

CFP | Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins Society (PEHS) session
American Literature Association Annual Conference, Chicago, IL, May 20-23, 2026

Hopkins's America, Then & Now

As America prepares to celebrate the semiquincentennial of the nation's founding, scholars have begun reflecting on the promise of that originary moment, its incomplete fulfillment and its present endangerment. This year, PEHS invites proposals that help elucidate and/or contribute to a deeper understanding of Pauline E. Hopkins's America—its promise and limitations—for presentation at the 37th Annual American Literature Association Conference in Chicago, May 20-23, 2026.

Pauline E. Hopkins, like many of her contemporaries, saw the work of racial uplift as a national project. As editor of the *Colored American Magazine*, she carved out a central role for Black Americans in the (re)forging of the postbellum nation and its future. The March 1904 issue, for example, “appeal[ed] to the conscience and heart of the American people” to recognize the progress of Black Americans, and asserted the publication as a national forum to lead that work. As the ALA conference returns to Chicago, a city pivotal in the histories of African American migration and to the development of post-Reconstruction Black art and politics, it seems fitting to re-consider expressions—and failures—of governance and nation in Hopkins's works. Topics might include, but are not limited to: sentiments and criticisms of nation / nationalism in Hopkins's work; her literary examinations of institutions and modes of governance; performing or examining national identity; the relationship between racial uplift & national character; and the role of the *Colored American Magazine* in Hopkins's America.

Please send 300-word proposals and CVs to Courtney Novosat (cnovosat@andrew.cmu.edu) and Edlie Wong (edlie@umd.edu) by January 15, 2026.