

Racism in the Nation's Service: Government Workers and the Color Line in Woodrow Wilson's America

By Eric S. Yellin



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Between the 1880s and 1910s, thousands of African Americans passed civil service exams and became employed in the executive offices of the federal government. However, by 1920, promotions to well-paying federal jobs had nearly vanished for black workers. Eric S. Yellin argues that the Wilson administration's successful 1913 drive to segregate the federal government was a pivotal episode in the age of progressive politics. Yellin investigates how the enactment of this policy, based on Progressives' demands for whiteness in government, imposed a color line on American opportunity and implicated Washington in the economic limitation of African Americans for decades to come.

Using vivid accounts of the struggles and protests of African American government employees, Yellin reveals the racism at the heart of the era's reform politics. He illuminates the nineteenth-century world of black professional labor and social mobility in Washington, D.C., and uncovers the Wilson administration's progressive justifications for unraveling that world. From the hopeful days following emancipation to the white-supremacist "normalcy" of the 1920s, Yellin traces the competing political ideas, politicians, and ordinary government workers who created "federal segregation."





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Editorial Review

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Yellin's scholarship fills an important gap in our understanding of what Wilsonian progressivism was all about . . . but also explores less well understood connections between racism, progressive politics, and the state.--American Historical Review

Carefully researched and well-written. . . . [Yellin's] book deserves a wide reading among scholars and students of labor and race in the twentieth century.--*Labor*

Yellin's well-written treatise reminds readers how far the U.S. has come in its quest for racial equality. Recommended. Most levels/libraries.--*Choice*

A very compelling read.--History: Reviews of New Books

[A] thoroughly researched and artfully crafted book.--Register of the Kentucky Historical Society

Yellin's work is lucid and illuminating. He provides a thorough, readable, and well-rounded narrative filled with vivid examples and sharp analysis.--*Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*

His nuanced and sober book carefully chronicles the rationales and practices of racial subordination in the realm of federal employment and the personal and collective consequences that this unfolding tragedy had on the lives of black Washingtonians.--*Journal of Southern History*

Excellent new book .-- Journal of Southern History

Yellin makes an important contribution to our understanding of 'white supremacy.'--Journal of Interdisciplinary History

This is an excellent, well-researched, and well-written study. Yellin's diverse sources are impressive as is his ability to weave them into a tight analysis.-- *Journal of American History*

Review

This is a highly readable and compelling narrative based on extraordinary research. Yellin fills in a crucial gap in the history of sanctioned segregation and its effect between *Plessy* and *Brown* and illuminates a crucial shift in the way institutional racism worked and was largely accepted, despite extensive efforts to prevent it from taking hold. This is a story manifestly worth telling, and Yellin does so in outstanding fashion.--Howard Gillette Jr., Rutgers University-Camden

The best book yet written on the segregationist racial politics of Woodrow Wilson's presidency and their devastating effects on Washington's accomplished and proud black community. A powerful and tragic story, exquisitely crafted and movingly told.--Gary Gerstle, author of *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*

Emphasizing the complexity and devastating impact of institutional racism, Yellin's pathbreaking study sheds new light on Wilsonian progressivism, public sector employment, and early-twentieth-century civil rights activism. Deeply researched, dazzlingly well written, and persuasively argued, *Racism in the Nation's Service* is an important book that deserves a wide audience.--Kate Masur, author of *An Example for All the Land: Emancipation and the Struggle over Equality in Washington, D.C.*

From the Inside Flap

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paul Delatorre:

Nowadays reading books be a little more than want or need but also turn into a life style. This reading practice give you lot of advantages. The benefits you got of course the knowledge your information inside the book in which improve your knowledge and information. The info you get based on what kind of guide you read, if you want have more knowledge just go with knowledge books but if you want experience happy read one using theme for entertaining for example comic or novel. Typically the Racism in the Nation's Service: Government Workers and the Color Line in Woodrow Wilson's America is kind of book which is giving the reader unforeseen experience.

Thersa Davenport:

This book untitled Racism in the Nation's Service: Government Workers and the Color Line in Woodrow Wilson's America to be one of several books which best seller in this year, here is because when you read this publication you can get a lot of benefit upon it. You will easily to buy this book in the book retailer or you can order it by using online. The publisher in this book sells the e-book too. It makes you easier to read this book, since you can read this book in your Smart phone. So there is no reason to you personally to past this book from your list.

Aletha Bassett:

The reason why? Because this Racism in the Nation's Service: Government Workers and the Color Line in Woodrow Wilson's America is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap it but latter it will surprise you with the secret this inside. Reading this book adjacent to it was fantastic author who else write the book in such remarkable way makes the content within easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So, it is good for you because of not hesitating having this anymore or you going to regret it. This phenomenal book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book possess such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking approach. So, still want to hold off having that book? If I had been you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

Richard Graham:

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