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## Brown v. Board and the Transformation of American Culture: Education and the South in the Age of Desegregation

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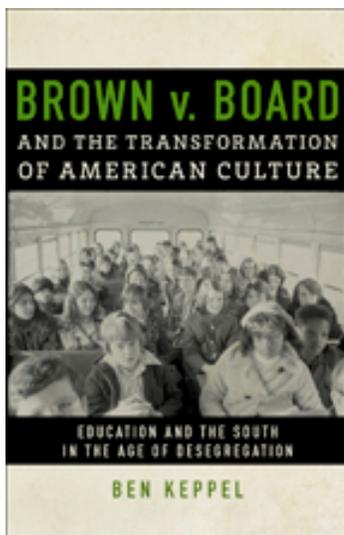
As a librarian and teacher now, I am aware the Negro spirituals which we sang as little children and the play, "The Life of Stephen Foster", with its beautiful songs written by Stephen Foster in the 1800s, emerged from the days when slaves sang and performed their spirituals in churches and on plantations. The strong impact of the slave spirituals upon America's musical heritage spread to art, theatre and opera in the following years.

William Francis Allen contributed through his journals and his work a priceless gem of songs and historical descriptions. His painstaking recording of lyrics and of scores and his journal writings of day to day experiences, all recorded in the edited manuscript by James Robert Hester, provide a precious look at St. Helena Island and the Charleston region during the 1860s and 70s.

This book is recommend as a valuable acquisition for public and college/university libraries..... Pages 216 to 323 pages of research notations.

*Carol Walker Jordan, PhD*  
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**Brown v. Board and the Transformation of American Culture: Education and the South in the Age of Desegregation.** Ben Keppel. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-8071-6132-6. 225 p. \$41.16.



The monumental text referring to Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka (1954) and desegregation tells in all-encompassing details the improvements in human rights and advances in education in the south as well as all of the United States.

Ben Keppel is on the faculty at the University of Oklahoma as an associate professor in the department of history. The monograph has some connection to the south because slavery and Reconstruction as well as Brown versus Board

of Education and desegregation of public schools are specifically discussed. Other places pointed out where incidents of human rights in Southern USA also occurred are Alabama, Arkansas, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Kansas. The writing style is easy to read. The content reveals how the United States accomplished the magnificent United States public school system. The perceived interest to the readership of the journal is perfect in that the book exposes human rights and education in southern and northern United States has greatly increased.

Examples from this work of progress in human rights and education in the United States are as follows. The Reconstruction of the South after the Civil War is referred to as the First Reconstruction. Desegregation is referred to as the Second Reconstruction in the South. *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) made unconstitutional the laws of the states separating black and white pupils with different schools. Robert Coles and his publication *Children of Crisis*, a study of Mississippi desegregation, are revealed. Education empowers choices for occupations.

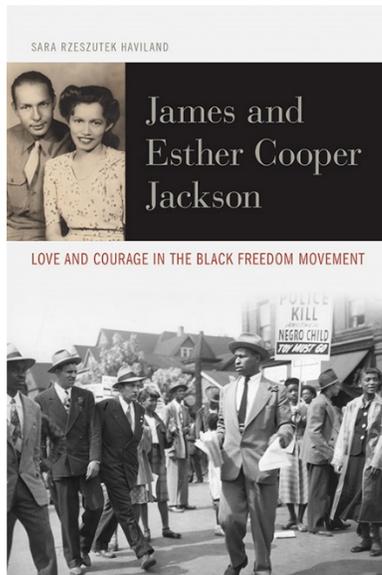
Educational television started in 1953. A television program to aid children prior to public school with alphabet and socializing is *Sesame Street* created by Joan Ganz Cooney. Other educational television programs alluded to are *Electric Company*, *Mister Roger's Neighborhood*, *Romper Room*, *Captain Kangaroo*, *Rowan Martin's Laugh In*, *Antiques Road Show*, and *Batman*. Parents brought into play *Sesame Street* to make their children more productive. Bill Cosby's *Cosby Show*, *Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids*, and *Good Times* portrayed successful humans to inspire all in the United States to do well. National Education Television (NET) furnished folk music, science, and classical music programs. Young people also learn tunes from commercials. Bill Cosby starred in JELL-O and Cola commercials. *Superman* on the radio was hoped to motivate children especially poorer children.

