
This single-volume survey of black history in North Carolina is unassuming in nature, yet it takes its place among historical classics such as *Strength through Struggle* and provides context to works like *Blood Done Sign My Name* and *The Parchman Hour*. First published in 1992, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* mapped the history of black North Carolinians from Colonial America to the 1990s. It has since been revised twice: once in 2002 to include a new chapter on the political influence of African Americans, and again in 2011 to include the 2008 presidential election and an updated index. This book is the finale to over two decades of research by the staff of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History and noted North Carolina historians. The canon of literature documenting the African American struggle for freedom and civil rights would not be complete without it.

The work is divided into ten chapters, each exploring a different era in North Carolina history. From the origins of slavery in the colonial era, to the controversy surrounding desegregation, and finally to the rise of black politicians, each chapter is broad and comprehensive. Ample photographs and illustrations illuminate the authors’ narrative and enhance the reader’s understanding of the material. Readers may also benefit from the appendices, which include lists of African American legislators in the General Assembly, 1868-1900, African Americans in major governmental posts from 1969-2011, and a chronology of congressional redistricting, 1991-2001.

Some may be disappointed by the book’s deficiencies, the chief of which is the lack of footnotes. Those wishing to delve further into a topic will find themselves stymied by the absence of notes. Small appeasement is offered in the form of a suggested readings list found in the back of the book. Readers may also be frustrated by the book’s lack of depth. While each chapter is comprehensive, nonetheless each is a historical survey, rather than an in-depth exploration of a particular topic. The book also lacks a central, unified thesis, which may be off-putting to those readers expecting a more sophisticated research endeavor.

Despite these deficiencies, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* remains a singularly helpful and informative text. It is recommended for all public and academic libraries, particularly those which have an emphasis on North Carolina or African American History. While this book is affordable, the second revised edition does not vary much from the first revised edition, so forgoing this latest incarnation is justified. It is well-written, very easy to understand, and clearly expresses the history of a people who for centuries suffered a “silent rage for freedom.”

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