Mob Justice in the “American Congo”: “Judge Lynch” in Arkansas During the Decade After World War I

BY TODD E. LEWIS

Christmas Day dinner 1920 turned into horror on the Craig plantation near Wilson in Mississippi County. Henry Lowry, a black tenant farmer, came to demand a settlement on his crops. The Craigs refused to hear Lowry, and shooting erupted, leaving patriarchal white planter O. T. Craig and his daughter Mrs. Mary Bell Williamson dead and two adult sons of Craig wounded. Lowry then fled, escaping a huge posse threatening to lynch him.1 He escaped to El Paso, Texas, where he remained hidden until white authorities in Mississippi County intercepted a letter from Lowry to a friend. El Paso law officials were notified, and Lowry was quickly extradited.

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American Congo

The prisoner, escorted by two Mississippi County deputy sheriffs, soon boarded a train bound for Arkansas via New Orleans and Memphis. Law officials hoped the roundabout route would thwart would-be Lynchers poised along a Texarkana-Little Rock route.2 But these efforts proved futile. In the early morning of January 26, 1921, “five or six muddy and traveled-stained automobiles” entered Sardis, Mississippi. Their passengers, sixteen “grim and determined-looking men,” parked near the depot and prepared to intercept the train bearing Lowry. They warned the night watchman not to interfere. When the train reached Sardis, the sixteen awaiting vigilantes each drew a revolver, boarded the Negro coach, and quickly subdued the two deputy sheriffs guarding the prisoner. Leaving the train, they “bundled [Lowry] into an automobile” and headed north toward Wilson.3 Choosing to skirt Memphis, where the police stood ready to stop a lynching parade, they arrived at Richardson’s Landing across from Nodena, Arkansas, and near Wilson, in the late afternoon.4 On the Arkansas side of the Mississippi River, “a great crowd [had] gathered. Every able bodied [white] man from Wilson, a crowd from Blytheville and surrounding towns” awaited “the coming of the murderer.”5

In addition to Lowry, the vigilantes planned to lynch two other black men who had helped him flee the country; the mob executions were to occur on the Craig plantation. But bad weather, pressure from state law enforcement officials trying to locate and stop the lynching, and a crowd of at least five hundred dictated
that Lowry be lynched immediately. Mob leaders chained their hapless victim to a log, placing leaves soaked with gasoline around his feet. After granting his requests that he be allowed to eat something and see his wife and children, the mob applied the torch. “Inch by inch the negro was fair cooked to death,” related Memphis Press reporter Ralph Roddy, who witnessed the horror. “Every few minutes fresh leaves were tossed on the funeral pyre until the blaze had passed the negro’s waste. As the flames were eating away his abdomen, a member of the mob stepped forward and saturated the body with gasoline. It was then only a few minutes until the negro had been reduced to ashes.” Lowry bore an agony lasting half an hour nobly; “not once did he beg for mercy,” reported Roddy. However, the dying Lowry did try to end his torment, reaching for hot ashes to eat, but members of the cruel mob kicked them out of his reach. Subsequent efforts by the lynchers to lay their hands on black prisoners who had helped Lowry to escape held in Osceola and Blytheville were beaten back by cold, nasty weather and a determined stand by Mississippi County sheriff Dwight H. Blackwood, backed by American Legionnaires.

The Lowry lynching provoked outrage both in Arkansas and across the nation. The NAACP, represented by one-time Arkan-isan William Pickens, conducted a special investigation, resulting in an account of the lynching published in The Nation; Pickens dubbed eastern Arkansas the “American Congo.” The NAACP also distributed an account of the lynching as a pamphlet to congressmen during the debate over the Dyer anti-lynching bill in 1922. The Arkansas Gazette, Arkansas Democrat, and the Arkansa Methodist, prominent state newspapers, editorialized on the evils of mob justice. Arkansas governor Thomas C. McRae called the lynching “most disgraceful and inexcusable;” he urged the adoption of a strong anti-lynching law that would remove negligent law officers from office. The Lowry lynching received tremendous attention, but it was not an isolated or unusual event: lynching was an important part of Arkansas’s racist system, which also included disfranchisement of black voters and segregation. As such, it was an instrument of terror, causing a fear of death not only for would-be violators of the color-line but for blacks in general. However, that lynching was not universally accepted by white Arkansans, would prove crucial in bringing it under control by the end of the 1920s.

Lynching had long been a problem in the South and remained so in the 1920s. Arkansas figured prominently among lynching

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*Memphis Press, January 27, 1921, in “An American Lynching,” 3, 4. Roddy’s account served as the source of information for accounts published in other newspapers such as the Arkansas Democrat and the Arkansas Gazette.

*Arkansas Democrat, January 27, 1921; Arkansas Gazette, January 27, 1921.

*National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, February 14, 1921, 3, in Film 649, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Minutes of the Board of Directors, 1909-1929, Audio Visual Department, Mullins Library, University of Arkansas, text-film, hereafter referred to as NAACP BOD Minutes;
statistics compiled by the Tuskegee Institute and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. 12 NAACP records indicated that between 1889 and 1918, 214 persons died by lynchings in Arkansas. 13 Arkansas ranked sixth among states in the number of victims lynched with 284 during the period 1883-1959, according to Tuskegee Institute records. The states ranking ahead of Arkansas, all part of the traditional South, included Mississippi with 578; Georgia, 530; Texas, 493; Louisiana, 391; and Alabama, with 347 persons lynched. 14 Especially after 1888, lynching was primarily a race-related phenomenon occurring in the traditional South, which included the eleven former Confederate states and the bordering states of Oklahoma and Kentucky. Missouri had a similar lynching pattern. 15 According to NAACP statistics, the executions of 2,868 of 3,224 lynching victims in 1889-1918 occurred in these fourteen states. Furthermore, of the 2,868 persons lynched, 2,422 were black men and women. Arkansas’s own lynching record resembled the general southern record. Of Arkansas’s 214 lynched persons in 1889-1918, 182 were black and only 32 were white. 16 Yet if lynching remained a problem in the South before 1919, it was one in decline. In the decade 1889-1898, the traditional South averaged 137.0 lynchings per year; in 1899-1908, 84.5; in 1909-1918, 65.3. Arkansas’s lynching pattern was a similar one of decline. In 1889-1898, 111 persons were lynched in Arkansas, 11.1 per year; in 1899-1908, 66 persons were lynched, 6.6 per year; and in 1909-1918, 37 persons were lynched, or 3.7 per year. 17 Thus the decade after the First World War promised to be one of further decline for lynching, if the long term trend held out. However, this decline had been unsteady, featuring peaks and valleys. And 1919 proved to be one of the peaks. The year following the end of the First World War was fraught with racial tensions, featuring an increase in lynchings, both in Arkansas and across the nation. After the war America found itself in a state of confusion. A postwar depression aggravated fears of communism and anarchist terror, dampening the optimism generated by victory. The Versailles treaty negotiations quickly dispelled the dream of a self-determined and democratic world order envisioned by President Woodrow Wilson. 18 Americans in general found the immediate postwar period exasperating. This was especially true for African Americans, who had found in military service and wartime factory positions great op-

