

Fear and desire : miscegenation in the postbellum South
by Christopher Bart Waldrip

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of History
Montana State University
© Copyright by Christopher Bart Waldrip (1998)

Abstract:
In 1863, a pamphlet, "Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to American White Man and the Negro," gave birth to an idea: "free" black men sexually desired white women. This idea eventually developed into an ideology and translated into southern white fears of miscegenation. This thesis examines the medium of popular literature and its influence on this ideological development in southern culture. Two southern authors wrote prolifically about miscegenation: Thomas Dixon, whose writings exacerbated white fears, and William Faulkner, whose writings exposed those fears as a negative underpinning of southern culture.

My study is not exclusive to literary theory; it combines historical and literary analyses to show how an ideology affected southern culture. I focus on Dixon's writings from 1903 to 1912 and Faulkner's from 1931 to 1936 and argue that both authors accurately captured the fears' effects. A bulk of my study concentrates on Mississippi; however, it devotes portions to Dixon's native North Carolina and the South as a whole. My major objective is to analyze the evolution of miscegenation from idea to ideology: how white southern culture perceived miscegenation and how fears of miscegenation endured and changed, if they changed at all.

FEAR AND DESIRE: MISCEGENATION IN THE POSTBELLUM SOUTH

by

Christopher Bart Waldrip

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of History

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY-BOZEMAN
Bozeman, Montana

April 1998

N378
W1408

APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Christopher Bart Waldrip

This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographical style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

Dr. Robert Rydell

Date

Approved for the Department of History and Philosophy

Dr. Tom Wessel

4/15/98
Date

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

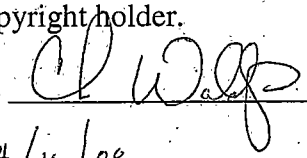
Dr. Joseph J. Fedock

4/20/98
Date

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at Montana State University-Bozeman, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

If I have indicated my intention to copyright this thesis by including a copyright notice page, copying is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed in the U.S. Copyright Law. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this thesis in whole or in parts may be granted only by the copyright holder.

Signature 

Date 4/16/98

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES.....v

GLOSSARY.....vi

THESIS ABSTRACT.....vii

INTRODUCTION.....1

FORBIDDEN FRUIT.....19

LOVE 'EM AND LYNCH 'EM.....56

CONCLUSION.....92

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....103

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

1. Lynchings, by Years and Race, 1924-35.....60

2. Lynchings, by Years and Race, 1939-49.....85

GLOSSARY

Black--Although a great majority of blacks in America are of mixed ancestry, this term applies to those who appeared unmixed. Because black culture and mulatto culture eventually fused together, this term sometimes applies to all those who appear to have unmixed and mixed black ancestry.

Herrenvolk Democracy--A German phrase originally applied to a Nazi ideology, Herrevolk Democracy, as sociologist Pierre L. van den Berghe defined it, means the equal superiority of all who belong to the master race (Herrenvolk) over all those who do not.

Miscegenation--Miscegenation is a broad term that applies to casual sexual relations to cohabitation or marriage between members of different races.

Mulatto--This term applies specifically to a biracial person with half-white ancestry and half-black ancestry. Because the term generally applies to those with any visible mixture of black and white, as it was used in the United States Census from 1850 to 1920, the term broadly applies to those who have any black and white mixture.

Octoroon--This term specifically applies to those with 7/8 white ancestry and 1/8 black.

Poor Whites--During the antebellum period, this phrase pointed to a class of white people who rarely held slaves. The use of this phrase, far from being a political statement, refers to white members of the lower class in the South. Poor whites were also often called "rednecks," and these terms are used interchangeably in the text.

Quadroon--This term applies specifically to whose with 3/4 white ancestry and 1/4 black.

Volksgeistian Conservatism--This term applies to a specific thought-set harbored by some aristocratic southerners that sprang from the conservative tradition after Reconstruction. Believing that God blessed all southern whites with a unique and valuable spirit (Volksgeist), these aristocrats tried to implant

Germanic idealism into southern culture in hopes of creating a more harmonious racial environment.

THESIS ABSTRACT

In 1863, a pamphlet, "Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to American White Man and the Negro," gave birth to an idea: "free" black men sexually desired white women. This idea eventually developed into an ideology and translated into southern white fears of miscegenation. This thesis examines the medium of popular literature and its influence on this ideological development in southern culture. Two southern authors wrote prolifically about miscegenation: Thomas Dixon, whose writings exacerbated white fears, and William Faulkner, whose writings exposed those fears as a negative underpinning of southern culture.

My study is not exclusive to literary theory; it combines historical and literary analyses to show how an ideology affected southern culture. I focus on Dixon's writings from 1903 to 1912 and Faulkner's from 1931 to 1936 and argue that both authors accurately captured the fears' effects. A bulk of my study concentrates on Mississippi; however, it devotes portions to Dixon's native North Carolina and the South as a whole. My major objective is to analyze the evolution of miscegenation from idea to ideology: how white southern culture perceived miscegenation and how fears of miscegenation endured and changed, if they changed at all.

INTRODUCTION

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word, "miscegenation," first appeared in December 1863. The term--taken from *miscere*, to mix, and *genus*, race--emerged in an anonymous pamphlet entitled "Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and the Negro." The pamphlet created not only a new word but an ideology that affected southern race relations for the next century: the fear of miscegenation. Disguising the pamphlet as the work of abolitionists, proslavery authors tried to discredit Abraham Lincoln and the Republicans prior to the 1864 elections. Before the pamphlet was revealed as a hoax, many whites became outraged at its major theme: miscegenation ensured American prosperity. The pamphlet asserted that emancipation provided black men not only physical freedom from slavery but sexual freedom to give white women, especially southern white women, what they had always desired--the uninhibited passion and generous endowment of black lovers. As the election drew closer, the charges against Lincoln and his party grew more outlandish. Propaganda reminded hysterical southerners of Lincoln's "Miscegenation Proclamation" and the "Black Republican Prayer," which called upon "the spirit of amalgamation... that we may become a regenerated nation of half-breeds, and mongrels," living "in bonds of

fraternal love, union and equality with the Almighty Nigger, henceforward, now and forever. Amen."[1]

Slavery, as revealed in the 1863 pamphlet, represented not only an economic but also a social foundation for southern society. With society separated along racial lines during slavery, white southerners formed a Herrenvolk Democracy, where, in theory, the commonality of white skin prevented class conflicts between slaveholders and nonslaveholders. Many southerners disliked slavery but deemed it necessary to prevent perceived black sexuality from tainting the Victorian virtues of white society. Although an Alabama farmer, for example, disapproved of slavery, he told Frederick Law Olmsted that emancipation threatened white supremacy: "Now suppose they was free, you see they'd all think themselves just as good as we... How would you like to hev a nigger feelin' just as good as a white man? How'd you like to hev a nigger steppin' up to your darter?"[2]

As with the Alabama farmer, many white southern males perceived the threat of miscegenation accompanying emancipation. However, many of those same white males bore responsibility for miscegenation during slavery. Daily dalliances between

---

[1] Forrest G. Wood, Black Scare: The Racist Response to Emancipation and Reconstruction (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 53-79.

[2] James M. McPherson, Ordeal by Fire: The Coming of War, 2d ed., vol. 1 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 34-36; Nathan Irvin Huggins, "The Deforming Mirror of Truth," Black Odyssey: The African American Ordeal in Slavery (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), xlii; Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), 328; Herrenvolk Democracy was the equality and common bond of white skin, which took precedence over all other interests.

masters and enslaved women happened since the earliest days in American slavery and became commonplace in the 1850s. The sexual relations between master and slaves perpetuated the existence of mulatto slaves. The progeny from such a relationship always followed the mother's status: if she were a slave, so was her child. Ideologies of sexism and racism dictated that only white men could bed (illegitimately) with black or mulatto women. Within the social constructs of slavery, the master--the primary power of the plantation--tacitly held exclusive rights to interracial affairs. Even the wives of slaveholders, virtually powerless to stop their husbands' philandering, spent their days on the plantation, like diarist Mary Chesnut, "surrounded by prostitutes," recognizing that "the mulattoes one sees in every family exactly resemble the white children."[3]

Indeed, between 1850 and 1860, more and more slaves resembled "the white children." The 1860 United States Census reported an astounding increase in the mulatto population. As the number of slaves in that decade increased by 20 percent, the number of mulattos in slavery rose 67 percent. According to W.E.B. Du Bois's scholarship, even the 1860 census figures fell well below reality because census agents took "mulatto" to mean a person who was visibly half-white.[4]

After slavery crumbled, southern white men, who initiated interracial sex, criticized Reconstruction governments for encouraging miscegenation. Many

---

[3]C.Vann Woodward, ed., Mary Chesnut's Civil War (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 29.

[4] W.E.B. Du Bois, ed., Negro American Family (New York: Negro University Press, 1969), 25.

southerners looked upon the utter ruin left by Billy Yank as God's punishment for miscegenation during slavery, and they voiced their disapproval to the Reconstruction legislatures that passed laws sanctioning intermarriage. But the Republicans proceeded to repeal bans on intermarriage and to legitimate existing biracial relationships.[5]

Some scholars believe that during Reconstruction interracial sex soared to unprecedented heights in the South. In Marriage in Black and White, for example, Joseph R. Washington, greatly influenced by the work of famed sociologist Edward B. Reuter, cited six reasons to support his belief that miscegenation increased after the war:

> First, slavery was largely a rural institution where the great bulk of blacks was not in contact with great blocks of whites...Second, slavery taught no code of ethics with respect to sex...Third, the freedom of the blacks to move at will in urban centers increased their contact with whites of all stations and standards. Fourth, personal demoralization and social disorganization of family relations, the mobility and desertion of the husband who had a freedom of movement formerly enjoyed largely by women, provided women with real susceptibility to unstable sex interests of the white male. Fifth, despite the freedom of blacks, the power of whites was still unchallengeable and the intimate associations were 'pretty much at the will of the white man'...Sixth, black women who had been used to the favors only white men could provide did not immediately give up concubinage and the rewards of the status they had achieved in their relationships with white men for what some believed to be the less prestigious relation of marriage to a black man.[6]

---

[5] Lerone Bennet, Jr., "Miscegenation in America," Marriage Across the Color Line, ed. Cloyte M. Larsson (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., 1965), 20; Neil R. McMillen, Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 14-15.

Washington's rationale seems somewhat reasonable, but other evidence refutes his analysis. In fact, miscegenation in the South reached a low point during the war and its aftermath.[7] Certainly love and curiosity stimulated some whites and blacks to brave the color barrier, but these numbers were few. Freedmen withdrew from white communities to live among themselves, creating a level of physical segregation vastly higher than during slavery, and although "slavery taught no code of ethics with respect to sex" for either whites or blacks, most slaves carved their own sense of sexual morality out of their lives and carried it with them into freedom. Moreover, the opportunities that black men had to travel never guaranteed opportunities for sexual experiences with white women. Both Washington and Reuter misinterpreted the census data for 1870 and 1890. Out of 100 percent of total blacks, the rise from 12.0 percent mulatto in 1870 to 15.2 percent mulatto in 1890 probably led both scholars to view Reconstruction as an increased period of interracial sex; actually the figures reflect the offspring between blacks and mulattos.

Other clues can be found in Caroline Bond Day's work. In 1918, she collected a mass of information on black persons divided into two groups. Consisting of 1,152 persons born before 1861, Group I accounted for 243 unions with whites. Conversely, Group II, consisting of 1,385 persons born after 1860, accounted for only 3 unions with whites. Even after considering the flaws in Day's sample, the dramatic drop in

---

[6] Joseph R. Washington, Jr., Marriage in Black and White (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970), 66; Edward Byron Reuter, The American Race Problem (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1966), 131.

[7] Joel Williamson, New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University, 1995), 90.

interracial unions clearly suggests a fundamental change in behavior concerning miscegenation.[8]

The validity of Washington's analysis concerns white men. Despite Republican Party rule, southern white men continued to hold nearly exclusive rights to interracial sex. The "unchallengeable" power of white men still coerced black women into bed and bricked a formidable wall between black men and white women. Surely some white women and black men tried to scale the barrier in both legitimate and illegitimate relations, but in reality, interracial sex most likely decreased as Reconstruction faded. Even as the Republicans sanctioned miscegenation, new white supremacist ideologies began to emerge in Dixie to thwart black "social equality" and to discourage anyone from transcending the color barrier. White men built more walls, supported by a new code of ethics, and after the return of Democratic rule in the mid-1870s, whites instituted a new system of racial control--Jim Crow.

In the post-Reconstruction years, the coils of white supremacy concentrated on interracial proscriptions, constricted around the taboo of interracial sex, and suffocated the opportunities for legal interracial unions. Throughout southern states, phrases like "race purity," "blood will tell," and "race degeneracy" became shibboleths for white supremacists. The fear of "amalgamation," as many whites called it, ran so deeply that Mississippi Democrats made prohibiting interracial marriage their top priority upon returning to power in 1876, eventually securing that

---

[8] Caroline Bond Day, A Study of Some Negro-White Families in the United States (Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum of Harvard University, 1932), chap. 3

prohibition in the 1890 constitution.[9] Following Mississippi's lead, all southern states implemented anti-intermarriage codes into their constitutions or civil and criminal codes by 1908.[10]

In the early years of the twentieth century, the rush to outlaw interracial unions was not only a southern phenomenon. Although southern states led the charge, most western states--Montana, Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico, California, Colorado, Arizona, Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, North and South Dakota--and two mid-western states--Nebraska and Indiana--adopted laws banning intermarriage (between whites and blacks) by 1913. Moreover, in 1913 a rash of bills prohibiting black-white marriages came to the floor in the state legislatures of Connecticut, Kansas, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin. Although the bills were defeated in these states, the attempt to ban intermarriage reflected a nationwide concern about miscegenation.[11]

For the next half-century, fears of miscegenation outside of the South slowly withered away, while they remained deeply rooted in Dixie. Still, in 1968--the year in which the Supreme Court repealed Virginia's anti-intermarriage law in its Loving v. Virginia decision--sixteen states had prohibitions against black-white marriages: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi,

---

passim; Herbert G. Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925 (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976); Williamson, New People, 89.

[9]McMillen, 15; Mississippi Constitution, 1890, art.14, sec. 263.

[10]Louisiana, the last southern state to add anti-miscegenation laws to its civil and criminal code, did so in 1908; Washington, 72-77.

[11] Washington, 69-81.

Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.[12] Oklahoma and West Virginia excluded, every state with anti-intermarriage laws in 1968 also had proslavery constitutions before the Civil War.[13] In fact, Maryland, the only other state that had a proslavery constitution, repealed its laws banning intermarriage in 1967.[14] Recognizing the reputation for racial justice in Chief Justice Earl Warren's Supreme Court, Maryland struck their anti-intermarriage laws from the books as soon as the Supreme Court accepted the Loving case. Unsurprisingly, these southern states also enforced the most severe Jim Crow laws.

Miscegenation existed as Jim Crow's most troubling concern. From the First Reconstruction to the Second Reconstruction in the 1950s and '60s, whites "instinctively" understood that "sex is at the core of life," in Mississippi author David Cohn's words, and in their "conscious or unconscious minds" they knew that the "negro question" was "at bottom a blood or sexual question."[15] White southerners, in effect, suffered from sexual and racial paranoia; they suffered from the fear of miscegenation.

As a topic, miscegenation remains relatively under explored by most scholars studying American race relations. Gary Nash, George Fredrickson, George B. Tindall, Carl Degler, and Nell Painter touch on the subject in their studies, but only Edward B. Reuter, Joseph R. Washington, Naomi Zack, Charles Herbert Stember,

---

[12] Ibid, 95.

[13] An Indian Territory before the Civil War, Oklahoma had no slavery. What is now West Virginia had a high concentration of slaves, but that area fell within Virginia's borders prior to the Civil War.

[14] Washington, 95.

and Joel Williamson devote entire works to miscegenation. These scholars provide invaluable research on the politics behind miscegenation, but they rarely confront the idea of miscegenation and its effects on southern culture.

During the preliminary research for this project, several questions concerning the idea of miscegenation in southern culture emerged. How did the idea permeate the minds of white and black southerners? What cultural manifestations resulted from the idea? How did the idea affect southern race relations? To answer these questions, the previously mentioned scholars deserve attention, but, here again, they rarely focus on the idea of miscegenation and how it affected southern culture. Even by relying on their studies, problems would surface. In The Crucible of Race, for example, Joel Williamson asserts that whites "began the practice of lynching as a reaction against the presumed threat of the black beast to white womanhood."[16] Yet, little statistical basis supports his contention. Gunnar Myrdal, James Elbert Cutler, and Walter White of the NAACP published evidence that placed the number of lynching victims accused of sexually assaulting a white woman at approximately 30 percent.[17]

Nevertheless, fear of miscegenation pervaded white southern thought. Lynching was not the only reaction to the fear. Other forms of physical intimidation,

---

[15]David L. Cohn, "How the South Feels," Atlantic Monthly, January 1944, 49.

[16]Joel Williamson, The Crucible of Race (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 184.

[17]Gunnar Myrdal, American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy, 2d ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), 562; James Elbert Cutler, Lynch Law: An Investigation into the History of Lynching in the United States (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1905), 176; Walter White, Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 26;

legislation banning miscegenation, and the "one-drop rule"--a rule that defined any person with black ancestry as legally black--reveal the extent of that fear. Perhaps the most significant cultural indicator is the medium of popular literature. For years, southern novelists addressed the cultural problems enshrouding miscegenation. Mark Twain started the tradition with Puddin'head Wilson. Following Twain's example, a pantheon of southern writers--George Washington Cable, Kate Chopin, Ellen Glasgow, Charles Chestnutt--explored themes of miscegenation. Their works steered away from the traditional sentimentality of southern literature and usually displayed the irony of white fears. "But save for these exceptions," as W.J. Cash noted in The Mind of the South, "the literary state of the region was to be accurately measured by Thomas Dixon, Jr."[18]

Raised in the racist atmosphere of Reconstruction North Carolina, Dixon entered Wake Forest in 1879 at sixteen, where he received the highest marks in the school's short history.[19] He then attended Johns Hopkins, where he studied under Herbert Baxter Adams, a man Dixon called a "genius of the highest order."[20] Professor Adams taught his students a Teutonic germ theory that he constructed by combining evolutionary science and Victorian romanticism. According to Adams, a superior intellectual genetic characteristic, which moved from Germany to Britain

---

NAACP, Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918 (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 10.

[18] W.J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York: Vintage Books, 1941), 375.

[19] Raymond Allen Cook, Fire From the Flint: The Amazing Careers of Thomas Dixon (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 1968), 94.

