

Florida Historical Quarterly

Volume 86
Number 1 *Florida Historical Quarterly, Volume
86, Number 1*

Article 3

2007

Forward

Florida Historical Society
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Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (2007) "Forward," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 86: No. 1, Article 3.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol86/iss1/3>

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Foreword:

The four articles in this issue of the *Quarterly* provide a sixty-year perspective on race and civil rights in Florida. Each of the articles is firmly grounded in local events and personalities, but each successfully places community and state history within national and regional perspectives and raises new questions for future scholarship. Joshua Youngblood's analysis of the lynching of Claude Neal begins with one of the most brutal examples of public murder in Florida and southern history. Youngblood connects the event with depression-era civil rights activities and leftist efforts to effect economic justice, and uses Howard Kester's investigation of the lynching as a vehicle for understanding regional and national struggles for social change.

Chanelle Rose takes up the story twenty years later in her analysis of the NAACP in Miami. Rose suggests that the traditional historiographical focus on grassroots mass movement has undervalued the contributions of earlier civil rights organizations, particularly the NAACP. Moving beyond the well-known defiance of the local NAACP chapter against the demands of the Johns Committee for membership lists, Rose demonstrates the considerable community improvements for Miami blacks made by the more traditional organization.

J. Michael Butler uses the struggles of the African American community in Pensacola in the 1970s to study the post-1960s era. His analysis focuses on conflicts between the black community and the Escambia County Sheriff's Department and the simultaneous clash between the NAACP and the SCLC for member loyalty. Butler concludes that the failure of the Pensacola effort demonstrates the detrimental effects that institutional hierarchy and intra-organizational antagonism had for local struggles.

Peyton McCrary, the 2006 Jillian Prescott Memorial Lecturer, surveys minority efforts to gain representation in local and state elections over a thirty-year period. Focusing on segregationist efforts to block African American access to elective office through the implementation of at-large elections, McCrary provides a primer of court cases and local actions that eventually produced minority representation in the legislature, and on county commissions and school boards. His complex study concludes that both litigation and voluntary action (often under the threat of litigation) increased minority representation and participation.

Together and separately, the four essays challenge traditional historiography and invite additional scholarship. Collectively the essays argue for an expanded time frame that incorporates the interwar years and continues through the decades following the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act. Each of the essays complicates our understanding of the role of the NAACP in furthering civil rights activism. Finally, as they ask new questions, the authors demonstrate the importance of Florida's civil rights history to the national narrative.

Connie L. Lester, editor