

Appendix I: Ida B. Wells Primary Sources

Primary Sources for Session 6. Read two essays by Wells or examine six visual sources (photos, short films, political cartoons). Write a short 1-2 page analysis of your primary sources.

1. Film: PBS American Experience film, "[Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice](#)" (1989)
2. [13 primary sources, including court documents, political cartoons](#). Also has additional resources and interesting questions on the teaching guide.
3. Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "[Lynch Law in America](#)" (1900)
(primary source)
4. [Short film about Jim Crow](#)
5. "[Southern Horror: Lynch Law in All its Phases](#)" (1892) –longish pamphlet (can be read in part)
6. Ida B. Wells, "[Lynch Law In All Its Phases](#)" (13 February 1893)
7. "[Killing the Messenger](#)": Ida Wells-Barnett Protests a Postmaster's Murder in 1898

Possible topics [1]:

1. One of the central features of effective rhetoric is that it is well matched or accommodated to its audience. The kinds of examples Wells uses in the speech, "[Lynch Law In All Its Phases](#)" (13 February 1893) are different from the evidence she includes in "Southern Horrors," her 1892 anti-lynching speech to black club women. (A pamphlet version of this address is available [online](#)). In "Southern Horrors," she talked more about her own Memphis experience and the loss of her three friends. She featured more cases in which black men accused of rape had in fact been involved in consensual relationships; and she outlined specific actions that African Americans should take in response. Why might Wells have made these changes in emphasis?
2. Ida Wells was characterized by some as abrasive, direct, blunt, or aggressive. Consider two of her speeches, such as "Lynch Law in all its Phases (13 Feb 1893)" and one other. How would you characterize her speech in its tone? This is sometimes referred to the "ethos" of a speech, i.e., the way the speaker's character and ethics are projected in the speech. Which do you think is more persuasive here – Well's ethos or her logic? How important do you think ethos is in influencing your response to a speaker?
3. In this same speech, Wells knew that the members of her Boston Monday lectureship audience were as concerned about the reputation of the nation as about the treatment of a particular segment of the population, so she pitched a good portion of the speech to their patriotism, their "desire to preserve our institutions." She closed the speech with lines from a national hymn. Speakers, seeking to establish common ground among dissenting or skeptical groups, will often begin by establishing agreement on some common value, often removed from the immediate issue at hand. Rather than focus exclusively on the

immorality of lynching, Wells talked of patriotism. Can you think of other examples of arguments that first establish agreement around some higher value? What do you think of this strategy? Does it help the cause or distract from the horrors of the subject at hand?

4. 4. Among the examples of reported lynchings in this speech, Wells included several involving black women (see paragraph 24). How does the inclusion of black women change the usual images associated with lynching as well as the alleged motives usually associated with the practice? Why do you think that mob violence against women was not generally discussed as frequently? Might this be an example of silencing the struggles of women? Or do you have another possible explanation. Check at least one other speech to see whether it includes any discussion of lynchings of women.
5. If you are very brave (trigger warning here), a collector named James Allen has brought together over 100 photos in his book, *Without Sanctuary: Photographs and Postcards of Lynching in America* (Sante Fe, NM: Twin Palm Publishers, 2000). These disturbing images may also be viewed online [here](#). If you choose to view the images, you may want to pay attention to the spectators as well as the victims; among them are women and children. Each photograph is accompanied by the name of the victim and the specific circumstances of the lynching, when known. Be sure to read this information as well. You might write about the photos themselves, or you might compare a few photos with the descriptions Wells included in her anti-lynching publications. If you do the latter, you could consider the advantages and disadvantages of visual and textual arguments.

Other sources (secondary).

9. Short op-ed piece: "[The Root: How Racism Tainted Women's Suffrage](#)" (2011)
10. [Background on Wells](#).

[1] Adapted from <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/wells-lynch-law-teaching-learning-materials/>

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