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*1889: The Boomer Movement, the Land Run, and Early Oklahoma City* by Michael J. Hightower (review)

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thirst for northern and federal investments, opened the doors to scrutiny from the outside and to demands that the most virulent forms of racism be dismantled. The growing power of black southerners who migrated to the North amplified those calls for change. Third, out of necessity, Jim Crow segregation and disenfranchisement led to organizing and institution building in the black community that doomed the most notorious forms of white supremacy. Due to segregation, African Americans created the historically black Mobile Street District, which supported the freedom movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Throughout the course of his monograph, Sturkey returns to these themes and marshals evidence to show how these three factors played out in one small southern city.

Historians may quibble about some points. One can wonder why Sturkey could not make more of the stories of the white working class. His assertion that white elites were the ones who left written records and had the biggest impact on the trajectory of Hattiesburg rings somewhat hollow when he does such a strong job of telling the stories of black Mississippians through various kinds of sources, particularly oral histories. He also overstates the success of the black freedom struggle when he asserts that “the Hattiesburg civil rights movement revolutionized race in the Hub City” as “local African Americans excised Jim Crow from their society” (p. 295). Still, the overarching lessons of *Hattiesburg* are valuable for those who write about and research southern history.

Of great interest, Sturkey’s book reveals the irony of how Jim Crow sowed the seeds of black advancement, but in turn black victories over racist oppression, such as desegregation, weakened black communities like Mobile Street. Sturkey’s *Hattiesburg* might well inspire future studies of those stories as well as examinations of the durability of white supremacy and its capacity to maintain today much of the power that was embedded in Jim Crow.

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ROBERT LUCKETT

*1889: The Boomer Movement, the Land Run, and Early Oklahoma City.* By Michael J. Hightower. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. Pp. xvi, 328. \$24.95, ISBN 978-0-8061-6070-2.)

The land runs and lotteries that brought thousands of Euro-American settlers into Oklahoma Territory remain in the collective memory of the state’s residents. From monuments and memorials to the use of the term *Sooners* (individuals who attempted to illegally claim land before the official opening) as the University of Oklahoma’s nickname to yearly elementary school reenactments of land runs, the unique settlement history of Oklahoma is frequently celebrated. Michael J. Hightower adds to our understanding of this period in *1889: The Boomer Movement, the Land Run, and Early Oklahoma City*, an account of the decades-long push to open the central part of the state to non-Native settlement that resulted in the Unassigned Lands run and a period of rapid urbanization at the townsite that became Oklahoma City.

Hightower divides *1889* into three parts. He first focuses on boomer (advocates for the non-Native settlement of Oklahoma) designs to settle Indian Territory in the 1870s and 1880s, including more than a dozen significant expeditions to homestead in Oklahoma without federal approval. The second

section relates events immediately surrounding the April 22, 1889, Unassigned Lands run that resulted in tens of thousands of people claiming land in central Oklahoma. Finally, Hightower chronicles the urban development of Oklahoma City that followed the run, as the location quickly evolved from a railroad stop into an upstart city. Throughout the book, Hightower links the opening of Oklahoma to non-Native populations to the larger context of American Gilded Age economic inequalities and a political environment that consistently favored the connected few over the majority of less fortunate Americans. Various geopolitical actors, such as the cattle industry, railroad corporations, American Indians, state legislatures, federal government officials, and the boomer movement led by David L. Payne and William L. Couch, played a role in facilitating, or hindering, settlement of public lands in central Oklahoma. Various sources, including archival material from multiple facilities and period newspapers, are used to build Hightower's historical narrative.

Unlike other popular representations of Oklahoma land runs, which focus on rural settlement and agricultural homesteading in the state, Hightower concentrates on townsite development and the rapid evolution of cities. Using Oklahoma City as a case study, he outlines the chaotic political environment after the land run, frequent disputes over property rights, the widespread violence and lawlessness in the city, contacts with nearby Native people, and the competition with Guthrie, Oklahoma, over which town would be the territorial (and later state) capital. The roles of early Oklahoma City leaders like Charles F. Colcord, Henry Overholser, and Angelo C. Scott in shaping the urban area are highlighted.

Frequent use of historical images of early Oklahoma scenes and individuals adds to Hightower's written descriptions. On multiple occasions, historical events are linked to modern locations, businesses, and landmarks in and around Oklahoma City. However, the one original map in the book is not detailed enough to orient readers, particularly those who are unfamiliar with the modern metropolitan area, to these places. A large-scale map of Oklahoma City would have enhanced the written analysis in 1889.

Otherwise, *1889* is a welcome addition to the existing literature on the historical development of Oklahoma. Written in an accessible and engaging style, the book will be useful in undergraduate and graduate seminars and should be well received by nonacademics wishing to better understand the political and economic context of opening Oklahoma to non-Native people. Hightower's account of the contested settlement of the Unassigned Lands within the larger political and economic context of the Gilded Age offers new interpretations of the history of Oklahoma.

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*Alfalfa Bill: A Life in Politics.* By Robert L. Dorman. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018. Pp. xiv, 418. \$34.95, ISBN 978-0-8061-6035-1.)

Scholars commonly describe William H. "Alfalfa Bill" Murray as an enigma. Many consider him the most influential political figure in Oklahoma from the period just before statehood through at least the mid-1930s.