[20] Thomas Dixon, Jr., Southern Horizons: The Autobiography of Thomas Dixon, ed. Karen M. Crowe (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1984), 167.

and then to colonial America, spawned democracy. Traveling through unadulterated whites, it created men who contained the intellect and ambition for self-government.[21] Adams' Teutonic germ theory gave Dixon the scientific basis to buttress the racist foundation he received during his youth. The lessons he learned from Adams soon reverberated in his first novel, The Leopard's Spots: "The future American must be an Anglo-Saxon or a Mulatto! We are now deciding what it shall be...This Republic can have no future if racial lines are broken, and its proud citizenship sinks to the level of a mongrel breed."[22]

Three of Dixon's novels--The Leopard's Spots (1902), The Clansman (1905), and The Sins of the Father (1912)--explicitly dealt with miscegenation. Dixon saw miscegenation as an acute southern problem, but his preoccupation may have reflected a deep personal obsession. The racist theories proliferating throughout his literature suggest that miscegenation affected him personally, even psychologically. After the publication of The Leopard's Spots, a biracial man in New York claimed publicly that Thomas Dixon, Sr. fathered him. When asked to respond to the allegations, Dixon, Jr. replied, "Yes I know that darky, he is always getting himself into trouble and I have helped him a number of times." The reports of Dixon's purported half-brother never reached a scandalous level. But the possibilities of truth

---

[21] Peter Novick, That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 87-88; Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 67-68.

may have festered in the author, forcing him, as Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore posits in Gender and Jim Crow, to use his novels as a vehicle to exonerate white men, like his father, and denounce miscegenation.[23]

Dixon's fiction depicted a "mongrel breed" that threatened the southern social order. Defending his native Dixie, the author's attitude embodied the fear: his literature cited the threat of a "mongrel breed" created by black men raping white women and erased the historical memory of white men raping black women during slavery. Dixon's fiction, however, did not stand unchallenged; it initiated a southern literary reaction. The decades of the 1920s and '30s saw an accelerating growth of fiction that argued against Dixon's racist doctrines.

William Faulkner led the way in this movement. Like Dixon, Faulkner devoted a bulk of his work to the problems of miscegenation, but unlike Dixon, Faulkner sloughed off the old southern imperative of using his writing to defend the South. Novels like Light in August (1932) and Absalom, Absalom! (1936) and the short story "Dry September" (1931) revealed the horror and hypocrisy of a culture immersed in Dixonian tradition.

Born and raised in north Mississippi at the dawning of the twentieth century, Faulkner had little formal education. What he learned, he learned through oral history and by observation. Spending most of his life in his native state, he knew Mississippi best and concentrated on miscegenation most. Perhaps the place burdened by the fear

---

[22] Thomas Dixon, Jr., The Leopard's Spots: The Romance of the White Man's Burden, 1865-1900 (Ridgewood, NJ: The Gregg Press, 1967), 198.

[23] Gilmore, 68-69.

of miscegenation more than any other was the Mississippi Delta. For its number of lynchings and strident segregation laws, the Delta has been aptly named "the most southern place on Earth."[24] Faulkner saw the muddled colors between jet black and stark white in the white supremacist stronghold of the Delta and throughout Mississippi and recognized that white fears of miscegenation were rooted in the Magnolia State's racial strife. In fact, the roots of racism ran so deeply that fears of miscegenation affected even Faulkner. Although his novels expressed sympathy for blacks and mulattos and condemned white lynch mobs common in Mississippi, Faulkner defended lynching in a 1931 letter to the Memphis Commercial Appeal. In Mississippi, the roots of racism ran deep, deep enough to tap a source of ambivalence in one of America's most racially sensitive authors.

Like Dixon, Faulkner was also haunted by the specter of miscegenation. In the 1850s, William Faulkner's namesake and great-grandfather, Colonel William Faulkner, owned several slaves, all of whom the census agent listed as "black."[25] In 1860, the agent listed all of Col. Faulkner's slaves as "mulatto." As Joel Williamson's scholarship in William Faulkner and Southern History relates, the evidence strongly

---

[24] James C. Cobb, The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Regional Identity (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[25] The Colonel actually spelled his name "Falkner." The author added the "u" to his name after joining the R.A.F. in 1918. To avoid confusion, members of the author's family will be spelled "Faulkner."

suggests that the Colonel had a "shadow family," a mulatto family that mirrored and lived under the shadow of the white family.[26]

Both Dixon and Faulkner painted portraits of southern culture influenced by the reality and fear of miscegenation. By combining literary and historical analyses, this study attempts to set their fictional texts in the proper historical contexts, use their work as a model to define the fear and its psychological effects on southerners, and present the fear's cultural manifestations, especially white supremacist measures--segregation laws, social codes, and racial violence--and the sexual images cast upon blacks and mulattos to support these measures. Stretching from the 1900s to the 1960s, this study focuses on Faulkner's Mississippi but also considers Dixon's North Carolina and the South as a whole. With an understanding that popular literature can indicate the fears of miscegenation experienced in southern culture, this study analyzes the evolution of miscegenation: how white southern culture perceived miscegenation and how the fear of miscegenation endured. This thesis is straightforward: Dixon's novels accurately reflected (and in many ways exacerbated) the fear of miscegenation; Faulkner's novels reveal the persistence of the fear through time. Both authors wrote about the fear of miscegenation. One supported it, the other denounced it. Dixon promoted the fear by encouraging white southerners to believe that lascivious black men held responsibility for a "mongrel breed," whereas Faulkner wrote not only to display the social and cultural effects of the fear but also to show the true origins of Dixon's "mongrel breed."

---

[26] Joel Williamson, William Faulkner and Southern History (New York: Oxford

The fear of miscegenation took hold after Emancipation and shaped southern race relations for the next century. During Reconstruction, anti-miscegenation rhetoric rang throughout the South. Many white southerners saw blacks as inherently inferior and thus miscegenation as inherently evil--one of the fundamental reasons the South needed racial segregation. For years, black leaders argued against doctrines of segregation based on racial inferiority. In a 1913 speech entitled "For Old and New Students," for example, Booker T. Washington told the Tuskegee student body that culture, not race, created the differences between blacks and whites. A mulatto himself, Washington saw two problems facing turn-of-the-century southern blacks: white racism and black cultural "backwardness," which strengthened white racism and hindered blacks from making positive advances even in their restricted segregated sphere. New to their relative freedom, Washington claimed that blacks lacked "self-control" and "some of the fundamentals of civilization." Washington's pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps philosophy advised Tuskegee students to use segregation to refine their own values and culture in hopes of one day joining whites in an integrated society.[27] Washington's belief that downtrodden blacks existed as a consequence of environment and not biology soon found a voice at Columbia University.

Franz Boas, a Jewish immigrant who founded the American Anthropological Association and the chair of Columbia's Department of Social Sciences, maintained

---

University Press, 1983), 22-29.

[27] Emmett J. Scott and Lyman Beecher Stowe, Booker T. Washington: Builder of a Civilization (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1917), 231.

that "the idea of a 'cultured' individual is merely relative." He used this idea, which he coined as "cultural relativism," to assault racist thought. In the decade following 1910, Boas began cultivating scholars--most of whom were black, immigrant, or female--into a cadre that would eventually dilute the "scientific" racist assumptions of American scholarship and emphasize the sociological and psychological effects of institutionalized racism. By the 1930s, cultural relativism gained increasing acceptance; by the '40s, it influenced much of American public opinion.[28]

As Carl Degler notes, "The Boas influence upon American Society can hardly be exaggerated."[29] Support for Degler's contention comes with understanding the famous Brown v. Board of Education case. In the South, many whites expressed fears of miscegenation in their defense of public school segregation; placing white children and black children in the same classroom, they said, would quickly lead to a southern race of "mongrels."[30] But the nine men who served on the Supreme Court in 1954 disallowed race to serve as a means of legal discrimination. They overturned the "separate but equal" ruling handed down by their predecessors in the Plessy v. Ferguson decision sixty years previously. Boasian thought had weakened the scientific racism--Social Darwinism, eugenics, and pseudo-sciences like

---

[28] Dinesh D'Souza, The End of Racism, Principles of a Multicultural Society (New York: FreePress Paperback, 1995), 144.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Albert P. Blaustein and Clarence Clyde Ferguson, Jr., Desegregation and the Law: The Meaning and Effect of the School Segregation Cases (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), 3-15.

physiognomy and phrenology--that buttressed segregation.[31] All that was left was culture.

Perhaps if the "separate but equal" theory had existed in reality, then Booker T. Washington might have seen the problem of what he called black cultural "backwardness" remedied. However, white supremacy--the other problem confronting southern blacks in Washington's opinion--continued. White political rule over state governments ensured that blacks facilities never equaled white facilities. This was exactly what the NAACP argued in Brown: the doctrine of "separate but equal" was inherently unequal.

Their argument evidently struck a chord with the nine Supreme Court Justices. On May 17, 1954, Chief Justice Warren announced their decision: "Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other 'tangible' factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunites?" he asked. "We believe that it does." In fine Boasian style, Warren insisted that to separate black children "from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone."[32]White southerners vehemently denounced the Supreme Court as advocating miscegenation, revealing that their fears existed well into the 1950s and '60s.

---

[31] Thomas Gosset, Jr., Race: The History of an Idea in America (Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963), 59, 401-02.

[32] Blaustein and Ferguson, 120.

Currently in America, popular culture seemingly promotes and encourages multiculturalism, yet the Supreme Court lifted the ban on interracial marriages only thirty years ago.[33] Acknowledging this shift in attitudes and laws, this study endeavors to examine miscegenation as a pervasive idea: how southern culture grappled with the idea, and how the idea endured.

[33] Loving v. Virginia, 388 U.S. 1 (1967).

FORBIDDEN FRUIT

The sexual and social constructs between white men and black women changed little from antebellum to postbellum South. Although the outcome of the Civil War freed black women from the manacles of slavery and thus the overwhelming burdens of satiating their masters, they continued to provide sexual outlets for white men in the Jim Crow South. Black women apparently enjoyed some years of reprieve during and following Reconstruction, but white men soon cast their eyes upon them again.

During Reconstruction, anti-miscegenation fever ran high, and as for interracial sex, southern white men literally practiced what they preached. Whites in these years generally blamed their antebellum fathers for the South's demise: slaveholders fell from grace by tasting the apple of black women.[34] The antebellum white men's indulgence in the forbidden fruit of miscegenation brought Yankees to their land, southerners said. But this attitude soon passed with the entrance of Jim Crow. Whites accused black women of possessing an alluring sexuality and developed myths that turned black women into lascivious animals. Thomas Dixon's racist doctrines perfectly exemplified this development. Dixon saw mulatto and black women as irresistible enchantresses who easily led white men into sin. Thus, he

---

[34] Williamson, New People, 87-92.

suggested, segregation was needed to ensure that white men would never again fall from grace.

Twenty years later, William Faulkner's fiction countered Dixon's. If segregation was instituted partially to prevent miscegenation, then it had failed miserably. White men who lambasted miscegenation during the day sneaked to black lovers at night. For Faulkner, "the sins of the father" barely differed from the sins of the son or the grandson. Southern white men in the '20s, '30s, and '40s still used their economic leverage to coerce black women into bed. They still cast racial aspersions and created myths intent on harming black women and salving their own image.

During Reconstruction, many southern white men, assuming the role of protectors of public sexual morality, punished anyone who dared to climb over the color barrier. Disseminating their anxieties about miscegenation, they planted both physical and ideological fear and watched it germinate. By Reconstruction's end, anti-miscegenation thought had bloomed. As Lawrence D. Rice observed, for example, anti-miscegenation grew uncontrollably in Texas after 1879. The Texas press covered every incident of miscegenation with inflamed rhetoric. One Texan at this time declared himself incompetent to serve in a jury hearing a miscegenation case by stating that he encouraged lynching any white men who crossed the line.[35]

The white outcry concerning miscegenation reflected a new defense of the color line. The denouement of the Civil War influenced many white southerners to see miscegenation as the sin of the South, the reason God forsook them during the

war. "It does seems strange that so lovely a climate, and country, with a people in every way superior to the Yankees, should be overrun and destroyed by them," wrote South Carolinian William Heyward during Reconstruction. "But I believe that God has ordered it all, and I am firmly of opinion... that it is the judgement of the Almighty because the human and brute blood have mingled to the degree it has in the slave states."[36] Heyward was not alone. White men who fathered mulattos in the antebellum South symbolized fallen angels, and their offspring symbolized the result of their fall from grace--the defeat and the sin of the South.

So it was in the last decades of the1800s. White southerners, constantly reminded by the mulattos in their presence of their presumed reason for defeat, recognized the threat of miscegenation to any new attempts of maintaining a white supremacist society. Although they tenaciously held to their beliefs in states' rights, whites knew that the ratification of the 14th Amendment demanded federal approval of any new attempts at establishing white supremacy. The South had received sanction for its anti-miscegenation laws in 1877 when the Supreme Court decreed that "marriage as creating the most important relation in life, as having more to do with the morals and civilization of a people than any other institution has always been subject to the control of state legislatures."[37] Many southerners, however, saw anti-miscegenation laws as too flexible. New laws were needed, laws that completely

---

[35] Lawrence D. Rice, The Negro in Texas, 1877-1900 (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 148-50.

[36]Williamson, New People, 92.

[37] Allen C. Brownfeld, "Intermarriage and the Court," Commonweal 81, 5 February 1965, 609.

separated the races. To help ensure that white southerners never again fell from grace, strict barriers of segregation were enforced.

To be sure, pervasive thoughts of racial purity alone did not motivate the move toward segregation. Economic as well as biological reasons encouraged whites to separate the races.[38] Many Democrats used blacks as a scapegoat for the South's economic woes, claiming that blacks were "absolutely unfit" for participation in a capitalist economy and their unabated economic participation had pulled the South into depression.[39] Biologically, however, segregation depended on definitions of white and black. With the high numbers of mulattos in the South, the definitions for white and black were not cut-and-dried during the post-Reconstruction years. In fact, because of mulattos, the legal definitions evolved in the 1890s. In 1895, South Carolina defined black as having "one-eighth or more negro blood." Similarly, almost all the southern states had marginal definitions ranging from one-quarter to one-sixteenth black ancestry.[40]

The Plessy v. Ferguson decision changed everything. With its Plessy decision in 1896, the Supreme Court again sanctioned the South's attempts to establish white supremacy. Homer Plessy challenged the Jim Crow statute that required racially segregated seating on trains in interstate commerce in Louisiana. Plessy maintained

---

[38]C. Vann Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow, 3d ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

[39] Ibid., 73-81.

[40] South Carolina Constitution, 1895, art. 3, sec. 33; Mississippi Constitution, 1890, art. 14, sec. 263; Tennessee Constitution, 1896, art. 11, sec. 14; Florida Constitution, 1892, art. 16, sec. 24.

that his seven-eighths white ancestry entitled him to ride in the seats reserved for whites. The Court, however, denied Plessy of that privilege, taking "judicial note" that a black was someone with any black ancestry.[41] The Plessy ruling literally gave the South a new legal definition for segregation enforcement. The definition for black became the "one-drop rule." No longer would South Carolina define blacks as persons with one-eighth black ancestry; the Plessy decision portended the one-drop rule in the Palmetto State. No longer would southern states adhere to their marginal definitions of black; the Plessy decision foretold the one-drop rule in most southern states.[42]

A new crop of racist southern leaders sprouted in the South to implement the new definition of blackness. Political leaders like Ben "Pitchfork" Tillman from South Carolina and James "The White Chief" Vardaman from Mississippi emerged to preach about the horrors of "race degeneracy."[43] With the strict racial barrier and the one-drop rule, the fear of "passing" came to fruition. The rhetoric in turn-of-the-century newspapers, pamphlets, and speeches announced the threat of "passing as white" or "invisible blackness." The antebellum "curse" their fathers had created still haunted white southerners. Mulattos with physically unidentifiable traces of black

---

[41]Plessy v. Ferguson, 163 U.S. 537 (1896); F. James Davis, Who Is Black?: One Nation's Definition (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 8-9; Brook Thomas, ed., Plessy v. Ferguson: A Brief History with Documents (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997), ch. 2 passim.

[42]South Carolina, Civil Code, 1902; Arkansas, Revised Statues, Annotated (Kerby, 1904); Alabama Constitution, 1901, sec. 102.

[43]Williamson, Crucible of Race, chap. 4; William F. Holmes, The White Chief: James Kimble Vardaman (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State Press, 1970), 89; Woodward, Strange Career of Jim Crow, 71.

ancestry could easily infiltrate their white world. With the obvious advantages of passing for white, mulattos, whites believed, quietly slipped over the line. As Williamson relates, the fear of invisible blackness fundamentally changed the social constructs of southern society. "The identification of newcomers in a community was always important.... [in the South], but as blackness disappeared beneath white skins and white features, it became vastly more so." Williamson also noted that marriage "became a much more crucial juncture in one's life. What if your son or daughter should, indeed, 'marry one,' all unknowing and unawares?"[44] Just as in Kate Chopin's 1899 short story, "Desiree's Baby," the mistake became apparent only after a newborn child appeared "cursed with the brand of slavery."[45]

Although whites initially blamed their forefathers for afflicting southern society with the curse of miscegenation, they slowly transferred their resentment to black and mulatto women. They still maintained that white men fell from grace, precipitating the pestilence of "mixed breeds" upon the South, but they were tempted by the forbidden fruit of the sensual black or mulatto woman.

Beliefs of prurient black women had existed since the earliest contact between black and white peoples. In The White Man's Burden, Winthrop Jordan quoted English travelers who met "hot constitution'd Ladies" in Africa "with a temper hot and lascivious, making no scruple to prostitute themselves to the Europeans for a very

---

[44]Williamson, New People, 103.

[45]Kate Chopin, The Awakening and Selected Short Stories (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 181.

slender profit, so great is their inclination to white men."[46] These beliefs transcended three centuries and crossed an ocean. As southern whites saw her, the mulatto woman of the early 1900s inherited "the hot and lascivious" temper from blacks and some, not all, of the intellect from whites. This lethal combination spelled trouble for unsuspecting white men: the mixture of sexual and intellectual traits made mulatto women irresistible seductresses. Perhaps no person embraced this image more deeply than Baptist minister and novelist, Thomas Dixon.

In his first book, The Leopard's Spots, Dixon expressed his views on the one-drop rule and the dangers of race mixing through Reverend John Durham, a fictional Baptist minister. "One drop of negro blood makes a negro," declared Durham. "It kinks the hair, flattens the nose, thickens the lip... and lights the fires of brutal passions." For Durham, the future of the nation depended on racial inequality, because the "beginning of Negro equality as a vital fact is the beginning of the end of this nation's life." The "fires of passion" running through mulatto veins necessitated segregation, because, as Durham believed, "There is enough Negro blood here to make mulatto the whole Republic."[47]

With her seductiveness, the mulatto woman posed a problem for Dixon. She easily lured good white men into bed and error. Thaddeus Stevens, as Dixon believed, fell under the control of such a mulatto temptress. Stevens, represented as

---

[46] Winthrop D. Jordan, The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 19.

