Historian studies World War I-era lynching

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Lynching is one of the most abhorrent of all human acts. It is sometimes explained as being the result of a combination of hate, insanity, and mass hysteria. But to really understand it one must recognize the historical context in which it occurred. A historian who has studied one lynching in our area is Jeff Manuel, an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Jeff attended SIUE and earned a B.S. in history, an M.A. in American history and a Ph.D. in history from the University of Southern Mississippi.

Dr. Jeff Manuel, above, and an archive photo Robert Prager, at right.

This concept of putting someone in protective custody to save them from potential mob or vile violence was pretty common, explained Manuel. "But I should say it was also pretty common for that protective custody to fail. Very very rarely, it was successful. And rare, rare, rare story, it was successful, it was successful in the world where it was successful, it was successful in the world where it was a justified protection care. Most of the time, the protective custody failed. It was very rare, very rare that it was successful."

The police declined.

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