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Sundown Towns:Persistent Atmospheres of Exclusion and the Transformation of Racist Geographies in America

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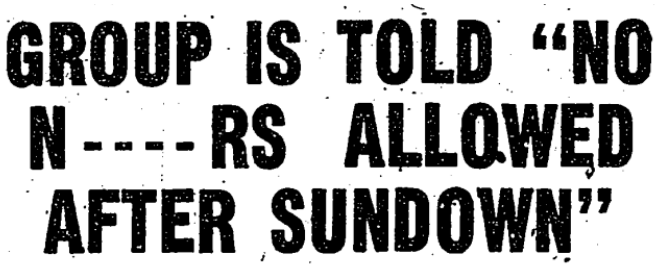
Sundown Towns:
Persistent Atmospheres of Exclusion and the Transformation of Racist Geographies in America



'White men shoot up church excursioners', *Pittsburgh Courier,* 17 August 1940, p. 24 <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/white-men-shoot-up-church-excursioner/docview/202069468/se-2?accountid=9730 > [accessed 17 January 2022].

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Shaun Wallace for his continued support, encouragement, and guidance.

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Introduction

'stay clear of sundown towns they all give off the same vibe. We were taught as children to stay clear. As an adult that lesson has kept me safe.'[1]

This comment appeared in 2021 as part of a social media discussion concerning travelling around the US safely as a Black American. It presented a window into questioning the contemporary racial experience in America through a significantly understudied concept: sundown towns.

After the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, America has 'both struggled to confront its history of racial division and continued to succumb to it.'[2] This study provides a unique lens to approach this structural racism.

Sundown towns are 'any organized jurisdiction that for decades kept African Americans or other groups from living in it,'[3] attempting to be purposely all-white. The sundown status of these towns materialized from the 1890s, in what is called the 'nadir' of race relations, a time which is considered the worst period in race relations in America.[4] The nadir emerged due to several historical factors, most prominently the shift in political stance from both the Republican and Democratic parties, as the anti-racist idealism previously championed by

[1] mrcrim3, (2021), *TikTok,* <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMLCncT3P/> [accessed 25 January 2022].
[2] Giulia McDonnell Nieto del Rio, John Eligon, Adeel Hassan, 'A Timeline of What Has Happened in the Year Since George Floyd's Death', *New York Times*, May 25 2021<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/25/us/george-floyd-protests-unrest-events-timeline.html> [accessed 13 April 2022].
[3] James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns*, 2nd edn (New York: The New Press, 2018), p. 4.
[4] Loewen, p. 25.

some ‘radical’ Republicans during the reconstruction period after the Civil War faded.[5] The emergence of contentious issues such as immigration, American Indian displacement and white imperialism cemented ideas of racial hierarchy and white supremacy.[6]

Anti-Black racism increased with the sentiment that if Black Americans still were ‘at the bottom’ of society even without slavery, ‘then it must be their own fault.’[7] This white ‘logic’ of racism began to be legitimized by increasingly hostile race relations, as Black Americans were perceived to be causing tensions rather than racism itself or the inescapable legacies of slavery. In this context, deeming Black Americans ‘the problem’ provided reasoning to actively prevent them from residing alongside white residents, causing an increase in sundown areas. Displacement at the hands of white power, therefore, continued as inescapable in the Black experience of America. Despite misleading media representations, sundown towns have a distinctly Northern characteristic.[8] Whilst Southern racism after slavery was targeted on continued subjugation through exploitation, to ‘keep them down,’ in the North it was defined by expulsion, ‘to drive them out’.[9]

The catalysts encouraging the creation, enforcement and maintenance of sundown towns are multifaceted. Pervasive racist stereotypes and eugenic myths of racial inferiority were key motivators for areas to become all-white, including myths of inherent Black criminality. Anxieties of interracial mixing, Black economic success, perceived social advancement, threats of desegregation, and false accusations of interracial rape were also significant

[5] Loewen, pp. 31-32.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Loewen, p. 38.
[8] *Green Book*, dir. by Peter Farrelly, (Universal Pictures, 2019).
[9] Loewen, p. 60.

catalysts for sundown town conception. These 'origin myths' served not only to justify sundown operation but also to reinforce it years later, mobilized through social memory to maintain hostile atmospheres.[10]

These towns have traditionally expelled and excluded Black Americans using deliberate 'formal and informal' policies through various methods,[11] such as vigilante groups violently threatening Black residents to leave, and signs which forbade Black Americans to enter the jurisdiction at night. The implication was that if Black Americans entered, violence would ensue. These signs often used the language of 'N*****, Don't Let The Sun Go Down On You…'[12] Eyewitnesses have recounted sundown signs in 'more than 150 communities in 31 states',[13] as well as other methods such as sirens to warn Black people to 'get beyond the city limits' by dark.[14] Despite their name, these areas did not only operate after dark or have to use signage, often operating through word of mouth using the colloquial term 'sundown' to describe the hostility of the area. Lynchings and riots also served as sundown maintenance, as well as formal methods such as ordinances or policies preventing Black residents from living or purchasing property in certain areas.

While sundown towns often excluded other minorities, especially those from Asian, Jewish, and Hispanic communities, this study will focus on the Black experience of sundown areas. They differ to areas singularly employing Jim Crow segregation, as they operate not just using separation, but through two further dynamics: residential exclusion *and* expulsion.

[10] Loewen, p. 182.
[11] Loewen p. 47.
[12] Loewen, portfolio, pp. 223-228.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

The pioneer of the study of sundown towns, James W. Loewen,[15] has defined their 'all-white for decades' characteristic as central to their sundown status. This dissertation seeks to expand his definition to include areas that also *consistently attempted* to expel and exclude their non-white populations with the aim of an all-white community.

The criteria for a sundown town to demonstrate acts of expulsion and exclusion and the *intention* of becoming an all-white jurisdiction remains fundamental. The key difference is that this reworked definition does not require the area to be completely all-white for decades to be classed as a sundown town. Rather, it focuses on the consistency of the attempts to achieve an all-white community, thus accounting for the traditional interpretations of sundown towns but also towns that crucially *maintained sundown methods of operation* whilst simultaneously having an (often small) Black population, extending the scope for contemporary accountability and potential for change.

By challenging the preconception that they are a phenomenon existing only in the past and positioning them as an embedded yet contemporary reality, this study situates sundown towns at the forefront of understanding racialized experience in America. Deviating from previous scholarship, it will use the framework of emotional geographies to focus on the atmospheres sustained and maintained in sundown areas, focusing on the lived Black experience. It moves beyond the traditional understanding of sundown towns as being completely all-white and redefines it to encompass different subversive methods of

[15] Loewen, (2018).

sundown operation, using the case study of Springfield, Illinois to investigate its transformed methods.

This dissertation argues that sundown towns continue to exist and operate through transformed methods of exclusion, overall centring sundown towns as a historical past *and* present. It shifts national narratives away from simplified racial progress in America by confronting the ongoing sundown patterns which remain and redefining their place in scholarship as integral to contemporary conversations about race, rather than as a historically isolated entity.

Literature

This research situates itself amongst a small but emerging historiographical development in American race studies seeking to draw attention to and emphasize the importance of sundown towns as crucial to racial experience in America. Historians of race have primarily focused on segregation in the South, slavery, Jim Crow laws and the Civil Rights Movement, however the study of sundown towns has yet to be investigated in depth by a range of scholars.

Currently, the most notable and influential work on sundown towns is 'Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism' by sociologist and historian James Loewen,[16] which at the time of its publication in 2005 and the later 2018 edition remains the most

[16] Loewen, (2018).

comprehensive and thorough work in the field documenting sundown towns, accompanied by an online database.[17] Acknowledged by Loewen himself, the research is at an early stage and is ongoing. There remains vast scope to investigate more personal experiences of sundown areas and to track their transformations over time, which this research seeks to contribute to.

Scholars Heather O' Connell, Elena Esquibel and Brent Campney have relied heavily on Loewen's analysis,[18] using his understanding of a sundown town to establish their arguments, with minimal divergence from definitions and frameworks that his work sets out. Esquibel has expanded most clearly, arguing that sundown towns are maintained through oral tradition, focusing on performances of race, but also building on Loewen's work to create a strong bank of primary analysis.

Heather O' Connell's 2019 study examined large scale segregation and has been amongst the first in connecting sundown towns to current inequality,[19] a framework which this research hopes to employ. Whilst valuable in identifying broad geographical patterns of disparity, O'Connell fails to examine the personal experiences of this inequality. This is a theme within the whole field, in which contemporary experience of sundown areas remains unexplored.

[17] History and Social Justice, (2022) *Sundown Towns* <https://justice.tougaloo.edu/sundown-towns/> [accessed 3 January 2022].
[18] Heather O' Connell, 'Historical Shadows: The Links between Sundown Towns and Contemporary Black–White Inequality', *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity,* 5 (2019), 311-325.
B.M.S Campney, '"A White-and-Negro Environment Which Is Seldom Spotlighted" The Twilight of Jim Crow in the Postwar Urban Midwest', *Pacific Historical Review,* 90, (2021), 84-118.
Elena Esquibel, 'Performing race, performing history: Oral histories of sundown towns in southern Illinois' (doctoral dissertation, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2011) pp. 1-215.
[19] Heather O' Connell, 311-325.

