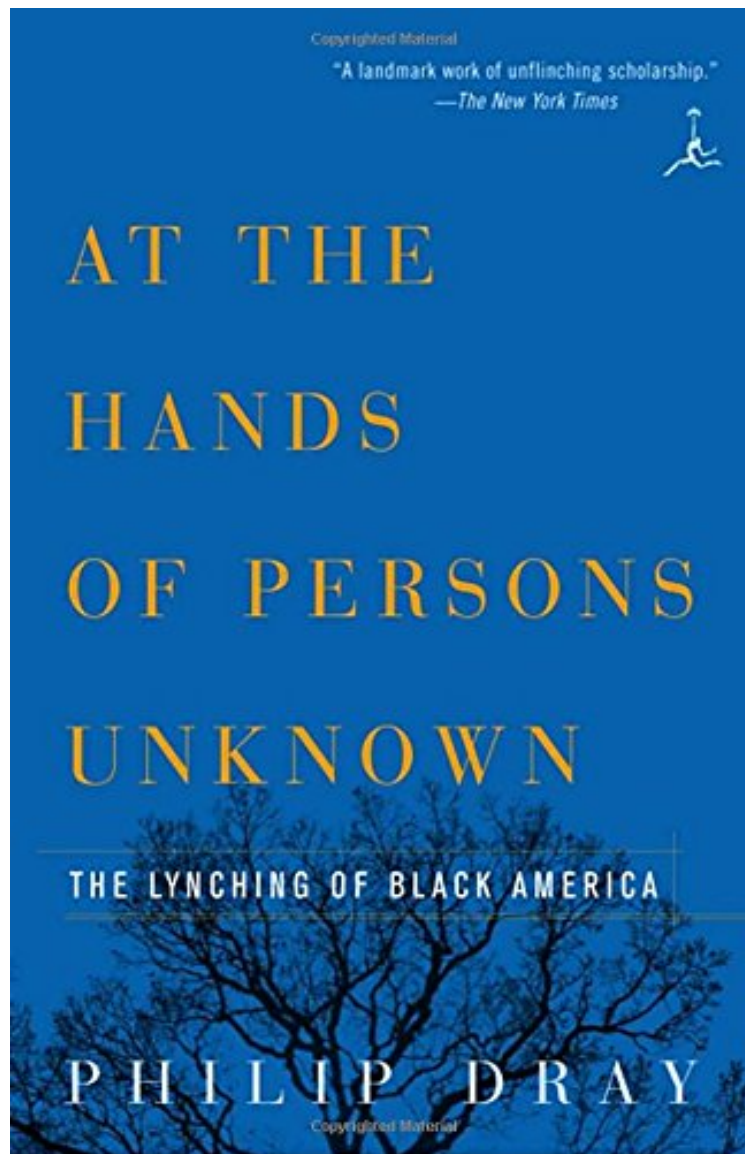


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At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America (Modern Library Paperbacks)

Philip Dray

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Philip Dray : At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America (Modern Library Paperbacks) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America (Modern Library Paperbacks):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A compilation of stories that shock the senses and the brave people who fought for freedomBy BrendaThis book pretty much covers a part of history that many find uncomfortable to talk about. There are some pictures that shock, and stories that leave a person shaking their head. Man's inhumanity to man.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Lorraine SteinbergHard to stomach, but necessary reading if we want to understand and rectify racial inequities in our country.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must read for students of civil rights and the run on of the civil war.By Vaughn MeatteA must read for everyone with an interest in the civil war and civil rights. A well written and executed work of top quality. The author guides the reader through the most hideous abuses of human rights with the expression of brutal honesty that these abhorrent acts demand. At the same time the author continues to sing the praises of the many heroes who time and again risk their lives to seek justice for the abused victims and their families. Not an easy read for anyone with a weak stomach because of the graphic and utterly diabolical acts described.

Winner of the Southern Book Critics Circle Award for NonfictionThis extraordinary account of lynching in America, by acclaimed civil rights historian Philip Dray, shines a clear, bright light on American history's darkest stainilluminating its causes, perpetrators, apologists, and victims. Philip Dray also tells the story of the men and women who led the long and difficult fight to expose and eradicate lynching, including Ida B. Wells, James Weldon Johnson, Walter White, and W.E.B. Du Bois. If lynching is emblematic of what is worst about America, their fight may stand for what is best: the commitment to justice and fairness and the conviction that one individual's sense of right can suffice to defy the gravest of wrongs. This landmark book follows the trajectory of both forces over American historyand makes lynchings legacy belong to us all.

.com Lynching, the extrajudicial punishment inflicted by vigilantes and mobs on often innocent victims, was far from an unusual occurrence, though some historians have depicted it as such. Instead, writes Philip Dray, lynching was part of a "systematized reign of terror that was used to maintain the power whites had over blacks." Drawing on records held at the Tuskegee Institute, Dray argues that from 1882 until 1952, not a single year passed without a recorded lynching somewhere in the United States, most often in the Deep South and Mississippi Delta regions. This violent "justice," meted out "at the hands of persons unknown" (with, therefore, no possibility of attaching guilt to the perpetrators, though, as Dray points out, such seemingly spontaneous events required organization and planning) held African American communities in terror and was one force behind the exodus of black southerners to the north in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Dray's extraordinary study reveals a pattern of crime against humanity, one that, he writes, diminished gradually for various reasons, not least of them the work of reformers and ordinary citizens "who knew we were too good to be a nation of lynchers." --Gregory McNameeFrom Publishers WeeklyBetween 1882 and 1944 at least 3,417 African-Americans were lynched in the United States, an average of slightly more than one a week. It was not until 1952, as Dray notes, that a full year went by without a reported racial lynching. Covering the South's resistance to racial equality from Reconstruction and the 1875 Civil Rights Act (which gave rise to the widespread acceptance of public murders) through the mid-20th century, this prodigiously researched, tightly written and compelling history of the lynching of African-Americans examines the social background behind the horrific acts. Yet Dray (*We Are Not Afraid*) also covers the myriad attempts of popular and judicial resistance to lynching, in particular the campaigns led by Ida B. Wells and by the NAACP. He has pulled together a wealth of cultural material, including D.W. Griffith's 1915 *Birth of a Nation*, Reginald Marsh's famous 1934 antilynching cartoon in the *New Yorker*, among much else, to supplement his impressive survey of the breadth of lynching in Southern society. While there is much shocking material here the 1918 lynching and disembowelment of eight-month-pregnant Mary Turner; California governor James Rolph Jr.'s 1933 statement that lynching was "a fine lesson for the whole nation" Dray never lets it dictate the complex social and political story he is telling. He faces the underlying sexual impulse of most lynchings head-on and shows how, in the 1913 lynching of Leo Frank, the fear of blacks was transferred to a Jewish victim. Whether he is explicating why the feminist-run Women's Christian Temperance Union refused to speak out against lynching, or why FDR refused to endorse antilynching legislation in the 1930s, Dray balances moral indignation with a sound understanding of history and politics. The result is vital, hard-hitting cultural history. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.From *Library Journal*Though everyone knew the culprits, victims of lynching were always said to die "at the hands of persons unknown." New School scholar Dray has worked on this history for more than ten years. Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.