Silence Descends: Lynchings and Their Aftermath in Lafayette and Union Counties, Mississippi

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SILENCE DESCENDS: LYNCHINGS AND THEIR AFTERMATH IN LAFAYETTE AND UNION COUNTIES, MISSISSIPPI

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Fine Arts Degree
The University of Mississippi

by

JONATHAN SMITH

May, 2019
ABSTRACT

The role of silence is explored with regard to how two lynchings in North Mississippi have, or have not, been memorialized. L.Q. Ivy was lynched in Union County in 1925. Despite several newspaper articles over the decades since the lynching has occurred his death is not acknowledged in the local history narrative, nor is it memorialized with a marker. Elwood Higginbottom was lynched in neighboring Lafayette County in 1935 and, despite a silence that has persisted for decades, has recently been memorialized. The process of memorializing Higginbottom’s lynching and what it has meant to the family is compared to the continuing silence around Ivy. In addition, the development of a MFA project incorporating an experimental “illustrated audio” piece and website is described.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of Elwood Higginbottom and L.Q. Ivy.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my parents and friends for their continued support. I would also like to thank Valerie Reaves, Allen McDaniel, Josh Knighton, and the anonymous interviewees who contributed their experiences to this work. In addition, I would like to thank my committee members: Dr. Andy Harper, John Rash, and Dr. David Wharton for their help. Ava Lowrey and Dr. Darren Grem provided much appreciated feedback as well. Finally I would like to thank the entire faculty and staff of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture for their unwavering support and willingness to lend an ear when needed.
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I. INTRODUCTION

Lynching memorialization is an ongoing process and only a handful of memorials currently exist. The largest is the Equal Justice Initiative's "National Memorial for Peace and Justice," which represents all known lynchings in the South. Some museums contain memorials, such as the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum which contains a memorial installation dedicated to all known lynchings in Mississippi. In addition, some cities are memorializing lynchings which occurred within their boundaries. For example, Duluth, Minnesota erected a large memorial in 2003 to the three men lynched there in 1920. The city claims this memorial is the first to be erected in the United States. Recently, Oxford, Mississippi erected a memorial plaque near the site of the 1935 lynching of Elwood Higginbottom, an African American farmer from Oxford whose murder is detailed in a later chapter. One lynching that yet to be represented in a local memorial is that of L.Q. Ivy in Union County, Mississippi. Researching his lynching in hopes of seeing a memorial erected is the genesis of both this thesis and the illustrated audio narrative that was created at the same time.
As I approached this research, I wanted to place the lynching both within the frame of collective memory and place as well as within the concept of silence as it relates to white supremacy and racism. Collective memory and place are constructed identities which serve as a common basis to bind together local communities (Puntscher et al. 2014). They are negotiated in a variety of ways, and different groups within a community may choose to remember events and places that are actively or passively suppressed by others. In cases of racially based injustice, such as lynching, sharing these different memories and views of place can be important in order to address historic wrongs and enable disenfranchised community members to claim their part in the larger community. Sharing can take many forms, ranging from public discourse at town meetings to memorialization of places where events, such as lynchings, occurred. I have chosen "sharing" rather than "reconciliation" because “reconciliation” implies a finite process that, once all steps are completed, ends conflict altogether. That’s a lot to place on a memorial. “Sharing” implies an ongoing process, more in line with the goal of memorialization.

Silence, in the sense of what public narratives remember and discuss, is an important part of the construction of memory and place. In this context, white silence refers to
the action of using and reinforcing the structures of white supremacy to maintain white power and privilege. In short, by using the structure of white supremacy to silence discussion and memory of events, such as lynching, white power maintains itself (DiAngelo 2012:2–4). This silence can take the form of active efforts, such as "losing" copies of newspapers that record lynchings, or passive ones, in which discussion of the events are avoided and allowed to fade from public discourse.

