



# Troubled Ground: A Tale of Murder, Lynching, and Reckoning in the New South

*Claude A. Clegg III*

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**Troubled Ground: A Tale of Murder, Lynching, and Reckoning in the New South** Claude A. Clegg III  
Claude A. Clegg III revisits a violent episode in his hometown's history that made national headlines in the early twentieth century but disappeared from public consciousness over the decades. Moving swiftly between memory and history, between the personal and the political, Clegg offers insights into southern history, mob violence, and the formation of American race ideology while coming to terms on a personal level with the violence of the past. Three black men were killed in front of a crowd of thousands in Salisbury, North Carolina, in 1906, following the ax murder of a local white family for whom the men had worked. One of the lynchers was prosecuted for his role in the execution, the first conviction of its kind in North Carolina and one of the earliest in the country. Yet Clegg, an academic historian who grew up in Salisbury, had never heard of the case until 2002 and could not find anyone else familiar with the case. He mines newspaper accounts and government records and links the victims of the 1906 case to a double-lynching in 1902, suggesting a long and complex history of lynching in the area while revealing the determination of the city to rid its history of a shameful and shocking chapter.

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