

City of Dispossessions: Indigenous Peoples, African Americans, and the Creation of Modern Detroit. By Kyle Mays. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022. 264 pages. \$39.95 cloth; \$39.95 ebook.

Kyle Mays' *City of Dispossessions: Indigenous Peoples, African Americans, and the Creation of Modern Detroit* accomplishes many goals. The book introduces readers to Detroit's Black, Native, and Afro-Indigenous peoples over a span of 400 years, rendering Native peoples visible and chronicling survivance. Using Detroit as a case study, the book illuminates interactions between African American and First Peoples, and links their experiences to each other as well as to the long waves of racial capitalism and the enduring logic of settler colonialism. The book also highlights the ongoing struggle for justice and self-determination in the city, embodied in Mays' own family. Connecting the dots between large structural processes and lived experience, Mays aims to "encourage the reader to think long and hard about their local place." (viii).

What is more important, the book fills the scholarly gap heretofore of Black-Native relations and Afro-Indigenous peoples within most writings on the urban American Indian experience. It also addresses the absence of American Indians in the best of books focused on Detroit in the twentieth century, such as Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin's *Detroit, I Do Mind Dying*, Thomas Sugrue's *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, Heather Ann Thompson's *Whose Detroit?* and Nicola Pizzolato's *Challenging Global Capitalism*. Most impressively, Mays' book eschews "boring history" and a strict historical timeline for a metanarrative arc to chronicle the city's history as waves of Indigenous and African American dispossession. In doing so, he connects classic literature on pre-industrial Detroit—such as the lifetime work of Helen Hornbeck Tanner and more recent work like Tiya Miles' *The Dawn of Detroit*—with the much more copious and well-known literature on industrial and rust belt Detroit.

Each chapter focuses on a site of dispossession. A site might be understood materially as well as ideologically, and may be "a place, a process, and outcome, a situation (2)." Detroit, Mays argues, is a place "rooted in multiple sites of dispossession" (4), but rather than a totalizing force, the dispossession creates its own conditions for Black and Indigenous resistance. The first chapter focuses on the roots of dispossession, or what might be called primary accumulation by dispossession, over a period of 200 years. The French named and occupied Detroit; the United States brokered treaties, and white men created narratives of dispossession to bolster their command of the space. The second chapter, "Performing Dispossession," investigates settler memory and the commemoration of dispossession epitomized by Detroit's 1901 bicentennial celebrations. Chapter three considers individual agency of Black and Indigenous people and communities in the era of Fordism, while the fourth chapter considers

twentieth-century resistance in the forms of Black nationalism and Indigenous self-determination. The penultimate chapter focuses on the ideological struggle around culturally relevant education, including Afrocentric education in both schools and parallel institutions such as cultural centers. It chronicles the creation and unfortunate destruction of Judy Mays' short-lived Medicine Bear American Indian Academy.

The conclusion provides a succinct roadmap, providing a ten-point plan for Detroiters to honor Indigenous peoples. The recommendations range from treating Detroit as treaty land to #LandBack. Some of the recommendations like the creation of a Pontiac statue would require funding but likely not ruffle any feathers at city hall. Other ideas, like the creation of new treaties between those Indigenous to Turtle Island and Black communities might seem far-fetched but provide important fuel for new grassroots collaborations. One of the extraordinary aspects of this book is the author's deep understanding of the centrality of the city's radical movements, most especially the Black Power movement and its support, and sometimes more tenuous relationship with Indigenous communities over the past fifty years.

City of Dispossession is easy to read yet theoretically rich. Mays' writing often ignores convention, effortlessly teleporting the reader between everyday experiences and high theory. For example, many of us know that by the 1980s, capital flight hollowed out Detroit, leaving Black workers trapped in the structural unemployment of a dilapidated inner city while white suburban workers had access to the more capital-intensive plants built in the suburbs. Rather than framing this process as simply white flight or "neoliberalism," Mays opts for the framework of dispossession. He extends geographer David Harvey's theoretical model of accumulation by dispossession as not just a single occurrence but an ongoing structure within capitalism.

No book is perfect, and no book can do everything for everyone. Readers would do well to internalize the scope that the author carefully delineated in the preface of the book. The book does not provide an argument for the most unconventional assertion in the book: Africans dispossessed of their lands and liberties were and are Indigenous. That topic is taken up at length by Mays in his book *An Afro-Indigenous History of the United States* (2021). Some academic readers new to the author might be initially uneasy with his writing style and broad references. Those readers would best let their inhibitions go and read the book for the enjoyment and insight that it offers.

Mays' command of high theory and the latest literature on a wide range of subjects does not get in his way. Instead, the author effortlessly weaves together critical theory, histories, geography, settler colonialism, urban studies, economics, and a number of other fields. In doing so, it offers readers new links and pathways to deepen their understanding of phenomena surrounding not only Detroit but their own world.

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