"The black must submit to the white or the white will destroy," wrote William P. Beard, the racist, iconoclastic editor of the Abbeville Scimitar. Beard was commenting on the October 1916 lynching of the wealthy African American landowner Anthony Crawford and the subsequent efforts of the state of South Carolina to convict eight white men for Crawford’s murder. Beard believed that the doctrine of white supremacy, which demanded that the “LOWEST white man in the social scale is above the negro who stands HIGHEST by the same measurement,” was the root cause and justification for Crawford’s murder. Beard scoffed at the hypocritical and mawkish appeals of white elites for “law and order” and insisted that the “best people” of South Carolina know that “when white men cease to whip, or kill negroes who become obnoxious, that they will take advantage of the laxity, and soon make this state untenable for whites of ALL kinds, and that under such conditions the ‘best’ will be like the worst, and the worst like the best.” Who actually killed Crawford mattered little, according to Beard, because
all whites shared in the blame. Whites of all classes taught their children to “keep nigger in his place,” said Beard, and the failure of elite whites to legally assign blacks to a subordinate caste made interracial violence a necessity.¹

Beard viewed lynching primarily as an instrument of racial oppression, and most modern scholars of lynching would agree with this interpretation.² But Beard’s perceptions about the causes of lynching also acknowledge the importance of interpersonal conflict as a cause of racial violence. Indeed, many lynchings (Crawford’s included) share striking similarities with “scenarios of violence” that sociologists associate with models of masculine homicide, especially those involving honor conflicts and personal disputes. The problem with viewing lynching as primarily a mechanism of white social control is that such a perspective tends to obscure the reactive nature of lynching violence. Rarely was lynching something that whites deliberately planned to inflict on a black victim. Rather, lynching, like masculine homicide, was often “the outcome of a dynamic interchange between an offender, victim, and . . . bystanders.”³ Models of masculine homicide emphasize the importance of honor altercations and conflict resolution as catalysts for male homicidal violence, and the same kinds of interpersonal dynamics were also the precipitating cause of many lynchings.⁴

Lynching Victims

The typical black lynching victim was far from an outcast in southern society. Most black lynching victims in Mississippi and South Carolina, for example, were agricultural workers, primarily tenants, who had lived and worked in the same area for years. Black tenants and white landlords often had a mercurial relationship because black tenants routinely resisted the attempts of white landlords to impose their will on work arrangements, crop settlements, monetary matters, freedom of movement, and interpersonal relations. The violent conflict that these disputes could engender often precipitated lynching, especially when whites interpreted such resistance as an affront to their personal honor and the continued political and social hegemony of white males.⁵

Black tenant Major Clark, for instance, was lynched near Shubuta, Mississippi, in 1918 because he dared to oppose the sexual relationship that his employer was having with Clark’s fiancée and her sister. (The two
women and Clark’s brother were also lynched.) Clark’s employer, E. L. Johnston, was a thirty-five-year-old alcoholic dentist from Mobile, Alabama. Johnston failed as a dentist in Mobile and then decided to become an itinerant dentist in the Red Hills region of Mississippi, where his father owned a profitable farm. During one of his trips through the country, Johnston apparently seduced a twenty-year-old black woman named Maggie Howze. Johnston’s country practice also collapsed, which prompted him to take over his father’s farm. Later the philandering dentist invited Maggie and her younger sister, Alma, to live and work on his farm so that “he could have [Maggie] at his disposal whenever he wished.” Although Johnston was married and had a child, he apparently felt no remorse over his many extramarital affairs.

When the Howze sisters arrived on the farm, Clark and his brother Andrew were working for Johnston to pay a debt on a mule that their father had purchased from the dentist. Major Clark began courting Maggie Howze, and the two eventually decided to marry. Johnston became enraged over the relationship, however, and bluntly told Clark that he would kill him if he did not stop seeing Maggie. The animosity between Clark and Johnston grew worse when Clark learned that both Maggie and Alma were pregnant and that Johnston was the father in both instances.

