

INCREDIBLE INJUSTICE:
LYNCHING IN THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES

By

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Thesis under the direction of Anthony Parent, Ph.D., Professor of History

Fear illuminated by competition legitimized lynching. This practice unequivocally altered the mindset, character, and spirit of the African American male. A societal hierarchy was built off of this practice which owned roots in hatred and fear. It's by products were racism and "Jim Crow" segregation. This research, addresses historical content of lynching as well as the continuation of trends used for legitimizing the practice. Examined are the periods from Post Reconstruction America until the present. The goal of this project is to enhance our understanding of how lynching was legitimized and to provide further insight into racial and social fears which radiated from the ideologies of slavery and lynching.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Lynching was a crime of extremism. It evolved from the attitudes of slavery, brought about by trepidation, malcontent, and a macabre neurosis on the parts of white citizens, especially white men. It was the single most effective social policing tool our country has ever seen. Fear illuminated by competition legitimized lynching. This practice unequivocally altered the mindset, character, and spirit of the African American male. A societal hierarchy was built off of this practice which owned roots in hatred and fear. The byproducts of such ideals were racism and “Jim Crow” segregation. This research, addresses the historical the content of lynching as well as the continuation of trends used for legitimizing the practice. Examined are the periods from Post-Reconstruction America until the present. The goal of this project is to enhance our understanding of how lynching was legitimized and to provide further insight into racial and social fears which radiated from the ideologies of slavery and lynching.

The historical origins of lynching are examined in Chapter two and the idea of vigilantism is conceptualized. Racial hostility is used to reaffirm how slavery and lynching are linked. Analyzing the use of science, sermons, and news publications of the time, this project explores how the ideals of prejudice and racism were continually reprocessed through the minds of whites. Using the aforementioned dynamics, this chapter will draw from past sociological work detailing a wayward pseudo-science which ultimately casts its shadow on race relations for decades to come. Delineated from this subject comes the brute caricature of black men as well as the rape myth two ideologies

commonly associated with competition and fear expressed by whites towards blacks. The subtopic of these philosophies during this chapter revolves around the distorted sense of chivalry which began to radiate throughout southern white culture. Also there is the question of white men's identity after the Civil War and their place in the social structure of a burgeoning new democracy. Furthermore, the perpetuation of consecutive generations of moral injury and oppression are examined to emphasize the development of complacency and an undying defeatist mentality by American blacks. This research will evaluate the ideas of contentment with the status quo of slavery and lynching in an effort to further the argument that all three, fear, competition, and complacency were contingent factors that helped to further both institutions.

In Chapter three, I outline the historical cases of the lynchings of both Claude Neal and Henry Smith. The Neal case is used to introduce the idea of corruption on the part of government officials; albeit at the local level, where lynching is involved. Also, I further examine the idea of how spectacle lynching grew out of community gossip and unconfirmed reports. Highlighted are sociological misconceptions about blacks. The case of Henry Smith outlines the savagery of the spectacle lynching. This chapter illuminates the important theme of lynchings as communal sacrifices. Smith's murder set a precedent for violence and also served the function of reasserting the power struggle of white control over blacks, especially when white women were involved. The discussion of high profile officials at the federal level is also now emphasized, as Anti-Lynching Legislation moves into focus. The origins of the NAACP and Anti-Lynching legislation are now discussed since its creation coincides with the Anti-Lynching movement. The case of Rubin Stacy is used to highlight the communal nature of spectacle lynching.

In Chapter four, I outline historical and sociological events that have occurred during recent history under the argument that the continued perpetuation of fear and competition between races is sometimes more blatant now, than in the past. The cases of James Byrd Jr., Amandou Diallo, Abner Louima, are each examined to outline the current and historical patterns of lynching. Lastly, I look at the present day comparisons of societal structure against those discussed earlier. The argument that competition and fear, both historically and sociologically, legitimized racial tones in this country articulates the attitudes of slave-owners and working class whites. These ideologies created feelings of malcontent, and a macabre neurosis on the part of whites, which evolved from the past and still permeates society today.

Few parallels exist in modern society that compare to the abomination of lynching in the United States. The dawn of slavery along with lynching essentially equated to the American holocaust. From most accounts from the years of 1882 until 1930 lynching claimed approximately 3000 lives (Tolnay and Beck 1995, taken from Garoutte, 2), with more than two thousand blacks dying at the hands of white lynchers (Brundage, 132). The worst period of lynching occurred after Reconstruction until 1900 when southern whites felt the need to reassert their authority over blacks (McGovern, 2). Donald Black uses Tolnay and Beck's, *Festival of Violence*, to quantify the southern phenomenon on lynching. Black argues that "ten southern states (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee) from 1882 to 1930, constituted the overwhelming majority – at least 90 percent – of the occasions that precipitated lynchings" (Tolnay and Beck 1995; Brundage, 49; taken from Garoutte, 2 (Footnote, 1, taken from Tolnay and Beck 1995). Black continues his

argument asserting that the most common [reason for lynching] was murder (nearly 40 percent), followed by sexual assault (30 percent), non-sexual assault (10 percent), theft, robbery, and arson (nearly 10 percent (Brundage, 49).

White-on-black violence was by far most prevalent during both eras and was legitimized by outlandish pseudo-sciences, myths of rape and violence against white women by blacks, biblical subterfuge, and propaganda by the news media at the time. However, it should be noted that not all victims were lynched by interracial mobs. Intra-racial (same-race) violence did occur. Beck and Tolnay argue that from 1822-1930, 148 southern blacks died at the hands of mobs that were integrated or composed entirely of African Americans. While this argument would seem to refute several components of this work, Brundage offers quantitative data from those periods where trending indicates that “lynchings simply mimicked the secular trend in mob violence and that there is little unique about these less conventional varieties of lynchings (Brundage, 133-135).

In essence these lynchings were a copy-cat effect of the dominant tendency of white on black violence. Which begs the question, why were blacks lynched by their own kind? Beck and Tolnay offer this as explanation which additionally enhances this projects earlier assertion of competition between men. Beck and Tolnay state that “[the] more typical incident of interracial lynchings...were more likely to lynch blacks when they felt threatened by the black population, especially economically (Brundage, 140). A rise in lynchings is noted from 1882 until around the turn of the century noted in Brundage; Beck and Tolnay; and McGovern. Beck and Tolnay however, contend that the same general approach may be taken to interpret black-on-black violence. The black population was not only replicating white mob violence on blacks but their reasons for doing so, were essentially the same. Fear and competition were the predictors of intraracial violence. Beck and Tolnay state that interracial tensions must figure only marginally in...consideration of the social forces responsible for the activities of black mobs (140).

However, it must also be noted that blacks were deceived into believing it was their place to help whites capture blacks accused of crimes. Theodore Roosevelt states that the “better element” of blacks could help abolish lynching by relinquishing colored criminals to the authorities (Dray, 160). This type of misinformation played on the inverse of the argument. It used black fears of being lynched by white mobs against them in order to illicit more attacks; by their [blacks] own indictments against their own people.