[47] Thomas Dixon, The Leopard's Spots, 244.

[48] Thomas Dixon, The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan (Ridgewood, NJ: The Gregg Press, 1967), book 2, ch. 1.

Honorable Austin Stoneman in Dixon's second novel The Clansman, let down his guard and allowed his mulatto maid to influence the reconstruction of the nation. In The Clansman, Dixon devoted a chapter entitled "The First Lady of the Land" to the mulatto maid's supposed influence.[48]

After the assassination of Lincoln, Stoneman, "the Radical leader of Congress," wielded his political power over the South with Lydia Brown, "a strange brown woman of sinister animal beauty and the restless eyes of a leopardess." One night at dinner, Stoneman appointed Silas Lynch, one of his dinner guests and a mulatto with the "head of a Caesar and the eyes of the jungle," as governor of South Carolina. "Lydia had called Stoneman's attention to this man, Silas Lynch." With Stoneman seated at the head of the table and Lynch seated to his left, Lydia "took her seat opposite Stoneman and presided over this curious group with the easy assurance of conscious power."[49]

According to Dixon, Lydia caused the "reign of terror" over the post-war South. "No more curious or sinister figure ever cast a shadow across the history of a great nation than did this mulatto woman in the most corrupt hour of American life." Lydia's "sleek tawny face" and "catlike eyes" had seduced Stoneman into "gripping the Nation by the throat." "Did [Stoneman] aim to make this woman the arbiter of [the nation's] social life," Dixon questioned, "and her ethics the limit of its moral law?"[50]

---

[49] Ibid., 79, 93, 94.
[50] Ibid., 94.

For Dixon, the results of Reconstruction had answered these questions. Stevens had eaten the forbidden fruit, which dulled his moral integrity and clouded his political judgement. Under the hypnotic spell of his mulatto maid, Stevens unleashed horror and degradation upon war-torn Dixie. But Dixon did not entirely blame Stevens for his Reconstruction policies. Although Stevens--like so many white southern men--fell from grace, he was, after all, rendered powerless to the temptation of the alluring mulatto woman.

Dixon reemphasized the theme of seductive mulatto women in a later novel, The Sins of the Father. (Even the title suggests what many southerners maintained as the sin of the South.) In its pages, Dixon admitted that slave owners had sex with slaves, but he heaped blame on mulatto and ultimately black women for tempting white men.

As the story goes, Major Daniel Norton of the Confederacy returned home from the Civil War, married a respectable white woman, and fathered a son, Thomas. His wife, unfortunately, suffered a wound near her jugular from thrashing during the pain of labor. The wound threatened to cause fatal damage, but under the attentive care of the faithful black Mammy, death was temporarily avoided. All was well for the Nortons until the beautiful young octoroon, Cleo, was hired to help around the house. Cleo tried to seduce Norton once at his office; however, his remarkable resistance to temptation won, and he fired her. In her persistence, Cleo later entered the Norton home again to assist Mammy after Mrs. Norton got a chill. Norton returned home to find Cleo playing with the baby, and in the presence of both his

wife and the octoroon, only Cleo aroused him. Cleo's "cheeks were flushed, eyes sparkling and red hair flying in waves of fiery beauty over her exquisite shoulders, every change of attitude a new picture of graceful abandon, every movement of her body a throb of savage music from a strange seductive orchestra hidden in the deep woods!" Norton, entranced by Cleo's "fiery beauty," succumbed to temptation.[51]

Mrs. Norton soon discovered her husband's infidelity, but other characters beseeched her not to blame Norton. The doctor who came to calm Mrs. Norton's hysterics assured her that with "that young animal playing at your feet in physical touch with your soul and body in the intimacies of your home, you never had a chance." Mrs. Norton even learned that her father died embracing a mulatto after her mother called to console her. Her mother intimated that Norton "isn't bad. He carried in his blood the inheritance of hundreds of years of lawless passion." After her mother's exoneration, Mrs. Norton saw herself as a "foolish wife," who "brought a beautiful girl into her husband's house and then repented the folly." Although she finally forgave him, Mrs. Norton suffered a relapse and in her dying breath pleaded with her husband to "rear our boy free from the curse." [52]

Just as in The Clansman--and as whites believed, real life--the repercussions of the "sins of the father" carried over into the following generation. Cleo bore Norton's daughter. Norton, threatened by the symbolic presence of his fall from grace, sent his daughter away but allowed Cleo to stay as house servant, because his

---

[51] Thomas Dixon, The Sins of the Father: A Southern Romance (New York: Appelton, 1912), 79-80.

[52] Ibid., 123, 134, 137, 162.

motherless son loved her dearly. For two decades, Norton and Cleo lived together in constant bitterness. Then, while Norton traveled throughout North Carolina campaigning to disfranchise blacks, Cleo invited her daughter to the house. Without knowing she was black or his half-sister, Thomas fell in love with her. The couple secretly married before Norton returned. Upon discovering his children's marriage, Norton confessed everything to his son, and horrified by thoughts of incest and miscegenation, they agreed to a suicide pact. Norton succeeded, but Cleo saved Tom by disclosing that Norton's real daughter died at birth: Cleo had taken in a white foundling as her daughter's substitute; thus Tom Norton's wife was neither black nor his sibling, and the marriage was saved.[53]

By one reading, The Sins of the Father condemned white men who practiced miscegenation in antebellum Dixie. Norton's mistake led to the death of his wife and eventually himself. As Gilmore maintains, Dixon never knew the truth behind the allegations of the biracial man in New York. He never consciously held his father responsible, so he created a fictional father who committed suicide.[54] The suicide freed both the fictional and nonfictional Thomas from the taint of racial impurity.

A closer reading, however, reveals that the novel damned mulatto and black women more than white men. Dixon explained Norton's infidelity with sympathy. Norton rightfully endeavored to disfranchise blacks but fell under Cleo's spell, because the "history of the South and the history of slavery made such a paradox inevitable. The long association with the individual negro in the intimacy of home life

---

[53]For another synopsis of The Sins of the Father, see Gilmore, 69.

had broken down barriers of personal race repugnance."[55] While Norton's lust seemed natural, Cleo's lust appeared supernatural.[56] She had "the sinister purpose of a mad love that had leaped full grown from the deeps of her powerful animal nature."[57] Dixon absolved white men and blamed mulatto women. Because of the nature of slavery, white men accepted sexual invitations from black women. Because women with any black ancestry had an "animal nature," white men could easily fall prey to the sexual predators again.[58] Because miscegenation doomed the South before, during, and after the Civil War, the South needed to separate the races completely to prevent racial mixing in the 20th century.

In summary, The Sins of the Father promoted segregation. For Dixon, Cleo's seven-eighths white blood meant less than her one-eighth black blood. Her supernatural libido survived through her slight black ancestry, and it ultimately ruined Norton. Dixon saw black women like Cleo as possessing irresistible charm and a wanton desire for white men. To protect future white men from black women, the South needed segregation. Even more threatening than Cleo was her supposed daughter. Norton--and even his son temporarily--believed that Thomas's wife had one-sixteenth black ancestry. The possibility of her black ancestry represented "invisible blackness," and Thomas's near suicide symbolically posed the question:

---

[54]Ibid., 70.
[55] Dixon, The Sins of the Father, 36.
[56] Gilmore, 70.
[57] Ibid., 42.

"What if your son or daughter should, indeed, 'marry one,' all unknowing and unawares?"[59]

In the first half of the 20th century, "invisible blackness" created a deep anxiety in white southerners. Most whites, many of whom could not confirm their own racial ancestry, perceived passing as white as the primary threat to white supremacy. With the growing rift between black and white, one's racial identity, and thus racial ancestry, assumed increasing importance. Whites knew of examples where mulattos crossed the color line: the famous mulatto author Charles Chesnutt admitted to passing as white on frequent trips to North Carolina; Walter White, a blonde-haired, blue-eyed mulatto who worked for the NAACP, passed over the color line to investigate lynching throughout the South.[60] If they could do it, anyone could. Indeed, White estimated that about 12,000 mulattos passed annually.[61] Although even these numbers were inflated, many southern alarmists estimated that anywhere from 20,000 to 30,000 passed annually. The tension of "invisible blackness" became so pervasive that even whites associating with or showing sympathy towards blacks were sometimes accused of having black ancestry.[62]

By the 1930s the trend had reversed. White southerners, believing a decade before that thousands of mulattos annually crossed over the color line, began saying that "passe blanc," as they called it in New Orleans, had ended. In 1932, William

---

[59] Williamson, New People, 103.

[60] Williamson, New People, 101; Walter White, A Man Called White: The Autobiography of Walter White (New York: Viking Press, 1948), 3.

[61] White, 11; Davis, 56.

Watts Ball, the dean of newspaper editors in South Carolina, trumpeted that "the South is on its guard!" He joined others in declaring that the defense of Jim Crow over the previous forty years had sensitized white southerners to recognize even the remotest sign of blackness.[63]

Staunch racists who assumed political power around the turn of the century deserve recognition for putting "the South...on its guard." In Mississippi, for example, James Kimble Vardaman--representing the state's "redneck" or "poor white" contingent--surged into power and publicly vilified blacks and miscegenation, much to the pleasure of his "redneck" supporters. Before Vardaman, lower-class whites rarely utilized what little political influence they had. The years immediately following Reconstruction saw southern aristocrats control state governments throughout the South. Before black disfranchisement, the aristocrats used the threat of black political power to wheedle votes from lower class whites, reminding them that blacks might combine with some "outside" faction and outvote them. Simultaneously, aristocrats also gathered black votes by playing on their fears of "rednecks." For three decades following Reconstruction, this political maneuvering elected paternalistic, aristocratic governors like Mississippi's John M. Stone, Robert Lowery, Anselm J. McLaurin, and Andrew W. Longino.[64]

---

[62] Davis, 56.

[63] Williamson, New People, 105.

[64] Albert D. Kirwan, Revolt of the Rednecks (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1951), 18; John Ray Skates and David G. Sansing, Mississippi Life: Past and Present (Jackson, MS: Magnolia Publishing, 1980), 144.

After the Constitution of 1890 paved the way for black disfranchisement, Mississippi's aristocrats began losing their power. Mississippi, "a pioneer" of disfranchisement, as C. Vann Woodward put it, started a chain-reaction throughout the South. Mississippi's poll tax and literacy tests gave other southern states the scheme they needed to prevent blacks from voting. "Other states elaborated the original scheme and added devices of their own contriving," and by 1910, South and North Carolina, Alabama, Virginia, Georgia, and Oklahoma had effectively decimated the black vote.[65] Throughout the South, poor whites turned their concerns from black political power to blacks themselves and to the aristocrats who usually employed or protected blacks. Black disfranchisement gave way, in Joel Williamson's words, to "the rise of the Radicalism," a school of thought that envisioned "new" blacks as retrogressing into a natural state of savagery. Radical leaders like politician Benjamin Ryan Tillman, women's rights advocate Rebecca Latimer Felton, and minister and writer Thomas Dixon, Jr. insisted that no place existed for blacks in the future American or southern society.[66]

James K. Vardaman also belonged to the Radical mold. By the turn of the century, Vardaman, a product of the Delta, had watched the aristocratic minority rule politically for much of his life, but he knew how to usurp their power. Aristocrats, like William Alexander Percy, saw Vardaman as a "vain demagogue unable to think," but poor whites hailed him as their "White Chief" who would lead them into the

---

[65] Woodward, The Strange Career of Jim Crow, 83-85.
[66] Williamson, The Crucible of Race, 6, 7, 11-149.

capitol.[67] Vardaman employed a hard-shelled racism that garnered support from poor whites; he rarely missed an opportunity to encourage whites to protect white supremacy, even if it meant using physical force. In 1904, Vardaman's racial rhetoric paid dividends: he won the gubernatorial race by a landslide.[68] Vardaman's victory symbolized a temporary end to the political power of the paternalistic aristocrats. Since Reconstruction, the "educated" and the "ignorant" had engaged in a political struggle centered on blacks. Vardaman and the "ignorant" had won a battle, but the aristocrats had not lost the war.

The political fight soon shifted into a struggle to influence popular thought. Vardaman believed that to keep power from blacks--who made up almost 60 percent of Mississippi's total population--he constantly needed to remind whites of black inferiority. A major issue for Vardaman was miscegenation. Personally convinced that blacks belonged to an inferior race, he feared that miscegenation debased whites, the superior race. Whites needed to maintain their racial integrity, because race played the vital role in human development. Of course, one way to encourage racial integrity was through strict segregation. But Vardaman understood that a legal barrier to inhibit miscegenation--segregation--meant little without the popular white belief that miscegenation was fundamentally wrong. Thus, Vardaman gained control of a prominent Jackson paper, The Issue, and flooded Mississippi with anti-miscegenation propaganda. Under his influence, The Issue ran weekly articles such as "Sexual Crimes Among Southern Negroes Scientifically Considered,"

---

[67] Percy, 143.

"Cannibalism in Hayti," and "The Negro a Different Kind of Flesh." One author Vardaman used was his good friend and fellow radical Thomas Dixon Jr.[69]

A strong aristocratic contingent challenged the influence in the sphere of popular thought of Vardaman and Radicals like him. Some aristocrats, using paternalism bequeathed to them by their ancestors, cared for blacks and sought to raise them into "civilization." Because the white majority thwarted original efforts to "civilize" blacks, these aristocrats turned to elevating the "civility" of whites who foiled their initial attempts. Williamson refers to these aristocrats as "Volksgeistian Conservatives." His term aptly describes these aristocrats: first, they believed that God graced all southern whites with a unique and valuable spirit, a "Volksgeist"; second, they directly applied Hegelian idealism to southern culture; and third, their movement derived from the southern conservative racial tradition--those who harbored paternalistic sentiments toward blacks. Williamson claims that the Volksgeistians "came to rule the modern Southern world, not only in race, but in economics, politics, education, religion, courts of law, prisons, medicine, public health, philanthropy, journalism, folklore, and literature."[70] Although Williamson's description of the Volksgeistians falls into hyperbole--the loss of political power by these aristocrats, for example, eventually propelled them to find a new social agenda outside the political realm--he correctly asserted that they profoundly impacted southern culture. The Volksgeistians attempted to establish a more harmonious racial

---

[68]Holmes, 89-109.
[69] Ibid., 37, 196-198.
[70] Ibid., 414-445.

environment by influencing southern whites to accept paternalistic attitudes through education.

The work of Edgar Gardner Murphy relates the early effort of Volksgeistian Conservatism. Murphy, an Episcopal priest, began his efforts to improve southern race relations in 1900, the year after lynching peaked in the South. Murphy organized a "Southern Society" to study race problems. The society soon organized a "Race Conference." Bringing a pantheon of southerners together, Murphy presided over the conference, asked Booker T. Washington to speak, and admitted several hundred blacks to hear Washington's words. Murphy declared the conference a huge success, but acknowledged that southern race relations demanded more attention, prompting him to write the Problems of the Present South in 1904. [71]

In Problems of the Present South, Murphy argued that southern whites needed to nurture and encourage blacks. "If any race is to live it must have something to live for," he insisted. A desire for miscegenation came naturally to southern blacks, according to Murphy, because whites suppressed the "racial integrity" of blacks, making their "world wholly synonymous with degeneration...the world of the white man is the only generous and honorable world which [blacks] know." After blacks climbed the ladder of self-worth, Murphy predicted, a synthesis of black and white

[71] Ibid., 415-417; Hugh C. Bailey, Edgar Gardner Murphy, Gentle Progressive (Miami, FL: University of Miami Press, 1968), 1-10.

cultures would create in the South a life in which "its unity is truer and richer because [it is] not run in one color or expressed in monotony of form."[72]

Murphy also argued that the South must give latitude to aristocratic leaders. As Murphy saw it, an upper class that possessed a moral responsibility toward the lower-classes graced Southern society. They had a noblesse oblige, a paternalistic attitude that slavery created and Reconstruction refined. Paternalism existed as "the noble and fruitful gift of the old South to the new, a gift brought out of the conditions of an aristocracy, but responsive and operative under every challenge in the changing condition of the later order." The paternalistic idealism was, to quote Murphy, "personified in Lee." Robert E. Lee, a paragon of the Old South, shouldered responsibility for the South's loss with honor and never begrudged the North or blacks. After the war, Lee focused on education, becoming the president of Washington College. [73]

Like Lee, latter-day paternalists focused on southern education. Education in the South had lagged behind the North and West in the 19th century, but by 1900 the South realized the ideal of mass public education. Murphy claimed that descendants of the Old South who held tightly to the values of their paternalistic forebears staffed the schoolhouses, and in the schools, they instilled white children, rich and poor, with the virtues of southerners like Lee.[74]

---

[72] Edgar Gardner Murphy, Problems of the Present South: A Discussion of Certain Educational, Industrial and Political Issues in the Southern States (New York: Macmillan, 1904), 34-35, 274.

[73] Ibid., 46-50.

[74] Ibid., 20.

In Crucible of Race, Williamson affirms that Murphy's analysis proved true. The Volksgeistians played an important role in promoting education in both private and public schools. At the college level, for example, Vanderbilt, Johns Hopkins, Wake Forrest, Trinity College (Duke), the University of the South, Virginia, South Carolina, and North Carolina--all felt Volksgeistian influence in the 20th century.[75] The flowering of Old South paternalism in the New South produced writers like W.J. Cash and Ellen Glasgow who incorporated Volksgeistian thought into their texts.[76]

Volksgeistian Conservatism also touched William Faulkner. Although he came of age in Mississippi while Vardaman was governor, Faulkner seemed to support Volksgeistian thought. The Faulkner family held an aristocratic tradition since William's great-grandfather, Colonel William Faulkner, arrived in Mississippi about 1842. As mentioned earlier, the Colonel left more than an aristocratic legacy: he left mulatto descendants. After his wife, William's great-grandmother, died in 1847, the Colonel took up with one of his slaves, Emiline Lacy Faulkner. After Emancipation, Emiline stayed with the Colonel until his death. She died in 1898, leaving several children. As Joel Williamson reveals in Faulkner in Southern History, some mulatto descendants of the Faulkner line moved to Texas, and some moved to Baltimore and still live there today.[77] But many black Faulkner families apparently still live in New Albany, William Faulkner's birthplace. While researching Mississippi, Anthony Walton, who calls himself "a black man," recalled his mother

---

[75] Williamson, The Crucible of Race, 423-449.
[76] Ibid., 4, 437, 452-53, 459.
[77] Williamson, Faulkner and Southern History, 41-69.

asking about William Faulkner. "She was taking a night-school course and wanted to write about the Nobel laureate from her hometown, New Albany." Walton encouraged his mother to write about Richard Wright, James Baldwin, or Zora Neale Hurston, but his mother informed him that "We're kin to some Faulkners." He laughed and told her that "*this* Faulkner was white." His mother simply smiled and retorted, "So?"[78] This exchange with his mother planted in Walton a growing awareness of the fine gradations of racial complexity in Mississippi and throughout the South. William Faulkner had this awareness concerning his own family and perhaps coupled it with his family's aristocratic tradition to accept Volksgeistian Conservatism.

