

With Her Fist Raised: Dorothy Pitman Hughes and the Transformative Power of Black Community Activism By Laura L. Lovett Lovett Dorothy Pitman Hughes led an important and fascinating life.

Much of the public discourse and press was about the middle-class white women working within the movement and their concerns. In the pages of this book we learn about the transformative childcare center Dorothy started in her Westside neighborhood of New York.

The books I've been reading since January have all been somewhat related. This not only started the Dorothy thread -- women who share the name of my mother who left this earth 25 years ago on 4/9 it is also related to Manning Marable's *Living Black History* as it's an unintended look at what your personal history looks like if you were too busy doing the things to tend to your own legacy (Marable notes you can't rely on family or fate in these matters; and while it's only mentioned in a couple of short bursts in the book note Pitman Hughes' efforts to save her hometown of Lumpkin Georgia from a takeover by the Mead Corp. Dorothy Pitman Hughes is best known for her iconic fists in the air portrait with Gloria Steinem her sister under the skin but she was in CORE a Black Panther and a walking intersectional feminist icon in her own right -- a pioneer in child care for all a key figure in *Free To Be (You and Me)* with Marlo Thomas and an entrepreneur whose business was mortally wounded by efforts to gentrify Harlem. Because there was little primary sourcing on any of this (although it's interesting how many obstacles were put in her path) the book is frustratingly short and uneven (a lot about the gentrification battles perhaps because there were documents but not enough on her efforts to integrate beauty pageants . Hopefully this inspires someone (perhaps her daughters -- hint hint) to expand on her legacy before she is forgotten entirely or a completely different story is told by folks with different agendas. The accompanying theory woven throughout the book also ties Dorothy's story to larger phenomena - learning about the difference between movement and community organizing was particularly interesting and really highlights the importance and nuance of organizing for an array of goals. As the author also points out the fact that the general public is more familiar with Gloria Steinem than Dorothy Pitman Hughes is an example of the continuing erasure of Black women's leadership in activism. I was also interested in how varied Dorothy's career and activism was - community organizing running a day-care center a copy store and a pageant and being an author and speaker. In short read this book because of the subject but let's hope that someone in the future dives more in depth into the rich full experiences that make up the life of Dorothy Pitman Hughes. Dorothy Pitman Hughes was a transformative community organizer in New York City in the 1970s who shared the stage with Gloria Steinem for 5 years captivating audiences around the country. She created lasting change by revitalizing her West Side neighborhood which was subjected to racial discrimination with nonexistent childcare and substandard housing where poverty drug use a lack of job training and the effects of the Vietnam War were evident. A black-and-white photograph of a White woman with long sunny hair and Black woman with a gravity defying Afro standing in solidarity with serious expressions and their hands raised in the Black Power salute. While writing this book the author had some difficulty locating documentation realizing that much of Dorothy's contributions to both the civil rights movement and the women's movement were on the cutting room floor. We learn of Dorothy's independent and dauntless spirit while reading about the year she purchased a franchise of the Miss America pageant because she wanted to see women of color not only represented in the pageant but celebrated for their beauty. She ran up against a plethora of stumbling blocks and closed doors because of the intersectionality of gender race and class but she has persevered in her commitment to the issues she has taken on. Used by people like my students to celebrate the defiant cross-racial in-your-face assertiveness of a movement that sought to change everything this image has taken on a life of its own without giving us information about the life of its subjects. However while Steinem is still a highly visible public figure to this day Pitman Hughes—a community activist who went on a national speaking tour with Steinem—is far less well known. In this the first biography of Pitman Hughes Laura Lovett outlines Pitman Hughes' life and work and shows how race class gender and

motherhood put her on a different trajectory to Steinem. Early on in this slim book Lovett argues that it's not only the famous with certain kinds of achievements who are deserving of autobiographies—that there is much to be gained from studying the lives and communities of those who are more representative of everyday experiences. I think that is certainly true! But it's undeniably true that Lovett has less surviving primary source material to work with when telling Pitman Hughes' story than she would have with other important second wave figures—it doesn't seem that the texts of her speeches have survived for instance unlike those of many of Steinem's,

*With Her Fist Raised* is the necessary biography of a pivotal figure in women's history and Black feminism whose story will finally be told, *With Her Fist Raised: Dorothy Pitman Hughes and the Transformative Power of Black Community Activism*. I received this book as a Goodreads Giveaway in exchange for an honest review. It is very well written and easy to read and but quite short - it left me wanting to know more about Dorothy Pitman Hughes: I think this book should become a part of the core collection of library feminist history titles. Dorothy's contributions to both of the political and social movements were significant. Lovett directly addresses the obvious white-washing of the historical record: Lovett relied largely upon interviews and public record to piece together Dorothy's life story: In these pages we learn about multiple civil rights organizations and political organizations Dorothy was involved with throughout her life: Starting with the NAACP when she was a child in Georgia and later organizations like CORE in New York city. Dorothy worked with the Black Panthers when they opened a chapter in New York and became a friend and co-conspirator to Malcolm X and his wife before his assassination: and here is where Hood Feminism comes in because black feminists have different -- and sometimes opposite--concerns than white feminists): All that said this was a very good first effort to note her accomplishments while she is still living: Lovett I'm very glad to have received this book through a Goodreads giveaway. The book presents an accessible and knowledgeable history of Dorothy Pitman Hughes's life, At just over one hundred pages the author covers Dorothy's major life milestones and activism endeavors: The length of the book draws someone like me in as it isn't too long or daunting and the style of writing enhances the book's accessibility. I'm amazed by the story of Dorothy's life and also disappointed that I have not learned about her until now: One part of her career I found inspirational is her holistic and self-deterministic approach to education. Her day-care center taught children to be advocates for themselves and for their communities: I am also glad to know that the proceeds of the book are going to Dorothy as this is her story: I will definitely be looking up Dorothy's books to find out how I can borrow/buy them! Laura L, The woman that is the subject of this biography Dorothy Pitman Hughes has a 5-star life. She is someone that we should all be aware of who has packed so much activity and activism into her life, Her erasure from public knowledge is an important part of her story: Each chapter in this book has enough content to be its own book: The epilogue at only 4 pages is a full story in itself. The author is an academic which isn't a bad thing but she takes a very academic approach to her storytelling: It's fine but only hints at the full life she attempts to capture on paper, Lovett I had never heard of Dorothy Pitman Hughes and wish I'd learned about her ages ago. Everything she knew about community activism in the 70s is even more relevant today, I had no idea she had her hands in so many community empowerment endeavors, Daycares schools beauty pageants feminism Black Panther copy/print shops bed & breakfasts, Lovett



