

identify the mores of average (white) Americans, but the point of polls by Gallup and Roper and interviews by Kinsey and his staff was to delineate a range of *differences* in beliefs and practices. What comes across in *The Averaged American* is not a series of medians and means but patterns of segmentation and divergence. The diversity of 1960s and '70s America that Igo notes in her epilogue was not new—it was only more pronounced and visible than it had been a generation earlier.

That is not to say that Igo's notion of "averaged" Americans isn't valid, but perhaps it applies to a different body of literature than the important but particular works she cites. Especially during the 1950s, survey-based books

and articles appeared that defined the average American family as a nuclear unit with 2.5 children, or told readers that persons of a certain height should weigh between 115 and 125 pounds. Americans who did not match the newly revealed norms (or averages) for cars and television sets per family may very well have felt anxiety about their aberrations. But the work of Gallup, Roper, and, especially, Kinsey argues *against* the grain of "averaged Americans." However one feels about multiculturalism as an American mantra, diversity has been with us for quite some while.

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IN BRIEF

HISTORY

Separate and Unequal

THE U.S. SUPREME COURT'S 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* marked the beginning of the end for legally mandated racial segregation in public schools. But from the time public education developed in the American South following the Civil War until well after *Brown*, southern blacks struggled to obtain quality schooling. Before Reconstruction ended in 1877, equal education for students of both races was an imaginable possibility, but once white "redeemers" seized political control, gross inequities took hold.

In *A Class of Their Own*, historian Adam Fairclough, of Leiden University, in the Netherlands, masterfully recounts black southerners' efforts to build schools that could offer their children some

A CLASS OF THEIR OWN:
Black Teachers
in the Segregated
South.

By Adam Fairclough.
Harvard Univ. Press.
533 pp. \$29.95

hope of educational uplift. By the 1870s every state had a public school system, but actually enrolling black youngsters in a functioning school "depended upon black initiative," usually through recruitment of willing individual teachers who would "first set up a school, then ask the county to pay their salary." Across the largely rural South, "black farmers depended upon family labor," and agricultural demands often resulted in very short school terms. Exploitative share cropping practices forced many black families to move almost yearly, so sustained schooling was often impossible.

These conditions made the lot of black teachers a hard one. They were generally poorly paid part-time workers lacking adequate training and experience. Circumstances did not improve as the decades went by. Fairclough writes that once the disfranchisement of black voters peaked, at the turn of the century, "southern states began to spend much less on black schools relative to white schools." A 1930 survey showed that "more than half of all black rural teachers had failed to

complete high school,” and Fairclough reports that “the condition of most rural schools was about the same in 1940 as it had been in 1870.”

What improvements did occur across the South were concentrated in a relatively elite group of black-run private schools funded primarily by northern white contributors, such as the school for black girls that pioneering black educator Mary McLeod Bethune founded in 1904 in Daytona Beach, Florida (now Bethune-Cookman College). Little remembered today, those schools initiated a good number of the relatively few upper-level academic programs available to blacks in the South. Many black public high schools and many of the nascent black state colleges originated as private institutions before attaining grudging public support and hybrid financing.

Only in the 1940s, as anti-segregation lawsuits began to point the way toward *Brown*, did southern states start to give more than lip service to the long-standing “separate but equal” doctrine. In many black communities, including the two in South Carolina and Virginia whose

legal complaints became part of *Brown*, better school services, not racial integration, was the topmost goal.

Once *Brown* established desegregation as a constitutional requirement, black teachers realized that integration into white-dominated school systems could threaten both their jobs and black schools’ existence. When schools began to merge, the number of black principals declined precipitously. In North Carolina, for instance, there were 226 high schools with black principals in 1963. Nine years later, there were 15.

“To many black southerners,” Fairclough explains, “the closure of black high schools represented the symbolic decapitation of their communities.” Growing black ambivalence about the benefits of integration generated “a

belated recognition that many segregated black schools of the pre-*Brown* era had been successful institutions.” By the 1990s, Fairclough notes, more and more institutional histories of black schools expressly challenged the earlier integrationist view that black education in the segregated South had more than merited *Brown*’s devastating upheaval.

