

CHOICE

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North America

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O'Brien, William E. **Landscapes of exclusion: state parks and Jim Crow in the American South.** Massachusetts/Library of American Landscape History, Amherst, 2016. 191p index afp ISBN 9781625341556, \$39.95; ISBN 9781613763605 ebook, contact publisher for price.

Using painstaking research into the records of New Deal funding for public state parks in the southern US, O'Brien (environmental studies, Florida Atlantic Univ.) reveals the total policy of segregation in public spaces. Park spaces allocated to African Americans—"Negro Area"—featured inferior and poorly kept buildings. Park Service officials allowed a request to use one of the white-only camps in Oklahoma's Lake Murray State Park to host a meeting of the Southwest Council of Student Christian Associations, which included one African American institution. When the permit was requested a second year, local authorities denied it. Later, when the authority for state parks was given to the states, NAACP lawyers in individual states and parks pushed for equality. Soon after the *Brown* decision (1954), the US Supreme Court declared that "public park segregation was unconstitutional." As a result, some states closed some of their parks. Finally, in 1967, when Virginia reopened the facilities at Seashore State Park three years after the Civil Rights Act was passed (1964), "[t]he Jim Crow era of southern state parks had finally come to an official end" (p.147). Many of the former spaces are no longer public parks, but the majority that still operate as recreational space do not acknowledge their segregated past.

--P. W. Kaufman, *University of Southern Maine, retired*

Summing Up: Recommended. Upper-division undergraduates and above.