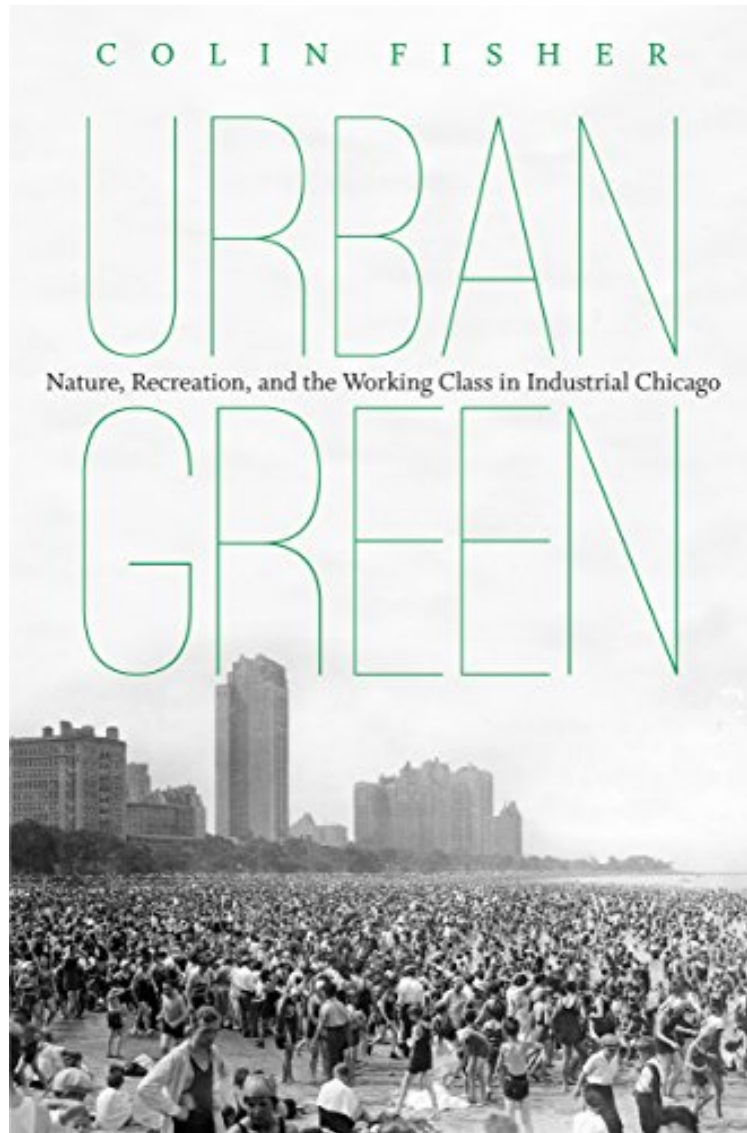


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Urban Green: Nature, Recreation, and the Working Class in Industrial Chicago

Colin Fisher

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Colin Fisher : Urban Green: Nature, Recreation, and the Working Class in Industrial Chicago before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Urban Green: Nature, Recreation, and the Working Class in Industrial Chicago:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy GuppyGreat read0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An enjoyable readBy B JohnsonUrban Green is an enjoyable read. It offers a colorful portrait of how the ethnic working class and African Americans retreated to and experienced nature in Chicago. I found the book to be an important counterbalance to the more conventional emphasis on the white middle-class relationship with nature. The book makes the reader think about how less privileged communities struggle to make meaning in and find reprieve in urban industrial spaces.

In early twentieth-century America, affluent city-dwellers made a habit of venturing out of doors and vacationing in resorts and national parks. Yet the rich and the privileged were not the only ones who sought respite in nature. In this pathbreaking book, historian Colin Fisher demonstrates that working-class white immigrants and African Americans in rapidly industrializing Chicago also fled the urban environment during their scarce leisure time. If they had the means, they traveled to wilderness parks just past the city limits as well as to rural resorts in Wisconsin and Michigan. But lacking time and money, they most often sought out nature within the city itself--at urban parks and commercial groves, along the Lake Michigan shore, even in vacant lots. Chicagoans enjoyed a variety of outdoor recreational activities in these green spaces, and they used them to forge ethnic and working-class community. While narrating a crucial era in the history of Chicago's urban development, Fisher makes important interventions in debates about working-class leisure, the history of urban parks, environmental justice, the African American experience, immigration history, and the cultural history of nature.

Cultural, social, and environmental historians will benefit from exploring a side of Chicago and of working-class culture that [have] remained hidden from view.--Journal of Social HistoryInvaluable. . . . Deeply informed by serious scholarship and wide reading, [Fisher's] prose is as accessible as any Chicago park, open to anyone who wants to walk in and enjoy it.--Chicago TribuneRecommended.--ChoiceColin Fisher has shifted the focus of working-class, African American, and ethnic engagement with the city . . . from nightlife and commercial recreation to the pursuit and enjoyment of nature.--Western Historical QuarterlyOffers a promising approach to uncovering and making sense of the ways in which urban dwellers have engaged with the outdoor world.--Western Historical QuarterlyFisher's book is recommended without caveat to all environmental historians and especially to those interested in the evolution of parks and in urban social history. It is an excellent read.--Environmental HistoryEnvironmental history, labor history, urban history, transnational immigration history, and cultural history rarely come together in one teachable book, but that is what Colin Fisher has achieved in *Urban Green*. . . . Fisher's analysis of multiple transnational cultures of nature deserves a wide audience.--American Historical Fascinating. . . . Could be required reading in social, environmental, labor, ethnic, and racial history courses as well as those in literary studies and urban sociology.--Journal of American HistoryA welcome addition to the growing literature on the nature found in great metropolises.--Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era Colin Fisher's smart, ambitious history shows how Chicago's underclasses--immigrants, African Americans, and laborers--understood and appreciated nature through leisure. Bringing together carefully considered empirical evidence with an absorbing analysis of working-class Chicagoans and their affinities for nature in the city, Fisher vividly reimagines Chicago's past.--Matthew Klinge, author of *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle*Urban Green brings a whole new perspective to historians working on race, class, and immigration in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century city. Colin Fisher has written a pioneering book that will make a significant impact in a number of fields and should become required reading for anyone working at the intersection of environmental and social history.--Andrew Diamond, Universite Paris-SorbonneBeautifully mapped, illustrated, and argued, this wonderful new study proceeds from below to show the ways that contact with nature shaped the pursuit of happiness for immigrant and African American Chicagoans. It excitingly explores profound and complex relationships between free spaces and green spaces in the city's history.--David Roediger, author of *Seizing Freedom*About the AuthorColin Fisher is associate professor of history at the University of San Diego. He teaches classes in U.S. environmental history, environmental visual culture, and history of food. His research centers on landscape and minority cultures of nature.