In line with recent scholarly attention on both racial studies and the spatial turn, there has been an interest in Black mobility and racialized place,[20] yet whilst sundown towns have been mentioned briefly in these works, there has been disproportionate focus on ghettos and Southern states. Study of atmospheric geography within a racial context has also gained momentum, seeking to understand the origins of current inequalities in travel by examining emotional reactions to place, with the work of scholars Joyce Davidson and Christine Milligan laying the groundwork of the study in 2004,[21] and more recently Derek Alderman, Kortney Williams and Ethan Bottone.[22] This framework of viewing generational travel behaviours through how atmosphere of place is experienced is particularly useful and the intention is to further connect this with not only incidents of discrimination but sundown town atmospheres.

Discriminatory housing policy and contemporary residential inequality has been a key concern of research since the 1960s and remains a pressing topic of interest. Richard Rothstein's 'The Color of Law' has crucial relevance to this dissertation,[23] briefly referencing sundown towns and focusing on systematic imposed segregation and discrimination. Alongside O'Connell and Loewen's work it links structural residential policy seen in sundown

[20] Michael Ra-Shon Hall, 'The negro traveller's guide to a Jim Crow South: negotiating racialized landscapes during a dark period in the United States cultural history, 1936-1967', *Postcolonial Studies,* 17, (2014), 307-319.

Gretchen Sullivan Sorin, *Driving While Black: African American Travel and the Road to Civil Rights*, (New York: Liveright, 2020).

Candacy A Taylor, *Overground Railroad*, (New York: Abrams Press, 2020).

[21] Joyce Davidson, Christine Milligan, 'Embodying emotion sensing space: introducing emotional geographies', *Social & Cultural Geography*, 5, (2004) 523-532.

[22] Derek H. Alderman, Kortney Williams, Ethan Bottone 'Jim Crow journey stories: African American driving as emotional labor', *Tourism Geographies,* 17 (2019) 1-21.

[23] Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law*, (New York: Liveright, 2017).

areas with current residential segregation, and this dissertation applies this lens to analyse Springfield, Illinois.

Whilst there is a historiographical agreement that sundown towns had significant impact on the contemporary experience of America, there is a clear divergence in consensus on the longevity of sundown towns. There has been a tendency to situate them as historically isolated phenomena in popular history articles, and some scholars such as O' Connell, although focusing on their legacies, position them as existing in the past, part of a bygone era.[24] However, my position aligns with and expands on the work of Loewen arguing that sundown towns not only have a significant legacy but, in many cases, continue to exist, and that they have transformed through various methods.

Concluding that contemporary patterns of residential inequality and exclusion arose due to individual bias and economic difference alone is simplistic, and through positioning sundown methods as still in operation, an alternative but compelling narrative of contemporary structural racism can be told, one which never left and instead *shifted* in its form.

The primary aim of this study is to determine if sundown areas still exist. It aims to question the experiences of exclusion in navigating sundown areas, considering how these have been articulated and discovering what legacies exist of these experiences to understand how

[24] Heather O' Connell, p. 312.

sundown towns manifest in the contemporary, overall reflecting on how Black exclusion has been sustained and perpetuated.

Methodology

Aligning with previous scholarship, this study follows the temporal parameters of sundown towns from the nadir of race relations (1890 to 1940) into the contemporary.[25] As Loewen's research has accumulated the largest and only database of its kind, his work therefore sets the geographic scope of the field of the Midwest and the North, which this study adheres to. Springfield, Illinois has been chosen as a case study due to its position as a typical Midwestern town and as a site of historical racial violence.

A culmination of factors has contributed to scholars overlooking the subject, especially the shameful nature of the topic leading to both a journalistic lack of coverage and purposeful omission of material regarding sundown towns by those in possession of evidence.[26] Historians agree that further research is required as not only has this history been ignored, but it has been hidden. Consequently, access to evidence of sundown operation is limited, especially formal documents such as restrictive covenants and ordinances which often only exist in local archives. Indeed, any pre-existing documentation may have been destroyed.

This limitation became significant as reliance on archived oral histories, social media comments and newspaper articles shaped the study to focus on the lived experience of

[25] Loewen, p. 25.
[26] Loewen, p. 212.

Black Americans regarding sundown towns, an understudied perspective. Lee and Scott's pertinent qualitative methodology identifying themes of Black habitus from interviews was applied here not only to interviews but social media comments.[27] Social media is seen in this study as an archive from which nuanced understandings of personal narratives can be drawn. Existing sundown town scholarship has not yet used this contemporary data.

A post on social media site TikTok was selected based on a keyword search of 'sundown towns,' and comments under this post were selected, having value in their nature as informal exchanges based on sharing personal experiences with either friends or a wider public audience. Their informality and potential for anonymity give the comments a unique position of reliability and unfiltered opinion. The hashtags under the post such as '#blacktiktokcommunity,' as well as the algorithm of the site, ensured that it reached its majority target audience of Black Americans and sympathetic white users,[28] therefore the comments were advisory in tone and the potential for distortions of the truth or 'trolling' was limited. Usernames have been anonymised for privacy.

Newspaper reports and headlines were also chosen as a valuable source to examine public discourse of sundown areas, both serving to reinforce opinion and drive local rhetoric. Their content and reach has value in determining how discourses of exclusion were circulated and experienced as an inescapable everyday reality. Newspapers from a geographical range were chosen to show the breadth of the issue. After preliminary reading to identify which words were common in reference to sundown areas, a keyword search in online archives of

[27] KangJae Lee, David Scott, 'Racial Discrimination and African Americans' Travel Behaviour: The Utility of Habitus and Vignette Technique', *Journal of Travel Research*, 56 (2017) 381-392.
[28] mrcrim3, (2021), *TikTok,* <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMLCncT3P/> [accessed 25 January 2022].

words ‘sundown’, ‘driven out’, ‘mob attack’, ‘vigilante’, ‘racism’, ‘Black’, ‘lynching’ and ‘Negro’ was used to collate relevant articles.[29]

The Oral History Collection of the University of Illinois was fundamental in providing oral accounts of sundown operation in Springfield,[30] with interviews from the 1970s and 1980s collated through a keyword search of: ‘riots’, ‘housing’, ‘segregation’, ‘African American’, ‘Black’, ‘Negro’, ‘racism’ and ‘Springfield’. The accounts focused on memory, which offered a unique perspective into how sundown areas are maintained through reproduction.[31] Two databases, ‘Mapping Inequality’ and the ‘Governing Research Project’ were heavily used to explore Springfield,[32] combining both qualitative and quantitative data for a rounded analysis.

It must be acknowledged that experiences of sundown towns by Black Americans are diverse, varied and should not be homogenised. This paper provides only an insight to the impacts of sundown towns on Black Americans rather than a comprehensive account of a societal group.

Chapter 1- The exclusionary atmospheres of sundown towns:

[29] ‘Negro’ is used here for the keyword search due to its use in the primary material of the time. It must be acknowledged as a word with a complex and sensitive racially charged history.
[30] *The Oral History Collection of the University of Illinois, Springfield* <http://www.idaillinois.org/digital/collection/uis> [accessed 9 March 2022].
[31] Alistair Thomson, ‘Memory and Remembering in Oral History’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* ed. by Donald A. Ritchie, (Oxford University Press, 2011) 1-20 (4).
[32] *Mapping Inequality, Redlining in New Deal America* (University of Richmond’s Digital Scholarship Lab, 2016) <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=13/39.794/-89.695&city=springfield-il> [accessed 14 December 2021].
Daniel C Vock, J. Brian Charles, Mike Maciag, ‘Segregated in the Heartland’, *Governing*, January 14, 2019, <https://www.governing.com/archive/gov-segregation-series.html> [accessed 6 March 2022].

This chapter explores the atmospheres of exclusion experienced when navigating sundown towns, engaging with geographically embedded signals of sundown towns. It will examine the social reproduction of sundown atmospheres and its function as a safety measure, positing them as a past *and* present Black American experience.

Chapter 2- Transformed methods of exclusion- a case study of Springfield, Illinois:

This chapter is a case study of Springfield, Illinois as a transformation of a sundown area. It explores why Springfield is a sundown area and examines how it has operated sundown practices over several decades. The chapter goes on to examine what methods of sundown town operation occur in the contemporary, investigating the consistent effects of redlining, restrictive covenants, and economic zoning.

Chapter 1:

The exclusionary atmospheres of sundown towns

'Black folks, when you have to stop on a road trip, how do you determine if that place is safe?'

#travel #roadtrip #blacktiktokcommunity #blacktiktok #blackhistory #racism #racist #whiteallies #illinois #blacklivesmatter #foryoupage #question[33]

This was a question asked by a Black American user on TikTok on the 8th of August 2021. By 25th January 2022, it had 3890 comments. Analysis of the first ten pages of comments revealed three distinct themes: reference to a particular feeling of knowing which locations were unsafe for Black people, reference to users being taught as children by their wider community where to avoid, and reference to which geographical signals made Black people cautious.

