Roberts settlements benefited from "an upbringing that enhanced their chances of success in the world" (p. 149) and that helped many climb into the urban middle class as teachers and ministers.

This is an important book for Midwest, Indiana, black, and social history. By presenting the experience of black pioneers in the Midwest, Vincent invites historians to think again about the frontier's impact on democracy, the rural experience of the antebellum northern black population, and the southern planters' insistence during Reconstruction that freedmen needed supervision as farmers. *Southern Seed, Northern Soil* is especially useful for historians of the Great Migration. The study of black migration patterns from the South has seldom been done so skillfully. The author's effort to link together primary sources such as census manuscript schedules, land deeds, and probate records—to name a few—has proven that this tour de force is very much worth the trouble. Those who study the migration of African Americans from the bottom up in the twentieth century will want to borrow some of his methodology.

NELSON QUELLET, assistant professor of history, University of Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, is at work on a manuscript that focuses on black migrants living in Gary, Indiana, from 1906 to 1925.


This study traces Brooklyn, Illinois, from its beginnings as a haven for fugitive slaves to its emergence as a labor market for neighboring industries. Like other predominantly black towns that arose in the South and Midwest, Brooklyn was a product of black desires for autonomy and self-determination, as well as white racism and social exclusion. Sundiata Keita Cha-Jua argues that this small village was bypassed by businesses that might have allowed it to develop into a thriving city in its own right. Due to this neglect, Brooklyn was doomed to become "an unindustrialized residential satellite" of East St. Louis and adjacent white communities (p. 5).

The black community of Brooklyn was founded in 1829 with the arrival of eleven families from Missouri. The town's proximity to the slaveholding South ensured it a steady influx of fugitive slaves but also guaranteed that runaways would be particularly susceptible to capture. Throughout the antebellum period, the rights and opportunities available to Brooklyn African Americans were circumscribed by Black Codes, political disfranchisement, and penury. Though situated in a nominally free state, life in antebellum Brooklyn was lived along the color line, as reflected in segregated public education, housing arrangements, and occupations. After the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870, African Americans came to dominate municipal offices, including mayor. Unfortunately, polit-
ical power did not bring economic clout to black Brooklyn. Illustra-

tively, though the town, which incorporated in 1873, was surround-
ed by coal mines, no major industries were founded there. Most adult 
males had to seek employment in riverine industries, farming, or as 
common laborers in surrounding white settlements. Social life cen-
tered on churches, fraternal organizations, and family networks so-
fened the town's precarious fiscal condition. However, according to 
Cha-Jua, demographic shifts occasioned by industrializing East St. 
Louis and migratory patterns often destabilized these communal 
structures.

The increasing proletarianization of Brooklyn African Americans 
who found employment in neighboring industries was a help to people 
who had previously been landless agricultural workers. Nonethe-
less, racism exposed them to the worst vagaries of industrial capitalism, 
such as exploitation, or the systematic, racially discriminatory under-
payment of black workers. Constantly threatened with annexation, 
Brooklyn endured political corruption, racial violence, and further 
economic decline as it entered the twentieth century. Though it con-
tinued to survive as a black enclave, the proliferation of board-
houses, saloons, and dens of vice testified to its hollow economy and 
uncertain future.

Drawing liberally on census records, period newspapers, and 
other sources, *America's First Black Town* is well researched, cogent-
ly argued, and brings an important story to life. The experiences of 
black Brooklyn are placed within the broader history of Illinois, and 
the author compares his subject with other black towns. One might 
question the author's attempt to fit Brooklyn into a colonial paradigm. 
It seems strange to see phrases such as "protonationalism," "white 
minority colonial domination," and "decolonization" used to describe 
a nineteenth-century Illinois town with barely a thousand inhabi-
tants (e.g., pp. 3, 120, 143). Aside from this, the book is an insight-
ful study that sheds light on a heretofore obscured history.

CLAUDE A. CLEGG, associate professor of history at Indiana University, Bloomington, 
is the author of *An Original Man: The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad* (1997).
Currently, he is writing a book on the emigration of black North Carolinians to Liberia 
during the nineteenth century.

bibliography, index. Clothbound, $40.00; paperbound, $18.50.

Although the overall death rate dropped with the widespread 
use of sewer and water filtration systems during the last half of the 
nineteenth century, infant mortality did not. Concerned public health 
officials consequently tapped mothers as the frontline soldiers in the 
battle against dirt and disease. In her engaging and thorough book,
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