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in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Thomas W. Hanchett. *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. xv + 380 pp. $65.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8078-2376-7.

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Published on H-Urban (March, 1999)

Thomas Hanchett has given us one of the finest studies of the formation of urban neighborhoods to date. Though very attentive to the special importance of black-white race relations in the South, Hanchett helps us see Charlotte in a broader national context as a city responding in its own way to social, technological, and commercial forces at work in cities across America. It is an excellent case study that uses the particular to illuminate the general and, conversely, balances that by referring to larger patterns of urban development in ways that assure us that the particular is not so peculiar. Readers will come away knowing a lot about Charlotte, but they will also understand more about similar processes in American cities in general.

There is little in the urban development of Charlotte that will seem surprising to those familiar with similar studies of other cities. Hanchett provides, however, a fine-grained examination of the process that is quite unlike any other available. Using social class and race as his principal variables, Hanchett traces the pattern of development through three schematic stages of urban development. The first is what he calls "salt and pepper," a mixed land use environment in which social classes and races were, compared to latter stages of urban development, more intermingled. This pattern of heterogeneity was obtained throughout a prolonged period of urban growth that extended from Charlotte's crude beginnings as an agricultural trading town in 1753 over the following century and a half. A century after its founding, Charlotte barely passed one thousand in population in 1850. After the Civil War, the pace of urban growth quickened as the cotton economy and railroad network funneled commerce away from the older cotton ports into the cities of the interior South. By 1870 Charlotte had nearly 4,500 people, and this would exceed 18,000 by the end of the century. There were pockets of concentration, of course: the grand homes of the town's wealthy families lined the main streets, surrounded by working-class whites, while blacks, about one third of the population by the 1870s, clustered in several pockets scattered around the periphery. The advent of railroads and of the cotton textile industry, along with population growth and a large influx of blacks following

emancipation, modified this "salt and pepper" pattern only slightly, according to Hanchett.

The next stage of urban development, between the 1890s and the 1920s, is described as a "patchwork" pattern of neighborhoods segregated by class and race but in several juxtaposed units. This was only an interlude to a more rigid arrangements of "sectors" in which the races became almost entirely partitioned into opposite sides of town and the wealthy withdrew into their exclusive suburban refuges.

Hanchett is concerned with showing that this process of segregation was not simply an automatic response to population growth, transportation technology, and all the vast changes that came with the transformation of a farm trading center into an industrial city. It was instead a product of urban planning policy that took form in a field of political power, class tensions, and racial animosity. Hanchett explores the urban counterpart to Populist unrest that gave rise to new expressions of working-class dissent during the depression of the 1890s. The introduction of large textile mills and other industrial activities produced a new enlarged scale of enterprise. The average manufacturing firm had less than four employees in 1880; by 1930 it was well over fifty. The assembly of large work forces surrounding the mills produced distinct blue-collar neighborhoods, Belmont and North Charlotte in particular, both lying northeast of the center. Within these neighborhoods, smallpox and other diseases caused horrible public health problems, which repelled the "better classes" from their proximity. Working-class demands for public health reform only intensified class tensions and accelerated the social and geographic distance between rich and poor in Charlotte.

Hanchett's intelligent treatment of residential segregation of the races allows us to see the process as a distinct but parallel development alongside the forces that separated blue and white-collar neighborhoods in this period. This part of Charlotte's history is most relevant to the South's peculiar racial configuration, but Hanchett forces it into a broader urban context by juxtaposing racial segregation with class separation.

Hanchett's shrewd analysis of this phenomenon ought to excite interest among historians interested in the debate surrounding the origins and meaning of segregation that followed C. Vann Woodward's interpretation in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. In his study of the urban origins of segregation, the late Howard Rabinowitz riveted the debate on the subject in the urban environment. It was in these showcases of New South progress that the new symbols of racial segregation took their most visible form, and it was of no incidental significance that the main innovations in racial segregation were introduced in the South's most modern institutions. Railroads, schools, streetcars, theaters, and other places that were characteristically urban were among the first to fall subject to Jim Crow's rule. Rabinowitz made us see segregation as something more than simply the measure of white oppression, for it often meant a step up from complete exclusion in such institutions as public schools. In black churches and other social institutions, former slaves found a new autonomy and source of racial solidarity.

Whatever the meaning of racial segregation before 1890, Rabinowitz left off just when the story got interesting, when race relations took a turn for the worse and segregation became but one part of a program of subjugation, disfranchisement, brutality, and denigration--in every sense of that word. Indeed, physical separation from whites, whether in neighborhoods or places of public resort, was among the least of the problems that blacks would face in the era of lynchings, rioting, disfranchisement, and subjugation that descended on them after 1890.

Hanchett, in agreement with Woodward, argues for a decisive change in race relations begin-

ning in the 1890s, as reflected in the "reordering" of neighborhood residential patterns in Charlotte. He makes it clear that the patterns of physical segregation were not simply the product of individual choice and social preferences; it was a planned and imposed policy emanating from white real estate developers, bankers, businessmen, and civic leaders. These whites devised a number of strategies that worked to discourage blacks in some areas and encourage them in others. The result was a patchwork of black neighborhoods clustered in different parts of the city that provided solid black communities capable of supporting their own institutions. The evidence of a vibrant black community life that took root in these neighborhoods tells us that these were more than just instruments of racial control imposed by powerful whites. But whatever the motivating forces behind this "sorting out," the outcome was a dramatic shift from the "salt and pepper" mix of black and white clusters to much larger and "sharp edged" patches that were solidly black.

I wish Hanchett had given more attention to public health concerns as they shaped race relations, a subject he takes up quite convincingly in connection with white working class neighborhoods. Health concerns were of paramount importance to both class and racial segregation after 1890, and historians debating the timing and meaning of segregation have neglected this subject. That the germ theory of disease emerged about the same time as more rigid forms of racial segregation appeared was no mere coincidence. Tuberculosis, a leading agent of death and the first to be ascribed to germs, was concentrated in the urban black population, and this was only the most salient of many health concerns that shaped race relations during the turn toward a more thorough and harsher system of segregation.

This is a beautifully illustrated book. The maps and photographs are not merely added on; they are integral parts of the book and work well with the text to lay out the argument and the evidence that supports it. Included are several very expensive color plates, which are meant to illustrate the shifts in land use. But it was frustrating to find the colors and legend were often difficult to sort out. The legend for color figure 1, for example, shows black households in yellow, businesses in red, white business owners in blue, white blue collar in what looks like brown, and white collar in green, with white dots used to mark the unidentified. But on the color map the yellows and whites are washed out, and it is not easy to tell red from brown or blue from green. Otherwise, the illustrations and the extensive notations that accompany them work effectively to clarify the author's argument and give us vivid images of the physical environment he describes in the text.

I began this book with only the most casual acquaintance of Charlotte, having been stuck in traffic trying to get through it many years ago. I finished it feeling that I knew the city and its neighborhoods pretty well. More importantly, I came away from this book with a firmer understanding of the ways in which race and class, social choice and public policy, all combined to define the American city. It was out of these boiling cauldrons of ethnic tribalism and class anxieties that America's modern segmented cities were formed. It was a process that at once propelled wealthy families away from "the dangerous classes" and pulled racial and ethnic minorities into separate enclaves, always conditioned by political as well as economic forces. Few books have provided a more vivid and convincing portrait of just how that took place than Thomas Hanchett has with Charlotte.

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Citation: Don H. Doyle. Review of Hanchett, Thomas W. *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975.* H-Urban, H-Net Reviews. March, 1999.

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