Lynching in this context is defined by the New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture as "an act of violence perpetrated out of racial animosity, fueled by a mob mentality that is quick to ascribe guilt outside the bounds of due process" (Wood 2009). In Lynching in America, the Equal Justice Initiative refers to these as "terror lynchings" as they were carried out in broad daylight with the intention of terrorizing minorities in towns where there was a fully functional legal system that was deemed "too good for blacks" (Equal Justice Initiative 2017). In Hanging Bridge, Jason Ward notes that the whites of Shubuta, Mississippi were eager to forget a problematic past, despite a "healthy appetite...for history and its evil twin, heritage" (Ward 2016:254). Lynching is often perceived as an act of hanging a person in popular culture, but it can include any form of murder for the reasons above. Hanging, shooting, burning alive or a combination is not uncommon in lynching accounts.

One such incident, the lynching of L.Q. Ivy at Rocky Ford in Union County, Mississippi in 1925 is currently undergoing the process of sharing. I initially expected to encounter active resistance to the idea of revisiting the story of the lynching, particularly from the members of the white community. I did not encounter the active resistance I expected – no threats were leveled at me, for example – I did encounter passive resistance avoiding discussing any aspect of the events. As a result, it seems that much of the remembrance of the lynching has
come through newspaper articles and other media which have served to keep the memory of the incident alive and visible and transmit it to subsequent generations. Thus, instead of the active resistance I expected, I encountered a passive resistance, in which individuals chose not to pass the story on to subsequent generations as a way of letting the shameful past die, a form of the silence mentioned above.

As a result, it was difficult to interview people, particularly on camera, although I interviewed Allen McDaniel, (McDaniel 2017a; McDaniel 2017b) early in the project. His class paper, written for a graduate level history course at the University of Mississippi, was subsequently turned into an article by the *New Albany Gazette* in 1977. This article is notable for being cited by subsequent works such as a 2000 article by LaReeca Rucker and a 2014 Master's Thesis written by Hannah McMahan. Rucker’s article served to re-introduce the lynching to a younger generation and has, in turn, spawned at least one song by a local songwriter, Josh Knighton. It has also served as the basis for entries in several web sites which record lynchings. In addition, I was also able to interview Valerie Reeves, a family historian for the Higginbottom family regarding the effect the memorial to Elwood Higginbottom in Lafayette County, Mississippi had on the family.

Originally, I had intended to connect the means by which L.Q. Ivy’s lynching has been remembered to broader social theory. However, as I attempted to speak with community members, family members of those involved, and scholars, I realized a different approach was required. I would have to attempt to draw together both the historical accounts and more recent interviews to produce a timeline, from that build up an idea of how the event has been remembered, by whom, and how it is associated with place. By place, I am referring not only to the place at which the lynching happened, but also the larger community, particularly the
memories of Myrtle and New Albany, the two incorporated towns most often mentioned in historical accounts and reports of the time. As a result, my focus has shifted to producing a narrative encompassing the historical timeline, the subsequent promptings of memory afforded by the newspaper articles published about the event, and to offer a few observations regarding the ways the individuals who wrote those articles have served to counteract the passive resistance to maintaining a community memory in the time and place the articles were written.
II. THE TOWNS AND COUNTIES

The lynchings I examine take place in two counties bordering one another in northeastern Mississippi. Union County, where L.Q. Ivy was killed, is in the eastern half of the state. Cotton was once a staple but has largely been replaced by agricultural feed crops such as soybean, milo, and corn. New Albany, the county seat, is the birthplace of William Faulkner, although he lived most of his life in nearby Oxford, Mississippi. The layout of the town is relevant to the events of the lynching. Union County was formed after the American Civil War, in 1870, primarily from land that had formerly been in Tippah, Pontotoc, and Lee counties. New Albany was established around 1840 as a mill town and agricultural hamlet, containing a grist mill and a saw mill powered by the Tallahatchie river. There is no town square as is commonly seen in southern county seats as a result of the town being older than the county. The courthouse sits at the eastern end of the main street, and the first hospital was housed in a converted house approximately a block east of the courthouse.

Myrtle, a small town north-west of New Albany on Highway 78, is situated along the railroad which runs through the town. In the early 20th century it had a small but active commercial district, although it is primarily a residential community now. Etta is a small unincorporated community west of New Albany and southwest of Myrtle, situated in the floodplain of the Tallahatchie river and commonly referred to by its historic name of “Rocky Ford.” Local lore suggests that the rock-bottomed ford in the river is the source of this older name and the name was changed to Etta following the Civil War, but I have been unable to find
documentation of the reason for the change. A local historian, James Major Coffey, suggests the change was due to reconstruction politics (Coffey 2005). Smaller than New Albany or Myrtle, it retained a general store and post office in the 1920's. The construction of Highway 30 bypassed the portion of the old Oxford road that had passed through the community, leading to a further decline in business and population.

