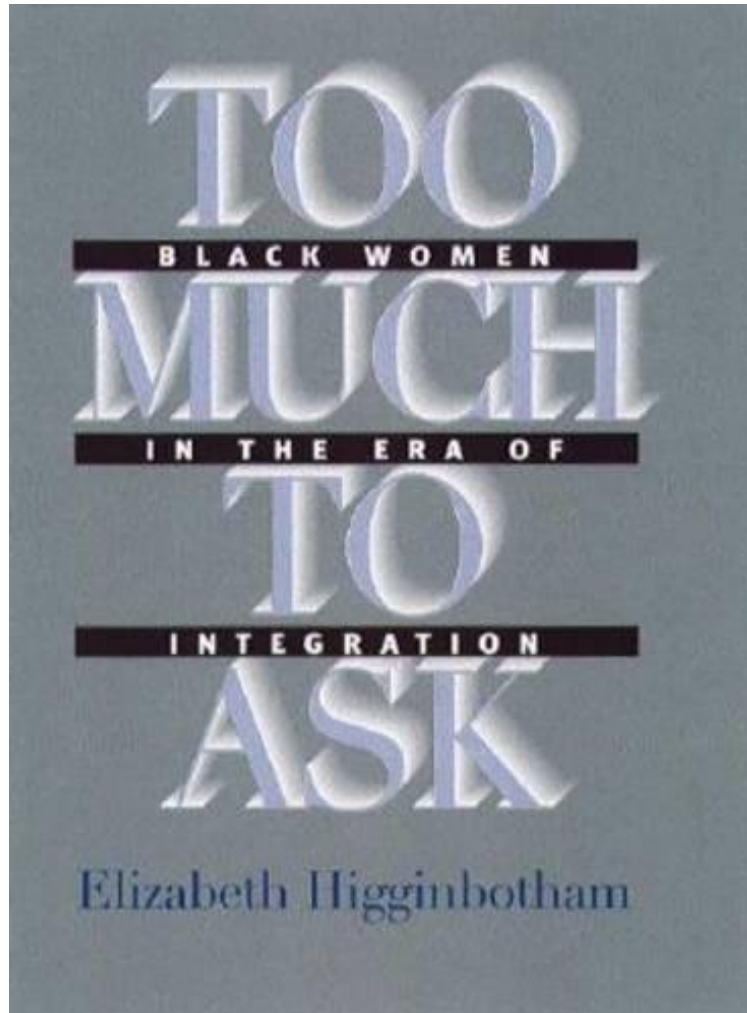


Too Much to Ask: Black Women in the Era of Integration

Elizabeth Higginbotham

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Elizabeth Higginbotham : Too Much to Ask: Black Women in the Era of Integration before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Too Much to Ask: Black Women in the Era of Integration:

1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Class Effects on Black Women's Education in the 1960sBy A CustomerThis is a study in which the interviewer is from the same background as the subjects. (I forgot the anthropological term for that.) In this study, Higgonbotham asks black women who went to predominantly-White, Northeastern colleges how they got there, how was it, and how did it affect their lives afterward. The book is written in a style that is scholarly but not impenetrable to non-academic readers. But here's the shocker. This book does very

little comparing black women to their black male siblings or their white female peers. Most of this book compares the choices and actions of middle-class black women to working-class counterparts. Really, this book was more a labor studies text, than a women's studies or African-American studies one. Further, with the exception of the occasional mention of Patricia Hills Collins, there is no mention of black feminist/womanist thinkers. I wish too that the author didn't make up cheesy names to keep the universities attended hidden. But I enjoyed this book. I think I'm going to give it to my mother as a present. If white women can have Miriam Horn's "Rebels in White Gloves", why can't sisters have an equivalent? Though dated, this book is an excellent edition to books such as Takagi's "The Retreat from Race" and Garrod's "First Person, First Peoples" that look at the lives of people of color in elite universities. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A long overdue and thoughtful study

By A Customer Higginbotham's book provides a context for and explores the many issues and problems that I faced as a Black woman at a predominantly White University in the late 60's. I learned that my experiences were not unique and personal (as I had assumed), but rather quite typical of my peers. This book reads like my biography, and I can now understand and explain situations that were then inexplicable. I applaud Higginbotham for her extensive and careful research and recommend this book enthusiastically. This is a history that I lived, and Dr. Higginbotham has demonstrated that it is worthy of scholarly investigation.

In the 1960s, increasing numbers of African American students entered predominantly White colleges and universities in the northern and western United States. *Too Much to Ask* focuses on the women of this pioneering generation, examining their educational strategies and experiences and exploring how social class, family upbringing, and expectations--their own and others'--prepared them to achieve in an often hostile setting. Drawing on extensive questionnaires and in-depth interviews with Black women graduates, sociologist Elizabeth Higginbotham sketches the patterns that connected and divided the women who integrated American higher education before the era of affirmative action. Although they shared educational goals, for example, family resources to help achieve those goals varied widely according to their social class. Across class lines, however, both the middle- and working-class women Higginbotham studied noted the importance of personal initiative and perseverance in helping them to combat the institutionalized racism of elite institutions and to succeed. Highlighting the actions Black women took to secure their own futures as well as the challenges they faced in achieving their goals, *Too Much to Ask* provides a new perspective for understanding the complexity of racial interactions in the post-civil rights era.

"*Too Much to Ask* is a blueprint for the construction of the African American baby boomer generation." -- Women's of Books Higginbotham provides a compelling portrait of these women, their families, their struggles during the early years of integration, and their fights to achieve success in a racist, sexist, and elitist society.--Journal of American History

Too Much to Ask is a blueprint for the construction of the African American baby boomer generation.-- Women's of Books

Too Much to Ask could prove to be an excellent introductory text for first year education, sociology, or history students.--Contemporary Sociology

An exemplary study into the early politics of race in higher education.--QBR

Slightly more than three decades have passed since the women who are central to Elizabeth Higginbotham's study graduated from college, and yet the ways that racism, class background, and gender affected their strategies for achieving a higher education are hauntingly familiar today. In this engaging and important book, Higginbotham provides historical context and vivid personal testimonies to the legacy of Black women's struggles for education and respect in the United States. She demonstrates convincingly that although the price of higher education for Black women has been 'too much to ask,' these women and their families did whatever was necessary to pay it, and did so with pride and dignity.--Bonnie Thornton Dill, University of Maryland at College Park

Too Much to Ask makes a tremendous contribution to the field of black women's history. Higginbotham's careful analysis avoids over-generalization about black women, and her attention to the meanings of social and economic class is particularly valuable.--Nell Irvin Painter, Princeton University

At its heart, *Too Much to Ask* is poignant and compelling as it explores how social class, family practices and expectations prepared and influenced the lives and educational outcomes of Black women in the 1960s.--Educational About the Author

Elizabeth Higginbotham is Victor S. Thomas Professor of History and African and African American Studies and Chair of the Department of African and African American Studies at Harvard University. She is coeditor of *Women and Work: Exploring Race, Ethnicity, and Class*.