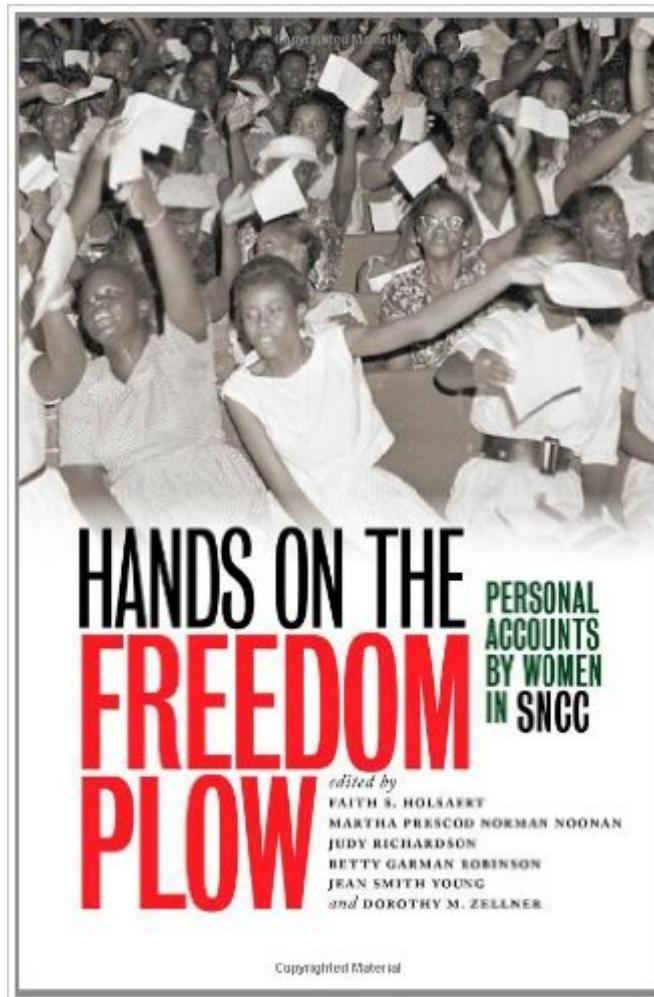


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Hands On The Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts By Women In SNCC



Synopsis

Â In Hands on the Freedom Plow, fifty-two women--northern and southern, young and old, urban and rural, black, white, and Latina--share their courageous personal stories of working for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) on the front lines of the Civil Rights Movement.Â The testimonies gathered here present a sweeping personal history of SNCC: early sit-ins, voter registration campaigns, and freedom rides; the 1963 March on Washington, the Mississippi Freedom Summer, and the movements in Alabama and Maryland; and Black Power and antiwar activism. Since the women spent time in the Deep South, many also describe risking their lives through beatings and arrests and witnessing unspeakable violence. These intense stories depict women, many very young, dealing with extreme fear and finding the remarkable strength to survive.Â The women in SNCC acquired new skills, experienced personal growth, sustained one another, and even had fun in the midst of serious struggle. Readers are privy to their analyses of the Movement, its tactics, strategies, and underlying philosophies. The contributors revisit central debates of the struggle including the role of nonviolence and self-defense, the role of white people in a black-led movement, and the role of women within the Movement and the society at large.Â Â Each story reveals how the struggle for social change was formed, supported, and maintained by the women who kept their "hands on the freedom plow." As the editors write in the introduction, "Though the voices are different, they all tell the same story--of women bursting out of constraints, leaving school, leaving their hometowns, meeting new people, talking into the night, laughing, going to jail, being afraid, teaching in Freedom Schools, working in the field, dancing at the Elks Hall, working the WATS line to relay horror story after horror story, telling the press, telling the story, telling the word. And making a difference in this world."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was the cutting edge of the Civil Rights Movement. Born out of the student sit-ins that erupted on February 1, 1960 in Greensboro North Carolina, within months thousands of students across the south were engaged in similar non-violent protests against racial segregation, risking their lives in the process. But it was far from a spontaneous uprising; the organizers (though mostly college age) were well trained and deeply committed to building a grassroots movement within the communities of the Deep South, working with local people to bring about change. This well-organized book shares the personal narratives of 52 women - northern and southern, young and old, urban and rural, black, white and Latina - who served on the front lines of freedom. The narratives are grouped by regional movements, and also by themes such as issues of personal identity. There are similarities found in some of the narratives; many relate terrifying encounters with the Klan and the public authorities who were supposed to protect them, beatings and deprivations in jail, but also love and overwhelming support from local people who lifted them up, fed them, and sheltered them to the best of their ability in the Jim Crow south. One recurring theme that touched me deeply was how many of these women were just girls, often the first in their family to attend college, terrified not only of being murdered in the Deep South but equally terrified about disappointing their parents by postponing (or sometimes being expelled from) college. Some recount having broken bonds with family which were never mended. But beyond these similarities each woman's story is related through a very personal lens.

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