

JOANNA P. MOORE

Missionary to the Freed Slaves in the South

September 26, 1832 - April 15, 1916

by

WALTER SINCLAIR STEWART

Edited by

Dr. Tom Sexton

With special thanks to:

Mrs. Tamale Tilley, for her labor of love in
preparing this booklet.

JOANNA P. MOORE

"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." (Psalm 119:130).

Birth of Miss Moore

Joanna Patterson Moore was born in a farmhouse in Clarion County, Pennsylvania, on September 26, 1832. She was the sixth child in a home that had thirteen children. Her father had come to America from the north of Ireland. He was a man of tremendous industry, always desiring better things for his children. Her mother was a worthy helpmeet, and she was ever trying to make things attractive in the home.

From her earliest girlhood, Joanna was assigned domestic tasks. There was a great deal of work to do on a farm, and coupled with that were the many mouths to be fed. In every way, she made herself useful around the home.

She had a sister, Rebecca, who was blind. Rebecca was four years her senior; but during her life they were the closest of friends. Joanna P. Moore, in her book *In Christ's Stead*, shares a great deal of their early fellowship:

"Mother was so sorry for sister's blindness that she seldom gave her work to do, but when I was old enough, she gave me plenty to do. I wanted help and soon found that Rebecca had wonderful power to see with her hands. I taught her how to knit, and for many years she knitted all the stockings for the family and also learned how to knit beautiful lace."

For over seventeen years these girls were inseparable. Their love was so great that each was willing to do anything for the other. In the year 1850, Rebecca kept talking about heaven: "No

one is blind up there. No one is sorrowful." She left for heaven's shore that same year.

Her heart had grieved over the two brothers and a sister who had died of whooping cough two years previous, with whom she was now reunited. She was such a lover of those of her own household. Joanna, in writing of her death in her book said, "I never can tell you how much I missed sister Rebecca and I miss her today. Her pure, unselfish love for me was great, and my heart needed just such devotion."

Early Years of Education

The Moore home was a religious household. Her father, who was an Episcopalian, read the Bible and had family prayers during all the years of her girlhood.

As a girl of nine, Joanna studied a book of children's sermons given to her by the pastor. After reading a sermon, she would kneel and repeat the prayer in the book. The promise of the Master came true: *"Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who seeth in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee"* (Matthew 6:6). "In that quiet place, in the dark closet," she wrote, "I gave my heart to the Lord."

No one seemed to think that a child so young could be converted. Did one not have to be grown before one could be sorry for one's sins? Then Joanna was a timid, shy girl, and she never could ask anyone what the next step should be. She did not publicly confess her love for Christ at that time. As the days and years of her girlhood ripened into womanhood, her first love was well-nigh forgotten. The fun and the frolics of the neighborhood and the joy of youth drove out of her mind the memory of that

sacred spot and that holy moment when she had opened her heart's door to the Saviour.

In the winter of 1852, she drove over to Greenville with the Corbett family to attend a revival meeting.

She was teaching school near Reedsburg that winter and was glad of the opportunity of hearing the gospel. Joanna had never been far from God since that moment of surrender, and she was always eager to hear the story of Jesus. As she sat in the meeting that night, she was sure that she was a backslider; and so, she made a public confession of her love to Christ.

Her problem was now a serious one. What church should she join? She watched the beautiful ordinance of believer's baptism and was deeply impressed. She searched the Scriptures and came to the conclusion that the position of the Baptists was Biblical. She was immersed in believer's baptism, to her own great joy. This joy that she had joined the Baptist church, increased as the years rolled on.

Joann was a happy girl who loved the outdoors. She said that if it were not for her blind sister, she would have done very little reading. She would rather help put in the hay, or herd the cows, or just amble through the fields and the woods than study.

With all this bubbling over of life she wrote that there were some things for which she was deeply thankful. She said, "Nothing I am more thankful for than being one of a large family. Another cause of thanksgiving is being a country girl...I am very thankful today," she wrote in 1903, "that there has always been some one weaker than myself along some line, one that I could really help and comfort. Oh, if I had always done it gladly and cheerfully, what a happy little girl and big girl I would have been."

In the spring of 1847, she was asked to teach at a private school in the summer. She had no teacher's diploma, but that was unnecessary in a private school. She had gone to the public school in the country and had spent one winter at a girls' seminary about fifty miles from her home. After Mr. Rockey (the man who had asked her to teach) left her home, joy broke forth. "I danced for joy," she said. "I was wild with delight.

I did not know then the great responsibility connected with being a teacher, nor the sad effect of poor teaching, or I would not have been so eager to begin, poorly fitted as I was for my task."

Fifteen years of Joanna's life were spent in teaching. Sometimes she was in public school, and sometimes in private school. She loved her pupils, both white and black, and gave them the best that she had.