The principles behind the spectacle of beating blacks into submission during the days of slavery were transferred over to the exhibitions of stringing them up to the nearest tree or light post during the next century. African American civil rights leaders of early-twentieth century, W.E.B. Du Bois and Ida B. Wells-Barnett, attempted to break down barriers imposed by this smear on American history. The creation of Anti-Lynching propaganda and the inception of institutions which looked to combat social injustices like the Anti-Lynching Bureau and the NAACP were some of the initial methods. With civil rights and equal treatment of blacks virtually destroyed by slavery and lynching, black leaders understood that the ripple effects from these atrocities would continue for generations. Although lynchings are much more uncommon today but still do occur but out of plain sight. James Byrd Jr., of Jasper, Texas was murdered within the last ten years by whites for no other reason than being African American. The question of fear and competition between African Americans and whites is possibly more pertinent today, due to racist ideologies and the formation of a staggered social structure.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL ORGINS OF LYNCHING; RACIAL HOSTILITY

Slavery Origins

Cotton production made an institution of slavery. It was an enormous part of the United States economy. Plantation owners saw their wealth increase and wanted to hold on that prominence. Du Bois states that “a wave of legislation passed over the South, prohibiting, the slaves from learning to read and write, forbidding Negroes to preach, and interfering with Negro religious meetings” (196). Southern governments wanted to shut the door on any higher learning or possible plots of insurrection. Masters were now Negro protectors. They “provided protection, physical necessities, and minimal brutality in return for slave obedience and loyalty” (Giddings, 41). Everything was geared toward keeping the machine of cotton production moving. In the meantime, slavery’s brutality began to dismantle nearly all other African institutions. Slaves were separated from their families and moved or sold at will if misconduct was suspected. Whites made sure that the African practice of marriage disintegrated. Du Bois claims that “marriage became geographical and transient...the private home as a self-protective, independent unit did not exist (187). In essence, men were no longer the protectors of the families, nor did they feel like men. With many men no longer connected to or obliged to provide safety and security for those around them, “sexual promiscuity” arose. Du Bois states that a “weak [African] community life was left in its place.” Separation caused the collapse of the institution of marriage for blacks. Weakened by deliberate obstructions the black community failed. The psychological havoc this brought was tremendous. It created a

defeatist mentality and introduces the ideas of conformity and complacency which will be discussed later. Such principles were more than contributing factors to the reason the institution of lynching was allowed to last for as long as it did.

After the Civil War

The self portrait of the Post-Reconstruction United States offered extraordinary optimism for a fledgling democracy. In turn, that photograph also proposed impressive components of modernization and progress past the rudimentary constraints that ultimately caused the Civil War. Restrictions which were left unchecked, until they finally led the country into a downward spiral of upheaval and bloodshed over ideals. Moral principles held so securely together by religious fervor mixed with bigoted malcontent, that a cloudy smokescreen of discriminatory pragmatism was cultivated. Slavery had ripped America apart. Southern states fought to keep their livelihood and the slave-race that helped to maintain it. The North fought against the injustice that it witnessed the South imposing on slaves. However, with the war behind them and emancipation on the horizon, African Americans now faced life as free citizens. A need to understand how to function without slavery and the necessity to find a means to support and police such a drastic change in lifestyles and policy was desperately essential.

Some African American legislators tried to assist with this conversion through government. Individuals like Hiram Rhodes Revels (1870) the first black Senator and Joseph Rainey, elected to the House of Representatives that same year beat the odds and were elected to office during reconstruction like (Wikipedia, s.v “Compromise of 1877”).

However, their dreams of creating an equal footing for Southern blacks with the additions of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution were short lived. They quickly realized there was little chance of making headway due to intimidation tactics from Southern Democrats. A number of events occurred in succession which eventually lead to the threat of violence. One such occurrence was the “redeeming” of Southern states by Democrats was the result of an effort to push out Radical Republicans who fought for the granting of political rights to newly freed slaves (Wikipedia, s.v. “Compromise of 1877”). Another was the disputed Presidential election of 1876 between Rutherford B. Hayes and Samuel J. Tilden, in addition to the Compromise of 1877. This decree was a written agreement between Hayes and Tilden which essentially removed the remaining policing force of federal troops from Florida, South Carolina, and Louisiana and awarded Hayes the election and White House (Wikipedia, s.v. “Compromise of 1877”). Faced with the prospect of no protection, very little political clout, and diminutive wages, African Americans living in the South had little choice but to arrange sharecropping relationships with former slave masters, or farmers just to make a living. In doing so, they created a race set apart from that which existed for slave’s years prior. Whites again seized on this mind-set and began to form coalitions in order to keep the Negro at bay. Intimidation and fear were used to propagate organizations such as the Klu Klux Klan (KKK). Not only were Africans forced to adapt to a new life of servitude, they were also brutalized by their employers.



Philip Dray, in a caption to the above illustrations states “Whipping was the Klan’s preferred mode of punishment in the Reconstruction south, explicitly reminding blacks of their former status” (Dray, 242). Punishment was meted out to any individual, victim is African American female. Note the amount of men surrounding – this can be considered a prelude to spectacle lynchings.

About Lynching

Several theories surround how the institution of lynching came into existence. W. Fitzhugh Brundage author of *Under Sentence of Lynching in the South* argues that lynching was not exclusively an American practice. Brundage states that “it [lynching] has appeared in such diverse places as ancient Greece and republican Rome, Africa, China, and South Asia, early modern Europe, and in some earlier, traditional Native American societies” (Brundage, 51). Henry Rhoades, author of *Lynch Law – An American Community Enigma* quotes James Elbert Cutler’s work *Lynch Law* as the most

accurate historic account of the subject. Cutler offers several plausible hypotheses, the first involving James Fitzstephen Lynch. Apparently, Lynch, who was the Mayor of Galway, Ireland in 1493, “hung his own son, against the wishes of the Galway townspeople, for killing the nephew of a Spanish friend of the Mayor.” Rhoades states that Cutler “quickly dismisses” Lynch as the possible catalyst due to this incident involving a trial and that Lynch was “acting in his capacity as an authorized public official” (Rhoades, 1). Lynching involved a rushed justice hardly ever involving the court system or a fair trial and that was not the case here.

Another account of the origination of lynching involved an article published in the Niles Register for August 8, 1835. Cutler states that there was a poacher in Washington County, Pennsylvania, who was given the ultimatum to leave the county within twenty-four hours or suffer the consequences. The poacher did not leave. This incensed locals, who then formed a mob. Cutler contends that one neighbor was named Lynch and he was appointed judge. Lynch ordered that the man received “300 lashes, and if he still refused to leave, he would receive another 300 lashes.” The man left on his own accord so the second set of lashes was not needed. Although this was a solitary incident of summary justice, events of this nature became more commonplace. The more common argument made by numerous scholars including Cutler, involves Charles Lynch. Born in Chesnut Hill, Virginia in 1736, he is said to be the father of lynching in this country. Lynch was chosen to be the presiding official over matters involving lawbreakers in Lynchburg, after serving both in the Virginia House of Burgess in 1767 and as a Battalion rifleman in 1781. During the latter stages of the Revolutionary War it became very dangerous to escort prisoners long distances for trial. With this inability to take both criminal and

witness long distances and provide adequate protection, Lynch along with others “came together to form more expedient ways of dealing with the criminal element” (Rhoades, 3).

This vigilantism presented the United States with two new concepts. The first was the convening of men together in groups to perform summary justice and the second was the exclusion of any type of formal court system. The first notion was new. Oftentimes men had banded together for a common purpose but vigilante justice in any organized form was rare. Power existed in numbers but this type of authority was never intentionally placed in the hands of regular citizens. Left unchecked more mobs would emerge, creating their own laws and sentences for indiscretions. The second concept involved men stepping over the prescribed conventions of formal justice and creating their own pseudo-court and jury. The primary problem with this is there is no impartiality. If the wife of a man is killed, does he not have a vested interest in taking vengeance on her murderer? If not checked, this would lead to anarchy and a collapse of the government. This new form of vigilantism quietly moved through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries until white southerners seized control of the ideology after the Civil War, and manipulated its purpose.

Before slavery ended, most lynching victims were white. The victims ranged from adulterers, to the treasonous. However, as Tolnay and Beck argued and this research indicates, once slavery was over the vast majority of hate crimes were targeted at the black populace. Any missteps by an African American were perceived as a notion of such horrific proportions by whites that it easily legitimized whatever individual punishment a lynch mob had waiting. Racial hostility was born out of this philosophy.

Racial Hostility

Racial hostility within this country was a learned ideology. Passed down from old to young, from the advent of slavery white men, women, and children were educated through; sermons, science, news publications, school, and community meetings, that they were of a better quality than all others. The Christian faith in particular aided in shaping attitudes about racial hostility. Donald Matthews author of *The Southern Rite of Human Sacrifice; Part II: Religion as Punishment*, references Clifford Geertz, author of *Interpretation of Cultures*, to explain how religion was morphed to facilitate the practice of racism. Geertz states that religions were seen as cultural systems of symbols and thus “established powerful, pervasive, and long lasting moods and motivations in [humans] by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of facticity that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic” (Matthews, 6). In this manner, whites were edified by the religious in both sermon and song that blacks possessed negative cultural symbols opposed to the positive virtues that whites maintained. The condemnation by God due to Ham’s punishment was a biblical indictment of enormous proportion. Betty Wood author of *The Origins of America Slavery: Freedom and Bondage in the English Colonies* offers details to the beginnings of slavery. She argues that “European thinkers had long held the justification for slavery in the book of Genesis” (Wood, 11). Noah’s son Ham peered on his naked body and Noah decreed that as a punishment Ham’s son Canaan (and by implication his descendants) would forever be a servant of servants (11).

