Ray, Charlotte E.,

Ray studied at the Institution for the Education of Colored Youth in Washington, D.C., and by 1869 she was teaching at Howard University. There she studied law, receiving her degree in 1872. Her admission that year to the District of Columbia bar made her the first woman admitted to practice in the District of Columbia and the first black woman certified as a lawyer in the United States.

Ray opened a law office in Washington, D.C., but racial prejudices proved too strong, and she could not obtain enough legal business to maintain an active practice. By 1879 she had returned to New York City, where she taught in the public schools. In the late 1880s she married a man with the surname of Fraim; little is known of her later life.