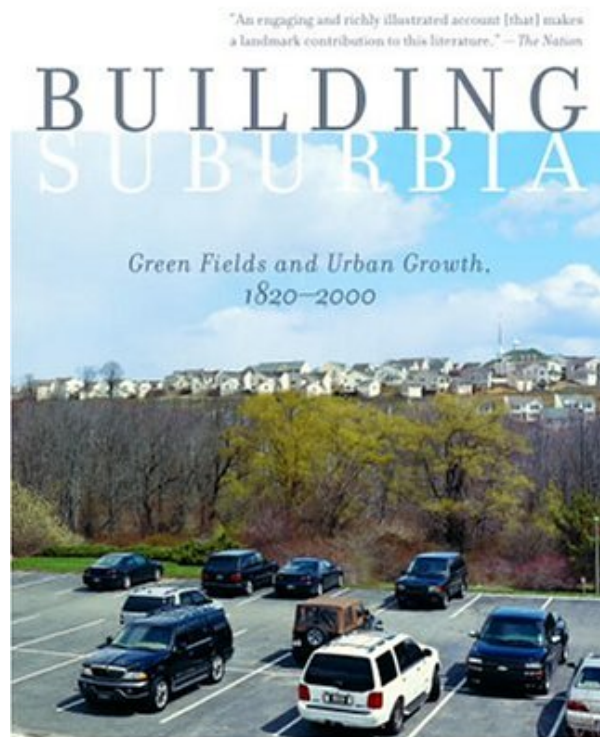


BUILDING SUBURBIA: GREEN FIELDS AND URBAN GROWTH, 1820-2000 BY DOLORES HAYDEN



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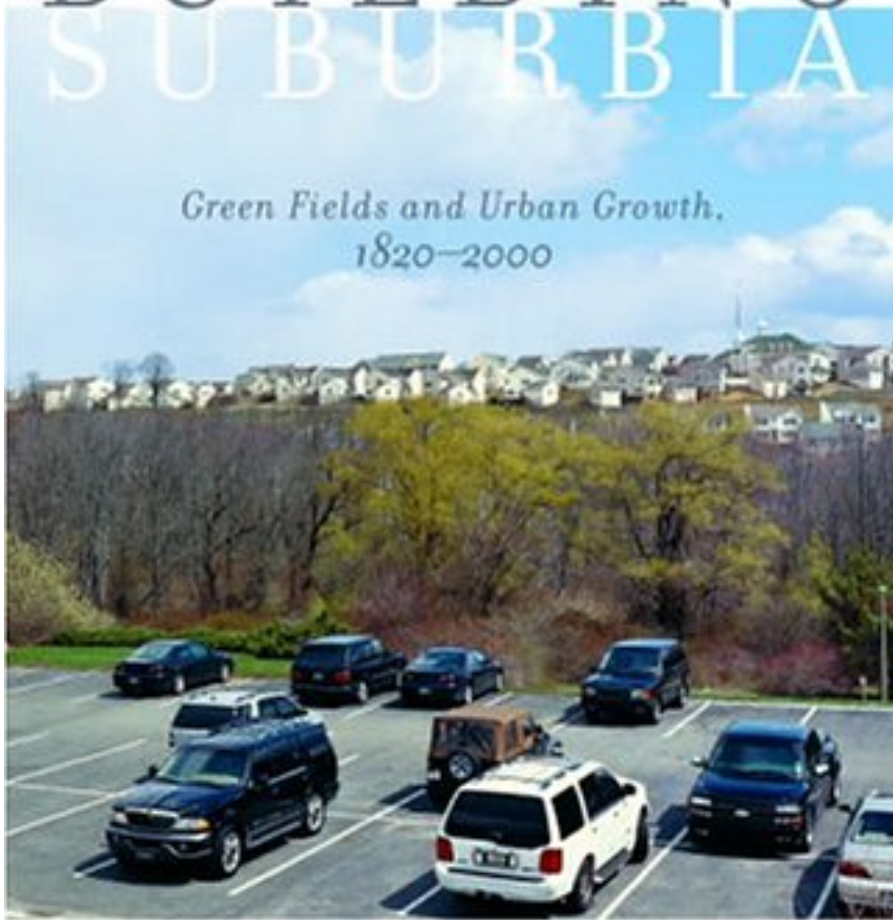
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BUILDING SUBURBIA

*Green Fields and Urban Growth,
1820–2000*



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- Sales Rank: #456244 in Books
- Published on: 2004-11-09
- Released on: 2004-11-09
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .80" w x 5.20" l, .70 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 336 pages

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The sordid story of American suburbia

By The Kodachrome guy

This is a readable and enlightening history of the American phenomena of suburbia, from the mid-1800s to

the 1970s. It clearly shows how the government and communities subsidized builders and developers, who, in turn, left it up to taxpayers to support the cost of new streets, sewers, schools, and all the other infrastructure needed to support ever-expanding suburbs. The book could have done a more thorough job of explaining how the funds that went to suburbs ended up leaving cities impoverished, with the result that schools, security, and infrastructure suffered. Also, the author could have described the terrible environmental toll as thousands of square miles of McMansion ghettos devoured farms, deserts and forests. The housing orgy of the 2000-2007 era was an extreme manifestation of the trend that has been ongoing since the 1800s.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Contemporary Overview

By Michael Brown

The author did in an excellent job in presenting a variety of issues. In my opinion though, her stronger suit is the historical aspect rather than some of later subjects she delves into in the text. It was refreshing to have a feminist critique, but this is more developed in the first part of the text and less interesting or less confined to the latter chapters. Paraphrasing another reviewer, there are parts of the text which begin to feel mechanical, again the latter part of the text.

Despite stylistic critiques, I believe the text to be very good and importantly, recent in scope.

55 of 57 people found the following review helpful.

The American Suburb in History

By S. Pactor

Building Suburbia is a capable synthesis of historical and recent scholarship on the development of the suburbs in America. Hayden, a professor of architecture and urbanism and professor of American Studies at Yale, knows what she is talking about. It was clear to me that this book is written for a general, rather than specialized audience.

Hayden's writing style is easy to understand, and she provides multiple in text illustrations and photographs to illuminate the text. The book tracks the historical development of suburbs in time (the subtitle is "Green Fields and Urban Growth 1820-2000.") She starts with "Borderlands", then covers "Picturesque Enclaves", "Streetcar Buildouts", "Mail-Order and Self-Built Suburbs", "Sitcom Suburbs", "Edge Nodes" and "Rural Fringes". This historical approach is book ended by an introduction with two chapters and a conclusion with two chapters.

Hayden includes excellent end notes and a selected bibliography that is worthwhile to have on your shelf. Since this book was written in 2003, the bibliography is chock full of RECENT books on urban studies that allow the student or casual reader to follow up in any number of directions.

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