

**Gilbert Ware. *William Hastie: Grace Under Pressure*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984) x, 305 pp., \$25.00.**

*William Hastie: Grace Under Pressure* is a book written about the life and works of William H. Hastie, the first black federal judge. Gilbert Ware, who was a professor of political science at Drexel University in Philadelphia at the time of the publication of this book, is to be commended for his ability to capture and convey the essence of the person and leadership of William Hastie.

The book is divided into sixteen chapters plus an epilogue. The book is well organized and easy to read. It begins with the ancestry of Hastie and ends with his last accomplishment. This book is an excellent example of the presentation of an ethnic experience.

The first few chapters present the upbringing and education of young Hastie. The author is clever in his ability to show how the black experience shaped Hastie's life and also prepared him to become successful in life. The author is careful to include family and significant others including blacks and whites that helped to shape young Hastie's life and to prepare him for the many struggles that he would have to endure throughout his career as a lawyer.

The remainder of the book presents the many accomplishments and struggles of Hastie, a lawyer of unusual talent and versatility, who was educated at Amherst College and Harvard Law School. Ware presents Hastie as a man with unusual courage, will, determination, tact, and humility.

Some of the accomplishments of Hastie include his work in the 1930s with the New Negro Alliance, an organization (with the help of Hastie) that helped to ensure historic rights to picket. He is known for his work with the NAACP where he was instrumental in outlawing segregation on interstate carriers. He developed a cadre of black lawyers who became civil rights warriors.

Hastie is also known for his work in the Virgin Islands. As a member of the Organic Act of 1936, he was able to ease the Virgin Islands out of colonialism. He also served as federal judge of the Virgin Islands from 1937-39 and as the governor of the Islands from 1946-49.

As an aide in the War Department, Hastie was also instrumental in the integration of the armed forces. He was active in securing the black votes that enabled Truman to become president of the United States. Ware's last compelling presentation of Hastie's accomplishment is his appointment to the U.S. Appellate Bench in 1950.

The only weakness that I see in this book is the placement of the photographs of Hastie, his family, and significant others. The photographs are placed in the middle of the book without any discussion of them. They do not, however, detract from the content of the book as such.

In summary, this is a fascinating book which should be read by people

in general and blacks in particular. It should definitely be added to every library.

—Allene Jones  
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**Joel Williamson. *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984) xviii, 561 pp., \$25.00.**

Almost twenty years ago Joel Williamson, professor of history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, began work on this book, envisioned as the definitive history and reinterpretation of black-white relationships in our time. Along the way he modified his conceptions many times and detoured in 1977-78 to write *New People*, a study of the physical and cultural mixing of blacks and whites.

Williamson's central thesis as it ultimately evolved is that black-white relationships had assumed their present form by 1915, molded since 1850 in the "Crucible of Race" by the interplay of three white "mentalities": Liberalism, holding that blacks had the possibility of making progress; Conservatism, believing that blacks are, and always will be, inferior to whites; and Radicalism, seeing blacks as retrogressing toward their "natural state of savagery" with no place in the American society of the future. According to Williamson it was the Conservative mentality—the belief in black inferiority—which triumphed in 1915 and "persists strong and essentially unchanged" in white American thought—both Southern and national—until the present.

How well does Williamson's thesis hold up? Although the Conservative mentality *had* reasserted itself by 1915, and *did* dominate white thought at least until World War II and perhaps into the 1960s, there has been substantial tempering in the last short generation, with more whites assuming more liberal attitudes toward blacks. The thesis, then, as Forrest McDonald said in an earlier assessment, is "outmoded," and thus only partly correct. Certainly the existence of the National Association for Ethnic Studies and many others in which blacks and whites work together in complete equality is indication that white attitudes toward blacks are not monolithically Conservative.

Williamson's book is also weakened by numerous efforts at psychoanalysis, sometimes accompanied by such conditional words as "if," "seemingly," "it is possible," and "conceivably." Only one example should suffice: in analyzing late Victorian white male sexual thought and behavior in relation to rape by blacks, Williamson says (308) "White men were projecting upon black men extravagant sexual behavior