

sentative [of the Old South] intellectually [as well as being] a product of the war [being] both burdened and inspired by its legacy" (p. 305).

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Sundown Towns

A Hidden Dimension of American Racism

By James Loewen

(New York: The New Press, 2005. Pp. x, 562. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$29.95.)

Racism and its persistence in American culture have been recurring themes in American literature, film, and television. In recent years, journalists and historians have written extensively of racial conflict and tension in every period of American history. Recent works such as David Blight's masterful *Race and Reunion* (2001) and Scott Malcomson's *One Drop of Blood* (2000), to name two, have contributed to a reexamination of the origins and development of racism as a major element in our national story.

Sundown Towns is an important contribution to this examination of the problem of racism as well as to the explanation of its persistence in present-day America. Author James Loewen, author of award-winning *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (1996), a critical examination of American history texts, and the more recent *Lies Across America* (1999), a look at history as distorted by public monuments and historic markers, has

produced a monumental study of the "hidden history" of racism.

A sundown town, as defined by Loewen, is "any organized jurisdiction that . . . kept African Americans or other groups from living in it and was thus 'all-white' on purpose" (p. 4). In great detail, the author marshals census data, primary sources, and a myriad of state and local contacts in order to document the existence of these deliberately "whites only" communities. In discussing the significance of these places, Loewen maintains that outside of the traditional slave holding South, "probably a majority of all incorporated places" (p. 4) excluded African Americans. Loewen further states that local historians wary of potential adverse publicity deliberately hid mention of these policies. Professional historians and sociologists, the author asserts, simply did not know about the practice until recently. He contrasts that omission with the extensively researched history of lynching.

Loewen posits a “nadir” period between 1890 and 1940, when racial exclusion became standard policy throughout the United States. The techniques for carrying out the policy ranged from threats to outright violence. More subtle, but perhaps more effective, were restrictive covenants, racial steering, and redlining by realtors and financial institutions. This practice extended to New Deal planned communities such as the Greenbelt towns and were policy under the FHA. By the 1950s most communities, including the new Levittowns, had successfully excluded blacks from their jurisdictions.

Loewen’s most telling argument is that the effects of racial exclusion are still with us. The sundown towns, he maintains, are now sundown sub-

urbs. The resultant racial segregation “exacerbates all other forms of racial discrimination,” (p. 17) such as lack of employment and educational opportunities, as well as the social networking necessary for advancement. Thus racial inequality is still a function of where “one can live.” Loewen has challenged historians and the public to examine the record of community life and to reflect upon the historical sources of contemporary racism.

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Indispensable Outcasts

Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880-1930

By Frank Tobias Higbie

(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003. Pp. xi, 255. Illustrations, notes, maps, tables, bibliography, index. Clothbound, \$44.95; paperbound, \$18.95.)

The Bonus Army

An American Epic

By Paul Dickson and Thomas B. Allen

(New York: Walker and Company, 2004. Pp. 370. Illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. \$27.00.)

There is a growing interest in the homeless as a factor in American history and civilization. Works by Alan Bloom (on the urban homeless before 1880), Elaine Abelson (on homeless women during the Great Depression),

and Ella Howard (a history of the Bowery in the twentieth century) are in progress, while an October 2005 conference at Princeton University compared social and political responses to homelessness in the U.S.