



Building a New Educational State: Foundations, Schools, and the American South

Joan Malczewski

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Building a New Educational State: Foundations, Schools, and the American South Joan Malczewski *Building a New Educational State* examines the dynamic process of black education reform during the Jim Crow era in North Carolina and Mississippi. Through extensive archival research, Joan Malczewski explores the initiatives of foundations and reformers at the top, the impact of their work at the state and local level, and the agency of southerners—including those in rural black communities—to demonstrate the importance of schooling to political development in the South. Along the way, Malczewski challenges us to reevaluate the relationships among political actors involved in education reform.

Malczewski presents foundation leaders as self-conscious state builders and policy entrepreneurs who aimed to promote national ideals through a public system of education—efforts they believed were especially critical in the South. Black education was an important component of this national agenda. Through extensive efforts to create a more centralized and standard system of public education aimed at bringing isolated and rural black schools into the public system, schools became important places for expanding the capacity of state and local governance. Schooling provided opportunities to reorganize local communities and augment black agency in the process. When foundations realized they could not unilaterally impose their educational vision on the South, particularly in black communities, they began to collaborate with locals, thereby opening political opportunity in rural areas. Unfortunately, while foundations were effective at developing the institutional configurations necessary for education reform, they were less successful at implementing local programs consistently due to each state's distinctive political and institutional context.



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