Fairclough’s own verdict is measured and sagacious. On the one hand, he writes, “the central assertion of the *Brown* decision—that segregated schools generated feelings of inferiority in the black children who attended them—has never been proven. In fact, the more we learn about those segregated schools, the more dubious that assertion seems.”

Yet he firmly refuses to adopt a sanguine view of the south’s pre-*Brown* days as “a golden era of community stability and educational progress” for black southerners. Indeed, he rightly warns, too much “uncritical celebration” of black courage and achievements during this period would only obscure “the extent to which white supremacy blighted black education” from the

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Mary McLeod Bethune, c. 1925

end of slavery to the present day. *A Class of Their Own* is scholarly history at its very best: A richly textured and nuanced book, it tells an important American story that should not be forgotten.

—David J. Garrow

Vintage Founder

THOMAS JEFFERSON IS thought of as the father of American wine. He was also an advocate of rural yeomanry that would forever keep the country whole, decent, and egalitarian, and presumably vineyardists were part of this idealistic vision. Jefferson paid a lot of money to import the good stuff, and served it often to grease the skids of civil discourse. He also tried valiantly to grow grapes at Monticello that would make a palatable drink, despite Virginia's extremes of temperature and humidity. A Chateau Monticello wasn't in the cards at the time, but wine thoroughly informed Jefferson's life, in public and in private.

Until now, no one has attempted to view the author of the Declaration of Independence and his times solely through his stemmed glass, but John Hailman does just that. A former wine critic clearly enamored of his subject, he doesn't shy away from the most incidental mention of anything vinous in the letters and conversation not just of Jefferson but of anyone with whom he had the most minimal contact. The result is a compendium of occurrences and facts sometimes only tenuously related to wine that together offer a backstairs view of a great man. War, presidential elections, and other big events are mere backdrops to the really important business of choosing the right claret and getting it from Europe to Monticello without its being watered down or imbibed by what Jefferson called the rascally Tidewater bargemen.

In an attempt to make our third president

more palatable to contemporary oenophiles, Hailman says that Jefferson's letters about wine "read remarkably like a Robert Parker newsletter or *Wine Spectator* article," conjuring a Jefferson who talks about oodles of blackberry on the nose, cigar box overtones, and the relative toastiness of plush cabernets. Jefferson was not, in fact, rhapsodic about wine, but merely appreciative, and more concerned with procuring it than describing it. For instance, of Meursault, one of his favorite wines, he wrote simply that he "found it so good that I will take three feuilletes," which were casks of 114 American gallons.

Jefferson championed wine more by drinking it than by doing anything else, as an emissary sent to Paris in 1784 and later as secretary of state, president, and statesman emeritus. Because of the breadth of Jefferson's acquaintanceship, we get the incidental views of other dignitaries and demi-mondains on a wide range of subjects, from Benjamin Franklin's cure for flatulence (dried rhubarb and attar of roses dissolved in—what else?—wine) to John Adams's opinion of Jefferson's entertaining (extravagant and tiring).

In addition to the important events in Jefferson's life, we witness others that are no less interesting: his wine tour of France in 1787, with visits to "Chateau de la Fite" and many other prime vineyards that still attract the peripatetic elites; his early orders of wine (Jefferson was a Bordeaux man, and to a lesser extent a Burgundy one, but no snob, finding merit in everything from plonk to Pommery); his list of favorite Bordeaux wines, remarkably similar to the top tier of the official French classification established much later; and the Marquis de Lafayette's visit to Monticello in Jefferson's declining years, during which the Frenchman drank much of what remained in a cellar once stocked with the best of France as well as wines from Germany, Italy, Hungary, Spain, and Portugal.

Thomas Jefferson on Wine has a gently didactic flavor, with old-fashioned subchapter

THOMAS JEFFERSON ON WINE.

By John Hailman.
Univ. Press of
Mississippi.
457 pp. \$38