Lynching and Leisure: Race and the Transformation of Mob Violence in Texas by Terry Anne Scott (review)

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shift from a one-sided terror campaign to civil war after Black men gained political power in 1868, that timing needs further exploration.

John Patrick Daly does not mince words in this short and easily read book. He boldly calls on all Americans to discard false narratives of Reconstruction that remain dominant in popular understanding and to memorialize the true heroes of the period, the Black and White southerners who gave their lives fighting the losing battle to establish a biracial democracy in the South. After reading this book, it will be hard for anyone to maintain the traditional textbook view of Reconstruction.

Texas A&M University Lorien Foote

Lynching and Leisure: Race and the Transformation of Mob Violence in Texas. By Terry Anne Scott. (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2022. Pp. 400. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.)

In her new and compelling study of racial violence in Texas, Terry Anne Scott presents a dramatic reinterpretation of the hundreds of lynchings that took place in the state between 1866 and 1950. Drawing on insights presented by Michel Foucault in his landmark work on the French penal system, Scott argues that the "spectacle and theatricality of lynchings in Texas" mirrored the "'excesses' of torture" that were used in France to "reveal and enhance the omnipotence of the state" (15). In the Texas case, however, Scott argues that Whites choreographed elaborate exhibitions of torture, murder, and death to celebrate and reinforce their own racial supremacy, which often came at the expense of state power.

Beginning with acts of mob violence that occurred immediately after the Civil War, Scott argues that early lynchings in Texas targeted horse thieves, cattle rustlers, and murderers who were often White. The victims were generally hanged in isolated places, and the perpetrators of the crimes often wore masks to conceal their identities. By the 1880s, however, White Texans had transformed lynching from an "earlier, strictly punitive and largely clandestine form of corporeal punishment into wholly racialized, publicly viewed, well-attended, frequently commercialized exhibitions of violence in which the vast majority of victims were Black, and the concept of crime included any action that challenged the racial hierarchy" (33–34).

As Scott describes this new culture of lynching, she makes several fascinating interventions in the literature. First, she rejects the idea that lynch mobs were "an archaic expression of backwoods, southern white people" (121). On the contrary, she argues that Black migration, urban growth, industrial development, labor competition, and residential conflict upset well-established racial norms at the end of the nineteenth century and spurred White rage and violence. Rather than simply acting as vigilantes,

however, Whites created a "new system of judicial norms" that melded together the "ethos of frontier-style justice with anxieties over Black freedom and progress" to produce a new "pseudojudicial system" that criminalized the Black body and supplanted the state's judicial system (21).

Scott's most fascinating argument is that lynching functioned as a form of racialized entertainment that often included spectators' time off from work, car or train travel, elaborate ceremonies, and even grotesque souvenirs and photographic postcards. In a detailed discussion of the ceremonial burning of African American men, including the horrific lynching of Henry Smith in 1893, Scott shows how White Texans used the extended ceremony, conspicuous torture, and hunt for bodily souvenirs to authenticate their new pseudojudicial process. Indeed, she argues that the photographs, recordings, and other artifacts picked up at lynching sites helped Whites reframe lynching within a narrative of recreation. As a result, lynching sites literally became tourist spots of "identity reinforcement for whites," as they struggled to control Black migration and labor competition (203).

In response to lynching, Black journalists and activists highlighted the frivolous way in which Whites approached the torture and death of African Americans. It was not uncommon, for example, for White Texans to refer to a lynching as a "barbeque, neck-tie party, [or] carnival," and many Whites even considered it a "pastime" like sports or hunting (217–219). Indeed, Scott writes, by presenting "white Texans as an ostensibly uncivilized ensemble of recreational murderers, journalists could at once bolster the refined image their readers had of themselves while establishing Texas as a space where racialized violence was woven into the very performance of an everyday life that they claimed was civilized" (224).

Although Scott does not cover the lynching of Hispanic men and women in Texas, she has added considerable new perspective and data to our understanding of racial violence in the Lone Star State. Her book will serve as one of the new standard texts on lynching in Texas alongside earlier scholarship by Karlos K. Hill, William Carrigan, Monica Muñoz Martinez, Benjamin Johnson, Brandon T. Jett, and others. This is crucial reading for anyone interested in the study of race, violence, and modern Texas.

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Toward a Cooperative Commonwealth: The Transplanted Roots of Farmer-Labor Radicalism in Texas. By Thomas Alter II. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2022. Pp. 304. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.)

In this book, Thomas Alter II traces the trajectory of agrarian radical politics in Texas between roughly the Civil War and the 1920s. Ar-