

**Hopkins and her Contemporaries:
Responses to Racial Violence, Appeals for Racial Justice**

In early May of 2020, Ida B. Wells—an illustrious contemporary of Pauline Hopkins’—posthumously received the Pulitzer Prize in journalism for “her outstanding and courageous reporting on the horrific and vicious violence against African Americans during the era of lynching.” Wells’ belated recognition, along with efforts in Congress to pass the first federal antilynching law earlier that year and the Equal Justice Initiative’s establishment of a museum commemorating slavery and lynching in 2018, seemed to suggest our nation’s willingness today to confront its tragic history of racism and violence against African Americans. Yet by the end of May 2020, the police killing of George Floyd galvanized the Black Lives Matter movement and sparked protests for racial justice and police accountability across the country. Far from an isolated act, the murder of George Floyd has come to symbolize countless acts of police brutality and white violence against Black people that have occurred since the beating of Rodney King in 1991, an event that transpired a hundred years after anti-Black lynching reached its official peak in the United States in 1892.

Well over a century separates our historical moment from the “lynching era” of Wells, Hopkins, and their contemporaries. Our two worlds, however, share much in common and are historically linked—not unlike the Southern world of North Carolina in the 1790s and the contemporaneous Northern world of Boston in the 1890s that Hopkins interlinks and about which she powerfully writes in *Contending Forces*, a novel partly inspired by Wells’ antilynching activism.

The Pauline E. Hopkins Society invites proposals that examine any aspect of racial (in)justice in the work of Hopkins and her contemporaries for presentation at the 33rd Annual American Literature Association Convention, to be held in Chicago, May 26-29, 2022. The Society especially welcomes papers that put Hopkins in dialogue with Wells, in order to celebrate the latter’s recent national recognition for combating anti-Black violence and promoting the rights of African Americans.

We are delighted to announce that Edlie Wong will be serving as our panel’s Respondent. Dr. Wong is Professor of English at the University of Maryland, College Park and the author of *Racial Reconstruction: Black Inclusion, Chinese Exclusion, and the Fictions of Citizenship* (2015) and *Neither Fugitive nor Free: Atlantic Slavery, Freedom Suits, and the Legal Culture of Travel* (2009) and the co-editor of George Lippard’s *The Killers* (2014). Her work also appears in *PMLA*, *American Literary History*, *Social Text*, *American Literature*, *African American Review*, and *American Periodicals*. Dr. Wong is currently serving as the President of C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists.

Please submit abstracts of up to 300 words, with the subject line, “Hopkins and Her Contemporaries,” to John Barton at bartonjc@umkc.edu by Jan 25, 2022.

For details about the ALA Convention, please consult the following website:

<https://americanliteratureassociation.org/ala-conferences/ala-annual-conference/general-call-for-papers/>