One morning in mid-December 1918, Johnston was shot in his barn while milking a cow. Suspicion immediately focused on Major Clark, who had carried the mortally wounded dentist to his house. Johnston’s father, however, a former member of the Mississippi state legislature, did not believe that Clark had killed his son and later even pleaded for Clark’s life before a mob. Many whites in Shubuta, moreover, believed that a white man had killed Johnston because of another sexual affair in which the dentist was involved. But the private beliefs of whites mattered little in this instance because of the widespread perception that Clark had killed Johnston because he was Clark’s sexual rival. White anger over Clark’s alleged actions was no doubt intensified because Clark was Johnston’s employee and because the dentist was killed without warning. These circumstances transformed Johnston’s death into a public challenge to the collective manhood of local white males, similar to the individual provocations that constitute the basis for many honor-related homicides.

A week and a half elapsed between the killing of Johnston and the preliminary hearing to arraign Clark, his brother Andrew, and the Howze sisters on murder charges. To prevent a lynching, all four were held out-
side Shubuta. Major Clark was held in Meridian, some forty miles from Shubuta, where authorities extracted a confession from him by smashing his testicles in a vice. When the defendants were returned to Shubuta for their hearing, it was a foregone conclusion that they would be lynched. The day of the arraignment, scores of cars and people began pouring into Shubuta after dark, prompting the chief of police to leave town for Meridian. When a mob arrived to remove the prisoners from jail, the deputy sheriff in charge allowed himself to be handcuffed at the mob’s request. Shortly thereafter, the well-orchestrated mob cut all power to the town.

The mob drove the four victims to a covered bridge over the Chickasawha River, a short distance from Shubuta. Four ropes were tied to a girder under the bridge and placed around the victims’ necks. To their dying breath the victims insisted that they were innocent and begged for mercy. When Maggie Howze screamed for her life, a mob member silenced her with a monkey wrench to the mouth, which knocked out some of her teeth. He then bashed Maggie in the head, leaving a half-inch-wide gash in her skull. The mob threw each of the victims over the bridge with the ropes around their necks. The Clark brothers and Alma Howze each died instantly, but Maggie twice caught herself on the side of the bridge before finally succumbing. The next day mob members laughed about how that “big black Jersey woman” had desperately clung to life.

When the bodies were “discovered,” local African Americans refused to retrieve them, saying, “The white folks lynched them, and they can cut them down.” After the bodies were brought to a white funeral home, some witnesses claimed to see Alma Howze’s child still moving in her womb. The victims were eventually buried, without the benefit of religious services, just outside the white cemetery. (African Americans in Shubuta refused to accept the bodies into the black cemetery.) The lynching prompted many black tenants to flee, leaving crops to decay in the fields. The brutal lynching was done in defense of a white man’s “right” to treat African Americans in any way that he pleased. The mob, which was led by a prominent local merchant, felt compelled to act not because they wanted to avenge the honor of a known philanderer but because Major Clark’s aggressive behavior had created the fear among whites that “no white man who had wronged a Negro would be safe” from future acts of violent retribution.

The Clark-Howze lynching was precipitated by a specific event that was interpreted (rightly or wrongly) by the white community as a direct challenge to the continued hegemony of white males, but many other
southern lynchings grew out of social tensions that developed between a particular black male and the larger white community. This sort of lynching can be compared to “conflict-resolution” homicides, which typically develop over an extended period of time, exhibit evidence of premeditation, and involve persistent disputes that one or more of the major actors in a homicide comes to believe has to be resolved through violence.9

A “conflict-resolution” lynching often involved an individual who persistently opposed the oppressive nature of the southern racial system. Wilder McGowan, for instance, was a young, industrious black entrepreneur, whom whites lynched near Wiggins, Mississippi, in November 1938. Whites accused McGowan of raping and robbing a seventy-four-year-old white woman, but an NAACP investigator claimed that McGowan’s innocence was well known throughout Wiggins and that the alleged crime was merely used as an excuse to lynch McGowan because he “did not know his place.”

