

classroom adoption. Instructors, too, will discover that this book is an ideal way to refresh their own memories about the Gilded Age.

Clemson University

H. Roger Grant

**Maria Sturken.** *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. Pp. x, 358. Cloth, \$45.00; Paper, \$16.95.

*Tangled Memories* is a challenging piece of cultural criticism that explores how a nation remembers its past and what the political battles over the construction of those memories mean for the present. The book operates on two levels. First, it has a rather dense theoretical discussion of the relationship between memory and history. Sturken, assistant professor at the Annenberg School of Communication, University of Southern California, uses psychological theory, mostly Freudian, of how an individual remembers and forgets to suggest that a culture and/or a nation selectively shapes its memory of past events to define itself and give meaning to those events for the present. These events might be specific, such as the Kennedy assassination or the Challenger disaster, or in a series like the Vietnam war or the AIDS epidemic. In either case, they produce artifacts that both memorialize and become the focus of debates on the meaning of these events.

The book is at its best when it moves from theory to analysis of specific cultural artifacts, as in the chapters on movies about the Vietnam War, the fight over the design and construction of the Vietnam veterans memorial, and the display of the AIDS quilt on the Mall in Washington, D.C. Sturken convincingly argues that both the movies and the memorial show a nation deeply conflicted over the meaning of the Vietnam war, particularly that its loss represented a weakening of American masculinity. On the other hand, she shows how a very traditional form of folk art (quilts) becomes politicized when it is used to memorialize those who have died of AIDS and exhibited at the symbolic heart of the nation. It is disappointing that AIDS movies and teledramas did not receive the same careful attention as the Vietnam movies. Productions like *An Early Frost*, first broadcast in 1985, *Parting Glances* (1986), and *Longtime Companion* (1990) contributed to documenting the early response to AIDS, particularly its devastating impact among gay men. While these three films never had the ratings or the box office receipts of the overhyped and dramatically inferior *Philadelphia* and thus did little to shape the debate over AIDS, they nonetheless deserve analysis as artifacts that are still available to influence how the nation remembers AIDS.

Uses for this book in the classroom are limited. It could be used most effectively in courses on twentieth-century America, though it presupposes a thorough knowledge

of post-1960 American politics and society. In a historiography or historical methods course, the introduction and first chapter would stimulate a lively discussion on the relationship between memory and history and the historians' role in helping a nation remember its past. Finally, of the three chapters mentioned above, the best is the one on the Vietnam veterans memorial. It is an excellent case study of the debates surrounding the meaning of war, its impact on American society, and on the healing of national wounds.

Mississippi University for Women

William R. Glass

Jacqueline Jones Royster, ed. *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900*. Boston & New York: Bedford Books, 1997. Pp. xi, 228. Paper, \$8.50.

*Southern Horrors and Other Writings*, edited by Jacqueline Jones Royster, is a new addition to the "Bedford Series in History and Culture," a collection of texts designed to give readers the opportunity to study the past the way historians do. Each text in the series focuses on a specific topic within a specific historical period. Also, each text includes a set of historical documents with the aim of facilitating a critical understanding of the documents and the social context within which they are produced. Born into slavery in 1862, Wells went on to achieve national and international fame as an investigative journalist, public speaker, and anti-lynching crusader. The documents collected in this volume represent Wells's major writings during her anti-lynching campaign period, 1892 to 1900. The purpose of this text, according to the editor, is to initiate a much needed dialogue on the phenomenon of lynching as a disquieting aspect of race relations in the American experience.

*Southern Horrors and Other Writings* is divided into two parts with an appendix. In Part One, Royster critically examines the politics of the post-Reconstruction era and illuminates the backdrop it provides for mob violence against African Americans. Royster's insightful analysis of the sociopolitical matrix of the post bellum South enables the reader to discern "lynching's complex relationships to systems of power and domination, to public discourse, and to social activism, including the activism of African American women."

Part Two contains three documents chronicling Ida B. Wells's major writings on lynching viz., *Southern Horrors: Lynch Laws in All its Phases*, *A Red Record* and *Mob Rule in New Orleans*. Each document provides vivid and disquieting portrayal of actual acts of lynching. More importantly, Wells unravels the social and political complexities of lynching and identifies several basic inconsistencies between the rationale for lynching and its actual execution. In the three documents, Wells rejects the notion that lynching is a spontaneous albeit understandable act of punishment for