12James Elbert Cutler, Lynch-Law: An Investigation Into the History of Lynching in the United States (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1905), 157. The exact accuracy of statistics on lynchings provided by either the NAACP or the Tuskegee Institute are questionable. Neither body agrees with the other on the exact number of lynchings. Furthermore, the two groups’ works differ greatly in nature. The Tuskegee Institute Department of Records and Research document, “Lynchings by State and Race, 1882-1959,” a document available on the shelves of the University of Arkansas’s Mullins Library, gives the national total of lynching victims each year, separating the victims into blacks and whites, as well as accumulated state totals for the seventy-eight year period. By contrast, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People document, Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918 (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), originally published as a pamphlet in 1919, gives the name, date, location and alleged cause of each victim’s lynching, but spans only a thirty-year period. Still, the two documents have an approximate annual and overall agreement; in 1889-1918, the Tuskegee Institute recorded 3,133 persons lynched, 645 white and 2,488 black, while the NAACP recorded 3,224 persons lynched, 702 white, and 2,522 black. Sources for statistical information in this paper have been selected on the basis of usefulness with regard to time span and geographical location. It should be noted that previous researchers have regarded the Tuskegee Institute and NAACP sources as generally accurate.

13Thirty Years of Lynching, 32.


15The lynching pattern shared by these states featured a high number of total lynchings with a majority of blacks being lynched. Other states either had a low number of lynchings or had a majority of white victims; none had as high a number of total lynchings as did these fourteen states.

16Thirty Years of Lynching, 31-32.

17Ibid., 34-35.

opportunities to escape the southern racist system." Intolerant standards of 100 percent Americanism generated by wartime propaganda emphasizing conformity were not forgotten after the war, and whites typically viewed blacks as outside of these standards. Whites also refused to accept any changes in race relations after the war. Northern white factory workers resented the new competition for jobs that blacks presented, while white southerners attempted to restore the old order.\footnote{Alaine Locke, The New Negro: An Interpretation (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925), 3-16; Randy Finley, "Black Arkansans and World War One," Arkansas Historical Quarterly 49 (Autumn 1990): 249-277; Robert Zangrando, The NAACP Crusade Against Lynching, 1909-1950 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 51, 53.} In turn, blacks resented and resisted efforts to deprive them of their newly won freedoms. Violence resulted; over twenty race riots erupted across the nation during the Red Summer of 1919, plaguing cities like Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Omaha.\footnote{Arthur I. Waskow, From Race Riot to Sit-In, 1919 and the 1960s: A Study in the Connections Between Conflict and Violence (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), 21, 39.} Also, lynchings increased from sixty-four in 1918 to eighty-three in 1919; one hundred thirty-six of these one hundred forty-seven lynching victims were black.\footnote{For a discussion of the race riots of 1919, see William Cohen, "Riots, Racism, and Hysteria," Massachusetts Review 13 (Summer 1972): 373-400; Charles Flint Kellogg, NAACP: A History of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Volume I, 1909-1920 (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1967), 235-245; and Waskow, From Race Riot to Sit-In, 1-142.} Between December 1918 and December 1928, a total of twenty-eight men, all but one of whom were black, died at the hands of Arkansas lynching mobs. Lynchings during the postwar decade shared several defining characteristics. Essentially, a person who had violated social mores, usually one proscribed by law, would be executed by a group of persons acting outside the confines of legal procedure. Lynchings were popular in the sense that they typically had grassroots acceptance as a punishment for the violations of certain community mores. During the postwar decade in Arkansas, the use of lynching proved to be peculiar to the white community; blacks did not Lynch. Furthermore, lynchings occurred only in certain parts of Arkansas: the Delta region of eastern and southern Arkansas where the vast majority of black Arkansans lived, as well as urban centers in central Arkansas like Hot Springs and Little Rock. The execution of the sole white man lynched during the postwar decade, E. C. Gregor in Harrison, which occurred outside of the lynching region, was a unique exception to this rule.\footnote{"Real Causes of Two Race Riots," Crisis 19 (December 1919): 60; Walter White, "Massacring Whites in Arkansas," Nation 109 (December 6, 1919): 715.} Lynchings of the postwar decade were events with informal rituals. Humiliation, torture, and defilement of the victim's body constituted part of Arkansas' lynching ritual, which always included death for the victim. Three lynching victims suffered the humiliation of being paraded down the street to the place of execution (see table).\footnote{\footnotemark[9]The Delta region always was the state's primary lynching region. Of the 214 lynchings recorded by the NAACP in 1889-1918, only thirty-two occurred outside the Delta region. Thirty Years of Lynchings, 48-52.} Other men were physically tortured: two
Table 1
Lynches in Arkansas, December 1918-1929

