



Fannie Barrier Williams: Crossing the Borders of Region and Race (New Black Studies Series)

Wanda A. Hendricks

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Born shortly before the Civil War, activist and reformer Fannie Barrier Williams (1855-1944) became one of the most prominent educated African American women of her generation. Hendricks shows how Williams became "raced" for the first time in early adulthood, when she became a teacher in Missouri and Washington, D.C., and faced the injustices of racism and the stark contrast between the lives of freed slaves and her own privileged upbringing in a western New York village.

She carried this new awareness to Chicago, where she joined forces with black and predominantly white women's clubs, the Unitarian church, and various other interracial social justice organizations to become a prominent spokesperson for Progressive economic, racial, and gender reforms during the transformative period of industrialization. By highlighting how Williams experienced a set of freedoms in the North that were not imaginable in the South, this clearly-written, widely accessible biography expands how we understand intellectual possibilities, economic success, and social mobility in post-Reconstruction America.



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