



# Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America

*Hilary J. Moss*

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While white residents of antebellum Boston and New Haven forcefully opposed the education of black residents, their counterparts in slaveholding Baltimore did little to resist the establishment of African American schools. Such discrepancies, Hilary Moss argues, suggest that white opposition to black education was not a foregone conclusion. Through the comparative lenses of these three cities, she shows why opposition erupted where it did across the United States during the same period that gave rise to public education.

As common schooling emerged in the 1830s, providing white children of all classes and ethnicities with the opportunity to become full-fledged citizens, it redefined citizenship as synonymous with whiteness. This link between school and American identity, Moss argues, increased white hostility to black education at the same time that it spurred African Americans to demand public schooling as a means of securing status as full and equal members of society. Shedding new light on the efforts of black Americans to learn independently in the face of white attempts to withhold opportunity, *Schooling Citizens* narrates a previously untold chapter in the thorny history of America's educational inequality.

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