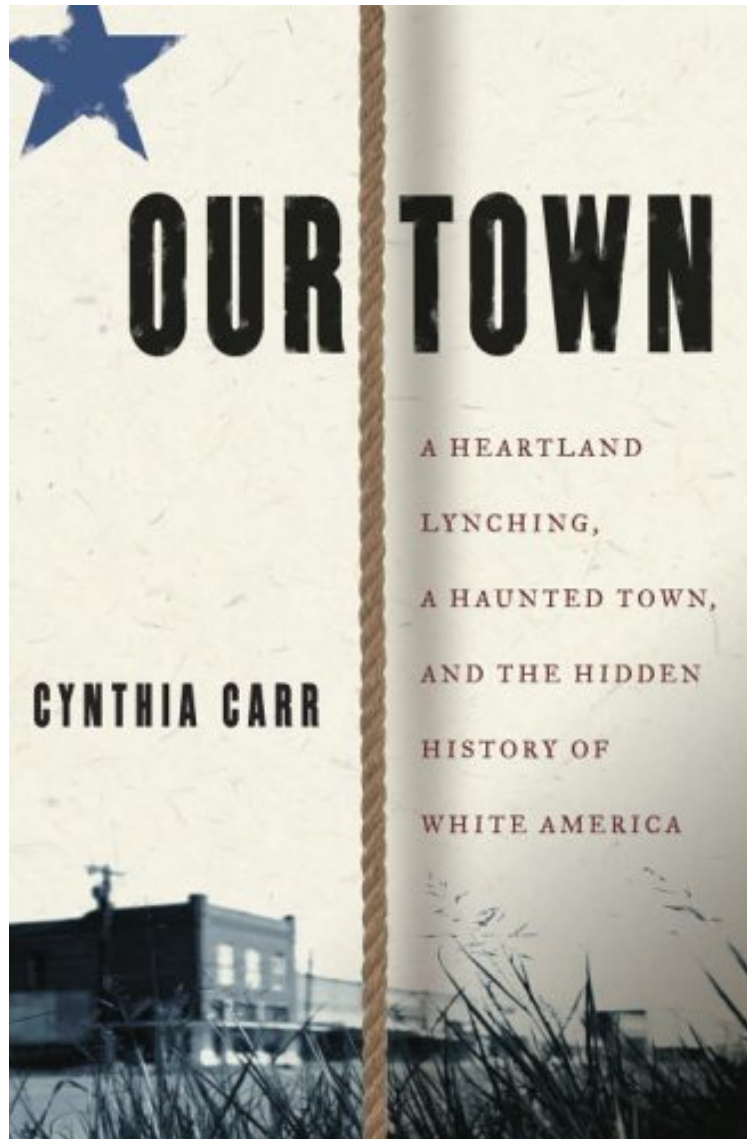


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Our Town: A Heartland Lynching, a Haunted Town, and the Hidden History of White America

Cynthia Carr

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Cynthia Carr : Our Town: A Heartland Lynching, a Haunted Town, and the Hidden History of White America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Our Town: A Heartland Lynching, a Haunted Town, and the Hidden History of White America:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Book was interesting. The main reason that I read ...By Gaetana M. DurhamBook was interesting. The main reason that I read it was because I am from Marion Indiana and on the cover

the picture was in the neighborhood that I lived in. Also I was curious of the lynching that took place in the 30's. I also saw a reference of my grandfather which cleared a few misgivings of the past about him. Although the last name was spelled wrong I knew who they were talking about. The young man Abram Smith is a relative of my family which I didn't know until my adult life.³ of 3 people found the following review helpful. The dark side of human nature
By Nancy Mills
I was aware of this incident through my in-laws (which ow look more like outlaws). This book reveals the dark side of our humanity and the triuth about race relations. It is a book everyone should read who believed the North was liberal and accepting of people of color. My heart broke, and I took a good look at my own nature - the reader will feel some deep emotions during this story - not only as the author searches her her own family's invovement, but the involvement of everyone who tainted generations and a community.⁵ of 6 people found the following review helpful. Eye Opening!
By Denise NI
I am an avid ancestry researcher and knew my family had roots in Marion, IN and I wanted to see if had any books on the history of Marion, IN. This book came up in my search. I had never heard about this horrific event from any of my family members so I was interested and bought it. This book was a shocking and utterly sad read. I was also shocked to discover while reading this book that my Great Grandfather was a police officer during the lynching, had worked that night and had testified during the subsequent court proceedings. Cynthia Carr did a fantastic job in researching this book. It was hard for me to put down and I have reread it a couple of times now. This is a book all Americans need to read.

