

O'Halloran, Thomas J., photographer. "People and vehicles in front of the Magic Castle, Disneyland, Los Angeles, California." Photograph. Washington, D.C.: U.S. News and World Report, July 1960. From Library of Congress: U.S. News & World Report Magazine Photograph Collection. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.83257/>

# an evolution of fun

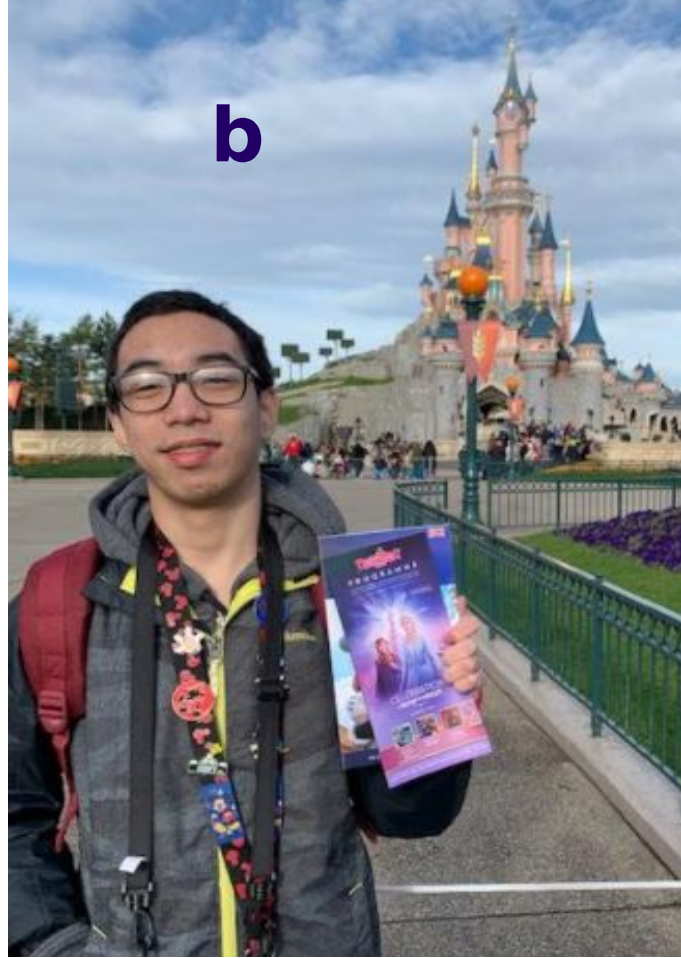
theme parks and new amusement in a  
post-WW2 America

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HIS 298: Historical Methods  
Dr. William B. Murphy, Ph.D.





a



b



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d



e



f



g

- a. Walt Disney World (EPCOT), 2015
- b. Disneyland Paris (Disneyland Park), 2020
- c. Sesame Place PA, 2011
- d. Universal Orlando (Islands of Adventure), 2023
- e. LEGOLAND New York, 2021
- f. Canada's Wonderland, 2022
- g. Disneyland Paris (Disneyland Park), 2020

# research question

## How did amusement and leisure evolve in the aftermath of the Second World War?

- rise of the themed entertainment industry; *“the Disneyland effect”* TIME magazine, June 14, 1968
- segregated post-war America; MLK Jr.’s family in Atlanta, GA Letter from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

# my thesis argument

**Amusement was changed by Disney's idea and started on the trajectory we see "theme parks" in today.**

- + "post-WW2" has existed up to the 1990s, setting up now
- + a radical shift in methodology and viewing the medium
  - > trending to more immersive environments (still!)

# “the Disneyland effect”

1. Popularity leads to proliferation.
2. In theory, these new “themed” parks generate a boom to towns and spur development.
3. Park proliferation nationwide had successes and losses.  
(C. V. Wood: Freedomland, Pleasure Island, etc.)



