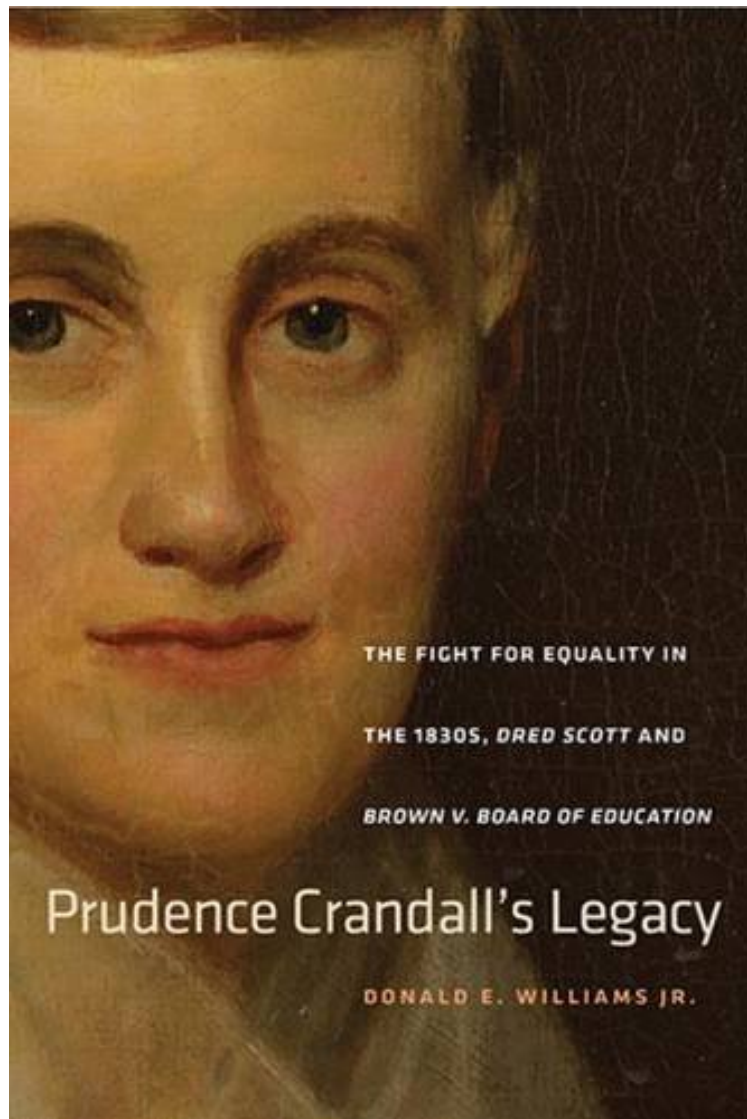


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## **Prudence Crandall's Legacy: The Fight for Equality in the 1830s, Dred Scott, and Brown v. Board of Education (The Driftless Connecticut Series Garnet Books)**

*Donald E. Williams Jr.*

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**Donald E. Williams Jr. : Prudence Crandall's Legacy: The Fight for Equality in the 1830s, Dred Scott, and Brown v. Board of Education (The Driftless Connecticut Series Garnet Books)** before purchasing it in order to

gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Prudence Crandall's Legacy: The Fight for Equality in the 1830s, Dred Scott, and Brown v. Board of Education (The Driftless Connecticut Series Garnet Books):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Fantastic ReadBy Dan“Who shall tell the story of those early abolitionists, and enable us to understand what it cost them to be true to their convictions?”-Celia Burleigh, wife of teacher, writer, and abolitionist William Burleigh in the seventeenth century.I think those early abolitionists would be extremely satisfied with this literary work addressing Prudence Crandall's “School for Young Ladies and Little Misses of Color” in Canterbury, Connecticut during the early 1800s.Donald E. Williams Jr. does a remarkable job of advancing Crandall's ordeal while using direct quotes and eyewitness accounts from that time period. It draws you in to the way players on all sides were thinking; their experiences and motivation to act the way they did, and public opinion. It often reads like the very best courtroom drama as passionate lawyers argue their case, while in Canterbury and elsewhere, nothing less than pure domestic terrorism occurs against this fierce and noble crusader for equal rights, and her allies. Public figures like William Lloyd Garrison barely escaped kidnapping, torture, and death.Unlike some dry history books that are more adept at presenting countless facts than anything else, Williams' work reads very fast and covers a lot in the manner of writers like Russell Freedman, who can effectively convey emotions and bring historical figures to life. He also has a great ability to carry many story lines, sometimes interconnecting events which allow the reader to draw conclusions about what may have been. Many of the prime players in Crandall's case found themselves thrown together six years later during the Amistad trial, and Williams hits on key points in a dramatic fashion, while quickly moving the overall story along. Book clubs and classrooms will have plenty of fuel for debate and speculation. Williams follows important ripples of influence moving outward from this landmark event. One example is how Abraham Lincoln embraced Crandall's close friend and ally (William Lloyd Garrison) as the Civil War ended:“President Lincoln received Garrison for the second time at the White House on Friday, June 10, 1864. The two engaged in frank conversation for an hour. Lincoln knew that . . . Garrison had helped to prepare the country for emancipation.”It is safe to say that President Lincoln was also aware of Prudence Crandall's efforts, and it makes me wonder that - if he were not assassinated the following year - perhaps Prudence would have enjoyed her own audience with the president, or at least realized more public recognition.The final chapter in this book is another adventure in courtroom drama, as Crandall v State becomes a point of reference during Brown v. Board of Education in the early 1950s. “The first comprehensive crystallization of antislavery constitutional theory occurred in 1834 in the arguments of W.W. Ellsworth and Calvin Goddard, two of the outstanding lawyers and statesmen of Connecticut, on the appeal of the conviction of Prudence Crandall,” (Thurgood) Marshall and his attorneys wrote in their brief to the court. “The dependence of the lawyers upon the historians was much in evidence,” John Hope Franklin recalled.The legal and social “ripples” caused by Prudence Crandall continued for years after her passing in 1890, and the book does an excellent job of following through, and leaving the reader with plenty more to contemplate regarding her “radical” departure from educating only white students.There are also several photos and illustrations which I found fascinating, including one of Samuel Clemens, a.k.a. Mark Twain, that he had sent to Prudence in 1866.As president pro tempore of the Connecticut State Senate with a J.D. from Washington and Lee University of Law, Mr. Williams is in familiar territory here, and his passion shows through. This book is so well written, we can only hope that there are more from this author in the future.A fantastic read!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Her story, and that of those who followedBy Don OFirst-rate compilation of material, mostly available elsewhere but widely scattered; a searching look at the struggle for desegregation and freedom, in which Crandall's school was an early step.1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great storytelling and important history = homerunBy George SantiagoThe author has managed to not only bring to light Connecticut's (and the North's) little known history around slavery but also vividly captures what it was like to live during the period, and wrestle with the issues from both sides. Any author that can marry important history with great storytelling is serving the reader well, and Williams does just that.

Compelling account of the abolitionist's life, legal battles, and legacy

“The doors that opened to schoolchildren all over America in the 1950s and 1960s were in a sense opened with a key supplied by Crandall . . . [Williams] relates that it was the arguments of Crandall's attorneys in one of her trials that made it clear that black Americans were citizens—that they could cross state borders to go to Crandall's school, if they wished. And referring specifically to these arguments in the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education case helped NAACP lawyers win their own argument that African-Americans were entitled to go to the same schools as whites—not ‘separate but equal’ schools.”—Steve Courtney, Hartford Courant