

Black Power on Campus
The University of Illinois, 1965–75
 By Joy Ann Williamson

(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003. Pp. xiii, 192. Illustrations, table, appendices, notes, index. \$34.95.)

Scholarship on the 1960s black freedom movement is rapidly shifting from studies of civil rights to a focus on black power. Joy Ann Williamson's *Black Power on Campus* makes a significant contribution to this emerging trend. Using a wealth of primary sources from the University of Illinois Archives and thirty-one interviews with former students, faculty, and administrators, Williamson provides a detailed analysis of the motivations and process by which African-American student activists, as well as both black and white university administrators and faculty, negotiated campus reform. In so doing, she situates this rich material in the context of both higher-education reform and the transition from the civil rights to the black power movement.

Students constitute one of the most important and perhaps least-studied segments of the new black power studies. Yet as Williamson demonstrates, an examination of African-American student protests from a black power perspective opens a window on a broad range of interconnected subjects. Her study traces the general history of African-American student protest at predominantly white campuses from the 1920s through the mid-1970s, as well as the more specific story of black students

at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) from 1887 through the mid-1970s. For both the general and the specific histories, the 1940s through the 1950s represented an escalation in the struggle, while the period from 1965 to 1975 marked the high tide of black student protests.

While attuned to continuity between these two moments, Williamson ultimately uncovers a story of startling transformations. During the 1940–1964 period there were few African-American students on predominantly white campuses—as late as 1967, for instance, only 233 attended UIUC. This generation of black students was isolated and tended toward assimilation and conformity. When these students did engage in protest they did so through integrated chapters of national organizations, such as the NAACP and Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). In contrast, during the latter period, particularly between 1964 and 1970, black student enrollment doubled nationally and more than quadrupled at UIUC (p. 71). According to Williamson, the increased enrollment of African-American students dramatically altered the campus climate. At Illinois, the increased numbers combined with factors particular to UIUC, such as the homogeneity of black students and the racial politics

of Chicago, to create a unique cohesion among black students.

Using the language of the black power era and of African-American psychologist William Cross, Jr.'s, "Nigrescence" or "Negro-to-Black Conversion Process model," Williamson labels black students during the former period as "Negroes" and describes their goals as "integrationist." In contrast, she uses the term "Black" for later students, who are committed to "instilling solidarity and unity among Black students . . . expressing the positive aspects of Black culture, and providing a training ground for political organization and leadership" (p. 28). Using the testimony of students, Williamson powerfully locates these differences in the break with the civil rights movement and adoption of black power ideology. She quotes a former student, Sandra Norris, as saying, "When I came there, I was . . . a student who happened to be Black. When I left, I was a Black who happened to be a student" (p. 49). Black power ideology meant "preservation of Black identity, preference for an ethnically centered curriculum, and an orientation toward collective racial

advancement" (p. 31). These views were quite a distance from those of the preceding generation.

The transformation of African-American students' ideology from negro assimilationist to black power, and the resulting institutional reforms at places like UIUC, attest to the long-term influence of the 1960s' generation of black student activists. Williamson's most important point is to remind us of *how* transformative black power was. This is particularly important at a moment when historians tend to collapse civil rights and black power and to argue that continuity rather than change characterized the relationship between the two movements. *Black Power on Campus* makes a tremendous contribution to the burgeoning black power studies literature. Moreover, it suggests that we need more historical accounts of black students and the creation of black studies units.

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Generations of Captivity
A History of African-American Slaves
 By Ira Berlin

(Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2003. Pp. 374.
 Maps, illustrations, tables, notes, index. \$29.95.)

Ira Berlin skillfully braids the histories of African-American slaves into a coherent, self-contained narrative

that provides general readers and specialists alike a way to conceptualize two-and-a-half centuries of history