Slavery, as the main catalyst for racism, provides the context for religious subterfuge and assists in proving that the Negro was an experiment gone terribly wrong

for this country. The Portuguese, English, Spanish, French, and Dutch initiated the slave trade of African peoples in the fifteenth century (Du Bois, 17). Explorer Richard Eden's impressions of the West Africans in mid 1550 equate, "those which we call Moore, Moorens, or Negroes, [as] a people of beastly lvyngge, without a god, law, religion, or common wealth" (Wood, 24). In the European mind this created an association between slavery, godlessness, and sin. W.E.B. Du Bois states in *The Negro* that this gave rise to the term "Hamite" implying the relation between Africans and the lineage to Ham. (Du Bois, 16). Africans were now associated with perpetual servitude as well as non Christian behavior. Europeans began to demonize the African race. They viewed the Africans as creatures with animalistic qualities stating that West African "men... are libidinous as apes that attempt women" (Woods, 25).

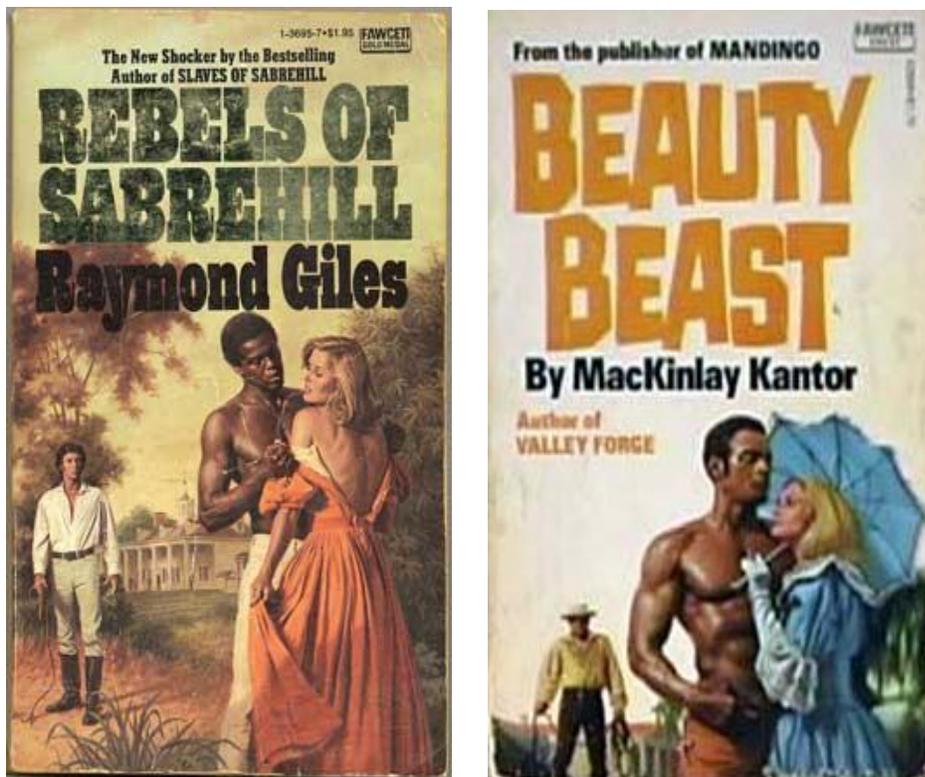
Another misrepresentation was the education of impurity which dealt with the theoretical contamination of black skin and hair. And the most dangerous of all symbols was the highly desirable virginal white women normally associated with the sexually uncontrollable African American male. Thus, religion became one of the major belief systems which clergy utilized to invalidate goodwill towards blacks. Racial polarization was recognized as a community effort which drew its authority from the church. Matthews utilizes Arthur Raper author of *The Tragedy of Lynching*, for further analysis asserting that he [Raper] "understood that religion and community were fused and observed that clergyman all too easily reflected the values of their community that nullified Christian compassion for black victims" He continues stating that the "ministers had not taught their people the sacredness and value of human personality" (Matthews, 3-4). This cornerstone in the belief system of the Christian philosophy was manipulated in

order to serve whites during a fearful and competitive period of time. Lisa Garoutte, author of *Lynching in the U.S. South: Incorporating the Historical Record on Race, Class, and Gender* utilizes her research on the sociological aspect of competition theory to illustrate. She states that that working-class whites fear economic competition from racial minorities, and thus engage in violence as a form of intimidation (Garoutte, 8). In losing the Civil War, whites were broken economically and psychologically. Paula Giddings, author of “*When and Where I Enter, The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*,” argues that after the Civil War white men were forced to remind themselves what is meant to be civilized. (Giddings, 78). In other words, during this time, white men took it upon themselves to re-legitimize their race as superior, undoubtedly to quell the upheaval that existed within the country after the war had taken place. Apprehension arose in the white community because Negro emancipation was a real threat to the overall social hierarchy. William Springs, author of *The American and German Holocausts: Common Behavioral Threads as seen from the Evolutionary Perspective*, offers that “the winning the Civil War by the north and the forceful freeing of the slaves formed the basis of resentment by the south of being forced to do something that was contrary to its beloved behavioral foundation” (Springs, 5). Paranoia that blacks would organize to demand justice for years of oppression was another concern. Edward Ayers, author of *Vengeance and Justice: Crime And Punishment in the Nineteenth Century South*, mentions that a group of blacks organized into a “regular army company” to avenge the death of a black man. Fears such as these combined with a different form of social stratification, the hesitation to submit to this new way of life, and fewer economic opportunities given that former slaves began

entering into the work force all helped form ideologies that legitimized the murder of innocent blacks. Whites had put immense effort into keeping the Negro oppressed and were in need of something more than religious fabrication to legitimize further subjugation. To assist in that effort, they turned to more modern methods in an attempt to advance their perpetuation of supremacy.

Giddings states that they most certainly found one, in the use of their present day sciences. She discusses that a “useful tool was the spate of anthropometric theories which determined the degree of civilization by measuring the brain size and anatomical features.” (Giddings 78). In other words, scientists would now use a person’s features and prejudged brain specifications to determine their value or lack thereof to American society. This antiquated way of looking at these issues predated the civil war most likely due to slavery. However, Giddings states that it really gained strength with the arguments of scientists Dr. Ceasre Lombroso, “who published *Criminal Man* in 1876.” (Giddings 79). In his work, Dr. Lombroso “proves” that men with non-Anglo–Saxon features tended to love “idleness and orgies.” Picture that most black men of the era did not have an elevated position in society. A large majority were ex-slaves who had just been freed and looking for sharecropper work for themselves and a means to provide for their families. Thus, by default, black men fell into one of Lombroso’s categories. He goes onto say that the criminal man, “desired not only to murder but to mutilate the corpse, tear its flesh and drink its blood. (Giddings 79). Not only were those who were idle prone to have voracious sexual appetites, they were also individuals that destroyed anything they touched. Strangely enough, Lombroso’s *Criminal Man* bore great ironic

resemblance to the black brute caricature that has personified the black sexual deviant throughout history.



Pictures From: Ferris State University Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia. Note: “Mandingo” novels were not written until the 1970’s however, the illustrations on the cover are used to represent the late nineteenth century south. Notice the brooding African American male who appears captivating to the virginal white female. While the white male stands in the background, whip in hand, preparing to protect the female.

Using Dr. Lombroso as a guide, Giddings asserts that “white superiority was further refined” (Giddings 79). Now having the fuel to propel the concept, Lombroso’s “criminal” encompassed those with darker skin and all other features that were non-Anglo. Blacks “were seen to be not only invalid but also dangerous to society.” (Giddings, 79). Both Lombroso and the brute misrepresentations created widespread paranoia throughout the white community. Giddings furthers the point with the

contention that “those residing in the South knew all too well, that these ideas were most readily absorbed in a region uprooted by defeat and porous with humiliation and fear” (Giddings, 80). In essence, whites were so frightened by the idea that blacks could supplant their social position due to losing the Civil War that they relented to this despicable line of thinking and allowed it to permeate their minds and culture.

