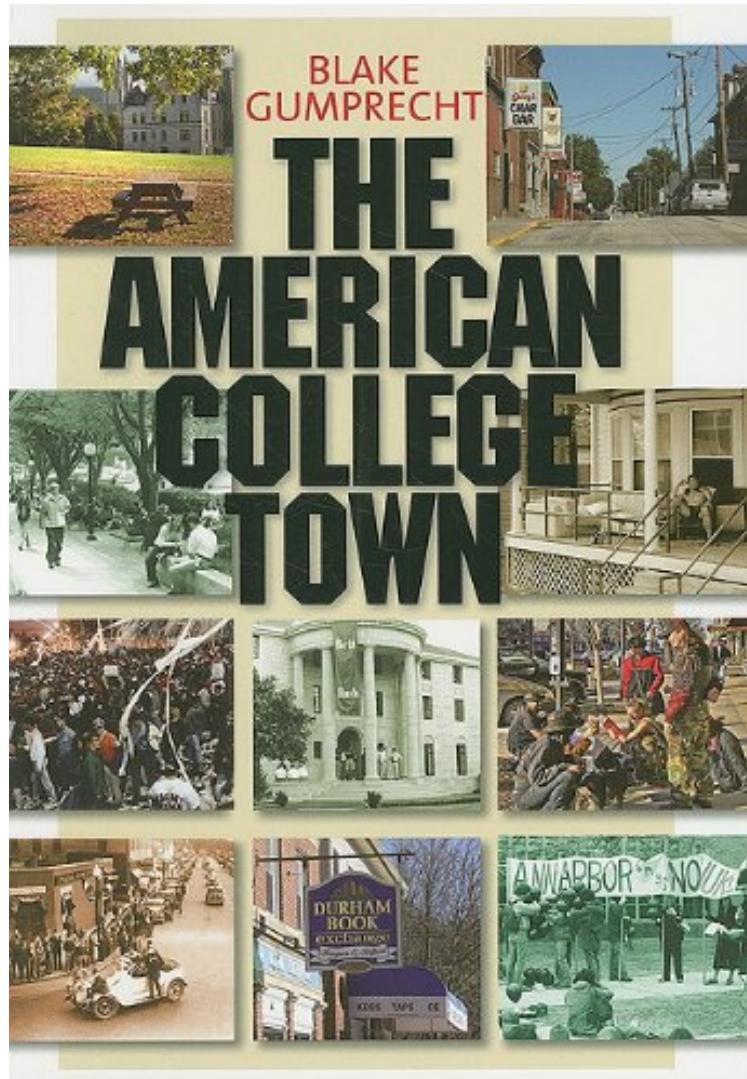


The American College Town

Blake Gumprecht

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Blake Gumprecht : The American College Town before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The American College Town:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A great resource book to haveBy John SamuelsBought this book for my dissertation in architecture school. Very detailed. A great resource book to have.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Welcome Insight into an Important American Phenomenon -- the College Town.By Stephen GrabowHaving taught the history of urban design for over four decades, I found Gumprecht's book on The American College Town a welcome analysis of a uniquely American phenomenon that is gradually disappearing from the landscape. His thesis is coherent, sensible and readily applicable to the variety of different college towns. He studies

60 and presents 8 cases: Ann Arbor, Ithaca, Davis, Auburn, Athens, Manhattan, Norman and Newark -- and has a lot to say about Lawrence. The book is well written and very well-researched and the author's credentials as a J.B. Jackson laureate in cultural geography say much to merit the reader's attention. This book helps to make clear our understanding of why such towns hold the affection of the millions of alumni who lived in them as transients for four years and then moved on -- or sometimes move back. Highly recommended. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A Celebration, Not A Guide Book By M. Wray Witten I reviewed this outstanding book for The Flagpole, which is exactly the kind of alternative newspaper that one of this book's eight featured College Towns (Athens, GA) must have. Read the whole review here: . The following are a few bits: No one should mistake this book for a guidebook. Though well disguised, it is foremost a scholarly work by the chair of the department of geography at the University of New Hampshire, replete with 60 pages of endnotes documenting wonderfully diverse sources and a 20-page index. Even so, the book's serious nature is well camouflaged: the sparse statistics are hidden in thickets of narrative, and photos dominate a quarter of the pages. The hallmarks of geography are almost invisible - no tables of demographic data or layered GIS maps or multivariate analyses leveraging grand conclusions out of the murky richness of life. Instead, the pattern Gumprecht has chosen to report his years of research - case studies of eight "college towns," including Athens - is more like a collection of intersecting short stories: warm narratives full of colorful anecdotes and supporting actors, out of which the character of the American college town emerges. And when the stories reach the '60s they begin to sing. It is true that the towns Gumprecht celebrates have multiple personalities; that's actually part of his definition of a college town. He reports in detail, often with high emotion and amusing drama, the conflicts between the starkly divergent visions (and behavior) of the citizens of one college town after another. After all, there is probably nothing more distinctive of college-town life than articulate disagreement.