The twenty-four-year-old McGowan owned a prosperous moving and hauling business and lived with his aged grandmother. McGowan was a marked man in Wiggins apparently because he had repeatedly resisted the violent intimidation of local whites. On one occasion, a mob of drunken whites attacked McGowan after he refused to flee when some white hoodlums tried to run some blacks down with a car. McGowan fought the ruffians off and took a revolver from one white man, whereupon the miscreants left him alone. On another occasion, McGowan wounded a white man with a knife after a mob tried to enter an African American dance hall in search of some “good-looking nigger women.”10

The unsuspecting McGowan was lynched one morning while working on his truck. A mob that included the local sheriff and his deputies forced McGowan at gunpoint to a wooded area and “hanged him without any investigation or consideration.”11 A white merchant drove McGowan’s body back to Wiggins, where white residents viewed it with merriment. In the meantime, a group of white law officers, merchants, laborers, and others severely beat a black woman and a young black man in separate incidents, bringing the day’s activities to a suitable conclusion.12

Anthony Crawford

The social tension that resulted from the desire of African Americans for equality with whites was a primary cause of violent racial conflict in the
South, and this was no more evident than in the case of Anthony Crawford. Similar to Wilder McGowan’s lynching, the Crawford lynching has many of the same characteristics as a “conflict-resolution” male homicide. Crawford was a longtime resident of his community, with a history of challenging white sensibilities about blacks. Although Crawford’s lynching was precipitated by a specific racial incident, it was clearly the result of years of tension between Crawford and the Abbeville white community. Finally, both Crawford and the whites who lynched him were willing to use violence to resolve the racial disputes that Crawford’s behavior engendered.13

Crawford was lynched in Abbeville, which prided itself on being the home of John C. Calhoun and claimed to be the site of both the birth and the death of the Confederacy. Abbeville was an attractive town, filled with majestic oaks, stately mansions, and manicured lawns reminiscent of its storied past. The elegant facade of Abbeville’s genteel elite, however, was but a thin veneer that covered a virulent and pervasive racism. Working-class whites around Abbeville’s mill district, for instance, had formed an armed club of some one hundred men that had regular contact with the Josh Ashley clan from Anderson County, another group of violent racists that was responsible for several lynchings.14

The “best people” of Abbeville, moreover, routinely gave their blessing to violence against African Americans, which they regarded as a necessary evil. J. Allen Smith, the president of the National Bank of Abbeville, for example, claimed that he only wanted Crawford beaten, but he insisted that “Crawford was insolent to a white man and he deserved a thrashing.” W. P. Greene, a lawyer and editor of the Abbeville Press and Banner, described Crawford as a “vicious Negro” who was “too eager to curse and abuse a white man and assert his manhood.” Violence against “uppity” African Americans was commonplace in Abbeville. “When a nigger gets impudent,” commented a local gin manager, “we stretch him out and paddle him a bit.”15 Anthony Crawford earned the animosity of whites of all classes because he was prosperous and because he had a confident, aggressive posture that was unsettling to the prevailing racial orthodoxy.

An important contributing factor in the Crawford lynching, moreover, was the desire of some disgruntled local white politicians to embarrass Sheriff R. M. Burts and Governor Richard Manning. Burts came from a wealthy, well-connected Abbeville family, and the genteel Manning
unexpectedly appointed Burts sheriff despite his lack of qualifications. This angered those who felt that Police Chief Joe Johnson should have been given the job. Burts was subsequently elected to a four-year term after defeating Jess Cann and George White, two men who would later play a central role in the lynching of Crawford.  

In the 1916 August gubernatorial primary, Manning ran against former governor Coleman Blease and Abbeville county solicitor Robert Cooper. The candidates held a debate in Abbeville in July, at which Blease decried Manning's progressive attitude toward race relations and claimed that this had encouraged an outbreak of murderous assaults by blacks against white men and women. In the first primary Blease swamped Manning and Cooper in Abbeville County, and in the runoff Blease again defeated Manning in Abbeville County, even though Manning narrowly won the statewide election. A young Bleasite attorney named Sam Adams also ran a strong race for the state legislature but lost by a narrow margin. Perhaps hoping to boost his political stature, Adams took an active role in the Crawford lynching and bragged that he had placed the rope around Crawford's neck and had fired the first shot. Hoping to ride such heroics to new heights of popularity, the firebrand Adams asked editor Beard to prominently feature him in a story about the lynching and to name him as one of the ringleaders.  

