

Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society, 1874-1947, by Michael J. Pfeifer. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004. x, 245 pp. Maps, notes, appendix, bibliography, index. \$35.00 cloth.

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Michael J. Pfeifer is fast becoming one of the leading experts on lynching in America. He has already published a series of well-received, regional essays on lynching in Iowa, Louisiana, Wisconsin, and various areas of the American West. In *Rough Justice*, Pfeifer pulls his previously published work together into a single comprehensive study that attempts to explain lynching as a national plague rather than regional phenomena.

Previous studies of lynching are region specific. Naturally, scholars have focused on the South, where over 80 percent of lynchings occurred. Scholars have also examined the American West, or frontier, because of the celebrated extra-legal movements in places such as San Francisco and Montana. As a result, lynching is often explained as a method of social and economic control over African American males in the South and as a reaction to lawlessness in the West. Pfeifer's national, cross-regional study provides for a more nuanced analysis of lynching's roots and its significance. In order to paint a more complete picture of lynching, Pfeifer researched representative states from the Northeast (New York), Midwest (Iowa and Wisconsin), West (California, Washington, and Wyoming), and South (Louisiana).

Pfeifer explains the prevalence of lynching between 1874 and 1947 as a response by rural, working-class Americans to changes in due process that were derived from New England and mid-Atlantic states. Using New York as an example, Pfeifer argues that during the antebellum period an emerging reform-minded middle class restructured the criminal justice system, moving away from a strictly retributive system and towards a form of due process that more clearly lived up to the Fifth Amendment's guarantee of individual rights. Lynching, Pfeifer claims, emerged as part of a cultural war between rural and working-class people who supported "rough justice" on the one hand and the growing middle class who favored due process on the other. Supporters of rough justice believed that due process reforms allowed criminals to escape punishment through changes of venue, appeals, weak judges, reduced sentences, and insanity pleas. Thus, rural and working-class Americans in northwestern Louisiana, southern Iowa, Wyoming, and interior California who favored a communally based retribution that was swift, certain, and violent turned to lynching to

ensure that criminal deviants were properly punished. The end of lynching, Pfeifer argues, occurred only after the state demonstrated that it would effectively and frequently use the death penalty. Pfeifer therefore insists on a clear connection between the decline of lynching and the increased use of the death penalty. More simply, he views the death penalty as legalized lynching.

Not only does *Rough Justice* provide insight into lynching on a national level, but Pfeifer's exhaustive research within the seven states studied also allows for comparisons within states. In none of the states studied was lynching universally accepted. In California, for example, lynching occurred primarily in rural, interior counties, while the modernizing, urban counties of coastal California turned to due process in the years after 1880. In Louisiana, Pfeifer found that the rural northern counties were more willing to rely on mob law while the more urbanized and racially balanced counties of the southern part of the state used established law more often.

Iowa is perhaps one of the better states to use as a case study to analyze lynching. In Iowa during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, supporters of due process clashed with rural, working-class proponents of rough justice. As a result, between 1874 and 1909 twenty-four victims fell prey to Iowa mobs. Fifty-two other would-be victims managed to escape death, usually thanks to the intervention of local or state authorities. Most of Iowa's lynchings occurred in the southern counties. Pfeifer argues that increased urbanization and the emergence of a vibrant market economy in the northern part of the state produced a middle class that sought to replicate the legal culture of New England and the mid-Atlantic states rather than joining their "rough justice" brethren in southern Iowa. Lynching began to lose its momentum in the 1890s and all but disappeared after 1900 because Iowa began using the death penalty more frequently. Between 1874 and 1909, for example, the state executed only five men while lynch mobs dispatched twenty-four. Between 1909 and 1947, legal executions jumped to twenty-four while lynching claimed only two victims. Iowa's experience with lynching and the rise of the death penalty certainly supports Pfeifer's thesis.

Rough Justice is derived from Pfeifer's dissertation. It is engagingly written, and although it is a crisp book at 153 pages, it can be a dense, academic read. A useful appendix lists all of the confirmed lynchings and near lynchings in the seven states covered. The book would have benefited from maps that pinpointed the locations of lynchings over the entire period covered rather than a few selected years. A map of Iowa, for example, notes lynchings in the Hawkeye State between

1900 and 1931. Because there were only two lynchings in the state during those years, a casual reader might assume that Iowa witnessed few lynchings when in fact mobs killed twenty-two other victims prior to 1900. Although a voluminous photographic record of lynching exists, Pfeifer was careful not to fall into the trap of publishing such gruesome images. Other than a single photograph of a lynching on the cover, the author refrained from providing a visual reminder of this dark period of American history. This book should find a wide readership among social, cultural, and legal historians. Moreover, there is much that will interest students of Iowa and midwestern history.

Amana Style: Furniture, Arts, Crafts, Architecture, and Gardens, by Marjorie K. Albers and Peter Hoehnle. Iowa City: Penfield Books, 2005. 160 pp. Illustrations, map, bibliography. \$14.95 paper.

Barbara J. Dilly is assistant professor of anthropology at Creighton University. Her dissertation was "Religious Resistance to Erosion of the Soil and the Soul among Three German-American Farming Communities in Northeast Iowa."

Collectors and admirers of Amana Colony arts and crafts will appreciate this illustrated history of material culture. Those who respect the many German immigrant religious sects that came to rural Iowa will also appreciate the story of how a community manages to retain its cultural identity and central values despite many changes. Designer Marjorie K. Albers, a descendant of the German immigrants who lived and worked in the Amana Colonies, and historian Peter Hoehnle, an elder in the Amana Church Society, explore and celebrate their rich cultural heritage in this colorful compendium of Amana life. They trace the unique arts and crafts traditions of the Community of True Inspiration, revealing a remarkable journey of a Pietistic separatist movement over three centuries and across three geographic localities from Germany to eastern Iowa.

Albers and Hoehnle offer their insights from the perspective of insiders who are intimately aware of the cultural aesthetic they call "Amana style." They characterize this style, or aesthetic sensibility, in terms of artists, craftspersons, materials, techniques, skills, knowledge, and values. By providing readers a glimpse into the largely anonymous lives of the Amana people, Hoehnle and Albers recognize the achievements of Amana artisans and craftspersons and the role they played in supporting an entire community and a way of life.

The community built by the Community of True Inspiration was quite different from other German communities in its blending of a European economic communal system of common land and business

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