



A Mysterious Life and Calling: From Slavery to Ministry in South Carolina

By Charlotte S. Riley

University of Wisconsin Press, United States, 2016. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 229 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. A rare discovery, A Mysterious Life and Calling is the autobiography of Charlotte Levy Riley, who was born into slavery but after emancipation achieved a fulfilling career as a preacher in the South Carolina Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, schoolteacher, and civil servant. Although several nineteenth-century accounts by black preaching women in the northern states are known, this is the first memoir by a black woman preaching in the South, both before and after the Civil War, to be discovered. Born in 1839, Charlotte Riley recounts her unusual experiences growing up as a young slave girl in Charleston under the protection of her parents and the dominion of her wealthy owners. She was taught to read, write, and sew, despite laws forbidding black literacy, and while still a slave married a free black architect. Raised a Presbyterian, she writes in her memoir of her conversion at age fourteen to the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) church, embracing its ecstatic worship and led by her own spiritual visions. After the war, she separated permanently from her husband, who objected...



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