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year/Victim’s Name*</th>
<th>Date/Location</th>
<th>Alleged Offense</th>
<th>Method of Execution</th>
<th>Location of Execution</th>
<th>Mob Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1918</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willis Robinson</td>
<td>December 18—-Newport</td>
<td>Killing policeman</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>Train depot</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1919</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sam McIntyre</td>
<td>April 23—Forrest City</td>
<td>Able to implicate other in murder</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>Beside railroad</td>
<td>25-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Livingston</td>
<td>May 21—-El Dorado</td>
<td>Murder of employers</td>
<td>Burning</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clyde Ellison</td>
<td>June 15—-Star City</td>
<td>Attempted assault of white woman</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Wilson</td>
<td>October 20—-Marianna</td>
<td>Murder of white woman</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Jameson</td>
<td>November 11—-Magnolia</td>
<td>Murder of sheriff</td>
<td>Burning</td>
<td>Public Square</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1920</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wade Thomas</td>
<td>December 26—-Jonesboro</td>
<td>Murder of policeman</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>Beside highway</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1921</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry Lowry</td>
<td>January 26—-Nodena</td>
<td>Murder planter and daughter</td>
<td>Burning</td>
<td>Ferry Landing</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Browning Tuggle</td>
<td>March 15—-Hope</td>
<td>Rape of white woman</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>Water tower</td>
<td>100/200-300/2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil Slater</td>
<td>March 22—-Monticello</td>
<td>Rape of white woman</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>In town</td>
<td>300/1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leroy Smith</td>
<td>May 11—-McGehee</td>
<td>Attack on white couple</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Turner</td>
<td>November 18—-Helena</td>
<td>Assault of white girl</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>25-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Hicks</td>
<td>November 23—-Lake Village</td>
<td>Propositioning white girl</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Beside highway</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas Knickerson</td>
<td>November 25—-Cypert</td>
<td>Attempted assault on white girl</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1922</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>John Harris/Harrison</td>
<td>February 2—Malvern</td>
<td>Frightening white girls</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>On railroad</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. Norman</td>
<td>February 11—-Spring Lake</td>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Rural park</td>
<td>2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurley Owen</td>
<td>May 19—-Texarkana</td>
<td>Murder of policeman</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Park in town</td>
<td>Several thousand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John West</td>
<td>July 28—-Guernsey</td>
<td>Insubordination to white man</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Woods</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert Harris</td>
<td>August 1—-Hot Springs</td>
<td>Murder of white businessman</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>Hotel Square</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1923</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>E. C. Gregor (white)</td>
<td>January 16—-Harrison</td>
<td>Burning of railroad bridges</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed Brock</td>
<td>August 11—-Murphyville</td>
<td>Insult to white woman</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1924</strong></td>
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<td>none</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1925</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>“George”</td>
<td>May 29—-Camden</td>
<td>Assault on white woman</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Canebrakes</td>
<td>25-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1926</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Albert Blade/Blazes</td>
<td>May 27—-Wilson</td>
<td>Attempted assault on white girls</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>500/2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Powell</td>
<td>August 11—-Lewisville</td>
<td>Murder of deputy sheriff</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>Swamp</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bud Nelson</td>
<td>ca October 51—-Terry</td>
<td>Murder of planter’s son</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Swamp</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1927</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Carter</td>
<td>May 5—-Little Rock</td>
<td>Attacking white woman</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>1000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Fleming</td>
<td>June 8—-Mellwood</td>
<td>Murder of overseer</td>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>Flood refugee camp</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winston Pounds</td>
<td>August 25—-Wilmot</td>
<td>Attempted assault on white woman</td>
<td>Hanging</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1928</strong></td>
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<td>none</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Unless noted otherwise, the lynching victim is assumed to have been black; see note 26 for an explanation of sources.
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him again; he quickly confessed, and the mob completed the
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under his feet. Methods of execution varied; in addition to the
three burnings at the stake, Arkansas lynchings in the postwar
decade included thirteen hangings and eleven shootings (see
table). Mobs frequently defiled the corpses of lynching victims.
In three cases mob members riddled the bodies with scores of
bullets. In another case, a Pulaski County mob riddled their
victim's body with some two hundred bullets, dragging it behind
a car into Little Rock, where it was burned. In August 1922, Hot
Springs authorities prevented a similar dragging and burning of
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men without interference, and in two instances mob members
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Lynchings were emotional events which allowed an explosion
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They allowed family members of murder, rape, and assault vic-
tims to avenge crimes personally. Sometimes family members led
lynch mobs. The sons of O. T. Craig reportedly attended Henry
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Wilson mob seized Albert Blade/Blazes in May 1926, only after
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Yet if lynchings allowed vengeance at the personal level, they
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people. The size of lynch mobs varied. Four of the lynchings in
Arkansas in the decade after the First World War had mobs of
fewer than ten persons. Five had mobs from twenty to fifty
person, while four had mobs of between one hundred and five
hundred persons. Two had mobs of over one thousand, with
three mob members in the hundreds or over a thousand,
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the arrival of the assault victim's father. The father of one girl
who had allegedly been assaulted shot the accused man to death,
while the uncle of a man slain near Pine Bluff in October 1926,
vowed to shoot his nephew's murderer personally.

Yet if lynchings allowed vengeance at the personal level, they
remained events perpetrated by groups and even masses of
people. The size of lynch mobs varied. Four of the lynchings in
Arkansas in the decade after the First World War had mobs of
fewer than ten persons. Five had mobs from twenty to fifty
person, while four had mobs of between one hundred and five
hundred persons. Two had mobs of over one thousand, with
three mob members in the hundreds or over a thousand,
depending upon different press accounts. With such large mobs,
lynchings were seldom secretive affairs. Lynchers occasionally
wore masks, and inhabitants often would not talk to strangers
after the fact. But lynchings were meant to be known. Indeed,
none of Arkansas's lynchings in the postwar decade were
per-
formed by secretive nightriders. One particular lynching, which occurred outside of Little Rock in 1927, exemplified the public nature of mob justice.