The 1948 novel Intruder in the Dust reveals the strong Volksgeistian influence in Faulkner's work. In the story, a young white boy named Charles "Chick" Mallison joined an old spinster of the antebellum aristocracy named Miss Habersham to save a mulatto, Lucas Beauchamp, from a lynch mob. The plot itself reflected Volksgeistian thought: Miss Habersham imbued Chick with Old South paternalism, and both of them sought to save a mulatto--the ideal representation of Edgar Gardner Murphy's synthesis of white and black culture in the South. After their success in saving Beauchamp, Gavin Stevens, an idealist lawyer and Chick's uncle, waxed in fine Volksgeistian fashion on the fusion of black and white southerners: "We--he and us--should confederate: swap him the rest of the economic and political and cultural privileges which are his right, for the reversion of his capacity to wait and endure and

[78] Anthony Walton, Mississippi: An American Journey (New York: Alfred A.

survive." Then the South would rise to its former glory. "Then we would prevail; together we would dominate the United States; we would present a front not only impregnable but not even to be threatened" by Northerners who have little in common "save a frantic greed for money and a basic fear of a failure of national character which they hide from one another behind a loud lipservice to a flag."[79]

Steven's appeal for a confederation of black and white southerners revealed Faulkner's adherence to Volksgeistian Conservatism. In Intruder in the Dust, the author echoed Murphy's aspirations detailed in Problems of the Present South. Murphy hoped for a southern culture expressed not "in one color or...in monotony of form." Similarly, Faulkner hoped for a fusion of cultures, personified in Lucas Beauchamp and idealized by Gavin Steven's desire to "confederate."

William Faulkner had explored the idea of miscegenation--a form of black and white fusion--long before Intruder in the Dust. In the '30s, the same decade that William Watts Ball posited that whites knew a mulatto when they saw one, Faulkner asserted precisely the opposite. In Light in August, Faulkner introduced Joe Christmas, a character who never knew his true racial identity. Christmas was the progeny of a rebellious southern white girl and a carnival man of a darker hue. The crux for Christmas concerned the unknown race of his father. His father could have had black, Mexican, and/or white ancestry, but Christmas never knew for sure.

Christmas meandered aimlessly back and forth across the color line throughout the South, eventually settling in Jefferson, Mississippi. Jefferson--

---

Knopf, 1996), 6-7.

Faulkner's fictional name for his hometown of Oxford--was steeped in Dixonian racism. The fear of miscegenation pervaded the town. In Jefferson, rumors about an interracial relationship ruined even its most prominent members. Reverend Gail Hightower kept a black cook in his house for years. But after "his wife was dead, the people seemed to realise all at once that the negro was a woman, that he had that negro woman in the house alone with him all day." His wife's body was hardly cold before they started whispering "about how he had made his wife...commit suicide because he was not a natural husband, a natural man, and that the negro woman was the reason." In the following days, the K.K.K. forced the cook to quit and commanded Hightower "to get out of town," but after his refusal, "a man found him in the woods about a mile from town. He had been tied to a tree and beaten unconscious."[80] In Jefferson--a society where racial identity assumed paramount importance and suspicions of miscegenation incurred social ostracism--Joe Christmas passed as white.

As Faulkner proposed in Light in August, segregation and fears of miscegenation proved, in effect, absurd. Joe Christmases, Walter Whites, and Charles Chesnutts existed throughout southern society. Even if "the South [was] on its guard," as Ball boasted in '32, hundreds of years of race mixing had created a colorless society, where, like Joe Christmas, no one really knew their racial identity. The mulatto witch-hunts proliferating throughout southern society usually ended up in hypocrisy and tragedy. Christmas, burdened with not knowing, looked for meaning in life outside of

---

[79] William Faulkner, Intruder in the Dust (New York: Vintage, 1991), 153.

racial identity, but the constructs of southern society forced him to choose either black or white. When suspicions of his black ancestry arose in Jefferson, whites rooted him out of his hideaways and killed him to erase the sins of the father. Eventually, Percy Grimm, a man knowing nothing about his past, killed Christmas. Grimm lynched Christmas because he was black and not white, but Faulkner symbolically crucified Christmas--a name obviously associated with Christ--because he was neither black nor white.

Faulkner returned to the theme of racial identity again in the '30s with Absalom, Absalom!. Within Absalom, Faulkner took the sins of the father and combined it with the sins of the sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons. While at Harvard, the novel's main narrator, a young white man from Mississippi named Quentin Compson, related the story of Thomas Sutpen and his single-minded pursuit to forge a dynasty in antebellum Jefferson to his roommate, Shreve McCannon. Shreve, a Canadian, knew nothing of the South, so he asked Quentin to "*Tell about the South. What's it like there. What do they do there. Why do they live there. Why do they live at all.*"[81] Shreve's nationality held importance. If another person from any part of the United States had requested the same from Quentin, he probably would have chosen a different story. As a Canadian, Shreve knew the history that shaped American culture from history books, not from living in that history. Thus Quentin felt comfortable in choosing the tragedy of Sutpen to *tell about the South...*

---

[80] William Faulkner, Light in August (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), 65-66.
[81] William Faulkner, Absalom, Absalom! (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 142.

Arriving in Jefferson with a cloud of mystery enshrouding him, Thomas Sutpen quickly married, conceived two children--Henry and Judith--held one hundred slaves, and built a beautiful plantation, Sutpen's Hundred. His life seemed perfect until Henry brought home Charles Bon, a schoolmate from Ole Miss. Other than Sutpen, the entire family--and especially Judith--adored Charles. In the next year, Charles and Judith announced their engagement. Upon hearing the news, Sutpen informed his son of a dreadful secret: Charles Bon belonged both to black ancestry and the Sutpen family.

Indeed, Thomas Sutpen fathered Charles with an octoroon in Haiti. Upon learning of his wife's black ancestry, Sutpen repudiated her and their child and fled the island. For years, the estranged son searched for his father, hoping for the chance to receive formal recognition. When he discovered Sutpen, Charles infiltrated his half-brother and -sister's life, believing that fears of incest and miscegenation would force his father to acknowledge him. Sutpen, however, refused to give Charles any satisfaction. Sutpen asked his son to prevent the marriage. The dual taboo (as seen in The Sins of the Father) tormented Henry, but one, as Charles intuitively discovered, outweighed the other: "*So it's the miscegenation, not the incest, which you cant bear* [Henry]." To which, Henry replied, "*You are my brother.*" "*No I'm not. I'm the nigger that's going to sleep with your sister. Unless you stop me, Henry.*" With this provocation, Henry, who loved his brother but hated the black man in his presence, ordered Charles to leave.[82]

---

[82] Ibid., 285-86.

The ordeal with Charles pushed Sutpen's wife into an early grave. Sutpen later sought female companionship with another mulatto. He fathered another child, rejected it, and died because of it.[83] Rejected by whites, Charles married a dark hued woman, became a tenant farmer, and fathered a "saddle colored" child, Jim Bond. Henry and Judith fled from Sutpen's Hundred and into hermitage. After Sutpen's death, they moved back to the plantation where they continued to live a life of solitude...

According to Quentin, that was the story of the South. After hearing the story, Shreve, the objective Canadian, asked Quentin, "Do you want to know what I think?" "No," Quentin said. So Shreve told him.

> I think that in time the Jim Bonds are going to conquer the western hemisphere. Of course it wont quite be in our time and of course as they spread toward the poles they will bleach out again like the rabbits and the birds do, so they wont show up so sharp against the snow. But it will still be Jim Bond; and so in a few thousand years, I who regard you will also have sprung from the loins of African kings. Now I want you to tell me just one thing more. Why do you hate the South?
>
> 'I dont hate it,' Quentin said, quickly, at once, immediately, 'I dont hate it,' he said. I dont hate it he thought, panting in the cold air, the iron New England dark: I dont. I dont! I dont hate it! I dont hate it! [84]

Within Absalom, Absalom!, Faulkner applied his fluidity of time theory, where, in his words, "There is only the present moment, in which I include both the

---

[83] Wash Jones, a faithful ex-slave and grandfather of Sutpen's last child, shot Sutpen after he rejected his grandchild. William Faulkner, "Wash," Collected Stories of William Faulkner (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 535-51.

[84] Ibid., 302-03.

past and the future, and that is eternity."[85] Faulkner linked the South's past to Quentin's present. Quentin carried Sutpen's legacy (the story *about the South*) and his latent desire for black or mulatto women with him wherever he went. Sutpen haunted Quentin. Later, Quentin, tormented by what he knew of the past and what he thought of the future, committed suicide in The Sound and the Fury.

Many literary critics--Eric J. Sundquist, Walter Taylor, Cleanth Brooks--familiar with both Absalom, Absalom! and The Sound of the Fury generally believe that Quentin's suicide resulted from the legacy of incest and his feelings for his sister, Caddie.[86] Although some evidence supports this conclusion, miscegenation--the worst of the double taboo according to Henry and Charles--eventually killed Sutpen, and Sutpen's legacy haunted Quentin. With this in mind, it seems feasible that fears of miscegenation, not incest, afflicted Quentin and forced him to commit suicide. If so, then Absalom, Absalom! represented Faulkner's rebuttal to Dixon's The Sins of the Father.

Faulkner's analysis of miscegenation as a fluid constant through time hit the mark. The hypocritical Thomas Sutpens of the "New South" continued to condemn miscegenation while they spawned mulatto children. In both fiction and reality, of the many absurdities existing around the fear of miscegenation, perhaps this one was the biggest: although southern white men accounted most for creating and perpetuating

---

[85]James B. Meriwether and Michael Millgate, eds., Lion in the Garden: Interviews of William Faulkner (New York: Random House, 1968), 70.

[86] Eric J. Sundquist, Faulkner: The House Divided (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press), ch. 5 passim; Walter Taylor, Faulkner's Search for a South (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press), ch. 7 passim.

fears of miscegenation, they also created and perpetuated the source for those fears. Many a southern white man, who chided his father for fornicating with black women by day, stole away to the bed of a black lover by night. Some white men, however, lived openly with black women despite the racial barriers. Writing in 1941 about the Delta, William Alexander Percy told of his Aunt Fannie who "in selecting her [dinner] guests flatly refused to invite a prominent planter because he openly and notoriously lived with a Negro woman." This particular planter "found it easier to move from the community than to live down the stigma or to acquire a paler bolster-companion."[87] But most white men found public scorn a bad trade for a black lover, so they tried to keep most of their interracial relationship a secret. Their attempts, however, usually proved futile.

Almost everyone--blacks and whites, males and females, adults and children--knew that white men frequently sought black companionship. David Fulton, a black writer who grew up in Wilmington, North Carolina, recalled, "When I was a boy in the south, the most popular Negro woman [among whites] of my town was the courtesan." In fact, many of the houses of black prostitution in Wilmington catered only to white men, and, according to Fulton, the houses' madams could "enter any store and receive more attention than the wife of a Negro legislator."[88]

In Mississippi, white men held up the racial barrier with one hand and lifted up the skirts of black women with the other. In Caste and Class in a Southern Town,

---

[87] Percy, 9.

[88] Gilmore, 70.

John Dollard wrote that although interracial intercourse declined after Reconstruction, "a rising social pressure has brought people to exaggerate the actual decline in these patterns since slavery days."[89] As a youth in the Delta, Clifton Taulbert observed that "even though strict racial segregation was the order of the day, it somehow slipped at night," because, as his aunt told him, "nearly ever' peckerwood got a nigger in his closet."[90] Endesha Ida Mae Holland recalled from her childhood years in Greenwood, Mississippi that some black women "aspired to become the woman, the mistress, of some wealthy white man." This "was a fairly simple process," Holland noted, "for those girls that were light enough."[91]

Perhaps some black or mulatto women saw chances for economic or social improvement when bedding with white men, but the structure of white supremacy probably left most women with little choice. Dollard recognized that the economic power of white men gave them an advantageous sexual position.[92] James Cobb came to a similar conclusion in The Most Southern Place on Earth: "Spurning the advances of a white employer could mean the loss of one's job; if a white man offered money for sex, an impoverished black woman had to weigh her own feelings of revulsion against the needs of her family."[93] Like slaveholders, southern white men in the first

---

[89] John Dollard, Caste and Class in a Southern Town, 3rd ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957), 143.

[90] Clifton Taulbert, Once upon a Time When We Were Colored (Tulsa, OK: Tulsa University Press, 1980), 106.

[91] Endesha Ida Mae Holland, "Memories of the Mississippi Delta," Michigan Quarterly Review 26 (winter 1987), 246.

[91] Dollard, 143.

[93] Cobb, 158.

half of the 20th century used their economic power to encourage or coerce black women into bed. The sins of the father differed little from the sins of the son or grandson. Postbellum white men experienced the same desire to sexually exploit black women in their midst, and they used similar means to satisfy those desires.

Many of the old arrangements between white men and black women survived slavery. The unequal social and sexual arrangements changed little. An old, popular Delta anecdote, as Cobb related, suggests the hypocritical nature of white men's sexual and social attitude toward black women. Two planters took their sons to New York to learn the ways of women. The planters summoned the bellhop and directed him to procure two whores for each of them and to deliver the biggest steaks the chef could prepare. The bellhop returned with steaks for the men and the prostitutes, but after four black women rang the doorbell, the planters hastily called the bellhop back to the room and accosted him: "What do you mean, son? Don't you know we can't eat with these women?"[94]

Black women got the joke; the black women interviewed by Dollard recognized the juxtaposition of interracial sex and interracial eating. "Repeatedly, in dreams of Negro women I noticed the manner in which eating with a white man symbolized other intimacies," Dollard wrote. "Eating together is the sort of act which can be done in a normal courtship situation and is a sign of legitimate social contact which might lead to legitimate sexual contact."[95] In the relationships between white men and black women, an informal engagement like dining together was forbidden,

---

[94] Ibid., 158.

whereas the intimate engagement of intercourse was tolerated. White men accepted black women to satisfy their carnal desire but rarely accepted any responsible roles that followed. For black women, eating with a white man symbolized the personal responsibility that he rarely took in reality.

Another responsibility shirked by white men concerned mulatto offspring. Like the Sutpens of old, southern white men of the New South usually refused to recognize any biracial progeny. Gossip about the child's resemblance to the father usually produced a delicate situation. In one case, the striking similarities of a mulatto child to his father prompted the white man's wife to persuade city officials to forbid the child from passing by his father's house. In another case related by Dollard, when a black female cook birthed the son of a prominent white man and insisted on naming her son after the father, influential whites forced her to leave town. By suggesting that the child "could expect status classification according to its father, which was implied in taking his name," Dollard explained, the cook "defied caste etiquette."[96] In Jackson, Mississippi, Richard Wright knew a black bellhop who lived with a black maid. "Out of a clear sky the police descended upon his home and arrested him, accusing him of bastardy." Although the bellhop swore that he never had intimate relations with the maid, the police forced them into wedlock. "When the child arrived, it was found to be much lighter in complexion than either of the two supposedly legal parents." The white men around the hotel laughed heartily at the

---

[95] Ibid.; Dollard, 170-71.
[96] Dollard, 142.

couple's misfortune, spreading a "rumor that some white cow must have scared the poor girl while she was carrying."[97]

Many harsh jokes and rumors spread about black and mulatto women throughout the South. Although mulatto women were openly admired for their light complexion before the Civil War, whites derided mulattos, calling them "ring streaked and striped" and "yellow nigger[s]."[98] Epithets suggesting a hybrid nature took deep root with Charles Chesnutt, who intimated in his journal that he was "neither fish[,] flesh, nor fowl."[99]

The animal imagery of these epithets eventually translated into the "muleology" myth. White southerners often compared the mule--a hybrid crossed between a mare and a jackass--to mulattos. Many jokes and myths spun of this theme, because the mule had no mule ancestors and no descendants. Literally, some whites expounded that since the infertile mule died, so too would the mulatto. Figuratively, Edgar Gardner Murphy declared in 1904 that "the present evidences of racial admixture are due not primarily to the period of slavery, nor chiefly to the period of the present, but rather to the period immediately following the Civil War." Like Washington and Reuter years later, Murphy believed that Reconstruction encouraged miscegenation, because "the presence at the South of vast numbers of the military forces of both sections--the lower classes of the Northern army demoralized

---

[97] Richard Wright, "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow," Uncle Tom's Children (New York: Harper Perennial, 1989) 11-12.

[98] Williamson, New People, 92.

[99] Charles Waddell Chesnutt, Private Journal, vol. 2, 3 January 1881, Chesnutt Collection, Special Collections, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

by idleness, the lower classes of the Southern army demoralized by defeat--" mingled with blacks during their moment of "greatest helplessness." Consequently, since the Yankees moved north and the Rebels regained their sense of racial integrity, the era of miscegenation had died, and mulatto numbers would inevitably dwindle.[100]

In the 20th century, muleology remained a popular topic of conversation. Sherwood Anderson recalled hearing Faulkner testifying to the truths of muleology in the '20s. "I remember, when I first met him, "Anderson later wrote, "when he had first come from his own little Southern town, sitting with him one evening before the cathedral in New Orleans while he contended with entire seriousness that the cross between the white man and the Negro woman always resulted, after the first crossing, in sterility." Faulkner then spoke of "the cross between the jack and the mare that produced the mule" and said that "as between the white man and the Negro woman, it was just the same."[101] Naomi Zack seemingly suggests that Faulkner really believed in muleology.[102] Faulkner, however, never really believed that first generation mulattos were infertile; his Go Down, Moses delineated a mulatto family to the seventh generation.[103] Perhaps pulling his Ohio friend's leg, Faulkner, as he did so many times in his literature, captured the southern white spirit in his analogy of mulattos and mules.

---

[100] Murphy, 272-73.

[101] Joseph Blotner, Faulkner, a Biography, vol. 1 (New York: Random House, 1974), 498.

[102] Naomi Zack, Race and Mixed Race (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 126; Williamson, New People, 97.

[103] William Faulkner, Go Down, Moses (New York: Vintage Books, 1990).

Phrases like "neither fish... nor fowl" and "ring streaked and striped" and taunts like "mule" and "mongrel" suggest that whites perceived animalistic characteristics inherent in mulattos. (Blacks usually endureded harsher names like "beast," and "ape.")[104] One of many characteristics, as whites believed, which separated whites from other "animals" was the ability to control sexual urges. As the myth went, anyone with black ancestry suffered from uncontrollable lust, and the more "black blood" one had, the harder it became to suppress one's prurient cravings. Dixon's belief in the feral sexuality of mulatto women came through in much of his literature. Along with his references to eyes that reflect the "jungle" and the "deep woods," Dixon referred to Lydia as a "leopardess" and Cleo as a "young animal."

