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## The First Waco Horror: The Lynching of Jesse Washington and the Rise of the NAACP

By Patricia Bernstein

Texas A&M University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 264 pages. Dimensions: 9.1in. x 6.1in. x 0.8in. In 1916, in front of a crowd of ten to fifteen thousand cheering spectators watched as seventeen-year-old Jesse Washington, a retarded black boy, was publicly tortured, lynched, and burned on the town square of Waco, Texas. He had been accused and convicted in a kangaroo court for the rape and murder of a white woman. The city's mayor and police chief watched Washington's torture and murder and did nothing. Nearby, a professional photographer took pictures to sell as mementos of that day. The stark story and gory pictures were soon printed in *The Crisis*, the monthly magazine of the fledgling NAACP, as part of that organization's campaign for antilynching legislation. Even in the vast bloodbath of lynchings that washed across the South and Midwest during the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Waco lynching stood out. The NAACP assigned a young white woman, Elisabeth Freeman, to travel to Waco to investigate, and report back. The evidence she gathered and gave to W. E. B. Du Bois provided grist for the efforts of the NAACP to raise national consciousness of the atrocities being committed and...



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