

Hamilton, Kenneth Marvin. *Black Towns and Profit: Promotion and Development in the Trans-Appalachian West, 1877-1915.* Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991. index, illustrations. Pp. 152, appendices. \$29.95 (U.S.)

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The author is far more successful in giving us a sense of how the players and the owners thought about the stadium than he is in conveying the ordinary citizen's feelings. Kuklick has uncovered the anti-nostalgic reactions of old ballplayers. Most memorable was the comment of Amos Strunk who was in the A's lineup for the 1909 opening game. Strunk, who had been a hard hitting outfielder for the A's, was invited to appear at the 1970 closing ceremony but refused since "I hold no sentimental value about the closing of this property and it means nothing to me at all." Satchel Paige, the great black pitcher who was not welcomed to the major leagues until long after his prime said only "well...they wouldn't let me and my boys play there." Such gems are not complemented by the voices of ordinary fans.

Interviews were an important part of the research for the book, but the voices of the fans seem muted. Kuklick never fully presents these ordinary Philadelphians, and does not reveal enough of his interviews with them to provide the access required to allow us to grasp the popular imagination. Perhaps a Studs Terkel could tap and bring alive the imagination of the baseball fan. The intersection of popular culture and social history may require more than the historian's conventional methodology can uncover.

Shibe Park had its few seasons of triumph with the A's and their \$100,000 infield from 1910-14, the 1927-32 team with stars such as Jimmy Faux, Al Simmons, Mickey Cochrane and Lefty Grove, and the 1950 Philly whiz kids. These were only interludes for Philadelphia fans who were victims of Connie Mack's penchant to break up winning teams, and the inability of the Phillies management to build a winner.

Mack was forced to retire from field management after a tenure of fifty years. His sons were caught up in a family rivalry that finally resulted in the sale of the A's and their move to Kansas City in 1954. The football Eagles moved to Franklin Field for the 1958 season, where they had not only many more seats but also parking space.

Kuklick gives us a picture of the ball park's steady, seemingly inexorable, decline. Perhaps, he observes, if Mr. Mack had overcome his racist prejudices to sign black stars such as Roy Campanella, Orestes Minoso, or Henry Aaron, the A's might have triumphed and stayed on in Philadelphia and even at Shibe. Yet, the Yankees and the Red Sox were similarly delinquent in signing black stars, and so perhaps we ought to consign this conjecture to the Cleopatra's nose file that also holds the note on Mr. Mack's failure to buy Babe Ruth from the minor league Orioles.

Shibe's 1970 demise is attributed by Kuklick to persistently poor teams, technical limitations on the expansion of seating beyond 33,000, inadequate parking facilities in a crowded neighbourhood, and its situation in a changing and increasingly more dangerous area. Some, or all of these factors may have contributed but they were not unique to Philadelphia. Wrigley Field in Chicago was and is not known for winning baseball, has limited parking in its environs and has a small seating capacity. Comiskey which only closed last year is in the heart of the South Side ghetto and the Yankee Stadium neighbourhood, recently vividly described in *Bonfire of the Vanities*, is no safer. This is only to suggest that Professor Kuklick's failure to invoke any comparisons leaves us with a narrowly focused picture and no means of weighing the analysis.

Kuklick's failures may be the result of pressing too hard to knock one out of the park. In this slim book, the urban historian may lament the absence of a comparative framework, the historian of popular culture will perhaps desire a fuller treatment of the fans, and the fan will certainly want more colour on players and important games. Yet, these are not three strikes on the author. He has, to leave the metaphor, opened up some interesting new areas in sports history which should prove inspirational for future scholars.

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Hamilton, Kenneth Marvin. *Black Towns and Profit: Promotion and Development in the Trans-Appalachian West, 1877-1915*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991. index. illustrations. Pp. 152, appendices. \$29.95 (U.S.).

Professor Hamilton of the Department of History, Southern Methodist University, has presented an important account of the founding of black towns in the Trans-Appalachian West. His work, broken into five chapters, chronicles the development of Nicodemus, Kansas; Mound Bayou, Mississippi; Langston City, Oklahoma; Boley, Oklahoma; and Allensworth, California. Hamilton poses a challenge to existing scholarship and its emphasis on blacks seeking refuge from racial oppression as the major impetus for establishing all black towns in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He does not reject the racial haven thesis but does assert that an essential element is missing. Hamilton reveals that an entrepreneurial profit motive drove black founders as it did their white counterparts engaged in the enterprise of town founding.

