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Charles F. Robinson II, Lonnie R. Williams. *Remembrances in Black: Personal Perspectives of the African American Experience at the University of Arkansas.* Introduction by Fred A. Bonner II. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2010. xx + 335 pp. $45.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-55728-953-7.

Reviewed by Jayne R. Beilke (Department of Educational Studies, Ball State University Tchr Col)
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Remembrances in Black consists of seven chapters plus a foreword, introduction, afterword, epilogue, and appendices. In the introduction, Fred A. Bonner II, who earned an EdD at the University of Arkansas in 1997, states that the seventy-eight oral histories contained in this book provide "a context in which you can better understand the motivation, thoughts, challenges, and opportunities that have made these African American students successful" (p. xiii). The University of Arkansas at Fayetteville is the flagship of the Arkansas post-secondary education system. Founded in 1871 as Arkansas Industrial University, it was segregated de facto by its geographic location in predominantly white-populated northwestern Arkansas. In 1873, Branch Normal College was established in the eastern part of the state for "the education and fitting of persons as colored teachers" (p. xv). Later, the college would become Arkansas Agricultural, Mechanical, and Normal College (Arkansas AM&N) and then, finally, the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff. Participants in the study could choose to be interviewed or submit written responses to a set of questions about their experiences at the University of Arkansas and included African American students, staff, administrators, and faculty. The oral histories are arranged chronologically and divided into periods reflecting significant events in the institution's racial history. Each section is preceded by a summary of the significant events during the period in question.

Several of those interviewed mention the practice of issuing out-of-state tuition scholarships to black students who wanted to attend white institutions. The practice provided graduate and professional education for blacks in northern states if that training was not available at black institutions within the state. The Arkansas state government established a $5,000 fund for this purpose in 1943.[1] Although the authors do not refer to it, the Supreme Court case *Gaines ex rel v Canada* (1938) outlawed the practice, but governments in the southern states ignored the ruling. However, as lawsuits pressed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) became more prevalent, southern institutions were forced to deal with the reality of a new racial and social arrangement. Silas Hunt, a World War II veteran from Texarkana, Arkansas, became the first black student to be admitted and enrolled in 1948. Hunt was not allowed to take classes with other students, use student restrooms, or live and eat in the dormitories, however. His attenuated stay at the university ended when he contracted tuberculosis and died in April 1949. Nevertheless, he provided a powerful symbol to generations of African American students who followed and measured their progress against the conditions that he had endured.

The period 1948-54 is the focus of chapters 1 and 2. Three principles guided the University of Arkansas administration during the period prior to the ruling in *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka* (1954). First, the university did not want to draw attention to early desegregation efforts; 2) the university subscribed to a policy of gradualism (e.g., not admitting undergraduate students); and 3) the university "followed legal mandates rather than choosing to set new social trends" (p. 2). Spurred on by the decision in *McLaurin v Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education* (1950), the University of Arkansas began to allow black males to live in a male graduate dorm and converted a residence into housing for black women. Student organizations, however, prohibited black membership, and students were socially segregated at public events. Although most alumni believed that they received a good education, they were not always awarded the grades that they deserved by racist professors. In several cases, however, subjects identify at least one white faculty member who was sympathetic and helpful. Denied the opportunity to live on campus, students relied on the black community in Fayetteville for housing, socialization, and nurturing. Often the only African Amer-

icans in their classes, they kept to themselves on campus.

After *Brown II* (1955), the university instituted a policy for admitting black undergraduates. However, blacks could not play intercollegiate athletics or attend social events such as student parties and dances. Potential students were often encouraged to attend Arkansas AM&N for three years and then apply to the University of Arkansas. Consequently, during the fall of 1956, only sixteen black students (out of a student population of 5,000) attended; significantly, however, eight were registered as undergraduates.

During the 1960s, the university publicly took the stance of admitting students without regard to race. However, the collegiate experiences of black and white students varied tremendously, and the administration of Arkansas governor Orval E. Faubus (1955-67) proved to be a setback. First, the Arkansas legislature required all public schoolteachers to file affidavits listing every organization to which they belonged and contributed. Second, it prohibited the employment of any person who was a member of the NAACP. But this was a period of black insistence as well as white resistance. Black students protested the conditions at the University of Arkansas, particularly the segregation of the dorms and athletic participation and admissions policies. They called for black instructors and an end to the incessant playing of the southern anthem "Dixie" at university-sponsored events. BAD (Black Americans for Democracy), a new student organization, formed. Alumni from the 1960s recounted instances of blatant racism, sexism, and lack of extracurricular activities. They also mentioned the "academic sophistication" of whites, which amounted to a hidden curriculum (p. 130). Whites had access to test files (collected and kept on hand by Greek organizations) and knowledge of administrative practices such as dropping courses without penalty. Blacks were excluded from such knowledge by their social isolation.

