



Southern Crossing: A History of the American South, 1877-1906

Edward L. Ayers

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Edward L. Ayers monumental history, *Promise of the New South*, was praised by the eminent historian Bertram Wyatt-Brown as "A work of frequently stunning beauty," who added "The elegance and sensitivity that he achieves are typical of few historical works." Winner of the James A. Rawley Prize for Best Book on American Race Relations from the Organization of American Historians, and the Frank Lawrence Owsley and Harriett Chappell Owsley Award from the Southern Historical Association, and finalist for the 1992 National Book Award, the 1992 Pulitzer Prize for History, and the 1993 Southern Book Award, *Promise of the New South* established Ayers as one of the foremost scholars of the American South. Now, in this newly revised edition, Ayers has distilled this remarkable work to offer an even more readable account of the New South.

Ranging from the Georgia coast to the Tennessee mountains, from the power brokers to tenant farmers, Ayers depicts a land of startling contrasts--a time of progress and repression, of new industries and old ways. Ayers takes us from remote Southern towns, revolutionized by the spread of the railroads, to the statehouses where Democratic "Redeemers" swept away the legacy of Reconstruction; from the small farmers, trapped into growing nothing but cotton, to the new industries of Birmingham; from abuse and intimacy in the family to tumultuous public meetings of the prohibitionists. He explores every aspect of society, politics, and the economy, detailing the importance of each in the emerging New South. Here is the local Baptist congregation, the country store, the tobacco-stained second-class railroad car, the rise of Populism: the teeming, nineteenth-century South comes to life in these pages. And central to the entire story is the role of race relations, from alliances and friendships between blacks and whites to the spread of Jim Crow laws and disenfranchisement. Ayers weaves all these details into the contradictory story of the New South, showing how the region developed the patterns it was to follow for the next fifty years.

A vivid portrait of a society undergoing the sudden confrontation of the promises, costs, and consequences of modern life, this is an unforgettable account of the New South--a land with one foot in the future and the other in the past.

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