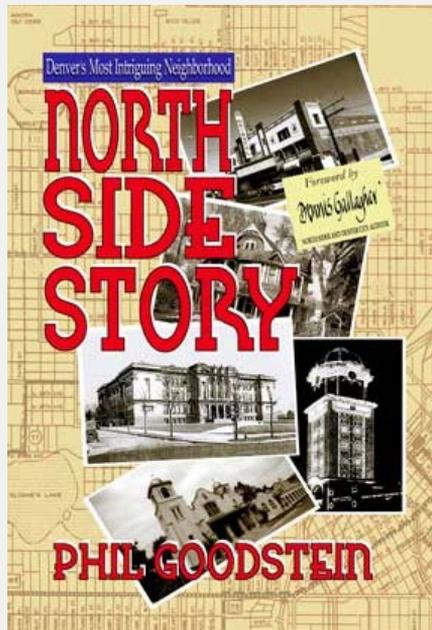


North Side Story: Denver's Most Intriguing Neighborhood

Submitted by nwharton on 8-5-2012 09:25 AM



Author: Phil Goodstein

Publishing: Denver, CO: New Social Publications, 2011. vi + 570 pages. Black-and-white photographs, bibliography, index, maps, notes. 6" x 9".

Reviewer: Rebecca A. Hunt, Ph.D.

Reviewer Affiliation:

University of Colorado Denver

Dr. Phil Goodstein is well known for his many quirky Denver history volumes in which he meticulously documents street names, ghostly visitations, and unusual characters. In his newest book, *North Side Story: Denver's Most Intriguing Neighborhood*, Goodstein has stepped outside his usual approach to history, presenting an intensely detailed and even loving portrait of Denver's north side.

The northwest area of Denver is a complex neighborhood. It encompasses the modern divisions of Highland, West Highland, Berkeley/Regis, Sunnyside, Sloan's Lake, and Jefferson Park. Its boundaries run from Interstate 25 to Sheridan Boulevard and from Fifty-second Avenue to Colfax. In its youth it was the North Denver neighborhood, the Town of Highland, and various development schemes such as John Brisbane Walker's Berkeley. Included in its boundaries were Elitch Gardens, Lakeside, and Manhattan Beach amusement venues.

The neighborhood's population included generations of Anglo-Americans, German-Americans, Irish-Americans, Italian-Americans, and Latinos. Its residents were pious do-gooder women and angry Klansmen. Its fortunes began bright, then dimmed in the mid-twentieth century and have again risen in the twenty-first century.

All of this shines through in the street-by-street, house-by-house detailing of the residents and businesses of the area. As is his custom, Goodstein searched newspapers, city directories, and other traditional sources for his stories. In this case he spent considerable time mining the old-timers who gathered at Common Grounds Coffeehouse and in other community centers. He also took time to have neighborhood historians read and critique sections of this work. Carefully selected photographs supplement the text. Because this is a self-published work, Goodstein does not have to limit himself to the paltry twenty or so photos usually allowed by more conventional presses.

I do have a few small complaints about this work. It is a big book, which might deter those who usually shy away from history books. It also occasionally has factual problems, but the author will surely fix those in the next edition. Those two matters aside, this book is a badly needed addition to the growing set of

works on Denver by this and other authors. As more historians write about Denver, the more interesting and complex the city's story becomes. The personal and business details make this not only a resource for residents but a treasure for those who are trying to make sense of their place in Denver's history.

Reviewer Info:

Dr. Rebecca Hunt specializes in the history of the American West and of Denver. She teaches in the history department at the University of Colorado Denver. She is also president of Highland United Neighbors, Inc.

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