

# NARRATIVE TEXTS

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## Maud Cuney-Hare, Musician, Author, and Playwright, 1874-1936

Raised by educated black parents in post-Civil War Texas, Maud Cuney-Hare learned to resist segregation graciously but firmly. She enrolled in the New England Conservatory—one of only two black students—and graduated to become a concert musician, playwright, and scholar of music. Once she was in a restaurant awaiting her politician father when the cashier approached.

*She began the conversation by asking if I was waiting for my husband. To my laughing exclamation that it was my father whom I was with, she said: "Oh, Spanish girls marry so very young, we in the hotel thought you were a little Spanish girl-bride." When I declared my race, she cried in astonishment: "But you and your father must be Spanish! No? Then Creole—surely you can not be colored."*

*Then continued an expression of bewildered, hazy ideas concerning the results of race admixture—texture of hair and shade of complexion, which led to a serious discussion of the Negro problem.*

*When father came to the table, I told him of the incident. He said; "You did right in declaring your race." He abhorred above all things the supposedly easier way of "passing for white."<sup>1</sup>*

Maud Cuney-Hare is best known for her groundbreaking book *Negro Musicians and Their Music*.

### Photo

Maud Cuney-Hare, *Norris Wright Cuney* (New York: Crisis Pub., 1913).

Source

<sup>1</sup> Maud Cuney-Hare, *Norris Wright Cuney: A Tribute to the Black People*, facsimile reproduction of the 1913 first edition (Austin: Steck-Vaughn Co., 1986), p. 154.

