

History of american education

[Education](#), [American Education](#)



The twentieth century is a century in which major events such as The Great Depression, rights for minority, two world war and rise and fall of radical politics that which shapes a better American society in the present day. One of the advancements that made modern American today would be education and life in American universities. Historian Frederick Rudolph wrote a comprehensive history of American higher education that became one of the standard in the field and published the book titled *The American college and Universities*. It describes how American education system had shaped over the twentieth century. It explores a wide range of issue from education curriculum, how institutions finance in activities and programs to the education of immigrants, blacks and women.

During twentieth century, American especially teenagers from all walks of life had a one question in mind when comes to the idea of university in the United States which was, “ What should the American university be?”[1]The university idea was a configuration which was far more complex than it seems, it involves financial resources, a wide range of agencies, public and private sectors to shape it. The book mentioned the complexities of college life due to events happening in America and the rise of college athletics. It gave a narrative review from historical bibliography on American college and the author Frederick Rudolph’s own perspective on development of higher education in United States. The topic of education in America gave a huge and serious debate to improve to encourage a cohesive environment for all. The author questioned on the consequences have in American college and universities that have developed. He writes as a national educator historian, and he aware of how federal and state policies including religious differences

effects on the institutions.² From the class material, progressive thinkers such as John Dewey mentioned that a comprehensive system of education was important for a democracy nation to be successful. Progressive thinkers believed that it was a necessity for compulsory education and they worked hard to improve and expand education at all levels. These reformers reform numerous aspects of education such as standardization of testing, avoid corporal punishment and emphasized on equal education standard for both genders. They transformed education to be a driving force in modernizing the society and create great leaders regardless of race and gender.

College was early recognized as an agency for economic and social mobility for the young adult. It coincides with the beginnings of feminism which one of the main goals was to give equal rights to education for women in United States. The higher education of women was a success. By 1950, there were about half a million women in the college as compared to a mere less than 100,000 back in 1900. It also gave the women to understand and exercise their social responsibilities and importance of voting. A study in 1935 had shown that 62% of women graduated from college voted as compared to less than 50% of women who did not attend higher education. Women were encouraged to take electives that are deemed feminine such as teaching or home economics.[3] However, there were still negative thoughts of women in higher education. An example will be Dean Briggs of Harvard, which he suggested that the movement for collegiate education for women may cause danger in intellectual unrest and deemed women will lose their role as a housewife or mother in later life due to high accomplishments. The employment rate of women significantly increases with more women going

higher education.[4]The author did not discuss during the Great Depression period of women education when fathers and husbands resented their wives and daughters to take over breadwinning roles which may be an effect from women getting higher education. From the class material, due to high unemployment rates among the men during Great Depression, there were states laws that which causes 10 million women to be fired from the job and Social Security pension system exclude certain female dominated occupations. This may cause a decline in women enrolled to higher education due to setback and little opportunity to advance during the Great Depression. The higher education main idea during twentieth century for the education of women will be established a college where the dignity of faculties and charm of the highest literary culture may be acquired by women without loss to women's crowning glory of grace and gentleness.

[5]During the 1920s, American college and universities had discovered something that students cared about passionately due to the rise of American football. To satisfy the students, universities build foot field house that is big enough to handle a football game and creating banners and motto for the football team.[6]It was also a solution to integrate ethnic minorities into a game to ease racial tension. Not only that, football drew a huge enthusiasm among the ladies to support their team as compared to intercollegiate baseball. Inclusive of ethnic minorities into a college team will help in progress of race relation. The author continuing mentioning on how each university fund the American football and the enthusiasm of the ladies comparing American football to gladiators.[7]From the class material, Jackie Robinson was the first African American to play baseball in major leagues

since 19th century, resulting numerous ethnic minorities to follow the footsteps of Robinson. However, they faced obstacles, such as off-field discrimination and often will not be chosen to play for major matches.

Education played a huge role in American society during the mid-twentieth century. After World War 2, population in United States dramatically increased with a baby boom. In 1944, the American Congress passed the GI bill which provides subsidies for veterans to attend colleges and universities. Millions of veterans took advantage of the opportunity resulting in drastically increased number of people in college. This resulted in higher education to experience a huge increase in enrollment of students and graduates in the 1950s.

Frederick Rudolph's bibliography had given me an understanding of American higher education from nineteenth century till the twentieth century and how universities such as Harvard, Yale or Michigan finance their institutes, their policies and the development of curriculum to the ethnic minorities and women and rise of sports in the college. This book gave information of the beginnings of education, complications the higher education institutions had faced and how the higher education institutions overcome it, be carefully documented using numerous secondary bibliography.

By narrowing down to history of American education, it really gave a brief idea of how the periods in twentieth century affects the college and university policies and complexities of the students. It could be better categorizing chronologically by year and the events happening around United States, to show how American higher education had progress over the years.

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It will help readers to better understand the progress and materials of the book. The materials will be better if there were demographic and statistical analyses to connect education history to the social history of America, such as how The Great Depression causes women to lose its employment and education rights. Given the fact that this book was based on numerous secondary bibliographic with inordinate reliance of institutional histories, the author did a splendid work in convincing the readers in important historical perspective on the development of colleges and universities in United States. The author minimizes biasness, cross referencing numerous sources and summarizing history of American higher education in great details.

[1]RUDOLPH, FREDERICK, and JOHN R. THELIN. *The American College and University: A History* . University of Georgia Press, 1990, p. 357-58.

² RUDOLPH, FREDERICK, and JOHN R. THELIN. *The American College and University: A History* . University of Georgia Press, 1990, p. 368.

[3]RUDOLPH, FREDERICK, and JOHN R. THELIN. *The American College and University: A History* . University of Georgia Press, 1990, p. 310-11.

[4]4 RUDOLPH, FREDERICK, and JOHN R. THELIN. *The American College and University: A History* . University of Georgia Press, 1990, p. 325.

[5]RUDOLPH, FREDERICK, and JOHN R. THELIN. *The American College and University: A History* . University of Georgia Press, 1990, p. 328.

[6]RUDOLPH, FREDERICK, and JOHN R. THELIN. *The American College and University: A History* . University of Georgia Press, 1990, p. 374

[7]RUDOLPH, FREDERICK, and JOHN R. THELIN. *The American College and University: A History* . University of Georgia Press, 1990, p. 391.