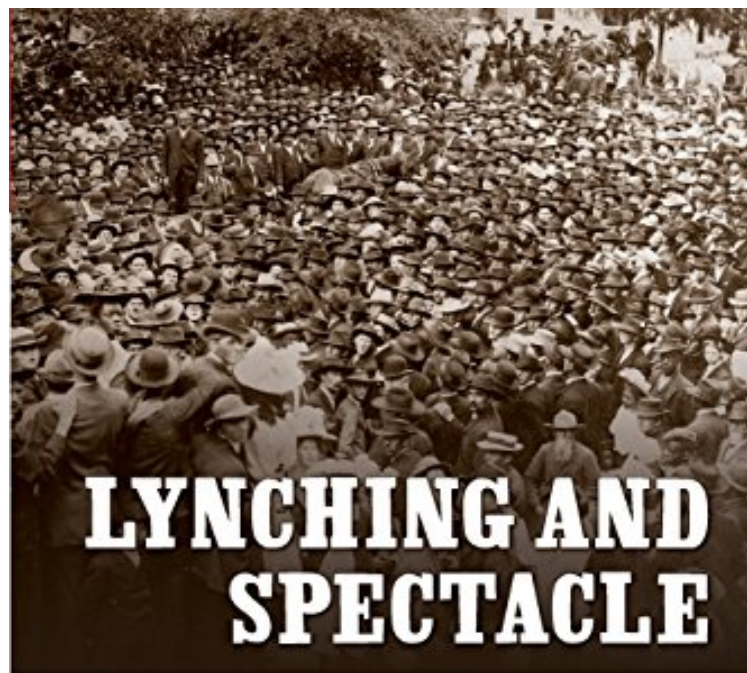


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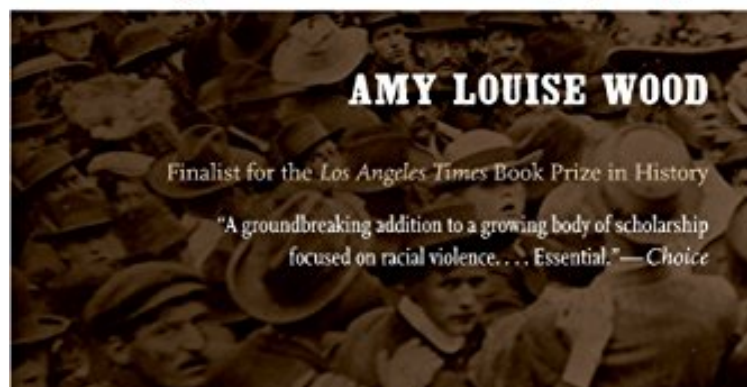
## Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940 (New Directions in Southern Studies)

Amy Louise Wood

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Amy Louise Wood : **Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940 (New Directions in Southern Studies)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940 (New Directions in Southern Studies):

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. WHITE MOB JUSTICEBy Alan WarnerMore black men were hanged in America in the twentieth century than were hanged during slavery, the author of this book Miss Amy Louise Wood does an excellent job of revealing who and what group of Americans did this whole scale hanging of black men. Many white people who participated and witnessed these hangings were your everyday run of the mill American citizens as stated on page 80-81 "As visual extensions of the lynching itself, photographs could at times assuage crowds that had missed the opportunity to witness and participate in the violence. In 1934, the posse that captured Claude Neal, accused of raping and killing a young white woman named Lola Cannidy, chose to lynch him in the woods outside Marianna, Florida, rather than bringing him to the Cannidy home, where a large crowd had gathered in anticipation of the lynching. When the waiting crowd had discovered that the mob had lynched Neal privately, they were reportedly outraged. The mob finally arrived with Neal's body in tow, and the crowd, which included Cannidy's family, took out their vengeance on the corpse, kicking and shooting it, tearing it apart, and even driving their cars over it. Neal's mutilated, nude body was then hanged on the courthouse lawn in the center of the town, and hundreds of photographs were taken. he next day, as people congregated in the square to see the body, the photographs were sold to those purportedly still incensed that the posse who lynched Neal had denied them the satisfaction and pleasure of witnessing Neal's lynching. The images acted as visual replications of the actual spectacle, offering them vicarious access to the missed thrill of the lynching. The gratification local viewers derived from the images of Neal's lynched body was directly attached to their outrage over Cannidy's rape and murder, their fears of black criminality, and their desires to assert their racial power and superiority in the face of these threats."Another interesting aspect of these mobs is the role religion played in their actions as stated on pages 67 "The performance of a lynching thus created a symbolic representation of white supremacy-a spectacle of demonic and wicked black men against a united and pure white community. That those images coincided with evangelicals' impassioned exhortations against sin gave lynching sacred force and justification. Indeed, the imprint of Protestant language and tropes on lynching rituals and defenses imbued the violence with divine sanction and made it appear familiar and recognizable to a people immersed in Christian beliefs and values. Mobs could thus conspicuously flout the law and perpetrate what otherwise would be considered aberrant and grotesque acts of sadism while considering themselves to be righteous and moral citizens."In the twentieth century the hanging of black men was a major festive event for many on looking white people as can be seen in the pictures on page 32 and also on pages 78 and 79, on page 79 you can see a young white man smiling, on pages 95 and 102 there are more pictures of gleeful white spectators, on page 192 there is crowd participation in this picture of a hanging and burning black man I thank this author for writing this very much needed book.10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. ShockingBy mikeythereaderAn informative read that will make you sick as the hanging death of people becomes a spectator sport. I knew going in I was going to be really angry about this and I was so right. It has been more than a month since I finished it and the horrific cruelty and lawlessness still makes my blood boil.And many times the "supposed law" were guilty of opening the jail or were complicit in letting this happen. It will make you think.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A must readBy QdawgAn extremely well written history. Especially, when it is one that is so overlooked quite distressing.