The effect was catastrophic for both whites and blacks. Whites ventured so deeply into these philosophies that it became their nature, virtually an accepted wisdom. Truly, they believed that blacks by virtue alone were out to murder all white men and rape all white women. Thus, they [whites] needed to police this aspect of their lives, bringing Giddings argument full circle and disseminating Dr. Lombroso’s presumptions, that black men possessed less value to society than whites and their very appearance made that so. The remedy for this type of social discord was lynching. With quasi-legitimization from the pulpit, Dr. Lombroso and others, whites began a rampage against the Negro.

The Rape Myth

As was mentioned in previous sections, Post Reconstruction America was a dangerous time for most African American men. The “Rape Myth” was something new and sinister concocted by whites to justify murders and lynchings. White men now perpetuated the illusion that black men wanted nothing more than to ravage the virginal white women. In 1884, eleven southern legislatures had banned miscegenation, in order to try and keep white women away from black men (Matthews, 6). Donald Matthews states that “what they [whites] did do in passing laws to perfect their mastery was to fabricate an elaborate system of boundaries, taboos, and etiquette in order to establish

purity [whiteness] and therefore impurity [blackness] by distancing black people from white and making proximity dangerous” (Matthews, 7). These ideas permeated church sanctuaries, town hall meetings and local news publications. This in turn influenced the public masses and made life for blacks in South even more of a living hell. A feature published in the Ida B. Wells own editorial, *Free Speech* May 21, 1892 read as follows:

Eight negroes lynched since last issue of the *Free Speech* one at Little Rock, Ark., last Saturday morning where the citizens broke(?) into the penitentiary and got their man; three near Anniston, Ala., one near New Orleans; and three at Clarksville, Ga., the last three for killing a white man, and five on the same old racket—the new alarm about raping white women. The same programme of hanging, the shooting bullets into the lifeless bodies was carried out to the letter. (Wells, 29)

Wells articulates that eight more African Americans have been murdered by lynching or lynch mobs since the last publication of her newsletter. Television or news networks did not exist during this period meaning that these events were reported by newspapers and journals. It gives the readers location and probable cause for the tragedies. Apparently, raping white women had become the new sensation of delusion. Pinning the rape of a white woman on a black man’s head meant almost certain death whether one was guilty of the crime or not. Wells alludes to the “new alarm” being utilized in the massacres making the killers seem like sports fanatics attending an afternoon ball game. This was becoming a telling sign of what the future held. Men were taken from their homes, places of work, even jailhouses and killed for no more than the rumor of any impropriety with a white female.

It is quite circumspect to believe that black men in the south “all of a sudden” found it mandatory to savagely harm and sexually assault white women. Dray contends that antebellum courts proceeded with relative restraint because of the value of slave

property when it came to alleged rapes. They were even occasionally nuanced enough in their rulings to acknowledge that some black-white relationships were consensual (Dray, 29). Why were African American males attracted to white females, now more so than ever before? From the time blacks were brought to this country as slaves they were around white women. Black men frequented the homes and fields of white slave owners for centuries. Wells contends that, “while the master was away fighting to forge the fetters upon the slave, he left his wife and children with no protection to save the Negroes themselves” (Wells, 62). Black men virtually became the protector of white women. How then had the Negro grown into some animalistic, oversexed and insatiable creature? The reasoning behind this lay embedded within what the white slaver owners lost after the North won the Civil War. W.E.B. Du Bois described this as the “devastating psychological impact of slavery on the white planter class.” He notes that:

The mere fact that a man could be, under law the actual master of the mind and body of human beings had to have disastrous effects. It tended to inflate the ego of most planters beyond all reason; they became arrogant, strutting, quarrelsome kinglets; they issued commands; they made laws; they shouted their orders; they expected deference and self-abasement; they were choleric and easily insulted. Their “honor” became a vast and awful thing, requiring wide and insistent deference. (Dray, 31).

These men had lost their identity and the sheer notion that blacks whom they were just masters over would even imagine to touch a white woman infuriated them. Something that fifty years prior, courts acknowledged would happen and gave leniency to, was now cause to commit murder.

No matter what country or nation, rape of its women is taken very seriously however, Southern whites “have always been most sensitive concerning the honor of their women—their mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters, states Bishop Haygood in his

apology for lynching. Haygood goes on to say that “to justify their own barbarism they [whites] assume a chivalry which they do not possess.” Garoutte contends that white men who participated in violence, were frequently applauded as chivalrous and just. White lynchers by their own accounts, as that of news reporters, rode to action to protect “their women” (Garoutte, 130). Therefore, it was most hypocritical for whites to view and report the mixing of races one way yet, not consent to production of the million or so mulatto men, women, and children which inhabited the South. In *Southern Horrors*, Ida Wells establishes that the miscegenation laws of the South "operated against the legitimate union" of races, thereby making it illegal for white women and black men to co-habitat, share in a relationship, and certainly not have any sort of sexual encounter (Wells, 6).

Janet Anderson, Advocacy Education Director for The Washington Coalition for Sexual Assault Programs helps to deconstruct the Rape Myth even further contending that, “The rape of white women was often the reason law enforcement, politicians, business men, and citizens gave to control the movement and success of Black people when, in reality it was women of African descent who were truly terrorized by sexual assault by white men, which was often done as a means of providing and ensuring a labor force” (Anderson, 5). Essentially, whites were bullying and raping black women and evading any sort of jail time or sentence unlike African Americans who were killed for such transgressions. Husbands watched in horror as their spouses were taken from their homes only to be returned hours later brutalized, if they returned at all. Anderson argues that “during the lynching period, many black women were raped and tortured along with their children before they themselves were hanged” (Anderson, 5).

The “Rape Myth” established a true boundary between the races. It was used as a deterrent for all blacks and became so ingrained in American culture that it eventually helped to create pieces of what we now know as Jim Crow. It also aids in establishing an argument of complacency on the parts of black citizens. In turn, it begs the question, why was the practice of lynching allowed to continue for such a long time? Black men were not at fault for their consensual relationships with white women. Most did not take what was not willfully given. However, in hypocritical eyes of white men, miscegenation was unlawful and deserved the harshest of punishments. All the while, mulatto faces decorated the southern landscape.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL CASES OF LYNCHING; CONTINUED LEGITAMIZING CONCEPTS AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN RESPONSE

The lynching of Claude Neal was one of the most sinister tragedies of the twentieth century. Neal, who was twenty-three at the time of his murder was identified as the killer and rapist of a young white girl named Lola Cannidy. Lola disappeared on the night of October 19, 1934, in Jackson County, Florida. She was last seen near a water pump in the middle of their father's farm by her brother who was in the same field. Authorities quickly zeroed in on Neal who witnesses said had been in the field that very same day. Neal was one of two men suspected of the crime. The other was a white man named Calvin Cross who was traveling through town. Illuminating the corruption of the government officials at the time, Cross was quickly absolved of the crime and allowed to go on his way. Neal was now the primary suspect in the rape and murder case. Lola Cannidy's body was found in her father's hog pen, with her skull beaten in with a bloody hammer found near her body. The murder of Cannidy was no more than two hours old when Neal was arrested under suspicion of killing the young lady. Those interviewed about the type of person Neal was offered varied points of view. Many attested to the quiet nature of the boy while some offered a completely different assessment stating how Neal had a bad reputation with whites and how several people remembered him as a "mean nigger." Several others declared him as "uppity, insolent, and overbearing" (McGovern, 51).

Accusations like these were all that was needed to prosecute Claude Neal but also to send the townspeople in an uproar over this young girl's murder. By that evening Jackson County townsfolk had surrounded the Sheriff's home and demanded to know where Neal was being detained. McGovern states that "a large segment of the white community was enraged; guns were everywhere, in the backs of automobiles and in hip holsters and inside men's coats" (McGovern, 49). The crowd grew incensed at the Sheriff for not revealing Neal's location but they were also paranoid due to the fact that "girls all over the county had to do chores in the fields." While researching the Claude Neal case McGovern interviewed Jackson County resident Arthur Jensen, who stated "How could the white men protect them [white girls] from things like this? You couldn't trust the "niggers" to keep their hands off a decent white girl if you turned around. Jensen went on to say that "the best thing in the world for them [blacks] is to have a white girl" (McGovern, 50).