This chapter will explore this 'emotional labor' employed by Black Americans in response to the experience of sundown areas,[34] revealing how they still exist through their maintained atmospheres of exclusion. This is demonstrated by how the feeling of atmosphere is articulated now, evidence of this fear being socially reproduced, and the tangible effects that it has on Black travel behaviour. It will utilise a primary source base of newspapers to examine the public discourse of fear and exclusion of sundown areas, oral accounts of lived experience, and social media experiences of sundown town navigation.

[33] mrcrim3, (2021), *TikTok,* <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMLCncT3P/> [accessed 25 January 2022].
[34] Alderman, Williams, Bottone, p. 2.

Sundown towns carry inherent emotional geography, where emotions of wariness are evoked based on the environment of suburban all-whiteness and past violence. This manifests as an atmosphere of unease and fear for Black Americans, 'embedded in histories of racism and survival.'[35] This dissertation argues that this atmosphere of exclusion persists and emerges as a sense of place which continues to impact on Black everyday experience, even when a sundown town no longer operates obvious methods of expulsion.

The contemporary understanding of these hostile environments within the Black community is reflective of their persistence, understood as inescapable 'facts of life' that Black Americans come to anticipate.[36] Sundown towns construct 'particular geographic landscapes that help define and reinforce racialized social hierarchies, thus facilitating domination and exploitation.'[37] This is constructed through the presence of specific sundown signals which signify a sense of othering for non-white people and belonging for white people. The most prominent indicator is the white suburban landscape, a 'spatial metaphor for whiteness itself,'[38] 'protected by modes of surveillance and discipline.'[39] An area having a distinct whiteness in its demographic becomes a signal of othering. Other signals of sundown operation include confederate flags (which have an inherent affiliation with racist ideologies), wooded areas, and rural roads, and these have strong associations with the violence and terror linked to incidents of hunting, lynching, and Ku Klux Klan

[35] Alderman, Williams, Bottone, p. 2.
[36] Ibid., p. 2.
[37] Joshua F Inwood, Robert A Yarbrough, 'Racialized places, racialized bodies: the impact of racialization on individual and place identities', *GeoJournal,* 75 (2010), 299–301 (299).
[38] Elizabeth A. Patton, 'Get Out and the legacy of sundown suburbs in post-racial America', *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, 17 (2019) 349-363 (351).
[39] Ibid., p. 352.

activity, as well as the driving out of Black residents to sustain or create a white community. The durability of these racialized signals preserves sundown atmospheres.

The routine emotions and reactions in response to navigating sundown areas highlight the prevalence of atmospheres of exclusion currently experienced. Demonstrated in a 2017 oral study of Black travel behaviour, themes of fear and awareness of racialized environment emerge.[40] The sundown signals continue to encourage fear, with one participant stating that among his rules of travel, being 'observant of the surrounding environment' and avoiding 'small towns in which few minorities live' was crucial.[41] Another participant stated that in certain places 'I just know, I just know that is not a place I wanna be when (the) sun goes down.'[42] This comment, whilst referring to the underlying understanding of sundown towns and the fear that they continue to emit, also refers to a feeling of 'knowing' as a method of identifying racialized places. Whilst this feeling continues to exist, sundown areas remain alive through the emotional reaction that they produce, encouraging Black Americans to avoid them through fear.

What these oral testimonies reveal are the effects of pervasive geographical atmospheres of exclusion experienced when navigating sundown areas. The continued need for such concerns demonstrates how sundown areas still operate by mobilising fear through sense of place. Kevin Lynch introduced the theory of 'wayfinding' in 1960,[43] an architectural concept referring to systems that function to navigate a space, such as signage enhancing an

[40] Lee, Scott, pp. 381-392.
[41] Ibid., p. 386.
Ibid., p. 388.
[42] Ibid., p. 388.
[43] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City,* (Boston: The MIT Press, 1960) p. 3.

experience of moving through a built environment. Traditionally it has been used as part of a positivist aspect of urban planning, yet, as utilised by Elizabeth Guffey in her analysis of Jim Crow signage, this concept can be applied to racialized space and inverted to highlight the negative signals which indicate hostile environments.[44] The oral testimonies indicate that these negative signals include all-white suburban landscapes, which contribute to a feeling of 'knowing' which areas have dangerous potential, acting as a wayfinding tool to navigate sundown landscapes.

This 'emotional labour' employed disproportionately by Black Americans,[45] described as the 'tough identity work undertaken in negotiating and resisting racial aggression,'[46] is demonstrated in the vocalization of this experience, revealing that it remains a contemporary feeling. Analysis of the responses to the question on TikTok ('Black folks, when you have to stop on a road trip, how do you determine if that place is safe?') show clear reference to this feeling of exclusionary atmosphere:

user 1 'stay clear of sundown towns they all give off the same vibe. We were taught as children to stay clear. As an adult that lesson has kept me safe.' 2021-10-31

user 2 'You never really know. You just learn to trust your gut.' 2021-8-30

user 3 'you just FEEL it' 2021-9-21

[44] Elizabeth Guffey, 'Knowing Their Space: Signs of Jim Crow in the Segregated South', *Design Issues*, 28 (2012), 41–60 (42).
[45] Alderman, Williams, Bottone, p. 2.
[46] Ibid.

user 4 'if I hear my ancestors say "get out", I get out' 2021-9-1

user 5 'you will feel it in your spirit for sure. Just sit and look for a min and I promise you will know!' 2021-8-31

user 6 'you can really tell if its safe or not. Those small towns are especially not a place I would stop at.' 2021-9-6

user 7 ' I trust my eyes and my ancestors. If I see a confederate flag or something don't sit right in my spirit, we'll try the next town' 2021-20-14 [47]

These comments give valuable insight into a collective understanding of atmosphere and feeling experienced by Black Americans in response to sundown areas, with their choice of language articulating a feeling beyond alienation in white landscapes, one of constructed danger and threat rather than just otherness.[48] They allude to a particular 'feeling' of a place, using phrases such as 'you will know', 'you can tell', 'you just FEEL it,' and referencing personal emotional reactions, such as the feeling of ancestors indicating where is safe, or spiritual awareness of where is a hostile environment for Black Americans. They indicate that the feeling acts as a signal and comes from an *atmosphere* rather than racist incidents alone which speak to the idea that in historically sundown areas, there remains an inherent lingering shadow of racialization, thus pointing to the fact that these atmospheres have

[47] mrcrim3, (2021), *TikTok,* <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMLCncT3P/> [accessed 25 January 2022].
[48] Ingrid Pollard, 'Pastoral Interlude' [online] < https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O107865/pastoral-interludeits-as-if-the-photograph-pollard-ingrid/> [accessed 18 April 2022].

transformed rather than dissipated, and are still a contemporary experience, remaining 'vivid and current' in American culture.[49]

To further understand how this atmosphere of exclusion occurring from sundown towns still exists, it is important to look to how this atmosphere has been sustained, and why the contemporary respondents had a 'feeling' of sundown areas. 'Social reproduction of the fear of racism' has helped to maintain not only knowledge of this atmosphere but reactions to it in the contemporary.[50] The ways that it has been reproduced is revealed through several methods, such as anecdotal messages of safety and survival by those in the Black community, but also those within sundown communities who have maintained sundown fear through community discourse. Esquibel's interview of sundown residents confirmed that their narratives 'reveal performances of race that are produced by a past history of sundown town racial relations, as well as racial performances that re-produce present manifestations of sundown town histories.'[51] This sense that these histories continue to be reproduced, both by those avoiding sundown areas and those circulating the racist ideas and atmospheres which maintain them, speaks to the fact that sundown areas continue to exist in the contemporary, regardless of formal policy. Esquibel found that how the stories were 'remembered in the community' had power and significance by 'maintain(ing) their presence through community discourse.'[52] The social media comments directly reflect the idea that sundown towns are kept alive through memory.

[49] Loewen, p. 343.
[50] Lee, Scott, p. 384.
[51] Esquibel, p. 11.
[52] Esquibel, p. 4.

Headlines and stories about sundown towns were part of common rhetoric of the exclusion and violence against Black people in newspapers, and therefore this dissertation argues that this has functioned as a means of social reproduction of the fear of racism and knowledge of atmospheres of exclusion. In this sense they helped to circulate and reinforce this knowledge. Examination of three newspaper articles from various geographic locations reflects this notion that sundown experiences were commonly reported and therefore in the public community discourse.