In May 1927, hysteria reigned in Little Rock following the discovery of the body of a small white girl in the bell tower of a church. The police detained as suspects Frank Dixon, a black man who worked as the church’s janitor, and his sixteen-year-old son Lonnie. When it became known that Lonnie had confessed to the murder, a mob assembled before the state penitentiary demanding the two prisoners. After learning that Chief of Police Burl C. Rotenberry had “spirited away” the prisoners, mob members pursued the Little Rock police chief throughout the night of May 1, searching jails throughout central Arkansas. The mob gathered before the state penitentiary again the following night but without finding the Dixons. Then on May 4, a middle-aged white woman and her teenage daughter reported being attacked by a black man on a road south of town. A posse assembled and by that afternoon had captured John Carter, reportedly a “halfwit.” With Carter in custody, members of the white posse began to unleash the fury that had been building up the past several days. Brushing aside resisting law officers, they promptly hanged Carter, riddled his body with over two hundred bullets, and then dragged his body behind a car into the black business section of Little Rock. A riot that lasted three hours involving over a thousand whites ensued. With Rotenberry reportedly out of town, the police refused to intervene. The rioters burned Carter’s body, fueling the fire with boards from a black church, according to an NAACP source. The arrival of soldiers called out by Governor John E. Martineau finally ended the riot. With the troops present the mob dispersed quietly.

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40Arkansas Democrat, May 1, 1927, May 2, 1927.
41Ibid., May 2, 1927. Pursuing mob members were reported in Sheridan, Benton, Hot Springs, and Malvern.
42Ibid., 3.
43Ibid., May 4, 1927; Arkansas Gazette, May 5, 1927; Crisis 34 (July 1927): 168.
44Arkansas Democrat, May 4, 1927; Arkansas Gazette, May 5, 1927. See also Scrapbook 5. The NAACP apparently never conducted an investigation of the

The riot following the Carter lynching encapsulated all the fears the black community entertained about lynchings, proving such fears justified. The police refused to do anything about the riot. During the grim festivities, whites essentially took possession of the black neighborhood, depriving blacks of any security in their own homes. Members of the huge riotous crowd occupied the porches of black homes, while a group of white women stood on the steps of the Mosaic Temple, city headquarters of the black fraternal Templars. The mob was indiscriminate; its members attacked any and all blacks found nearby. One black man on foot was chased, but he eluded his white pursuers. Another black man driving an automobile passed through the intersection near Carter’s body just as it was set ablaze; “several [mob members] started after him and he raced away.” A third man was caught and severely beaten. Only the intervention of a [white] man promising the blood of the Dixons prevented the beaten man from being burned alive on the spot. The victim “was tossed from one automobile to another until about 20 young men obtained possession of him and rushed him to police headquarters.” There he was placed in an ambulance and taken to a hospital. During the dangerous riot, blacks evacuated the area. “All negro business houses and residences in the vicinity appeared deserted throughout the night.” Blacks who could not escape hid. One black merchant who had taken refuge in his shop during the riot emerged after soldiers had arrived and the mob had dispersed. “Badly frightened,” he refused to return home until a soldier assured him “that he would be furnished with an escort.” Two other blacks, trapped by the mob’s arrival, likewise emerged from their place of hiding after the riot, departing in their car.

Race riots and lynchings produced great fear in the African-American community; in investigating the Lowry lynching, NAACP representative William Pickens reported that the “col-

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Carter lynching, although it did mention the incident as illustrative of the conditions prevailing in the Delta region. Crisis 34 (July 1927): 168.
45Arkansas Gazette, May 5, 1927; Scrapbook 5.
46National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Directors, February 14, 1921, 3, in NAACP BOD Minutes.
ored people, even in Little Rock and Memphis are afraid to talk about the lynching." This fear helped to define an etiquette of race relations in which blacks often assumed a humble posture. For instance, in May 1922, older members of Texarkana’s black community felt it necessary to ask city officials to allow them to gather the charred remains of lynching victim Hurley Owen for burial. Black leaders typically expressed their concerns in a non-confrontational manner; prominent black citizens of Little Rock formally thanked the city’s white authorities after the prevention of the lynchings of Emmanuel West in March 1921 and the Dixons in May 1927. They frequently volunteered their services in a cooperative spirit, hoping to show that they were responsible citizens. In the wake of the Lowry lynching, members of the African-American John M. Reed Post of the American Legion volunteered its services to protect prisoners against lynch mobs, and while in the midst of an apparent assault wave by black men on white women in March 1921, a Little Rock black Republican club volunteered its members to patrol the city streets to prevent further attacks.

If the responses of some African Americans to lynchings and mob violence were humble and cooperative, others were not. On two occasions, the lynchings of Hurley Owen in May 1922 and John Carter, rumors spread that blacks were arming themselves.

Yet a resort to arms remained a precarious solution, as exemplified by the Elaine riot in October 1919. Essentially, gunfire between white law enforcement officials and black tenant farmers seeking to organize a union resulted in the assembling of a large posse of whites. The posse went to Elaine expecting to arrest the farmers involved in the shooting only to be repulsed by armed blacks. This resistance by Phillips County blacks caused Governor Charles H. Brough to order five hundred soldiers to the area. In this way the state and local white community united to suppress what it claimed was a black rebellion, killing at least twenty-five blacks, perhaps fifty, and by some accounts over one hundred. Over seventy other blacks were placed on trial, resulting in death sentences for twelve men.

The justice rendered in the Elaine riot trials was questionable at best. The jury typically deliberated only a few minutes before rendering its verdicts of guilty. Against such “legal lynchings” black Arkansans exerted tremendous effort. In cooperation with the national NAACP, local black attorneys led by Scipio Jones of Little Rock, leader of the state “Black and Tan” faction of the Republican party, embarked on a successful four-year campaign to overturn the verdicts of the twelve men condemned to death.

In another case, Little Rock’s NAACP raised funds to aid in the defense of accused rapist Emmanuel West, but with less success;

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“Arkansas Democrat,” March 19, 1921, p. 8, May 4, 1927. The attempt to lynch Emmanuel West and two other black men occurred on March 17, 1921, in response to alleged incidents involving white women, including a rape on March 12, 1921. See Arkansas Democrat, March 18, 1921; Arkansas Gazette, March 18, 1921.