She always read the Bible and prayed in her schoolroom whether she was teaching in Pennsylvania or Illinois. Once in Illinois the directors came to her and said, "We do not allow the Bible taught in our schools." To this reprimand she replied, "I will leave." She would not teach in any school where she was not allowed to read the Bible.

To this answer of hers the directors said, "Oh, no, don't leave." The Bible, she believed, should not only be the cornerstone of character; but its beauty and loveliness should be so presented to young minds that it might mold them into sincere love for the Word of God.

The appeal of the missionary task had never been presented to her so that it made any challenge for the consecration of her life to Christian service. About two years after her conversion, she heard Reverend Sewell Osgood, a returned missionary, preach on foreign missions. Immediately she responded to this message. She

would go! She would go at once! Her heart burned, and her mind was aflame with this new passion of her life. The appeal of the immense task uncompleted, which her Saviour had asked His church to accomplish, swept her soul like a prairie fire. Never had she considered it seriously.

Now she was aghast at the thought that the Christians had permitted this command of their Christ to be so neglected! She would dedicate her life!

As soon as the service was over, she approached the preacher. She told him of how she must go and tell the gospel story. He urged her to seek further preparation before attempting the task. This did not dim her enthusiasm.

As she prayed about it and thought it over, she was sure more than ever that the Lord wanted her to go into immediate service. Without doubt she would have started out, not knowing whither she went, but trusting in the Lord, but for the fact that she needed more education.

Then came many interruptions, and for over four years all prospect of further schooling was lost. In 1861, she returned to Belvidere, Illinois. The following year, she entered Rockford Seminary. It was while Joanna was at this school that she heard the call to the definite mission work which her Lord had planned for her to do.

It was not the work of her own choosing because she was still looking to China or India as the land to which she would go. Over nine years had gone by since she had heard her first foreign mission appeal. Preachers did not talk of missions, and many of them were even opposed to the whole missionary task. Still Joanna was seeking to fit her life for work across the sea.

Civil war had begun in all its fury in the United States. Brother was fighting brother. The spirit of hate and revenge were abroad in the land. The girls of the seminary were busy knitting socks for the soldiers and preparing bandages. Joanna was too busy to help with this because she was working her way through the seminary and studying for final examinations.

War always brings sorrow, suffering, and death in its wake. This internal strife was now waging with such fury that every home felt its influence. America was as President Lincoln so eloquently stated "engaged in a great civil war testing whether this nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated could long endure."

The immortal Abraham Lincoln was at the helm of the ship of state—he who in his younger days had seen a slave sold at auction, and had said then in reference to slavery, "When I get an opportunity to hit that thing, I will hit it hard."

Now the President had dealt slavery a death blow. He had fulfilled his own prophecy and kept his vow. The Emancipation Proclamation was issued on January 1, 1863. Over three million slaves received that most coveted of all human relationships, and the most dangerous freedom. No greater event is recorded in American history!

Miss Moore's Call to Service

On New Year's Day in 1863, an immense jubilee meeting was held in Rockford to commemorate this event. It was a time of great rejoicing. Everyone was shouting for joy. The Black man was now, according to the proclamation, "henceforth and forever free." In this meeting Joanna sat with a brooding face. She wrote later: "To my ears there came an undertone of sadness, a piteous cry for help. The next day as I tried to study my lessons there passed

before my imagination a panorama of bondmen, tied down with cords of ignorance, superstition, and oppression."

It was the summons of the Father to her life. The challenge of the unmet need of these millions of freed men was weighing on her soul. She could not escape it. God was saying to her, "You must go to the rescue." What a struggle now waged in her soul! Would she go where she wanted to go, or where God called her?

The days passed into weeks, and still she heard the piteous cry for help, a voice that seemed to say, "Come over and help us." God had a work for her to do, and He kept pleading with her until she answered, "Here am I, send me."

In February, God spoke to Joanna again in a meeting. The speaker had just come from an island in the Mississippi River where there were 1100 freed women and children, contrabands of war. He told of the extremities of bodily suffering and of the grossest ignorance. "What can a man do to help such a suffering mass of humanity?" the speaker demanded. "A woman is needed; nothing else will do."

No wonder Joanna in writing of this meeting later said, "I know my schoolroom and foreign missions, with all their sweet attraction, receded and kept receding, till they were in the background of my picture, and there in the front stood a black woman, with her child, both half naked, stretching out empty hands, crying for help."

Still Joanna sought to find an excuse from her God-appointed tasks. Others could do so much better than she. Others were much more cultured and prepared for such an arduous work. Others were better fitted. What could she do for so many people?

Finally, the decision was made. The struggle that had kept her in mental torment and spiritual anguish for months was over. Peace came to her spirit when she surrendered all to her Lord and promised to follow His leading for life. "I surely made a good bargain," Joanna said, "when I invested my life in their race." It had seemed to her as if God had said, "Go, and I will go with you."

