



South Side Girls: Growing Up in the Great Migration

By Marcia Chatelain

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In *South Side Girls* Marcia Chatelain recasts Chicago's Great Migration through the lens of black girls. Focusing on the years between 1910 and 1940, when Chicago's black population quintupled, Chatelain describes how Chicago's black social scientists, urban reformers, journalists and activists formulated a vulnerable image of urban black girlhood that needed protecting. She argues that the construction and meaning of black girlhood shifted in response to major economic, social, and cultural changes and crises, and that it reflected parents' and community leaders' anxieties about urbanization and its meaning for racial progress. Girls shouldered much of the burden of black aspiration, as adults often scrutinized their choices and behavior, and their well-being symbolized the community's moral health. Yet these adults were not alone in thinking about the Great Migration, as girls expressed their views as well. Referencing girls' letters and interviews, Chatelain uses their powerful stories of hope, anticipation and disappointment to highlight their feelings and thoughts, and in so doing, she helps restore the experiences of an understudied population to the Great Migration's complex narrative.

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South Side Girls: Growing Up in the Great Migration By Marcia Chatelain Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"In this singular contribution to our understanding of the Great Migration, Marcia Chatelain approaches the historical archives with an entirely new question, 'is there a girlhood for those who will grow into black women?' *South Side Girls* is a perfect book for a moment when we struggle with the twin realities of the extraordinary girlhoods of the Obama daughters and the violent brevity of the girlhood of Renisha McBride; as we watch a new generation of child migrants fleeing violence in central America and question our national response even as three generations of South Side Girls live in the White House."

(Melissa V. Harris-Perry, author of *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America*)

"*South Side Girls* captures the promise and peril of Migration-era Chicago while adding nuance to our understanding of how Progressive reformers approached their subjects. Taking a long view from the nadir of Jim Crow to the cusp of the postwar civil rights movement, Marcia Chatelain explores how black girls shouldered much of the burden of both black aspiration and reformers' mistrust."

(Adriane Lentz-Smith, author of *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I*)

"This engaging read deftly examines the experiences of African American girls and young women as they undertook the vast emotional and physical paradigm shifts of the Great Migration era, with a specific geographical focus on migrants to the South Side of Chicago. . . . Recommended for civil rights, gender and women's studies, environmental, and social science scholars."

(Jewell Anderson *Library Journal*)

"[N]otable for its flowing attention-holding writing. . . . Included are many entertaining stories the author has plumbed from diaries, African American newspapers, and archives."

(Karl Helicher *Foreword Reviews*)

"Referencing girls' letters and interviews, Chatelain shares these unknown stories (enhanced by 13 images) and thus offers a glimpse into this understudied population to the Great Migration's complex narrative."

(Bobbi Booker *Philadelphia Tribune*)

"Many scholars have studied the great migration of African Americans from the South to the North. Most often, the subject focuses on men. Chatelain asks 'What about girls?' . . . An excellent companion to works such as James Grossman's *Land of Hope* and Nicholas Lemann's *The Promised Land*. Highly recommended. All public and academic levels/libraries."

(W. Glasker *Choice* 2015-09-01)

"Chatelain exhibits a particularly deft reading for the girls' voices. . . . In writing that is accessible and conceptually generative, [she] demonstrate[s] not only that black girls existed, but that they mattered—an important challenge to the implicit and ongoing view that girlhood is a whites-only space."

(Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant *Women's Review of Books* 2015-11-01)

"*South Side Girls* renders a fascinating interpretation of the African American migration. Marcia Chatelain has produced an engaging study that challenges historians to re-conceptualize ideas about urban migration,

African American reform, and black girls' thoughts about family and community, consumer culture, and religion.... *South Side Girls* is an innovative work that illuminates the voices and narratives of a dynamic group of underrepresented urban citizens: black girls."

(LaShawn Harris *American Studies* 2016-06-01)

"[An] elegantly-written monograph about African American girls seeking education, autonomy, and opportunity in early and mid-twentieth century Chicago.... In *South Side Girls*, Chatelain has made important contributions to existing scholarship about Chicago, the Great Migration, African American and women's history, and the rapidly developing, dynamic field of girlhood studies."

(Holly M. Kent *Journal of Illinois History* 2014-12-01)

"Marcia Chatelain's *South Side Girls* offers an intriguing and unique view of black girls in Chicago during the Great Migration from 1910 to 1940."

(Dionne Danns *American Historical Review* 2016-10-13)

"Chatelain makes creative use of sources as she searches for and finds black girls who have been invisible and unaccounted for in previous histories of the Great Migration. . . . *South Side Girls* ... demonstrate[s] the ways that consideration of black girls' experiences provides richer and more nuanced historical narratives . . . [and] provide[s] important context and foundation for the conceptions of black girlhood that we have inherited."

(Farah Jasmine Griffin *Public Books* 2016-11-01)

"Marcia Chatelain's *South Side Girls* focuses on the lives of young African Americans who left direct and indirect traces in the archives—in interviews and through their interaction with institutions. Chatelain makes a major contribution by engaging black girls' experiences, not just academic conceptions of black girlhood. Indeed, she critiques American society and African American communities for being more interested in black girlhood than with the quality of black girls' lives."

(Koritha Mitchell *Journal of American History* 2017-03-06)

About the Author

Marcia Chatelain is Associate Professor of History at Georgetown University.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Robert Marques:

Do you really one of the book lovers? If yes, do you ever feeling doubt when you are in the book store? Try to pick one book that you never know the inside because don't evaluate book by its handle may doesn't work is difficult job because you are afraid that the inside maybe not seeing that fantastic as in the outside appear likes. Maybe you answer can be *South Side Girls: Growing Up in the Great Migration* why because the excellent cover that make you consider regarding the content will not disappoint you actually. The inside or content is actually fantastic as the outside or even cover. Your reading 6th sense will directly guide you to pick up this book.

Cheryl Fisher:

The book untitled South Side Girls: Growing Up in the Great Migration contain a lot of information on it. The writer explains the girl idea with easy means. The language is very clear to see all the people, so do not necessarily worry, you can easy to read it. The book was published by famous author. The author brings you in the new period of time of literary works. You can read this book because you can continue reading your smart phone, or model, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can start their official web-site as well as order it. Have a nice examine.

Levi Ryan:

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