The brutal lynching of two young black men in Marion, Indiana, on August 7, 1930, cast a shadow over the town that still lingers. It is only one event in the long and complicated history of race relations in Marion, a history much ignored and considered by many to be best forgotten. But the lynching cannot be forgotten. It is too much a part of the fabric of Marion, too much ingrained even now in the minds of those who live there. In *Our Town* journalist Cynthia Carr explores the issues of race, loyalty, and memory in America through the lens of a specific hate crime that occurred in Marion but could have happened anywhere. Marion is our town, America's town, and its legacy is our legacy. Like everyone in Marion, Carr knew the basic details of the lynching even as a child: three black men were arrested for attempted murder and rape, and two of them were hanged in the courthouse square, a fate the third miraculously escaped. Meeting James Cameron—the man who'd survived—led her to examine how the quiet Midwestern town she loved could harbor such dark secrets. Spurred by the realization that, like her, millions of white Americans are intimately connected to this hidden history, Carr began an investigation into the events of that night, racism in Marion, the presence of the Ku Klux Klan—past and present—in Indiana, and her own grandfather's involvement. She uncovered a pattern of white guilt and indifference, of black anger and fear that are the hallmark of race relations across the country. In a sweeping narrative that takes her from the angry energy of a white supremacist rally to the peaceful fields of Weaver—once an all-black settlement neighboring Marion—in search of the good and the bad in the story of race in America, Carr returns to her roots to seek out the fascinating people and places that have shaped the town. Her intensely compelling account of the Marion lynching and of her own family's secrets offers a fresh examination of the complex legacy of whiteness in America. Part mystery, part history, part true crime saga, *Our Town* is a riveting read that lays bare a raw and little-chronicled facet of our national memory and provides a starting point toward reconciliation with the past. On August 7, 1930, three black teenagers were dragged from their jail cells in Marion, Indiana, and beaten before a howling mob. Two of them were hanged; by fate the third escaped. A photo taken that night shows the bodies hanging from the tree but focuses on the faces in the crowd—some enraged, some laughing, and some subdued, perhaps already feeling the first pangs of regret. Sixty-three years later, journalist Cynthia Carr began searching the photo for her grandfather's face.

From Publishers Weekly
Starred . Former Village Voice arts writer Carr has crafted a searing look at race in America that combines investigative journalism with an intensely personal family history. She uses the 1930 lynching of two African-American men in Marion, Ind., where her father and grandfather grew up, as a prism to examine not only the psychology of the lynch mob members but the thousands of bystanders, some of whom were immortalized in a revolting and haunting photograph, which shows townspeople gathering to stare at the mutilated corpses, still dangling from their nooses. Carr's discovery that her beloved grandfather belonged to the Ku Klux Klan and may have been involved in the hate crime leads her to return to Marion and ask questions that many on both sides of the racial divide find uncomfortable. Carr's sense that she bears—that we all bear—a burden of guilt allows her an empathy that enables her to gain access to present-day Klan members, who talk freely about their ideology; her refusal to view herself as morally superior to them lends power to her observations, and her lack of self-righteousness is refreshing. This outstanding narrative is an excellent companion to last year's *Blood Done Sign My Name* and *Arc of Justice*, which also used a crime as an entry point into the struggle for civil rights. With the Hurricane Katrina catastrophe reviving the debate on the state of race relations in this country, this book will have an extra topicality in addition to its narrative power that should deservedly attract a wide audience. 8 pages of bw photos not seen by PW. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist
Marion, Indiana, was the site of a lynching in 1930 that was immortalized in photos of white townsfolk--men, women, and children--looking

on, reflecting a complex range of responses from festive to shock. Carr, a journalist, was raised in Marion, and as a child she heard discussions that piqued her interest. Later, she discovered that her grandfather had been an active member of the Klan during the period of the lynching. She uncovers secrets, both familial and national, surrounding troubled race relations. Those she was able to interview include James Cameron, who survived the lynching and later created the Black Holocaust Museum; Cameron's nephew, a Marion police detective, who sought to investigate the lynching; and the former mayor, now 90 years old. Carr also found a black community not as oppressed as the lynching would seem to indicate. Carr's Marion, with its family and racial secrets, provides a glimpse at a complex America, not so distant in our past that its ghosts aren't capable of haunting us today. Vernon Ford Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved "Whatever the ultimate literary verdict on this sorrowful and penetrating but uneven book, I cannot think of a nonfiction author in this country who has so bravely taken up [James] Baldwin's dare. Carr calls her volume "Our Town" without a trace of irony or superiority. While she certainly has no desire to exculpate the murderers of 1930 or their flagrantly bigoted successors today, neither does she intend to condemn them in order to elevate more enlightened whites like herself. Family history has offered her no such luxury." —Samuel G. Freedman, New York Times Book "Cynthia Carr goes deep into the heart of our national darkness—the public ritual of violence we call the lynching. Carr investigates its aftermath in a small town and, page by page, we understand everything that we can, experiencing the shock, the disgust, and the harrowing heartbreak that always attend murder wearing the blues mask of 'rough justice.' Carr's clear-eyed rendering of her quest follows the transformation of that murder from a rumor to a collective act to a disputed fact that sits uneasily in the memory of a community." —Stanley Crouch, author of *The Artificial White Man: Essays on Authenticity*