Lafayette County neighbors Union county to the west. Rocky Ford/Ettia is very close to the county line, and residents of the community live in both counties. L.Q. Ivy's family lived in Lafayette county, although the events of the lynching played out in Union county. Oxford is the county seat, laid out in the traditional manner, with the courthouse at the center of a square of commercial properties. William Faulkner lived in Oxford most of his life and is most strongly associated with the town. The area referred to as the "Three Way", where Elwood Higginbottom was lynched, is to the north of the town, and is the end of modern State Highway 30, which connects New Albany and Oxford. As mentioned in the Etta section, the old name for parts of the route taken by Highway 30 is the "Oxford Road". Historically Oxford was a railroad town, although the line is now abandoned and no longer exists within the city limits. Industry in the county is primarily agricultural with some light manufacturing. Oxford is home to the University of Mississippi, one of the major state-funded universities.
Figure 2. Map of Union and Lafayette County
III. L.Q. IVY’S LYNCHING AND THE PRESS

The lynching of L.Q. Ivy was covered in numerous local, regional, and national newspapers. The New Albany Gazette, Oxford Daily Eagle, and Memphis News Scimitar all included an article about the lynching in the days following the event. Due to the publishing dates of the various papers, the first account in print appears to be that of the Memphis News Scimitar by reporter J.L. Roulhac, dated September 21, 1925. He was present on Sunday at the lynching, although it is not clear how he came to know about it. It is possible he was a passenger on a train traveling through or that he was sent down specifically to cover the event. Regardless, he provides a first-hand account of the events of the lynching. Two articles appear in this issue; the first is a standard short news column that incorrectly identifies L.Q. Ivy as J.P. Ivy. This error has led to the mis-identification of the victim of the lynching on memorials in Mississippi and Alabama. It also includes, as a preamble, a statement released by Governor Whitfield of Mississippi decrying mob actions and encouraging citizens to follow the instructions of officers of the law and allow due judicial process to be carried out.
The second, longer, account is Roulhac’s first-hand narrative of the lynching along with the details of the previous two days’ events (Roulhac 1925a). In this longer account Roulhac does say Ivy confessed, but only under duress after undergoing torture. I will detail the timeline of events in the following sections, including supposed confessions. The opening paragraph of
Roulhac's first-hand account suggests a man who is still in shock at what he has witnessed (Roulhac 1925b).

Figure 4. Roulhac Account, full text below.

I watched a negro burned at the stake at Rocky Ford, Mississippi Sunday afternoon. I watched an angry mob chain him to an iron stake. I watched them pile wood around his helpless body. I watched them pour gasoline on this wood. And I watched three men set this wood on fire. I stood in a crowd of 600 people as the flames gradually crept nearer and nearer to the helpless negro. I watched the blaze climb higher and higher, encircling him without mercy. I heard his cry of agony as the flames reached him and set his clothing on fire. "Oh God; Oh, God!" he shouted. "I didn't do it. Have mercy!" The blaze leaped higher. The negro struggled. He kicked the chain loose from his ankles, but it held his waist and neck against the iron post that was becoming red with the intense heat. "Have mercy, I didn't do it, I didn't do it," he shouted again. "You should have thought of this before." someone shouted from the crowd. There was an instant of silence. Then several voices rose in agreement. Nowhere was there a sign of mercy among the members of the mob, nor did they seem to regret the horrible thing they had done. The negro had supposedly sinned against their race and died a death of torture.