The racial hatred that Abbeville whites felt toward Anthony Crawford was due in large part to his remarkable material success. Crawford was a literate, fifty-six-year-old former slave, who owned some 427 acres of prime cotton land on the Little River about seven miles west of Abbeville. As a boy Anthony Crawford helped his father farm a small cotton patch. He was an ambitious lad who routinely walked seven miles to and from Abbeville to attend school. Over the years the dapper and determined Crawford transformed the ambition and perseverance of his youth into a considerable fortune. In his early twenties Crawford purchased nearly 200 acres of land for $830. Just five years later, in 1888, Crawford bought about 100 acres of land for $670 that bordered on the farms of his father and his brother. By the mid-1890s Crawford had achieved enough prominence to help found the Industrial Union of Abbeville County, which was dedicated to promoting the "material moral and intellectual advancement of the colored people." Around the turn of the century, Crawford completed his land holdings, acquiring about 170 acres of land for $700 in 1899 and then another 113 acres of land for $800 in 1903. At the
time of his death in 1916, Crawford's estate was worth approximately $25,000.19

Crawford's prosperity was well known in the white community. On at least two occasions one of the local papers ran a story about the success of Crawford's farming operations. In November 1904, for instance, the Abbeville Medium reported that Crawford had raised a "splendid" 1,000-bushel crop of corn along with forty-eight bales of cotton. The paper also reported, somewhat enviously, that Crawford owned six horses, twelve head of cattle, eighteen hogs, two wagons, a McCormick rake, a new top buggy, and a substantial bank account.20

Anthony Crawford was not a humble man, and material success only bolstered his self-confidence. For nearly two decades he was the chief benefactor and secretary of the Chapel A.M.E. Church, which he dominated as completely as any bishop. On one occasion, for example, Crawford opposed a preacher who wanted to expel one of the church members. The next Sunday the irate pastor addressed the congregation about "boss-ridden" institutions. Crawford leapt to his feet, slapped the preacher, and fired him on the spot. The self-assured Crawford deferred to no man, black or white. According to a contemporary, success had convinced Crawford that he was both "the equal of some white men and the superior of others."21

Crawford passed this confidence along to his twelve sons and four daughters. He tried to provide his children with all the advantages of wealth. Some of his sons attended college, and all of the children had farms in close proximity to their father.22 In late December of 1905, several of Crawford's sons had an altercation with some white men, one of whom, James Rodgers, suffered a gunshot wound. Four of Crawford's sons were eventually convicted of aggravated assault, but Crawford hired an attorney to appeal the decision. (Crawford eventually paid a $500 fine on behalf of his sons.) Later he tried to settle the dispute when, in September of 1908, he wrote an open letter to a local paper in which he assured whites "that no one deplores the matter more than I." Crawford promised that both he and his family would "strive to make as good citizens in the future as we have in the past" and said that he had "nothing but a friendly feeling" for his opponents.23 Years later when Crawford was lynched, the mayor of Abbeville, C. C. Gamble, happened to be a relative of James Rodgers, and although Gamble witnessed much of the lynching, he predictably did nothing to stop it.
Although Crawford hoped that in the future whites and blacks could "settle their differences, legally and amicably," such apologies did not mollify those whites who "had been figuring on giving him [Crawford] a licking for a long time." Whites resented that Crawford sometimes hired black laborers, who were already under contract with white farmers, and that he usually had plenty of help even when labor was scarce.

In the years preceding the Crawford lynching, moreover, race relations in Abbeville County were far from congenial. In March 1910, for instance, whites burned a local black college to the ground and three black male students were killed in the fire. Three years later, some Abbeville whites castrated a black youth because a young white woman thought the boy was going to insult her. One of the perpetrators of this atrocity took an active part in the Crawford lynching, bragging about his exploits and encouraging those present to lynch that "damn nigger Crawford." Fifteen months before Crawford's death, whites lynched a black man named Will Lozier, after Lozier mortally wounded the son of a well-known white farmer during an argument on a public road. Finally, just a few weeks before Crawford was killed, a young black man was severely whipped for allegedly insulting a white store clerk. A more circumspect man might have modified his behavior in light of such atrocities—but not Anthony Crawford. Crawford feared no one; he once told a friend, "The day a white man hits me is the day I die."