The 1904 newspaper article in the Arkansas Gazette reported that Black Americans 'Leave Town of Bonanza', reporting that there was a 'warning followed by shooting into the houses of the Blacks,' with 'hundreds of shots fired', 'negroes terrorized and decided to leave.'[53] Whilst the agency in the Black residents 'decision' remains dubious in the context of a racist expulsion, the headline shows how the media represented and reproduced fears of sundown areas. Bonanza was experiencing a race and labour riot, with a violent expulsion of its Black population. This report reinforces sundown town presence by functioning as both a warning and a means of formalising the departure of the Black residents. Another headline appeared in the New York Times, a widely popular newspaper that published the headline: 'Negro Driven Away. The Last One Leaves Decatur, Ind., Owing to Threats Made.'[54] This article from 1902 detailed how Decatur, Indiana, was 'now cleared of Negroes they will keep it so, and the importation of any more will undoubtedly result in serious trouble.'[55] The

[53] 'Negros Leave Town of Bonanza', *Arkansas Gazette*, 7 May 1904, <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/media/bonanza-race-war-newspaper-article-8444/> [accessed 10 January 2022].
[54] 'Negro Driven Away', *New York Times*, 14 July 1902, <https://justice.tougaloo.edu/sundowntown/decatur-in/> [accessed 17 January 2022].
[55] Ibid.

'serious trouble' acts as a formalization of a warning, both to Black Americans as a safety measure but potentially as a hostile warning to stay away. In both dynamics the newspaper coverage of sundown towns contributes to their maintenance through reinforced rhetoric, moving beyond just conveying information and actively taking on an agency, influencing perception of a place. The 1940 newspaper article reporting on South Carolina titled 'WHITE MEN SHOOT UP CHURCH EXCURSIONERS: GROUP IS TOLD NO N****** ALLOWED AFTER SUNDOWN' in the Pittsburgh Courier again details a racial attack,[56] where a bus of Black Americans was shot at by '8 white men' who 'ordered them to "get out here right quick. We don't allow no ******* n****** round here after sundown." '[57] The report then states that they 'fled into the woods, many still missing when the bus left on Monday',[58] reflecting the blurring of urban and rural racialised spaces at the boundaries of sundown towns, linking rural roads, woods, and towns as sites of sundown racism. This narrative in the media shows how this fear was reproduced in public discourse.

Black Americans have also reproduced these fears and knowledge of sundown areas as a means of safety and survival, with Loewen describing it as a 'persistence of caution that in turn maintains sundown towns today.'[59] Across generations, this caution, acquired through consumption of news media and anecdotal experience, has been passed on by older members of the community. As a young Black driver from Cairo, Illinois, recalled in a recent interview with the Associated Press in 2020, sundown towns were 'something that was

[56] 'White men shoot up church excursioners', *Pittsburgh Courier,* 17 August 1940, p. 24 <https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/white-men-shoot-up-church-excursioner/docview/202069468/se-2?accountid=9730 > [accessed 17 January 2022].
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Loewen, p. 342.

known'… 'but also something that our parents taught us growing up.'[60] In an interview with Allen Threatt about his families service station, he revealed that Black Americans 'had a way about communicating with one another from the east coast to the west coast as they travelled and they knew that they could stop at the Threatt Service Station. And feel comfortable.'[61] This specific way of communicating speaks to the community work that was done as a means of survival in response to sundown areas. The Green Book, a travel guide first published in 1936 for Black people to safely navigate racist areas in America and highlight Black businesses, also acted as a formalisation of this communication, including in its foreword that 'the Negro, before the advent of the travel guide, had to depend on word of mouth' for safety, [62] yet the social media comments indicate that this dependency remains.

In the TikTok comments, a clear theme that emerged was the process of teaching Black children which areas to avoid and how to determine if a place was safe:

user 1 'stay clear of sundown towns they all give off the same vibe. We were taught as children to stay clear. As an adult that lesson has kept me safe.' 2021-10-31

user 8 'I was taught at a young age' 2021-9-7 [63]

[60] Tim Sullivan, Noreen Nasir, 'AP Road Trip: Racial Tensions in America's 'sundown towns'', *AP News,* 14 October 2020 < https://apnews.com/article/virus-outbreak-race-and-ethnicity-violence-db28a9aaa3b800d91b65dc11a6b12c4c> [accessed 20 January 2022].
[61] Allen Threatt, interviewed by Candacy Taylor for the Occupational Folklife Project, 7 January 2019, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2020655505/> [accessed 14 December 2021].
[62] Victor Green, *The Negro Travellers' Green Book,* (New York: Victor H Green & Co., 1956), p. 3. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/9c9b2af0-83b9-0132-240c-58d385a7b928> [accessed 14 December 2021].
[63] mrcrim3, (2021), *TikTok,* <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMLCncT3P/> [accessed 25 January 2022].

As explored by Elizabeth Patton, a contemporary artistic representation of this is demonstrated in the 2017 horror film 'Get Out', directed by Jordan Peele.[64] Michael Abels title track 'Sikiliza kwa wahenga' is used as the black protagonist travels through a white suburb, indicated to be a sundown area through the imminent racial violence of the film occurring after dark.[65] The song translates in Swahili to 'listen to the elders,' with Abels implying that the protagonist's ancestors, victims of racism, are trying to warn him of this area.[66] This 'spatial continuity between the living and the dead' is particularly relevant to sundown towns as it shows that despite time passing,[67] the geographic atmospheres of race prevail and memory and intergenerational communication serve as a significant methods of wayfinding through sundown areas. This understanding passed through generations for survival is reflected in the TikTok comments:

user 4 'if I hear my ancestors say "get out", I get out' 2021-9-1

user 7 ' I trust my eyes and my ancestors…' 2021-20-14 [68]

These findings are reflective of a persistent need to share survival and safety messages to navigate a geographical landscape embedded with racism, specifically geographies of

[64] Patton, p. 353.
Get Out, dir. by Jordan Peele, (Blumhouse Productions, 2017) [on DVD].
[65] Michael Abels, 'Sikiliza kwa wahenga'*, Spotify*, (2017) *<https://open.spotify.com/track/7dYRXvyAGIloysASZazFLI?autoplay=true>* [accessed 10 April 2022].
Patton, p. 353.
[66] Duncan Harrison, 'How composer Michael Abels produced the chilling score for Get Out', *Crack,* 15 March 2017 <https://crackmagazine.net/article/long-reads/composer-michael-abels-produced-chilling-score-get/> [accessed 20 January 2022].
[67] Katherine McKittrick, 'Plantation Futures' *Small Axe*, 17, (2013), 1-15 (2).
[68] mrcrim3, (2021), *TikTok,* <https://vm.tiktok.com/ZMLCncT3P/> [accessed 25 January 2022].

sundown towns, and a continued relevant need to listen to community discourse and advice from family and older members of the community. The idea that this knowledge is transferred between generations and is still in use in Black travel behaviours demonstrates that the atmospheres of exclusion of sundown towns have not ceased to exist but have transformed.

Although sundown towns may have changed in their demographic and have stopped the use of overtly racist signage, the fear and need for survival that they have structurally promoted over decades remains and cannot be ignored when it has life or death implications within a community still affected by its impacts and ongoing structure. Sundown areas continue to operate through memory, social reproduction, and a pervasive atmosphere of exclusion, and the reflection in lived experience and emotional labour in navigating sundown areas must be acknowledged as evidence of continued sundown town operation.

Chapter Two:

Transformed methods of exclusion: a case study of Springfield, Illinois

Figure 1. Booth-Grunendike Collection*, A view of East Madison St., Springfield in the aftermath of the riot,* 1908, Brookens Library University of Illinois, Springfield, <https://library.uis.edu/archives/collections/localhistory/riotphotos.html> [accessed 3 March 2022].

"NEGRO FAMILY LEAVES CITY WHEN ORDERED"

'The first negro family routed from Springfield by a mob was the Harvey family, residing at 1141 North Seventh street, who were told Sunday morning to 'hike', and carried out the orders yesterday afternoon. The family proved themselves obnoxious in many ways. They were the one negro family in the block and their presence was distasteful to all other citizens in that vicinity.'[69]

[69] William English Walling, 'The Race War in the North', *Independent*, 3 September 1908, p. 533. <https://www.eiu.edu/past_tracker/AfricanAmerican_Independent65_3Sept1908_RaceWarInTheNorth.pdf> [accessed 14 January 2022].

Taken from social reformer William English Walling's recounting of newspapers in the aftermath of the 1908 Springfield race riot, the statement reveals key themes of prevailing sundown attitudes. Black presence in the white area being perceived as 'distasteful,' and their forced departure echoes the notions of exclusion in Springfield that were to be experienced in forthcoming decades.

This chapter will examine the case study of Springfield, Illinois, and its transformation as a sundown area. Initially, it will address why Springfield should be classed a sundown area, and then explores how it has transformed, exploring several methods implemented to exclude, expel, segregate, and discourage Black belonging. The chapter will reveal how these transformations have taken place in recent history, contributing to the atmospheres of sundown exclusion analysed in chapter 1.

Home to Abraham Lincoln from 1844 to 1861, Springfield, Illinois is a city in the Midwest entwined with pivotal moments in Black American history. In 2007, Barack Obama announced that he would be running as the first Black president of America outside the city's Old State capitol. On the same steps 98 years prior, the ferocious noise of race riots could be heard.[70] A white mob cried to the city's Black residents, 'Lincoln freed you, we'll show you where you belong!'[71] The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (the NAACP), famous for their actions in the Civil Rights Movement, was created after learning of the terror of the Springfield riots.

