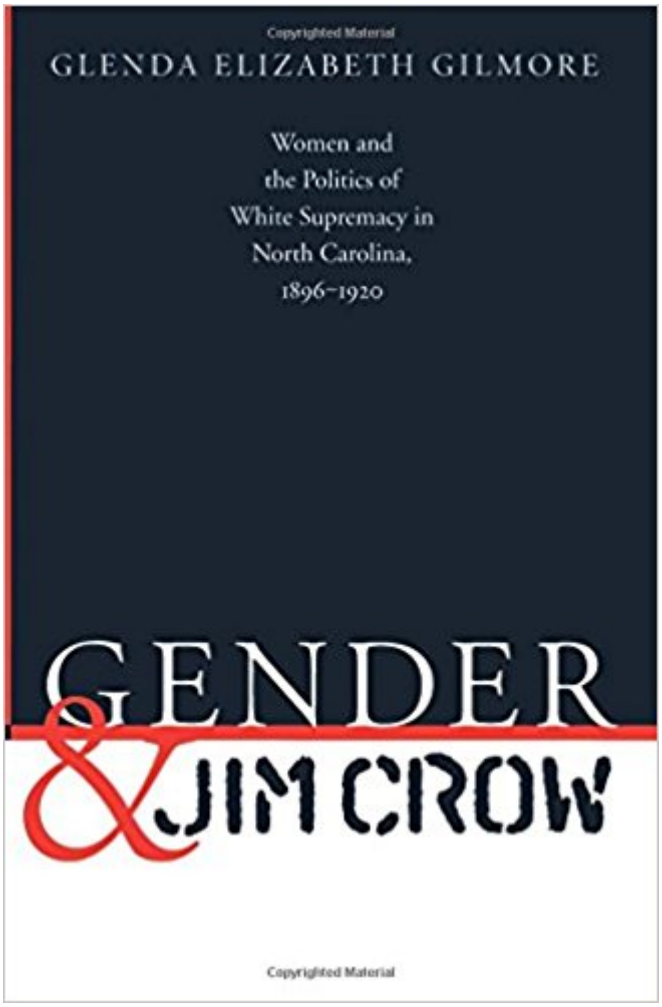
Gender And Jim Crow: Women And The Politics Of White Supremacy In North Carolina, 1896-1920 (Gender And American Culture)



Synopsis

Glenda Gilmore recovers the rich nuances of southern political history by placing black women at its center. She explores the pivotal and interconnected roles played by gender and race in North Carolina politics from the period immediately preceding the disfranchisement of black men in 1900 to the time black and white women gained the vote in 1920. Gender and Jim Crow argues that the ideology of white supremacy embodied in the Jim Crow laws of the turn of the century profoundly reordered society and that within this environment, black women crafted an enduring tradition of political activism. According to Gilmore, a generation of educated African American women emerged in the 1890s to become, in effect, diplomats to the white community after the disfranchisement of their husbands, brothers, and fathers. Using the lives of African American women to tell the larger story, Gilmore chronicles black women's political strategies, their feminism, and their efforts to forge political ties with white women. Her analysis highlights the active role played by women of both races in the political process and in the emergence of southern progressivism. In addition, Gilmore illuminates the manipulation of concepts of gender by white supremacists and shows how this rhetoric changed once women, black and white, gained the vote.

Book Information

Series: Gender and American Culture

Paperback: 410 pages

Publisher: The University of North Carolina Press; New edition edition (September 23, 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0807845965

ISBN-13: 978-0807845967

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 11 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #192,758 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #15 inÃ Â Books > Gay & Lesbian > Nonfiction > Activism #32 inÃ Â Books > Gay & Lesbian > Nonfiction > Civil Rights #47 inÃ Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Specific Topics > Women in Politics

