

## Editors' Note

This issue of *Federal History* contains articles that are wide ranging in topic and content. This is appropriate as the historical development of our federal system and central government has been a complex and multilayered story. Federal initiatives have never translated in the states and communities quite as intended. They have been altered, reformulated, and mediated to suit local politics, customs, and conditions. While the national government can guide and direct the framework of its policies, the effects of its programs can also be conditioned, reinvented, and altered by local and state reactions to those federal goals. That unpredictable and complicated formula of action and reformulation emerges through these articles in several ways.

Anders Walker finds that in Florida the *Brown v. Board of Education* mandate resulted not in educational reform in its early years but the centralization and reform of law enforcement. Governor LeRoy Collins suppressed police injustices against African Americans, and his pacification policies toward civil rights activism were adopted in a national program. Thus, the *Brown* decision and its aftermath in Florida prompted bold leadership, unforeseen changes in state governance, and deterred conflicts between civil rights activists and law enforcement. Felicia Wivchar explores the symbolic cultural meanings of art about American Indians housed in the U.S. Capitol. Using Seth Eastman's naturalistic portrayals as a counterpoint, she highlights the ambiguity in our romanticized representations of American Indians— at once inferior to white Christian society, yet noble and dignified in their primitive natural civilizations. Thomas Faith explores the mixed results of the Chemical Warfare Service's efforts after World War I to protect its existence and reinvent itself. While it failed to promote popular acceptance of chemical warfare, it saved itself by successfully sponsoring and promoting new peacetime applications of chemical gasses, such as the gas chamber. Judson MacLaury explores the implementation of EO 10925, the procedural blueprint for affirmative action initiatives during the John F. Kennedy administration. The government's efforts to stimulate hiring of minorities in corporations and to desegregate unions and apprenticeship programs all met with some resistance, and they were redefined in part by criticism and resistance from minority associations and from the groups they aimed to reform. That interactive process produced the basis for successive affirmative action programs to this day.

Gavin Wright explores the impact of the New Deal on the economies and infrastructures of the southern states through an extensive review of the literature. He finds that while New Deal programs had limited effect on the improvement of race relations and civil rights for African Americans in that era, they expanded the industrial and economic infrastructures of the South.

We also feature the first Roger R. Trask Award Lecture, delivered by Roger D. Launius at the Society for History in the Federal Government's 2009 conference. He discusses the broader shifts in historiographical thought inside and outside of academia since the 1960s and the federal historian's role of negotiating both worlds in presentations. He cautions that as we serve a popular audience, we must be aware of the ways in which people absorb and view the past. In so doing, public historians must portray a complex and often tragic history, accounting for racial diversity and civil rights struggles, for example, as well as views of national progress.

We hope you enjoy this issue and welcome your comments and contributions.

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