Lynch mobs in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America exacted horrifying public torture and mutilation on their victims. In *Lynching and Spectacle*, Amy Wood explains what it meant for white Americans to perform and witness these sadistic spectacles and how lynching played a role in establishing and affirming white supremacy. Lynching, Wood argues, overlapped with a variety of cultural practices and performances, both traditional and modern, including public executions, religious rituals, photography, and cinema, all which encouraged the horrific violence and gave it social acceptability. However, she also shows how the national dissemination of lynching images ultimately fueled the momentum of the antilynching movement and the decline of the practice. Using a wide range of sources, including photos, newspaper reports, pro- and antilynching pamphlets, early films, and local city and church records, Wood reconfigures our understanding of lynching's relationship to modern life. Wood expounds on the critical role lynching spectacles played in establishing and affirming white supremacy at the turn of the century, particularly in towns and cities experiencing great social instability and change. She also shows how the national dissemination of lynching images fueled the momentum of the antilynching movement and ultimately led to the decline of lynching. By examining lynching spectacles alongside both traditional and modern practices and within both local and national contexts, Wood reconfigures our understanding of lynching's relationship to modern life.

An engaging treatment of the 'spectacle of lynching.'--The Alabama This insightful exploration of lynching's cultural power is a groundbreaking addition to a growing body of scholarship focused on racial violence. . . . Essential.--Choice[An] insightful study. . . . Her research is impressive, Wood's conclusions are measured and well-documented, and . . . her prose is crisp and clear.--Journal of Illinois HistoryServes as a potent reminder that racial violence was not only condoned but enthusiastically supported by huge numbers of white Americans.--The Journal of Blacks in Higher EducationAdds an important chapter to a branch of scholarship that must remain as fluid, and sometimes uncertain, as its subject. . . . Wood, in choosing a ritualized form of violence and a unique set of sources through which to examine

it, has made both a wise and creative choice, which has yielded a rich and troubling history.--Southern Cultures  
The public nature of lynching receives heavily researched and imaginative treatment in Wood's readable analysis.--Journal  
of Interdisciplinary History Should be required reading for all studying racial violence in the South. . . . Wood is  
admirably balanced in assessing her evidence and placing it in perspective. . . . In evidence, argument, context, and  
writing, this is an impressive study that will inspire future scholarship and will offer teachers a rich set of contexts to  
enliven their discussions of race in the era of lynching.--American Historical Insightful. . . . One of the work's greatest  
strengths is the interplay between local and national contexts. . . . An excellent example of how visual culture and  
theory can enhance historical research without obscuring the argument. . . . Recommended for historians interested in  
how race and violence worked together to shape popular culture, and vice versa.--Indiana Magazine of History This  
thoughtful and amply illustrated monograph shows how photography served first to cast atrocity as civility and  
subsequently undermined the practice of lynching by reconstructing what had become folk custom as, instead, an  
outrage.--Arkansas Historical Quarterly Wood deserves praise for synthesizing the expansive body of scholarship on  
lynching while offering an insightful cultural analysis of southern white sadism.--North Carolina Historical Expands  
our understanding of lynching. . . . Wood's most important contribution is her well-informed discussion of the impact  
of photography and film on lynching's rise and demise.--Georgia Historical Quarterly This study incorporates a  
tremendous amount of information and provides a thorough understanding of lynching as spectacle, which will be of  
interest to scholars of American religion, the South, and American Studies.--Journal of Southern Religion The  
freshness of approach provides a unique perspective and contributes to several fields of study. . . . Wood thinks  
clearly, demonstrates an impressive range of research skills, and writes well. . . . Offers the best account to date of the  
American film industry's disturbingly cozy appropriation of lynching in its early decades. . . . [Wood] provides so  
much primary source material and interpretive aplomb that her narrative rarely wavers in its originality or self-  
reliance.--Journal of Southern History [A] thoughtful, well-researched study. . . . Wood has established the centrality of  
visual media to the formation of racial identities and the perpetuation of a related culture of lynching more cogently  
and elaborately than any previous writer. . . . Provocative and lucid. . . . A significant contribution to our  
understanding of race and racial violence in American history.--Southern Quarterly The scholar interested in southern  
culture will find the book rewarding." --Journal of Mississippi History Wood's effective contribution refines our  
understanding of the relationship between lynching and culture. . . . Compelling and insightful. . . . A well-executed  
book that should be read by all who are interested in the cultural relations of lynching.--Journal of American  
History Wood succeeds admirably. . . . One of the most enlightening studies of lynching produced in recent years.--  
Arkansas : A Journal of Delta Studies Lynching and Spectacle is a work of both impressive analysis and serious  
historical craft that makes a number of important contributions to our understanding of the American South and  
violence there. Combining attention to place, time, and context with an acute sensitivity to cultural expression, ranging  
from photography and film to journalism, Wood has written the most mature, finely grained, and insightful study of  
the culture of lynching available.--W. Fitzhugh Brundage, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill From the Inside  
Flap Wood explains what it meant for white Americans to perform and witness sadistic spectacles of lynching and how  
lynching played a role in establishing and affirming white supremacy. She also reveals how the national dissemination  
of lynching images ultimately fueled the momentum of the antilynching movement and the decline of the practice.