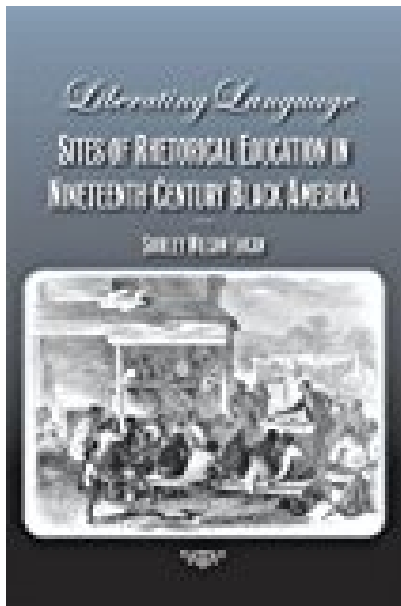


Liberating Language Sites of Rhetorical Education in Nineteenth-Century Black America



BOOK DETAILS

- Author : Shirley Wilson Logan
- Pages : 224 Pages
- Publisher : Southern Illinois University Press
- Language : English
- ISBN : 0809328720



BOOK SYNOPSIS

Liberating Language identifies experiences of nineteenth-century African Americans—categorized as sites of rhetorical education—that provided opportunities to develop effective communication and critical text-interpretation skills. Author Shirley Wilson Logan considers how nontraditional sites, which seldom involved formal training in rhetorical instruction, proved to be effective resources for African American advancement. Logan traces the ways that African Americans learned lessons in rhetoric through language-based activities associated with black survival in nineteenth-century America, such as working in political organizations, reading and publishing newspapers, maintaining diaries, and participating in literary societies. According to Logan, rhetorical training was manifested through places of worship and military camps, self-education in oratory and elocution, literary societies, and the black press. She draws on the experiences of various black rhetors of the era, such as Frederick Douglass, Frances Harper, Fanny Coppin, Charles Chesnutt, Ida B. Wells, and the lesser-known Oberlin-educated Mary Virginia Montgomery, Virginia slave preacher "Uncle Jack," and former slave "Mrs. Lee." Liberating Language addresses free-floating literacy, a term coined by scholar and writer Ralph Ellison, which captures the many settings where literacy and rhetorical skills were acquired and developed, including slave missions, religious gatherings, war camps, and even cigar factories. In Civil War camp sites, for instance, black soldiers learned to read and write, corresponded with the editors of black newspapers, edited their own camp-based papers, and formed literary associations. Liberating Language outlines nontraditional means of acquiring rhetorical skills and demonstrates how African Americans, faced with the lingering consequences of enslavement and continuing oppression, acquired rhetorical competence during the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century.

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