This reiterates a sentiment which has been discussed during this research, how white men believed that black men perceived white women as the proverbial pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. And that their embrace was god-like and unforgettable. Walter White, author of *Rope and Faggot*, offers some insight into where these ideals developed. White ascribes "the deep-seeded hatred of southern whites towards African Americans to three misconceptions that were drilled into southern minds through the pulpits, press, home, schools, and on the streets. The misconceptions were (1) negroes are given to sex crimes, (2) that only lynching can protect white women and (3) that unmentionably horrible deeds can be prevented through the extreme use of brutality" (White, 8).



Claude Neal, October 1934

The NAACP publication, *Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918*, compiled a list of noted lynchings from the entire country. Between those years; 2,472 Black males and 50 females lost their lives. Many of them were only accused of rape as was the case with Claude Neal. White's assertions beg the question, if extreme brutality prevented blacks from committing crimes of hate and passion, why did so many people need to be lynched over the 30 years? Should not the first five or ten murders have been a warning to all African Americans, no matter their age or local, to stay in their place and not disturb those who were out for blood? Donald Matthews aids in answering this query with his assertion that [American] culture already made woman a religious surrogate or mediator for men as well as the fount of purity. They found it amiable indeed to establish boundaries and distances that pushed black men to a certain margin of society "protect" her" (Matthews, 7). Essentially, the virginal qualities of [white] women marginalized the lives of blacks. Protection of that purity was supported by a sexual alibi which allowed the legitimization of brutality towards African Americans. In essence,

separation of races was “right” for whites. The order of the universe confirmed it. It was sacred in that it placed certain issues beyond dispute; it approached holiness because it established boundaries that demanded individuals conform to the class they belong (Matthews, 7). A cultural conditioning took place which Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, author of *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*, equates the America’s period of lynching to the German holocaust. This idea of complacency and conformity with social norms allowed regular people the fortitude to do awful things. Goldhagen states that “the psychological mechanisms that permit “good” people to commit minor moral transgressions, or to turn a blind eye even to major ones committed by others, particularly if they are far away, cannot be applied to people’s perpetration of genocidal killings, to their slaughter of hundreds of others before their own eyes – without careful consideration of such mechanisms’ appropriateness for elucidating such actions” (Goldhagen, 21). The examination of cruelty was often far from the minds of a lynch mob. Individuals followed others because they believed it was appropriate. This created an army of white supremacists hell bent on maintaining the advantages of repression on African Americans. Obviously, submission on the parts of blacks was the result. Thus, these atrocities were allowed to continue for even more time.

Henry Smith

The case of Henry Smith is one such record in which, In Wells-Barnett pamphlet *A Red Record* she states “never before in the history of civilization has any Christian people stooped to such shocking brutality and indescribable barbarism” (Wells, 80).

Smith was accused of the rape and murder of the four-year old daughter of Police Officer, Myrtle Vance in Paris, Texas. Henry Smith endured a fate worse than death.” The awfulness of his sentence offers a glimpse into the grotesque and perverse nature of the human soul. The lynching turned into a spectacle whose attendance rivaled that of a present day football game. Prior to being taken away by four angry men, Smith sat in a room weeping to a local Reverend who had known Smith for years. Momentarily forgetting about the fate that awaited him, Smith sobbed uncontrollably. He asked Reverend [King], “Did I kill her?” Smith was inconsolable, stated “the drink did it, the drink did it” (Wells, 82)! He was dragged away by an angry mob moments where he was “placed on a scaffold, six feet square and ten feet high, securely bound, within the view of all beholder” (Wells, 80). Smith’s killing was meant to be an example to those who dare commit any impropriety with a white girl or women. The crowd pierced his sides and with red-hot pokers and continued to do so until the pokers had cooled. The then reheated the pokers and rolled them down his torso and extremities. The entire process took about 50 minutes (Wells, 80). As Smith writhed in pain, his tormentors took a red hot poker and forced it down his throat more than likely razing his vocal cords and making it impossible for him to scream to let others understand his absolute agony. To only add insult to injury, his eyes were gouged in the same manner. One can only imagine the amount of pain rifling through Smith's body. Now that justice had been served, the crowd finally decided to put Smith out of his misery. They “piled all kinds of combustible stuff around the scaffold, poured oil on it and set it afire” (Wells, 81). Smith broke free of his bond, “rolled and tossed out the mass, only to be pushed back by the

people nearest him. Pain drove Smith out of the heat and flames again where the crowd then “roped and pulled [Smith] back” (Wells, 81).

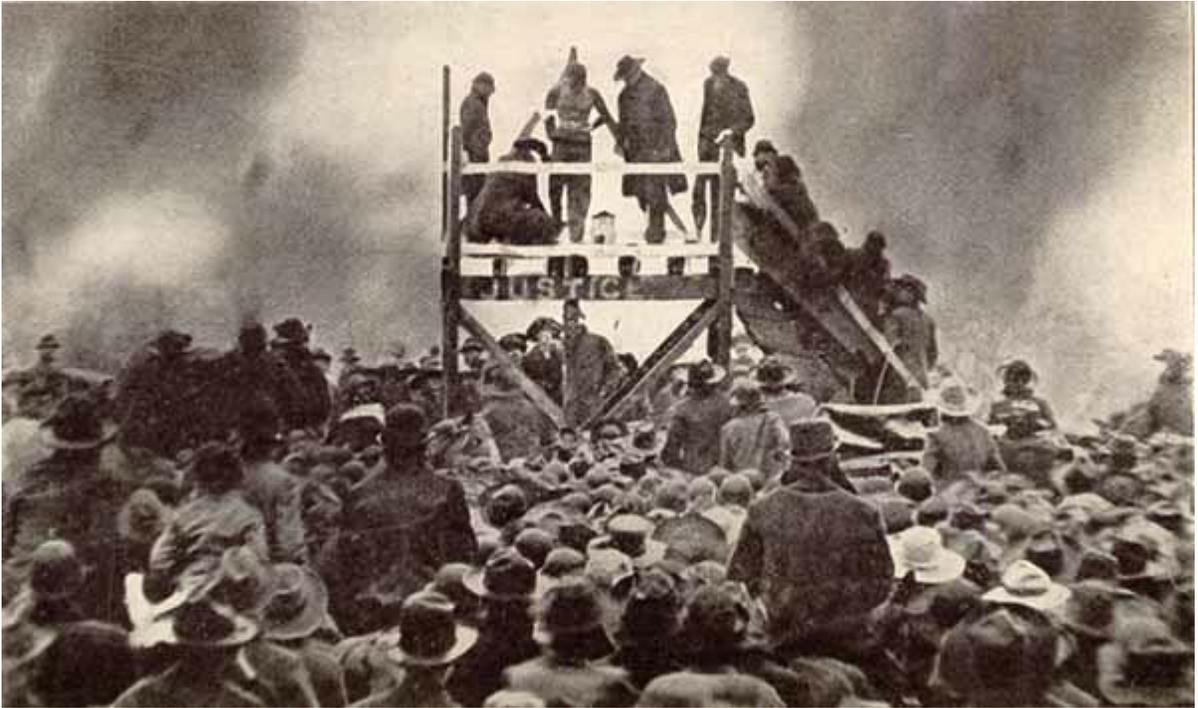


Photo of public lynching of Henry Smith, Paris, Texas in 1893.

Some estimated the crowd at 10,000. (Wells, 81). People came from as far as Alabama, where Smith was found after he committed his deed. Many white citizens of the town lay claim to his remains once the smoke and heat dissipated. There was no doubt that whites ruled the town of Paris, Texas. Blacks beware.

MR. PRESIDENT

During the period between 1890 and 1952, seven different presidents petitioned Congress to pass a federal law outlawing lynching (MSNBC). But the Senate, with Southern conservatives used it filibuster powers, absolutely refused to act. (MSNBC).

