MARK EVANS

MAIN STREET, AMERICA: HISTORIES OF I-95

“Main Street, America: Histories of I-95” fills a historiographical gap by arguing the Interstate Highway System can only be accurately understood through the study of local histories. The existing literature tends toward national, system-wide evaluations and consequently fails to capture the complexity of the Interstate Highway’s interaction with the communities through which it passes. By focusing on the backbone of the Interstate Highway System, I-95, this dissertation demonstrates responses to Interstate Highways were dependent on the interplay of myriad local factors. Additionally, it argues that I-95’s effect on communities was determined by local conditions. Studying individual communities along a single route results in a new way of understanding the Interstate Highway System. Rather than serving as a simple catalyst of economic growth or a harbingers of destroyed cities, I-95 (and by extension, the larger Interstate Highway System) emerges as a far more interesting subject, one with a history more complex than previously understood.