Walt Disney's Disneyland, season 1, episode 1, "The Disneyland Story", aired October 27, 1954 on ABC

Time magazine, author unknown, June 14, 1968 "Modern Living: The City: The Disneyland Effect"



# segregation and unequal guest experiences

two-pronged effect:

1. Black visitors (children and families)
2. Black employees (college students and senior citizens)

irony and double-sidedness; expectation vs. reality

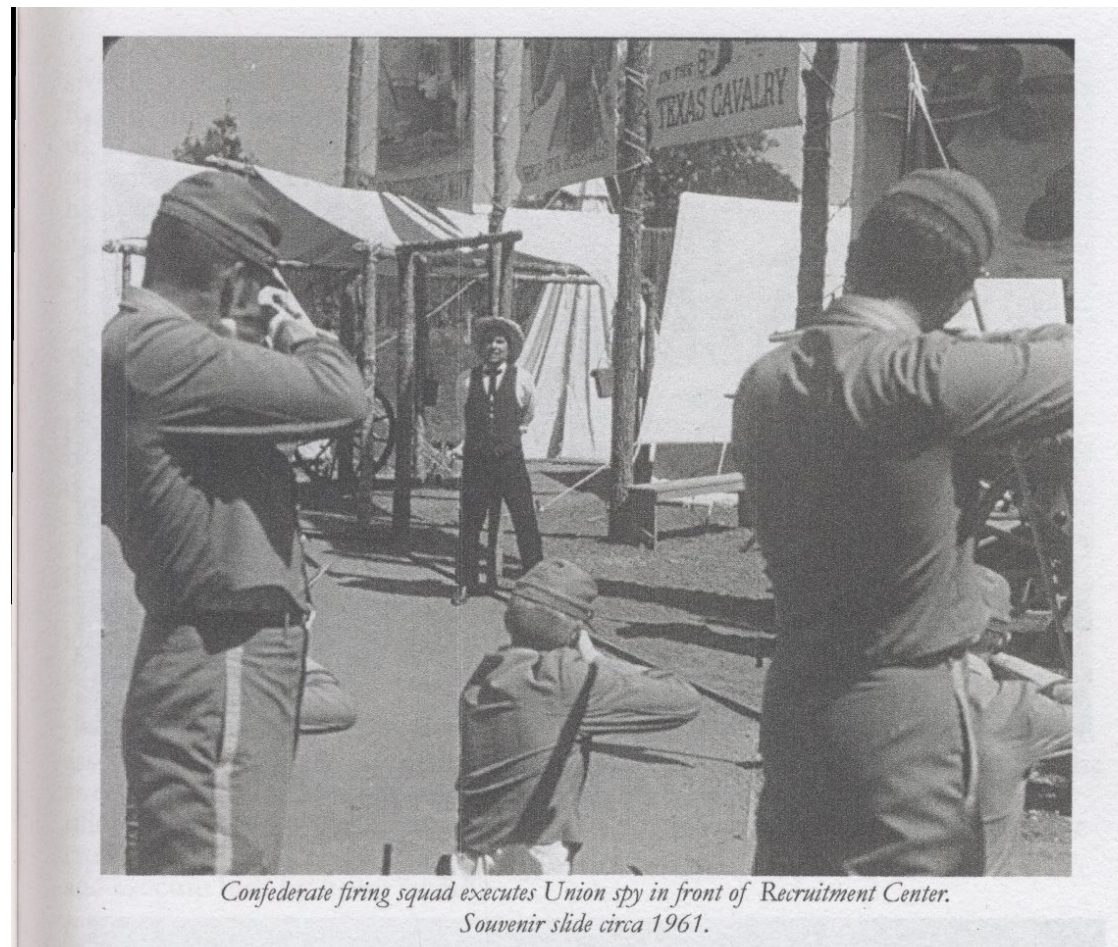
NOTE: Disneyland vs. other parks and the “Disneyland effect” in integrated 1960s-70s America