[70] Carole Merritt, *Something So Horrible,* (Illinois: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Foundation, 2008), p. 25.
[71] William English Walling, p. 529.

On the 14th of August 1908, the riots took place in response to false rape accusations against a Black labourer George Richardson from white resident Mabel Hallam.[72] Her 'cry of rape set a white mob in motion against Black residents of the area'.[73] The riots lasted for 2 days, and it is estimated that 16 people died, with both Black and white residents killed at the hands of the white mob, although figures are uncertain due to the lack of reporting.[74] Harry Loper, a local white restaurant owner escorted Richardson and another Black prisoner, Joe James, out of town. James was accused of murdering a white man two weeks before. Once the mob was informed, they attacked Loper's restaurant, and then 'launched a wholesale attack on the Black presence in Springfield,'[75] advancing through the Black businesses in an area called the Levees, and torching Black homes in Springfield's majority Black area, the Badlands.[76] The tree used for the lynching of Scott Burton who was a successful Black barber who catered to a white clientele,[77] was chopped up for Springfield residents to keep as souvenirs.[78] Destruction and terror followed, and then, a Black exodus. Although numbers are not confirmed, it has been proposed that around 2000 Black residents left the city.[79]

Springfield is a clear example of a sundown area, embodying the atmosphere and methods of sundown ideals. It represents two key dynamics of sundown operation- expulsion *and* exclusion. Loewen has described Springfield as a sundown 'attempt,'[80] but through viewing

[72] Merritt, p. 6.
[73] Merritt, p. 7.
[74] Merritt, p 28.
[75] Merritt, p. 24.
[76] Figure 1.
[77] Merritt, p. 36.
[78] Murray Hanes interviewed by Barbara Herndon, Oral History Collection of the University of Illinois at Springfield, 1972 <http://www.idaillinois.org/digital/collection/uis/id/1340> [accessed 3 December 2021].
[79] Loewen, p. 94.
[80] Loewen, p. 93.

it as a site of consistent expulsion and exclusion regardless of Black residency in the larger jurisdiction, it can be confidently defined as a sundown area.

The events of the riot align with that of the creation of a sundown town. Firstly, in 1908 Springfield had a distinct anti-Black sentiment, with a clear atmosphere of unease and distaste amongst the white population towards the advancement of the Black community.[81] The Illinois State Journal reported that a member of the mob stated that 'N****** must depart from Springfield. We want the n***** and we will apply the rope,'[82] revealing the notion that Black members of the community should not have residential belonging, and ultimately should be expelled, or indeed lynched. The imperative 'must' reflects a sense of immediacy and conviction in this belief. Illinois at the time was experiencing a 'significant Black influx' into Springfield, [83] their 'presence' perceived as a threat to white power.[84] After 1900 several poor Black workers began to rent in the Levee area, which disturbed and tarnished the exclusivity of the previously white area. Additionally, as Black residents utilised their ability to vote, white residents saw this as a direct inversion of power. The Springfield News published an article in 1908 which reported 'the male citizen of the black belt in late years has come to pose as a political factor in Springfield. Do you want n****** to make white mans' laws? If not, get busy.'[85] 'Get busy' is a direction to get involved in ousting the Black population, moving beyond segregation, and focusing on Black expulsion.

[81] Merritt, p. 54.
[82] Merritt, p. 25.
[83] James L. Crouthamel, 'The Springfield Race Riot of 1908', *Journal of Negro History*, 45 (1960) 164-181 (165).
[84] Merritt, p. 12.
[85] Merritt, p. 18.

Oral accounts confirm that the Black exodus had significant impact on the way that Springfield was perceived by the Black community, with a feeling of caution present in memory. Springfield resident LeRoy Brown, interviewed in 1974 exemplifies this, stated '…there was lots of (Black) people that left town and never came back. My brother, my half-brother left here and never came back.'[86] Embedded in the memory of the area is the expulsion of its Black residents, speaking to the idea that the atmosphere of exclusion was held within living memory. This is also echoed by other interviews, including that of Arthur Brittin, who recalled in 1972 that '…those colored people left town…I heard them talking about one woman leaving town with a birdcage in one hand and a package of clothes in the other...'[87] The 1975 oral testimony of resident Margaret Ferguson reveals that her uncle did not feel comfortable working in Springfield after the riot and 'felt that he would have to leave,'[88] moving to Dakota, indicating an underlying feeling of caution and fear remained in Springfield and was ingrained in the social memory of the community, in turn sustaining the wariness around the area perpetuating its associations with anti-Black sentiment.

Furthermore, it is evident that Springfield supported a wider system of whiteness. It was responsible for becoming a 'prototype' for other towns to turn sundown, with reports that white mobs attacking Black residents shouted 'Give 'em Springfield!' at over twelve other locations,[89] with Buffalo, a small town 16 miles away being the clearest example, turning all-white only two days after the Springfield riot.[90] This indicates that regardless of whether a

[86] Le Roy Brown interviewed by Reverend Negil L. McPherson, Oral History Collection of the University of Illinois at Springfield, 1974 <http://www.idaillinois.org/digital/collection/uis/id/1300> [accessed 3 December 2021].
[87] Arthur Brittin.
[88] Margaret Ferguson interviewed by Reverend Negil L. McPherson, Oral History Collection of the University of Illinois at Springfield, 1975 <http://www.idaillinois.org/digital/collection/uis/id/5487> [accessed 3 December 2021].
[89] Loewen, pp. 94-95.
[90] Ibid.

Black population remained or returned, Springfield was fundamentally part of a wider sundown system.

After the exodus, many Black families did return to Springfield, with census data indicating this.[91] Acknowledgement of this data alone points to the idea that in the aftermath of the riot, Springfield regained normalcy. However, in a survey from September 1914, it was described as having an 'unusually large proportion of native born-white American citizens' in its education system,[92] and as Dr. Theodore T. Rose recalled in 1985 in his oral memoir, in 1925, 17 years after the riot, 'all the scars and prejudices' of the riot remained, and there was 'still… (a) kind of feeling like a cloud from an atomic bomb over the whole neighbourhood', an 'overshadowing resentment' towards the Black population of the area.[93] Springfield resident Reverend Harry Mann, who remembered the riot as a child echoed in his oral testimony in 1974, '…ever since I knew anything about it, it has been a prejudiced town,' stating that 'the riot…stained this community for years in my estimation'.[94] Focusing on these oral accounts rather than census data alone sheds light on the incorrect historical characterisation of Springfield as 'quickly return(ing) to normal' after the riots,[95] and instead positions it as having a sustained sundown atmosphere, regardless of its demographic.

[91] Roberta Senechal, *The Sociogenesis of a Race Riot: Springfield Illinois, in 1908* (Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), p. 56.
[92] 'Springfield, Illinois, Survey', The Journal of Education, 80 (1914), 256-259 (256).
[93] Dr. Theodore T. Rose interviewed by Reverend Negil L. McPherson, Oral History Collection of the University of Illinois at Springfield, 1985 <http://www.idaillinois.org/digital/collection/uis/id/5046. 2022-03-10> [accessed 3 December 2021].
[94] Reverend Harry Mann interviewed by Reverend Negil. L. McPherson, Oral History Collection of the University of Illinois at Springfield, 1974 <http://www.idaillinois.org/digital/collection/uis/id/3013> [accessed 3 December 2021].
[95] Senechal, p. 27.

This atmosphere of exclusion not only remained despite some Black residents returning but continued to be reinforced through different sundown methods. For decades after the riot, it has maintained policies of exclusion and only when these policies and methods are examined over an extended period, can the wider transformation of the sundown system be understood.

The existence of restrictive covenants (documents which prevented the sale of property to Black buyers), are a key example of transformed methods of exclusion in Springfield. Whilst there is little formal documentation of these being in place in there, despite countless reports of them in nearby St. Louis and Chicago,[96] there are other significant sources that point to restrictive covenants being in place in Springfield. In 2021, a new law, House Bill 58, made it possible for homeowners in Illinois to remove the racism in property deeds from restrictive covenants, which although no longer enforced since 1948, still existed on the paperwork of the deeds.[97] This information was directly circulated to residents through a press release from the State Senator headed 'SPRINGFIELD', indicating that it affected Springfield residents specifically.[98] Resident Margaret Ferguson confirms this, revealing in an oral testimony from 1975 her recollection of 'clauses in all those deeds that not a lot (of

[96] Wendy Plotkin, 'Hemmed in: The Struggle against Racial Restrictive Covenants and Deed Restrictions in Post-WWII Chicago', *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, 94 (2001), 39-69.
Herman Long, Charles Johnson, *People vs. property; race restrictive covenants in housing*, (Nashville: Fisk University Press, 1947).
[97] House Bill 58, Illinois General Assembly, 23 July 2021 <https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocNum=58&GAID=16&DocTypeID=HB&SessionID=110&GA=102> [accessed 4 January 2022].
[98] 'Homeowners can eliminate racist covenants from their property deeds under new Johnson law', *State Senator Adriane Johnson*, 23 July 2021 <https://www.senatoradrianejohnson.com/news/press-releases/88-homeowners-can-eliminate-racist-restrictive-covenants-from-their-property-deeds-under-new-johnson-law> [accessed 4 January 2022].

housing) could be sold (to) Blacks,'[99] with her Black friend being unable to purchase housing in particular areas of Springfield due to the presence of restrictive covenants.

