

In the narration of the digital short we produced on her life, as well as in the information presented here on the UNLADYLIKE2020 website, we report:

Although there's some debate about the year and location, Bass was born Charlotta Amanda Spears in 1888 in Little Compton, Rhode Island.

There is considerable discrepancy and dispute about both the date and location of Charlotta Spears Bass' birth.

In [*Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America*](#), Douglas Flamming, University of California Press, 2005 cites these primary sources regarding her date of birth:

- "U.S. Census ms., 1920, Los Angeles City, Assembly District 74, Precinct 75, ED 417, p. 1A, lists Charlotta's age as thirty-six (meaning a birth year of 1884), her state birth as Rhode Island, and no knowledge of her parents' place of birth..."
- U.S. Census ms., 1930, Los Angeles City, Assembly District 60 (no precinct), ED 752, p. 10A, lists Charlotta's age as forty (meaning a birth year of 1890), her state of birth as Rhode Island..."
- The *Online Archive of California*, drawing on the biographical sketch prepared for the Charlotta A. Bass Papers archived at the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research in Los Angeles, claims that Charlotta Spears was born in Little Compton, Rhode Island (386)."

The New York Times, "Overlooked No More: Before Kamala Harris, There Was Charlotta Bass" on September 4, 2020 reported:

- Charlotta Amanda Spears is believed to have been born in Sumter, S.C., around 1880 to Kate and Hiram Spears, descendants of enslaved people.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/04/obituaries/charlotta-bass-vice-president-overlooked.html?smid=em-share>

The National Park Service reports:

- Charlotta Amanda Spears Bass (1874-1969)...
She was born on February 14, 1874 in Sumter, South Carolina. Charlotta was the sixth out of eleven children for Hiram and Kate Spears.

In the field of archival research, the most credibility is assigned to primary sources. The UNLADYLIKE2020 editorial team went on-site to the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research in Los Angeles to review Charlotta Spears Bass' hand-written and typed autobiographical notes, written in the third person. Thus, **we reference what she reported herself: that she was born in Little Compton, Rhode Island in 1888.**

(See images below)

*Obviously
this should be edited & not placed*

In the town of Little Compton, Rhode Island, in 1888, a child was born;

How are heroes of the people made? How do they differ from those about them?

*but makes a
line?*

Some become heroes on the battlefield. Our history books ~~xxxixxxxix~~ tell of such heroes in great number. They risk life and liberty for a cause they hold priceless. ~~It sometimes turns out that heroes are made~~

Most heroes and heroines are not made on the battlefield. ^{THERE} They are people of a special mold who have learned to identify their needs and interests with the needs and interests of the masses of ^{THE} less talented and articulate about them. They are the teachers, the ^{FEARLESS} forward looking labor leaders, ~~(of which unfortunately there are so few)~~ ^{FEELS} the professional who ~~fields~~ himself a responsible member of the family of man, the artists who entertains and who teaches and those who perform the many tasks imposed by a growing civilization for the growth of and who, in performing these tasks, ~~recognize~~ feel responsible ~~to~~ those about them. They love people.

And there are the heroes of communication, of the press.

We honor two such heroes tonight, who, for almost 50 years have moved each in paths seemingly remote but inexorably destined to move in the same direction and finally to meet in common cause.

Rhode Island

A little girl is born in the town of Little Compton in February of the year 1888. Her life ~~was~~ ^{IS} in early years ~~was~~ the life of children born within a pale whose roots ~~was~~ set down over two hundred years before.

One day when, she ^{IS} ~~was~~ she chances ^{IS} on a book . . . Bellamy's "Looking Backward". It ~~was~~ about a life of the future ~~that was~~ a lot different from the life of a poor Negro family in 1902. She ~~didn't~~ ^{DOESN'T} know about Socialism but she ^{DOES} ~~did~~ know that here ^{IS} ~~was~~ something to think about and discuss.

Her family ^{THINKS} ~~thought~~ otherwise and wanted ^S her to put the book out of her mind. Socialism ^{IS} ~~was~~ un-Christian, ^{WILL} ~~would~~ only get her into trouble. Just

A second thing happened that had great impact on her thinking.

It was the first organizational meeting of the NAACP in her town and her mother took her to the gathering in the town church. Charlotta was deeply impressed. The community, long fed up with the status of second class citizenship, ^{was} were on the move.

And so too ^{young Charlotta} Miss Speers was on the move. She had begun to get the ~~map~~ the directions straight on the map of her life. . . She was headed for ~~social security and~~ equal rights and social security.

At the age of 18 she came to Los Angeles which, in many people's minds ^{was} gets confused with Utopia.

500 miles away from Little Compton where Charlotta was born and five years earlier in the Town of Sylvania, Ohio, a boy ^{Reuben} is born. The boy's father was owner of a small carriage works, politically an ardent Populist. His paternal grandfather rode the Southern Michigan circuit as an Evangelical Lutheran preacher while his maternal grandfather was a vocal disciple of Robert Ingersol. The little boy, Reuben, thus started his intellectual struggle at an early age.

He could be found as a boy sitting near a cracker barrel of a Saturday morning in the town general store while his elders munched and debated the issues of the day . . . the '93 panic, the Populist movement (~~which the boy was later to learn deteriorated with its attack on such American as our little girl of Little Compton,~~ ~~and the speeches of William Jennings Bryan and his Cross of Gold.~~ ~~stage for an Episcopal minister for the book Equality by Edward Bellamy~~ "There were present in these turbulent little assemblies", ~~Reuben reminisces, "no spies, no members of the F.B.I. to jot down the extravagances of political oratory."~~

The boy listened intently, absorbing each facet of debate.

The Stages of Freedom organization in Providence, Rhode Island has completed additional research on Ancestry.com and of U.S. Census records and has made the following assessment:

- There is strong primary source evidence - censuses and a birth certificate for a younger sibling - that Charlotta Spears Bass was born in Sumter Country, South Carolina around 1880, and that she came to Providence, RI to live with her older brother Ellis. After leaving for California and in following censuses, she reported that she was born in Rhode Island. None of the census data supports 1874 being her birth year.