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## Book Review - Jim Crow Terminals: The Desegregation of America's Airports

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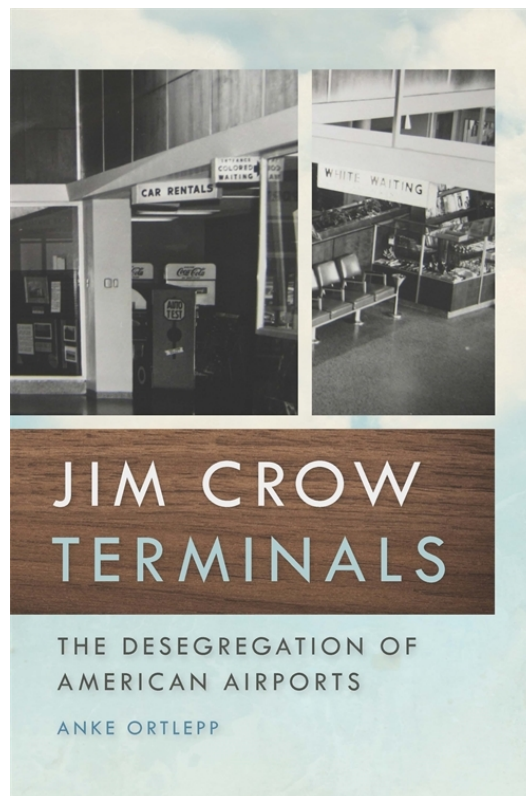
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## Off the SHELF

**Jim Crow Terminals: The Desegregation of America's Airports** by Anke Ortlepp (The University of Georgia Press, 2016: ISBN 9781469628394, \$26.00)

Air travel is associated with fun and luxury, and it is one of the safest and most easily accessible ways to cover long distances in a short period of time. Many could not imagine their lives without the convenience that aviation provides; however, this was not always the case for all Americans. In *Jim Crow Terminals*, Anke Ortlepp crafts a masterful narrative of how the transportation revolution in the post-WWII American South (1945–1965) pitted staunch municipal refusals to disrupt the social order of segregation against the deafening reluctance of the newly minted Federal Aviation Agency to take action toward ground facility matters. Until multiple fierce and long-suffering legal battles were underway in Southern airports, the ills of segregation continued their unjust existence, making the federal government an accomplice to discrimination. Victories such as the *United States vs. The City of Montgomery* and many other individual cases served as the predecessors of crucial legislation that eventually culminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The text provides 60 pages of references to source documents, court case testimonies, archival photos, and government documents to substantiate this narrative.



As America looked to its future, aviation emerged as one of its most essential industries, not just for transporting people and goods but for allowing commerce and growth to thrive in regions that had been largely agrarian. Airports were coming to the fore as the cosmopolitan, upwardly mobile way to open America to the world. With this period of growth and redefinition came a newly mobile middle class of African-American air travelers. Airports such as the well-traveled and much-heralded

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport were the sites of fly-ins, eat-ins, and other demonstrations that provided evidence for the cases that ultimately created desegregated airport environments. Although the history of other transportation industry integration efforts is well documented in the train, bus, and highway sectors, not much had been said about America's airports. Ortlepp frames the hypocrisies of consumer culture, class distinction, and the boundaries to which American citizenry was tested in addressing

racial discrimination in these spaces, as well as the trickery employed to keep local customs intact while blatantly violating federal rules.

Audiences for this book include the student who wants to draw parallels between today's social justice struggles with those of the recent past, the history buff who wants to sharpen

their understanding of one of the mid-20th century's greatest revolutions, and the legal scholar who has an interest in how systematic and targeted litigation can change America's social fabric for the better. Those interested in regional history or underrepresented features of the Civil Rights era will also find this book

fascinating, as it explores exactly how the foundations of metropolitan areas that many of us traverse today were laid.

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