For fifty-three years, until she was called for higher service, she served her Father in the path of His guidance with unremitting toil that was ever brightened with the thought, "I am doing the work He wants me to do."

Her First Ten Years as a Missionary

She was just a little past her thirty-first birthday when she began her life work. The American Baptist Home Mission Society gave Joanna a commission but told her that they could not pay her any salary.

The Sunday school of the First Baptist Church of Belvidere pledged her four dollars a month. Lastly, the government furnished her transportation to her destination and provided her with a soldier's rations. With this unpromising beginning she began her fifty-three years of missionary service.

In November of 1863, she landed on Island #10 in the Mississippi River. Here she made her home with Reverend B. Thomas, a Baptist minister from Ohio, who was in command of the regiment that guarded the island. Mrs. Thomas, Miss Baldwin, and Miss Moore started work among these poor Black people. They sought by visitation in the homes and the conducting of many meetings, including Sunday School, to turn the thoughts of these people toward God.

It was a pitiful sight that she witnessed daily; her heart was torn with anguish as she mingled with these half-naked, starved,

friendless, and superstitious folks. What a task for a woman like Miss Moore, who had never had any dealing with the Black people!

After five months, they were all transferred to Helena, Arkansas. Miss Moore moved with her protégés. She found that the Quakers had recently come to Helena to establish an orphan asylum. When they offered her employment to them, Joanna gladly accepted. For four years, she was in the employ of the Quaker church, and she often spoke of the Christlikeness of their treatment.

In her work here, she divided her group into four divisions after she had nailed her blackboard to a tree. The first were little children; the second older children; the third were adults who could read a little; and the fourth those who could not read or write, but who were glad to listen.

Joanna wrote, "Each division spent about one hour and a half in school. Later, I read the Bible and explained it, and gave them a memory verse. Then they sang their weird, old plantation hymns, and prayed their old-time prayers till after dark.

O, how I did enjoy each day there." This teaching was carried on at "The Home Farm," which was three miles from Helena.

The Black soldiers also became objects of her attention. They needed all that she was trying to give to women and children.

With daring zeal and with intrepid faith, she mingled among these men, seeking to serve them and to present Christ to them. As a result of her consistency, there were soon sixty of these soldiers converted. Nothing gave her so much joy as to see these warm-hearted people surrender their lives to Christ.

After this, she went home briefly to be with her mother in her sickness. Before she had left for her life service, she had bought a home for her mother and seen her comfortably settled in Belvidere. Her mother had hoped that Joanna would give up the missionary life and stay at home. She little reckoned with the power of the vision and the sincerity of the dedication of her daughter.

The Quakers opened an orphanage at Lauderdale, Mississippi in 1868, and she went there to help them. She had been there but a little while when the scourge of cholera broke out. Miss Moore was in charge, as the superintendent had just left for Indiana. Never had she come to such grips with death.

As soon as the children died, they were buried, and she was the only white woman there. She learned then, more than she had ever learned before, the value of faith in God.

Again, she went home to her mother in the early part of 1869. She decided that until her mother showed signs of real improvement, she would find work nearby. In April of 1869, she began work in Chicago for the North Star Baptist Church. She labored for this church for three months; and she had a very blessed time.

Miss Moore spent a little over a year in Chicago with three different churches. She was called home in October of 1870 due to her mother's illness.

She settled in Belvidere for three years and taught school. "During the years that mother's feeble health kept me from the South," she wrote, "my thoughts were with the freed people. However, I said little to anyone on this subject."

The Woman's Foreign Mission Society

The Woman's Foreign Mission Society of the West was organized in 1871. The women asked her to be their missionary. Here was the opportunity to fulfill the desire of her heart that had been with her for fifteen years—to go as a foreign missionary, to represent her Christ among the great peoples of the world, to be sent by the women of the Baptist denomination!

What should she do? Which way should she turn? There was the call of the freed people of the South, and this was most insistent. Her mother wanted her and needed her at home, but again came the challenge of the lands across the sea. She was forty years old, and some of the Board thought that it would be too difficult for a woman of her age to learn the language.

God was leading her life. She had placed Christ in command of her career on that never-to-be-forgotten night when she decided to give her life to this great cause. His command was still in force for her. She must continue to give all that she had to the bringing of the former slaves to Christ.

Eighteen Years in Louisiana

In the fall of 1873, Miss Moore went to New Orleans to take up her work again among the freed slaves. She never relinquished her task until forty-three years later when her Heavenly Father called her to His Kingdom above where she might labor without weariness or criticism. Who shall count the heartaches of those years?

Due to her work among these freed people, she was despised and criticized by many of her own race who bore the name of Christ. Hers was not to count the cost, nor to defend her actions! Hers was to obey Jesus the Commander.

Louisiana became her home for eighteen years. President Thomas Jefferson had authorized the buying of this territory in 1803, and this purchase included the city of New Orleans.