# segregation and unequal guest experiences (continued)

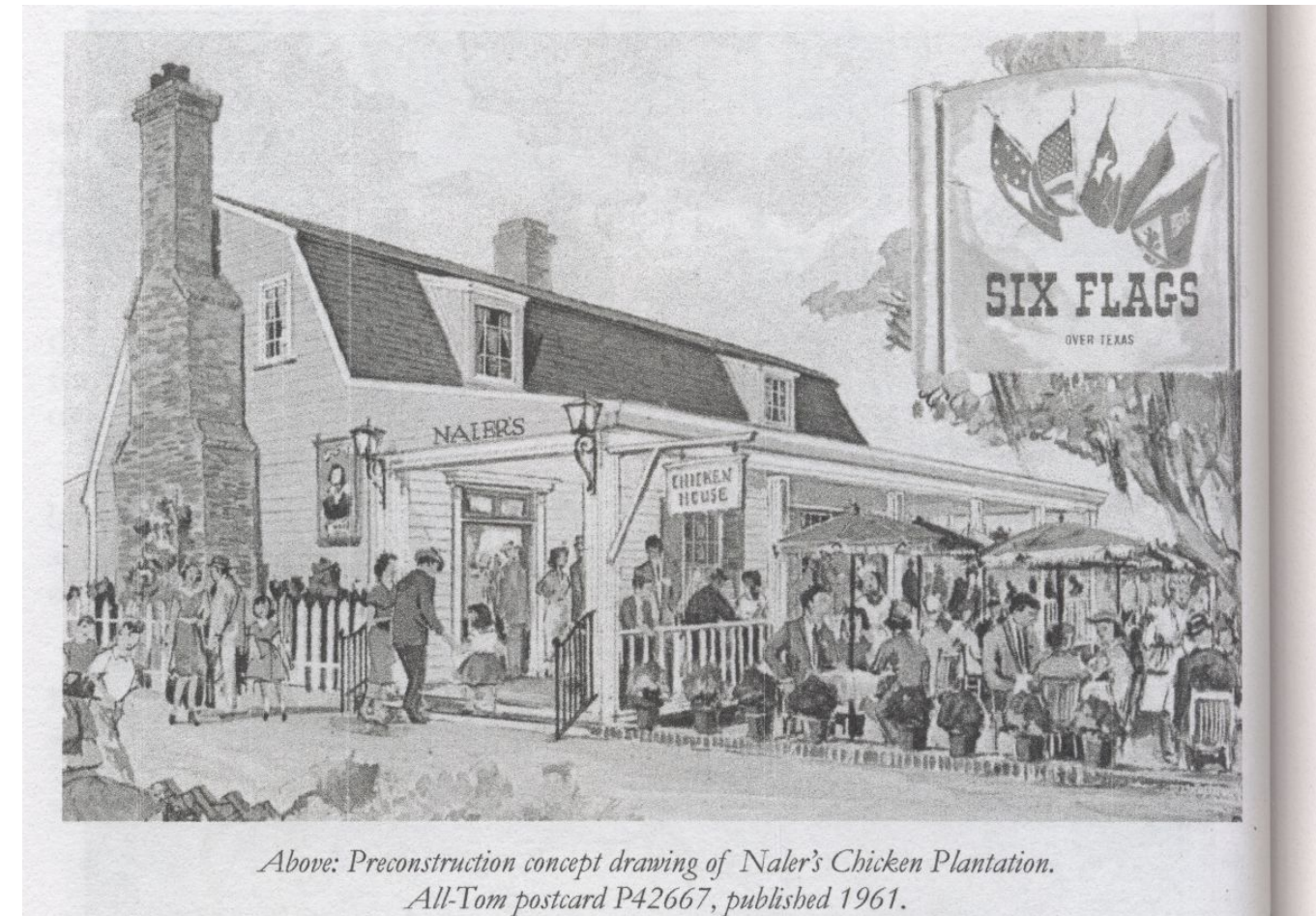
**Disneyland Integration Due**  
LOS ANGELES, July 25 (UPI)—Joseph McKnight, Congress of Racial Equality chairman on employment, said Disneyland officials had agreed tentatively today to hire Negro employes for the amusement park.  
CORE representatives were assured at the meeting yesterday that the Disneyland board of directors would consider their requests.

**CITY RIGHTS GROUP**

wire article, United Press International. *New York Times*, July 26, 1963



LEFT: press photo of a theatre troupe of college students, dressed as Confederate soldiers executing a Union spy, with a young park guest—a “recruit”—joining in? (1961)



RIGHT: postcard with concept art for Naler's Plantation House restaurant (1961)

photos from *Six Flags Over Texas: The First Fifty Years* by Davis G. McCown

# segregation and unequal guest experiences (continued)

“[W]hen you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six-year-old daughter why she cannot go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television...”

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

*Letter From Birmingham Jail*

April 16, 1963

A screenshot of a Twitter post from the account 'Defunctland' dated June 2, 2020. The post is a reply to another tweet from the same account. The text of the tweet reads: "...daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children."

Defunctland · Jun 2, 2020  
@Defunctland · Follow  
Replying to @Defunctland  
"...daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children."