In 1969, the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) offered ten suggestions that would help the University of Arkansas comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Six of them involved the recruitment of black students, faculty, staff, and athletes. While the enrollment at the University of Arkansas had grown to about 9,000 students, the number of black students was only 150. The HEW also recommended that the University of Arkansas prohibit the exclusionary practices of Greek organizations and make dormitory assignments without regard to race. The report issued by the HEW in 1970 noted progress (including the establishment of a tutoring program for academically disadvantaged students, a black culture center, and efforts to recruit more international students) but it again cautioned the University of Arkansas for lack of black students, administrators, faculty, and athletes. At the same time that the HEW was pressing the University of Arkansas on the aforementioned matters, BAD was representing the interests of students through its own campus paper, BAD *Times*, and providing social opportunities for black students. BAD is credited with many accomplishments, including the creation of the Black Emphasis Week in 1970. Altogether, federal, state, and local (specifically BAD) efforts resulted in an increase of 4 percent in the black student population. In 1974, the state developed a desegregation plan which was enhanced in 1976 after the NAACP sued the HEW and forced the agency to request more specific desegregation plans for Arkansas and several other states. All in all, the 1970s signaled an expansion in educational opportunity for blacks in Arkansas. Of particular note in chapter 4 is the interview with coauthor Lonnie R. Williams, who served as vice-chancellor of student affairs.

Chapter 5 looks at continued efforts to desegregate the university during the 1980s. In 1979, BAD became STAND: Students Taking A New Dimension. Its goals included fostering an appreciation for black heritage, improving interracial relationships, emphasizing education, and helping members develop leadership skills. They requested representation in the Associated Student Government and were given two permanent senate seats. This agenda reflected a more subtle and nuanced approach to race relations. Although the book does not examine this issue, one also wonders if this reflects a more middle-class orientation. STAND was committed to working within the system. While the university made progress on several fronts (it featured a black homecoming queen, black administrators, and a black basketball coach), black student enrollment actually declined during the decade to 673 out of 14,281 students by 1989. By this time, black students had other options. The university was still overtly racist, and the relative attraction of being a pioneer had fallen out of favor.

During the 1990s, the university hired an affirmative action director, opened a multicultural center, recognized the month of February as Cultural Awareness Month, hired more black administrators and faculty, and grew the black student body to 5.88 percent of the total student population. However, there were reminders of the institutionalized racism at the University of Arkansas in the presence of a statue named "Sambo" outside of the Sigma

Phi Epsilon house. When Carlton Bailey, a University of Arkansas law professor went to take a photograph of the statue, he was greeted with calls of "nigger" (p. 236). Incredibly, members of the fraternity claimed that Sambo was intended to be "a positive uplifting thing for black people" (p. 236).

Gains during the 2000s included the creation of a Diversity Task Force in 2002 charged with creating a diversity plan for the institution, the hiring of an African American woman to serve as chief diversity officer, and the inauguration of the Silas Hunt Awards to recognize the contributions of African American students, faculty, and staff to furthering the cause of inclusion. Black students and faculty increased slowly, with black teaching faculty rising from 3.1 percent in 2000 to 3.9 percent in 2002. This was countered by the dismissal of the men's basketball coach, Nolan Richardson, who subsequently sued the university for racial discrimination. By 2006, black student enrollment had once again fallen from 6.37 percent in 2002 to 5.28 percent.

Williams (alumnus and administrator, 1972-2003) was instrumental in starting the Black Alumni Society, which sponsored reunions held on the University of Arkansas campus. In fact, the book is an outgrowth of a series of black alumni reunions. While some former students had maintained a connection with the university, others found the memory of their history at Fayetteville to be too painful to go back. Indeed, the question "have you gone back?" is central to the interviews. It meant not only a physical return to the campus, but a re-visitation of one's experiences there. In some cases, going back, in terms of memory, was painful. In at least two instances, interviewees shed tears as they told their stories to coauthors Charles F. Robinson II and Williams. For others, the interviews seemed to be cathartic and helped "put everything into perspective" (p. 42). And, there were allusions to students who were so damaged by the experience that they left the university. Frequently, "some of those folk never recovered" (p. 246).

When this reviewer looked at the current University of Arkansas web site, there was not one person of color represented. But historians of education are surely to be interested in an institutional history that tracks the response of a southern post-secondary institution to changing racial and social mores through oral interviews with alumni, particularly given the prominence of the desegregation of Central High School in Little Rock. Appendix A includes biographies of most of the interviewees, arranged according to chapters. Appendix B is a record of African American enrollment from 1983 to 2009. Appendix C is a timeline of African American history at the University of Arkansas from 1871 to 2009, when Robinson II, a coauthor of *Remembrances*, was appointed vice provost for diversity.

Note

[1]. For a discussion of this practice, see Mary Bynum Pierson, *Graduate Work in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947).

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