“Arkansas Democrat,” January 28, 1921, p. 7, March 26, 1921, p. 3; Pine Bluff Daily Graphic, January 29, 1921. The assault wave began on March 12, 1921, when a white woman was allegedly raped by two black men in Little Rock; Emmanuel West was one of the men arrested for this incident. Other events were then reported in the press, including an alleged proposition by a black man to a white woman on March 11, and two separate incidents on March 17 and March 22 in which a white woman fended off a “nigger” trying to break into her home. See Arkansas Democrat, March 18, 1921, p. 5, March 18, 1921, p. 15; Arkansas Gazette, March 13, 1921, pp. 1, 10, March 18, 1921, March 23, 1921.


Two accounts of what initiated the Elaine riot exist. One, found in the white press, claims that while enroute to arrest a bootlegger, the car of two white law enforcement officials broke down near the church where the tenant farmers were meeting; the farmers fired upon them first. Another account, presented by the NAACP, claims that the lawmen tried to break up the meeting, firing the shots after they were denied entrance to the church. See Arkansas Gazette, October 2, 1919; and “The Real Causes of Two Race Riots,” Crisis 19 (December 1919): 58, for these two accounts. Secondary accounts of the Elaine riot include Curtner, A Mob Intend on Death, 5-23; B. Boren McCool, Union, Reaction, and Riot (Memphis: Bureau of Social Research, 1970); O. A. Rogers, Jr., “The Elaine Riot of 1919,” Arkansas Historical Quarterly 19 (Summer 1960): 142-150; and Waskow, From Race Riot to Sit-In, 121-142.

For an account of the Elaine trials, see Waskow, From Race Riot to Sit-In, 143-174. For Scipio Jones’ role in the defense of the rioters, see Curtner, A Mob Intend on Death, 48-54, 78-79, 84-105, 115-120, 125-130, 160-166, 181-183.
the prisoner was sentenced to life imprisonment.53 Nevertheless, in the courts blacks found a relatively effective way to resist the arbitrary action of white power. Another alternative was to leave town; a mass exodus of local blacks reportedly followed the Carter lynching.54

Two particular forms of violence proved most likely to provoke lynchings: murders, and incidents of rape and assaults involving white women and girls as victims. White apologists for lynchings typically cited the menace of black men raping white women as the cause of mob justice. For instance, fundamentalist Missionary Baptist leader Ben Bogard of Little Rock displayed a strong belief that black men would rape white women if they were not controlled. Writing in 1928, he commented that a federal anti-lynching law providing a large indemnity to the lynching victim's family, as did the Dyer bill, would “be the greatest sort of encouragement for the crime [of rape] to be committed.” Such a law, according to Bogard, would “assure the negro brute in advance that if he is caught [and lynched] that his family [would] be well provided for.”55

Arkansas's most stalwart defender of lynchers during the 1920s was the Pine Bluff Daily Graphic. In response to anti-lynching commentary in the wake of a state lynching spree in March 1921, the Daily Graphic claimed that emphasis was being misplaced. “Too much about the terrible crime of lynching and ... too little about the terrible crimes which provoke lynchings” was being said. While lynching was “a terrible crime,” asserted the Daily Graphic, “the crime which provokes lynching was much more terrible.” Indeed, lynching was a form of upholding honor, it implied, as “the white man will not tolerate any desecration of his women.”56 In effect, the Daily Graphic argued that lynchings occurred because black men raped white women.

White Arkansans during the postwar decade believed that black men possessed brooding passions that could explode at any time and result in the violent rape of a white woman. During the decade after the First World War, whites viewed the issue of interracial sexuality with such great fear that distinctions probably blurred. Any sexual contact between black men and white women, including consensual ones, was likely to be reduced to the same thing: an extreme violation of the color line. In addition, the assumption that black men would rape white women was so strong that whites considered rape an implied intention in cases of physical assaults by black men on white women. Therefore, white Arkansans generally disregarded the arguments put forth by organizations such as the NAACP and the Tuskegee Institute that rapes provoked less than a quarter of lynchings.57 For instance, during the House debate over the Dyer anti-lynching bill in January 1922, Arkansas Representative William J. Driver asserted that he believed the Tuskegee Institute's report was “inaccurate in the percentage of lynchings attributed to the crime of rape.” He suggested that many rapes were listed as murders because “in many instances the crime of rape is mercifully followed by the murder of the victim, in which event the cause is charged to murder.”58

At a glance, Driver's assertion about lynching statistics does not seem totally inaccurate, at least not for Arkansas in the decade after the First World War. Sixteen lynchings—more than half of Arkansas's lynchings between December 1918 and 1928—were

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53Untitled Documents Relating to Emmanuel West, July 29, 1921, in Film 651, Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1917-25, 1928-32, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Audio-Visual Department, Mullins Library, University of Arkansas, text-film. For an account of the West trial, see Arkansas Democrat, April 8, 1921, April 9, 1921, July 22, 1921, p. 7. See also Arkansas Gazette, April 11, 1921, April 18, 1921.


55(Little Rock) Baptist and Commoner, October 3, 1928, p. 3.

56Daily Graphic, March 24, 1921, p. 4.

