

# Making Haste Slowly - David G. Sansing

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Making Haste Slowly: The Troubled History of Higher Education in Mississippi by David G. Sansing The troubled history of higher education in Mississippi is a mirror image of the cultural and political dynamics that have shaped the state's history over the last two centuries. The interaction between race and place, the juxtaposition of wealth and poverty, illiteracy and literary genius, the conflict and change and continuity that mark the contours of its history, have influenced the development of higher education in Mississippi. In this study of the origin and evolution of the state's collegiate system, David Sansing examines higher education in its broad cultural context and its elaborate involvement with the rest of society. Although he focuses on one southern state he links the growth of higher education in Mississippi to both regional and national developments. Sansing also contrasts the strong popular support for higher education with the general neglect of public schools, a longstanding tradition in Mississippi that dates from the pre-Civil War period. From the antebellum artisans and the sharecroppers of the Gilded Age, to the redneck farmers of the debt-ridden twenties and post-World War II blacks with their rising expectations, Mississippians have struggled and sacrificed to send their children to college as a way up and out of poverty. Sansing's history of higher education in Mississippi is the first such study since 1899 and is the most recent of the five modern state histories of higher education. This pathbreaking study traces the gradual and often controversial expansion of Mississippi's institutions of higher learning from the founding of Jefferson College in 1802, through the sectional crisis and Civil War, the Gilded Age, the Great Depression, the Bilbo Purge, World War II, the Meredith Crisis, and Civil Rights Revolution. Sansing also details the problems caused by the tradition of institutional autonomy and documents the periodic disruption caused by political intervention. Throughout most of their history each of the state's eight public universities has been autonomous, bound together only by a single board of trustees and a common funding source. But they have recently been restructured into a "system of universities." That new relationship, which will permit more coordination among the eight institutions, plus the recent creation of the post of commissioner of higher education, will bring both changes and new opportunities to the state's system of higher education. David G. Sansing is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of

Mississippi.Author: Sansing, David G. Publisher: University Press of Mississippi Illustration: N Language:  
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