



Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880-1930 (Blacks in the New World)

By W. Fitzhugh Brundage

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Based on analysis of nearly 600 cases, this volume offers a full appraisal of the complex character of lynching. An original aspect of this work demonstrates the role blacks played in combatting lynching, either by flight, protest, or organized opposition which culminated in the expansion of the NAACP.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Brundage, an assistant professor of history at Queen's University in Ontario, provides a nuanced corrective to theories that lynching was a monolithic phenomenon throughout the South. In fact, he shows, the frequency of lynchings and the events that instigated them varied from state to state as functions of local race relations and economic factors. Focusing on Virginia, which had the fewest lynchings in the South, and Georgia, which had a particularly violent history, Brundage notes that Georgia mobs, unlike Virginia mobs, would lynch for minor transgressions. In the Cotton Belt and southern Georgia, the plantation system fostered racial violence, while in coastal Georgia, with its mixed economy, white paternalism and a strong black community limited lynching. In Virginia, diversified agriculture required day labor, which lessened racial conflict while keeping black workers on a short leash. In Virginia, Brundage shows, anti-lynching efforts were sponsored by conservative government officials who condemned anarchy. In Georgia, on the other hand, the anti-lynching campaign was instigated by progressive social reformers, leading to a decline in lynching by the late 1920s.

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Review

"The best book ever written on lynching." -- Numan V. Bartley, author of *The Rise of Massive Resistance*.

"A nuanced corrective to theories that lynching was a monolithic phenomenon throughout the South." -- Publishers Weekly

From the Back Cover

In 1905, the sociologist James Cutler observed, "It has been said that our country's national crime is lynching". If lynching was a national crime, it was a southern obsession. Based on an analysis of nearly six hundred lynchings, this volume offers a new, full appraisal of the complex character of lynching. In Virginia, the southern state with the fewest lynchings, W. Fitzhugh Brundage found that conditions did not breed endemic mob violence. The character of white domination in Georgia, however, was symbolized by nearly five hundred lynchings and became the measure of race relations in the Deep South. By focusing on these two states, Brundage addresses three central questions ignored by previous studies: How can the variation in lynching over space and time be explained? To what extent was lynching a social ritual that affirmed traditional values? What were the causes of the decline of lynching? An original aspect of the work is that it demonstrates the role blacks played in combatting lynching, whether by flight, overt protest, or other strategies. The most lasting of these were efforts to organize opposition to lynching, efforts that culminated in the expansion of the NAACP throughout the South. The book's multidisciplinary approach and the significant issues it addresses will interest historians of African-American history, the South, and American violence. At the same time, it will remind a more general audience of a tradition of violence that poisoned American life, and especially southern life.

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