57According to "Lynchings by State and Race, 1882-1959," 25 percent of lynchings were precipitated by cases of rape and attempted rape. According to the NAACP, 19 percent of lynchings it recorded involved cases of rape and attempted rape, while 9.4 percent involved other attacks on white women. See Thirty Years of Lynching, 10.

precipitated by incidents involving white women. However, only four of these were blatantly sexual in nature: two rapes, by Phil Slater and Browning Tuggle; a letter written by Robert Hicks propositioning a white girl; and a dual case of indecent exposure and harassment by John Harris/Harrison. In several other cases, the possibility of rape was strongly implied in reports of the lynchings; these included two assaults and four attempted assaults on white women and girls, and an insult to a white woman. In these cases, the term “assault” served as a press codeword for “rape,” while an “insult” implied lewd remarks. Then in the case of the Leroy Smith lynching near McGehee on May 11, 1921, the press account alleged that three black men attacked a young white couple with the intention of raping the girl. In two cases, the shooting of Mrs. Mary Bell Williamson by Henry Lowry and John Carter’s attack on two white women, the incident was entirely violent. This was also probably the case with regard to Frank Livingston’s murder of his employers, a white man and his wife, and Alexander Wilson’s murder of his farm manager’s sister, meant as a psychological dagger aimed at the manager. Still, in these latter two cases, as suggested by Congressman Driver, rape may have occurred. But in these two cases, press accounts gave no affirmation to or suggestion of Driver’s assertion. So many lynchings were provoked by incidents involving white women is significant, for it suggests the high degree of sensitivity felt by whites toward interracial sexuality involving white women and black men; cases of such, whether consensual or not, were likely to provoke lynchings. However, it still does not validate the almost exclusive stress apologists for lynching placed on rape. A possible rape or attempted rape seems to have been an actual factor in only nine lynchings, including the two rapes, the two assaults, the four attempted assaults, and the attack on the white couple. Thus, less than one-third of Arkansas’s lynchings in the postwar decade involved the possible rape of a white woman.

In contrast to rape, an important provoker of lynchings not commonly alluded to by apologists of mob justice was the murder of prominent local citizens, such as O. T. Craig. Thirteen of Arkansas’s twenty-eight postwar lynching victims were accused murderers. Murder coupled with violations of white-over-black power relationships often provoked lynchings. In addition to the planter Craig, other murder victims included a man’s employers, a planter’s son, the sister of a white farm manager, and an overseer. The slaying of white law enforcement officials by blacks also constituted a violation of white-over-black power relationships; murder victims included three policemen, a sheriff, and a deputy sheriff. Lynchings following murders served as an important means to enforce the color line.

Apologists as well as opponents of lynching blamed slow legal procedures as provokers of lynchings. For instance, according to the Fayetteville Democrat, “lynching is generally resorted to because of the uncertainty and delay of legal procedure.” But despite the argument, in reality lynch mobs were not in the habit of giving legal procedures a chance. Of one hundred sixty-four lynchings recorded nationally by the Tuskegee Institute in 1922-1927, ninety-five featured mobs taking prisoners from jail or from officers’ custody. Law enforcement officials prevented another two hundred sixty-three lynchings during this period. Of the twenty-eight lynchings in Arkansas in the postwar decade, eight featured mobs taking victims from officers. In another seven of the twenty-eight lynchings, mobs took victims from the jail, often battering the jail doors down.

“See the table for those lynching victims accused of murder.

“Fayetteville Democrat, October 10, 1919, p. 2.


“Prisoners taken from officers included Wilson, Jameson, Lowry, Turner, Harris/Harrison, “George,” Blade/Blazes, and Pounds. Those taken from jails included Robinson, McIntrye, Thomas, Tuggle, Slater, Owen and Harris.

“See the table for the specific cases involving white women.

“Arkansas Gazette, May 13, 1921.

“Ibid., May 22, 1919, October 21, 1919.
Lynchings often pitted law officers, as well as mayors and judges, against a significant part of the white community. Sometimes the actions of officers and city officials were not enough to stop determined mobs, as in the fifteen cases in which mobs took men from officers or jails. While officers frequently proved unable to protect prisoners, in many other cases officers were able either to outwit or hold off the assaults of lynching mobs. "Spiriting away" prisoners was a favorite tactic of officers. For instance, to prevent their lynchings, Little Rock Police Chief Burl C. Rotenberry spirited away four men in March 1921.66 To avoid mob justice, in February 1921, the police chief of Pine Bluff transported to Little Rock two black men accused of attacking two teenage white girls.67 In early March 1921, a Mountain View farmer who had murdered two "well-to-do farmers and stockmen" was taken to Batesville to avoid a lynching.68 In mid-June 1921, a sheriff removed three "Chinamen" from Dermott to prevent their lynching.69 In March 1922, the sheriff of Monroe County hid a pair of men accused of killing two law officers from a mob in Clarendon, transporting the men to Little Rock after the mob had dissolved.70 Then in late May 1922, North Little Rock became the location of racial tensions. That evening groups of whites gathered, and a fight resulted between a black man and a white man. The police arrived in time to prevent a mob of one hundred whites from killing the black man.71 Spiriting away a prisoner often succeeded. Still, many Arkansans accepted lynching as a fact of life. In 1928 Ben Bogard wrote, "Everybody knows that whenever a negro outrages a girl in the South he will be mobbed. It can not be avoided whether right or wrong."

On many occasions, officers and governmental officials took strong, direct stands and thus prevented a lynching. These stands could be either preparations or actual confrontations. For instance, one hundred soldiers sent to Helena during the Elaine Riot of 1919 discouraged any attempt tolynch alleged black rioters.75 After his failure to prevent the lynching of Henry Lowry, Mississippi County sheriff Dwight H. Blackwood and American Legion volunteers fortified the Blytheville prison where a group of blacks were being held for aiding Lowry's earlier flight. This spoiled an attempt at lynching by members of the mob who went to the town after Lowry's execution.76 Police Chief Rotenberry led officers in repelling a mob that attempted tolynch alleged rapist Emmanuel West on March 17, 1921. The following day the penitentiary was reportedly fortified with a machine gun at the front gate and twelve men armed with sawed-off shotguns.77 On June 18, 1922, the sheriff of El Dorado and his deputies broke up a mob desiring tolynch a black man held in connection with an "offense" against a fifteen-year-old white girl.78 Governor John Martinneau ordered extensive safeguards such as the closing of streets and a large standby force to prevent violence during the trial of Lonnie Dixon in May 1927.79 The strong stands taken by lawmen and government officials served to undermine the widespread myth that officers could not stop a determined mob. And each successful stand by officers probably inspired other officers to take similar stands.