Although it was on the scope, the murder of innocents escaped the political radar. W.E.B. Du Bois states “I remember the alarm that was felt when we realized for the first time since the Civil War a Democrat was in office. Grover Cleveland had just been elected in 1884. At the time Du Bois contends that America was in the midst of a “fierce and brutal political climate” (Lewis, 483). Cleveland’s election marked the end of an era.

Republicans no longer controlled the White House. Many GOP reformers were quick to blame the loss on disenfranchisement of black and mostly Republican voters in the south. Cleveland did very little in terms of establishing anti-lynching legislation. In fact, he worked against the Republican Party which now desperately attempted to enact election reforms in the south after his appointment. Cleveland intended to continue to the disenfranchisement of blacks at the voting booth while Republicans looked to regain those votes in order to win back the presidency. In December 1891, during President Harrison’s tenure, he recommended that Congress pass a law to protect aliens from mob violence (Walter, 436). This suggestion did not include African American in the United States. Thus, Anti-Lynching legislation was left up to the re-elected Grover Cleveland.

The end of Grover Cleveland’s second presidency included the infamous case of *Plessey v Ferguson* in 1896. The U.S. Government established that “separate but equal” was legal under the Constitution's equal protection clause. This established the constitutionality of racial segregation. During the McKinley administration, the lone black Representative in the House, George White called for an end to the barbarism. On January 20, 1900, he introduced H.R. 6963, the first federal anti-lynching bill. White claimed it was for the protection of all citizens of the United States against mob violence. However, the bill garnered no support from the McKinley administration, stirred little

enthusiasm in the House, and was met with ambivalence by the American public with scant knowledge of the magnitude of the lynching problem. The bill died on the Committee floor in 1901. Neither Cleveland nor McKinley offered presidential assistance during their terms. However, their non-action had allowed the flood gates to open for Jim Crow segregation (Cashin, 207).

The assassination of President McKinley left President Theodore Roosevelt at the heart of lynching battle. Having fought with blacks in the Spanish-American War, yet contradictorily thinking of them as “unreliable soldiers” (Dray, 160), Roosevelt was reluctant to move on any legislation involving the eradication of lynching in the South. Roosevelt was very concerned about how he was perceived in the public eye, especially in the southern part of the U.S. Dray argues that “Roosevelt had not anticipated how deeply the specter of social inequality alarmed Southern whites” (160). Roosevelt made a calculated wager and was losing. The President invited Booker T. Washington to dinner at the White House and had never fully “vindicated” himself from that act. The *Richmond Times* wrote “this means the President is willing that Negroes shall mingle freely with whites in the social circle, and that white women may receive attentions from Negro men.” Comments such as these continued to perpetuate the rape myth but also crushed hopes of social progression for blacks. Senator Tillman of South Carolina stated that “he thought the meal would necessitate our killing a thousand niggers in the South before they would learn their place again” (160).

Along with Cleveland and McKinley, Roosevelt had done little legislation wise to help disenfranchised blacks while in office. Dray contends that Roosevelt gave voice “to two of the most common and erroneous myths,” about black men placing them in even

greater danger of being lynched. He not only stated that lynching occurred due to the “black man’s runaway sexual appetite” but also that the “better element” of blacks could help abolish lynching by relinquishing colored criminals to the authorities. This type of loose vigilantism by the American government expanded the threat of violence towards African Americans and legitimized lynching as a viable sanction for misdeeds. To further the point, Dubois adds that the next President in office, William Taft “represents that class of Americans who believe that Negroes are less than men; few of them out to vote; their education should be restricted; their opportunities should be limited; their fate must be left to the white south; their (“value”) is their money value to their neighbors; and on occasion they may be treated like dogs” (Lewis, 484). Presidential historian Alvin Felzenburg states that, Taft threw aside his strict constructionist interpretations of the fifteenth amendment. He contends that Taft proclaimed voting restrictions southerners had imposed were constitutional and publically stated that the fifteenth amendment was a mistake (see Felzenburg). African Americans would receive no help from President Taft to curb lynching.

The turn of the century laid witness to changes in American leaders. However, very little in policy changed, except now disenfranchisement was law. African Americans would begin to see more brutalization at the hands of whites with the government virtually sponsoring the melee. With nowhere to turn blacks needed an answer.

NAACP

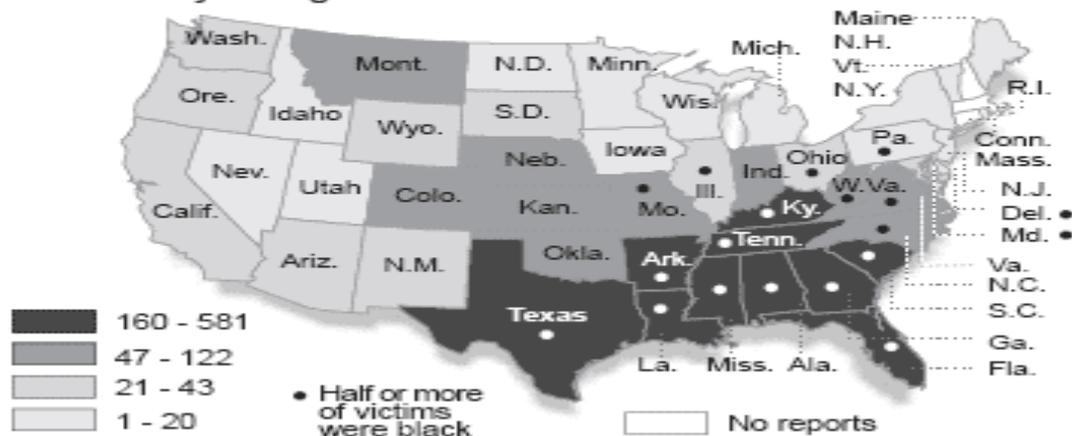
In the United States between the years 1882-1968, white citizens were conducting summary justice at will on African American. Estimates place the total of

lynchings at 5,000 for the southern states alone.

Lynchings concentrated in the South

A Senate measure Monday apologized for its failure to pass anti-lynching legislation well into the 20th century.

Victims of lynchings 1882 to 1968



SOURCE: Tuskegee University National Center for Bioethics

AP

With little punishment or prosecution, our government stood by and watched the violence occur and was rather nonexistent where the issue of lynching was concerned. Blacks needed some sort of voice because the government refused to provide one. The NAACP by Civil Rights leaders of that era to be a less militant faction than its sister group and predecessor, the National Afro American League (NAAL). The NAACP served as a precursor to Dubois's Niagara Movement and later to the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) (5). The Niagara Movement was based on power. It was one of the first organized civil rights organizations and it would be led by W.E.B. Dubois and William Trotter. They wanted the name to promote strength and change; the "mighty current" and effect of Niagara Falls, which was near. (Wikipedia, s.v. "Niagara Movement"). The first meeting took place in July 1905. The organization "was the long-awaited response to the systematic stripping away of human rights that had afflicted America since the end of Reconstruction" (Wikipedia, s.v. "Niagara Movement").

Philip Dray states that “in the history of the resistance to lynching, few events would prove more auspicious than the founding of the NAACP. With its twin convictions that basic rights were unjustly denied black citizens and that agitation was required to secure them, the organization represented a spirit of resolve that had been sorely missing from the lives of black and white Americans. (Dray, 176). The voice that African Americans needed was finally here in the NAACP. With a strong following they along with the Anti-Lynching Bureau could place pressure on the government to change. The NAACP was the culmination of years of oppression of whites towards black citizens, it incorporated the “humanistic spirit of the abolitionists with the militant race consciousness” (176). The United States regressed where the civil liberties of African Americans was concerned. The amount of fear that black citizens lived with on a daily basis is unfathomable. However, the NAACP hoped to change those attitudes and the culture of the American people. “It was necessary to shake the nation out of its complacency and to superimpose on the picture of the black brute...the picture of the white brute” (Dray, 177).

The NAACP sought to shift the focus of those peering over fraudulent news articles and bogus publications about African Americans to those who were actually behind the scenes writing this material. This was not only an extremely innovative idea it would “reverse the language of lynching by emphasizing the criminality of lynchers and those who protected them.