Crawford's Death

The day that Crawford died was Saturday, October 21, 1916, when he came to Abbeville with two loads of cotton and a load of seed. While waiting in line for the cotton gin, Crawford went to sell his seed at the store of W. D. Barksdale. Crawford knew that cottonseed was selling for ninety cents a pound, so when Barksdale offered only eighty-five cents Crawford told him that he had already received a better offer. Barksdale called Crawford a liar, which incensed the proud farmer, who cursed Barksdale for trying to cheat him. After Barksdale retreated inside his store, Crawford continued his tirade, saying he would not sell "to any damn white man only at his [Barksdale's] price." Two of Barksdale's clerks, one of whom was the son of the president of the People's Bank of Abbeville, then armed themselves with axe handles and attempted to beat Crawford, but he fended them off. As Crawford fled across the town square, Sheriff Burts arrested him. Before Burts could escort Crawford to the municipal
building, however, a crowd intent on whipping Crawford for his animadversions gathered quickly, but the men were easily dispersed. After the crowd had gone, Police Chief Johnson released Crawford on fifteen dollars bail. Johnson then went home, allegedly sick, and did nothing to prevent the subsequent lynching.\(^{30}\)

While Crawford was arranging his bail, Barksdale talked with McKinney Cann, a local strongman who belonged to the same Baptist church as Barksdale. Barksdale asked Cann to organize a mob to whip Crawford and “cure him if possible,” but the pusillanimous merchant wanted no direct role in the beating.\(^{31}\) When Crawford began to make his way back to the cotton gin, someone alerted the mob while another man blocked the jail door from the outside and prevented Sheriff Burts from leaving. Realizing the danger, Crawford fled for the gin and hid in a partially covered pit in the boiler room. There he found a four-pound hammer and waited. When McKinney Cann peered into the pit, Crawford smashed his skull with the hammer and would probably have killed Cann if someone had not restrained his arm. Someone in the mob then crushed Crawford’s head with a rock and he collapsed. The mob, which included three brothers of McKinney Cann, took Crawford outside to the street, where he regained consciousness and tried to escape. Fighting his way some fifty feet, Crawford beat six of the mob rather badly before being stabbed in the back with a knife. The gin superintendent and two furniture dealers tried to prevent the beating, but as Crawford lay in the street, two hundred men kicked and beat him unconscious.

Crawford probably would have been lynched then and there had it not been for Sheriff Burts, who pleaded with the mob to release Crawford to his custody. For forty-five minutes Burts implored his constituents not to tarnish his reputation and violate his oath of office by lynching Crawford. Finally after promising Lester and Jack Cann that Crawford would not be moved until their brother’s condition had stabilized, Burts was allowed to remove the bloodied Crawford to the county jail. At the jail Mayor Gamble, who was also a doctor, treated Crawford and declared that he would probably die.

Around 3:45 P.M. a rumor started that Sheriff Burts was going to put Crawford on the 4 o’clock train. This rumor, coupled with the fear that Crawford would die before he could be lynched, prompted the now drunken mob to storm the jail. Neither the sheriff nor the jailer resisted as the mob took their guns and keys. The beaten and broken Crawford was quickly dragged down three flights of stairs and thrown into the street
amidst a chorus of cheers. Some men, including the grandson of the county coroner, pummeled Crawford with rocks while others beat him with wagon boards. The mob repeatedly lifted Crawford by the shoulders and feet, threw him on the ground, and jumped, spit, and beat on him. A white woman, named Mrs. D. A. Dewey, phoned Mayor Gamble to stop the violence, but he replied that his hands were tied. The mob then dragged Crawford through the black district as a warning to “good niggers.” Such diversions were not appreciated in the more elegant part of town, however, so the mob threw Crawford’s lifeless body onto a passing load of slabs so as not to unduly offend the “better class of people,” who lived in their august and princely homes and were “strongly opposed to work of this character, but . . . were all helpless before the frenzied mob.”

