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## Growing Old in New Town: What Marked Me, What Marred Me, What Made Me

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## Growing Old in New Town: What Marked Me, What Marred Me, What Made Me

### Abstract

Wendy Moore, Doctoral student at the University of South Carolina's SLIS program, and a cataloger at Francis Marion's James A. Rogers Library, reviews *Growing Old in New Town: What Marked Me, What Marred Me, What Made Me* by Michael E. Goings.

### Keywords

book review, Growing Old in New Town, Michael E. Goings



## BOOK REVIEW

### **Growing Old in New Town: What Marked Me, What Marred Me, What Made Me**

Michael E. Goings

Lulu Publishing, 2015, \$7.99

As I read Michael E. Goings' *Growing Old in New Town*, I was taken back to a time in which I had been reminded of by my parents, grandparents, and others who have actually *lived* it (at least most of it).

*Growing Old in New Town: What Marked Me, What Marred Me, What Made Me*

is a personal account of Michael E. Goings' life growing up as an African-American boy, primarily in 1950s and 1960s (and 70s) Dillon, South Carolina in the small community of New Town. *Growing Old* chronicles Goings' life from

boyhood through adolescence. The fifth of ten children, he not only introduces us to the trials, tribulations, and the good times of a large-poor African American family but also to a southern African American community.

Goings describes New Town as not exactly the top of the line environment to live in. It is a community filled with families of poverty, not many business establishments, or recreational facilities, a community of violence and with not much opportunity in the era of Jim Crow.

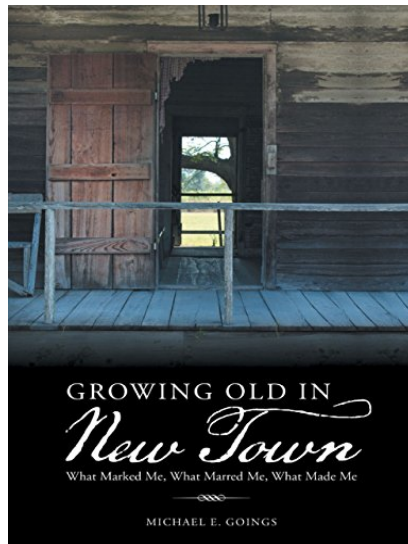
Since this community was not a part of the city of Dillon, it did not possess many of the luxuries we enjoy today, such as garbage collection, city water, sewage, and other conveniences which most of the citizens of Dillon did. Thus, we are introduced to the world of out houses and other alternatives used in the place of modernization.

One of Goings' greatest assets is his attention to detail. Throughout *Growing* he provides a great characterization of those who made an impact in his life, from family members to teachers, neighbors, his pastor, the

church and others. He also provides in great detail certain events big and small.

Some experiences dealt with childhood bullying with siblings and relatives, as well as neighborhood bullies.

Other experiences shared were small and some were somewhat spiritual, such as his sense of peace in hearing the rain falling on the windows of his home, the beauty he saw in lightning bugs, and his sense of belonging in his church. He also shares his experience in seeing hogs slaughtered for food.



We get a sense of closeness in his relationships with his siblings and his parents, especially his mother. He describes his mother as a hardworking and virtuous woman and his father as a hard working man who taught him the quality of possessing good work ethics. His father rose above circumstances to own his own business. He asserts the pride he felt when his father stood up to a racist. He strongly credits them for the man he is today. However, as the saying goes, *you take the good with the bad*. Thus, this is precisely Goings' strongest attribute, telling the truth no matter how painful it may be.

Although his father was a hard worker, a good provider, and would *give you the shirt off his back*, Goings also describes his father as an alcoholic and a womanizer who often physically abused his mother.

Despite all the heartaches, difficulties, and other atrocities in this little community, Goings realizes that overall, New Town is a community filled with good people and that this community made him what he is today.

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