This community like the rest of the state, was settled entirely by Catholics. Despite that fact, the people gave her very little trouble during all the years of her sojourn. They seemed to feel that her mission was more concerned with the home life than it was the religious life of the people.

During the first four years in New Orleans, she was supported by the offerings taken in the churches of Illinois. She kept pleading with her white sisters of the North to help her. When the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society was organized in 1877, Miss Joanna P. Moore was the first person to receive a commission. This was delivered to her in person by Dr. and Mrs. C. R. Blackall when they visited New Orleans that spring.

Miss Moore was a great believer in the sanctity of the home. She felt that if she could teach the people to have clean attractive homes where the Bible was studied, it would be a powerful incentive toward a better race. From the very beginning, she worked for mothers and children. Not until a few years later did she formulate plans which finally led to the organization of this work.

At first, she simply went from house to house spreading the gospel of cleanliness, neatness, kindness, temperance, and love. She would gather the children around her and tell them the stories of the Holy Book.

It was not easy at first for her to have such intimate contact with Black people. She had begun to work among them more

through pity than love. There came a day when this difficulty was overcome.

"I did not like even to shake their hands," she wrote. "I knew this feeling was wrong and spent many hours in prayer for a baptism of love. One night I received an answer to my prayers.

The next morning, we rang the bell as usual for prayers, and the old people came tottering in. Our lesson was from Luke 23:27-45.

I read the comforting words of Jesus to the weeping women with tears in my voice. When I came to '*Father, forgive them, they know not what they do,*' we all burst into tears, fell on our knees, and prayed. After prayer, the old people gathered around me saying: 'Sister Moore, we will not worry you anymore. We will be good.' They saw they could put their arms around me, and I let them, for my heart was full of love."

Before the end of her first year in New Orleans, she made some trips into the country. She usually journeyed by boat or cart to her destination. On all these visits, she fought intemperance. It was a terrible curse. Saloons were part of grocery stores; or if not, there would be an understanding between them. Whiskey was being drunk by all the people. Miss Moore spoke against drinking and always secured signers to the temperance pledge. Some even signed against tobacco.

During the year 1874, she produced her first leaflet and took her first offering for foreign missions. This leaflet, *Rules of Politeness for Home, and Church* was scattered everywhere. The offering she received was from a children's band, and she sent it to Reverend Perry of New York to be used for work in Haiti. No matter how great the need might be on the home field, she believed that Christians should be taught to give for work across the sea.

In the first few years of her work in Louisiana, Joanna had no helpers. As her work became more well known, money was sent to her, and women came to assist in the work.

Soon after her appointment was made, four were sent, "and" she wrote, "they were four of the best women who ever lived." Miss Agnes Wilson labored most earnestly until she was married to Reverend Amos Weaver. Miss Sarah Butler, who was so virile in her Christianity, married Reverend J. E. Morris. Miss Helen Jackson was with her for two years only before she was transferred to Raleigh, North Carolina. Miss Jennie Peck, who believed so thoroughly in giving the Bible to the people, was made a general missionary in Texas in 1884.

These women were astonished at the filth, the degradation, and the misery they met everywhere. They said that they did not believe it possible for folks to become as corrupt and repulsive as these people. All of them soon learned that the love of God could work miracles here! Even more important to these missionaries was the knowledge that came to them as it had come to Miss Moore.

"Our greatest battles are fought and lost, and greatest victories won, where no one but God sees and understands," Miss Moore wrote in her book *In Christ's Stead*. And further, "We do know that when we live for God's glory, He with matchless kindness made the shade and the sunshine, the bitter and the sweet, all unite for our good as well as His glory."

One of the objects that Miss Moore had in mind was the constant extension of the work. She wanted more helpers and more money so that more Black people might be reached for Christ. Year after year, she made exploring trips seeking to interest people in

her work. In 1878, she went as far as Selma, Alabama. Here a mission was started that flourished through the years.

Three years later, she made a much-extended trip to the Atlantic seaboard, and then went north. She visited Atlanta University; Benedict College at Columbus, North Carolina; Richmond College, where Dr. C. Corey was president.

She went still further north to New York City; and finally attended the May meetings of the Northern Baptists.

She had the opportunity to speak of her work to the Woman's Home Board, and to plead with them to start a training school for Black women. The old Black women stirred her heart deeply. As she saw these elderly women, some of whom were eighty to a hundred years old, she wondered what could be done for them. New Orleans had an Old Ladies Home, but there was no department for the Black people.

After much prayer and after having conferred with some friends, she started a "Faith Home." She had the first floor fixed up for the old Black women, and the second floor for the missionaries. Over the mantel of the home, she had hung the motto, "The Lord will provide." She watched over this work for three years, and then turned it over to the Black Baptists with a property valued at \$25,000 free of debt.

