



Pauline E. Hopkins: A Literary Biography

Hanna Wallinger

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Virtually unknown for the better part of the twentieth century, Pauline E. Hopkins (1859-1930) is one of the most interesting rediscoveries of recent African American literary history. This is the first study devoted exclusively to Hopkins's life and her influential career as an editor, political writer, social critic, pioneering playwright, biographer, and fiction writer. Hanna Wallinger's discoveries break much new ground, especially regarding Hopkins's relationship with such notable men and women as Booker T. Washington and Anna Julia Cooper, her position in Boston's black women's club movement, her work with the Boston-based Colored American Magazine, and her concepts of race, gender, and class.

Drawing on recently discovered letters, Wallinger sheds new light on the relationship between Hopkins and Booker T. Washington, particularly the acrimony surrounding Hopkins's departure from the Colored American Magazine. She discusses Hopkins's pseudonymous writings in addition to those written under the known alias Sarah A. Allen. Wallinger interprets Hopkins's play *Peculiar Sam*, her now famous novels (*Contending Forces*, *Hagar's Daughter*, *Winona*, and *Of One Blood*), and the short stories, which have so far received little critical attention. This study also contains the little-known but important text *A Primer of Facts*. Republished here for the first time, it establishes Hopkins as an early advocate of black nationalism and one of the few women writers who joined this discourse.

Hopkins, writes Wallinger, "was on the scene when race consciousness was being defined." This important new study reveals her role at the center of crucial debates about the cultural politics of magazine editing, radical activism, and the early feminist movement.

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