Hopkins, Pauline,


Hopkins attended Boston public schools and in 1880 joined her mother and stepfather in performing her first work, a musical entitled Slaves' Escape: or, The Underground Railroad (also called Peculiar Sam). She then spent several years touring with her family's singing group, Hopkins' Colored Troubadors. Her second play, One Scene from the Drama of Early Days, based on the biblical character Daniel, was also written about this time.

The difficulties of blacks amid the racist violence of post-Civil War America provided a theme for her first novel, Contending Forces: A Romance Illustrative of Negro Life North and South (1900). The plot follows a mixed-race family from early 19th-century slavery in the West Indies and the southern United States to early 20th-century Massachusetts. Hopkins also wrote short stories and biographical articles for the Colored American Magazine, of which she was women's editor and literary editor from approximately 1900 to 1904.

Hopkins' later novels include Hagar's Daughter (published serially in 1901-02 under the pseudonym Sarah A. Allen) and Winona: A Tale of Negro Life in the South and Southwest (published serially in 1902), the complex tale of an interracial marriage, abduction into slavery, and rescue. In her fantasy Of One Blood; or, The Hidden Self (published serially in 1902-03), an African-American medical student finds himself proclaimed king of an exotic city beneath a pyramid in Ethiopia. Hopkins' final work was the novella Topsy Templeton (published serially in 1916).