When the mob reached the fairgrounds, Crawford was surely dead, but they hanged him anyway and then emptied several hundred rounds into his body. At sunset Coroner F. W. R. Nance led a jury up the lynching hill. Knowing that his grandson had taken an active part in the lynching, Nance appointed two members of the lynching mob to the jury, which decided without taking any evidence that Crawford had been killed by parties unknown. That night, with liquor flowing freely, a drunken and unruly mob decided to drive the Crawford children and their families from the area. Upon seeing the mob, one prominent citizen commented, “If they ever started they’d shoot every nigger along that seven miles of road.” Fearing a bloodbath, three or four leading businessmen convinced the mob to forgo further violence by arranging a meeting on the next Monday, October 23, to decide what to do about the Crawford family.

The Monday meeting was well attended and attracted persons from as far away as Anderson County, twenty miles to the north. The Cann faction wanted to take immediate action, but again the town’s “better” element, led by court clerk Jack Perrin, bank president J. Allen Smith, and merchant J. S. Stark, prevailed and agreed to convince the Crawfords to leave the state by November 15. When Perrin, Smith, and Stark returned, they told the meeting of several hundred persons that the Crawfords were good “niggers” and that they had agreed to leave the state at any time but preferred to stay on their father’s farm. The committee’s report was interrupted, however, by a revolver shot and shouts of “Run ’em out today!” and “Lynch the black bastards!” A vote was then taken and the meeting unanimously decided that the Crawfords should be gone by November 15.

But Abbeville’s elites had once again lost control of the situation, and the terror began anew when a mob forced all the black businesses in
Abbeville to close. The only black business to remain open was the blacksmith shop and that only because Jack Perrin faced down the mob when they came to close it. The mob also engaged in "some shooting to impress the negroes that they meant business." When one group of terrified blacks fled to the house of the aforementioned Mrs. Dewey during the pogrom, the courageous woman appeared with a rifle and drove the mob from her lawn. Later Mrs. Dewey's husband asked her why she had not fired at the mob, and she replied that she felt reluctant to shoot "dogs in the back as these people were dogs of the lowest type."  

African Americans refused to shop at the stores of white merchants in response to these outrages. Mayor Gamble, who had done nothing to stop the lynching, now admitted that business had fallen off frightfully and that black laborers were leaving fast. The refusal of blacks to purchase goods from white merchants and the exodus of black labor prompted white businessmen to publicly condemn those who wanted the Crawford children to leave the county. In mid-November a twelve-man "reconciliation committee" was formed, and the Crawfords were allowed to remain on their land. The Crawford lynching had far-reaching consequences for Abbeville County. Whites were unable to stem the migratory flow of black labor. One prescient white paper, the Columbia State, hoped that the migration and economic boycott might finally convince whites to refrain from lynching. Whites had "lynched their own pocketbooks," said the State on October 23, and with the coming of the boll weevil the situation could only get worse. Unless mobs ceased, the State feared that lynching and boll weevils would "drive away the labor from farms and bankrupt this Southern country." White farmers needed more black labor, in the State's opinion, not less, and the paper reminded its readers that the "flight of the Israelites from Egypt still has its lessons." From the perspective of white landowners, at least, the State claimed that the deleterious effects of mobs were "hard facts [that] are unlynchable." The 1920 census confirmed this assessment: Abbeville County lost over 30 percent of its black population in the 1910s compared with an average of less than 1 percent for all South Carolina counties.

"Property ownership," said one prominent white South Carolina newspaper editor, "always makes the Negro more assertive, more independent, and the poor whites can't stand it." But the success of a man like Anthony Crawford was offensive to both rich and poor whites alike.  

A bank president from Abbeville told a state investigator that he believed Crawford should have been lynched, since lynching was the only
way to handle such matters in the South. A Dr. Harrison, president of the Farmers' Bank, commented that Crawford was insolent to whites and got what he deserved. Although Harrison wanted the law upheld, he did not want "a white man's right to whip a negro once in a while interfered with." After interviewing many of Abbeville's most prominent citizens, New York investigative reporter Roy Nash concluded that Crawford had been lynched simply because "he lacked the humility becoming a 'nigger.'" In the end Crawford was lynched because he lived as if he could be both black and the social equal of white men at the same time. But for black men in the South "to exercise manhood, as white men displayed it," was, according to South Carolina native Benjamin E. Mays, "to invite disaster." 37

