packed with villains, victims, and heroes, Stained with Blood and Tears recounts the story of what has been called the “equal opportunity” lynchings of Will “Froggie” James, who was black, and Henry Salzner, a white man, in the rowdy river town of Cairo, Illinois, on November 11, 1909. This book is the first to focus on one of the most infamous nights of lynching in the history of the United States, when about one thousand men and women were transformed into a murderous mob. The book also details a lesser-known attempted lynching of a suspected purse snatcher by another mob about ninety days later. That mob was beaten back by about a dozen mostly African American deputies and a white sheriff. Stained with Blood and Tears ends with the saga of the killing of a Cairo policeman in the police station by the sheriff from a neighboring county over an incident that began in a Cairo brothel. The book thoroughly examines a dark side of Cairo’s past when it had a Jim Crow mind-set and crooked policemen and was awash in liquor and teeming with prostitutes and gambling houses. The violence of the era led the town’s Catholic priest to lament, “Must this fair city of ours go ever in garments spattered with blood?”

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