

ample, tends to be repetitious. An extreme example of this occurs when the following appears twice on pages 6 and 7—word for word!

“ . . . t(H)is does not mean that the images have been unchanging. Nor does it mean that there is total agreement on exactly what these images have been (see on this point, Chapter 6 by Berg). Last, it does not mean that only Latinos had negative images.”

Gabriel Haslip-Viera  
Hunter College

**Jacqueline Jones Royster, ed. *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900.* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997). 228 pp, \$19.95 paper.**

Ida B. Wells (Barnett) was the first writer to document the lynchings of African Americans. Born in 1862, at age sixteen she had to raise her four brothers and sisters after the 1878 deaths of her parents. Still, she managed to attend Rust College and Fisk University. While teaching school in Memphis, Wells first began writing articles for a church newspaper and then contributed to other Baptist newspapers. She used the pen name of “Iola,” and the popularity of her articles led to her becoming co-owner of the Memphis *Free Speech and Headlight* in 1889. It was the lynching of three of her friends that caused her to question the lies surrounding lynchings of African Americans—that African American males were punished for raping white women. On March 9, 1892, she published the editorial “Eight Men Lynched” in the *Free Speech* that would force her to leave Memphis.

The search for the truth surrounding the deaths of friends Thomas Moss, Calvin McDowell, and Wil Stewart angered many whites in Memphis insofar as they destroyed the office of the *Free Speech*. Wells moved to New York and wrote for the *New York Age*, continuing her crusade. She published three pamphlets: *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in all its Phases* (1892), *A Red Record* (1895), and *Mob Rule in New Orleans* (1900) to demonstrate that lynchings were no more than murders of chiefly African American men. Many of them were fighting for their human rights. Wells traveled to England in 1892 and 1894, making speeches and writing articles against lynchings. While there she organized the Anti-Lynching Society of England. Between 1892 and 1931, the NAACP calculated that 3,318 African American men, women, and children were lynched by “parties unknown.”

Using newspaper articles and other sources, Wells revealed that instead of Negroes assaulting white women, whites targeted them for being “sassy,” “uppity,” “saucy,” independent, or exhibiting other supposedly offensive behaviors. In the case of Moss, McDowell, and Stewart,

Wells noted that local white newspapers justified their murders because of supposed assaults on white women. Instead, she found that their deaths resulted from a confrontation with a white storekeeper who was competing with them.

In her gruesome accounting of lynchings in *A Red Record*, Wells documented that whites murdered many African Americans for the following offenses: arson, suspected robbery, wife beating, race prejudice, alleged barn burning, alleged murder, alleged complicity in murder, self defense, insulting whites, conjuring, writing a letter to a white woman, alleged stock poisoning, for no offense at all, and other "crimes." She included the names, places, and dates of the murders. At the same time, Wells documented the sexual assaults and murders of African American girls and women by white men who received little or no punishment.

Besides demonstrating that lynchings were a tool to keep African Americans disfranchised, the book also shows the depth of commitment by Wells to end such monstrous practices. She described how lynchings (which incorporated beatings, burnings, tortures, and mutilations) were acts of terrorism. Even when sex was involved, she showed that in many cases it was consensual. Though not an easy book to read, it is an important one because it provides some insight into the post-Reconstruction period and its attendant racial violence.

George H. Junne, Jr.  
University of Northern Colorado

**Jeffrey Rubin-Dorsky and Shelley Fisher Fishkin. *People of the Book: Thirty Scholars Reflect on their Jewish Identity*. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996). 507 pp., \$22.95 paper.**

*People of the Book* is an important contribution to ethnic studies and identity politics. It is a dense and reflective collection of essays which defines Judaism in personal and scholarly contexts. As one of the contributors, Nancy Miller, says: "It's not easy to write about being Jewish" (168). The editors divide the essays into four parts. After the introductory essay, Part 2, "Transformations," examines how the authors' activism grows out of their Jewish heritage. "Negotiations," looks at Jewish definition in the context of other Jewish and non-Jewish communities, and "Explorations," shows the relationship between being Jewish and pursuing a discipline. "Meditations," is an application of previous themes to specific literary works. Certain concerns cross over all four sections to make the search for identity continuous and shared.

For instance, many authors come to terms with Judaism's patriarchal heritage and their feminism, which produces what Susan Gubar calls "a