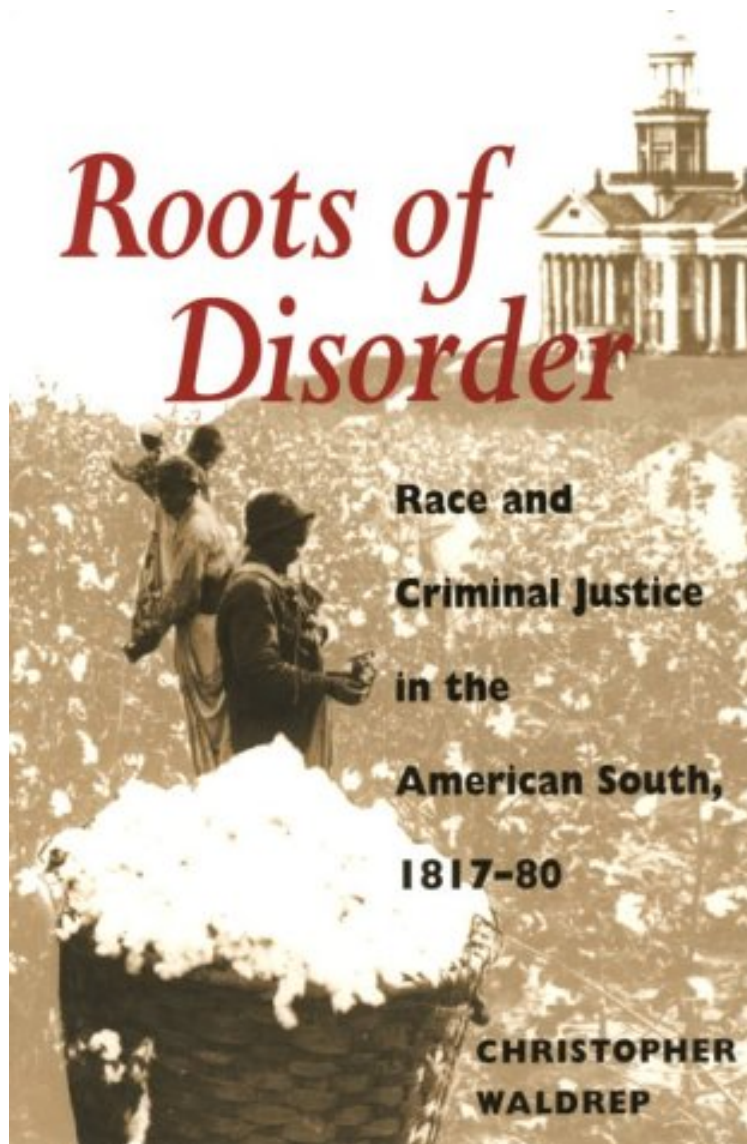


Roots of Disorder: Race and Criminal Justice in the American South, 1817-80

Christopher Waldrep

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Every white southerner understood what keeping African Americans down meant and what it did not mean. It did not mean going to court; it did not mean relying on the law. It meant vigilante violence and lynching. Looking at Vicksburg, Mississippi, *Roots of Disorder* traces the origins of these terrible attitudes to the day-to-day operations of local courts. In Vicksburg, white exploitation of black labor through slavery evolved into efforts to use the law to define blacks' place in society, setting the stage for widespread tolerance of brutal vigilantism. Fed by racism and economics, whites' extralegal violence grew in a hothouse of more general hostility toward law and courts. *Roots of Disorder* shows how the criminal justice system itself plays a role in shaping the attitudes that encourage vigilantism.

"A valuable, and in some ways unprecedented, study. Its creation of a detailed socio-legal portrait of a Mississippi county from myriad court records contributes significantly to our understanding of southern criminal justice and violence." -- Michael J. Pfeifer, H-Net Book "Adds a legal and community angle to the current historical literature... Documents how whites in Mississippi made a conscious choice to turn to folk violence (not an unthinking one) based on decades of distrust in formal law." -- Rhonda Y. Williams, *Journal of Social History* ADVANCE PRAISE
"Waldrep has written the most detailed and nuanced study of crime in a Southern community. His deep research, originality, and fairness marks every page." -- Edward L. Ayers, author of *Southern Crossing: A History of the American South*