

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PREFACE

The audience for my book has always been clear to me: my interviewees, nibbling on homemade molasses cookies (my mom's recipe) at kitchen tables or in local parks and showing me their scrapbooks, monuments, and hopes for the future. I also see my parents and my neighbors reading this book: people naming what is lost in their beloved places when the new coal mine wrecks their water supply or when the new high-rise goes up next door. "Just moving" away from home isn't an option. I want you to know you are not alone. My intended audience is also my academic colleagues, who have moved every few years for the past decade, as have I. Maybe you, too, are questioning where and what exactly home *is* anymore.

Ultimately, this book is for all of us. It is a rare person who does not live in or love a place that has been turned upside down because of economic crisis or earthquakes, rising sea levels or desertification, new Amazon warehouses or power plants, and nuclear fallout or war. Just as the causes of these crises are not located at the individual level, neither can their

solutions be. We all deserve to make choices and live in place we would like to call home.

A brief note to readers about names and places. All places are real—names unchanged, with historical information fact-checked. However, this is not strictly a history of two communities. Instead, this is a work of sociology—an approach to social science research that searches for broader patterns and cross-cutting lessons learned from groups of people interacting in specific times and places. Historical facts structure the book, but individuals' memories of history propel its arguments. Unlike a historical account, I present interviewees' personal stories through a veil of pseudonyms. I link descriptors of race, age, gender, and residential longevity to interviewees' quotes and life histories, but I change their names. Pseudonyms grant speakers a modicum of privacy, useful for life narratives like these, where people are sharing about family, friends, and significant (and sometimes very personal) life events. Their quotations have not been altered—when in double quotation marks, I am directly quoting from interviews that I recorded, with the speaker's oral or written permission. When in single quotation marks, I am quoting my closest approximation of what was said during an on-the-move interview or unrecorded conversation with a larger group of people.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Qualitative social science research is a relational project. Interviews, ethnography, and historical data collection were possible only with the support of people and organizations in my two case locations. The Iron County Historical Society and the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum were starting places and home bases for me in Wisconsin and Illinois, respectively.

I am grateful for interactions with the Iron County Development Association, the Iron County Extension office, and Sam at WJMS AM, who broadcast my oral history project that constitutes part of this research on the local radio station. In Chicago, the members of the tenth ward's chapter of retired United Steelworkers union members welcomed me in, and representatives from nonprofits and city-based organizations offered me helpful information. Two community members fact-checked the historical information presented in the first two chapters of this book: the indomitable Rod Sellers in Southeast Chicago and the insightful Julie Morello in Iron County. These two local experts are deeply familiar with community history and local archives. Any errors that remain are certainly my own.

Telling the sociological story of these two communities also required a cloud of supporters. At the University of Wisconsin, where I completed my PhD in Sociology in 2019, Michael Bell, Jane Collins, Gary Green, Chad Goldberg, Bill Cronon, Jess Gilbert, and Josh Garoon fundamentally shaped my approach to research. Mike's curiosity about my interviewees' sense of home, Gary's clarity of thought about community change, and Jane's big-picture questions about the relationships between people and places sparked my imagination and honed my arguments. Chad Goldberg brought me into the literatures on labor, the welfare state, citizenship, and Charles Tilly. Bill Cronon's mentorship granted me a historical perspective and patience for thinking about place, space, story, and narrative in ways too often hurried past by sociologists. Josh Garoon's clear feedback and vast knowledge of social scientific literature pushed me in the right direction, every time. And Jess Gilbert's kind and historically-tempered perspective on the sociology of agriculture and natural resources continues to influence my writing and teaching on land, the economy, and the state. I workshopped the earliest versions of this project with participants from the

Department of Sociology's brownbags in Politics, Culture, and Society and Sociology of Economic Change and Development, along with the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies' Center for Culture, History, and Environment. Troy Reeves at UW's Oral History Program gave me invaluable advice about the public sociology components of my research. Rebecca Rodgers thought through home and interview narratives with me, and Daanika Gordon read portions of early analyses.

I completed much of this book while visiting other institutions. While living in Chicago and making weekly trips to the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum and retired steelworkers' union meetings, I was fortunate to sit in on Dan Slater's Comparative Historical Analysis class at the University of Chicago. Yaniv Ron-El and Wan-Zi Lu kindly invited to workshop my most unwieldy and risky chapter at the University of Chicago's Money, Markets, and Governance workshop. These scholars brought me into their writing community and gave clarifying feedback on data analysis that became one of the key arguments in the book. I am grateful for my time as a visiting scholar in the Department of Environmental Studies at the University of California-Santa Barbara, as well as a fruitful visit to the Max Planck Science Po Center for Instability in Society in Paris.

At Drexel University, where I am an assistant professor, my colleagues Kelly Underman, Anil Kalhan, and Diane Sicotte provided valuable feedback on chapters from the book. The interdisciplinary Science and Technology Studies Works-in-Progress workshop participants asked compelling questions on the book project as a whole, as well as adjacent projects from this data. Joseph Larnerd and Lillian Walkover cheered me on through all the stages of writing and revision. Developmental editing from Emma Warnken Johnson set my earliest book draft on a solid foundation. Funds from Drexel also enabled me to

hold a workshop with three remarkable scholars who gave my draft book a close, incisive, and generous read. The synergy, brilliance, and warmth of my book workshop participants—David Pellow, Hillary Angelo, and Colin Jerolmack—made my final round of revisions an exciting and emboldening process.

Undergraduate research assistants brought energy to my data analysis and writing process. Many thanks to my four stellar undergraduate research assistants from the University of Wisconsin–Madison: Yoki Wang, Claire Morse, Constance Chang, and Hannah Chouinard. Once at Drexel, the book benefited from the time and commitment of Devesh Chainani, Aurora Wiley, and Grace Zaborski.

Finally, this book wouldn't exist without the indefatigable insights of two remarkable people. First, katrina quisumbing and I have exchanged drafts of academic research and writing projects every two weeks since 2014. She has read multiple iterations of this much-revised book—some parts more than once. When I lost sight of the big picture in the morass of revisions, katrina pulled me back to the core of my argument and my personal motivation for this project. I credit much of my growth as a writer and professionalization into academia to our consistent meetings and mutual support.

Second, I offer weighty thanks to my husband, Josh. Because we met in graduate school, this project has paralleled our relationship. Josh joined me on my earliest research trips to Iron County, and we lived in Chicago together. His support showed up in meals cooked, chapters read, ideas rebutted, and encouragement sincerely given. My interviewees asked after him when I returned to the Southeast Side and Iron County for fact-checking and follow-up interviews. And in poetic conclusion, Sophia was born as I finished revising this book. May we keep making our home together, again and again.

**WHO WE ARE IS
WHERE WE ARE**