Whites in the Delta quickly pointed to the sexual promiscuity of black women. Hortense Powdermaker reported that several whites told her about one condemned black man who asked for a female companion as his last request. Difficulty surrounded securing a woman for the task until the prisoner offered forty dollars, and then a "loose" black woman sped to the jail so quickly that "the rest of the town was rather disgusted by her open and indecorous haste."[105] In another example offered by Dollard, whites joked that a black woman appeared in court and told the judge she was a widow of ten years. The judge looked behind the woman to see a row of children, many of whom looked younger than ten, and asked "Whose children

---

[104] "Mongrelization"--a linguistic expression for miscegenation commonly used by whites--also suggests that whites associated animal characteristics to blacks and mulattos.

[105] Hortense Powdermaker, After Freedom: A Cultural Study in the Deep South (New York: Random House, 1968), 167-68.

are these?" After the woman said they belonged to her, the judge exclaimed, "What, you say these are your children!" "Yes, sir," the woman replied, "I said, 'He's dead,' not 'I'm dead!'"[106]

Myths of black sexuality floated so freely in the South that many white men saw black women only in sexual terms. As boy in Mississippi, Willie Morris believed only black women had sex with white men "just for fun," because only they possessed "the animal desire to submit that way." Black women remained "a source of constant excitement and sexual feeling" in Morris' life, filling him with "fantasies and daydreams" and "delights and wonders."[107] The prevailing myths about black women's sexuality conditioned southerners like Morris to see black women as purely sexual objects. They existed to satisfy the desires of many southern white men. This representation made the fear of miscegenation an absurdity: the same defenders of the one-drop rule and race purity sexually exploited black females.

After tracing the stereotype of the unchaste, lusty black female back to the earliest European-African contact, Winthrop Jordan concluded that "'ideas' persist according to the measure of their deep-rootedness in psycho-social necessities."[108] Like the English travelers who saw "hot constitution'd [black] Ladies," southern white men molded an image of black and mulatto women out of "psycho-social" necessity. White men needed to create an image of inherently lustful black women to absolve their fathers and to justify the younger mulattos in their presence. Arguing for

---

[106] Dollard, 139.

[107] Willie Morris, North toward Home (Oxford, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 1982), 79.

segregation, Thomas Dixon depicted black women as lascivious animals who sexually hypnotized white men. Perhaps, in doing so, he freed his father from the guilt of miscegenation, but he most certainly exonerated white men of his generation by perpetuating the myth of black female lust. Thomas, in The Sins of the Father, survived because he remained true to his race. Luckily Thomas, as Dixon proposed, grew up after slavery. "The long association [in slavery] with the individual negro in the intimacy of home life" had ended. A new system--segregation--would create born-again white men like Thomas who held tenaciously to their "personal race repugnance." For Dixon, Jim Crow stopped the "sins of the father" from passing to later generations, but those sins in William Faulkner's novels trickled down to the sons and grandsons.

Thomas Sutpen left a legacy that continued to haunt Quentin Compson. The taboo of miscegenation and denial of violating that taboo brought Sutpen to a tragic, but justifiable, end. Recognizing that Sutpen's tragedy existed in his South left Quentin reeling in his own denial: "I dont hate [the South]! I dont hate it!" Like their antebellum forefathers, white men clung to ridiculous myths like muleology to pacify permanent threats to their white social order. Moreover, by viewing black women as mere sexual objects, white men rejected the responsibility of accepting their illegitimate offspring or giving their black lovers social equality and enforced the one-drop rule. These beliefs helped salvage the image of white men who used their

---

[108]Jordan, 19.

economic or physical power to sexually exploit vulnerable black women and maintain white supremacy.

LOVE 'EM AND LYNCH 'EM

In September 1908, a local paper advertised that Thomas Dixon's play The Clansman was coming to Oxford, Mississippi. A month later it debuted at the local opera house owned by John Wesley Thompson Faulkner. His grandson, eleven-year old William Faulkner, usually picked his seat for the house events, and Dixon's drama proved no exception.[109] The Clansman had a lasting effect on young Faulkner. The themes the future writer received from the play eventually seeped into his literature, provoking him to spin a southern yarn reflecting white southerners immersed in sexual and racial paranoia.

The paranoia had its roots with earliest white/black contact. Similar to their pervasive ideas concerning promiscuous black women, white men harbored beliefs of lustful, over-sexed black men. As Jordan noted, exaggerated beliefs of black men's sexuality predated America's settlement and followed the slaves via the Middle Passage. The English travelers who spoke of "hot constitution'd" African women also spoke of African men with "members" of "extraordinary greatness." The abnormal length of black men's penises became commonplace in Great Britain and North America by the 18th century, highlighted justifications for slavery in the 19th century,

---

[109] Williamson, Faulkner and Southern History, 162.

and remained a viable and deep-seated ideology for white southerners in the 20th century. [110]

Southern white men discussed the length of black men's penises with a combination of fascination, envy, and anxiety. One Delta planter who burst into a sharecropper's cabin told Dollard about a black man preparing for sex. The planter, shocked by the propitious size of the black man's penis, "gave an indication by his arm and clenched fist of its great length and diameter." Beliefs in the greatness of black men's genitalia were widespread in the Delta, and local legend stated that physical examinations conducted in 1917 confirmed their beliefs.[111]

Concomitant to penis size was virility. In this regard, black men also held a mythical super-sexual status. One local jailer told Dollard of a black man who requested female companionship the night before his execution. Local custom bound officials to procure a woman who bedded with the condemned man on his last night. He hanged the next morning, but his hanging made less of an impression on local white men than his "virility-in-the-face of death."[112]

Differing little, if at all, from slavery, beliefs of black men's large penis size and sexual potency created within postbellum white men the need to keep black men physically separated from white women. Since slavery, southern white men had rebuilt a racial hierarchy on which they sat atop, but stories of black men's sexuality proved problematic. In regards to sex, many white men believed themselves inferior

---

[110] Jordan, 19, 82.
[111] Dollard, 161.
[112] Ibid., 161-62; Cobb, 157.

to black men. John Griffin, a white reporter who posed as black while traveling through the South, noted that white men showed no compunction in approaching him with their lewd interpretations of black men's sexuality. White men "appeared to think that the Negro [male] has done all of those 'special' things they themselves never dared to do...they carry the conversation into the depths of depravity."[113]

The sexual inferiority complex from which white men suffered manifested in several ways. One way was to sleep with black or mulatto women; perhaps psychologically struggling with their perceived shortcomings, they violated the taboo they created by trying to prove themselves sexually competent with females of the lower caste. Another manifestation was segregating black men from white women. Thinking black men possessed superhuman sexual qualities, white men said that sex between black men and white women would put the woman through terrible agony and ruin her "socially." Many white women, however, wished not to participate in the sexual segregation. The myths of black men's generous endowment and virility that floated around white male circles permeated white female circles, imbuing some white women with the need to discover for themselves.

For social as well as psychological reasons, white men endeavored to prevent any sexual contact between white women and black men. Sex with white women represented the ultimate symbol of "social equality" for black men. As long as miscegenation was limited to white men and black or mulatto women, then white men could eschew black calls for social equality: Sutpen could always repudiate his

---

[113] John Griffin, Black Like Me (New York: Signet Books, 1963), 86.

mulatto son, but the mother of Joe Christmas had to acknowledge her child. Faced with an imbroglio of their making, white men attempted to forge identities for both white women and black men. White women, in the minds of white men, were chaste and racially conscious, physically repulsed by black men. Similar to black women, black men were licentious beasts. From this psychological construction came an integral component of the fear of miscegenation--the paranoia of an omnipresent black rapist.

The white paranoia of an omnipresent black rapist has challenged many scholars. Most cite the controversy over the Dyer (Federal Anti-Lynching) Bill, the inflamed rhetoric of Radical Democrats, and the emerging popularity of the Ku Klux Klan during the first Reconstruction and again in 1915 to reveal the paranoia, but with the exception of Joel Williamson, scholars usually leave the media of southern fiction untouched. In his work, Williamson gives credence to Thomas Dixon for accurately expressing white fears of black rapists.[114] Dixon's novels The Leopard's Spots and The Clansman--which became the play and the basis for the movie "Birth of a Nation"--diagnosed lascivious black men as an acute southern problem. Writing to defend the South, Dixon represented lynching as the most effective method to prevent black men's prurient desire for white women. However, in William Faulkner and Southern Fiction, Williamson concludes a subchapter devoted to lynching by saying that by "the 1920s the ubiquitous black beast rapist was virtually lost to the white mind, and certainly the history books," an irony given that Faulkner helps to

[114]Williamson, The Crucible of Race, ch. 5 passim.

prove the belief transcended the '20s.[115] Faulkner's "Dry September" (1931) and Light in August (1932) reveal that white beliefs of the "ubiquitous black rapist" existed in the '30s.

In Williamson's defense, the number of black lynching victims declined in the '20s, and much of the fiery racism preached by radical southerners like Dixon faded. But the lynchings of blacks slightly swelled again in the first half of the '30s, and perhaps due to fears of federal intervention, the racist rhetoric submerged from public voices to private opinions. The paranoia nevertheless persisted through the '20s and into the '30s, and with Faulkner's aid, this chapter attempts to expose its existence in southern white minds and procure it for the history books.

Table 1. Lynchings, by Years and Race, 1924-35

Year	Whites	Blacks	Total
1924	0	16	16
1925	0	17	17
1926	7	23	30
1927	0	16	16
1928	1	10	11
1929	3	7	10
1930	1	20	21
1931	1	12	13
1932	2	6	8
1933	4	24	28
1934	0	15	15
1935	2	18	20 [116]

[115]Williamson, Faulkner and Southern History, 163.

[116] Jessie Parkhurst Guzman, ed., "Lynching, the Second Reconstruction and the Great Migrations," Racial Violence in the United States, Allen D. Grimshaw, ed. (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969), 56-59.

The history books already document the early Dixonian influence on Faulkner. Before The Clansman came to Oxford, Faulkner knew of Thomas Dixon; three years earlier his teacher gave him a copy of Dixon's novel, The Clansman, as a gift.[117] The novel would have given Faulkner a portrait of Dixon's South, where white southerners suffered emotionally and economically during Reconstruction, where a sexually wanton mulatto led unruly blacks in the legislature, and where Gus, a black army captain, raped a white mother and her daughter. But if Faulkner had not read the novel, then he certainly saw Dixon's South in the play. As he watched the Klansmen lynch Gus, surely Faulkner recalled a similar scene in Oxford seven weeks before the play arrived, when townsmen rallied to lynch Nelse Patton.[118]

Faulkner's grandfather knew The Clansman would draw a crowd; Dixon's play resembled the racial turmoil recently experienced in Oxford. On September 8, Mrs. Mattie McMillan's husband, a prisoner in the county jail, sent a message to his wife via Nelse Patton, a black prisoner trustee. As the Jackson Daily Clarion-Ledger reported, a drunken Patton arrived at the McMillan house, delivered the message, but then refused to leave "after his animal passion was aroused."[119] The Lafayette County Press claimed that Mrs. McMillan went for her gun, convinced the black

---

[117] Joseph Blotner, Faulkner: A Biography, One Volume Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 20.

[118] The spelling of Klansman obviously differs from Dixon's Clansman. Dixon probably sought to relate what he perceived as the chivalry of early Klansmen with the Highland Clans of Scotland.

[119] Jackson Daily Clarion-Ledger, 10 September 1908, 1.

[119] Lafayette County Press, 9 September 1908, 1.

"desperado" meant to rape her. According to the Press, what followed was one "of the coldest blooded murders and most brutal crimes known to the criminal calendar...a black brute of unsavory reputation...attacked...a respected white woman, cutting her throat from ear to ear."[120]

The evidence clearly pointed to Patton as Mrs. McMillan's killer; a tiny shard of metal removed from one of her vertebrae matched a gap in his razor. Nearly 2000 people gathered around the town square after Patton's arrest. Some citizens of Oxford asked the mob to disperse, but former U.S. Senator W.V. Sullivan encouraged the mob not only to stay but also to lynch Patton. Convinced by Sullivan's diatribe, the mob broke into Patton's cell with crowbars and pickaxes--a job consuming four and one-half hours. Once the cell door swung free, "26 pistol shots vibrated throughout the corridors of the solid jail, " related the Press, "and when the smoke cleared away the limp and lifeless body of the brute told the story. The body was hustled down stairs to terra-firma, the rope was produced and the drag to the court house yard began."[121] Finally, the mob castrated Patton, hung his naked corpse from a telephone pole, riddled the lifeless body with a few more volleys, "dispersed and Oxford was quiet again."[122]

---

[121] Ibid.

[122] Memphis Commercial Appeal, 4 September 1908, 3. For other accounts of the Nelse Patton see Williamson, Faulkner and Southern History, 163-171; Joseph Blotner, Faulkner, A Biography, vol. 1, 113-14; John B. Cullen and Floyd C. Watkins, Old Times in the Faulkner Country (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 89-93; Taylor, 14-15; Arthur F. Kinney, Go Down, Moses: The Miscegenation of Time (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), 24-26, 136-41.

The jail and town square were not far from Faulkner's bedroom window. Williamson believes "it is impossible to imagine that [Faulkner] failed to record and retain every detail of the [lynching] that came to his senses."[123] Surely he heard the haranguing ex-senator, the screaming mob, and the shots fired in the jail and square. Perhaps he saw the drama unfold, but he, like every Oxford citizen, undoubtedly saw the graphic denouement in the morning: Nelse Patton's naked, castrated, and mutilated corpse swinging from the telephone pole.

The Nelse Patton lynching fit neatly into the pattern of lynchings occurring in the South and, especially, in the Mississippi Delta. According to evidence published by the NAACP in 1919, at least 293 lynchings happened in Mississippi--more than any other state--from 1889 to 1909. During these years, the seventeen counties of the Delta accounted for over 30% of the lynchings for all of Mississippi's eighty-two counties.[124] The Nelse Patton lynching was not unique. In fact, further investigation into the incident provides insight into the southern lynching phenomenon as a whole.

Two primary beliefs surround the rash of lynchings in the South. First, lynchings were the handy-work of the lower orders of white southern society, the "poor whites." Second, lynchings occurred to defend against rape or attempted rape. In Lanterns on the Levee, William Alexander Percy depicted his father, Leroy, and other aristocrats as defending blacks against racist poor whites. Percy blamed the

---

[123] Williamson, Faulkner and Southern History, 159.

[124] NAACP, Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States, 1889-1918 (New York: McGraw Hill, 1919), 74-79; the statistics compiled by the NAACP were broken down by county by Professor Neil McMillen, University of Southern Mississippi, and given to Cobb, The Most Southern Place on Earth, 91.

racial violence on "the lawlessness and hoodlumism of our uneducated whites...They were the sort of people that lynch Negroes, that mistake hoodlumism for wit, and cunning for intelligence."[125] Percy's view of aristocratic protectors versus poor white lynchers echoed W.E.B. Du Bois' assertions in Souls of Black Folks. Writing five years before the Patton lynching, Du Bois believed poor whites or the "ignorant Southerner," as he coined them, "hate the Negro," but "the sons of the masters" made a concerted effort "to protect the Negro... in property, life, and limb."[126]

The Patton lynching, however, was not an act performed by only "uneducated whites." Evidently, not all aristocrats accepted Volksgeistian thought, and maybe not all Volksgeistians escaped the paranoia. The Lafayette County Press article related a public effort, and as its reporter saw it, "the public had done their duty."[127] W.V. Sullivan, a son of a master and certainly no "ignorant Southerner," led the lynch mob. Sullivan graduated from Vanderbilt in 1875 and became a lawyer. By 1890, he moved into Oxford's social elite. In 1897, Sullivan won a seat in the United States House of Representatives, and after the death of Senator Edward Walthall in the following year, the governor appointed Sullivan to serve in Walthall's stead until the term ended in March 1901. Following his Senate tenure, Sullivan returned to Oxford and reinstated his law practice. Ironically, Nelse Patton belonged to Sullivan's clientele.[128] Sullivan's professional relationship with Patton did not abate his effort to

---

[125] Percy, 228, 149, 20.

[126] W.E.B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folks (New York: Signet Classic, 1969), 92-93; Taylor, 6-10.

[127] Lafayette County Press, 2.

[128] Williamson, Faulkner and Southern History, 159-60.

lynch his client. Sullivan, a man supposedly committed to the law, overlooked Patton's right to a trial. Outside the jail, when some prominent Oxford citizens (perhaps expressing their noblesse oblige) explained that Patton could have killed Mrs. McMillan in self-defense, Sullivan convinced the mob that Patton tried to rape his victim.[129] On the following day, Sullivan boasted of his part in the lynching: "When I heard of the horrible crime, I started to work immediately to get a mob... I led the mob which lynched Nelse Patton and I am proud of it." For Sullivan lynching Patton existed as a moral issue. "Cut a white woman's throat? and a Negro? Of course I wanted him lynched."[130] For citizens like Sullivan, the Nelse Patton lynching symbolized an effort to suppress dissolute black men.

Recognizing that upper and lower class white southerners shared responsibility for lynching, W.J. Cash wrote in 1941 that an "ignoble hatred" for blacks had festered in southern "poor whites" long before Reconstruction. After Reconstruction, however, Cash asserted that growing enmity for blacks emerged in "the master class" and continued well into the twentieth century:

> The most superior men...seeing their late slave strutting about full of grotesque assertions, cheap whisky, and lying dreams, feeling his elbow in their ribs, hearing his guffaw in high places, came increasingly to feel toward him very much as any cracker felt, fell increasingly under the sway of the same hunger to have their hands on him, and ease the intolerable agony of anger and fear the shaken pride in his screams.[131]

---

[129] Cullen and Watkins, 89-93.

[130] Jackson Daily Clairion-Ledger, 2; Williamson, Faulkner and Southern History, 161.

[131] Cash, 114.

