

But why limit this insight largely to urban business leaders? Fairbanks contends that these players had the greatest impact, hence their thinking and actions deserve our primary attention. As a good historian, however, Fairbanks puts aside this advice occasionally and follows the story down a number of promising avenues, exploring how Dallas's working classes, Mexican-American residents, and African-American organizations advanced their own ideas about the city. I only wish Fairbanks had strayed even more. Building on this fine book, perhaps we can extend our understanding of urban politics and planning and examine more fully the ongoing contests for power in this city-as-a-whole. Fairbanks's study deserves a wide audience, including urban and planning historians and readers interested in cities great and small.

*Gender, Race, and Politics in the Midwest: Black Club Women in Illinois*, by Wanda A. Hendricks. Blacks in the Diaspora. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998. xviii, 162 pp. Notes, index. \$27.95 cloth.

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In *Gender, Race, and Politics in the Midwest*, Wanda A. Hendricks examines a brief but salient period in the history of African-American women's clubs in Illinois, the Progressive Era years of 1890 to 1920. At that time, Illinois boasted an unparalleled number of such clubs compared with other states in the region and throughout the country. Black female club members in Illinois encountered challenges unlike those of their cohorts in other regions. These challenges were introduced primarily by the major influx of southern blacks into northern cities such as Chicago, as well as the steady increase of African Americans moving from rural to urban areas within the state.

Hendricks traces the history of black women's clubs in Illinois from their founding in the early 1890s, sparked by the exclusion of black women from the planning committee of the World's Columbian Exposition, to their emergence as a collective social and political force in Illinois state and local history. Groups of middle-class, educated, and religious black women formed coalitions throughout the state, their mission being to uplift African Americans through unity and collective effort. Club activities were under way in Illinois even prior to the founding of the National Association of Colored Women in 1896. The Illinois Federation of Colored Women's Clubs was founded in 1899. Despite often facing both racial and gender discrimination, black

club women in Illinois persevered, establishing social welfare programs for black migrant families, as well as creating networks of clubs and agencies across city, state, regional, and occasionally racial lines. They also took action against lynching and other racially based violence, advocated universal woman suffrage, and helped to elect Chicago's first African-American alderman.

Overall, Hendricks's study is tightly focused and thoroughly researched. Hendricks uses a topical approach, devoting a chapter to each major issue in which the club members were involved. She draws supportive evidence from census records, published histories, club records, newspaper and journal articles of the day, correspondence, and other material. She reveals gaps where they appear in the documentation, noting, for example, that the records relating to the first twenty years of the Illinois Federation of Colored Women's Clubs no longer exist. Common to most organizational histories, this work includes short biographies of selected key individuals who figured prominently in the clubwomen's activist efforts, such as journalist and antilynching crusader Ida B. Wells-Barnett and club leader Fannie Barrier Williams. Yet Hendricks also incorporates biographical sketches of women whose names might not be so well known, such as Amanda Smith, who spearheaded an effort to obtain better health-care facilities for orphans in Harvey, Illinois. Hendricks tends to resist the inclination to focus too heavily on club activities in major urban areas such as Chicago by discussing efforts of members in Cairo, Springfield, and other cities. Although *Gender, Race, and Politics* works well as a closely defined study, it might have benefited from comparisons to clubs in other regions of the country. In her introduction, Hendricks contends that the work "shows the crucial role that regional differences played in shaping the ideologies and institutions that sustained and nourished black communities in Illinois" (xi), yet she offers few substantive comparisons with club efforts outside Illinois or the Midwest.

That shortcoming notwithstanding, Hendricks's work contributes considerably to the relatively scant amount of historical literature on African-American women's clubs in the Midwest. Iowa historians might well use this work, despite its narrow focus, as a springboard if not a model for writing the history of Iowa's black clubwomen. The founding of the Iowa Federation of Colored Women's Clubs occurred in 1902, only a few years after the establishment of Illinois's federation, and its records survive. A study of Iowa's black women's clubs could provide a fascinating complement to Hendricks's book. *Gender, Race, and Politics in the Midwest* should appeal to historians of African Americans, women, and Illinois.

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