After Miss Moore had been in New Orleans for ten years, she moved often. From the year 1883 until 1891, it is difficult to know just where her headquarters were. She went first to Thibodeaux, and then to Morgan City in 1884. She immediately saw the need of a reading room for the Black people. They were using the saloon, but they needed a place where they might meet and enjoy themselves. The room was provided in direct answer to

prayer. It proved to be a tremendous force in the lifting of the entire Black population of that city.

It was in the years 1884 and 1885 that Miss Moore started two factors that proved immense power among these freed people. The first was the Bible Band. The constitution of this band states:

The object of the organization is: First, to study and commit to memory the Word of God for our own edification and comfort.

Second, to teach it to others to read the Bible to all the sick. To carry the Bible with them when they go on a visit.

Miss Moore wrote, "There is no power strong enough to reform human lives but the power of the gospel of the Son of God."

The Bands were few in number, but each year the movement continued to show signs of growth. Five years after its inception, the Bands numbered 115 and there were upwards of six thousand who were members. In order to keep up the interest and encourage one another, the members of each Band met once a week to report progress and to tell how the Lord was blessing them.

The second factor was the publication of the magazine *Hope*. Miss Moore produced the first edition of this new monthly magazine in Plaquemine, Louisiana, where she was then living. This issue was only five hundred copies, and it was quickly exhausted. Miss Moore served as editor of *Hope* for twenty-six years, only surrendering that task because of growing weakness. In 1911, she was elected honorary editor, and she continued to write the daily Bible lessons until her death.

Hope was the first magazine that many of the Black people ever read. It had two mottoes on the cover: on the left it had, "Have

faith in God." On the right hand, "Love one another." Miss Moore wrote that she chose the name *Hope* because "I wanted to encourage them, I wanted to inspire them with hope, and cheer them on." Six years after its first edition, five thousand copies were printed. Ten years later, the publication had more than doubled.

This was accomplished through the untiring efforts of Miss Moore, who never would permit the magazine to go into debt or to have any advertisements.

The center of all her ministry of service was the home. Whatever movements she inaugurated centered in the home. Her greatest contribution to the evangelization of the Black race was her influence in making their homes the place of Christian culture and refinement.

She realized that to change the home life, she must train the mothers. She did not believe in merely taking the girls and training them that the next generation might be better; but rather seek to establish schools for mothers that these women who now had the home responsibilities on them might be reached and won to new ideals and purposes.

To accomplish this objective, she started a training school for mothers in Baton Rouge which lasted for almost three years. This school was begun with great enthusiasm. If so, much could be achieved by occasional visits to the home, what might not be realized in school! As a group of mothers would stay with her for a few weeks, they would receive instruction in the care of the home, the nurture of children, and kindred subjects.

The school started under such favorable auspices was forced to close on November 20, 1890. On that date, a notice was put up on the gate signed by the White League. They ordered Miss

Moore to close the school and to leave under penalty of death. As a reason for this threat, the notice had printed on it, "You are trying to educate the _____ to consider themselves the equals of the white people." In commenting on the closing, Miss Moore said, "It was one of the greatest, if not the greatest, trial of my life."

She kept hoping that she could convince the women to return. She had no fear herself of the threat of men. All to no avail! The women were scared, especially so because above the notice of the White League were the emblems of death, skull, and crossbones.

Eighteen years in Louisiana, and now she left with this defeat of her plans weighing down her soul. On her trip to the North, she visited Dr. John A. Broadus in Louisville, Kentucky. Into the ears of this wise and kindly minister, she poured the tale of her work and of this new sorrow. He said to her, "There are so many sides to this question, but your work is greatly needed. Go forward, quietly trusting the Lord."

During the next three years, she made her home in Little Rock, Arkansas, moving there in the fall of 1891. Miss Moore had the privilege of conducting a mothers' training school here coupled with her other activities. Being blessed with good health most of her life, she was a woman of tremendous activity. She would labor for fifteen to eighteen hours a day. When she journeyed to the little villages in the country, she would usually stay up until midnight, and then would be the first one up in the morning. No one could keep pace with her; yet many would become enthused by the very zeal of her service.

It was during her stay in Little Rock that she first originated the Sunshine Bands. The purpose of this organization was to reach

the large company of children who did not attend any Sunday School. In reporting this work, Miss Moore wrote:

"We cannot dress them up for the Sunday School or church, and parents do not care to send them, but every woman with a mother's heart can make a Sunday School room out of her own home. Glory, hallelujah! I have found the way to save the children on the right path. It is so much easier teaching children, dressed in everyday garments in one's own home, than in Sunday School."

By the end of the first year, there were ten Sunshine Bands. To pay for the extra expenses due to this new organization, she prayed for the money needed. Always in her life, Miss Moore talked things over with her Lord. The answer came in money and gifts from many people whom she did not know. She said that the holiest gifts that were ever given for the work of the Sunshine and Bible Bands were from two women of the North Belvidere Baptist Church. The \$300 was given to support two young women who were helping Miss Moore in her work.

