

community. It might thus have benefited from a more explicit reliance on the policing and social control literature that has analyzed pertinent issues on the merging of informal and formal controls, uncovering the less-than-benign nature of such developments. Nonetheless, Herbert's grounding in political geography is successful in being able to transcend the narrow technocratic focus of evaluation studies that dominate the police literature. As an intellectual effort with a policy purpose, this concise study may well prove to be among the more useful contributions on community policing. It is also a short and very readable book. Professional experts in police administration and policy as well as community activists have no excuse not to read it and learn from it.

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Lethal Punishment: Lynchings and Legal Executions in the South. By Margaret Vandiver. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006. Pp. 336. \$65.00 cloth; \$27.95 paper.

Reviewed by Timothy W. Clark, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Vandiver explores the racial nature of law and lynching in the post-bellum U.S. South in this important book. Vandiver seeks to understand why some incidents of alleged crimes and racial infractions by African Americans were likely to invoke illegal mob violence while others were left to the racially biased legal system to pursue "justice."

This book fills a long-vacant niche in the current research between historians' descriptive case studies of single lynchings or executions and social scientists' large-scale quantitative analyses of lynchings or executions across states or regions. Vandiver uses the local histories of nine Southern counties where lynchings and executions occurred to serve as case studies. For this endeavor, Vandiver selected seven rural counties from northwest Tennessee, and two urban counties, including Memphis, Tennessee, and Ocala, Florida. These geographic areas were chosen based upon the availability of a historical record and on the variations on the use of lynchings and legal executions. In this purposive sample, Vandiver includes counties where lynchings were prominent for decades and abruptly stopped, lynchings were rare and executions common, and lynchings were common and executions rare. While Vandiver admits that the generalizability of her work is limited due to the small number of cases and nonrandom sampling, this work follows the protocol of comparative analysis and provides a scale

that allows us to explore variation in the outcomes—in this case, executions versus lynchings.

The book begins by detailing the nature of race relations in the counties under study and then provides a detailed look at many of the counties' lynchings and court cases ending in executions. Two chapters are exceptionally novel as they devote attention to two underdocumented aspects of race relations—mock trials in lynchings (Chapter 6) and prevented lynchings (Chapter 9). A final chapter (Chapter 10) in this section provides a look at efforts by activists to end lynchings in Tennessee.

While the reader will find that each of these chapters provides glimpses into the nature of race, violence, and the law in these specific areas, the book offers no real answers to the nature of the relationship between lynchings and executions. In the end, Vandiver found there was no consistent pattern across the counties that would allow her to reach broad conclusions. According to Vandiver, “Instead, I found that the function and meaning of lynchings and executions varied over time, by place, and by circumstance” (p. 176).

As this book does spend considerable time providing detailed descriptions of specific lynchings, prevented lynchings, mock trials, and official court cases, I find the book most useful in illuminating the variation in the ways that violence, or threats thereof, dominated race relations in these areas and were tied into the legal system. Thus in the end, although Vandiver does not accomplish much in the way of merging case studies and quantitative large-scale investigations, she does make an effective contribution to already-available case studies by providing what in essence is an additional set of nine multilayered case studies.