These covenants were used in conjunction with racial zoning, which was used to sustain this exclusion by 'reserving middle class neighbourhoods for single family homes that lower income families of all races could not afford.'[100] Whilst zoning is concentrated on class, there is significant racial intent visible in the language used in planning documents.[101] Home ownership being fundamentally tied to belonging and citizenship in America situates zoning as embedding Black exclusion into the geographical landscape of Springfield, working subversively alongside the more traditional methods of sundown maintenance such as violence, threat and ordinances.[102]

[99] Margaret Ferguson.
[100] Rothstein, p. 50.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Loewen, p. 97.

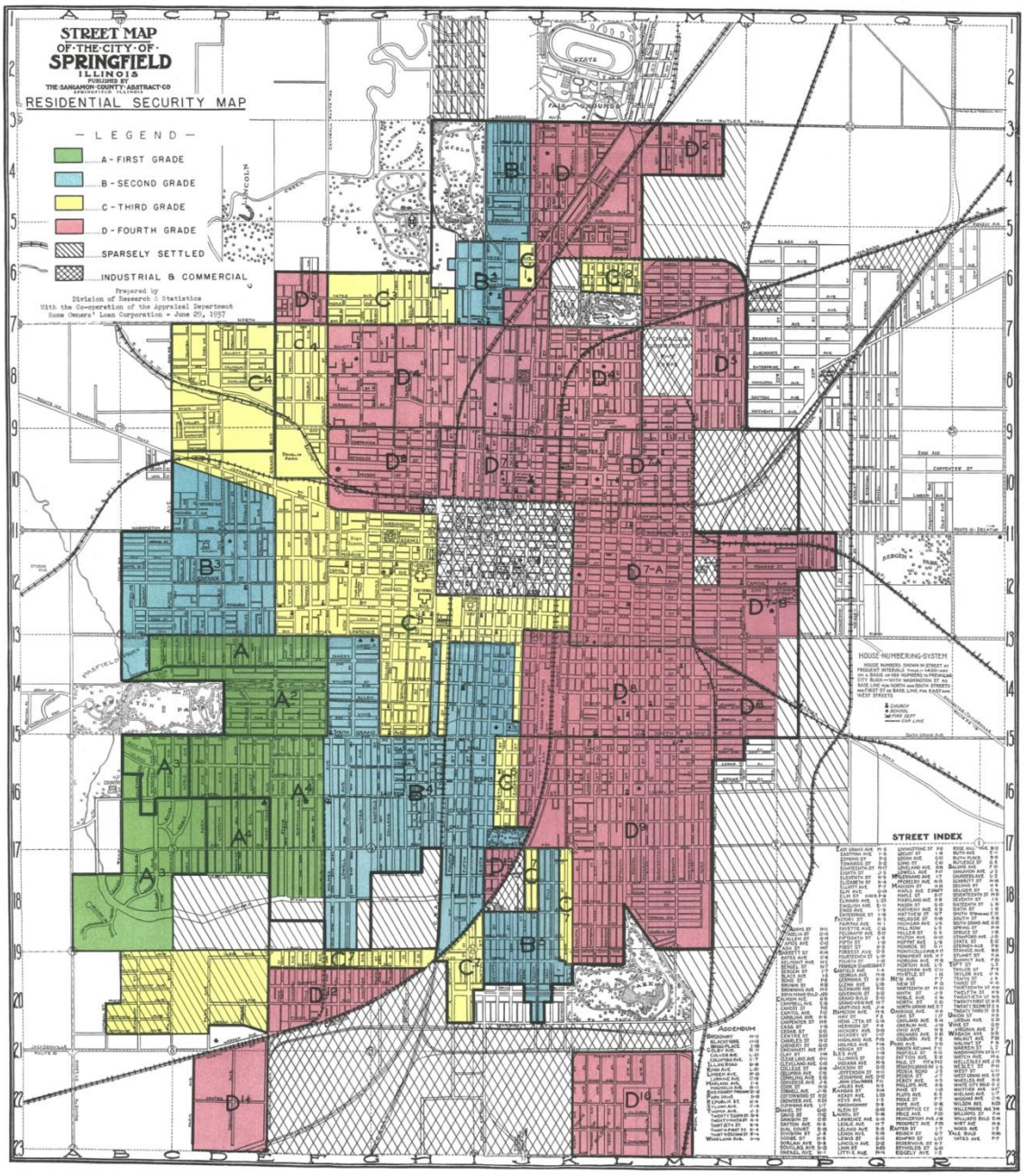
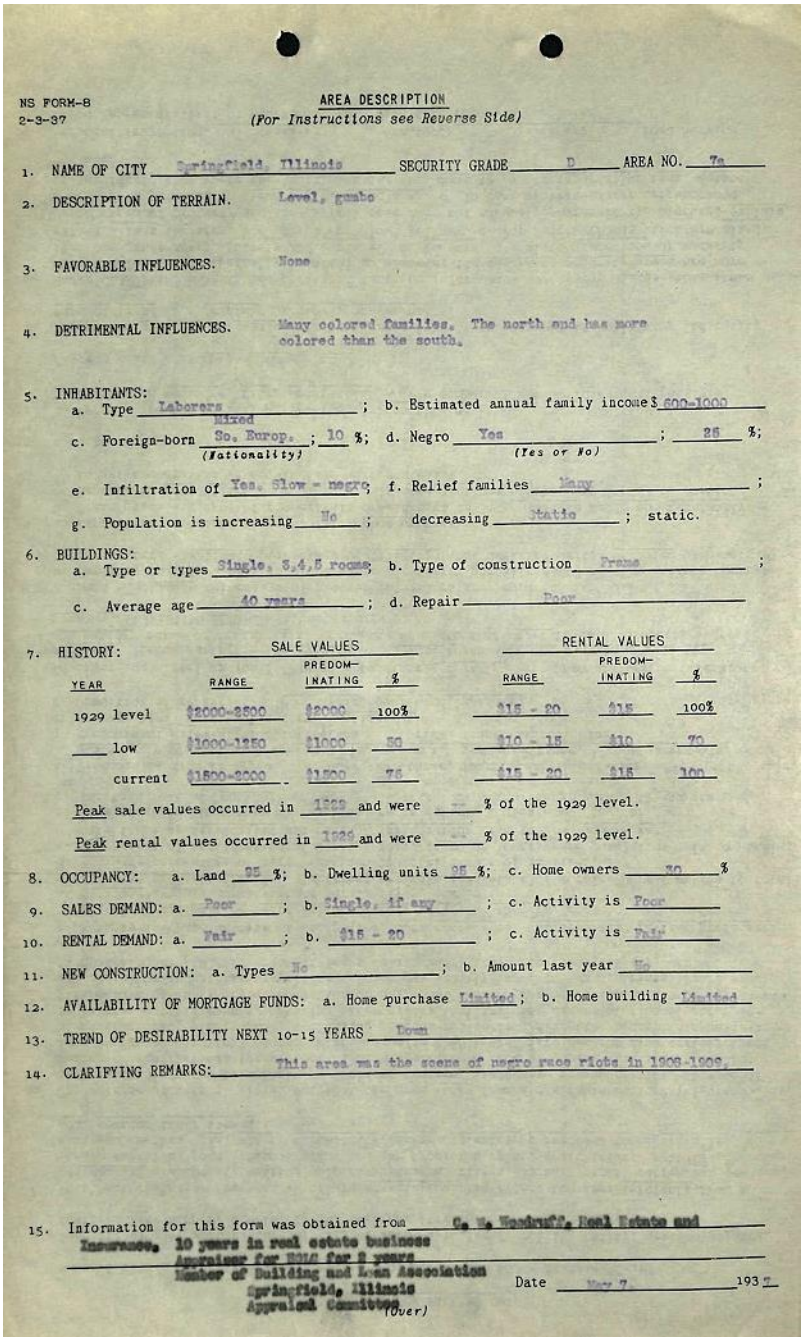


Figure 2. 1937 Redlining Map of Springfield, Illinois, *Mapping Inequality, Redlining in New Deal America* (University of Richmond's Digital Scholarship Lab, 2016) <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=13/39.794/-89.695&city=springfield-il> [accessed 14 December 2021].