For Cash, economic, social, and sexual reasons initiated the violent hatred upper class white men expressed toward black men. Over forty years later, Williamson also combined these reasons to explain the rash of southern lynchings occurring in the years following Reconstruction. In Crucible of Race, Williamson posited a thesis very similar to C. Vann Woodward's in Strange Career of Jim Crow: whites, and especially white men, used racism as a "scapegoat" to deal with their economic difficulties. Williamson noted that sex and family roles consumed southern whites in the Victorian era: "Men saw themselves as the providers and protectors in their families. As the economic world constricted, men found themselves less and less able to provide for the women in the accustomed style, and there seemed to be no promise of an end to the decline." Because these men no longer adequately fulfilled their roles as family providers, they psychologically suffered from "feelings of inadequacy." To compensate for these feelings, white men directed their rage upon a supposed "black beast rapist." If white men could not provide for the women economically, then they certainly could protect them from the severe threat of losing their purity to black men.[132]

Throughout the South, lynching emerged as the primary result of white paranoia. Lynching became so commonplace in the early 1900s that respected organizations endeavored to publicly justify it. In March 1904, ex-Confederates held a reunion at Grenada, Mississippi, where they decreed "that we are unalterably

[132] Williamson, The Crucible of Race, 115.

opposed to the lynching of a human being, save, perhaps, for the one unmentionable crime." The paranoia burgeoned from small towns like Grenada to fiery debates on Capitol Hill. On March 28 1904, Representative Frederick Gillett of Massachusetts urged southern Congressmen to discourage lynching. Gillett wanted "thoughtful, reflecting men [of the South]" to denounce lynching, but "so arrogant and proscriptive is public opinion [concerning lynching] in the South that no man raises his voice against it." Indeed, many "thoughtful, reflecting" southern men usually supported lynching instead of condemning it. Immediately after Gillett's speech, for example, Representative Charles Clark from Mississippi took the floor: "I have no disposition to mix up in this debate on the subject of lynching, but I will tell the gentleman from Massachusetts [Gillett] when lynchings will cease. Whenever the black man...ceases to commit rape, then lynchings will cease."[133]

Thomas Dixon, Jr., was another thoughtful southern man. After reaching unprecedented success at Wake Forest and John Hopkins, Dixon became the youngest man ever elected to the North Carolina Legislature. But politics bored the young Tarheel, and he followed his heart into the Baptist pulpit.

His first pastorate was in Boston. In the fall of 1887, not long after he started preaching, Dixon attended a lecture entitled "The Southern Problem." The speaker, Justin D. Fulton, reported that racial unrest made the South "a hotbed of revolution and that the North must brace itself against the impending upheaval." An infuriated Dixon leaped from his seat and denounced the speaker "as a liar and a fool."

---

[133] Congress, House of Representatives, 1st sess., Congressional Record (28 March

Outraged, Dixon promised to tell the country what he saw as the "true" story of the South.[134] In 1902, Dixon made good on his promise with the release of The Leopard's Spots.

Before The Leopard's Spots hit the shelves, Dixon's native North Carolina had received national criticism for its racial antagonism. In 1897, Wilmington whites initiated a race riot, leaving ten blacks dead in the streets and many more injured. According to Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, two major reasons spawned the violence: Republican rule displeased most white North Carolinians, and Alexander Manly pricked white nerves by printing an editorial on interracial liaisons. Manly's article responded to a reprinting of Rebecca Felton's speech given a year earlier. Felton charged Georgia farmers for allowing the rape of white women by black men; because neglectful white men let blacks deteriorate into a feral state, lynching represented the only means to prevent the deflowering of white women at the hands of black despoilers. Manly answered the reprinting by attacking the virtuosity of white women. In a style resembling Ida B. Wells, Manly first claimed that white women lied about being raped. He then suggested that poor white women encouraged potential black suitors. As Manly saw it, white women were not "any more particular in the matter of clandestine meetings with colored men, than are the white men with colored women."

A reaction to the article came quickly. The ire excited by Manly resulted in threats on his life. Manly escaped the city, but an angry white mob burned his press

---

1904): 3824-33.

and hunted down prominent black leaders to either kill them or force them into exodus. The carnage left North Carolina expatriate Charles Chesnutt deeply embarrassed and angry: "It is an outbreak of pure, malignant and altogether indefensible race prejudice, which makes me feel personally humiliated, and ashamed for the country and the state."[135]

Dixon used The Leopard's Spots as a rebuttal to the critics of North Carolina. Early in the story, a squad of black Reconstruction soldiers crashed the wedding party of sixteen-year old Annie, the daughter of Tom Camp, a poor white. The soldiers, "laughing and yelling," dragged a screaming bride out of the house and towards the woods. The white men asked, "What shall we do, Tom?... If we shoot we may kill Annie." Tom asserted unhesitatingly, "Shoot, men! My God, shoot! There are things worse than death!" The men acted quickly, wounding three soldiers and killing another three. Annie, however, was among the casualties. Minutes later, the men expressed their regrets to Tom, to which Tom replied, "It's all right boys... you've saved my little gal. I want to shake hands with you and thank you. If you hadn't been here--my God, I can't think of what would 'a happened! Now it's all right. She's safe in God's hands."[136]

Within this scene, Dixon expressed two ideas. First, without slavery, black men retrogressed into a lascivious state and preyed on white women. Second, to rebut Manly, all southern whites--rich or poor--perceived interracial liaisons as

---

[134] Cook, 105.
[135] All information on the Wilmington massacre taken from Gilmore, 105-18.
[136] Dixon, The Leopard's Spots, 122-27.

repugnant. Later in the story, Dixon reemphasized these themes. In his chapter entitled "The Unspoken Terror," (language which suggests Dixon believed the fear was widespread in the South) Tom suffered the loss of another daughter, eleven-year old Flora.

A search party of white men found Flora near a spring. She "lay on the ground with her clothes torn to shreds and stained with blood. Her beautiful yellow curls are matted across her forehead in a dark red lump beside a wound where her skull had been crushed." The men rushed the near-dead girl home, where doctors cleaned her wounds and tied a broken artery. When Flora regained consciousness, overcome by the harrowing experience, she "screams and calls to her father for help." After a second convulsion seized her, Flora's artery broke again, "her heart fluttered and she was dead."[137]

In the next chapter, outraged whites sought revenge. Entitled "A Thousand Legged Beast," this chapter symbolized white beliefs in the omnipresence of black rapists. Albeit Dixon called the white mob "a thousand legged beast," perhaps he used the subtitle as a double entendre: although the white mob searched for a single perpetrator, the problem was "a thousand legged beast." All black men stalked innocent white women according to many white men. The perpetrator, Dick, represented new blacks, the generation of blacks not schooled under the "civilized"

[137] Ibid., 122-27.

institution of slavery. The mob tied Dick to a tree, saturated him with oil, and lit him afire.[138]

According to Dixon, since the recent Republican triumph, "crimes [like Dick's] increased with alarming rapidity," and "the insolence of the class of young negro men was becoming more and more intolerable." Criminality raged. "Negro insolence reached a height that made it impossible for ladies to walk the streets without an armed escort." In 1898, whites responded violently. After a race riot where whites chased blacks out of town, a white supremacist fever spread throughout the state.[139]

The similarities of time and place between Dixon's fictional riot and the Wilmington massacre deserve notice. By allegorizing his fictional riot to illustrate the actual violence that occurred in North Carolina, Dixon defended whites in Wilmington. In both, southern whites rebelled against Republican rule. In Wilmington, Manly asserted that white women welcomed black lovers, provoking a violent white response. In The Leopard's Spots, Dixon reasserted Felton's insistence that black men actually preyed on white women. For Dixon sexually wanton blacks resulted in racial violence in both fiction and nonfiction.

The Leopard's Spots reached astonishing popularity. Within a few months, sales passed one hundred thousand copies, eventually reaching the million mark. The sales of Dixon's third novel, The Clansman, far surpassed his first book. Bookstores could not keep enough copies on the shelves; its sales exceeded a million in a few

---

[138] Ibid., 381-84.

months.[140] The Clansman shared similar themes with The Leopard's Spots: villainous black men raped beautiful white girls in both novels. With The Clansman, however, Dixon chose to use more graphic detail.

While the beautiful young Marion and her mother prepared for bed, black Reconstruction soldiers, led by their ringleader Gus, broke into their home. After knocking her mother unconscious, Gus turned his attention to Marion:

> Marion staggered against the wall, her face white, her delicate limps trembling with the chill of a fear colder than death.
> 'We have no money--the deed has not been delivered,' she pleaded, a sudden glimmer of hope flashing in her blue eyes.
> Gus stepped closer, with an ugly leer, his flat nose dilated, his sinister bead-eyes wide apart gleaming ape-like, as he laughed:
> 'We ain't atter money!'
> The girl uttered a cry, long, tremulous, heart-rending, piteous.
> A single tiger-spring, and the black claws of the beast sank into the soft white throat and she was still.[141]

Upon regaining consciousness, Marion and her mother, like Norton and Thomas in The Sins of the Father, agreed to a death pact to keep the family name "sweet and clean." According to Marion, death was the only answer: "We could not escape ourselves! The thought of life is torture. Only those who hate me could wish that I live. The grave will be soft and cool, the light of day a burning shame." With these words, both she and her mother leaped off a cliff and plunged to their deaths.[142]

---

[139] Ibid., 410-15.
[140] Cook, 112, 131.
[141] Dixon, The Clansman, 303-04.
[142] Ibid., 306-08.

In the chapter entitled "The Hunt for the Animal," white men assembled to discover the reason behind the women's deaths after finding the corpses. By looking at the image frozen in the mother's eyes, they hoped to find "the fire-etched record of this crime." A doctor studied the eye and saw the "bestial figure of a negro--his huge black hand plainly defined--the upper part of the face is dim... but the massive jaws and lips are clear--merciful God!--yes!--it's Gus!" And "The Hunt for the Animal" began.

Their discovery spawned the Ku Klux Klan, white men who endeavored to reestablish white rule. After absconding Gus, the Grand Dragon announced to his brethren that for violating a southern woman, "a priceless sacrifice on the altar of an outraged civilisation," Gus must lose his life.[143] As illustrated in The Clansman, Dixon represented lynching as a white cure for lusty black men. He apotheosized the Klan by applying terms like honor, duty, and noble, and he denigrated blacks by applying descriptors like bestial, ape-like, and animal. He tried to show the origins of the racial strife in the South, but in doing so, Dixon exculpated white men for lynching while placing culpability on black men for raping.

After his success with The Clansman, Dixon rewrote the book into a play. He toured the South and received accolades at most stops. In the fall of 1905, Dixon took his play to Atlanta, where its inflammatory racist themes prompted the audience to give a long standing-ovation to the author.[144] White Atlantans had waited for a

---

[143] Ibid., 313-14, 325; for another analysis of both The Leopard's Spots and The Clansman, see Williamson, The Crucible of Race, ch. 5 passim.

[144] Cook, 143.

solution to their race problems and found one in The Clansman. After Dixon's arrival, reports of black attacks on white women mushroomed. The play apparently catalyzed whites to perceive all white-black contact as dangerous. White paranoia ran so deep that Ray Stannard Baker, a nationally noted journalist visiting Atlanta, remarked, "I was astonished... to discover how widely prevalent this dread has become." In September of the next year, newsboys sold papers reporting another attempted assault by a black man upon a white woman. The report was the proverbial last straw: white men thronged on the street corners, determined to rid the city of the black scourge. A riot ensued. White mobs beat and killed many blacks, burned black housing, and chased remaining blacks from downtown.[145]

Dixon's influence and popularity continued into the next two decades. Dixon always maintained that he intended to reach the widest possible audience through his books, and in 1915 he attempted to reach more people. The Clansman became the basis for the movie "Birth of a Nation," which quickly drew the largest viewing audience in film's short history. According to Roy Aitken, a northern businessman who along with his brother financed the movie, "Birth of a Nation" received its warmest welcome in the South.[146] Indeed, "Birth" engrossed so many white southerners that the Klan reemerged in 1915. In the end, Dixon reached his audience, and they responded: the paranoia of black rapists pervaded white southern minds

---

[145] All information concerning Atlanta riot taken from Williamson, The Crucible of Race, 214-19.

[146] Roy E. Aitken and Al P. Nelson, The Birth of a Nation Story (Middlesburg VA: William W. Denlinger, 1965), 43.

throughout the '20s, and punishing black men presumed as rapists remained a gross obsession.

In the '20s, the debate on Capitol Hill still raged. On January 19, 1922, Representative John Rankin of Mississippi related as many horrific incidents as possible to justify lynching. He claimed that four sexual assaults had taken place the first week after the House convened. Then he reflected on a "typical Negro outrage" that happened "several years ago" not very far from where he lived. A black "brute" entered a home and preyed on an unsuspecting mother and daughter. Upon discovery of his presence, the "mother knew the moment she looked upon his savage countenance what his hellish designs were. She rushed between him and her daughter, where "he seized her, drew a razor, and cut her throat from ear to ear."[147]

The story sounds hauntingly similar to the Nelse Patton case. Unsurprisingly, Rankin grew up outside of Oxford, close to William Faulkner's home. As with Rankin's recollection, incidents like the Patton attack left an indelible mark on white men's psyche. With memories festering, white men (like those in Atlanta a decade earlier) of the '20s perceived any contact between black men and white women as a threat; innocent bumps, glances or grins still had the capacity to incur the lynching hysteria.

In his "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow," Richard Wright reported two incidents that reveal the overwhelming nature of the paranoia in the '20s. While working in a Jackson, Mississippi hotel, Wright waited on one of the many white

prostitutes occupying rooms. When she passed by him in the nude, Wright watched her. Immediately, her white client asked, "Nigger, what in hell you looking at?" Knowing that he had violated the social code, Wright quickly responded, "Nothing." "Keep your eyes where they belong, if you want to be healthy!" Wright soon learned that white men were as much bite as bark when it concerned white women and black men. A black bellboy that Wright knew "was caught in bed with a white prostitute. He was castrated and run out of town." Immediately following the incident, all the black male employees were warned: "We were given to understand that the boy who had been castrated was a 'mighty, mighty lucky bastard.'" The white manager wanted to impress upon all employees that "next time the management would not be responsible for the lives of 'trouble-makin' niggers.'"[148] In the '20s, as Wright surely would have attested, the paranoia lived in Jackson.

The paranoia trickled into the '30s; about two hundred miles north of Jackson, William Faulkner recognized it and experienced it. In 1931, Faulkner published "Dry September," a short story concerning the injustice of lynching and mob rule. Faulkner' s story countered Dixon's fiction. Dixon portrayed animalistic black characters deserving of the punishment and stressed the heroism of the lynch mobs. Faulkner evoked sympathy for the victim and enmity for the lynch mob. In "Dry September," Faulkner began by showing the ignorance of the white men who congregated in the barber shop: "through the bloody September twilight... it had

---

[147] Congress, House of Representatives, 1st sess., Congressional Record (19 January 1922): 1426.

[148] Wright, 11, 12.

gone like a fire in dry grass--the rumor, the story, whatever it was. Something about Miss Minnie Cooper and a Negro. Attacked, insulted, frightened: none of [the men]... knew exactly what had happened."[149]

One youth, Butch, wanted to react immediately, but Hackshaw, the barber, tried to dissuade him, claiming that "I don't believe anybody did anything." But Butch soon found support with the arrival of John McLendon. McLendon crashed open the door and said, "Well, are you going to sit there and let a black son rape a white woman on the streets of Jefferson?" After hearing a question as to the validity of the presumed attack, McLendon quickly retorted, "What the hell difference does it make? Are you going to let the blacks sons get away with it until one really does it?" McLendon's rationale (or lack thereof) convinced most of the barber's patrons, and the newly formed mob hurried off in pursuit of their victim, Will Mayes.

After arriving at Will Mayes's place of employment and calling to him, someone whipered, "Kill him, kill the son," but McLendon delayed the violence, stating, "Not here... Get him into the car." Will's sympathetic plea came immediately: "What is it captains?... I aint done nothing. 'Fore God, Mr John." After they shoved him into the car, Will reverberated his plea again: "What you all going to do with me, Mr John? I aint done nothing. White folks, captains, I aint done nothing: I swear 'fore God."[150]

---

[149] William Faulkner, "Dry September," Collected Stories of William Faulkner (New York: Vintage International, 1976) 169.

[150] Ibid., 170-72, 177-78.

An ambiguity existed in Faulkner's story: no one ever knew for sure if Will actually attacked a white woman. But the lynch mob never cared to know. McLendon's reasoning easily wheedled the men to form a mob. The paranoia afflicted them. It never mattered if Will attacked a white woman; what mattered was he could have. Faulkner set the story in Jefferson, the fictional name for his hometown of Oxford. When once asked why he wrote about Oxford, Faulkner pithily replied, "I know them."[151] So, although no Oxford lynchings occurred in the '20s or early '30s, did Faulkner "know" that the paranoia still gripped white men in Oxford?

As Faulkner prompted the question, he helped supply the answer. On February 2, 1931, an editorial written by W.H. James in the Memphis Commercial Appeal thanked Mississippi women for organizing against lynching. Two weeks later, a "William Falkner" from Oxford responded with a letter entitled "Mob Sometimes Right." The letter virtually defended lynching as an instrument of justice, because it protected the "sacredness of womanhood." In the letter's conclusion, Falkner continued to defend lynching in an exonerating tone: "I hold no brief for lynching... mob violence serves nothing... But there is one curious thing about mobs. Like our juries, they have a way of being right." The evidence clearly suggests the Faulkner wrote the letter. As Neil R. McMillen and Noel Polk pointed out, Faulkner lived in Oxford at the time, and he would have either read or heard about the letter. If he did not author it, then we would have defended his image.[152] Apparently, the

---

[151] Meriwether and Millgate, 58.

[152] Neil R. McMillen and Noel Polk, "Faulkner on Lynching," The Faulkner Journal 8, no. 1 (fall 1992), 3-14.

paranoia of black rapists afflicted at least one southern man's mind in the '30s, Faulkner's.

The belief of black rapists affected men other than Faulkner in the '30s. The Mississippi women to whom James referred belonged to the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching (ASWPL). Forming the Mississippi branch in 1931, ASWPL hoped to create an anti-lynching consensus in the most pro-lynching state. The Mississippi ASWPL devoted much of its time disabusing white men from the patriarchal notion that only they stood between black men's lust and sacred white womanhood.[153] In the '30s, the southern paranoia continued to plague white men, and Mississippi women knew it and organized against it.

Faulkner knew the black rapist stereotype psychologically afflicted him. Although "Dry September" criticized those who harbored beliefs of black rapists, his letter practically defended them. But he confronted his contradictory feelings in Light in August, where he returned to the paranoia in novel form. He once stated that he wrote because he wanted to cure "my country" of its faults within his capacity.[154] Perhaps he wrote Light in August to help his country cure the rape complex festering in the minds of southern white men; perhaps he wrote it to deal with his own ambivalence. Faulkner's life was sometimes as cryptic as his prose. Scholars may never know his exact personal motivation for writing Light in August, but the text

---

[153] McMillen, Dark Journey, 235-49.

[154] Merriwether and Millgate, 159; the phrase "my country" could refer to United States and/or the South. In another interview, Faulkner referred to the section of the country stretching from Memphis to New Orleans as "my country," implying that he considered himself first southern and then American. Ibid., 167.

exists as another indicator that the "ubiquitous black rapist" was not "lost to the white mind" in the '30s.