Customer Reviews

Historian Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore examines an unfamiliar world in this groundbreaking study, the world of middle-class, educated black women at a time that was one of the nadirs of black-white

relations in America. With the Supreme Court’s affirmation of legal segregation, Southern black men found themselves disfranchised and excluded from politics. Black women filled that vacuum, Gilmore argues, making a place for themselves as ambassadors to the white community, and as activists on behalf of blacks, and bequeathing to their descendants a heritage of resistance that culminated in the civil rights movement of the 1950s and ’60s. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In this extensively documented history, Gilmore (history, Yale) examines the imposition of legally mandated segregation in North Carolina at the turn of the century. African Americans had achieved significant success in that state even after the end of Reconstruction, and Gilmore argues that the incentive for segregation emerged in response to that success and to the stirrings of independence of white women. Vilification of the black man as a sexual predator served the twin purposes of banishing potential economic and political rivals and restricting the ambition of white women. This focus, however, provided an opportunity for black women to play the role of "diplomat" to the white community and to initiate a small measure of interracial cooperation. Although well written, this densely detailed exposition will attract a chiefly academic audience.?Cynthia Harrison, George Washington Univ., Washington, D.C.

As Gilmore writes (p. 1) in Gender and Jim Crow, "since historians enter a story at its end, they sometimes forget that what is past to them was future to their subjects." And with regard to black optimism, potential and opportunities during Reconstruction, African American "subjects" looked forward to a future of encouraging possibilities, as African American males had real political power and influence within the Republican and populist parties, which courted their votes. These men and women believed that race as a social classification would decline in importance in favor of class. Yet just as the hopes of Agrarian radicals were thwarted by the harsh the realities of the two-party system, so too were the dreams of Reconstruction-era blacks crushed by the resurgence of white supremacy and the systematic attempts by whites to disenfranchise the Negro. Gilmore presents this tale of high hopes and shattered dreams in her first chapter, "Place and Possibility." Gilmore’s story is one of perseverance among the increasingly subjugated blacks of North Carolina after Reconstruction ended, in particular, the struggle of middle class black women to maintain power, dignity and to some degree control over their lives and communities. By the 1890s, the ugly image of white supremacy showed its face, as white men fought a successful battle to disenfranchise black men through the instrument of fear, that is to say, fear for the safety of white women from the

ravenous clutches of Negro rapists. As Gilmore details, this sexually based contrivance branded black men as beasts and drove them from the political realm. Articulate black women, she argues, stepped in to this cultural and political vacuum to coordinate with whites (especially white women and Northern reformers) to get social services and to work for "racial uplift," especially through church and voluntary associations such as the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. Gilmore notes that these types of activities were not as exposed to white restrictions or ire as overt political action, and thus helped to assure some success by these middle-class black females. It seems that black women could travel within certain community and political circles that were no longer open to their male counterparts. Gender and Jim Crow is an innovative look at post-Reconstruction race relations, in that the chief actors in Gilmore’s tale are women. It nicely dovetails with Kantrowitz’s Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy, in that we see similar examples of the creation of Jim Crow and the use of sexual fears to bolster notions of white supremacy as well as white political solidarity. While Kantrowitz shows that Ben Tillman was representative of many of white Southerners of his day, I am unconvinced that Gilmore’s subjects are as representative. Her geographic realm is limited to one state of the Upper South, North Carolina; did black women carve out a similar role for themselves in the Deep South as well? Additionally, her cast of characters is quite small, and perhaps we are drawn to these women and their story because of its very exceptionalsim and not its typicality. Nevertheless, Gilmore’s new and nuance perspective is groundbreaking and valuable in that we see the era of Jim Crow from a viewpoint previously unexplored.

I loved this book. I recently read it to for a paper I was writing on woman’s suffrage, and was initially concerned the focus on North Carolina would be too narrow to serve my purposes. However, Gilmore’s research and analysis of the role played by black middle class women after Reconstruction and the multi-layered conflicts in southern society around enfranchisement, economic security and cultural and masculine identity is eye-opening. Gilmore’s exposure and explanation of the invidious ’propaganda wars’ conducted by white supremacists do much to explain regional antipathy to equal rights for both African Americans and women.P. Abeles

good book

This is a great book, I recommend to everybody!