Roulhac is also the photographer who took the three photographs of the lynching. The first shows the mob at the hospital, according to the description, the second shows L.Q. Ivy chained and posing with the mob, and the third shows L.Q. Ivy chained to the axle. The newspaper caption exhorts the viewer to "note rope around his neck and chains". I include the second and third photographs in this and the following chapter, however, I have been unable to find clear copies of the first. In the second and third photograph, the faces of many members of the mob are clearly visible and were identifiable according to later community reports, despite Sheriff Robert's insistence that he "recognized no person at the lynching".
The event was also covered in several local papers. Of note are the *New Albany Gazette* and the *Oxford Eagle*. The *New Albany Gazette*, published on September 24, 1925 carried an excerpt of Roulhac's article along with a note from the editor, which begins, "I shall not treat the subject at length. There is not one single bright spot in the whole sad story."

![Image](image.png)

*Figure 5. New Albany Gazette, 1925.*

The *New Albany Gazette* also published a statement from Sheriff Roberts (Roberts 1925)
The Oxford Eagle also printed an article in its September 24, 1925 edition. The text is largely similar to the *New Albany Gazette* and *Memphis News Scimitar* articles.
It is worth noting that accounts conflict as to whether or not L.Q. Ivy confessed to Sheriff Roberts, but most accounts seem to agree that the only times he confessed were under duress, once while being tortured in a barn prior to being lynched and then while the fires were being lit. Also, worth noting is the closing sentences of the Oxford Eagle account, which reads, "Sheriff Roberts had made no arrests last Sunday. He declared that he recognized no members of the mob." (Oxford Eagle 1925). This is a not uncommon codicil to lynching accounts, even in cases such as this where clear photographs of those involved exist.

Following the attack, the story spread through the Associated Press and other news services. It was published in papers throughout the United States and the world. For example, a photo of Ivy chained to the stake was published in the November 13, 1925 in the Sumatra Post, a newspaper from the Netherlands East Indies (present day Indonesia) (Sumatra Post 1925).
In addition to newspaper accounts, the brutal nature of Ivy's death drew attention from lawmakers. The Jackson Printing Company published a pamphlet entitled "Mississippi and The Mob" in late 1925 which spoke against mob violence and included statements by various public officials and civic leaders, although many of the responses may be the standard “The L.Q. Ivy lynching is included as "the fifth lynching to blacken the record of this State" (Anon 1925a). Additionally, the lynching is mentioned in the minutes of the United States Senate, published under the title "To Prevent and Punish the Crime of Lynching", on bill S.121 of 1926. The bill was one of several anti-lynching acts that were proposed but failed to become law (Anon 1926).
IV. L.Q. IVY TIMELINE

What did happen on those days in September? Variously reported in newspapers and community memory as a rape, attempted rape, assault, or beating, it does appear to be the case that Betsy Gaines was battered when her parents returned to their home and found her. While it is impossible to ascertain exactly what happened prior to her parents’ discovery of Ms. Gaines, it is possible to reconstruct a timeline of events following the discovery. On September 18, 1925 Bessie Gaines was assaulted while picking peas at her parent’s farm. After the assault, she crawled to her family home and was found by her parents. She claimed she had been attacked by a "negro man.” Mr. Busby, a neighbor who lived about a quarter mile away attempted to contact Doctor Waites by telephone and called the sheriff, J. W. Robertson, who sent a bloodhound and a couple of deputies to follow any trail the alleged attacker might have left. Mr. Busby was unable to reach Dr. Waites, so Ms. Gaines parents drove her to the Mayes Hospital in New Albany.

Meanwhile the bloodhound had picked up a trail and led deputies to a team of four timber cutters, Cleveland Jones, Sherill Kilpatrick, Spencer Ivy and L.Q. Ivy, working on Lawrence Goolsby farm and timber lot in the Tallahatchie bottom. Near where the men were cutting timber was an overflow well, used to water their mules and also a well-known local landmark (McDaniel 1977). The timber cutters, including L.Q. Ivy were taken into custody by the deputies and, for reasons unknown, L.Q. Ivy was selected as the most likely perpetrator and arrested. L.Q. Ivy was the son of Jim and Allie Pegues Ivy, and L.Q. lived just over the county line from Etta in Lafayette County with his parents. Some newspaper accounts incorrectly
identify J.P. (Jim Peague) Ivy as the victim of the lynching, perhaps drawing on the article from
the News Scimitar shared through the Associated Press. Dr. Elizabeth Payne has noted that Jim
Ivy had successfully won a contract with the state to haul gravel for the new highway being
constructed through Etta, and that this may have engendered anger in the white community
(Payne 2017). Sheriff Robertson, fearing that a mob would form, sent Ivy to the jail in Tupelo,
Mississippi, the county seat of neighboring Lee county. Later in the afternoon, a mob did form
on the courthouse lawn in Union County.

