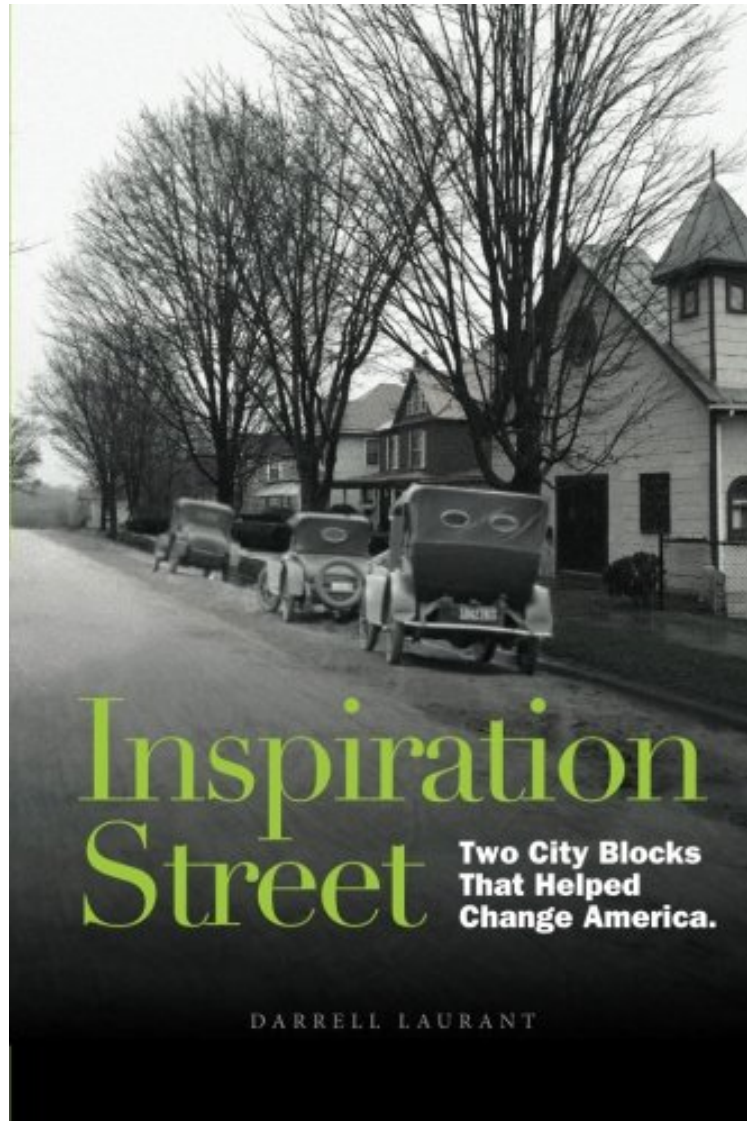


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Inspiration Street: Two City Blocks That Helped Change America

Darrell Laurant

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#1976682 in Books 2016-02-26Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.00 x .38 x 6.00l, .51 #File Name: 193820526X166 pages | File size: 45.Mb

Darrell Laurant : Inspiration Street: Two City Blocks That Helped Change America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Inspiration Street: Two City Blocks That Helped Change America:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A wonderful short history about the American experienceBy Mike Billington author of Corpus DelectableHistory is a double-edged sword.It can bring light to darkness by telling the story of the past with honesty, integrity, and good scholarship.Conversely, it can be used as a weapon to further

political and social agendas when those who write it choose to deliberately exclude some people from the text or, worse, to spread falsehoods about them. If you don't think that's true ask yourself why most Americans have never heard of the first all-black paratroop battalion in World War II or why, as another example, very few people know that the last Confederate general to surrender at the end of the Civil War was a Cherokee chief. I was a victim of that poor scholarship when I was much younger. The history books that I was assigned to read in public school and, later, at a state university were written to perpetuate the myth that the United States and - in fact - the world was the domain of white Christian men. As students, we were led to believe that white men, and only white men, were responsible for the great achievements in science and industry; that they, and only they, were responsible for elevating civilization. Thus, my textbooks contained no mention of the famous Tuskegee Airmen or the Japanese-American regimental combat team that fought the Nazis in Europe and emerged as the most highly decorated unit in that theater. Likewise, very few women of any race or creed were ever mentioned. Marie Curie got a mention, of course, because she did win two Nobel Prizes for her achievements in science. There was, however, no mention of other pioneering females such as mathematician Ada King-Noel, the Countess of Lovelace, who laid the foundations for computer science in the 1830s and is credited with writing the world's very first algorithm. Thankfully, there is a new generation of historians abroad in the United States; men and women who are determined to write articles and books that tell the stories of ALL Americans, not just those who are approved by increasingly jingoistic and - sadly - racist boards of education. Not surprisingly, many of these new historians are homegrown, street-level writers who have chosen to tell the stories of local people, places, and events that shed a whole new light on the American experience. Darrell Laurant is among them and while he might chafe a bit at being called an historian he is one nonetheless. A novelist and a retired newspaper columnist, his book "Inspiration Street: Two City Blocks That Helped Change America" is a shining example of how history could be - and should be - written. Focusing his attention on two city blocks in Lynchburg, Virginia populated primarily by African-American families, he shines a much-needed spotlight on the achievements of some of the men and women who lived there and who have - despite their accomplishments - largely been ignored in standard history textbooks. They include Dr. R. Walter Johnson, a physician and tennis coach who helped develop the skills that Arthur Ashe and Althea Gibson would later use to become world famous; Harlem Renaissance poet Annie Spencer; and Frank Trigg, who was born a slave but overcame that and the loss of an arm to become a college president. Laurant writes in an easy, very accessible style. "Inspiration Street" is not a weighty tome destined to gather dust on a library shelf somewhere but a fairly short book, one that I carried around in my backpack and read while having coffee at my favorite cafe. He has a journalist's knack for putting the reader "in the moment" and a reporter's eye for detail. More importantly, he has - I believe - done a lot to help dispel some of the stereotypes and racial myths that we, as Americans, cling to with such fervor. Reading about the remarkable men and women that grace the pages of this short history of two city blocks is, well, not to put too fine a point on it, "inspiring." An easy read, it's my opinion that "Inspiration Street" should be read by any and all Americans interested in the true history of the United States and it is a book that I highly recommend. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Victor O. Cardwell Great and real "street level" story. Moving and real. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. info helps By Customer good insight

This book describes some of the intriguing people who have lived in the 1300 and 1400 blocks of Pierce Street in Lynchburg, Virginia, but it is also more than that. Through what they accomplished during the days of segregation and beyond, these individuals represent 100 years of African-American history in microcosm.

About the Author Darrell Laurant is a veteran of more than 40 years in journalism, serving as a sportswriter, reporter and columnist for newspapers in South Carolina and Virginia. Inspiration Street is his fourth book, following Even Here: A Small Virginia Community, a Violent Decade (1992); A City unto Itself: Lynchburg VA in the 20th Century (1997), and The Kudzu Kid, his first novel, published in 2014. A history major at Belmont Abbey College near Charlotte, North Carolina, he has long been intrigued by the effects of the past on the present and future. The issue of race, especially in the South, has been of particular interest. Laurant retired from the newspaper business in 2013 in order to devote more time to his other writing. He now lives and writes in Lake George, New York. He and his wife Gail have two children—Jeremy Laurant, of Fort Collins, Colorado, and Cindee Layne, of Lynchburg Virginia—and four grandchildren.