

According to nineteenth-century racial uplift ideology, African American women served their race best as reformers and activists, or as doers of the word. In *Belabored Professions*, Xiomara Santamarina examines the autobiographies of four women who diverged from that ideal and defended the legitimacy of their self-supporting wage labor. Santamarina focuses on *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth*, *Eliza Potters A Hairdressers Experience in High Life*, *Harriet Wilsons Our Nig*, and *Elizabeth Keckleys Behind the Scenes*. She argues that beyond black reformers calls for abolitionist work, these former slaves and freeborn black women wrote about their own overlooked or disparaged work as socially and culturally valuable to the nation. They promoted the status of wage labor as a mark of self-reliance and civic virtue when many viewed African American working women as drudges. As Santamarina demonstrates, these texts offer modern readers new perspectives on the emergence of the vital African American autobiographical tradition, dramatizing the degree to which black working women participated in and shaped American rhetorics of labor, race, and femininity.

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*Belabored Professions: Narratives of African American Working Womanhood*. By Xiomara Santamarina. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, TITLE. *Belabored Professions: Narratives of African American Working Womanhood* In *Belabored Professions*, Xiomara Santamarina examines the. *Belabored Professions* has 3 ratings and 0 reviews. According to nineteenth-century racial uplift ideology, African American women served their race best. *Belabored Professions: Narratives of African American Working Womanhood*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. Pp. xiv. Available in: Paperback. *Belabored Professions: Narratives of African American Working Womanhood*.

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