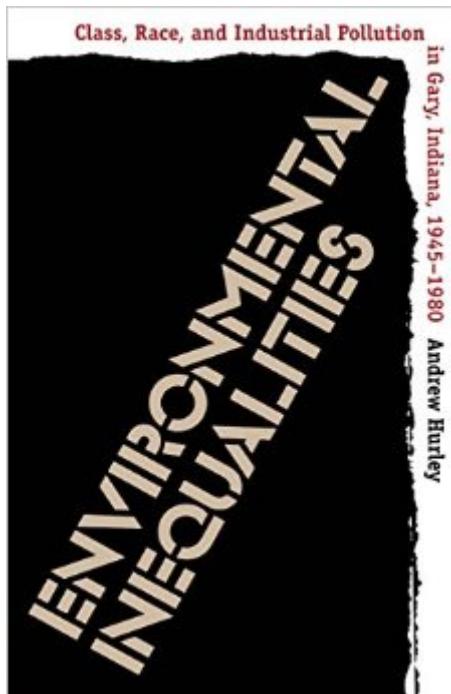


The book was found

Environmental Inequalities: Class, Race, And Industrial Pollution In Gary, Indiana, 1945-1980



Synopsis

By examining environmental change through the lens of conflicting social agendas, Andrew Hurley uncovers the historical roots of environmental inequality in contemporary urban America. Hurley's study focuses on the steel mill community of Gary, Indiana, a city that was sacrificed, like a thousand other American places, to industrial priorities in the decades following World War II. Although this period witnessed the emergence of a powerful environmental crusade and a resilient quest for equality and social justice among blue-collar workers and African Americans, such efforts often conflicted with the needs of industry. To secure their own interests, manufacturers and affluent white suburbanites exploited divisions of race and class, and the poor frequently found themselves trapped in deteriorating neighborhoods and exposed to dangerous levels of industrial pollution. In telling the story of Gary, Hurley reveals liberal capitalism's difficulties in reconciling concerns about social justice and quality of life with the imperatives of economic growth. He also shows that the power to mold the urban landscape was intertwined with the ability to govern social relations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In Environmental Inequalities, Andrew Hurley traces the dynamics of environmental degradation as experienced by three distinct sectors of society in Gary, Indiana, from 1945 to 1980. Hurley devotes a chapter to each of the particular demographics of three social classes affected by industrial pollution and expansion: white, middle class suburban families, working class whites, largely comprised of ethnic minorities including Serbians, Greeks, Russians, Romanians, Bulgarians,

Croatians and Poles among others, and finally a large African-American population (over 35,000 African-American between 1920 and 1950) that migrated from the south in search of employment and improved prospects. Each group was affected by industrial waste in a different, though related, way and each took a unique approach to ameliorating problems specific to its particular group. White middle class activism was largely led by well-educated stay-at-home moms whose primary concern was preserving their quality of life. Their primary target was containing the spread of industry to their east side neighborhood (Miller) and preventing the spoilage of surrounding natural areas. They focused on extensive research, political lobbying and events (such as picnics) and personal contacts to meet their goals. White working class families tended to stay close to ethnic neighborhoods and churches which meant that they continued to live in areas heavily affected by air and water pollution. Although the union (specifically the U.S. Steelworkers union) was an important protector of their wages, benefits and job safety and security, the union was not as interested in protecting their environmental conditions, particularly when that protection involved a perceived threat to the industry.

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