![Figure 9. Union County Courthouse, undated early 20th century postcard](image)

The crowd grew over Friday night and Saturday morning until it numbered around four
thousand (Rucker 2000; Roulhac 1925b). On Saturday afternoon, Senator Hubert Stephens, a
native of New Albany, Judge Thomas Pegram, of Ripley, and New Albany Mayor J. E. Tate
addressed the throng, promising a swift trial, which succeeded in dispersing the gathered
citizens. However, by Sunday morning, the mob had reformed, and several Etta/Rocky Ford residents had secured a writ requiring Sheriff Roberts to return L.Q. Ivy to New Albany to be identified by Betsy Gaines. The reason given was that certain citizens were concerned Ms. Gaines would succumb to her injuries before an identification could be made and, if L.Q. Ivy was not the perpetrator the actual perpetrator would have fled the area. L.Q. Ivy was secretly brought back to the Mayes hospital in New Albany.

![Maye's Hospital in New Albany](image)

*Figure 10. Maye's Hospital in New Albany, undated early 20th century postcard*

During a lineup, conducted in the presence of Judge Pegram and attorney L. K. Carlton, Betsy Gaines identified L.Q. Ivy as the man who had attacked her, at least according to some of the newspaper accounts that lauded the "quick justice" of the lynching (Oxford Eagle 1925). However, oral history and some newspaper narratives tell a different story. For example, according to one account, a white driver of a gas truck was seen walking across the field towards the Gaine’s residence that morning. In addition, according to the same narrative, Russ Scott and
his father, both white, drove the four black men to work that morning. Scott told officers at the
time there was no way L.Q. Ivy would have been able to travel the two and a half miles from
where he was working to the Gaine’s house and return by the time the assault occurred. This
narrative was given to Martha Cofield of Oxford by the unnamed white woman who wrote it.
While the narrative was written some time after the lynching, perhaps as late as 1989, newspaper
accounts of the time did note that Gaines was hesitant to identify L.Q. Ivy and her father
expressed doubt that he was the guilty party (Wolfe 1994). During the lineup when she was
pressed by the lawyer Carlton, Ms. Gaines would only say she "thought" L.Q. Ivy looked like the
man who assaulted or, that he was about "about the size" of the man who had attacked her
(Rucker 2000; McDaniel 1977). Following the identification line-up, Sheriff Robertson
attempted to remove L.Q. Ivy from Union County once again. However, the mob that had
reformed that morning learned Ivy was at the hospital and destroyed bushes and small trees in
their path as they surged the block up the street from the courthouse to the hospital (Rucker
2000). According to Allen McDaniel’s account, Sheriff Robertson, along with some of his
deputies and Sheriff L.A. Reese from Lee county attempted to sneak Ivy out the back door of the
hospital and return to Lee County. However, they were stopped by a roadblock south of the
hospital, presumably set up by the mob to prevent a return to Lee county and were forced to turn
around and head north. It is likely they were heading to Holly Springs to place L.Q. Ivy in
custody there. Two deputies were dropped off at a bridge just outside New Albany and ordered
to stop the mob, but the people pursuing Ivy threatened to shoot their way through if the deputies
did not clear the road. The deputies then opened the road to the mob.

At this time, a man who worked near the bridge telephoned friends in the town of Myrtle
to the north, informing them that the two sheriffs were headed their way with Ivy, and soon two
fast cars set up a roadblock at another bridge just outside Myrtle. When the car carrying Ivy arrived at this roadblock it was quickly blocked from behind by the pursuing mob and the sheriffs gave Ivy to the mob. Sheriff Roberts "begged the mob to wait until complete proof of guilt could be had, but they listened to nothing and took Ivy". Again, all accounts here make the notation that the sheriff surrendered Ivy "without a shot being fired". According to McDaniel's account Ivy was chained to the back of a flat-bed truck and forced to run alongside it for some of the way to Rocky Ford. McMahan's thesis states that, "[a] small group of men, including Thad Parker, Bill Greer and his father Book Greer" took him back to Rocky Ford and into Arlo Graham's barn (McMahan 2012). McMahan draws information from both the narrative referenced above and an interview with Mattie Ivy Bruce.