The effects of strong efforts by law enforcement officers to prevent lynchings was evidenced by the change in the ratio of lynchings to lynchings prevented. From 1916 to 1920, lynchings per year numbered three to every two lynchings prevented. In the five years after 1920, lynchings numbered one to every two prevented annually. The year 1920 proved to be the pivotal year in this change; after 1919, the number of lynchings carried out

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66The men removed had all been involved in cases of rape or propositioning of white women; see Arkansas Democrat, March 17, 1921; March 18, 1921; March 19, 1921; Arkansas Gazette, March 13, 1921; March 18, 1921; April 2, 1921.
67Arkansas Democrat, February 17, 1921; Daily Graphic, February 17, 1921.
68Arkansas Democrat, March 8, 1921.
69Arkansas Gazette, June 14, 1921.
70Ibid., March 15, 1922, p. 6.
71Arkansas Gazette, May 27, 1922.
72Baptist and Commoner, October 3, 1928, p. 3.
73Ibid.
74Arkansas Democrat, January 27, 1921; Arkansas Gazette, January 27, 1921.
75Arkansas Democrat, March 19, 1921.
76Arkansas Gazette, June 19, 1922.
77Arkansas Democrat, May 20, 1927.
never again exceeded the number of lynchings prevented. Strong stands by officers naturally made lynchings more difficult to carry out, and this increased difficulty probably deterred mob action. The actions of officers proved to be the most direct cause of the reduction of lynchings witnessed in the nation in the 1920s and probably in Arkansas as well. What motivated officers to take stronger stands remains unclear, though several factors possibly played a role.

Historically, Arkansas had a reputation of being a backward place inhabited by wild, illiterate hillbillies. The publicity given the Lowry lynching as well as the Elaine Riot of 1919 enhanced this negative image in the 1920s, giving the state the taint of lawlessness and arbitrary violence. At the same time, Arkansas had long been dominated by a group of Democratic politicians wedded to the idea of the New South. These men desired northern investment to aid in the economic development of their region. Thus Arkansas's negative image was of major concern to them, for as long as the state was seen as a backward, lawless region, outside investors were likely to avoid the region. Lynching was a particular embarrassment, and these New South men desired to eliminate it. They publicly denounced mob justice, taking a stand for law and order. Their representatives included men such as Governor McRae and the editors of the Arkansas Gazette and the Arkansas Democrat. The Gazette in particular stood out as a vocal opponent of lynching, using incidents such as the Elaine Riot and the Lowry and Carter lynchings as opportunities to express the wileness of mob justice and the virtues of law and order. In this light, statistician John Shelton Reed suggests that pressures outside the South influenced southern leaders to oppose lynching. Specifically, the negative press coverage generated by lynchings caused southern leaders to pressure local officials to stop lynchings. Contemporaries such as NAACP officers Walter White and James Weldon Johnson pointed toward the pressures placed by their organization's anti-lynching crusade, especially the Dyer anti-lynching bill, which passed the House in January 1922. The bill failed to become law because of a filibuster by southern senators. But even the partial success of the bill apparently aroused the fear of federal interference in state racial policy among southern leaders. They in turn applied pressure on local officials to stop lynchings and thus resolve the problem of mob justice without federal encroachment on states' rights.

In addition to the influence of outside pressures on southern states, changes occurring among southerners and the nation as a whole may have sped the decline of lynching. The period 1914-1929 was one of rapid change, both psychologically and materially. In an effort to mobilize the country for war, the federal government took unprecedented efforts to develop an American consciousness; propaganda caused Americans to look beyond the

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"Work, Negro Year Book, 157. In the period 1916-1920, 300 lynchings occurred, while 184 were prevented; in 1921-1925, 189 lynching occurred, while 392 were prevented. In 1919, 83 lynchings occurred, while 43 were prevented, whereas in 1920, 61 lynching occurred, while 84 were prevented.


"For examples of anti-lynching editorials, see Arkansas Gazette, October 7, 1919, p. 6, January 28, 1921, p. 6, March 19, 1921, p. 6, March 24, 1921, p. 6, February 24, 1922, p. 6, May 21, 1922, Section II, p. 4, May 25, 1922, p. 6, May 26, 1922, p. 6, June 17, 1922, p. 6, August 3, 1922, p. 6, August 6, 1922, Section II, p. 4, August 16, 1922, p. 6, Scrapbook 5.


local community to the nation as a whole and to make certain sacrifices to assure the nation's success. The vast numbers of men serving in the armed forces brought their experiences home with them after the war, contributing to the awareness that a world existed beyond the local community. Inventions such as the automobile, which allowed an unprecedented degree of individual mobility, and the radio, which allowed instantaneous exposure to ideas from different parts of the country and the world, also served to broaden the consciousness of Americans. This included those in relatively isolated rural communities in southern states. At the same time, such inventions coupled with motion pictures gave the individual an alternative to community-focused events which had traditionally broken the daily routine. Such events included political debates, revivals and other church-related functions, and even lynchings. Whereas the old forms of excitement typically had a moral or ideological component, the new forms allowed the individual to experience excitement for its own sake. As a result, community-mindedness and loyalties were eroded. It may have been that officers of the law who might have assisted or at least acquiesced in lynchings began to adopt values that placed ideals such as law and order above the demands of the local community. They became more willing to resist mobs, even when such mobs represented the majority local sentiment. As a result, the number of successful attempts at lynching declined.

It should also be noted that the early 1920s was a period of revived interest in the Ku Klux Klan—and Arkansas had a relatively active Klan during this period. But despite its historical reputation as an organization of racial terror, the Klan apparently had little if anything to do with any of Arkansas's postwar lynchings. In only two of the twenty-seven lynchings of black men did the Klan's name surface: in the case of P. Norman, and in the case of Gilbert Harris. Evidence laying the blame for the lynchings at the Klan's feet was tenuous at best in both cases. With regard to the former, four "masked and heavily armed men" entered the news room of the Four States Press in Texarkana proclaiming that they had done the lynching. However, they claimed they were "not K.K.K." In the Gilbert Harris case, the man he was accused of murdering—Maurice Connelly—was a Klansman. However, Connelly, a man "very popular in business and social circles" and a nephew of the county judge, also belonged to the Masons, the Knights Templar, the Elks, and the American Legion. Evidence indicates that the lynching of Gilbert Harris was a spontaneous event in response to the death of a very popular local citizen, not an act of Klan terror.

