

Association for the Study of African American History and Culture (ASALH)

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The Journal of African American History

Special Issue:

“African American Education, Civil Rights, and Black Power”

Guest Editors: Dionne Danns and Michelle A. Purdy

ASALH announces the publication of the final issue of Vol. 100 of *The Journal of African American History*, Fall 2015.

The Fall 2015 issue of *The Journal of African American History's* (JAAH) centennial volume presents significant new studies of the history of African American education. In 1915, Carter G. Woodson, the Father of Black History, published his important book, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, and laid the foundation for the field of African American educational history. In their introduction to the JAAH Special Issue, Dionne Danns and Michelle Purdy examine the major contributions to this area of African American history over the last century, including the Special Issues and articles on African American educational history published in the JAAH.

Crystal R. Sanders' "More Than Cookies and Crayons: Head Start and African American Empowerment in Mississippi, 1965-1968" describes the activities of the Child Development Group of Mississippi (CDGM) and its numerous Head Start programs opened for pre-schoolers. Veterans of the civil rights campaigns were hired to run these programs and they were empowered by their control over substantial amounts of federal funds flowing into the state. Sanders makes it clear that CDGM teachers and administrators viewed the implementation of Head Start programs in the late 1960s as the next phase of the black freedom struggle in Mississippi.

While there have been many books, articles, and memoirs recounting the experiences of the first African American children to desegregate public elementary and secondary schools, there is little or no documentation of the circumstances for those who were the first to enroll in elite private schools. Michelle A. Purdy's "Courageous Navigation: African American Students at an Elite Private School, 1967-1972" fills this gap in the scholarship by focusing on the first African American students who attended the Westminster Schools, a private boarding school in Atlanta, Georgia. Using school records, newspaper accounts, curricular materials, and oral interviews, Purdy provides detailed insights into the positive and negative aspects of the African American

students' experiences, and she explains why most were successful in making the transition from an all-black to a predominantly white educational environment.

Barbara Sizemore was the first African American woman appointed as Superintendent of a large urban school district. In "Barbara Sizemore and the Politics of Black Educational Achievement and Community Control, 1963-1975," Elizabeth Todd-Breland presents insightful information on Sizemore's upbringing and training, as well as her leadership of public elementary and secondary schools in Chicago and an experimental community control program before she was appointed Superintendent of the Washington, DC, Public Schools in 1973. In her well-documented analysis of Sizemore's attempt to use "community control" to improve black academic achievement in Chicago and the District of Columbia, Todd-Breland exposes the racial and gender discrimination that prevented Sizemore from implementing the changes needed to advance African American education in the era of Black Power.

In the Special Report, "Documenting the Contributions of Children and Teenagers to the Civil Rights Movement," V. P. Franklin describes the research carried out and the exhibit mounted by students at the University of California, Riverside, that documented the activities of children and teenagers in support of civil rights campaigns organized by adults, as well as the protests and demonstrations organized by the teenagers themselves. The report describes the beginning of efforts to document the many ways children and teenagers' social activism impacted civil rights campaigns throughout the United States in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Fall 2015 issue also includes an Essay Review by Dionne Danks of two recent books on the "Separate and Superior" black secondary schools operating during the Jim Crow era; one by M. Christopher Brown on two books that examine the limited possibility for African American students to achieve equal educational outcomes in U. S. public schools; and a third by Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua on the history of black cooperative economics.

This fourth issue of the JNH/JAAH's 100th volume also includes three "Centennial Perspectives." Brenda E. Stevenson's "'Out of the Mouths of Ex-Slaves': Carter G. Woodson's *Journal of Negro History* 'Invents' the Study of Slavery" documents the JNH's pioneering work in the field of Slavery Studies. "'Bound to Them by a Common Sorrow': African American Women, Higher Education, and Collective Advancement" by Linda M. Perkins describes the women's long struggle for college and university education, and shows how college-bred black women used their advanced training to benefit oppressed African Americans in American society; and Olga Dugan's "In the Catbird Seat: The African American Contribution to 20th Century American Poetry" details how poets Robert Hayden, Gwendolyn Brooks, Rita Dove, and Natasha Tretheway used their positions as U. S. Poet Laureates to expand the audiences for poetry in the United States.

In addition, there are reviews of 15 recently published scholarly works on African American history and culture.

The JAAH Fall 2015 issue is available for purchase from ASALH in hard copy, and for use in courses through Publications Director, Karen May, at kmay@asalh.net. The digital version will

soon be available through “JSTOR Current Journals”; please check and make sure your university library subscribes to the program.

For more information, go to the JAAH website: www.jaah.org; or contact Sylvia Cyrus, JAAH Managing Editor, executive.director@asalh.org; or the JAAH:

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