Dubois and his newly founded NAACP had finally given voice to those who yearned for some type of outlet. Dray contends one of the first lynchings that the NAACP brought light to was for a man named Will Porter. Allegedly Porter had shot and killed a white man in a bar fight. The Sheriff of the town knew that a lynch mob would soon be

forming and “did not want this jail violated,” tried to hide the victim in the “basement of the local opera house.” He was not able to stop the mob which eventually discovered the Sheriff’s plan and seized Porter.

The mob’s leaders then acted on a perverse inspiration. Kicking aside some scenery, they tied Porter to a pole at center stage and informed the Crowd waiting for the culprit to be carried outside and put to death that the lynching would take place inside the theatre. Two different kinds of seats would be sold for the “performance.” An orchestra seat would allow the patron to empty a six-shooter at Porter, while those in the balcony would be limited to one shot, with all proceeds going to the family of Frank Mitchell (the man Porter allegedly shot), who was not expected to recover from his wounds. Fifty men paid the admission and quickly seats. The mob was unsure how to turn the stage lights on, so the event took place in an eerie semidarkness, Porter’s silhouette barely illuminated from behind. The sound of fifty weapons blazing in an empty theater was so earsplitting, dozens of frightened rats went scurrying across the stage as Porter’s body was perforated by gunfire. Of the 200 shots fired, reported *The New York Times*, nearly half entered the body of the black man and the remainder torn to shreds the woodland scenery arranged for the presentation of a much milder drama. “In the residents of Livermore, “the paper concluded, the dramatic sense is strongly developed...it is quite certain that the Negro who made in the Livermore opera house his first and last appearance on any stage will never again offend the delicate sensibilities of his fellow townsmen. (Dray, 178).

ANTI LYNCHING LEGISLATION

Within the limits of US legislation, more than 200 anti-lynching bills were introduced to Congress during the first part of the 20th century. Bills were actually passed three times only to meet a quick death on the Senate floor. The system was flawed, the legislative process failed to act. They turned a blind eye and thousands of people and their families suffered the consequences. The Negro was not only subjected to sub-human treatment due to economic and social disenfranchisement, the psyche of the entire race suffered as well. When individuals were killed or maimed for little more than

trying to open their own business or for not directing the correct pleasantries towards a white person, there was definitely an enormous amount of fear that fed through the entire race. Sunday drives ended before the sun went down and those who were caught out after dark, were forced to either take the less traveled back roads home in the hopes that they would avoid local law enforcement, or try and find refuge at churches or a relative's home until the morning. Congress came close to getting one bill passed during the presidency of Warren G. Harding in 1921. The Dyer Anti-Lynching Bill was actually passed by the House but failed in the Senate (Rucker, 8). Harding was one of the first presidents to support a bill written with Anti-Lynching rhetoric. However, the government had failed to capitalize on an effort that would help its citizens. The argument for the bill not moving past the Senate was language. Ironically, politicians made arguments that almost provided a defense for the practice of lynching (9). Although the House passed the bill initially with a 231-119 votes, the Senate argued that the bill was unconstitutional (9).

Section three of the Dyer bill contends that “any State or municipal officer charged with the duty or who possesses the power or authority as such officer to protect the life of any person that may be put to death by any mob or riotous assemblage, or who has any such person in his charge as a prisoner, who fails, neglects, or refuses to make all reasonable efforts to prevent such person from being so put to death shall be guilty of a felony, and shall be punished by imprisonment not exceeding five years or by a fine of not exceeding \$5,000, or by both such fine and imprisonment” In effect, if public officials charged with providing safety for [black] prisoners did not abide by their sworn duty and code of ethics, they would be punished to full extent of this law. Section five of

the Dyer bill punishes counties that atrocities took place in stating that “any county in which a person is put to death by a mob or riotous assemblage shall, if it is alleged and proven that the officers of the State charged with the duty of prosecuting criminally such offense under the laws of the State have failed, neglected, or refused to proceed with due diligence to apprehend and prosecute the participants in the mob or riotous assemblage, forfeit \$10,000. This measure would put county officials on notice that if any transgressions against blacks took place within their jurisdiction, the town would pay heavily for each offense. Section six of the bill makes certain that counties in which individuals were transported to outside of their own county lines were culpable if any person(s) were put to death by the transporting faction. Sections seven and eight make these hate crimes punishable in an court of law or territory within the United States and “upon conviction the sentence executed in like manner as sentences upon convictions for crimes under the laws of the United States” (NAACP). The Dyer Anti-Lynching bill made lynching a crime against humanity and an unlawful acquisition of African Americans right to live.

With a threat to filibuster and no Republican attempts to prevent it, the bill lost steam and died. (9). Rucker argues that the “Dyer debate exposed the fear that such a bill would give blacks social equality” (9). This was exactly what African Americans and the NAACP had been waiting for, their opportunity to render the U.S. government as the suspect behind the lethargic pace of legislation. Southern whites believed that an anti-lynching bill “would ignite blacks and incite demands for equality”(9). With the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt the NAACP believed they would make great headway and perceived a workable relationship with the new President. However, even after applied

pressure from his wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, the President did not sign the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching bill of 1935 (9). An excerpt from section two of this bill states that “if any state or governmental, subdivision thereof fails, neglects, or refuses to provide and maintain protection to the life or person of any individual within its jurisdiction against a mob or riotous assemblage, whether by way of preventing or punishing the acts thereof, such State shall by reason of such failure, neglect, or refusal be deemed to have denied to such person due process of law and the equal protection of the laws of the State, and to the end that the protection guaranteed to persons within the jurisdiction of the United States, may be secured, the provisions of this Act are enacted” (Spartacus). In essence this bill would have punished states and their governments who “failed to protect their prisoners from lynch mobs” (9). Even the brutal murder of Rubin Stacy, which made national headlines and was the very reason that Costigan-Wagner was written, failed to persuade Roosevelt.



Rubin Stacy was an unemployed African American that was accused of accosting a white woman in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. July 19, 1935. Knowing the peril that Stacy was in, the Sheriff of the town ordered him moved to another, more secure facility in Dade County, Fla. However, under armed guard of six Sheriff's deputies, Stacy was apprehended by an angry mob. The above photo was the result. Later during an interview it was discovered that his original accuser had become frightened and screamed when Stacy, who was starving, knocked on her door to beg for food. (Spartacus). Notice the children in the background of the photo.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

Recent events within American society bear a very real resemblance to lynchings of the past. While murder of an individual is rare, it does still occur. The lynching of James Byrd Jr., for example outlines the relation between current and historical patterns of lynching. All of the incidents are recent and real.. To this day Congress has not passed an Anti-Lynching resolution. In fact, as earlier mentioned, they have offered an apology for never doing so.

The Systems Failure, Legal Lynchings

In the case of James Byrd Jr., one would not think that an execution of this sort could happen in this day and age, however it did. Byrd was murdered in the small rural town of Jasper, Texas. His assailants maintained affiliation with white supremacists groups, sparking racial tensions in Jasper from local Black Panther and KKK members. His murder signified that the occasional killing of a black man in the rural south can still occur with little, if any retribution. Byrd was dragged to his death behind a pickup truck by three white supremacists who were later convicted of his murder. On June 7, 1998, Byrd Jr., accepted a ride from Shawn Allen Berry, Lawrence Russell Brewer, and John William King. Twenty-four hours later, he was found dead. He was savagely beaten behind a convenience store in the town of Jasper. He was then stripped naked, chained to the back of King's pickup truck and from there he was dragged by the ankles for more than 3 miles by the assailants. As gruesome as the attack was "it is believed that Byrd Jr. survived through most of this experience." (amath.colorado.edu). Forensic evidence "suggests that Byrd Jr. had been attempting to keep his head up while being

dragged...Byrd died after his right arm and head were severed after his body hit a culvert.” (Wikipedia, s.v. “Murder of James Byrd). When police arrived on the oft travelled road that next morning they found Byrd’s remains littering the scene. Officials calculated “75 places” where they gathered pieces of the victim’s body. (Wikipedia, s.v. “Murder of James Byrd). His attackers were known white supremacists to state law officials and due that fact, the murder was considered a hate crime. (Wikipedia, s.v “Murder of James Byrd). After being arrested, it was discovered that Byrd’s main assailant, John King, bore numerous tattoos depicting racist viewpoints, examples included; a black man hanging from a tree, Nazi symbols, the words “Aryan Pride,” and the patch for a white supremacist gang known as the Confederate Knights of America. The Jasper Sheriff knew somebody was murdered because he was black. These particular individuals continued to subscribe to old adages of racial inequality and such factors helped to contribute to Byrd’s lynching.