The desire among many whites to strip blacks of every vestige of equality allowed the more vicious members of the white community to use violence with impunity. Despite the well-intentioned efforts of Governor Manning to bring Crawford's murderers to justice, the bloodletting in Abbeville County continued. Amazingly, just three years after Crawford's death, the Cann family figured prominently in another Abbeville lynching, which again stemmed from a violent confrontation between a black man and a white man. Lester Cann, who by this time had become an Abbeville sheriff's deputy, was allegedly shot and killed by a black man named Mark Smith. Shortly after Smith was acquitted of murder, however, a mob riddled Smith with bullets in the presence of his wife and mother. 38

The lynching of Anthony Crawford was due in part to the desire among a few whites to eliminate a rather unsettling exception to the doctrine of white supremacy. But the Crawford lynching was, as William Beard noted, an extension of the "spirit of [18]76" when the "TRUE white people of South Carolina arose en masse . . . armed themselves and in defiance of every law, trampled the authority of the federal government in the dust, shot, hung, beat and bullied negroes out of their constitutional rights, and to make sure of their position, stole the state government from them through a fraudulent election, in order to save the state of civilization." Only "fools and cowards" tampered with sentiments that were stronger than any law, opined Beard. 39 African Americans, of course, saw things otherwise, and many "fools" like Major Clark, Wilder McGowan, and Anthony Crawford refused to endure the indignities of white ascendancy at the cost of their very lives.
Notes

1. Abbeville Scimitar, 1 February 1917. The information on Anthony Crawford and his lynching is taken from many sources, the two most important being Roy Nash, "The Lynching of Anthony Crawford: South Carolina Declares an End to Mob Rule," New York Independent, 11 December 1916; and a series of investigative reports from detective J. B. Eagan to Governor Richard I. Manning, Manning Papers, 1915-1919, South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH), box 15, miscellaneous—lynching. Other sources that were consulted include Papers of the NAACP, microfilm, Series A: The South (Bethesda, Md.: University Publications of America, 1991), reel 15, frames 360-404; Tuskegee News clipping files, microfilm edition, roll 221, frames 376-403; Garris 1973, 14-24; and Devlin 1989, 171-88. The story of Crawford's lynching is also told in Schweninger 1990, 233-35.


5. Finnegan 1996.

6. The sordid details surrounding the Howze-Clark lynching can be found in Papers of the NAACP, reel 13, frames 1128-63. The famed Walter White was the NAACP’s primary investigator in the case.


9. Ibid., 129, 133.

10. Letter from Thurgood Marshall, assistant special counsel for the NAACP, to U.S. Attorney General Frank Murphy, 15 April 1939, Department of Justice, Record Group 60, file 158260, box 1230xg, sec. 46, National Archives; St. Louis Argus, 16 December 1938.

11. Letter from George Baldwin, Wiggins, Mississippi, to Joseph Gelders, chairman of the National Committee for People’s Rights, Birmingham, Alabama, 21 November 1938, Department of Justice, Record Group 60, file 158260, box 1230xg, section 46, National Archives.

12. Marshall to Murphy, 15 April 1939.

13. Polk (1994, 129) identifies three general characteristics of conflict-resolution homicides: the victim and offender must know one another for a considerable period of time; the conflict between the parties must be the result of a dispute that builds over time; and one of the parties must finally decide to use violence to resolve the matter.


15. Nash 1916; Ware n.d., 186.


17. Ware n.d., 186; Eagan, reports of 10 November 1916 and 20 November 1916, SCDAH.


19. Ware n.d., 184; Eagan, report of 11 November 1916, SCDAH.

20. Ware n.d., 185.
27. Eagan, report of 20 November 1916, SCDAH.
32. Eagan, report of 9 November 1916, SCDAH.
33. Eagan, reports of 18 and 23 November 1916; letter from J. Howard Moore to R. I. Manning, 1 November 1916, SCDAH.
34. Nash 1916; Columbia State, 9 November and 23 October 1916.
35. Eagan, report of 23 November 1916, SCDAH.
38. Abbeville Medium, no date; Tuskegee Newsclipping files, roll 221, frame 835.