



Urban Green: Nature, Recreation, and the Working Class in Industrial Chicago

Colin Fisher

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In early twentieth-century America, affluent city-dwellers made a habit of venturing out of doors and vacationing in resorts and national parks. Yet the rich and the privileged were not the only ones who sought respite in nature. In this pathbreaking book, historian Colin Fisher demonstrates that working-class white immigrants and African Americans in rapidly industrializing Chicago also fled the urban environment during their scarce leisure time. If they had the means, they traveled to wilderness parks just past the city limits as well as to rural resorts in Wisconsin and Michigan. But lacking time and money, they most often sought out nature within the city itself--at urban parks and commercial groves, along the Lake Michigan shore, even in vacant lots. Chicagoans enjoyed a variety of outdoor recreational activities in these green spaces, and they used them to forge ethnic and working-class community. While narrating a crucial era in the history of Chicago's urban development, Fisher makes important interventions in debates about working-class leisure, the history of urban parks, environmental justice, the African American experience, immigration history, and the cultural history of nature.

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