



Kentucky Countryside in Transition: A Streetcar Suburb and the Origins of Middle-Class Louisville, 1850–1910

Stephanie Bower

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Kentucky Countryside in Transition charts the rise of the American middle class at the turn of the twentieth century by examining the migration from the Kentucky countryside to the city and subsequently the suburbs of Louisville. The formation of the middle class in Louisville was fostered by two factors: a boom in white collar employment and the electric streetcar, an innovation that fundamentally changed the urban landscape. Ultimately a narrative of industrialization and modernity, this study focuses on a group of forty-two families who lived at the end of the Broadway Trolley line in an area that came to be known as the Cherokee Triangle. This suburban neighborhood was dominated by white collar commuters who were driven to Louisville by a desire to get ahead but continued to embrace a nostalgia for country life. In this meticulous three generation study, Stephanie Bower follows this group of families as they make the transition from rural farmers and cultivators to city laborers and white collar workers. By mining census records, city directories, and county records, Bower carefully reconstructs the biographical details of residents in an effort to paint a picture of life in this streetcar suburb during this important period of transformation. Regional studies of the middle class during this pivotal era are often overlooked in contemporary scholarship. Consequently, this analysis will be of interest to those researching Louisville, middle class formation, and suburbanization, as well as to local genealogists tracing their family histories.

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