Fireside Schools Inaugurated

All her life she had tried to reach every possible Black person with the blessed gospel of Jesus. As the work grew and widened, the task of molding it all into a tremendous force so that hundreds of thousands might be reached became her paramount desire. She had the nucleus already in the Bible and Sunshine Bands.

Her magazine *Hope* was the medium whereby she was even now reaching thousands of these Black people. The time was ripe for the launching of the movement that proved to be her most vital contribution to the cause of Christ among the Black people. In August of 1892, the Fireside School was started.

Nothing that Miss Moore ever inaugurated has been so blessed for the home as this school. It has transformed thousands of homes. Since its inception, it has continued to grow and prosper, and it is still growing in influence. Mrs. O. R. Judd, in her book *Fifty Golden Years*, has written of this work: "It is not in the ordinary sense a school, but rather a family altar, the grouping of the entire family about the fireside for the study of the Bible and prayer, the daily memorizing of a verse of Scripture, and the reading of a worth-while devotional or inspirational course."

The Fireside School was started for each family member in the home. The parents signed a pledge that they would conduct the family altar daily and report each month their progress to the church. The plan was that every three months, all the churches would send their reports to Miss Moore. In this way, she felt that she could keep her finger on the pulse of the work and try to guide it in the proper way through the monthly magazine *Hope*.

Two great objectives the Fireside School sought to accomplish: the first was "to secure the daily prayerful study of God's Word in every home, with all the family together." The second was "to help put other appropriate books in our homes and see that parent and child read them together as far as possible." This would not necessitate any additional organization.

It was hoped, however, that once a month the pastors would hold a parents' meeting to encourage the daily Bible study.

To augment and stimulate interest in Bible reading in the Fireside School, a course of study was outlined to cover three years: First year: Bible, *Hope*, *Peep of Day devotions*, and *Second Temperance Reader*. Second year: Bible, *Hope*, *Line Upon Line*, *For Mother While She Rocks the Cradle*, *Third Temperance*

Reader. Third year: Bible, *Hope*, *Story of the Bible*, *Kind and True*, *Black Beauty*. Many of the books prescribed for this course were those written by Miss Moore.

If the people who promised to take the work of the Fireside School were to be helped consistently, then a plan must be devised to put *Hope* into their homes regularly. Many of these folks could not afford to subscribe to this magazine; and those who could found themselves hindered by the white people who feared that this paper might suggest a political scheme to upset the order of society. By persistent believing prayer, a way was provided, and *Hope* was delivered to the homes.

From the very beginning, Fireside School had the blessing of the Lord. The movement had continued to spread. It touched the lives of Black people everywhere. The permanency of the work and the lasting nature of the results are a living testimonial to Miss Moore who "*being dead yet speaketh*."

Headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee

Atlanta, Georgia, was Miss Moore's headquarters for the first few months of 1894. In the fall of that year, she moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where she lived for twenty-two years. Her office work was large. There was not only the editing of *Hope* and the writing of many leaflets and books, but also the answering of hundreds of letters which came each month. These folks sought her advice and counsel on the many perplexing things of life, and her interpretation of difficult passages in the Word of God.

Closing Years

Miss Moore, with the true vision of a missionary pioneer, believed that as rapidly as possible all the work for the Black people should be turned over to members of their own race. In the

year 1900, she selected a group of Black men and women, and gave to them the care of the Fireside School work. This move proved to be a little premature, so that it was necessary for Miss Moore to take charge again. This she did until 1906, when on account of failing health, she turned it all over to the Woman's Home Mission Society.

One of the reasons for Miss Moore's continued success was her faith in humanity because of her love for Jesus. She was working for people for whom Christ died. The constant inspiration and cheer to her soul was her implicit faith in the indwelling Christ. She walked among these people without fear, confident that her Lord was able to keep her. He who had never left her nor forsaken her would keep her to the end.

In 1902, she was asked to state her view on the race problem. She wrote: "I've never seen a problem. I know exactly what to do for the white man, for the Black man, and for all humanity. God has given His children a guidebook which makes the path of duty very plain. I have always found the Black man very willing to observe the courtesy and restrictions that riches, honor, and intelligence recognize as due in political and social life.

But he could not see how the simple color of his skin should make any more difference than the height or weight, color of hair or eyes, of white people made as respects their treatment of each other. His strong white brother should have taken him by the hand in a loving, brotherly way, saying: 'Yes, you are free, as free as I am, but you are only a child. Sit down, and I will teach you the duties that belong to freedom. Together we will study our Bibles, and see what is right, and learn to love and respect each other, and thus live in peace.'

That is what the guidebook teaches—to quit talking about race, master, or slaves; bury the whole past, and strive to help each other to be God's free men. As I said before, there is no problem before me. I know what to do. First, be good, loving, helpful, and cheerful myself. Find something good to say for every individual."