Light in August muddled the issue of black men raping white women. Joe Christmas, as discussed earlier, never could confirm his racial identity. He supposed that his father had "black blood," but he never knew. Passing for white, Christmas understood that white men considered interracial sex between black men and white women taboo. Believing himself black, Christmas felt empowered by breaking the rules. He slept and cohabited with white women, but a shocking revelation disempowered him. After living with a white woman for several months, Christmas told her that he was black, and the woman responded apathetically, "You are?... What about it?" Finding no satisfaction in her response, Christmas beat her.[155]

Knowing that some white women accepted black lovers troubled Christmas, and his troubles compounded the next time he confessed to another white lover, Joanna Burden. Christmas told Joanna of his racial identity, and she was neither apathetic nor fearful. Instead, discovering that she had a black lover excited her. Christmas often found Burden "hidden, in closets... waiting, panting" or "beneath certain shrubs about the grounds... naked, or with her clothing half torn to ribbons upon her," seductively whispering "Negro! Negro! Negro!"[156] Christmas, unable to truly know his race, lost the only power he ever had, so he brutally killed Burden.

With the way white women reacted to Christmas's racial identity, Faulkner offered a bold analysis: some white women, according to Light in August, welcomed

---

[155] Faulkner, Light in August, 111-12.

black lovers. Faulkner was not the first to suggest that white women had consensual sex with black men. Manly said it in North Carolina in 1897. Ida B. Wells shouted it in Memphis four years prior to Manly.[157] But Faulkner suggested it as a southern white man, perhaps validating what Wells and Manly had always maintained and what southern white men had always denied.

Prior to Light in August, the presumption in both the white public and white law was that intercourse between white men and black women resulted only from rape. In 1931, no white men arose to disagree with a Mississippi editor when he asserted that no southern white woman was so depraved as to "bestow her favors on a black man."[158] After Light in August, however, other members of Mississippi's white intelligentsia began proposing that some white women chose to bed with black men. William Alexander Percy, for example, who although he ardently disapproved of miscegenation, followed Faulkner's lead a decade later in Lanterns on the Levee. "In the South the one sacred taboo," Percy wrote, "is the untouchability of white women by Negro men." However, the southern white women of Percy's generation acted immorally, imbibed heavily, and encouraged black men: "Today white women drink in public places, become drunk in public places, and public places are filled with scandalous and grossly human Negro waiters." The drinking and carousing

---

[156] Ibid., 245.

[157] Jacqueline Jones Royster, ed., Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900 (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997), 117-18, 126.

[158] Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, Revolt against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 319.

sometimes precipitated, in Percy's words, "moral failure" on the part of both white women and black men.[159]

Although it went unacknowledged at the time, the evidence supported the contentions of Faulkner and Percy. Many Mississippi towns were burdened with stories like that of Robert Patterson. As Debbie Dilworth told Anthony Walton, author of Mississippi: An American Journey, Robert Patterson and Chris Ross of New Albany secretly dated two white girls from "the rich side." Robert and Chris "were going to meet their girls" at the Southland Motel. The boys checked in, somebody called them, and Robert bolted out the door, supposedly to pick up the girls. Time passed, and slumber overtook Chris. Authorities found Robert "the next morning in the motel swimming pool, and the boy didn't swim." The police awakened Chris and arrested him.[160]

If white women willingly bedded with black men, then white men lynching blacks under the guise of protection--the same argument Faulkner ironically supported in his letter--appeared fallacious. Logic, however, obviously never deterred white men from lynching. As Faulkner related in Light in August, a white mob formed immediately after hearing of Joanna Burden's murder, believing "that it was an anonymous negro crime committed not by a negro but by Negro" and hoping "that she had been ravished too: at least once before her throat was cut and at least once afterward."[161]

---

[159] Percy, 307-08.
[160] Walton, 84.
[161] Faulkner, Light in August, 271.

Sadistic beliefs and desires also pervaded the authority. The Mississippi National Guard, led by Percy Grimm, who believed "that the white race is superior to any and all other races and that the American is superior to all other white races," initially attempted to keep the peace. Grimm gave simple orders to his troops: "We got to preserve order... We must let the law take its course. The law, the nation. It is the right of no civilian to sentence a man to death. And we, the soldiers in Jefferson, are the ones to see to that."[162]

But the disregarded taboo of a black man sleeping with a white woman overwhelmed Grimm. When Christmas fled from the law to a nearby house, Grimm tracked him and shot him five times in the chest. Seeing that Christmas clung to life, Grimm castrated Christmas, saying, "Now you'll let white women alone, even in hell."[163] In the end, Christmas resembled Nelse Patton: his body, castrated and riddled with bullet holes, symbolized the harrowing result of mob rule. Similarly, Grimm resembled W.V. Sullivan: overcome by a black man's outrage, Grimm violated his oath and ignored the law.

By writing both "Dry September" and Light in August, Faulkner helped reveal the paranoia of black rapists in southern white minds in the 1930s for the history books. Faulkner wrote for a reason--to cure society's ills. The paranoia was a major reflection of the fears of miscegenation. The fears still existed in Faulkner's Mississippi, but the monolithic advocacy of it began to crumble in white society.

---

[162] Ibid., 426-27.

[163] Ibid., 439.

White men differed in the ways they saw relationships between white women and black men. They all still maintained that these relationships violated the "one sacred taboo," but white men became divided as to who held responsibility for their affairs. In Light in August, several prominent citizens tried to intervene on Christmas's behalf, and in reality, many liberals (for Mississippi's standards) started to think like Percy and Faulkner--that many of these relationships were in fact consensual, constituting a "moral failure," as Percy put it, on both parties. To these liberals, white women figuratively loved and lynched black men.

The staunch white racists never deviated from their longstanding position: the only miscegenation between black men and white women existed through rape. In his 1947 book Take Your Choice: Separation or Mongrelization, Mississippi Senator Theodore G. Bilbo posited that all southern white women shunned black men's sexual advances. In Bilbo's opinion, white women wisely chose separation over "mongrelization." Although white men "poured a broad stream of white blood in black veins," the racially conscious white woman maintained a pure "Southern Caucasian blood" line. She "preserved the integrity of their race, and there is no one who can today point the finger of suspicion in any manner whatsoever at the blood which flows in the veins of the white sons and daughters of the South."[164] Although Faulkner had pointed his "finger of suspicion," the image of racially conscious white women had not faded in men like Bilbo. In their minds, black men physically repulsed white women. Never would one find a white woman willing to bed with a

black man in the South. Any interracial sex between white women and black men occurred through rape and rape only. Theodore Bilbo, governor of Mississippi when "Dry September" and Light in August came into print, resembled fictional Mississippians like McLendon and Grimm: these men still harbored beliefs of a "ubiquitous black rapist," and remnants of their beliefs persisted well into the '50s.

The 1940s brought relative racial peace to the South. As both black and white southern men sailed over to fight the Axis Powers, much of their aggression and hatred transferred from their social counterparts to the Japanese. World War II, however, raised questions about the status blacks had in southern society. How could a black man be drafted to fight abroad for the principles of American Democracy when he did not enjoy those principles at home? Southern segregation escalated into a national issue during the war. Calls for equality ran high, leaving national figures like General Marshall to confide that he "would rather handle everything that the Germans, Italians and Japanese can throw at me, than to face the trouble I see in the Negro question."[165]

Table 2. Lynchings, by Years and Race, 1939-49

Year	Whites	Blacks	Total
1939	1	2	3
1940	1	4	5
1941	0	4	4
1942	0	6	6
1943	0	3	3

[164] Theodore G. Bilbo, Take Your Choice: Separation or Mongrelization (Poplarville, MS: Dream House Publishing, 1947), 57-58.

[165] John Dower, War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), 173.

1944	0	2	2
1945	0	1	1
1946	0	6	6
1947	0	1	1
1948	1	1	2
1949	0	3	3 [166]

As John Dower has noted, fears among white southerners of a Japanese-Black alliance were commonplace from the 1930s to Nagasaki. Some polls taken during the war reflected some pro-Japanese sentiment within blacks. Conversely, Gunnar Mrydal emphasized the "thoroughly American" outlook of American blacks during the war. Myrdal found that black Americans harbored prodemocratic and antifacist beliefs, but he also observed that a "modest number" of blacks took "vicarious satisfaction in imagining a Japanese (or German) invasion of the Southern states."[167]

Apparently, white fears of a Japanese-Black alliance deferred to their fears of miscegenation. The strong beliefs in the "sacred taboo" caught the boat with white southerners who sailed to Europe. While serving in France, the future Field Secretary for the NAACP, Medgar Evers, excited many white soldiers from Mississippi after he "got friendly" with a local French girl. Evers ignored the taboo, which at home may have meant death, and fought four whites to a draw. After the military police separated the fighters, Evers dusted himself off and told his brother Charles that "When we get out of the army, we're gonna straighten this out."[168]

[166] Guzman, 56-59.
[167] Dower, 174.
[168] Walker, 61.

Indeed, after the war, Evers and a pantheon of black leaders tried to straighten things out. With their actions, the winds of racial change began to blow in the '50s. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund accepted many cases in hopes of bring segregation to an abrupt end. Blacks throughout the South grew tired of the all-encompassing effects of separation, but as black pressure to end discrimination mounted, white supremacy hardened to thwart the increasing threat to the white social system. To combat the calls for equality, some whites revived racial violence.

The early '50s marked the widespread use of another form of lynching. The "ubiquitous rapist" stereotype prompted the execution of black defendants like the Martinsville Seven and Willie McGee. For allegedly raping a white woman, authorities executed the Martinsville Seven--Joe Henry Hampton, Howard Hairston, Booker Millner, Frank Hairston, John Taylor, James Hairston, and Frances Grayson--on February 2, 1951, in Richmond, Virginia. In Mississippi, the execution for rape was reserved only for blacks, adding credence to Jesse Jackson's phrase, "legal lynching," and in Mississippi, the courts found Willie McGee guilty of raping Mrs. Willamette Hawkins. As Robert Shapiro relates, evidence indicated that Hawkins lured McGee into a relationship he later tried to sever, but once Hawkins screamed rape, Mississippi sought the death penalty. Like so many of the white female characters in Faulkner's literature, Hawkins desired a black man. But the passion she

felt for McGee quickly subsided when he later tried to break-up with her. By claiming that McGee raped her, Hawkins literally loved him and lynched him. [169]

It took only a one-day trial and a two and one-half minute jury deliberation to find McGee guilty. Faulkner called the case an "outrage" and accused his fellow Mississippians of following a long-standing "fetish," an obsession of killing black men accused of rape.[170]

Four years later, Emmit Till, a fourteen-year old black visiting Mississippi, allegedly spoke to and "wolf-whistled" at a white woman. The next morning, Till's corpse floated facedown in the Tallhatchie River. An all white jury acquitted two white men, J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant, charged with Till's murder.[171] Shortly after their acquittal, the two men sold their story to writer William Bradford Huie for thirty-five hundred dollars. They admitted their guilt and described their crimes in graphic detail. Initially, they "had no idea o' killing him," Milam explained, but intended to "whip him, scare some sense into him, and send him back to Chicago." However, according to Milam, Till "never even whimpered" but taunted his kidnappers: "You bastards, I'm not afraid of you. I'm as good as you are. I've had white girls and my grandmother was a white woman." Then Till produced a picture and pointed to a white female he called his "girl." To this, Milam responded, "Boy you ain't never going to see the sun come up again." For Milam, Till had violated the taboo, and like many southern white men, Milam saw sex with white women as the

---

[169] Herbert Shapiro, White Violence and Black Response: From Reconstruction to Montgomery(Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 397.

[170] Ibid., 395-96, 399.

ultimate symbol of "social equality" for black men, even black men fourteen-years young. Milam later reiterated this firm belief:

> What could I do?...He thought he was as good as any white man...I'm no bully. I never hurt a niggah in my life. But I just decided it was time a few people got put on notice. As long as J.W. Milam lives and can do anything about it, niggahs are gonna stay in their place. Niggahs ain't gonna vote where I live. If they did they'd control government. They'd tell me where to stand and where to sit. They ain't gonna go to school with my kids. And when a niggah even gets close to mentioning sex with a white woman, he's tired o' livin'...I'm gonna kill him.[172]

Again Faulkner criticized the racial violence in Mississippi. He lashed out at Till's killers and his native state, saying that "if we....have reached that point in our desperate culture when we must murder children, no matter for what reason or what color, we don't deserve to survive, and probably won't."[173] The paranoia lived. Its life, as Faulkner saw it, symbolized the dying gasps of a desperate southern culture.

The paranoia lived a long life. In the antebellum period, white men saw slavery as a way to keep unsavory black men in check, but without the constraints and "civilizing" effects of bondage, southern white men believed that lascivious black men unleashed sexual brutality upon white women. For white men lynching became a means of "protecting" white women. After Reconstruction, lynching increased with astonishing rapidity. The Ku Klux Klan reigned in the South, touting lynching as a safeguard against sexually wanton black men. Even after the original Klan faded, southern white men still maintained that lynching protected their "virtuous" white

---

[171] Ibid., 411.
[172] Cobb, 218-19.

women. In the first three decades of the 20th century, as Joel Williamson posited in The Crucible of Race, the image of black bestial rapists profoundly affected the white psyche. The horrific stories--existing more in fantasy than reality--of blacks attacking white women of all ages cast a stereotypical image upon all black men. Thomas Dixon, however, thought that image applied and endeavored to relate the sexual rapacity of black men in his fiction.

Dixon's The Leopard's Spots and The Clansman depicted black men as vicious sexual beasts. In his fiction, Dixon sought to defend the South for its racial antagonism by showing his audience that all black men after Emancipation retrogressed into violent, irrepressible rapists who favored white women as their prey. Dixon's themes echoed the popular thought of southern white men. From rich to poor, educated to ignorant, recognized to remote, white men thought black rapists lurked around every corner, waiting for an unsuspecting white woman. The popular thought permeated the '20s. In 1924, South Carolina Representative John Tillman told his congressional peers of white fears: "The baleful shadow of the dusky rape fiend hangs over every southern home like the blight of death... no mother is safe for an hour unless guarded by watchful husband or son."[174]

Rhetoric of southern icons like Dixon and Tillman perpetuated the paranoia, and it latched onto southern white men of the '30s. In this decade, southern women of the ASWPL, who recognized the paranoia's existence and its ability to foment

---

[173] Merriwether and Millgate, 254-55.

[174] Congress, House of Representatives, 2nd sess., Congressional Record (7 June 1924): 11304.

lynchings, spent much of their time trying to erase beliefs in black rapists from white men's minds. So pervasive was the paranoia in the '30s that it affected even William Faulkner, whose sensitivity and liberality on racial issues became notorious in the South. Faulkner harbored prejudices; he defended lynching as a protection of "sacredness of womanhood" in his letter, but he excoriated the South, and especially Mississippi, in "Dry September" and Light in August.

The paranoia lived a long life indeed. It did not disappear in the 1920s. Faulkner's ambivalence, his fiction, and the forming of the ASWPL indicate the paranoia still existed after the '20s. Perhaps laws legitimating that only blacks convicted for rape qualified for the death penalty, the Willie McGee case, and the murder of Emmitt Till suggest that paranoia continued to plague some southern enclaves in the '50s.

CONCLUSION

In November 1953, Robert Patterson, a white manager of one of the largest plantations in the Mississippi Delta, learned about the pending school desegregation cases that would soon combine to form the famous Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka case. Believing that integration would eventually lead to miscegenation, Patterson urged white Deltans to "stand together forever firm against communism and mongrelization." Patterson's appeal apparently seemed premature to his fellow Mississippians; not much was made of integration in the last days of 1953.[175] However, less than six months later, on May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court's ruling on Brown made Patterson's fears all too real.

Following the Court's decision, white Mississippians--rich and poor, educated and ignorant--harshly criticized desegregation, and the crux of their criticisms often centered on miscegenation. Congressman John Bell Williams called May 17 "Black Monday" in a 1954 speech before the House of Representatives. Mississippi's Circuit Judge Tom P. Brady adopted the term "Black Monday" as the title for his widely circulated pro-segregation tract, in which he argued that integration denied white southerners the "God given right to keep his blood white and pure...If God in His infinite wisdom had wanted a Mongrelized, mixed man, that man would have been on this earth." Likewise, in an address entitled "A Lawyer Challenges the U.S. Supreme

---

[175] Cobb, 213.

Court," Hugh V. Wall told members of the Mississippi State Bar Association that the Supreme Court "usurped the most sacred right that is guaranteed our people, the right to educate our own children...If the blood of our white race should become corrupted...with the blood of Africa...all hope for the future would be forever gone."[176] Another member of Mississippi's Bar, Senator James O. Eastland called the Brown decision "an illegal, immoral, and sinful doctrine." Dubbed the "symbol of racism in America" by a New York colleague, Eastland rationalized that "Southern people will not be violating the Constitution or the law when they defy this monstrous proposition."[177]

Although the jurisprudence-laced arguments against Brown may have flown over the heads of many white working-class Mississippians, most understood the racial implications of the Supreme Court's decision. A white man who worked for the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Belzoni, for example, spoke for many white Mississippians in his succinct view of desegregation: "Integration leads to intermarriage; then there won't be any whites left or nigras left: there'd be a race of mulattoes. If my daughter starts going to school with nigras...she won't think anything of dating one of 'em."[178]

Of course, at least one Mississippian stood up in defense of the Brown decision. Four years earlier in 1950, William Faulkner delivered his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in Stockholm, Sweden. In it, Faulkner emphasized "the

---

[176] Blaustein and Ferguson, 8-9.
[177] Cobb, 217.
[178] Ibid., 216.

old verities and truths of the heart"--"love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice." He claimed that these "verities" provided the underpinnings for the triumph of human existence, claiming "that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal...because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance."[179] For Faulkner, none exemplified honor and pride or sacrificed and endured more than the southern black.[180] Perhaps Faulkner discerned that the rising tide for black equality would soon engulf the South and subtly expressed that in his speech. Faulkner recognized that southern blacks had spirits "capable of...sacrifice and endurance." Sacrifices dating back hundreds of years had flowed inside them, and in the 1950s these sacrifices welled in loud, clear calls for equality. When asked in 1956 about his opinion on black efforts for integration, William Faulkner stated that the "Negro has a right to equality. His equality is inevitable, an irresistible force."[181] In other words, Faulkner believed that blacks would not merely endure: they would prevail.

Before the Brown decision, William Faulkner's literary career had declined. After Brown, his career fell into sharper decline; in the southern public eye, he quickly changed from a writer of the highest esteem to an irascible, old curmudgeon. But Faulkner had started a southern literary legacy. Following Faulkner's lead,

---

[179] William Faulkner, "Speech of Acceptance upon the Award of the Nobel Prize for Literature," Bear, Man, and God: Seven Approaches to William Faulkner's *The Bear*, Francis Lee Utley, Lynn Z. Bloom, Arthur F. Kinney, eds. (New York: Random House, 1964), 170-171.