The first biography of Dorothy Pitman Hughes a trailblazing Black feminist activist whose work made children race and welfare rights central to the women's movement, After leaving rural Georgia in the 1950s she moved to New York determined to fight for civil rights and equality, Lovett traces Hughes's journey as she became a powerhouse activist responding to the needs of her community and building a platform for its empowerment. Hughes created a high-quality childcare center that also offered job training adult education classes a Youth Action corps housing assistance and food resources. Her realization that her neighborhood could be revitalized by actively engaging and including the community was prescient, As her stature grew to a national level Hughes spent several years traversing the country with Steinem and educating people about feminism childcare and race: She moved to Harlem in the 1970s to counter gentrification and bought the franchise to the Miss Greater New York City pageant to demonstrate that Black was beautiful: She also opened an office supply store and became a powerful voice for Black women entrepreneurs and Black-owned businesses. Throughout every phase of her life Hughes understood the transformative power of activism for Black communities, With expert research which includes Hughes's own accounts of her life but this book's organization left me confused about the timeline of events. It is an image forever tied to the women's liberation movement, Almost anyone who has read about the women's movement knows who the woman on the left is. Gloria Steinem is the glamorous and fierce journalist who started Ms: Magazine and was often the face and voice of the movement, But many of us don't know as much about the other woman in the photo: Dorothy Pitman Hughes and Gloria were speaking partners for several years traveling the country speaking about civil rights and equality for women: With Her Fist Raised: Dorothy Pitman Hughes and the Transformative Power of Black Community Activism by historian Laura L. Lovett shares Dorothy's story from her humble origins in Georgia through her life as a nightclub singer in NYC by night and a domestic worker by day: Dorothy became involved in community activism first as a child in Georgia then in her Westside neighborhood in New York and later in Harlem, Rather than waiting for someone else to get involved Dorothy did something about it herself: She sees a problem organizes the community securing funding and volunteers to address the problem. In the civil rights movement the news stories how we often learn about our history were mostly about the men in the organizations she was a member of: In the women's movement and how she used this institution to not only improve the lives of the children but of her entire community, The movement opposed the pageant thinking it was a patriarchal institution that degraded and infantilized women, She saw it as an opportunity for Black women to feel both empowered and represented within the Miss America pageant and American society, Dorothy later moved to Harlem with her second husband and began organizing within that community. She saw the need for a local copy and stationery store because places like this were integral to community organizing and political protest: Recognizing the need for more local Black-owned businesses Dorothy opened the copy shop herself: Dorothy dedicated her life to improving the lives of her community with tangible things like steady employment child care and affordable housing. She believed a community should have a say in how their community is run giving the residents self-determination and self-governance, She later fought against the city's planned gentrification of Harlem, Throughout Dorothy's life she has seen a need within a community and

taken the challenge head on. Dorothy now lives in Jacksonville Florida near one of her three daughters and continues to organize her community in the struggle for equity and self-determination: This book was an inspiring and educational biography of an icon of both the women's movement and the civil rights movement "I begin with "The Image. " The one that immortalized Dorothy Pitman Hughes as an icon of the women's movement reproduced on posters T-shirts and postcards: In fact a copy of it is now part of the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. Lovett Dorothy Pitman Hughes is perhaps most widely known from the famous photograph taken in the 1970s of her standing next to Gloria Steinem both women with their fists raised, And perhaps because Pitman Hughes is still alive Lovett doesn't delve too deeply into her personal life—this is mostly focused on Pitman Hughes' organising career: Lovett I had never heard of Dorothy Pitman Hughes before this book: It infuriates me the amount of black history that is missing from our school system: The list of this woman's accomplishments is astonishing! Feminist civil rights activist child welfare advocate business owner mother and I'm sure I'm missing a dozen other things. Laura L.). Laura L. It's clear her activism took many forms. Lovett This is a hard book to rate. The text is 3 stars. Laura L. Everyone should know her name and story. Laura L. Lovett What a badass. Laura L. Historian Laura L. It felt more like a reading of important bullet points. Laura L. Lovett We have all seen the iconic image. Dorothy saw a need in her community for childcare. This is Dorothy's pattern in life. This was a controversial stance within the women's movement. But Dorothy saw something else in the pageant." Laura L. Still a worthwhile read. Laura L. Inspiring read - I'll be recommending this one. Laura L. Lovett.