

Spring 1996

Preliminary Examination
African American History
(Anderson/Littlefield)

Consider three of the following issues or questions, citing historiographic or bibliographic references wherever possible. Choose one (1) from EACH of the following sections.

Section I

Discuss the origins and development of slave culture, paying particular attention to the structure of slave families, the structure of African American cultural forms, and the larger slave community.

For many years U.B. Phillips dominated American slave historiography. What conditions, professionally and/or socially caused that situation to change? Who were the principal historians involved in the change?

Section II

1. Compare and contrast the issues and concerns that characterized the beginning of the civil rights movement (primarily but not necessarily in the South) with those that marked it in its later years. What conditions and strategies changed?
2. What were the conditions that encouraged and the process by which the Democratic Party changed from being the party of racists to become more responsive to African American needs.

Section III

1. Eugene Genovese developed a number of criteria for comparing New World plantation societies and their treatment of slaves. How do the various societies stand in relation to that typology?
2. Discuss the significance and the strengths and weakness of the Tannenbaum thesis. Remember that you will need first to tell us what it is.

African American
Preliminary Examination for

September 1996

Burton/Anderson

- I. You must answer one question from this selection.
 1. Compare and contrast the lives of enslaved people before 1815 in what would become the United States with the lives of enslaved people after 1815 in the United States. Be sure and make North-South and regional distinctions in your discussion.
 2. Compare and contrast the treatment and lives of free African Americans in what would become the United States before and After 1815. Be sure and make North-South and regional distinctions in your discussion.
 3. Discuss the development of African American culture prior to 1815. According to such scholars as Wood, Gutman, Abrahams, Sobel, Hall, Blassingame, Littlefield and Genovese what were the major forces shaping African American culture and what were its content or characteristics.
- II. You must answer two questions from this selection.
 1. The American South has changed dramatically since World War II. Almost all the historical scholarship has emphasized the urbanization of the South and has consequently focused on race relations in the towns and cities. What do we really know about rural race relations in the American South since World War II? Develop an outline for an essay and sketch in what you can that analyzes rural race relations in the American South since World War II.
 2. Discuss the genesis and character of U. S. slavery. What were its origins? Why did it flourish in the U. S. South? Was it a traditional system of labor or a modern one? How well did the institution of slavery exist in the context of the development of global capitalism, i. e. was it an anachronism or was it consistent with capitalist relations? Did the institution of slavery act as a brake on the economic development of the United States?
 3. How does the historiography of slavery in the United States differ and relate to the historiography of slavery and enslaved peoples in other societies?
 4. Discuss the development of segregated schooling for African American children in the American South from the early twentieth century through the modern Civil Rights movement. Drawing on such scholarship as Walker's **THEIR HIGHEST POTENTIAL: AN AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOOL COMMUNITY IN THE SEGREGATED SOUTH**, discuss the developing relationship between school and community and the experiences of African American students, teachers, and administrators in segregated schools. In what way might this history inform the ongoing debate about how best to educate African American children?