[180] Although Faulkner did not intimate this in his Noble Prize speech, he claimed it in several interviews. Merriwether and Millgate, 20-21, 78-79, 258-64.

[181] Ibid., 260.

fictional southern writers like Robert Penn Warren, Richard Wright, and Ralph Ellison gave compassionate literary representations to their region's blacks. Concomitant to this fictional movement, scholars hailing from Dixie like Vernon L. Wharton, George B. Tindall, and Fletcher M. Green studied southern blacks with unflagging commitment. Another such scholar came from the Black Belt of Arkansas: C. Vann Woodward.

The first publication of C. Vann Woodward's The Strange Career of Jim Crow fell on the heels of the Supreme Court's Brown decision. Woodward's book quickly became, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. referred to it, the Bible of the second Reconstruction. The nation felt its impact immediately: it sold more than half a million copies within ten years of its initial publication. The Strange Career of Jim Crow launched a new field of study in American history--the field of southern race relations. Studies on southern black history had surfaced before Woodward's work; he benefited tremendously from Wharton's The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890 (1947) and Tindall's The Negro in South Carolina, 1877-1900 (1949). But The Strange Career of Jim Crow treated the history of black-white relations in the South as a separate, distinct entity. Joel Williamson believes that the Brown decision motivated Woodward to understand something he had always known: "that there had been, indeed, a history of race relations in the South, that things had now always been the same." Woodward grasped the idea that southern race relations had a diverse, even evolutionary, history. He recognized that southern race relations "had not frozen

with the end of either slavery or [the first] Reconstruction into an absolutely monolithic, rigid, and lasting pattern."[182]

This study makes no attempt to alter or revise Woodward's work. However, it does argue that although the pattern of race relations in the South changed from Emancipation to the Second Reconstruction, the ideas that generated the pattern were strikingly similar. Before Emancipation, whites maintained that blacks were inherently inferior, and that inferiority relegated them to a subservient status. After Emancipation, the system of racial control evolved from slavery to segregation, but the idea of black inferiority remained the primary justification for white supremacy.

For whites, characteristics that directly spoke to black inferiority concerned sexuality. Winthrop Jordan noted that the earliest white-black contact brought stereotypes of lusty, over-sexed black males and females into white culture. Seventeenth-century English sailors wrote of "hot constitution'd" African women who unscrupulously sought white male sexual companionship. Mariners also noted that African men had "members" of "extraordinary greatness" or abnormally large "propagators." Whites carried these images into the twentieth-century.

Southern white men accorded black women with a supernatural sexuality. Naturally attracted to white men, black women used their sensual and sexual charms

---

[182] Williamson, The Crucible of Race, 491-93.

to overwhelm their victims, rendering white men virtually powerless not to taste the "forbidden fruit." No one promoted this image of black women more than Thomas Dixon. For Dixon, women with any black ancestry possessed both carnal desires for white men and the hypnotic sexuality to lure them into bed. In The Clansman and The Sins of the Father, Dixon characterized his black and mulatto female characters as conniving nymphs who used their sexual powers to gain a foothold within their white victims' lives.

William Faulkner represented the relationship between white men and black or mulatto women in a different way. In Absalom, Absalom!, Thomas Sutpen formed a family with an octoroon in Haiti, but he later denied her and the son he fathered after discovering her black ancestry. Thomas Sutpen had willpower, a motivation that drove him to build the most impressive plantation in Jefferson. He never fell into a trance, lured into bed by a sexual enchantress. He consciously married a woman who he thought was white; he consciously fled to New Orleans after discovering her black ancestry; he consciously denied his son of one-sixteenth black ancestry twenty years after his exodus from Haiti; and he consciously coupled with a known mulatto after his dynasty crumbled. Sutpen made decisions, and, for Faulkner, his decisions outlined the story of the South.

Like Caliban from Shakespeare's The Tempest who looked into a glass but disliked the monstrous image, southern white men saw a side of their life in Faulkner's literature they did not wish to see. Robert Penn Warren noted the vilification Faulkner received from fellow Mississippians. When asked why he hated

Faulkner, a white gentleman from Clarksdale responded that Faulkner's literature was "Gory and on the seedy side of life."[183] The "seedy side" of southern life was exactly what Faulkner sought to expose and exactly what characters like Quentin Compson tried to deny. He told the story of Thomas Sutpen, and his legacy haunted Quentin till his death.

Like Quentin, white southern men did not want to know the story of Sutpen and its similarities to their lives. When it came to sexual relations with women of a "lower caste," white men needed the image promoted by Dixon out of, as Jordan called it, "psycho-social necessities." Black and mulatto women represented a ready-made scapegoat for white men. Images of black women's sexuality functioned to explain away the mulattos in their presence and to purge the guilt of white men who used their advantages to exploit both antebellum and postbellum minority women.

The aforementioned super-sexual image of black men was also deeply rooted in white southern culture. Sexual relations between black men and white women during slavery were always labeled taboo. Because mixed-race progeny always followed the mother's status, white men forbade white women from bedding with black men and vice-a-versa. The sexism that reinforced the racism in the antebellum South continued after Emancipation. Mulattos continued to follow the status the mother's status, thus segregating whites from blacks and mulattos depended on white women's rejection of interracial affairs.

---

[183] Robert Penn Warren, Segregation: The Inner Conflict in the South (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 21.

From this social organization came two concomitant images--the reapplication of the old images of the lusty, oversexed black man and the chaste, racially conscious white woman, imbued by Victorian virtues and repulsed by black men. With these two images simultaneously channeling through white men's minds, the only sex that could occur between black or mulatto men and white women, according to white men, happened by rape. Thoughts of black rapists pervaded white southern culture from Emancipation to the 1950s. White men, refusing to accept that some white women willingly chose to sleep with black men, lynched and/or castrated any black man that dared violate the "sacredness of white womanhood." Once again, Thomas Dixon's literature perfectly captured white beliefs in black rapists. The Leopard's Spots and The Clansman reinforced the images already festering in the minds of white southern men. The black and mulatto male characters of Dixon's fiction subjected innocent, physically helpless white women to their sexual wrath. For Dixon, lynching existed as the means of protecting white women.

The deep-seatedness of the belief in black rapists reveals itself in the ambivalence of William Faulkner. Although his sensitivity for racial fairness came out in his literature, Faulkner justified lynching in his letter to the Memphis Commercial Appeal. With words and ideas resembling Dixon's, Faulkner claimed that lynch mobs had a knack for being right and that lynching protected against the violation of sacred white women. However, in his fiction, Faulkner revealed white female characters that hardly resembled helpless victims. In Light in August, the knowledge that white women willingly bedded with black and mulatto men of the

lower caste shocked Joe Christmas. Similar to another native Mississippian, Ida B. Wells, who in 1897 asserted that the white "woman [had] been a willing consort of her [black] paramour," Faulkner suggested that some sexual affairs between black men and white women were consensual.[184]

But the fictional Joe Christmas, like the nonfictional Nelse Patton, actually killed a white female victim, ultimately justifying his lynching for whites. In Faulkner's analysis, however, the paranoia resulted from taking incidents conducted by individuals and stereotyping groups of people. Nelse Patton and Joe Christmas performed individual acts, but their actions, because of stereotypes, cast an image on all black men. The paranoia had psychological power: it transmogrified an individual crime into a collective crime; rapes became, to reemphasize Faulkner's words, "an anonymous crime committed not by a negro but by Negro."

From the antebellum to the postbellum, southern white men ultimately wished to preserve white racial integrity. Although the pattern of southern race relations evolved, as Woodward posited in The Strange Career of Jim Crow, the fear of miscegenation persisted as a vital component of maintaining white supremacy. From the antebellum farmer who asked, "How'd you like to hev a nigger steppin' up to your darter," to Theodore Bilbo who lustily boasted in 1947 that the "South stands for blood, for the preservation of the blood of the white race," the story of southern race-relations has centered on the fear of miscegenation.[185]

---

[184] Royster, 118.
[185] Bilbo, 58.

A "yellow man" interviewed by Robert Penn Warren in 1956 gave his interpretation on the white resistance to integration: "Mongrelization...that's what a white man will say. You ask him and he'll say that. He wants to head it off...But look at my face. It wasn't a black man hung it on me."[186] The "yellow man" and his observation bring this study to closure. His visage juxtaposed against his words represents the blatant hypocrisy of white men's defense of the color line. Although white men bore much of the responsibility for mulattos, they vehemently refused to accept them. After Emancipation, white men rebuilt a system of white supremacy in which the old antebellum rule of a mulatto following the status of the mother applied. White men used their economic and social advantages to exploit women of the lower-caste and prevented white women from bedding with black men, thus preserving the unadulterated line of "white blood."

There is, of course, neither "white blood" nor "black blood," neither "white" people nor "black" people. As many scholars have postulated, the melange of so-called races, especially in America, created so-called black people biologically indistinguishable from so-called white people. White southern men thought they protected their bloodline, but they and their forefathers violated the "bloodline," if it ever existed. Perhaps Faulkner recognized the consanguinity of many "blacks" and "whites" in his own family and throughout the South. For a white southerner, his literature showed an unprecedented sensitivity to race in general and miscegenation in particular. Maybe he felt a connection to the black Faulkner families that lived in

---

[186] Warren, 32-33.

New Albany, Mississippi, his birthplace, or perhaps he knew that while he laid on his deathbed his second cousin, a mulatto named Faulkner Hughes, prepared to accept her crown as Queen of Me-De-So Cotillion in Baltimore, Maryland.[187]

[187] Walton, 6-7; Williamson, Faulkner and Southern History, 384-85.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aitken, Roy E., and Al P. Nelson. The Birth of a Nation Story. Middlesburg, VA: William W. Denlinger, 1965.

Arkansas. Revised Statutes, Annotated (Kerby, 1904).

Bailey, Hugh C. Edgar Gardner Murphy, Gentle Progressive. Miami: University of Miami Press, 1968.

Baker, Ray Stannard. Following the Color Line. New York: Doubleday Page, 1908.

Berland, Alwyn. Light in August: A Study in Black and White. New York: Twayne Publishing, 1992.

Bilbo, Theodore G. Take Your Choice: Separation or Mongrelization. Poplarville, MS: Dream House Publishing, 1947.

Blaustein, Albert P., and Clarence Clyde Ferguson, Jr. Desegregation and the Law: The Meaning and Effects of the School Segregation Cases. New York: Vintage, 1962.

Blotner, Joseph. Faulkner: A Biography, Vol. 2. New York: Random House, 1974.

_____. Faulkner: A Biography, One Volume Edition. New York: Random House, 1974.

Braxton, Bernard. Women, Sex and Race: A Realistic View of Sexism and Racism. Washington, D.C.: Verta Press, 1973.

Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Brownfield, Allen C. "Intermarriage and the Court." Commonweal 81, 5 February 1965, 601-621.

Cash, W.J. The Mind of the South. New York: Vintage Books, 1941.

Chessnutt, Charles Waddell. Private Journal. Vol. 2. 3 January 1881. Chessnutt Collection. Special Collections, University of North Carolina. Chapel Hill.

Chopin, Kate. The Awakening and Selected Short Stories. New York: Bantam Books, 1992.

Cobb, James C. The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Regional Identity. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Cohn, David L. "How the South Feels." Atlantic Monthly, January 1944, 49-61.

Cook, Raymond Allen. Fire from the Flint: The Amazing Careers of Thomas Dixon. Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 1968.

Cullen, John B. and Floyd C. Watkins. Old Times in the Faulkner Country. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1961.

Cutler, James Elbert. Lynch Law: An Investigation into the History of Lynching in the United States. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1905.

Davis, F. James. Who Is Black?: One Nation's Definition. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1991.

Day, Caroline Bond. A Study of Some Negro-White Families in the United States. Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum of Harvard University, 1932.

Dixon, Thomas, Jr. The Clansman: An Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan. Ridgewood, NJ: The Gregg Press, 1967.

_____. The Leopard's Spots: A Romance of the White Man's Burden, 1865-1900. Ridgewood, NJ: The Gregg Press, 1967.

_____. The Sins of the Father: A Romance of the South. New York: Appleton, 1912.

_____. Southern Horizons: The Autobiography of Thomas Dixon, ed. Karen M. Crowe. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 1984.

Dollard, John. Caste and Class in a Southern Town. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957.

Dower, John. War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.

D'Souza, Dinesh. The End of Racism, Principles for a Multicultural Society. New York: The Free Press, 1995.

Du Bois, W.E.B., ed. Negro American Family. New York: Negro University Press, 1969.

_____. The Souls of Black Folk. New York: Signet Classic, 1969 .

Faulkner, William. Absalom, Absalom!, ed. Noel Polk. New York: Vintage, 1986.

_____. Collected Stories of William Faulkner. New York: Vintage, 1995.

_____. Go Down, Moses. New York: Vintage, 1990 .

_____. Intruder in the Dust. New York: Vintage, 1991.

_____. Light in August. New York: Vintage, 1972.

_____. The Sound and the Fury, ed. Noel Polk. New York: Vintage, 1990.

Frankenberg, Ruth. White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth. Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

Gosset, Thomas, Jr. Race: The History of an Idea in America. Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963.

Griffin, John. Black Like Me. New York: Signet Books, 1963.

Grimshaw Allen D., ed. Racial Violence in the United States. Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969.

Gutman, Herbert G. The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925. New York: Pantheon Books, 1976.

Hall, B.C., and C.T. Wood. The South. New York: Scribner, 1995.

Hall, Jacqueline Dowd. Revolt against Chivalry: Jesse Ames and Women's Campaign against Lynching. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

Henriques, Fernando. Children of Conflict: A Study of Interracial Sex and Marriage. New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1975.

Hernton, Calvin C. Sex and Racism in America. New York: Grove Press, 1965.

Holland, Endesha Ida Mae. "Memories of the Mississippi Delta." Michigan Quarterly Review 26 (winter 1987): 240-265.

Holmes, William F. The White Chief: James Kimble Vardaman. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1970.

Jackson Daily Clairon-Ledger. 9 September-15 September 1908.

Jordan, Winthrop. The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.

_____. White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812. New York: Norton, 1977.

Kinney, Arthur F. Go Down, Moses: The Miscegenation of Time. New York: Twayne Publishing, 1996.

Kirwan, Albert D. Revolt of the Rednecks. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1951.

Kolchin, Peter. American Slavery, 1619-1877. New York: Hill and Wang, 1993.

Lafayette County Press (Oxford, Mississippi). 9 September-15 September 1908.

Larsson, Cloyte M., ed. Marriage across the Color Line. Chicago: Johnson Publishing, 1965.

McMillen, Neil R. Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

_____, and Noel Polk. "Faulkner on Lynching." The Faulkner Journal 8 (fall 1992): 3-14.

McPherson, James M. Ordeal by Fire: The Coming of War, 2d ed. Vol. 1. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993.

Matthews, Donald R., and James W. Protho. Negroes and the New Southern Politics. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966.

Memphis Commercial Appeal. 9 September-15 September 1908.

Meriwether, James B., and Michael Millgate, ed. Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner, 1926-1962. New York: Random House.

Morgan, Chester M. 1985. Redneck Liberal: Theodore G. Bilbo and the New Deal. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1968.

Morris, Willie. North Toward Home. Oxford, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 1982.

Murphy, Edgar Gardner. Problems of the Present South: A Discussion of Certain Educational, Industrial and Political Issues in the Southern States. New York: Macmillan, 1904.

Myrdal, Gunnar. American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy, 2d ed. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962.

NAACP. Thirty Yeas of Lynching in the Unites States, 1889-1918. New York: Arno Press, 1969.

Newby, I.A., ed. The Development of Segregationist Thought. Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press, 1968.

_____. Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1965.

Nolen, Claude H. The Negro's Image in the South: The Anatomy of White Supremacy. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1967.

Novick, Peter. That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Percy, William Alexander. Lanterns on the Levee: Recollections of a Planter's Son. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941.

Powdermaker, Hortense. After Freedom: A Cultural Study in the Deep South. New York: Random House, 1968.

Plessy v. Ferguson. 163 U.S. 537 (1896).

Reuter, Edward Byron. The American Race Problem. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970.

Rice, Lawrence D. The Negro in Texas, 1877-1900. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1971.

Royster, Jacqueline Jones, ed. Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900. Boston: Bedford Books, 1997.

Scott, Emmett J. and Lyman Beecher Stowe. Booker T. Washington: Builder of a Civilization. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1917.

Shannon, A.H. The Racial Integrity of the American Negro. Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1953.

Shapiro, Herbert. White Violence and Black Response, From Reconstruction to Montgomery. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988.

Skates, John Ray and David G. Sansing. Mississippi Life: Past and Present. Jackson, MS: Magnolia Publishing, 1980.

South Carolina. Civil Code. 1902.

Stember, Charles Herbert. Sexual Racism: The Emotional Barrier to an Integrated Society. New York: Elsevier, 1976.

Sundquist, Eric J. Faulkner: The House Divided. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.

Taulbert, Clifton. Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored. Tulsa, OK: Tulsa University Press, 1980.

Taylor, Walter. Faulkner's Search for a South. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983.

Thomas, Brooks, ed. Plessy v. Ferguson: A Brief History with Documents. Boston: Bedford Books, 1997.

Utley, Francis Lee, Lynn Z. Bloom and Arthur F. Kinney, eds. Bear, Man, and God: Seven Approaches to William Faulkner's *The Bear*. New York: Random House, 1964.

U.S. Congress. House of Representatives. 1st sess. Congressional Record (16 March 1904).

_____. (28 March 1904).

_____. (22 February 1908).

_____. (19 January 1922).

_____. 2nd sess. (7 June 1924).

Walton, Anthony. Mississippi: An American Journey. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

Warren, Robert Penn. Segregation: The Inner Conflict in the South. New York: Vintage, 1956.

Washington, Joseph R., Jr. Marriage in Black and White. Boston: Beacon Press, 1970.

Williamson, Joel. The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.

_____. New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1995.

_____. William Faulkner and Southern History. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

White, Walter. A Man Called White: The Autobiography of Walter White. New York: Viking Press, 1948.

_____. Rope and Faggot: A Biography of Judge Lynch. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969.

Wood, Forrest G. Black Scare: The Racist Response to Emancipation and Reconstruction. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970.

Woodward, C. Vann, ed. Mary Chesnut's Civil War. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981.

_____. The Strange Career of Jim Crow, 3d. ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Wright, Richard. "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow." In Uncle Tom's Children. New York: Harper Perennial, 1989.

Yates, Gayle Graham. Mississippi Mind: A Personal Cultural History of an American State. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1990.

Zack, Naomi. Race and Mixed Race. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
3 1762 10274503 9