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Making Suburbia

NEW HISTORIES OF
EVERYDAY AMERICA



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What are the suburbs? The popular vision of monotonous streets curving into culs-de-sac and emerald lawns unfurling from nearly identical houses would have us believe that suburbia is a boring, homogeneous, and alienating place. But this stereotypical portrayal of the suburbs tells us very little about the lives of the people who actually live there. *Making Suburbia* offers a diverse collection of essays that examine how the history and landscape of the American suburb is constructed through the everyday actions and experiences of its inhabitants. From home decor and garage rock to modernist shopping malls and holiday parades, contributors explore how suburbanites actively created the spaces of suburbia. The volume is divided into four parts, each of which addresses a distinct aspect of the ways in which suburbia is lived in and made. More than twenty essays range from Becky Nicolaides's chronicle of cross-racial alliances in Pasadena, to Jodi Rios's investigation of St. Louis residents' debates over public space and behavior, to Andrew Friedman's story of Cold War double agents who used the suburban milieu as a cover for their espionage. Presenting a wide variety of voices, *Making Suburbia* reveals that suburbs are a constantly evolving landscape for the articulation of American society and are ultimately defined not by planners but by their inhabitants. Contributors: Anna Vemer Andrzejewski, U of Wisconsin–Madison; Heather Bailey; Gretchen Buggeln, Valparaiso U; Charity R. Carney, Western Governors U; Martin Dines, Kingston U London; Andrew Friedman, Haverford College; Beverly K. Grindstaff, San José State U; Dianne Harris, U of Illinois, Urbana–Champaign; Ursula Lang; Matthew Gordon Lasner, Hunter College; Willow Lung-Amam, U of Maryland, College Park; Becky Nicolaides, U of California, Los Angeles; Trecia Pottinger, Oberlin College; Tim Retzliff, Michigan State U; Jodi Rios; Christopher Sellers, Stony Brook U; David Smiley, Columbia U; Stacie Taranto, Ramapo College of New Jersey; Steve Waksman, Smith College; Holley Wlodarczyk, U of Minnesota.

About the Author John Archer is professor of cultural studies and comparative literature at the University of Minnesota. He is the author of *Architecture and Suburbia and The Literature of British Domestic Architecture, 1715–1842*. Paul J. P. Sandul is assistant professor of history at Stephen F. Austin State University. He is the author of *California Dreaming: Boosterism, Memory, and Rural Suburbs in the Golden State*. Katherine Solomonson is associate professor of architecture at the University of Minnesota. She is the author of *The Chicago Tribune Tower Competition: Skyscraper Design and Cultural Change in the 1920s*. Margaret Crawford is professor of architecture at University of California, Berkeley.