



Puerto Rican Citizen: History and Political Identity in Twentieth-Century New York City (Historical Studies of Urban America)

Lorrin Thomas

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By the end of the 1920s, just ten years after the Jones Act first made them full-fledged Americans, more than 45,000 native Puerto Ricans had left their homes and entered the United States, citizenship papers in hand, forming one of New York City's most complex and distinctive migrant communities. In *Puerto Rican Citizen*, Lorrin Thomas for the first time unravels the many tensions—historical, racial, political, and economic—that defined the experience of this group of American citizens before and after World War II.

Building its incisive narrative from a wide range of archival sources, interviews, and first-person accounts of Puerto Rican life in New York, this book illuminates the rich history of a group that is still largely invisible to many scholars. At the center of *Puerto Rican Citizen* are Puerto Ricans' own formulations about political identity, the responses of activists and ordinary migrants to the failed promises of American citizenship, and their expectations of how the American state should address those failures. Complicating our understanding of the discontents of modern liberalism, of race relations beyond black and white, and of the diverse conceptions of rights and identity in American life, Thomas's book transforms the way we understand this community's integral role in shaping our sense of citizenship in twentieth-century America.

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