



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Putting Their Hands on Race Irish Immigrant and Southern Black Domestic Workers

Danielle T. Phillips-Cunningham

“Danielle Phillips-Cunningham's *Putting Their Hands on Race* is a pioneering comparative analysis of the distinct and overlapping labor and migration histories of Irish immigrant and Black domestic workers, as well as their activist struggles against exploitation and stereotyping. Employing familiar racial formation theory and intersectional feminist theory in complex ways, this interdisciplinary project makes important contributions to whiteness studies, African American Studies, Women's Studies, and labor history.”

—Beverly Guy-Sheftall, co-author of *Gender Talk: The Struggle for Women's Equality in African American Communities*

Putting Their Hands on Race offers an important labor history of 19th and early 20th century Irish immigrant and US southern Black migrant domestic workers. Drawing on a range of archival sources, this intersectional study explores how these women were significant to the racial labor and citizenship politics of their time. Their migrations to northeastern cities challenged racial hierarchies and formations. Southern Black migrant women resisted the gendered racism of domestic service, and Irish immigrant women strove to expand whiteness to position themselves as deserving of labor rights. On the racially fractious terrain of labor, Black women and Irish immigrant women, including Victoria Earle Matthews, the “Irish Rambler”, Leonora Barry, and Anna Julia Cooper, gathered data, wrote letters and speeches, marched, protested, engaged in private acts of resistance in the workplace, and created women’s institutions and organizations to assert domestic workers’ right to living wages and protection.

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