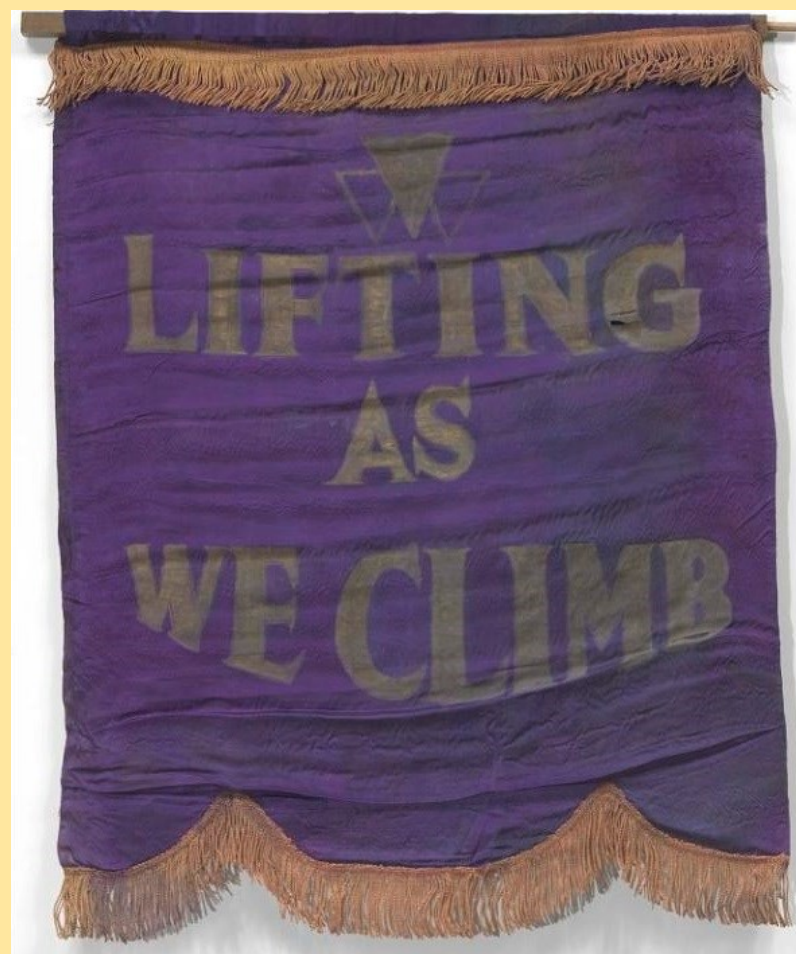


Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin



Along with Lucy Stone, she became a founding member of the American Woman Suffrage Association and held leadership roles in the Massachusetts chapter.

With the growth of women's clubs in the late 1800s, she launched the Woman's Era Club in Boston in 1893 that was primarily for African-American women. The club's motto was "Lifting As We Climb."



That club had its own newspaper, *The Women's Era*, that Ruffin ran. Two years later, she convened the First National Conference of the Colored Women of America, that included representatives of 53 women's clubs from across the nation to promote woman's suffrage.

After she was expelled from a Boston school because of her race, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin set out on a path of activism promoting full citizenship rights for both women and African-Americans.

During the Civil War, she helped recruit soldiers for the all-black Massachusetts 54th Regiment.



Ruffin saw equality of rights for women linked to advancing rights for African-Americans. A founding member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), she wrote:

“We are justified in believing that the success of this movement for equality of the sexes means more progress toward equality of the races.”