader, editor, feminist, orator, and suffragist. Her father, George, was the first African-American to graduate from Harvard Law School in 1869. He later became one of the first African-American judges. Florida was the second African-American teacher in the Boston Public Schools, teaching at the Grant School from 1880-1888. Florida and her husband moved to Brookline, MA where they raised their two children and became members at Second Unitarian Church.<sup>1</sup>

She later served as the editor of the first newspaper in the country owned, managed, and published by African-American women, called the *Women's Era*. It was the official journal of the Colored Women's League, later known as the National Association of Colored Women. In 1920 Florida and her mother helped found the league of Women for Community Service. They also raised funds and purchased a mansion that provided housing for female workers from the South and college students. Florida and her mother were very involved in the African American Women's Club Movement, dedicated to empowering African-Americans. Florida Ridley also had a number of fiction and nonfiction stories and articles published. Florida died on February 25, 1943.