To illustrate the cogency of his observations, Hamilton relates the promotional activities of black agents like Edwin Mc-

Cabe first in Kansas and later in Oklahoma. In addition, he charts the close ties between Isaiah Montgomery of Mound Bayou and Booker T. Washington. Beyond Washington, Montgomery also made use of white industrialists and philanthropists like Julius Rosenwald both to promote the city and to increase his own profits. Allen Allensworth of Allensworth, California, was less successful than Montgomery in attracting the support of Washington but he made the effort nonetheless. Allensworth's promotion of the town included running ads in the leading black newspapers of the time including *The New York Age*. Economic promotion was coupled with old fashioned boosterism sometimes reaching proportions that overstated the actual conditions of the new townsite.

As with speculation in other town-finding ventures in the Trans-Appalachian West, black towns were also characterized by political and financial chicanery. Still, Hamilton's research makes clear that most of the promotional literature for the new towns made a conscious appeal to well-mannered, industrious middle class types.

Black towns, like their white counterparts, needed natural advantages like waterways, railroad access, educational facilities, farm land that was better than marginal, and a population with a pioneering spirit. Those that were able to develop their natural resources and attain outside support usually survived. Hamilton also suggests that in several cases a loose frontier equality existed between whites and blacks in their entrepreneurial pursuits although not necessarily in living together. He recounts the adventures of black developers out to make a fast buck either speculating in land or engaging in politics.

For all its interesting new material, Hamilton's book is a curiously unbal-

anced work. Each successive chapter is shorter than its predecessor and the volume ends with a slight four-page conclusion that repeats the conclusions already revealed in the separate chapters. Despite the structural and perhaps conceptual weakness cited above, readers will find much to treasure in Hamilton's work.

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Reher, David Sven. *Town and Country in pre-industrial Spain: Cuenca, 1550-1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Pp. xiv, 337. Tables, maps, illustrations, index. \$?.

This wide-ranging, richly textured book makes rewarding reading not only for historians of early modern Spain but also for urban, economic, and family historians and historical demographers. The author deals successively with the theoretical underpinnings of the history of towns; Cuenca viewed in the larger comparative context of the decline of Spain in the seventeenth century; the relationship between economic change and urban demographic behavior: epidemics, famine, and death in an urban setting; household and family structure; and nineteenth-century migratory patterns in Cuenca.

Prospering from an active textile industry in the mid-sixteenth century involving almost thirty percent of the active population, Cuenca began to decline in population in the 1590s, dropping from 13,000 to 5,600 by 1650; two centuries later in 1860 the population had only increased to 7,400 inhabitants. Economically, the demise of the textile industry in Cuenca in the 1590s led to a ruralization of the region and an increase in the number of people in the agricultural sector, a pattern that persisted into the twentieth century. Deurbanization and economic

and demographic stagnation (1600-1876), also typical of towns in Old and New Castile and Estremadura, occurred when urban areas outstripped the agricultural carrying capacity of the surrounding countryside. This, in turn, imposed a "ceiling to potential urbanization."

Patterns of nuptiality, marital fertility, and mortality reveal a good deal about Cuenca, particularly in the nineteenth century. Although marriages occurred later from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, population remained stationary because delibacy declined. Among the determinants of nuptiality were the volatile marriage market, migration, residence, societal status, and time of year. As for marital fertility, Cuenca had a seven-to-ten percent lower level than rural areas. Conception was lowest in August and October and during Lent, when religious attitudes dictated abstinence. Mortality, particularly infant and child mortality, was high: only half the children born in Cuenca reached puberty, while life expectancy for the newborn was twenty-nine years. Linking prices to demographic phenomena demonstrated that high prices depressed fertility and nuptiality, though the strongest relationships in Reher's model were between prices and mortality, mortality and nuptiality, and most likely, nuptiality and fertility.

By Reher's definitions, mortality crises occurred in any year when mortality rates doubled the average. Usually, subsistence and epidemic crises went hand in hand. Subsistence crises in bad harvest years were virtually unavoidable, compounded always by hoarding and a lack of regional markets and of adequate municipal grain storage facilities. When epidemic disease struck the town, *conquenses* responded by flight, isolation, cancelling fiestas, public gatherings, and bull fights, and improving hygiene, but for the most part these measures failed to control epidemics, at least until after