

Roberts settlements benefited from “an upbringing that enhanced their chances of success in the world” (p. 149) and that helped many climb into the urban middle class as teachers and ministers.

This is an important book for Midwest, Indiana, black, and social history. By presenting the experience of black pioneers in the Midwest, Vincent invites historians to think again about the frontier’s impact on democracy, the rural experience of the antebellum northern black population, and the southern planters’ insistence during Reconstruction that freedmen needed supervision as farmers. *Southern Seed, Northern Soil* is especially useful for historians of the Great Migration. The study of black migration patterns from the South has seldom been done so skillfully. The author’s effort to link together primary sources such as census manuscript schedules, land deeds, and probate records—to name a few—has proven that this tour de force is very much worth the trouble. Those who study the migration of African Americans from the bottom up in the twentieth century will want to borrow some of his methodology.

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*America’s First Black Town: Brooklyn, Illinois, 1830–1915.* By Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000. Pp. xiv, 276. Table, notes, index. \$37.50.)

This study traces Brooklyn, Illinois, from its beginnings as a haven for fugitive slaves to its emergence as a labor market for neighboring industries. Like other predominantly black towns that arose in the South and Midwest, Brooklyn was a product of black desires for autonomy and self-determination, as well as white racism and social exclusion. Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua argues that this small village was bypassed by businesses that might have allowed it to develop into a thriving city in its own right. Due to this neglect, Brooklyn was doomed to become “an unindustrialized residential satellite” of East St. Louis and adjacent white communities (p. 5).

The black community of Brooklyn was founded in 1829 with the arrival of eleven families from Missouri. The town’s proximity to the slaveholding South ensured it a steady influx of fugitive slaves but also guaranteed that runaways would be particularly susceptible to capture. Throughout the antebellum period, the rights and opportunities available to Brooklyn African Americans were circumscribed by Black Codes, political disfranchisement, and penury. Though situated in a nominally free state, life in antebellum Brooklyn was lived along the color line, as reflected in segregated public education, housing arrangements, and occupations. After the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, African Americans came to dominate municipal offices, including mayor. Unfortunately, polit-

ical power did not bring economic clout to black Brooklyn. Illustratively, though the town, which incorporated in 1873, was surrounded by coal mines, no major industries were founded there. Most adult males had to seek employment in riverine industries, farming, or as common laborers in surrounding white settlements. Social life centered on churches, fraternal organizations, and family networks softened the town's precarious fiscal condition. However, according to Cha-Jua, demographic shifts occasioned by industrializing East St. Louis and migratory patterns often destabilized these communal structures.

The increasing proletarianization of Brooklyn African Americans who found employment in neighboring industries was a help to people who had previously been landless agricultural workers. Nonetheless, racism exposed them to the worst vagaries of industrial capitalism, such as exploitation, or the systematic, racially discriminatory underpayment of black workers. Constantly threatened with annexation, Brooklyn endured political corruption, racial violence, and further economic decline as it entered the twentieth century. Though it continued to survive as a black enclave, the proliferation of boarding-houses, saloons, and dens of vice testified to its hollow economy and uncertain future.

Drawing liberally on census records, period newspapers, and other sources, *America's First Black Town* is well researched, cogently argued, and brings an important story to life. The experiences of black Brooklyn are placed within the broader history of Illinois, and the author compares his subject with other black towns. One might question the author's attempt to fit Brooklyn into a colonial paradigm. It seems strange to see phrases such as "protonationalism," "white minority colonial domination," and "decolonization" used to describe a nineteenth-century Illinois town with barely a thousand inhabitants (e.g., pp. 3, 120, 143). Aside from this, the book is an insightful study that sheds light on a heretofore obscured history.

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*Modern Mothers in the Heartland: Gender, Health, and Progress in Illinois, 1900–1930.* By Lynne Curry. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1999. Pp. x, 206. Map, tables, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Clothbound, \$40.00; paperbound, \$18.50.

Although the overall death rate dropped with the widespread use of sewer and water filtration systems during the last half of the nineteenth century, infant mortality did not. Concerned public health officials consequently tapped mothers as the frontline soldiers in the battle against dirt and disease. In her engaging and thorough book,