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The Literary Corner: Introduction to Afro-American Essays with Sarah Fabio and Thomas Schick (side a)

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<i>Thomas Schick</i>: To convince free Afro-Americans they should in fact immigrate, uh, a very important one of course, is, uh, Edward Wilmot Blyden's, uh, essay entitled, uh, "The Call of Providence to the Free Colored People of the United States", and in this essay, uh, he documents and, uh, presents, uh, a very important argument for why Afro-Americans ought to immigrate to West Africa, in particular Liberia. At the same time, there were those in the Afro-American community who denounce the colonization and immigration, and for them, they also took the essay form as a way of, uh, of making their points known. Uh, I think David Walker's appeal in 1829 is an excellent example of that, a very, uh, inflammatory pamphlet that was circulated widely. In fact, it was condemned as seditious material in many states in the South; uh, David Walker defining, uh, a number of things as, uh, as being the cause of the current degradation of the population. One of those causes he considered the scheme of colonization.

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<i>Sarah Fabio</i>: Right, right. Uh, who {{?}} the idea to search for a place?

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<i>Thomas Schick</i>: Uh, that actually is a, um, uh, a compilation of two, uh, reports done by Martin R. Delaney (--)

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<i>Sarah Fabio</i>: Right.

<i>Thomas Schick</i>: (--)and Robert Campbell: both free Afro-Americans who went to West Africa in search of, uh, a suitable place for colonization and, uh, they wrote back very long reports of their experiences in Nigeria. Uh, but unfortunately for the colonizationist, uh, the Civil War broke out and Delaney, among others, rushed back to the US to, uh (--)

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<i>Sarah Fabio</i>: and participate in the Civil War, right.

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<i>Thomas Schick</i>: (--)participate in the Civil War and later in ,uh, Reconstruction Politics.

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<i>Sarah Fabio</i>: Right.

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<i>Brooks B. Robinson</i>: What about some of the later essayist ,uh, that came onto the scene toward the end of the 19th century?

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<i>Thomas Schick</i>: W.E.B Dubois began to write essays, uh, that he published in, uh, journals and national magazines. Essays that have now been compiled together in a book and an anthology of his writings called "The Souls of Black Folks". Uh, (--)

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<i>Sarah Fabio</i>: Which was done late, uh, late 19th century

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<i>Thomas Schick</i>: Yes, uh, uh, probably the most important of those essays is one entitle on Booker T. Washington and others, which was his most succinct, uh criticism. Analysis and criticism of the Booker T. Washington program of accommodation, especially as it applied to education and his, uh uh, admonishment to the Afro American Community not to ignore, uh, the importance of higher education because of course Washington was most interested in industrial education for the masses.

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<i>Sarah Fabio</i>: You I think Tom, uh, before that the same Martin Delaney, who became a physician, scientist, novelist and political writer, is well, is, uh, as we said is a Reconstruction Politician and many other things. He had written "The Condition, Elevation, Immigration, and the Destiny of the Colored People of the United States", politically considered as one essay. And then that [wonder?] man, William Wells Brown, who did the first novel, uh, and and first drama and many other things; he had written a thing called "The Black Man, his antecedents, his genus, his achievement" by 1863 and these also kinda set precedents for the kinds of things that , uh, people would be writing about. Like Alexander Crummel will be writing about, uh, the African; so later on, you know in trying to keep alive memories with the Afro American in his past.

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<i>Brooks B. Robinson</i>: And during the Harlem Renaissance, Professor (--)



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