NS FORM-8
2-3-37

AREA DESCRIPTION
(For Instructions see Reverse Side)

1. NAME OF CITY Springfield, Illinois SECURITY GRADE D AREA NO. 7a
2. DESCRIPTION OF TERRAIN. Level, gumbo
3. FAVORABLE INFLUENCES. None
4. DETRIMENTAL INFLUENCES. Many colored families. The north end has more colored than the south.
5. INHABITANTS:
   a. Type Laborers; b. Estimated annual family income $ 600-1000
   c. Foreign-born Mixed So. Europ. (Nationality); 10 %; d. Negro Yes (Yes or No); 25 %;
   e. Infiltration of Yes, Slow - negro; f. Relief families Many;
   g. Population is increasing No; decreasing Static; static.
6. BUILDINGS:
   a. Type or types Single, 3,4,5 rooms; b. Type of construction Frame;
   c. Average age 40 years; d. Repair Poor
7. HISTORY:

YEAR	SALE VALUES RANGE	SALE VALUES PREDOMINATING	SALE VALUES %	RENTAL VALUES RANGE	RENTAL VALUES PREDOMINATING	RENTAL VALUES %
1929 level	$2000-2500	$2000	100%	$15 - 20	$15	100%
____ low	$1000-1250	$1000	50	$10 - 15	$10	70
current	$1500-2000	$1500	75	$15 - 20	$15	100

   Peak sale values occurred in 1929 and were ____% of the 1929 level.
   Peak rental values occurred in 1929 and were ____% of the 1929 level.
8. OCCUPANCY: a. Land 95 %; b. Dwelling units 95 %; c. Home owners 70 %
9. SALES DEMAND: a. Poor; b. Single, if any; c. Activity is Poor
10. RENTAL DEMAND: a. Fair; b. $15 - 20; c. Activity is Fair
11. NEW CONSTRUCTION: a. Types No; b. Amount last year No
12. AVAILABILITY OF MORTGAGE FUNDS: a. Home purchase Limited; b. Home building Limited
13. TREND OF DESIRABILITY NEXT 10-15 YEARS Down
14. CLARIFYING REMARKS: This area was the scene of negro race riots in 1908-1909.
15. Information for this form was obtained from C. H. Woodruff, Real Estate and Insurance, 10 years in real estate business
    Appraiser for HOLC for 2 years
    Member of Building and Loan Association
    Springfield, Illinois
    Appraisal Committee
    Date May 7 1937

(over)

Figure 3. Area Description Document for Zone D-7A, Springfield Illinois, 7 May 1937, *Mapping Inequality, Redlining in New Deal America* (University of Richmond's Digital Scholarship Lab, 2016) < https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/#loc=13/39.794/-89.695&city=springfield-il&text=downloads> [accessed 14 December 2021].

Redlining maps exemplify a method of significant exclusion, surpassing segregation and acting as an attempt to deter and actively push out Black Americans from residential areas evidencing the racial intent in the language of residential planning. Figure 2 was produced in 1937 by the agents of the federal government's Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) who 'assigned grades to residential neighbourhoods that reflected their mortgage security.'[103] The A graded areas were deemed 'hot spots…where good mortgage lenders with available funds are willing to make their maximum loans,'[104] with high appraisal, and graded D areas were 'characterised by detrimental influences…undesirable population or an infiltration of it,'[105] with loan refusal encouraged.

As the map affirms, significant amounts of Springfield were deemed grade D, 'hazardous'. The area D7-A marks the area where the 1908 riots took place, shown in figure 2. D4, D6, D7-A, D7-B, D8 and D9 are the only segments of the map marked as having 'negro inhabitants,' with the only consistent factor in D grade Springfield being race, rather than other factors such as terrain or building type. D7-A is marked as having no 'favourable influences', and its detrimental influences are noted as having 'many colored families.' The grade A areas are in the southwest of the city, purposely spatially distanced from the Black residential areas. The title 'residential security map' speaks to the idea that the Black, 'D grade' population was 'hazardous,' reinforcing racist notions of Black people as inherently criminal and dangerous. Through prescribing race into legal documents through language, dictating the geographical landscape of a place based on racism, sundown areas are formally embedded into the infrastructure of Springfield. This operates beyond segregation,

[103] Figure 2.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Ibid.

as it not only seeks to keep 'infiltration' from occurring,[106] but actively attempts to significantly 'push out' Black residents by defining their areas of residence as low grade so that barriers to homeownership for future Black residents are created and current residents housing devalued, cementing the atmosphere of a sundown area, and creating long term impacts.

Notes from the Illinois Writers Project, intended to document the Black experience in Illinois to promote change, confirm these impacts. The notes from 1941 detail that in Springfield 'it is almost impossible for Negroes to find homes which could be called satisfactory in any sense of the word. Real estate dealers refuse to rent or sell to Negroes in any (areas), except sections where they already live,'[107] echoing the notion of distinct anti-Black sentiment from the 1908 riots of Black people being deemed 'distasteful.'[108] In comparison with contemporary accounts, it reveals that very little has changed as the embedded exclusion of the area remains, with a Springfield resident in 2021 stating that 'my first encounter with overt racism was in Springfield… many… landlords I encountered were white and preferred not renting to Black tenants… I met a landlord to view his property, and once he saw that I was Black, he said the property was no longer available.'[109] Comparison of these two accounts reveals a distinct pattern of sundown exclusion that has remained endemic in Springfield.

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[106] Figure 3.
[107] Joseph Bougere, *Report of the Illinois State Commission on the Condition of the Urban Colored Population,* (Illinois: Illinois Writers Project, 1941) p. 1. <https://cdm16818.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/IllWriters/id/8379/rec/3> [accessed 4 February 2022].
[108] William English Walling, p. 533.
[109] Linda Shanklin, interviewed by WMAY Radio, *Black History Month Spotlight,* (2021) *MWAY* <https://www.wmay.com/2021/02/17/black-history-month-spotlight-linda-shanklin/> [accessed 3 March 2022].

As laws shifted, the methods of sustaining sundown areas through residential planning could not remain static, so to aim for the same white outcome, language shifted, 'masquerading as an economic measure' rather than one dictated by racism.[110] The 1952 edition of the FHA (Fair Housing Act) Underwriting Manual which acted as a guide for housing agents across the US removed its language of 'negro infiltration,'[111] yet 'continued to base property valuations on whether properties were located in neighbourhoods where there was a "compatibility" among neighbourhood occupants.'[112] This compatibility referred explicitly to race relations between occupants. Even when de facto segregation of Jim Crow was dismantled through changes in language, the architecture and landscape remain based on its original categorisations, enforced through new means of articulating segregation using race neutral language but nevertheless achieving the same objectives. This demonstrates the evolving nature of the methods of exclusion.

1968 was a significant turning point with the Fair Housing Act, yet whilst discrimination was illegal in housing,[113] coded racial borders still existed, and continued to make up the geographical structure of Springfield. Former president of the NAACP in Springfield, Jimmy Voss, stated that when house hunting in the 1970s, there were still areas where 'no blacks were allowed to buy or rent,'[114] again demonstrating that despite legal rulings, exclusionary atmospheres consistently defined housing accessibility for Black residents.

[110] Rothstein, p. 52.
[111] Figure 3.
[112] Rothstein, p. 59.
[113] Loewen, p. 127.
[114] Cinda Ackerman Klickna, 'Traveling while Black', *Illinois Times*, 7 March 2019 <https://www.illinoistimes.com/springfield/traveling-while-black/Content?oid=11482443> [accessed 2 March 2022].

