

# The Williamston Freedom Movement: A North Carolina Town's Struggle for Civil Rights, 1957-1970

Amanda Hilliard Smith

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During the summer of 1963 civil rights movements were taking place all over the South. In northeastern North Carolina the struggle for freedom focused on the small town of Williamston, where a legacy of voting rights advocacy and a history of violence caught the attention of Martin Luther King, Jr., and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). The Massachusetts chapter of the SCLC sent fifteen white ministers to Williamston in November in an attempt to increase media coverage. Just as the movement was gaining traction, John F. Kennedy was assassinated and the nation lost interest in Williamston. So far the Williamston Freedom Movement has remained little known, though its impact was significant locally. This book details the events and those who participated, and includes 19 interviews with members of both the black and white community. By studying local movements, historians can better understand how ordinary people contributed to the Civil Rights Movement.



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