



**Reaping a Greater Harvest: African Americans,
the Extension Service, and Rural Reform in Jim
Crow Texas (Sam Rayburn Series on Rural Life,
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Debra A. Reid

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Jim Crow laws pervaded the south, reaching from the famous "separate yet equal" facilities to voting discrimination to the seats on buses. Agriculture, a key industry for those southern blacks trying to forge an independent existence, was not immune to the touch of racism, prejudice, and inequality. In *Reaping a Greater Harvest*, Debra Reid deftly spotlights the hierarchies of race, class, and gender within the extension service.

Black farmers were excluded from cooperative demonstration work in Texas until the Smith-Lever Agricultural Extension act in 1914. However, the resulting Negro Division included a complicated bureaucracy of African American agents who reported to white officials, were supervised by black administrators, and served black farmers. The now-measurable successes of these African American farmers exacerbated racial tensions and led to pressure on agents to maintain the status quo. The bureau that was meant to ensure equality instead became another tool for systematic discrimination and maintenance of the white-dominated southern landscape.

Historians of race, gender, and class have joined agricultural historians in roundly praising Reid's work.

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