A text block providing context for the tweet above. It states that Funtown became a demonstration location and includes a reference to a 1963 newspaper article about the park's closure due to an integration attempt by a group of mixed teenagers.

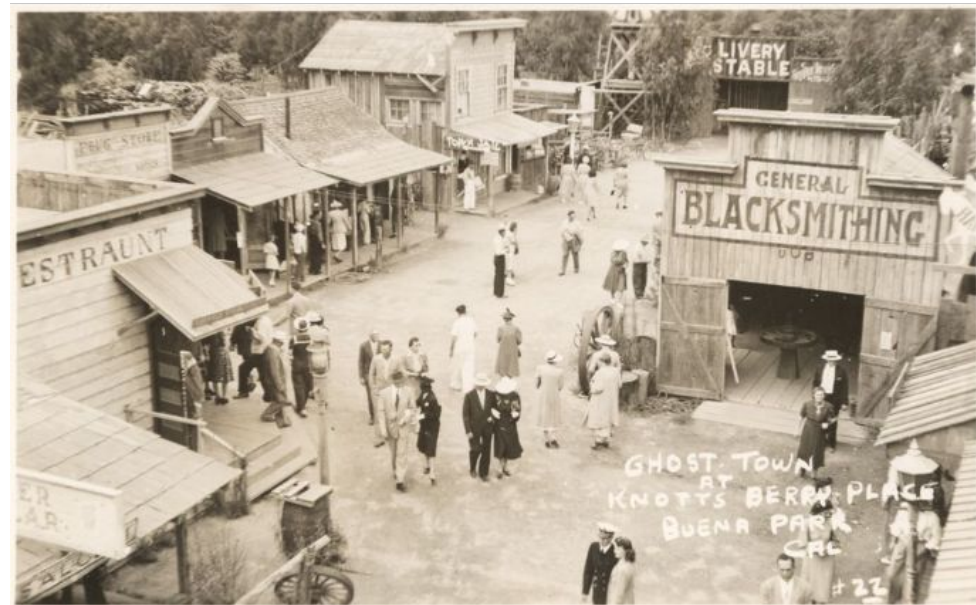
Defunctland  
@Defunctland · Follow  
And so Funtown became a demonstration location. Here is one piece in 1963 about the park shutting down because of an integration attempt by a group of mixed teenagers.

A newspaper clipping with the headline "Funtown Is Closed By Integration Bid" by Dick Hebert. The article reports that Atlanta's Funtown Amusement Park closed down its operations on Sunday afternoon after a group of white and Negro teenagers staged a desegregation attempt. A police sergeant who declined to be identified said the group was composed of "eight or 10" persons in their "late teens" about evenly. The article also mentions that the teenagers told them that was their own business and that they asked about closing the park for the night, and that the sergeant told them that was their own business. To the right of the article is a vertical column of text, partially cut off, which includes the words "Spy Pen" and "SPRI ton Sol prison has be lanta t tem's r field fo".

**Funtown Is Closed  
By Integration Bid**  
By DICK HEBERT  
Atlanta's Funtown Amusement Park closed down its operations Sunday afternoon rather than admit a group of white and Negro teen-agers staging a desegregation attempt.  
A police sergeant who declined to be identified said the group was composed of "eight or 10" persons in their "late teens" about evenly told them that was their own business. Then they asked about closing the park for the night, and I told them that was their own business.  
SPRI ton Sol prison has be lanta t tem's r field fo  
Dr. F of the did not bell's a physica  
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# what sources did I use?



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

**Chronicling America**  
Historic American Newspapers  
[chroniclingamerica.loc.gov](http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov)

The New York Times Magazine

**Hoopla and Thrills Still Pack 'Em In**  
Amusement parks show record gains — from hot dogs to parachute jumps.

By HENRY ROSENBERG

AMUSEMENT PARKS are the only industry in the United States that is growing faster than the population. Last year, according to the National Amusement Park Operators Association, the industry's gross receipts were \$1.2 billion, up from \$1.1 billion in 1967. The industry's growth is being fueled by a number of factors, including the fact that the average family now has more children than ever before, and that many of these children are being born in the suburbs, where there are no schools, no churches, and no other places where they can go to have fun.

Whether it's a machine in the street, or a roller coaster, or a hot dog stand, amusement parks are everywhere. They are the heart of the summer season, and they are the only place where you can find everything you need for a fun day out.

