



# **Toxic Drift: Pesticides and Health in the Post-World War II South (Walter Lynwood Fleming Lecture in Southern History)**

*Pete Daniel*

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Following World War II, chemical companies and agricultural experts promoted the use of synthetic chemicals as pesticides on weeds and insects. It was, Pete Daniel points out, a convenient way for companies to apply their wartime research to the domestic market. In *Toxic Drift*, Daniel documents the particularly disastrous effects this campaign had on the South's public health and environment, exposing the careless mentality that allowed pesticide application to swerve out of control. The quest to destroy pests, Daniel contends, unfortunately outran research on insect resistance, ignored environmental damage, and downplayed the dangers of residue accumulation and threats to fish, wildlife, domestic animals, and humans. Using legal sources, archival records, newspapers, and congressional hearings, Daniel constructs a moving, factfilled account of the use, abuse, and regulation of pesticides from World War II until 1970.

**AUTHOR BIO:** Pete Daniel is the author of *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s*, winner of the Elliott Rudwick Prize, and *Standing at the Crossroads: Southern Life in the Twentieth Century*, among other books. He is a curator at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History and lives in Washington, D.C.

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