

Mark R. Schneider, *Boston Confronts Jim Crow, 1890-1920*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1997. 262 pp. ISBN: 1-55553-295-0; paper.

Antebellum Boston was the home of some of America's most ardent opponents of the institution of slavery. Although not all Bostonians by definition opposed the Southern way of life, the strong commitment to combat racism and racial inequalities continued after abolition when the South introduced its inflexible segregation practices.

Based in large part on newspapers, correspondence, and judicial and legislative debates, Mark Schneider convincingly portrays the intellectual and political lives of influential Bostonian reformers like Booker T. Washington, William Monroe Trotter and Henry Cabot Lodge and their views on American race relations. In the introductory chapter Schneider portrays the racial and political commitment characteristic of Boston's close-knit African American community during these years and points out that the city's black and white civil rights activists found much of their strength and inspiration in the deeds of their abolitionist ancestors. The rest of Schneider's book is divided into seven chapters. The first examines the Republican party's determination to end the Democrats' domination in the South. Backed by accusations of southern election fraud and harassment of its African-American voters, Henry Cabot Lodge initiated his crusade for the Federal Elections Bill of 1890. Despite its strong advocates in both black and white political circles, the bill was never passed. Schneider remarks that this rejection of a bill securing the African-American vote, led to a shift in the strategies of race improvements from political action to more individual economic and social self-help. The second chapter is devoted to the period's most prominent African American leader, Booker T. Washington, and the communication between him and Boston's African American upper class in particular. For a brief period, black Bostonians backed Washington's accommodating policies until the emergence of more radical views such as those of William Monroe Trotter and W.E.B. Du Bois. In contrast, influential white Bostonians remained receptive to the ideology of gradual racial concessions.

The third chapter is devoted to African-American women's influence on the racial and women's rights debate of the time. Prominent women like Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin and Maria L. Baldwin worked to improve women's and African Americans' position in a white, male-dominated society which Schneider depicts with careful attention to the agreements and disagreements between black and white women's groups. As in the previous chapters, Schneider in his fourth chapter provides useful background about the personalities portrayed, with Trotter as the protagonist in the increasing opposition to Washington's alleged autocratic rule. Schneider argues that Trotter was ahead of his time, for, like the militant civil rights movements during the 1950s and 1960s, he stressed keeping organizational leadership in African-American hands. Du Bois worked for similar goals in the NAACP, whose leadership went from largely integrated to largely African-American by the 1920s. The fifth chapter examines the leadership and work of the NAACP's Boston chapter that, in spite of its relatively small African-American community, constituted the largest branch in the nation. Schneider attributes this fact and

the organization's successful legal battles during the modern civil rights movement to the city's long history of race activism. Chapter six explores why, in spite of the NAACP's commitment, only a few significant racial advancements were achieved in Boston during these years. Here, Schneider turns his attention to the wider Bostonian community and the transformation of white power relations from the Protestant Yankee upper class to the ambitious Irish-Americans. The contributions of three prominent lawyers to the African-American quest for equality is the topic of the final chapter. The focus is on William Henry Lewis and Moorfield Storey's commitment to pursue their predecessors' active engagement in the civil rights struggle, an enthusiasm the third lawyer, Oliver Wendell Holmes, did not quite share.

In this solid but slow-moving book, Schneider addresses the specialist reader interested in the history of race relations as they pertain to the city of Boston. His elaborate list of primary and secondary sources is a valuable source for anyone wishing to know more about Boston and its inhabitants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.