No wonder that Mrs. H. B. Montgomery wrote of Miss Moore in 1924, "Joanna P. Moore's work has resulted in a real and permanent contribution to the solution of race questions in this country."

Although Nashville was her home, she traveled a great deal throughout the South, especially visiting the schools for Black people and the colleges. Many of her friends tried to persuade her to live a quieter life once she had reached her eightieth year. Her answer was, "I'm immortal till my work is done." And a little later she said, "I am ready when the Master calls, and there is a straight road to heaven opening from every Black man's cabin in the South."

When the secretary of the Woman's Board asked her for her annual report one year she replied, "An annual report of what? Report of tears shed, prayers offered, smiles scattered, lessons taught, steps taken, cheering words, warning words, tender, patient words for the little ones, stern but loving tones for the wayward? Songs of hope and songs of sorrow, wounded hearts healed, light and love poured into dark, sad homes?"

You might as well ask me to gather up the raindrops of last year, or the petals that fell from the flowers that bloomed. It is true I can send you a little stagnant water from the cistern, and a few dried flowers, but if you want to know the freshness, the sweetness, the glory, the grandeur of our God-given work, then

you must come and keep step with us from early morn to night for three hundred and sixty-five days of the year."

Bible Lessons in Hope

Every month Joanna wrote the daily Bible Lessons for *Hope* with short comments. One of the last lessons that she wrote was on Stephen. She wrote, "I think that Acts seven is the best chapter of the New Testament. His accusers said in Acts 6:13-14, while Stephen's face was like an angel's, verse fifteen. With that shining face, he preached the best Bible sermon I ever read."

The last year of her life, she went on a visit to Spelman Seminary. She fell on the stone steps, cutting a gash in her head and straining her hip muscles. She spent several weeks in the hospital but was able to be in Chicago by Christmas. She was known everywhere she went as "Miss Sunshine."

The End in Selma, Alabama

Miss Moore left Chicago on the last trip of her life in the early part of 1916. She was in her eighty-fourth year, but her zeal and her enthusiasm had not abated. Her first stop was Jacksonville, Florida, where she stayed for several weeks. Her plan was to visit several cities in the South and then go to Nashville.

On the way to Selma, Alabama, she took a cold, which developed into bronchitis, she died in Selma on Saturday, April 15, 1916. As they ministered to her during the last few hours in the home of Dr. M. W. Gilbert, they heard her keep repeating, "God's blessed Book, the Bible."

The funeral service was held in the Ryman Auditorium of Nashville, Tennessee. Thousands came, both whites and Black

people, to pay her tribute. Then they followed the procession on its way to Greenwood Cemetery. It was the last wish of her life that as she had worked with the Black people for so many years, her body might be laid to rest with them in their cemetery. The race that was so repulsive to her at first became very dear.

She wrote, "I plead for more love, more patience, more real help for our dear Black people. They are kind; they are struggling hard to be wise and good. They have never had a fair chance. I thank God for the friendship and love of the dear mothers of this race."

She had wanted to serve in a foreign land, but God kept her in America where with all her heart she gave the best that she had until God called her to the country where there is no race distinction.

Reverend C. W. Morrow said of her at the funeral, "She was one among millions in her whole-souled recognition of the fact that she belonged to Christ; that He had purchased her with His precious blood, and so she was not her own. To do His will, however taxing, was her supreme delight; and through the mystic union with Him there came to her great power, even the power of the indwelling Spirit. We should not forget the place the Bible had in her heart and life. She believed in it with all her soul; it was to her divinely inspired, the Book of books. She believed that could she get men, women, and children to read, ponder, and accept its teaching, they would be spiritually transfigured."

The issue of *Hope* for June, 1916, was given entirely as a memorial to Miss Moore known everywhere as "Miss Sunshine"

It read, "Our benefactor, counselor, and friend has been removed from earth to Glory. No one can estimate the value of such a life of service as Sister Moore's which touched thousands of

lives with loving ministry. May the reflection of such a life dwell with us forever."

In this same issue of *Hope*, Miss S. A. Blocker of the Florida Baptist Academy wrote of her, "She can never die. She built her own monument in the hearts of thousands in the humble homes of a despised race. The Black people owe her a debt of gratitude which they can only pay by being true to God and in extending His kingdom on earth."



BANNER BIBLE BAND, NASHVILLE, TENN.

This Band began the study of our lessons in 1865, and has continued until the present, 1902. They have been faithful members of their church, but as faithful in reproving, by their everyday life, what was contrary to the Bible. In 1869 their church began to collect money for a new edifice by giving suppers, and in other ways begging the unconverted for help. This Band said, "We will help by self-denial." The Band numbered only eight, so that only eight of those seen in the picture were members of the Band. At the end of six months the Band had given \$60.75, while all the other members of the churches had raised \$37.45. The members of the Band are poor—as poor as the others. The Band grew more Christlike, the others became more worldly. This Band is only one of hundreds that have proven by their every-day conduct the power of daily prayerful Bible study to rebuke sin and maintain a closer walk with God.



