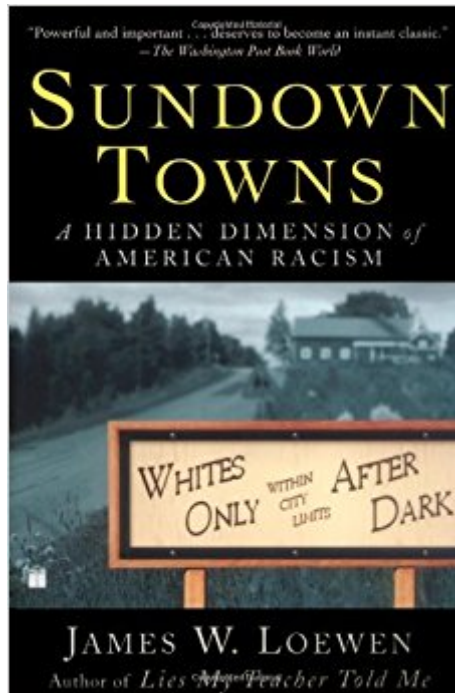




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# Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension Of American Racism



## Synopsis

Bestselling author of *Sundown Towns*, James W. Loewen, exposes the secret communities and hotbeds of racial injustice that sprung up throughout the twentieth century unnoticed, forcing us to reexamine race relations in the United States. In this groundbreaking work, bestselling sociologist James W. Loewen, author of the national bestseller *Sundown Towns*, brings to light decades of hidden racial exclusion in America. In a provocative, sweeping analysis of American residential patterns, Loewen uncovers the thousands of "sundown towns"—almost exclusively white towns where it was an unspoken rule that blacks could not live there—that cropped up throughout the twentieth century, most of them located outside of the South. These towns used everything from legal formalities to violence to create homogenous Caucasian communities—and their existence has gone unexamined until now. For the first time, Loewen takes a long, hard look at the history, sociology, and continued existence of these towns, contributing an essential new chapter to the study of American race relations. *Sundown Towns* combines personal narrative, history, and analysis to create a readable picture of this previously unknown American institution all written with Loewen's trademark honesty and thoroughness.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. According to bestselling sociologist Loewen (*Lies My Teacher Told Me*), "something significant has been left out of the broad history of race in America as it is usually taught," namely the establishment between 1890 and 1968 of thousands of "sundown towns" that

systematically excluded African-Americans from living within their borders. Located mostly outside the traditional South, these towns employed legal formalities, race riots, policemen, bricks, fires and guns to produce homogeneously Caucasian communities—and some of them continue such unsavory practices to this day. Loewen's eye-opening history traces the sundown town's development and delineates the extent to which state governments and the federal government, "openly favor[ed] white supremacy" from the 1930s through the 1960s, "helped to create and maintain all-white communities" through their lending and insuring policies. "While African Americans never lost the right to vote in the North... they did lose the right to live in town after town, county after county," Loewen points out. The expulsion forced African-Americans into urban ghettos and continues to have ramifications on the lives of whites, blacks and the social system at large. Admirably thorough and extensively footnoted, Loewen's investigation may put off some general readers with its density and statistical detail, but the stories he recounts form a compelling corrective to the "textbook archetype of interrupted progress." As the first comprehensive history of sundown towns ever written, this book is sure to become a landmark in several fields and a sure bet among Loewen's many fans. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

**\*Starred Review\*** In the long and troubled history of race relations in the U.S., one fairly hidden and unstudied practice has been the blatant exclusion of racial minorities in towns and suburbs through violence, laws, and tradition. Loewen, author of *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (1995), explores the history of places where blacks were warned, "Don't let the sun go down on you in this town." He details the creation and maintenance of sundown towns in Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere in the early part of the twentieth century, with practices that continue to this day. In an alarmingly large number of towns, virtually no minorities--other than those imprisoned or otherwise institutionalized--live there. Starting in central Illinois, where he grew up, Loewen traveled throughout the U.S. And documented practices of racial exclusivity and talked to town residents about the long-held customs, some beginning with the violent expulsion of black residents. Across the U.S., in small towns and wealthy suburbs, Loewen notes that where there are no black residents, it is likely the result of whites-only laws or practices. Vanessa BushCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

GREAT READ..VERY.. .INFORMATIVE

This is an amazing insightful work that did an amazing job of unveiling an ugly truth about American history. Mr. Loewe has given each of us as Americans a challenge - how do we bring others locally and globally into our communities without prejudice, judgement, malice and/or violence. Instead with peace, compassion and a commitment to humility and a devotion to discover our similarities, and less focus on what is only skin deep. Thank you Prof. Loewen.

Truly eye opening expose. It explains how the subdivision where I live was required by the Federal Government to be racially pure when it was formed in 1940. It leaves me wondering just how many towns still remain racist in their composition even today?

Everything you need to know about Sundown Towns. The research is astounding & fascinating! Most believe that these occurrences were predominantly in the south but this book proves that the north was just as discriminatory but on an often more discreet level. One would need to have lived or traveled to those northern towns to know just how discriminating they were towards blacks.

This book explains the extent of institutionalized white supremacy across the United States. Very data heavy - which can be a bit much at times, but shows how many towns, cities and suburbs in the country used every measure to keep black people from living in their boundaries.

Wow...who knew? Good reading and somewhat depressing. Lots of cited info.

great

I lived under those exact conditions growing up as a young child. The book brings back very vivid memories that are true and concise. This book is a great example what Black people went through in the 50's and 60's.

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