They are also the only place where you can find a lot of things that you can't find anywhere else. There are no schools, no churches, and no other places where you can go to have fun. There are no roller coasters, no hot dog stands, and no other places where you can find everything you need for a fun day out.

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**Expansion Set At Hersheypark**

By CHARLES P. WILSON JR.  
Eagle City Editor

HERSHEY — Plans to develop Hersheypark into one of the country's outstanding amusement centers were revealed today at a press conference here.

The plans for the development encompass a five-year period and call for the establishment of numerous new amusements, including a mammoth ferris wheel, and "little villages," including Pennsylvania Dutch, wild west and old English themes.

James E. Bobb, president of Hershey Estates, announced that the project would be carried out in five stages, with the final one coming in 1976.

It was pointed out that this project will be nearly completed by 1976, the time of the national bicentennial. Although the project was not scheduled to coincide with the national celebration, most of it will be completed at that time.

In 1972, the program calls for the completion of a carousel-circle amusement center, a Pennsylvania Dutch area, a 1,000-seat aqua theater, a "talk-a-to the animals garden" and a petting zoo.

1973's program calls for completion of a carousel-circle amusement center, a Pennsylvania Dutch area, a 1,000-seat aqua theater, a "talk-a-to the animals garden" and a petting zoo.

1974's program calls for completion of a carousel-circle amusement center, a Pennsylvania Dutch area, a 1,000-seat aqua theater, a "talk-a-to the animals garden" and a petting zoo.

1975's program calls for completion of a carousel-circle amusement center, a Pennsylvania Dutch area, a 1,000-seat aqua theater, a "talk-a-to the animals garden" and a petting zoo.

1976's program calls for completion of a carousel-circle amusement center, a Pennsylvania Dutch area, a 1,000-seat aqua theater, a "talk-a-to the animals garden" and a petting zoo.

**SUMMER PROGRAM**  
BIG STEAMER PUT-IN-BAY  
Put In Bay Island Park  
Cedar Point on Lake Erie, Sandusky

**Every Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday**

Leave Detroit at 9 a. m., for Put in Bay and Cedar Point. Round trip excursion fare to Put in Bay \$36, children half. All the afternoon at the Bay or remain on the boat to Sandusky, continuous round trip \$1.75. One way fares to Put in Bay 75c, Cedar Point or Sandusky \$1.50. No time at Cedar Point these days. Due in Detroit at 8 p. m.

FRIDAY—Leave 9 a. m. to Put in Bay, Cedar Point and Sandusky. Afternoon at the Bay or Cedar Point. Return 10:45 p. m.

