

**Hardin, John A. Fifty Years of Segregation: Black Higher Education in Kentucky, 1904-1954. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997, 182 pp. Cloth, \$29.95.**

John A. Hardin brings impressive credentials to this study of a half century of segregation in the Commonwealth. He is an Associate Professor of History and Assistant Liberal Arts Dean at Western Kentucky University. He started his teaching career at Kentucky State University in 1972. He has written a history of KSU from 1886 to 1986, a pivotal institution in black higher education in the Commonwealth.

Hardin found relatively little scholarly coverage of Kentucky black colleges' achievements, but he became aware of Kentucky blacks developing plans to abolish segregated education throughout the Commonwealth. He hopes there will be other studies of how Kentucky blacks helped to end racial barriers.

Hardin's book extends from the Reconstruction Era to the present. In the Post Civil War period, many white Kentuckians had the attitude: "Yankees freed them, now let the Yankees take care of them." As his title indicates, Hardin focuses primarily on the period from 1904 through 1954. In the early twentieth century Kentucky blacks adhered predominantly to the educational and social philosophy of Booker T. Washington. However, Commonwealth black leaders accommodated themselves and Kentucky State University to segregation.

Throughout the bulk of the text Hardin chronicles "genteel or polite racism" backed by the Day Law of 1904, which mandated only segregated education throughout the state. During the late 1920's Kentucky blacks rejected the promoting of liberal arts studies. In the next decade other blacks both locally and

nationally challenged "polite" racism through extreme deprivation of the Great Depression. Between 1940 and 1954 Kentucky blacks moved from "separate but unequal" to "desegregated but still separate" at Western Kentucky State, the University of Louisville, the University of Kentucky, and Paducah Junior College.

After 1954 the status of black education was actually unclear. The very existence of black KSU, as Hardin points out, "encouraged the persistence of de facto segregation." Black leaders and some whites began to turn their attention to employment, housing, and public facilities. Yet blacks still had to overcome state inaction and resistance inside and outside of education. Even in the late 1970s and into the 1980s questions remained: Were public educational institutions in compliance with integration in Kentucky and in nearby Tennessee, as in the Geier cases in the University of Tennessee system?

Hardin concludes with a tribute to blacks and whites who pressed for full educational opportunities and says, "Their individual untold stories are the missing pieces in the continuing puzzle of Kentucky race relations."

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