

(Washington, D. C.) newspaper, he attained his basic education in Savannah from Reverend Jim Simms, “who ran a secret school in that city before and during the war,” as well as spending “a term or two” at the Knox Institute, though there are no details of what he might have studied there. He helped support his mother and siblings, including sending his two younger sisters, Susan and Emma, to Atlanta University. His lot at Gospel Pilgrim Cemetery features a memorial to his mother, who died sometime in the 1880s while only in her 50s.

Morton’s first wife, Amanda, died in 1885. Three years later, Monroe married Tallulah “Lula” Thomas (b. circa 1860), who reportedly had a Cherokee mother and white father. She had two years of college education, but like many married women of the time, made her home and family her career. Four of their six children survived to adulthood: Monroe Bowers, Jr. (b. 1895), Maude Muller (b. 1897), Ida McKinley (b. 1901), and Charles Thomas (b. 1903).

To gain his place in the world, *The Colored American* noted that Morton “has engaged in almost every kind of work or business,” from working as a porter, a laundry subcontractor for University of Georgia students, a messenger for Major John Knox of the Athens office of the Freedmen’s Bureau, a surveyor for a railroad company, a carpenter, a city lamp lighter, a tailor, and a merchant. He was named the second African-American postmaster for Athens in 1897, and expanded his business interests into construction, real estate, insurance, bonding, railroad agency, and newspapers. Profiles of Morton note his “grit, perseverance, energy, and pluck” and “bustling activity;” like other successful men of his era of all races, he rarely had a single business interest or investment. It was said that while he “enjoys the society of pleasant people, it is in the world of business that Mr. Morton finds most delight.” By 1890, he had \$30,000 worth of assets in Clarke County.

His position as postmaster, which paid \$2,500 per year and allowed him to hire other educated African-Americans to fill six well-paying positions in the Athens office, was the result of his activity with the Georgia Republican Party at local, state and national levels. Morton was commonly named the Republican delegate from Clarke County to state conferences, and from



This photograph of Monroe, Tallulah, Monroe Jr. (standing), and Maude (seated) was taken in approximately 1898.

Courtesy of Charles Thomas Morton, Jr.