

lect and music of lower-class whites, with a small amount of African influence on the kinds of changes the blacks had made.

Johnson's thesis may seem tame today, but it stirred up heated controversy then. It offended nearly everyone who was interested in the subject. Leading anthropologists had argued that much of American black culture consisted of "African survivals," and attacked Johnson for disagreeing with them. Some Black intellectuals did not like what they saw as a denial that Blacks were capable of inventing their own culture, though Johnson had taken pains to show that the Black versions of many cultural patterns were more intellectually complex than the original white versions. Most of all, racist whites were upset by the notion that white and black cultures had been blended; they wanted both the cultures and the people kept separate. Johnson neither backed off nor counterattacked. He let the evidence in his book speak for itself.

In the 1930s Johnson turned his attention to current race relations. From then on, he was best known as a tireless and influential worker for racial equality. He wrote articles advocating equality and analyzing the harm done to African Americans by discrimination. He was active in organizations dedicated to equality. From 1944 to 1947 he was executive director of the Southern Regional Council, a biracial organization working for interracial cooperation throughout the South. He was a trustee of Howard University from 1937 to 1974, a trustee of the Phelps-Stokes Fund from 1948 to 1975, and at various times an officer of the North Carolina Council on Human Relations.

He was not a civil rights "activist." He did not help organize demonstrations, civil disobedience, or other forms of mass protest that became the chief weapons of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. He aimed his message at white professionals such as journalists and clergymen. He tried to persuade them to say in public that segregation was wrong and to cooperate with African American professionals in efforts to influence community officials. For this moderate, conciliatory approach he was later criticized by African American activists and white liberals; but he knew that the leaders of mass activism would have to be African American. When the civil rights movement flowered, he was an approving spectator, not a participant, but his work had helped pave the way. Simply advocating racial equality took courage in the South of the 1930s. There was organized pressure on the University of North Carolina to fire Johnson. (The university ignored it.) He got hate mail, including death threats. None of this slowed him down, or speeded him up either; he just went about his work, teaching, doing scholarly research, and writing the truth as he saw it.

In recognition of his research and service, Johnson received the Anisfield Award for Research in Race Relations in 1937 and the Catholic Committee of the South Award for Work in Human Relations in 1948. In 1975 the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill honored him and his wife, Guion Griffis Johnson, a noted historian, with Distinguished Alumnus awards. The Southern Sociological Society elected

him its president for 1953-1954, and in 1987 inscribed his name on its Roll of Honor.

Johnson's analyses of race relations reflected optimism tempered by realism. From 1920s population data showing a vast migration of southern blacks to northern city ghettos and a continuing high birth rate among the blacks who had moved, he predicted that militant black nationalism would grow alongside blacks' demands for integration into the mainstream of society; but he also predicted that black separatist movements would have little effect on the pace or nature of desegregation. In 1953, a year before the Supreme Court mandated the desegregation of schools, he wrote: "Anyone who thinks that the transition from segregation to racial coeducation can be made without problems . . . is a fool. Anyone who thinks the transition means the end of civilization is a fool. The operation may be serious, but the patient will recover. And when he recovers and looks back over his experience, he may say, 'Well, it wasn't half as bad as I thought it would be.'" History has borne out these forecasts.

Further Reading

Besides many articles and book chapters, Johnson published seven books: *The Negro and His Songs* (with Howard W. Odum, 1925), *Negro Workaday Songs* (with Odum, 1926), *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island* (1929), *John Henry: Tracking Down a Negro Legend* (1930), *Encyclopedia of the Negro*, Preparatory Volume (with W.E.B. DuBois, 1944), *Folk, Region, and Society: Selected Papers of Howard W. Odum* (edited with commentary, with Katharine Jocher, George L. Simpson, Jr., and Rupert B. Vance, 1964), and *Research in Service to Society: The First Fifty Years of the Institute for Research in Social Science* (with Guion Griffis Johnson, 1980). This last-named book, a history of the research center founded by Odum at Chapel Hill, gives many facts about Johnson's academic career, especially about his research projects. Discussions of Johnson's relations with his mentor Odum and of his strong influence on the thinking of southern social scientists and intellectuals about blacks and black-white relations appear at various points in Daniel Joseph Singal, *The War Within: From Victorian to Modernist Thought in the South, 1919-1945* (1982). □

Hiram Warren Johnson

Hiram Warren Johnson (1866-1945), American politician, was a reform governor of California. As a U.S. senator, he was a leading spokesman for isolationism in international affairs.

