

*Black Power on Campus* is not simply a study of the Black Power movement nor is it strictly an institutional history of the University of Illinois after World War II. By explaining both how institutional reform took place and the role of Black Power in bringing about change, Williamson has added another layer of complexity to our understanding of the Black Power movement. Her research is solid, and her conclusions are well argued and supported by evidence she has artfully mined in the UI archives, student publications, local newspapers, and more than 30 oral interviews. Scholars of the sixties and social movements will find much value in this study, as will historians of higher education.

*Persistence and Change in Rural Communities: A 50-Year Follow-up to Six Classic Studies*, edited by A. E. Luloff and R. S. Krannich. New York: CABI Publishing, 2002. xii, 189 pp. Illustrations, charts, references, index. \$75.00 cloth.

Reviewer Philip J. Nelson teaches history at the University of Northern Iowa. His dissertation (Iowa State University, 1996) was "The Elusive Balance: The Small Community in Mass Society, 1940-1960."

Community has been and remains an important and provocative issue in both scholarly and popular literature. The fate of rural communities has elicited special concern throughout the twentieth century as waves of industrialization and urbanization have transformed the cultural landscape. Few rural places, for better and worse, have been left untouched by the onrush of mass society. These sweeping changes became particularly evident during the 1930s. Economic collapse, agricultural distress, and later, outmigration due to the Second World War combined with formerly urban amenities such as hard-surfaced roads and electrification, mass communication, and governmental support programs to challenge the solidity and shape of local communities.

By 1940, these massive structural changes to American society prompted the federal government, under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to coordinate sociological case studies of six different rural communities: El Cerrito, New Mexico; Sublette, Kansas; Landaff, New Hampshire; the Old Order Amish of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania; Irwin, Iowa; and Harmony, Georgia. As noted in the work under review, "These studies represent seminal works in the study of rural community life in the USA at a critical point in history. . . . The Rural Life Study series was designed to provide a holistic picture of community change in six ideal type communities" (3).

Fifty years later the authors and editors of the reviewed work revisited those original six communities and their attendant classic stud-

ies. Their restudies and comparative analyses address "fundamental and still unresolved sociological questions: to what degree and in what ways do local communities persist as meaningful forms of social organization in contemporary rural America" (1)?

The organization of the book is logical and straightforward. After an introductory chapter and a second chapter that presents a theoretical overview of community studies, the subsequent chapters deal one at a time with the six communities. A final chapter does comparative analysis on the subject communities and discusses policy implications for general rural community well-being. The book can be read profitably, with an understanding of the editor's desired points, by selecting only those communities in which the reader might be interested. Moreover, despite its professional sociological style and tone, at 177 pages in length the volume is not a long or jargon-filled tome. However, the brevity of the book is a little surprising considering the amount of material covered and the ambitious, almost open-ended objectives presented in the introduction. One might have anticipated more discussion of policy implications for rural America, especially in light of the fact that governmental programs are cited as a key factor in community persistence.

Policy implications of community change is just one of four themes that run through the book. A second theme and major objective of the restudies was to discover the types and extent of change in each of the six communities. This facet of the project was largely successful, generating some interesting and unexpected results. Key among them was that all the communities demonstrated an "amazing" persistence in the face of significant change. For example, one community suffered severe depopulation (El Cerrito) only to bounce back to virtually its earlier size. Another community (Harmony) was largely inundated by the filling of a reservoir, but managed to maintain a local spirit by refocusing on the larger county community. Finally, the community perceived to be the most unstable and unprosperous (Sublette) in the original study became among the most vital and stable, albeit by virtue of its ability to tap into the Ogallala Aquifer for irrigation water.

A third theme involves a methodological discussion. The editors argue for a continuation of the case study method, including participant observation. In addition, they present a convincing case for longitudinal studies and comparative analysis of communities. As with the material on policy implications, however, the methodological treatment is short, to the point of being abbreviated.

The book also deals with the theoretical side of community studies, which constitutes a fourth theme. This discussion, like that of policy and methodology, is very brief. After a look at contemporary theoretical concerns, the editors critique the structuralist Great Change thesis of Roland Warren. Finally, they demonstrate how their evidence supports the interactionist theory of Kenneth Wilkinson, which is best at accounting for the persistence of community in mass society. For the theoretically minded, this is actually quite fascinating, because it seems as if a major breakthrough has occurred in community studies; and readers will want to know about its implications for real-life application, if any.

As one who has read some of the original Rural Life series, I commend the authors' and editors' work, and I recommend the book to anyone interested in any aspect of rural community life. One can only hope that the present volume does not suffer the same fate as the original studies—to be often quoted but little used as a catalyst for rural development.

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