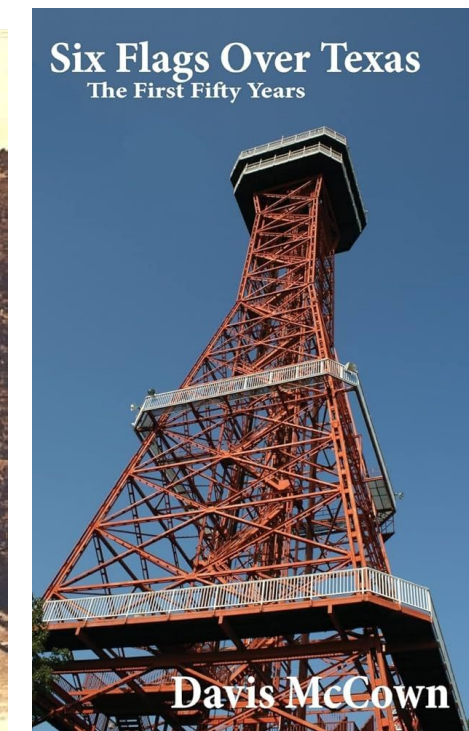
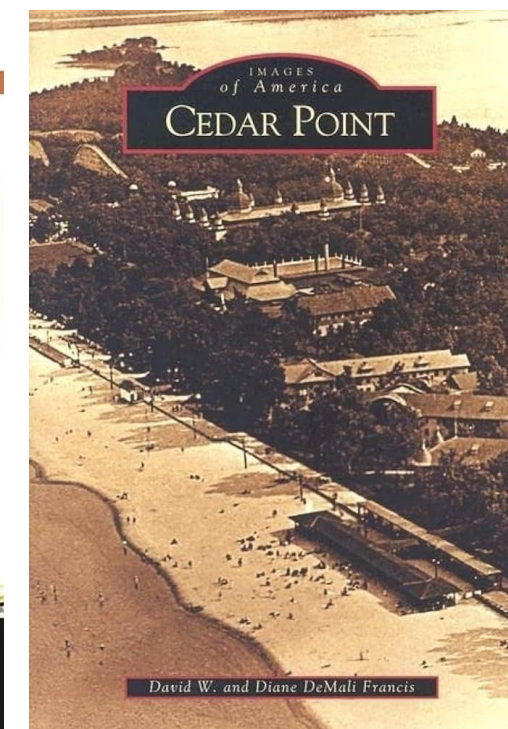
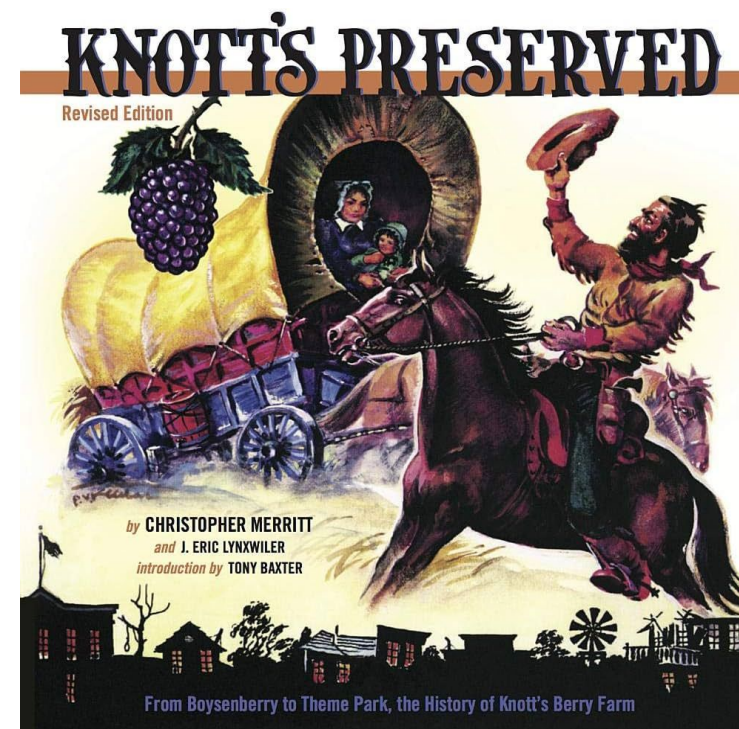
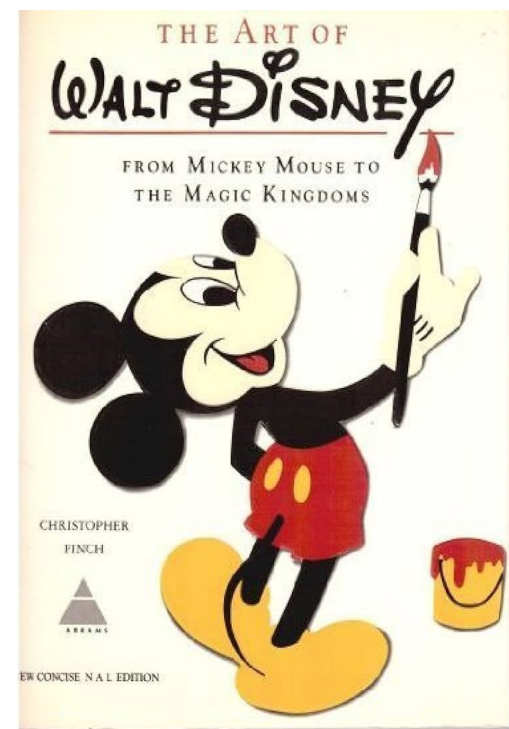
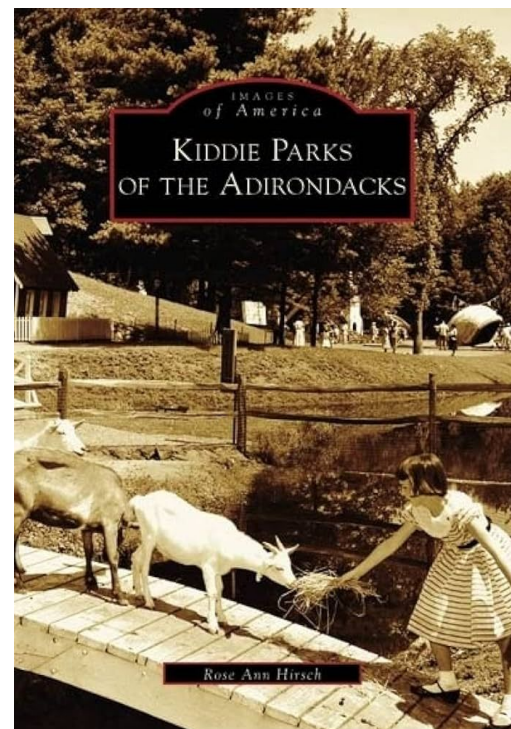
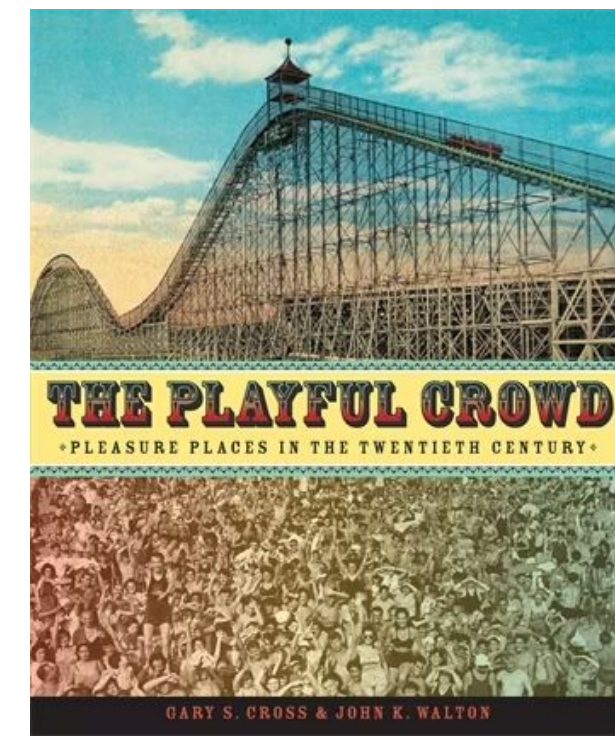
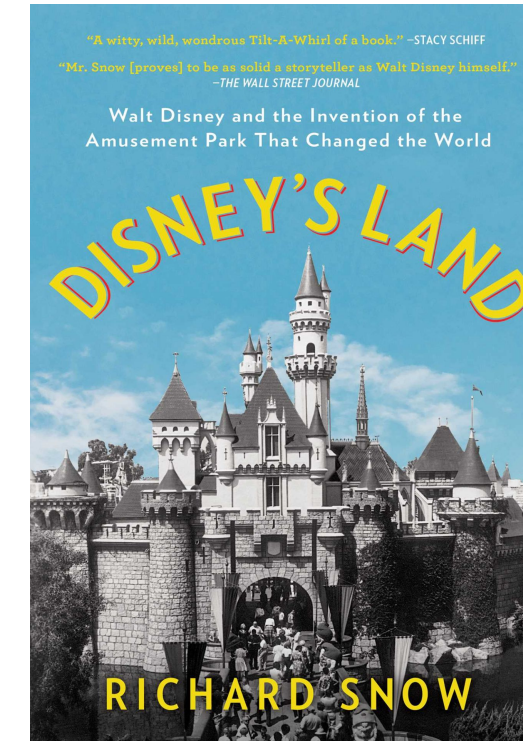
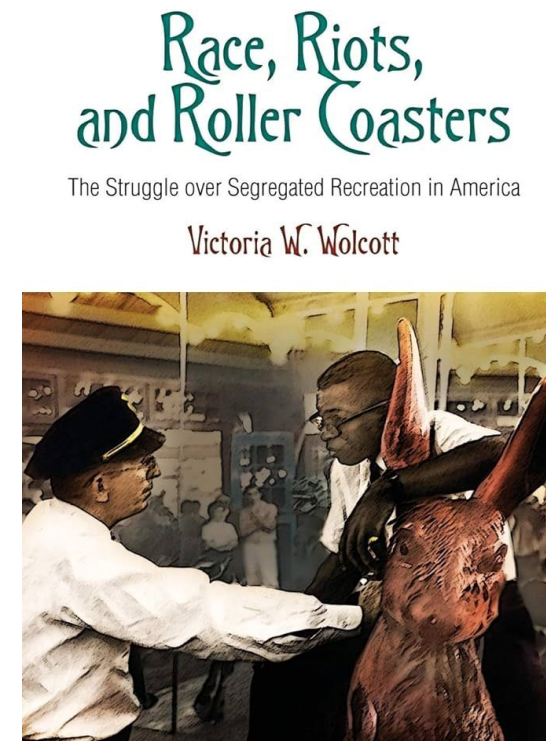
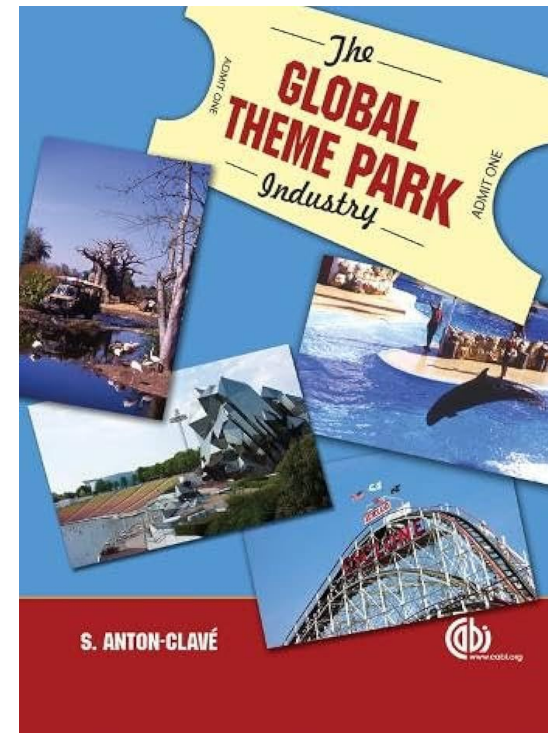
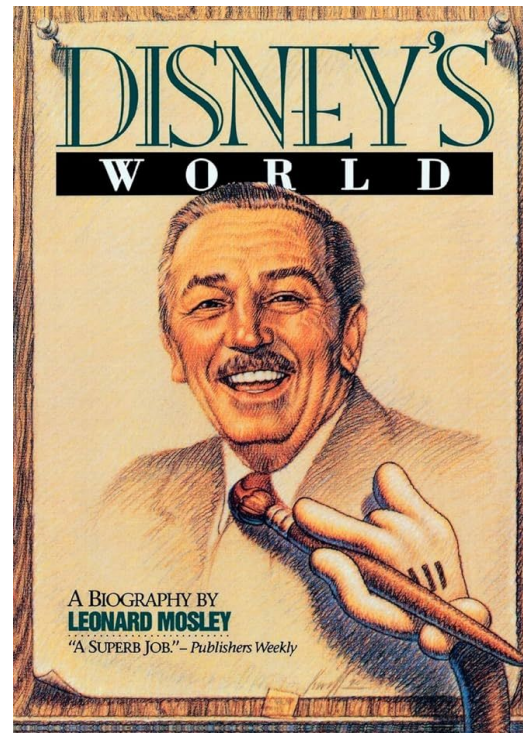
SUNDAY—Leave Detroit at 10 a. m., all the afternoon at Put in Bay. Round trip fare \$1.00, or 3 hours

**CEDAR POINT!**  
CUT-RATE EXCURSION  
FRIDAY, AUGUST 1

ENJOY A CRUISE ON THE BIG STR. PUT-IN-BAY

**Legislative Session Nears End**  
HARRISBURG (UPI)—Legislators returned to the Capitol

# what sources did I use?



# what sources did I use?

## Special acknowledgements:



Alfred C. O'Connell  
**LIBRARY**



**FORT WORTH  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**



**CHAPMAN  
UNIVERSITY**  
LEATHERBY LIBRARIES

**Columbia**  
COLLEGE CHICAGO



**CARLSON LIBRARY**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO



**PENFIELD  
LIBRARY**

A black and white photograph of a theme park scene. In the background, a large, ornate castle with multiple spires and towers is visible. In the foreground, a large crowd of people is walking along a path. To the right, a vintage-style open-top car is parked, and a horse-drawn carriage is partially visible in the lower right corner. The overall scene is busy and festive.

**questions?**