It should also be noted, that “Former Texas Governor (current President at the time), George W. Bush, declined an invitation to come to Jasper personally to show his outrage over the racial killing. (McLaughlin). Yet another example of how American legislating officials have failed to help close this unattractive chapter in our history. And further proved how lynching whether it occurred in the year 1898 or 1998, went largely unnoticed or garnered major inattentiveness as a true social issue. The NAACP accused the President of “implicit racism since as Governor of Texas, he opposed hate crime legislation” (Wikipedia, s.v “Murder of James Byrd”). President Bush exhibited the same deliberate indifference as his predecessors and was truly guilty of perpetuating violence towards the African American man. This speaks to the sociological conceptions of race in

the United States. Hate crimes occur every day in this country however, many do not involve the death of the individual. Situations such as this are unique and allow an elected official such as the President time and inclination to denounce such an act. Yet this model resembled many others like it in the past where the importance was placed on circumstances and not the victim. And it asks Americans to accept this as something that is going to happen from time to time.

This project examined the sociological and historical aspects of slavery, racism, and lynching. I incorporate class and gender into the sociological discussion which enhance the themes of social control and gender norms. This analysis indicates, as suggested within the research, that competition and fear of racial equality among whites aided in the justifications for both slavery and lynching. Furthermore, the research demonstrates that political decisions intensified and prolonged racist violence thus creating systems of racial subordination and psychological complacency. Past and contemporary patterns of social inequality possess clear origins of historical discrimination. The attitudes have morphed over time. However, the implications are still the same. This system of social inequality is an accepted part of American culture and continues to permeate thought and speech of citizens and leaders even today.

Few in our county have lobbied for any sort of national monument recognizing the victims of lynching. In 2005, Senators Mary Landrieu of Louisiana and George Allen of Virginia proposed S. R. 39 (109th Congress), a formal government apology from the Senate for lynching. The Senators recommended this decree after reading James Allen's pictorial history of lynching, *Without Sanctuary*. (landrieu.senate.gov). Allen's book is the most comprehensive source of pictorial information to date on lynching. Allen offers

that “photographs stretch our credulity, even numb our minds and senses to the full extent of the horror, but they must be examined if we are to understand how normal men and women could live with, participate in, and defend such atrocities, even reinterpret them so they would not see themselves or be perceived as less civilized” (Allen, 34). Landrieu and Allen’s motivation is easily understood after reading this book. However, a small contingent within the legislature did not carry the same sentiments. They refused to sign the initial resolution. Eleven Senators in all declined to put pen to paper. This action essentially stated their complete indifference to the plight of any victim of lynching but more importantly, illustrated their sheer lack of respect for African Americans. NAACP Chairman, Julian Bond, used the term “odious” when describing Senator Bill Frist and his utter repudiation of S.R. 39. He goes on to say that Frist denied “repeated requests from the resolutions sponsors for a roll call vote.” (NAACP). In fact, this shielded those who were not willing to openly oppose lynch mob violence. Racial inequality and racial hostility still exist in today’s America however a veil of apology has been placed over it, so as to appear authentic. The American government continues to involuntarily impede black progress by not showing African Americans the respect that their race and culture is due. The utilization of lynching as a social policing instrument within our culture has forever damaged the fabric of racial continuity for our country.

Appendix

1. Pg. 09 - Whipping A Negro Girl In North Carolina By "Unconstructed" – Johnsonian's. NYPL Digital Gallery, *Harper's weekly; a journal of civilization*
http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/dgkeysearchdetail.cfm?trg=1&strucID=1861955&imageID=1692861&total=4&num=0&parent_id=1861951&word=&s=¬word=&d=&c=&f=&k=0&sScope=&sLevel=&sLabel=&lword=&lfield=&imgs=20&pos=4&snum=&e=r
2. Pg. 16 - *The Rebels of Saberhill; The Brute Caricatures*. Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, Ferris State University. Webpage states, "The brute caricature portrays black men as innately savage, animalistic, destructive, and criminal – deserving punishment... Black brutes are depicted as hideous, terrifying predators who target helpless victims, especially white women."
 (under More Pictures)
http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://x9c.xanga.com/0f0f04f356230240454907/b190292220.jpg&imgrefurl=http://susu.xanga.com/699445968/racisms-fruit/&usq=__HfjrbW-If0PjeQ-NU-Us0Tjp6fk=&h=450&w=302&sz=37&hl=en&start=19&sig2=9Jc193712ENv_AwJoVJkuw&tbnid=pujZCNYjg4IrQM:&tbnh=127&tbnw=85&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dthe%2Bblack%2Bbrute%2B/%2BBracism%26gbv%3D2%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DG&ei=ljMCS6fzJ4KUnAfnLQ7
3. Pg. 16 - *Beauty Beast; The Brute Caricatures*. Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, Ferris State University. Explanation same as above. (under More Pictures)
http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://x9c.xanga.com/0f0f04f356230240454907/b190292220.jpg&imgrefurl=http://susu.xanga.com/699445968/racisms-fruit/&usq=__HfjrbW-If0PjeQ-NU-Us0Tjp6fk=&h=450&w=302&sz=37&hl=en&start=19&sig2=9Jc193712ENv_AwJoVJkuw&tbnid=pujZCNYjg4IrQM:&tbnh=127&tbnw=85&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dthe%2Bblack%2Bbrute%2B/%2BBracism%26gbv%3D2%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DG&ei=ljMCS6fzJ4KUnAfnLQ7
4. Pg. 24 - Claude Neal by: Scotty Olsen/Getty Pictures.
<http://history.howstuffworks.com/historians/cannibalism3.htm>
5. Pg. 27 - Henry Smith Lynching; Photo of public lynching of [Henry Smith](#) in [Paris, Texas](#) in [1893](#). Photo of public lynching of Henry Smith in Paris, Texas in 1893. This image is part of the public domain and is not copy-written.
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/0/09/Henry-smith-2-1-1893-paris-tx-2.jpg/180px-Henry-smith-2-1-1893-paris-tx-2.jpg>
6. Pg. 31 - Map; Lynchings concentrated in the South. *Senate apologizes for inaction on lynchings; Lawmakers express contrition for condoning 'this terrorism in America*. Victims of lynchings 1882 to 1968.
http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://x9c.xanga.com/0f0f04f356230240454907/b190292220.jpg&imgrefurl=http://susu.xanga.com/699445968/racisms-fruit/&usq=__HfjrbW-If0PjeQ-NU-Us0Tjp6fk=&h=450&w=302&sz=37&hl=en&start=19&sig2=9Jc193712ENv_AwJoVJkuw&tbnid=pujZCNYjg4IrQM:&tbnh=127&tbnw=85&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dthe%2Bblack%2Bbrute%2B/%2BBracism%26gbv%3D2%26hl%3Den%26sa%3DG&ei=ljMCS6fzJ4KUnAfnLQ7
7. Pg. 34 - Anti-Lynching Bill, 1918, Senate Reports (7951), 67th Congress: 2nd Session, 1921-22, Vol. 2, pp. 33-34. ANTI-LYNCHING BILL. APRIL 20 (calendar day, JULY 28), 1922.--Ordered to be printed. Naacp.org
http://naacp.org/about/history/anti_lynching_bill/index.htm

8. Pg. 36 - [Costigan-Wagner Bill](http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAcostiganwagner.htm), 73rd Congress, 2nd Session (3rd January, 1935), Spartacus Educational, Civil Rights Movement; 1900-1980: Issues, Events & Organizations
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAcostiganwagner.htm>
9. Pg. 37 - Rubin Stacy. Caption reads: Lynching of Rubin Stacy at Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 1935. Spartacus Educational; Lynching.
<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USALynching.htm>

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