This is not to suggest that members of Arkansas's Klan did not commit acts of violence; they did, especially in 1922. But by 1923 violence had lost its primacy as a Klan activity. In 1923-1924 Arkansas's Klan moved towards a more respectable means of obtaining and exercising power—politics. Klansmen ran for office


"Arkansas Gazette, February 22, 1922.

"Arkansas Gazette, August 2, 1922; Hot Springs New Era, August 3, 1922.

"Incidents of violence in 1922 included the whippings or floggings of a black man in Texarkana, a Little Rock pool hall operator; the murder of one and whipping of another man in Nashville; and a gunfight in S. Smith resulting in the death of a man. Although Klansmen did not serve as its leaders, a vigilante committee in Harrison which formed to break a railroad strike in 1923 had Klansmen as members; this committee lynched E. C. Gregor, a white man, whipped several men, and forced others to leave town. See Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, 56, and Alexander, "White-Roped Reformers," 20-21.
or endorsed political candidates. Among many whites the Klan
achieved a high degree of respectability. Indeed, in 1924 state
Republican leader Harmon L. Remmel negotiated with the head
of Arkansas's Klan, Grand Dragon James A. Comer, a proposal
that the Klan endorse and support Republican candidates. Remmel
hoped to increase the party's appeal to white voters by eliminating
the party's Black and Tan faction.90

While many Klansmen may have approved of lynchings, the
evidence suggests only an incidental connection between Arkansas's Klan and lynchings. Rather, such mob executions were the
work of the local white community. Many of its members probably
became white-hooded Knights, but when they participated in
lynchings they represented and acted as members of the local and
perhaps a wider white community, not as representatives of a
particular organization. Indeed, the Klan may have acted as a
deterrent to mob justice. In 1922 both the Conway and Helena
Klans made official pronouncements condemning violence as a
form of intimidation against blacks; they took strong "law and
order" stands.91 These were reiterated by Imperial Wizard Hiram
W. Evans at the national meeting of Klan Grand Dragons in July
1923. Evans clearly advocated allowing matters of justice to run
their course through the courts.92 Given the strength of the Klan
at the local level, the opposition to mob justice pronounced by
Klan leaders translated into fewer Klansmen willing to participate
in lynchings. Such events would inhibit Klan chances of capturing
political power. It was probably no coincidence that during the
period of the Klan's peak activity in Arkansas, 1923-1925, only
three lynchings occurred. And in 1924, the year that the Klan
made its strongest efforts to win political office, no lynchings oc-
curred.93

90 See Alexander, "White Robes in Politics," 212-213; and correspondence
between Harmon L. Remmel and Klan members H. N. Street and James A.
Comer, September and October 1924, Harmon Liveright Remmel Papers, Special
Collections Division, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.
91 "Log Cabin Democrat," March 14, 1922, p. 3; Helena World, April 30, 1922,
July 16, 1922, p. 3.
92 "First Annual Meeting of Grand Dragon Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (New York:
93 See table.

All of these factors—more determined stands by law officers,
outside pressure, fear of a negative state image, modernization,
and the Klan anti-violence stand—combined to bring lynching in
Arkansas under control. By 1922 the most vocal proponent of
acquiescence on lynching, the Pine Bluff Daily Graphic, became
silent. However, the Arkansas Democrat and Arkansas Gazette con-
tinued to espouse strong anti-lynching stances. After 1922, which
featured five lynchings, Arkansas never again had more than
three lynchings in a year. Lynchings epitomized what historian
Joel Williamson has dubbed the Radical perspective on race rela-
tions, one which viewed blacks as beasts that should be either
neutralized or exterminated.94 And as long as whites holding the
Radical view were free to Lynch, they did. Actions by Arkansas's
law officers most directly served to curb lynching, virtually
eliminating successful attempts at mob justice by 1928. However,
the Radical spirit still held sway among many Arkansans, espe-
cially in rural areas. And white Arkansans swayed by this spirit
continued to attempt lynchings. But lawmen managed to check
these attempts. Indeed, after the lynching of Winston Pounds on
August 25, 1927, Arkansas did not suffer another lynching until
September 15, 1932, when a Crossett mob lynched Alan Tucker,
a black who had shot an officer of the law. At the same time,
between January 1930 and August 1932, officers prevented seven
threatened lynchings.95

Arkansas became one of the first two former Confederate
states to suffer no additional lynching attempts. After 1936, the
Tuskegee Institute recorded no additional lynchings in Arkansas.96
While lynching certainly remained a possibility after 1930,
in Arkansas it was one seldom realized. The spirit that caused

94 Joel Williamson, The Crucible of Race: Black-White Race Relations in the Ameri-
can South Since Emancipation (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984). For a
discussion of the "Radical" approach to race relations, see Williamson, 109-323.
95 Arthur F. Raper, The Tragedy of Lynching (New York: Dover Publications,
96 The Tuskegee Institute's number of lynchings recorded for Arkansas had
reached its 1959 maximum by 1937. In fact, the 1959 version listed one less
white lynching for Arkansas than did the 1937 version. Compare "Lyn-"}

ychings By State and Race, 1882-1959," and Work, Negro Year Book, 156.
mobs to act persisted. It would take the efforts of organizations such as the NAACP, which publicized the horrors of lynchings and campaigned for a federal anti-lynching law, and the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching, formed in the 1930s to combat the idea that lynchings protected southern womanhood, to quell this spirit. Still a vital link in the attempt to prevent lynchings—the willingness of officers of the law to resist mobs—was forged in the 1920s.

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