In 1916, South Carolina instructors conveyed tales to instruct pupils in reading. Having other books for pupils to read such as *Robin Hood*, *George Washington Carver*, and *Richard E. Byrd* enhanced student scores. Montessori schooling was initialized in the 1950's for pupils to learn alone. In 1961, Miami, Florida did not have enough instructors for the large amount of pupils, so educational television on history, sciences, automobile driving, reading, spelling, composition, and literature was employed to instruct the pupils instead. In the seventies in the United States, food stamps and school lunches were created. The idea of a shorter workday for Americans brought desires for maintaining a cleaner home. A cafeteria female employee indicated she would clean her residence. A business person said he would advertise in amplified amounts. The United States wants all types of people in public school together for all people to have opportunities and education to strive for expansion and improve the United States. This work is invaluable for public and academic libraries and vital for researchers of the history of

public education in southern United States as well as all of the United States.

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**James and Esther Cooper Jackson: Love and Courage in the Black Freedom Movement.** Sara Rzeszutek Haviland. Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8131-6625. 359 p. \$45.00.



This is both an inspiring and a disturbing book. It is inspiring in terms of the heroic efforts and sacrifices made by James Jackson (1914-2007) and Esther Cooper Jackson (1917- ) on behalf of the black freedom movement; it is disturbing in terms of the severe harassment they endured from the federal government due to their leftwing activism and, in Jack's case, lifelong affiliation with the Communist Party (CPUSA). The book is also inspiring as a story of two people who, over the course of a 66-year marriage, succeeded in working both together and separately to combine their love of family with their activism, to advance the cause of African American civil rights. The story of "Jack" Jackson and Esther Cooper Jackson is also important in that they were a part of the civil rights movement that has largely remained hidden: the leftwing African American activists who got their start in the 1930s and 1940s and who were, in many ways, eclipsed by the better known liberal civil rights leaders of the 1950s and 1960s and the more militant black nationalists active in the 1960s and 1970s.

Jack and Esther both came from well-to-do African American families in Virginia and were college educated. Their passion for civil rights and for leftwing politics was instilled early as they observed the poverty and harsh conditions suffered by African Americans living under southern segregation. Both came of age during the Great Depression when the certainties of capitalism were in doubt and leftwing organizations including the Communist Party

were seen as offering viable alternative approaches. The Popular Front was a Communist-affiliated coalition of leftist and some centrist groups and during the 1930s and 1940s appealed to a number of mostly younger activists such as Jack and Esther. A major appeal of the Popular Front and the actual Communist Party itself was a truly progressive approach to civil rights for African Americans. Jack and Esther saw more mainstream liberal groups such as the NAACP as too tame and also as lacking a class-based approach to the advancement of civil rights. The Popular Front also appealed to Jack and Esther as an interracial coalition for advancing the cause of civil rights.

Sara Rzeszutek Haviland (Assistant Professor of History at St. Francis College) does a convincing job of linking the various avenues of activism engaged in by the couple from the 1930s onward to their approach to family life. Both were heavily involved in working for the Southern Negro Youth Congress in the early years of their marriage. The Cooper Jacksons took a completely egalitarian approach to gender roles as well. They made connections between racism and anticommunism with the destruction of family life and the black freedom movement. Their marriage was at times put under serious stress such as when Jack served three years in Burma during World War II and when Jack went underground during the years 1951-1955 during the height of Cold War anticommunist hysteria. This is where the book becomes particularly disturbing.

No matter where one's political sympathies lie, the truly nasty harassment suffered by Esther Cooper Jackson and her and Jack's two young daughters at the hands of the F.B.I. is simply appalling. As the Cold War grew in intensity in the immediate postwar years, southern racists successfully linked communism to civil rights activism in the minds of much of the American public. True communists such as Jack faced possible prison sentences under provisions of the Smith Act even if they had no intentions of violently overthrowing the federal government. The Smith Act (otherwise known as the Alien Registration Act) passed in 1940 also required all adult non-U.S. citizen residents to register with the government. Jack was (inaccurately) indicted for "conspiracy to teach or advocate the violent overthrow of the government" in 1951 (p. 124). Not wanting to risk a trial and likely conviction and lengthy prison sentence, he went into hiding. In an attempt to break Esther's will and get her to reveal Jack's whereabouts (of which she had no knowledge during this time), the F.B. I. engaged in truly mean spirited tactics such as destroying one's ability to get or keep a job and, in Esther's case, also by inaccurately alleging that she had an extra source of income thus forcing her to temporarily withdraw her four-year old daughter, Kathy, from nursery school. Fortunately, Esther was able to work with the Families Committee of Smith Act Victims to put pressure on the New York Welfare Department and was, ultimately, able to reinstate Kathy in nursery school so that she, Esther, could get a job to support herself and her two daughters. Haviland relates other heavy handed techniques of harassment employed against family members of other accused Communists including one where a woman was unable to either register or sell her car which also,