

---

## Book Reviews

Note: The editors regret that in the June issue the review of *Destination Indiana: Travels through Hoosier History*, text by Ray E. Boomhower, photography by Darryl Jones, incorrectly identified the publisher. The book was published by the Indiana Historical Society.

*Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*. By Emma Lou Thornbrough. Edited and with a final chapter by Lana Ruegamer. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000. Pp. x, 286. Illustrations, notes, index. \$27.95.)

In *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*, the long-awaited sequel to her landmark study *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900*, the late Emma Lou Thornbrough continues her exploration of the plight of black Americans in Indiana. She not only describes the growth and power of African Americans throughout the state during the twentieth century, especially in cities such as Indianapolis, Gary, Evansville, Fort Wayne, East Chicago, and South Bend, but also explains how the arrival of these migrants led to increased racial segregation statewide during the 1920s and 1930s. Thornbrough shows how World War II marked the defining moment in Indiana's race relations, since most racial barriers in public education, housing, and employment were eliminated during the 1950s and 1960s, as well as how after the 1970s, despite the expansion of numerous economic and social opportunities, black Hoosiers continued their march toward social equality and racial justice, while facing "new problems, and attitudes on race and race relations were changing" (p. 190).

In her first three chapters Thornbrough discusses the status of blacks during the early 1900s, the movement of thousands of African Americans to Indiana, and the emergence of legalized racial segregation during the 1920s and 1930s. The author contends that although most black and white Hoosiers lived, worked, and played in separate communities at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was the Great Migration of African Americans to Indiana during and following World War I, along with the "ascendancy of the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana politics and society" during the 1920s that led to an increase in local moves to segregate schools and housing.

Thornbrough next describes how World War II was the decisive moment in the history of African Americans in Indiana because of the emerging statewide civil rights movement and the subsequent efforts to eliminate racial segregation and discrimination throughout Indiana during the 1950s and 1960s, which were spearheaded by the establishment of a group of "new" grassroots and civic organizations, such as the Gary United Council of Negro Organizations, the Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council, and the Indianapolis Federation of Associated Clubs, as well as the appearance of a

cadre of "new" leaders, such as Jesse Dickinson of South Bend, State Representative William Fortune of Marion County, and Henry J. Richardson and Willard Ransom, two Indianapolis NAACP chapter lawyers. Thornbrough's book ends with a brief analysis that notes that, after the 1970s, many black Hoosiers began to reevaluate and try to cope with the now questionable gains they had achieved during the previous decades.

*Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century* is a meticulously researched and well-written piece of scholarship. The only two problems are the lack of a detailed analysis of the role black women played in the various grassroots and civic organizations that operated during the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s and the space the author uses examining the conflicts within black American communities over the correct strategy to employ to end racial segregation. In general, despite these minor shortcomings, Thornbrough's book is a riveting study of the life of black Americans in a crucial midwestern state that adds much to the fields of black history and Indiana history.

ERIC R. JACKSON, assistant professor of history at Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, specializes in African American and early American history, and the history of the civil rights movement. He is working on the educational history of African Americans in Indianapolis during the first half of the twentieth century.

*Ball State University: An Interpretive History.* By Anthony O. Edmonds and E. Bruce Geelhoed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001. Pp. xiii, 350. Illustrations, notes, note on sources, index. \$29.95.)

Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, is one of about 300 universities in the country that began as normal schools and teachers colleges. In the nineteenth century, as the value of education was recognized and laws requiring school attendance by children were enacted, normal schools or teacher training institutions were established, some as commercial endeavors and some by government units. Many had brief lives; those that survived were taken over by the state or a city. With the financial help of George A. Ball, a wealthy manufacturer, the assets of the Muncie National Institute, a former normal school that was then training hotel employees, were purchased and donated to the state of Indiana to become a branch of the Indiana State Normal School at Terre Haute. In time this branch of the Normal School separated from the Indiana State Normal School to become an independent teacher's college, and in 1965 it achieved university status.

Ball State University, while shaped by many of the same influences as other institutions of this group, was sharply different in one respect, and that difference is reflected in its name. From the very beginning, the Ball family, owners of the factory in Muncie, Indiana,