

History 340
Critical Periods in American History the 1890s
Roger Williams University
CAS 228
M, W, F, 12:00 - 12:50
Fall Semester, 2007

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Week of November 19

Thanksgiving Break isn't kind to us this year. I had hoped to have an uninterrupted series of classes during which to explore the issues of race, and I'm afraid that's not going to happen. I know that numbers of students will be departing early, because travelling over Thanksgiving is horrendous—it's the busiest few days for airlines in the entire calendar year. I'm going to take a census in class on Friday the 9th to see how many people are going to be here on Monday the 19th, and I may adjust this syllabus accordingly. We *will* have class, but I don't want anyone to miss some of the agenda items, because of their interest and their importance.

For *Monday, November 19*

Lynch Law

Between 1882 (when reliable statistics were first collected) and 1968 (when the classic forms of lynching had disappeared), 4,743 persons died of lynching, 3,446 of them black men and women. Mississippi (539 black victims, 42 white) led this grim parade of death, followed by Georgia (492, 39), Texas (352, 141), Louisiana (335, 56), and Alabama (299, 48). **From 1882 to 1901, the annual number nationally usually exceeded 100; 1892 had a record 230 deaths (161 black, 69 white).** Although lynchings declined somewhat in the twentieth century, there were still 97 in 1908 (89 black, 8 white), 83 in the racially troubled postwar year of 1919 (76, 7, plus some 25 race riots), 30 in 1926 (23, 7), and 28 in 1933 (24, 4).

[About Lynching, Zangrando, Callahan, and Bruce](#)

Internet Assignment:

Download and Read:

[About Lynching](#), by Robert L. Zangrando, et al. found at http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/poets/g_l/lynching/lynching.htm.

[Lynch Law in Georgia](#), by Ida Wells Barnett (1899) found at http://afroamhistory.about.com/library/blidabwells_lynchlawingeorgial.htm

[Lynching in America](#), including the report of the lynching in Urbana, Ohio and the newspaper accounts of it, found at <http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/mmh/lynching/default.cfm>

I am expecting that some of you will find today's readings and discussion profoundly disturbing. In fact, I would be a bit disappointed if this was not the case. All too often we are ready to assume that inter-social conflict is something that happens elsewhere... in Ireland, or Israel, or Afghanistan, certainly not in "civilized" America. And yet our own record is bloody enough, and surprisingly unknown. There are a number of voices speaking to you today, and it is important that you consider them. Note that popular sentiments divided on this issue, and that for every anti-lynch crusader like Ida Wells there were civic voices raised defending the practice. Note, too, that not all the lynchings were southern, Urbana, Illinois, scene of a late 19th century lynching was home to the University of Illinois. Not all the persons lynched were black. However, in many cases where a white person was lynched the "crime" involved over familiarity with black persons.

Wednesday and Friday, November 21 and 23

No classes. Have a delightful Thanksgiving Break. This little prayer is part of a text I use when I teach New England, and has absolutely nothing to do with this course. But I thought I'd share it with you anyhow.

As I was Musing on my Bed being awake as Usual before Daylight; recollecting the Many Mercies and good things I enjoy for which I ought to be thankful this Day; some of which I have Noted after rising as follows viz:

The Life & health of myself and family, and also of so many of my Children, grand Children and great grand-children' also of my other Relations and friends & Neighbors, for Health peace and plenty amongst us

For my Bible and Many other good and Useful Books, Civil & Religious Priviledges, for the ordinances of the gospel; and for my Minister.

For my Land, House and Barn and other Buildings, & that they are preserv'd from fire & other accidents.

For my wearing Clothes to keep me warm, my Bed and Beding to rest upon.

For my Cattle, Sheep, and Swine & other Creatures, for my support.

For my Corn, Wheat, Rye Grass and Hay; Wool, Flax, Syder, Apples, Pumpkins, Potatoes, Cabages, tirnips, Carrots, Beets, peaches and other fruits.

For my Clock and Watch to measure my passing time by Day and by Night.

Wood, Water, Butter, Cheese, Milk, Pork, Beefe, & fish, &c.

For Tea, Sugar, Rum, Wine, Gin, Molasses, peper, Spice and Money for to bye other Necessaries and to pay my Depts & Taxes &c.

For my Lether, Lamp oyl & Candles, Husbandry Utensils, & other tools of very sort &c &c &c.

Bless the Lord O my Soul and all that is within me Bless his holy Name. Bless the Lord O my Soul and forget not all his benefits, who Satisfieth thy mouth with good things, &c.

Samuel Lane, 1793