In "Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920", Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore focuses on the black middle class prior to 1920. The subjects of her study ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“were men and women who had forgotten neither their familiesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ enslavement nor their own struggles for an education. They unabashedly believed that they were setting the best example for other African Americans to follow, and they aimed to help the less fortunate alongÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. xix). Her argument is multifaceted. In her first section, she argues, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Racial repression at the turn of the century did not simply institutionalize the prevailing trend in race relations; rather, it profoundly reordered societyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. xx). She continues, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The white supremacists responded to growing assertiveness among white women, to urban and industrial social pressures, and the spectacular African American successesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. xx). Following this, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“African American resistance to the rising tide of white supremacy, revealing a black political milieu infinitely more varied than the binary construction of black resistance around the oppositional poles of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du BoisÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. xx). Later, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“After disfranchisement of black men, black women became diplomats to the white communityÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. xxi). Gilmore concludes, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Women suffrage forever altered white supremacyÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s style and cleared a narrow path for black men to return to electoral politicsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. xxi).Describing the Jim Crow South, Gilmore writes, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Southerners lived under a caste system in which skin color, class, and gender dictated the pattern of every daily interactionÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. 3). Conversely, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“the first and second generation of freedwomen saw racial progress as inclusive, not exclusive, of those less fortunateÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. 4). Discussing the intersection between race and gender, Gilmore writes, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“By the time black female children first encountered sexism, they were armed with an ideological paradigm: racism is wrong; therefore sexism is wrongÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. 20). Gilmore argues that education prepared women with the skills necessary to play an active role in the world. Further, she counters the current view of the WomenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s Christian Temperance Union as racist, arguing that it played a key role for women in the South in fostering interracial cooperation based on shared gender and class situations. In education, Gilmore writes, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Unlike white women of the period, black women did not usually have to choose between higher education and marriage or between teaching and marryingÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. 43). Conversely, men increasingly tied notions of gender to race, resulting in the concepts of the Black Best Man and the New White Man, both of whom sought to represent the ideal masculine figure of their race and curtail interracial sex.Of the white supremacy

campaigns in the 1890s, Gilmore argues that historians have overlooked womenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s involvement. She writes, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“The DemocratsÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ campaign depended in large part upon white womenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s cooperation. On the one hand, it objectified women and portrayed them as helpless; on the other, it celebrated their involvementÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. 92-93). In the case of black women, Gilmore writes, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Although, in fact, black women did cleave to a common political culture, one that privileged communitarianism over individualism, their tactics ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ how they voiced their beliefs and the forums in which they chose to act ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ depended on their class, their age, and the centrality of gender to their thinkingÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. 93). Later, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“after disenfranchisement, however, the political culture black women had created through thirty years of work in temperance organizations, Republican Party aid societies, and churches furnished both an ideological basis and an organizational structure from which black women could take on those tasksÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. 147-148). Black women used the authority of female moral suasion couple with progressivism ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ different from white womenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s progressivism ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ to at in the political and public spheres. Race likewise played a key role in womenÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s suffrage. Gilmore writes, ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“Those white women who opposed their own enfranchisement took up race as a cudgel to attempt to win their fight. Before it was over, all white women ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ suffragists and antisuffragists alike ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â œ developed new political styles that took race into accountÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• (pg. 203).

Study of American and South African History North Carolina Atlas & Gazetteer (North Carolina Atlas and Gazetteer) North Carolina Real Estate License Exam Prep: All-in-One Review and Testing To Pass North Carolina's PSI Real Estate Exam Insiders' Guide to North Carolina's Southern Coast and Wilmington, 16th (Insiders' Guide to North Carolina's Southern Coast & Wilmington) North Carolina Curiosities, 3rd: Jerry Bledsoe's Guide to Outlandish Things to See and Do in North Carolina (Curiosities Series) ADC The Map People Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill North Carolina Street Atlas (Raleigh, Durham & Chapel Hill North Carolina Map) Insiders' GuideÃ Â® to North Carolina's Southern Coast and Wilmington, 17th (Insider's Guide to North Carolina's Southern Coast & Wilmington) North Carolina on My Mind: The Best of North Carolina in Words and Photographs (America on My Mind) Adc the Map People Raleigh Durham and Chapel Hill North Carolina: Street Map Book (Raleigh, Durham & Chapel Hill North Carolina Map)