FIRST PARENTS' CONFERENCE, NASHVILLE, TENN.



FIRST SUNSHINE BAND IN NASHVILLE, TENN.



Joanna Greave Henrietta Pantic
Mary Finner Virginia W. Boulton Mary J. Giblin
FIRE SIDE SCHOOL SECRETARIES



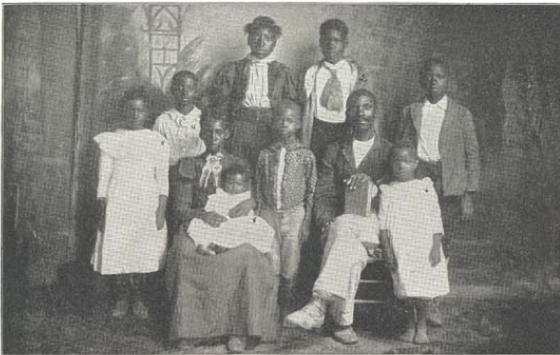
PIRESIDE SCHOOL FAMILY, PETERSBURG, VA.
The father in this family, Rev. C. W. McColl, is both a pastor and missionary.



SOME MEMBERS OF BIBLE BAND AT THE STATE NORMAL SCHOOL, NORMAL, ALA.



BIBLE AND SUNSHINE BAND, CHATTANOOGA, TENN.



JAMES AND ELLEN THOMPSON AND FAMILY, ODOM, ARK.

Ellen Thompson for seven years has had charge of a large club for Hore, putting it into seventeen families, and testifies that this paper has been a great blessing to her home and to her neighbors. She is one of hundreds of witnesses to the good results of daily Bible study and the power of the Holy Spirit.



MISS BUTTON'S DRESSMAKING CLASS, LITTLE ROCK, ARK.



From photograph taken in Spring of 1890

MAILING "HOPE."



J. P. Moore

RECITATION ROOM

Miss Lydia Lawrence



Mrs. Fannie Pound

J. P. Moore

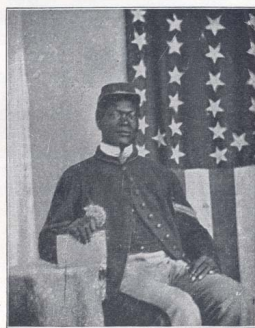
Lydia Lawrence

TRAINING SCHOOL FOR WIVES AND MOTHERS, BATON ROUGE, LA.

From photograph taken in 1888



SCHOOL BOYS AND GIRLS



JAMES C. OWEN



BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION LEADERS IN LOUISIANA, IN 1879



GROUP OF COLORED WOMEN IN FAITH HOME,
NEW ORLEANS, IN 1898



JOANNA P. MOORE IN 1867

Quotes from Joanna P Moore

I have no sympathy with those who take hold of any kind of work
with the tips of their fingers.

Hold it with both hands, your success depends on it.

I love music but no one climbs to heaven on musical scales.

Christ is the Head of this House,
carry all your disagreements to the Head.

The Bible is a personal letter from God to His family on earth.
There is a lesson in it for all in every situation of life.

To be put in trust with the Gospel is a great trust.

You must know the Bible. It is the standard by which we examine
and test the doctrines and teachings we hear.

Seeking the praise of men will spoil your Christian work.

You cannot stand on a pedestal and hand out the Gospel.

There is no power strong enough to reform human lives but the
power of the Gospel of the Son of God.

There is no book that tells about this Gospel but the Bible.
Therefore, the great object in all our work has been to get this
Book into the hands and hearts of all.

I have never known a Christian to backslide
who continued the *daily, prayerful* study of the Bible.
All Christians should sit down *together* to read their
Father's letter.

We forget that we are stewards of the wisdom we have acquired
as well as the money and other talents.

It is not the amount of work that tells,
but work done through the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Have faith in God" and "Love one another."

Don't look for the faults in others as you go through life,
and even when you find them, it is wise and kind,
to be somewhat blind and look for the virtues behind them.

I have never lost my faith in humanity.
People must have some intrinsic worth, or God would not care so tenderly for them; they increase in value after they are saved.

It is better to die and go to heaven than to live like a coward.

All at it. Always at it.

“Our greatest battles are fought and lost and our greatest victories won where no one but God sees and understands. As we look back we do not know which was victory or which was defeat, what was wise and what was a mistake.

But we do know that when we have lived for God's glory He, with matchless kindness, made the shade and the sunshine, the bitter and the sweet, all unite for *our good* as well as *His glory*; and now in restful faith I give my poor life, past, present, and future, into the hands of Him who *loved me* and gave *Himself for me*.

Glory be to His name, now and forever. Amen.” Joanna P. Moore