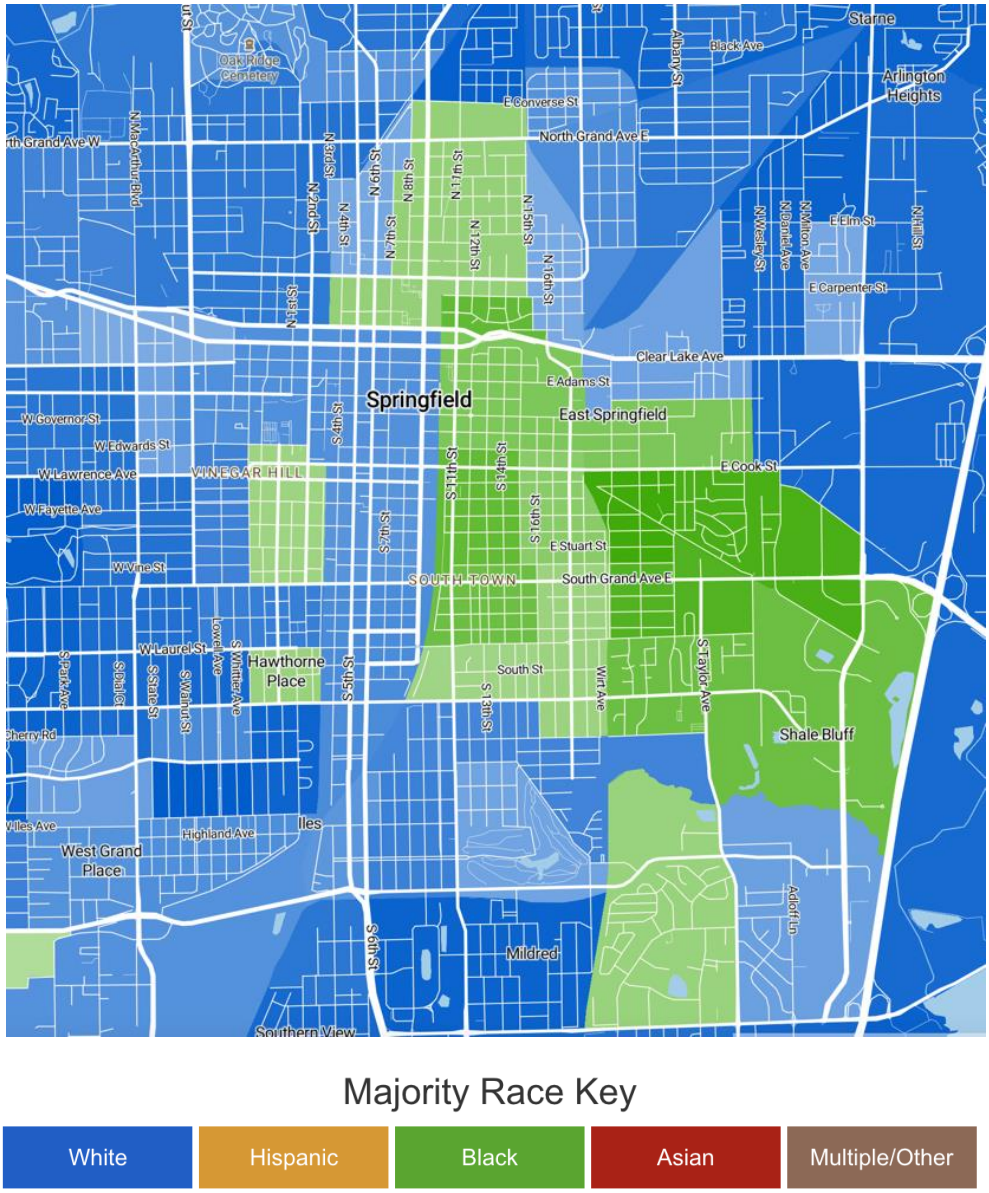

Figure 4. Best Neighborhood, *Map of Race, Diversity and Ethnicity in Springfield, Illinois*, 2020 <https://bestneighborhood.org/race-in-springfield-il/> [accessed 12 January 2022].

Methods of sundown maintenance are still evident in Springfield currently, demonstrating that whilst laws and social attitudes in Springfield may have evolved, the residential exclusion underpinning the geographical makeup of the area remains. In 2019, the metro area of Springfield was amongst the top three areas nationally with most segregated areas for Black and white residents. [115] This indicates that Springfield has not left its sundown practices in the past, but instead has witnessed a transformation of these methods, coded in race-neutral language, and protected by the illusion that the existence of Black residents in the area makes it less exclusionary.

The persistence of racial zoning is demonstrated by examining remaining patterns of redlining. This is evident through comparison of figure 2, the 1937 redlining map of Springfield, and figure 4, the map of race, diversity, and ethnicity in Springfield, based on data from the 2020 US census.[116] A significant pattern in figure 4 is that there is a substantial division along the dividing line that is the 11th street, with a predominantly Black population existing east of it and a predominantly white population residing on the west. Viewed in conjunction with the redlining map, a clear pattern is seen; the areas that are predominantly white in 2020 are the same areas listed as A grade in 1937, and those marked D grade housing a historically Black population continue to do so, revealing that the embedded nature of zoning remains strong.

[115] Daniel C Vock, J. Brian Charles, Mike Maciag, 'Segregated in the Heartland', *Governing*, January 14, 2019, <https://www.governing.com/archive/gov-segregation-series.html> [accessed 6 March 2022].
[116] Figure 4.

The consistency in the Black exclusion from the west side of the city demonstrates that the city cannot escape the racial logic underpinning zoning despite language changes and positioning it as a purely economic choice. This is also echoed in contemporary oral accounts from 2019, with residents saying that 'racial segregation is so clear that as soon as you cross the train tracks on 11th Street you can see the divide',[117] an 'invisible dividing line,'[118] with Silas Johnson, Springfield resident since 1973 recalling that 'in the South, blacks stayed in certain areas and so did whites. That's the same here now in Springfield.'[119] Equating the division to Southern segregation solidifies the racism dictating this pattern. This further reinforces the idea that despite older methods of residential exclusion such as violence and signage being discontinued, other methods remain ingrained within a community, felt both in the experience of people but also the physical landscape.

The zoning not only segregated Springfield, but actively excluded Black neighbourhoods from loans and federally guaranteed mortgages, significantly putting Black residents at an economic disadvantage and making it difficult to invest in property in white areas. The west side of the city is home to subdivisions which are made unaffordable by residential planning and 'often explicitly bar any use other than single-family homes.'[120] This planning acts to drive out and oust Black prospective buyers by limiting the homes available to them, a subtle form of expulsion. The knock-on effect is then the concentration of multifamily

[117] Alyssa Hui, 'Battling Housing Inequity in Springfield', *WICS*, October 16 2021, <https://newschannel20.com/news/local/battling-housing-inequity-in-the-city-of-springfield> [accessed 4 March 2022].
[118] Daniel C Vock, J. Brian Charles, Mike Maciag, 'How States and Cities Reinforce Racial Segregation in America', *Governing*, January 16 2019, <https://www.governing.com/archive/gov-segregation-main-feature.html> [accessed 6 March 2022].
[119] Ibid.
[120] Vock, Charles, Maciag, 'How States and Cities Reinforce Racial Segregation in America'.

dwellings on the east side, with predominantly Black residents.[121] This self-reinforcing exclusion is a direct product of the racial zoning operating under economic language, exposing how sundown methods never ceased but rather, transformed.

Whilst Black residents continue to live in Springfield, their housing options are restricted based on embedded remnants of racist policies of exclusion which continue to operate. Springfield has been described as a 'sundown attempt,'[122] yet this research has shown that the exclusion has been resoundingly successful, lasting decades. When factors such as the atmosphere of the area felt by residents, the segregated physical layout of racialized residential housing, and the transformation of the methods of exclusion which operate within the law such as zoning are taken into consideration, this idea is challenged with confidence.

Whilst there are contemporary calls for the memorialisation of the Springfield riots in 1908, the more immediate issue is the still visible and very present continuations of this sundown ideal.[123] The sundown patterns that have endured legislative and societal change remain and continue to impact the Black experience of Springfield, both in infrastructure and physical landscape, and in atmospheres of division, expulsion and exclusion.

[121] Ibid.
[122] Loewen, p. 93.
[123] Floyd Mansberger, Christopher Stratton, Chelsea Coates, 'Why Bother with The Archaeology of Burned Houses From 1908?' *Conference on Illinois History*, (2021), 1-37.

Conclusion

The need for this study became apparent after first learning about sundown towns through brief mention of them in recent studies of the Green Book and Black travel. There was a distinct reference to them in the past tense, only existing as a historical phenomenon from long ago. Yet when browsing social media for discussion about sundown towns, it was apparent that Black Americans were still very much experiencing them in the present. The question of whether sundown towns still operate became imperative.

This dissertation has determined that sundown towns do still exist in transformed ways, through focusing on experience of Black Americans in response to the sustained atmospheres of exclusion embedded in the geographical makeup of sundown areas. These findings contribute to the field through connecting racialized space study with sundown towns, using contemporary and historical accounts to build a picture of experience. Black travel navigation and daily emotional labour has been and continues to be dictated by sundown areas. Examining how methods of exclusion and expulsion have transformed and changed over time to adapt to changing legislation has demonstrated how sundown areas continue to maintain sundown atmospheres, attitudes, and structure. This dissertation has shown that Springfield, Illinois, demonstrates this transformation through shifting methods which span from riots and lynching's to restrictive covenants, redlining, and economic zoning.

This research has positioned social media, oral history, and anecdotal accounts as crucial to understanding the pervasive nature of sundown atmospheres, which exist and are

maintained through social reproduction and community knowledge as a means of safety, prioritising everyday lived realities of sundown towns.

Further research is needed in the study of sundown towns, expanding beyond the geographical parameters of the Midwest to encompass more areas which have yet to be labelled as sundown. Whilst appearing remarkable in its history entangled with Black exclusion, Springfield is not unique, representing only an insight into the areas across America witnessing entrenched sundown transformations. The database of sundown confirmation shows many possible but unconfirmed sundown towns across America.[124] The reworked definition will be of significant use to identify these as sundown areas, using the focus on sustained methods of operation rather than just the presence of an all-white population to expand the possibility for towns to take accountability for their racist past *and* present. A larger study into the emotional and atmospheric impact of sundown areas is also required, to further explore their contemporary effects.

Sundown towns and their transformations must be viewed beyond the framework which positions them as an extinct phenomenon from a distant past. They continue to operate and contribute significantly to racialized experience in a time where the dichotomy of inclusion and exclusion defines belonging in America. The landscape is embedded with sundown towns and until these are structurally altered, their operation will remain. Immediate action is necessary to break the maintenance of sundown towns, and whilst their deep routed

[124] History and Social Justice, *Sundown Town Map*, (2022), <https://justice.tougaloo.edu/map/> [accessed 8 March 2022].

methods may take decades to fracture, there is optimistic possibility that sundown towns will one day become a part of the American past rather than its present.

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