



Southern Black Women in the Modern Civil Rights Movement

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WINNER 2013 of the Liz Carpenter Award for Research in the History of Women, presented by the Texas State Historical Association

Throughout the South, black women were crucial to the Civil Rights Movement, serving as grassroots and organizational leaders. They protested, participated, sat in, mobilized, created, energized, led particular efforts, and served as bridge builders to the rest of the community. Ignored at the time by white politicians and the media alike, with few exceptions they worked behind the scenes to effect the changes all in the movement sought. Until relatively recently, historians, too, have largely ignored their efforts.

Although African American women mobilized all across Dixie, their particular strategies took different forms in different states, just as the opposition they faced from white segregationists took different shapes. Studies of what happened at the state and local levels are critical not only because of what black women accomplished, but also because their activism, leadership, and courage demonstrated the militancy needed for a mass movement.

In this volume, scholars address similarities and variations by providing case studies of the individual states during the 1950s and 1960s, laying the groundwork for more synthetic analyses of the circumstances, factors, and strategies used by black women in the former Confederate states to destroy the system of segregation in this country.

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Review

"Clearly, this collection of essays will make a valuable contribution to the scholarly literature on the civil rights movement. A formidable army of African American female activists marches through the pages of this remarkable book, and the authors effectively highlight the roles of these women in a wide variety of settings and circumstances. Some of these women are already well known to students of the movement while others have remained shrouded in mystery; their contributions relegated to historical footnotes--until now. The addition of this fine collection of female voices to the scholarly literature brings us one step closer to a broader and deeper understanding of the complexities that punctuate the late twentieth century chapter of the continuing black freedom struggle."--Cynthia G. Fleming, professor of history, University of Tennessee, and author, *Soon We Will Not Cry: The Liberation of Ruby Doris Smith Robinson* (Cynthia G. Fleming 2012-12-17)

"This volume is a useful compendium of information on a wide number and variety of women civil rights activists in all thirteen states in the former Confederacy."--Alison Parker, professor of history, State University of New York (Alison Parker 2013-01-06)

"*Southern Black Women in the Modern Civil Rights Movement* will be a useful tool for future researchers who can follow the threads here to build an even richer understanding of women's critical roles within the gender, race, class, and generational dynamics of what Jacquelyn Dowd Hall has called "the long civil rights movement" " -- *Journal of American History* (*Journal of American History*)

About the Author

BRUCE A. GLASRUDE is the retired dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Sul Ross State University and a professor emeritus of history at California State University, Hayward. His most recent title for Texas A&M University Press is *African Americans in South Texas History* (2011).

MERLINE PITRE is a professor of history at Texas Southern University. She coedited (with Bruce A. Glasrud) *Black Women in Texas History* (Texas A&M University Press, 2008) and is the author of *In Struggle against Jim Crow: Lulu B. White and the NAACP, 1900–1957* (Texas A&M University Press, 1999). She is a past president of the Texas State Historical Association.

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