The college town is a unique type of urban place, shaped by the sometimes conflicting forces of youth, intellect, and idealism. The hundreds of college towns in the United States are, in essence, an academic archipelago. Similar to one another, they differ in fundamental ways from other cities and the regions in which they are located. In this highly readable book the first work published on the subject Blake Gumprecht identifies the distinguishing features of college towns, explains why they have developed as they have in the United States, and examines in depth various characteristics that make them unusual. In eight thematic chapters, he explores some of the most interesting aspects of college towns: their distinctive residential and commercial districts, their unconventional political cultures, their status as bohemian islands, their emergence as high-tech centers, and more. Each of these chapters focuses on a single college town as an example, while providing additional evidence from other towns. Lively, richly detailed, and profusely illustrated with original maps and photographs, as well as historical images, this is an important book that firmly establishes the college town as an integral component of the American experience.

"Employing the methods of cultural geography, this book seeks to portray the impact of colleges and universities on their home communities. . . . Gumprecht has undoubtedly captured some part of the truth about each of the towns he examines, although clearly multiple cultures and communities can exist within the same physical space. His work is strongest when he explores the psychological power of campus design or the dynamics of residential housing patterns and the development of business districts." *Journal of Southern History* "Blake Gumprecht is passionate about college towns. He has spent most of his adult life in them and has written a lively and engaging book that should be required reading for the many architects and planners in Greater Boston." *Architecture Boston* "Gumprecht has undoubtedly captured some part of truth about each of the towns he examines [and]. . . His work is strongest when he explores the psychological power of campus design or the dynamics of residential housing patterns and the development of business districts." *Journal of Southern History* "Although there are books on campus planning and design and others on the university as a cultural, political and economic entity, few combine the physical and social aspects of colleges and universities, and none attempt to define the college town. *The American College Town* is a welcome addition to the literature on the history and experience of colleges, universities, and their urban settings." *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements* "If a friend should ever ask for a book that epitomizes the best that geography can offer, I recommend Blake Gumprecht's new volume as a near-perfect candidate." *Journal of Cultural Geography* "As a rule, Gumprecht's prose is easy to digest, and on many occasions his fact-finding turns up marvelous anecdotes. . . ." *Indiana Magazine of History* "Surpassing his earlier *The Los Angeles River*, Gumprecht's new book places him among the leading cultural/historical geographers. . . . Lavishly illustrated, meticulously researched, and enlivened by a former journalist's eye for detail, this will be a classic. . . . Essential." *Choice* "If a friend should ever ask for a book that epitomizes the best that geography can offer, I recommend Blake Gumprecht's new volume as a near-perfect candidate. He takes a landscape familiar . . . and makes us see it afresh. He dissects its complexity with astonishing thoroughness, using a rich mix of archival material, personal observation, and field interviews. He offers deep case studies, but remembers the need for broader context. Finally, he assembles the total package with spirited, clean prose, some of the best academic writing I have ever seen." *Journal of Cultural Geography* "At last! With this literally unprecedented volume, Blake Gumprecht has filled what may have been the most grievous of gaps in the literature of

our American settlement landscape. Moreover, he has done so in magisterial fashion by telling us in wonderfully readable prose virtually everything one might wish to know about those many scores of special places. I have read it with unalloyed pleasure and hope that a vast number of readers will share my joy."Annals of the Association of American Geographers" "There are red states and blue states, and then there are college towns a universe of their own, anomalous political cultures. This brilliantly worked-out idea by a University of New Hampshire geographer is the rarest of things the first full-length study of its subject and sure to please any academic on your list."The Philadelphia Inquirer" "A field guide to the leafy, left-of-center places so many academics call home. Insightful and candid."Ann Arbor Observer" "A collection of intersecting short stories: warm narratives full of colorful anecdotes and supporting actors, out of which the character of the American college town emerges. Karen is getting tired of hearing me cite the many fascinations of the book."Flagpole" "The book is an illuminating read for anyone drawn to a good yarn about what makes college towns the idiosyncratic places that they invariably turn out to be. Gumprecht's reportorial instincts bring to life the history, social patterns, personalities, and politics that define the localities he has chosen to discuss. His role as a geography scholar gives dimension to what college towns mean in the larger fabric of American places."Planning in Higher Education" "The American College Town demonstrates Gumprecht's knack for recognizing a great untold story. It also proves that it is actually possible to articulate that most elusive of geographical concepts, the sense of place, when the writer is a master of landscape observation, as Gumprecht unquestionably is. This book teaches readers how to see the meaning embedded in places we take for granted. Gumprecht's exhaustive, multi-dimensional research enables him to read landscapes better than any historical geographer writing today."Author of Calvinists Incorporated: Welsh Immigrants on Ohio's Industrial Frontier" "With a keen eye for telling details and examples and an easy writing style, both products of an earlier career as a journalist, Blake Gumprecht identifies, explains, and vividly conveys the characteristics that make American college towns distinctive places."Author of An Unspeakable Sadness: The Dispossession of the Nebraska Indians" "Those interested in the sociology of American higher education and simply in well-presented case studies will find much to like in Gumprecht's work."The of Higher Education About the Author Blake Gumprecht is associate professor and chair of the Department of Geography at the University of New Hampshire. His previous book, The Los Angeles River: Its Life, Death, and Possible Rebirth, also won the J. B. Jackson Prize from the Association of American Geographers.