

all by 1960 (still in the glow of the New Deal) the income gap between the rich and the poor had considerably narrowed from 1929. Lawson's crepe-draped final chapter recounts the denouement of Ronald Reagan's Commonwealth of Hope through the wasteland of the Bush II years.

A Commonwealth of Hope provides a highly readable and illuminating synthesis of some of the best scholarship on the New Deal. My only reservation about an otherwise excellent narrative is that Lawson essentially ignores cities, and the significant urban housing and regional planning dimension of the New Deal. This untold story would have strengthened the author's conceptual framework. New Deal housing and urban planning programs had strong progressive origins, and despite conservative reaction, they survived

through World War II. These ventures—the PWA Housing Division, the National Resources Planning Board, the Greenbelt Town planning, public housing, Lanham Act war housing—all fit neatly into Lawson's cooperative commonwealth thesis, and I was baffled by their absence. Otherwise, I regard this as an important and accessible contribution to the extensive scholarship on the New Deal and its legacy.

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Buried in the Bitter Waters *The Hidden History of Racial Cleansing in America*

By Elliot Jaspin

(New York: Basic Books, 2007. Pp. ix, 341. Maps, illustrations, notes, appendices, bibliography, index. \$26.95.

Elliot Jaspin, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for Cox Newspapers, spent a number of years investigating the strange anomaly he discovered in census records: the precipitous drop in the number of African Americans in certain U.S. counties. His research was originally published in the *Austin American Statesman* and other Cox newspapers, displayed on a website—

“Leave or Die” [www.statesman.com/news/content/shared/news/interactives/lod/index.html] and developed by Marco Williams into a 2006 documentary called *Banished*.

Jaspin uses the modern term “cleansing” to denote the concerted effort by white residents to drive African Americans from these counties. Concentrating on the middle

Atlantic, southern, and midwestern states in the years between 1890 and 1930, he identifies nearly 260 suspicious drops, over ten percent of the counties he examined. Concentrating on some of the largest numerical drops, he details twelve of the most dramatic stories, geographically spread from Georgia to Texas, from Missouri to Indiana—where he looks at the steep decline of African Americans in Washington County from 1860 to 1870, and at a 1923 effort to drive the small African American population from Vermillion County's coal-mining community of Blanford. Jaspin describes the terror to which African Americans were subjected, but he is equally fascinated by the stories many of these communities tell or, rather, don't tell about the racial cleansings in their pasts.

Much of the work is expository—not surprising for a journalist doing history—but these stories should be exposed. Jaspin seems attuned to some of the nuances of these communities' stories, and he does not reduce every conflict to black and white. For instance, in his discussion of an 1886 Texas expulsion, he argues that the lynching that followed a murder may have had more to do with frontier justice than with race, but that the subsequent expulsion of African Americans was clearly racial. Jaspin does provide some interesting insights, including the demographic signature of racial cleansing: a donut hole, whereby surrounding counties measure an

increase in African American population. In Indiana, Lawrence County more than doubled its African American population between 1860 and 1870, perhaps taking in many of those who left Washington County. The most sweeping argument in the book is Jaspin's explanation of why the white majority chose expulsion of the entire African American community rather than lynching particular individuals: "more often than not what separated a single lynching from a mass expulsion was economic rivalry" (p. 216).

Both Indiana cases, however, seem to fall under the "not" category. There is little evidence in the book that residents of Washington County feared economic competition as much as they feared the very notion of "equality." And in Vermillion County, the immigrant Serbs and Italians who were the economic rivals of local African Americans were not the antagonists. That role was filled by the native-born—many of whom were affiliated with both the Ku Klux Klan and the local Horse Thief Detective Association—who were as suspicious of the immigrant workers as they were of African Americans. Yet Jaspin's story does not quite cohere; he has a clearer picture of the conflicts between native-born and immigrants than he does of the forces that drove African Americans from Vermillion County.

This book is an invitation to Hoosier scholars to do more work on these and other dreadful cases.

Almost every major Ohio River town in Indiana had at least one threatened racial cleansing, and in communities as diverse as Greensburg and Decatur, some whites attempted and sometimes succeeded in driving African Americans from their midst. In the process, Jaspin's work will be modified, as scholars uncover the stories in their full local complexity. We should be thankful to Jaspin for alerting us to this history and reminding us that such atrocities were not limited to the South.

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Race to the Frontier
 "White Flight" and Westward Expansion

By John V. H. Dippel

(New York: Algora Publishing, 2005. Pp xi, 337. Notes, selected bibliography, index. Cloth-bound, \$28.95; paperbound, \$22.95.)

John V. H. Dippel provocatively deploys the modern decampment of whites to the suburbs as an organizing metaphor for his argument that the desire to distance themselves from African Americans motivated successive waves of white "plain folk" to relocate ever farther westward. At the argument's core is a demographic genealogy of Free Soil ideology, the northern antebellum vision of the Midwest and trans-Mississippi territories as the dominion of free white farmers, whose material opportunities would be maximized and labor ennobled by the absence of slavery. Many Free Soilers were unapologetically racist, ascribing the degradations of slavery as inherent characteristics of all African

Americans. Although Dippel's emphasis on the anti-black element of frontier development is buttressed by existing scholarship, his sweeping synthesis relies on too many partial inferences to be fully persuasive, let alone to reconfigure our understanding of either westward expansion or of American racial ideology.

Dippel identifies the seeds of Free Soil prejudice in seventeenth-century Virginia and follows white non-slaveholding southerners who planted those seeds in frontier zones from the Virginia Piedmont all the way to Oregon and California. Rather than analyze race as a historically contingent cultural construct, he treats it as an essentially ingrained hatred from the