



The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America

By James N. Gregory

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Between 1900 and the 1970s, twenty million southerners migrated north and west. Weaving together for the first time the histories of these black and white migrants, James Gregory traces their paths and experiences in a comprehensive new study that demonstrates how this regional diaspora reshaped America by "southernizing" communities and transforming important cultural and political institutions.

Challenging the image of the migrants as helpless and poor, Gregory shows how both black and white southerners used their new surroundings to become agents of change. Combining personal stories with cultural, political, and demographic analysis, he argues that the migrants helped create both the modern civil rights movement and modern conservatism. They spurred changes in American religion, notably modern evangelical Protestantism, and in popular culture, including the development of blues, jazz, and country music.

In a sweeping account that pioneers new understandings of the impact of mass migrations, Gregory recasts the history of twentieth-century America. He demonstrates that the southern diaspora was crucial to transformations in the relationship between American regions, in the politics of race and class, and in the roles of religion, the media, and culture.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The Southern Diaspora establishes a new standard for studies of internal migration in the United States. Gregory has brilliantly set black and white southern migration in an intelligent and informed conversation with one another--not to argue that they are part of the same process, and not simply to compare them, but to show a relationship between them, and a larger relationship to other social, political, economic, and cultural forces. (James Grossman, The Newberry Library)"

"An engagingly written and conceptually original study that significantly enhances our understanding of how southern migration redefined the United States. Gregory makes great use of the life stories of individuals, both ordinary and famous to illustrate the broader transformations he describes. . . . An enormously informative study of value to all students of modern America."

-- "Journal of American Ethnic History"

"Gregory sets a new standard. . . . His work will serve as a model as future scholars extend his insights."

-- "Canadian Journal of History"

"Gregory's endeavor raises some intriguing points. . . . [Gregory's] book is a much-needed and fresh look into the discourse of American migration studies."-- "Alabama Review"

"Outstanding. . . . On the leading edge of a growing interdisciplinary literature . . . a must-read for all scholars and students."

-- "Journal of Regional Science"

"Likely to become a standard title in the bibliography of important works on twentieth century American history."

-- "Arkansas Libraries"

"Fascinating."-- "Seattle Times"

"This well-researched and documented work will now be required reading for historians and sociologists interested in the impact of internal migration on American society. . . . This is solid scholarship that integrates a significant amount of secondary sources while introducing the reader to an array of original work. It will remain pertinent for years to come, and should spawn additional research."

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Review

With *The Southern Diaspora* Gregory has set a new standard for understanding the 20th century southern migration." *Journal of African American History*

Written in an engaging and lively style, Gregory shares numerous stories about individual migrants, black and white alike, as they struggle to adjust to their new surroundings.--*Journal of the West*

The Southern Diaspora not only brings together heretofore largely separate black and white migration stories, but also shows how these intertwined though quite different population movements both energized and changed the twentieth century economy, culture, and politics of the urban North and West.--Joe W. Trotter, Carnegie Mellon University

Gregory's endeavor raises some intriguing points. . . . [Gregory's] book is a much-needed and fresh look into the discourse of American migration studies.--*Alabama Review*

Gregory sets a new standard. . . . His work will serve as a model as future scholars extend his insights.--*Canadian Journal of History*

This book does an excellent job of not only providing historical data but also making the reader see the migration as that of real people. . . . Gregory has done a fine job of providing meaningful data in a readable book.--*Multicultural Review*

An engagingly written and conceptually original study that significantly enhances our understanding of how southern migration redefined the United States. Gregory makes great use of the life stories of individuals, both ordinary and famous to illustrate the broader transformations he describes. . . . An enormously informative study of value to all students of modern America.--*Journal of American Ethnic History*

[*The Southern Diaspora*] moves the study of internal migration beyond economic or demographic statistics, or even historical reports of individual stories, and places the Great Migration in a more comprehensive context. In particular, Gregory makes wonderful linkages among migration, race, class, and social change. . . . This book is essential reading for anyone interested in migration but also for those with an eye on race, class, and sociocultural change in twentieth-century America.--*Journal of Interdisciplinary History*

This well-researched and documented work will now be required reading for historians and sociologists interested in the impact of internal migration on American society. . . . This is solid scholarship that integrates a significant amount of secondary sources while introducing the reader to an array of original work. It will remain pertinent for years to come, and should spawn additional research.--*Journal of Social History*

Outstanding. . . . On the leading edge of a growing interdisciplinary literature . . . a must-read for all scholars and students.--*Journal of Regional Science*

Fascinating.--*Seattle Times*

Stunning. *The Southern Diaspora* is much more than a synthesis of existing literatures; it is an empirically-based, national-level study of the experiences and impact of the tens of millions of white and black southerners who left the region over the past century. . . . An enormous success. . . . Seamlessly blends sophisticated quantitative methods with informed social and cultural analysis. . . . This work is calling for major changes in how we study and understand mass population movements.--*Journal of Appalachian Studies*

Likely to become a standard title in the bibliography of important works on twentieth century American history.--*Arkansas Libraries*

Gregory analyzes and contextualizes . . . symbiotic migrations in his illuminating and timely (not to mention conceptually original) new book. . . . A sustained, well-written exploration of two unique, yet interwoven, migrations that changed the face of American society.--*Journal of American History*

The Southern Diaspora establishes a new standard for studies of internal migration in the United States. Gregory has brilliantly set black and white southern migrations in an intelligent and informed conversation with one another--not to argue that they are part of the same process, and not simply to compare them, but to show a relationship between them, and a larger relationship to other social, political, economic, and cultural forces.--James Grossman, The Newberry Library

Written in an engaging style, with numerous personal vignettes to enliven the narrative. . . . The writing, the comprehensive treatment, and the paperback edition make the book ideal for classroom use.--*American Historical Review*

The first comprehensive study of migrations from the South to the North and West during the twentieth century.--*Arkansas Historical Quarterly*

About the Author

James N. Gregory is professor of history at the University of Washington and director of the Seattle Civil

Rights and Labor History Project. He is author of the award-winning *American Exodus: The Dust Bowl Migration and Okie Culture in California*.

Users Review

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