Hiram Johnson was born in Sacramento, Calif., on Sept. 2, 1866. After finishing high school, he worked in his father's law office for a year. He entered the University of California in 1884. He left school in 1886 to marry and once again studied law in his father's office, where he became a partner in 1888. After disagreements with his conservative father over political issues, he moved to San Francisco and opened a law office in 1902.

Johnson's swift rise in politics began in 1906, when he became a prosecuting attorney in San Francisco's graft trials and won the conviction of a party boss. A critic of corporate influence in California politics, Johnson was selected by Progressive Republicans as their gubernatorial candidate in 1910.

As governor, Johnson organized his followers for aggressive reform. Under his leadership his adherents pushed many Progressive ideas through the legislature: a public utilities commission, a railroad commission, a conservation commission, women's suffrage, workingmen's compensation, restrictions on child labor, and direct primary elections.

In 1912 Johnson supported Theodore Roosevelt over incumbent William Howard Taft for the Republican presidential nomination. When Roosevelt bolted the party, Johnson accepted the vice-presidential nomination of Roosevelt's Progressive party. The ticket lost, but that it carried California testified to the strength of Johnson's reform organization. In 1914 Johnson ran for governor again as a Progressive. His legislative record, which included some conservative measures (notably the Alien Land Law of 1913 directed against resident Japanese in California), sufficed to reelect him without Republican endorsement. In 1916, however, he successfully sought the Republican nomination for senator and returned to leadership in that party.

As U.S. senator from 1917 until 1945, Johnson took Progressive positions on domestic issues but was an isola-



tionist in foreign affairs and helped defeat President Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations proposal. He bolted the Republican party in 1932 and 1936 to endorse Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. However, his support for Roosevelt's domestic policies was matched by his hostility to the administration's proposals for American membership on the World Court, reciprocal trade agreements, and a peacetime draft. He also opposed Roosevelt's campaigning for a third term. During World War II he voted against American membership in the United Nations. Although Johnson had been an outstanding Progressive governor, by the time of his death on Aug. 6, 1945, his views on foreign affairs made him part of an outdated isolationist minority in Congress.

Further Reading

Materials on Johnson's career after he entered the Senate are not readily available. For a scholarly account of his years as governor see George E. Mowry, *The California Progressives* (1951), and Spencer C. Olin, Jr., *California's Prodigal Sons: Hiram Johnson and the Progressives, 1911-1917* (1968).

Additional Sources

Weatherson, Michael A., *Hiram Johnson: a bio-bibliography*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1988.
Weatherson, Michael A., *Hiram Johnson: political revivalist*, Lanham: University Press of America, 1995. □

Jack Johnson

Jack Johnson (1878?-1946) became the first black heavyweight champion after winning the crown from Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia on December 26, 1908. As a result of this victory, he became the center of a bitter racial controversy with the American public clamoring for the former white champion, Jim Jeffries, to come out of retirement and recapture the crown.

Jack Johnson, who became the first black heavyweight boxing champion in the world in 1908, was the preeminent American sports personality of his era, a man whose success in the ring spurred a worldwide search, tinged with bigotry, for a "Great White Hope" to defeat him. Handsome, successful, and personable, Johnson was known as much for his exploits outside of the ring as for his boxing skills. He married three white women in a time when such interracial unions resulted in denunciations of him from the floor of the United States Congress. He made big money, spent it lavishly, and lived grandly. And in doing so he gained admirers and detractors all over the world and became, quite simply, one of the best known men of the early twentieth century.

Johnson's autobiography, *Jack Johnson, In the Ring and Out*, remains the key source for information about his early life. In it he writes, "I am astounded when I realize that there