

corruption as a method to enact new policies is certainly an achievement of this book, and as the authors describe, “a significant achievement of all those governments” (181).

A case study of several cities does not necessarily mean that the book is a comprehensive examination of municipal politics across the United States. The authors acknowledge that each city is unique, and there is no doubt that America’s public health improved within the Progressive Era, but it is perhaps a stretch to use these examples as evidence of how “local governments transformed sanitation in the United States and, by extension, the nation’s public health” (8). Moreover, the true effectiveness of city wide corruption to develop public policy is debatable. Clearly there are connections to corrupt governments and public policies that benefited those in power, but how transformative were these policies when they ultimately failed, such as in St. Louis and New Orleans? But these are relatively minor criticisms in an otherwise impressive analysis of community politics around the turn of the twentieth century. *The Politics of Trash* convincingly shows how city laws and ordinances can, and were, enacted through untraditional and undemocratic processes to solve an often-overlooked problem.

In their conclusion, Strach and Sullivan consider just how big a challenge it was for cities in the United States to overcome the trash problem in the 1890s. Cities needed both the political will from leaders and “the administrative capacity to collect and dispose of trash” (179). These challenges explain why and how cities developed policies outside of the formal democratic process. Ultimately, though, it would be the ordinary activities of citizens that accepted and implemented modern garbage collection.

## Residential Jim Crow and Class Struggles in the South

**Herbin-Triant, Elizabeth A. *Threatening Property: Race, Class, and Campaigns to Legislate Jim Crow Neighborhoods*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. xi + 335 pp. \$105.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-231-18970-5; \$35.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-231-18971-2.**

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In this valuable study, Elizabeth A. Herbin-Triant explores white efforts to segregate both urban and rural areas of North Carolina in the early twentieth century. Herbin-Triant looks at legislative efforts to segregate black and white residences and farms, focusing primarily on municipal ordinances in the case of urban segregation and state legislation in the case of rural segregation. Although centered on North Carolina, the book connects the

Tar Heel State to larger transnational and regional developments surrounding segregation laws. Herbin-Triant employs a range of historical sources to tell this multifaceted story, including newspapers, periodicals, legislative records, and, especially, the writings of the book's chief historical character, Clarence Poe.

Indeed, the book in many ways presents the history of residential segregation through the lens of Poe, a white North Carolinian from a middling-class farming family who became the editor of the *Progressive Farmer*, a journal with a primarily southern, small-farmer readership. In addition to touting new farming techniques and championing Populist-inspired policies, Poe used the journal to popularize his campaign for legally-mandated rural residential segregation. A substantial portion of Herbin-Triant's book amounts to a case study of Poe, using his ideas and experiences as a prism for the wider beliefs of middling (the term Herbin-Triant favors instead of "middle class") white farmers in North Carolina.

Although, as Herbin-Triant acknowledges, a few historians have written about Poe and the transnational currents of rural segregation (Poe was especially influenced by the segregationist ideas and policies emerging in South Africa), *Threatening Property* offers a more complete analysis of his campaign by placing it alongside parallel efforts to legislate residential segregation in cities. The book shows how debates—among and between white and black southerners—over rural and urban residential segregation developed in tandem.

The book's central argument is that class divisions among North Carolina whites ultimately scuttled legally mandated residential segregation in both cities and the countryside. Whereas middling whites advocated for residential segregation laws in order to acquire and protect economic assets in the form of urban property values and prime farmland (Black farm ownership was steadily rising in the 1890s and 1900s), "this type of segregation would have benefited a group that did not wield real political power, middling whites, at the expense of elites," who wished to ensure access to cheap black labor and feared such laws would interfere with that access (8). According to Herbin-Triant, white elites deemed such ordinances a legal overreach, despite the otherwise rapidly proliferating world of Jim Crow. They worried that residential segregation ordinances in North Carolina cities would spark black migration out of the state, and feared any rural segregation law designating vast tracts of land exclusively for white or Black ownership would inhibit their ability to procure exploitable Black workers for their farms and plantations.

In the end, Herbin-Triant contends, residential segregation laws interfered with property rights in a way white elites could not countenance. While middling whites saw Black acquisition of property in cities and the countryside as threatening their precarious economic status and livelihoods. They were the dominant constituency for the push to pass residential segregation laws. But white elites held the state's political power, and, viewing such laws as threats to their labor supply, they used their political capital to defeat them. Although it won significant support, white elites in the state senate nevertheless defeated a bill to enact rural residential segregation in 1915. Even when residential segregation ordinances were enacted in a number of North Carolina cities, the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled in *State v. Darnell* (1914) that such laws exceeded the authority granted to city governments by the state legislature, violated property rights protected by the U.S. Constitution, and threatened mass black migration out of the state.

*Threatening Property* captures the texture and complexity of Jim Crow in the American South. Within North Carolina, local political and economic arrangements determined not only the ease with which city governments adopted segregation laws, but also

the level of Black resistance to such laws. Further, *Threatening Property* reveals that segregation laws did not simply flower across the South with uniform white support. Instead, class status often dictated visions of what Jim Crow segregation should look like, both in North Carolina and across the broader region. Herbin-Triant complements scholarship demonstrating that Jim Crow was a modern response to industrialization and urbanization. She demonstrates, for instance, that many middling whites, including Clarence Poe, viewed rural residential segregation as a progressive reform necessary to address both economic changes rooted in the industrialization of agriculture and the increasing number of Black farm owners across the South.

While Herbin-Triant captures significant class-based approaches to Jim Crow, she perhaps underestimates the political power of middling whites. Although she describes the South as a “world ruled by elites,” middling whites were still able to successfully pass residential segregation ordinances in multiple North Carolina cities (9). Although the North Carolina Supreme Court eventually invalidated these ordinances, in other southern states it took the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Buchanan v. Warley* (1917) to overturn such laws. Class power relations were perhaps more uncertain and contested than Herbin-Triant implies. Nonetheless, Herbin-Triant identifies important differences in white approaches to residential segregation in the South and thereby provides vital insights into the nuances of Jim Crow. By doing so, *Threatening Property* offers a fascinating history of race and class in the U.S. South.

## Climate Uncertainty in America’s Gilded Age

**Giacomelli, Joseph. *Uncertain Climes: Debating Climate Change in Gilded Age America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023. 238 pp. \$40.00 (cloth), ISBN 0-226-82443-8.**

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Joseph Giacomelli’s *Uncertain Climes* sifts through the relationship between climate uncertainty and both economic growth and scientific development in Gilded Age America. Giacomelli skillfully surveys the diverse debates and divergent viewpoints surrounding climate change in the Gilded Age to provide new insights into a topic pertinent to today’s world.

Giacomelli’s focus sits squarely on uncovering how historical actors in the Gilded Age understood scientific and climatic uncertainty, both in their own immediate weather and climate data as well as from a longer-range perspective. Giacomelli also skillfully examines how uncertainties surrounding climate change and environmental knowledge influenced