NASA and the Long Civil Rights Movement
Edited by Brian C. Odom and Stephen P. Waring

“Shines new light on a variety of civil rights topics within aerospace history.”—Steven Moss, coauthor of We Could Not Fail: The First African Americans in the Space Program

“The essays in this useful volume present a nice blend of social, cultural, and political history that provides new and exciting insights into the intersection of race and space.”—Kari Frederickson, author of Cold War Dixie: Militarization and Modernization in the American South

As NASA prepared for the launch of Apollo 11 in July 1969, many African American leaders protested the billions of dollars used to fund “space joyrides” rather than help tackle poverty, inequality, and discrimination at home. This volume examines such tensions as well as the ways in which NASA’s goal of space exploration aligned with the cause of racial equality. It provides new insights into the complex relationship between the space program and the civil rights movement in the Jim Crow South and abroad.

Essays explore how thousands of jobs created during the space race offered new opportunities for minorities in places like Huntsville, Alabama, while at the same time segregation at NASA’s satellite tracking station in South Africa led to that facility’s closure. Other topics include black skepticism toward NASA’s framing of space exploration as “for the benefit of all mankind,” NASA’s track record in hiring women and minorities, and the efforts of black activists to increase minority access to education that would lead to greater participation in the space program. The volume also addresses how to best find and preserve archival evidence of African American contributions that are missing from narratives of space exploration.

*NASA and the Long Civil Rights Movement* offers important lessons from history as today’s activists grapple with the distance between social movements like Black Lives Matter and scientific ambitions such as NASA’s mission to Mars.


266 pp. | 6x9
Hardcover $85.00
ISBN 9780813066202

30% off with code SAVE30
Order at upress.ufl.edu or call 800.226.3822