Figure 11. Rocky Ford, town hall and old post office, circa 2017.

Once inside the barn, the men stripped Ivy of his clothes, placed a rope around his neck, threw the end of the rope over a beam, and used it to pull him off his feet as the men threatened
him repeatedly. When threats failed to produce a confession they tortured him by singing off his body hair, cutting all over his body, and then someone sent for a lemon squeezer and Ivy's the men used to crush Ivy’s testicles. His scream for mercy could be heard outside quite clearly by those present. Any further details of the torture are vague. Accounts conflict, but it seems likely he may have "confessed" to the crime during his torture. Following the torture, the men re-clothed him and took him to a nearby sawmill, about 300 feet away. It is at this point that J.L. Rouhlac took the second photograph, for which Ivy was posed with the mob on top of the pile of wood shavings that would serve as a viewing stand.
After the photograph was taken, members of the crowd drove a buggy axle into the ground of a gully among the sawdust. Ivy was chained to the axle, and members of the crowd piled scrap from the sawmill around Ivy, then the crowd doused Ivy with kerosene and gasoline.
Roulhac gives details of the crowd. For example, one woman begged the crowd to stop and moved forward as if to free Ivy before being restrained and pulled away by several men. Also, in attendance was a young black man, Will Talley, who was raised by a white family in Hickory Flat, Mississippi. He was acting “above his place” and not properly respectful to white people so he was brought as a lesson (Roulhac 1925b).

Interviews with members of the Ivy family in the early 21st century and accounts of other individuals in the community have revealed additional information. The day following Ivy’s lynching Sam Bullock, a white store owner from Enterprise, told Ivy's father he could collect his son's remains. Jim Ivy couldn't bring himself to go, so J.D. Ivy, L.Q.'s brother, took a couple of other men, Shep Boone and Gates Kilpatrick, with him and found among the ashes Ivy's heart, "burned black as a crow but otherwise whole". According to an oral history account by Mattie Ivy Bruce, this was seen as a sign of Ivy's innocence. A minor difference in accounts occurs here, as McDaniel states the men took a burlap sack, while McMahan's account says they were given an apple box by Sam Bullock in which to bring home any remains (McMahan 2012; McDaniel 1977). In her article, LaReeca Rucker references a narrative on file at the University of Southern Mississippi. The narrative, referenced earlier, was received by Martha Cofield from an unnamed white woman who was a resident in the area of the lynching. The narrative notes:

Those interviewed said Rush Scott, one of the members of the posse that the sheriff deputized to search for Gaines' assailant, told police that from the time the black suspects were dropped off at the logging field, and the time Gaines said the rape occurred, it would have been impossible for anyone to travel on foot the two and a half miles to the cornfield where she was attacked. He also reportedly remarked that he saw the white driver of a gas truck from New Albany, moving across the cornfield.

The evidence in the narrative and the historic accounts combine to further reinforce Ivy’s innocence.
The African American community, dispirited by these events, began to move away. McMahan cites one member of the community, Macy Visor Ferrell, as saying, “They all began to move out. We was living with a good man. Mr. Roberson was a good man. But all they black community was moving. We knew we wasn't going to have a church; we knew we wasn't going to have school, and so everybody moved out. It was a sad time, a crucial time, for black people. They was quiet as possible, and as soon as they could, they all left the community.” The African American community, especially Ivy's family, clearly remember and memorialize the event, although to date this has involved the process of telling the story of the incorruptible heart and a curse that followed the ringleaders rather than public displays of remembrance (McMahan 2012).

The fate of the “ringleaders” grew into legend, with all 5 of the individuals who supposedly lit the fire meeting with tragedy later in life ranging from death by car accidents, poisoning by illegal alcohol, and accidental self-inflicted gunshot wounds. This appears to have been seen as a form of divine retribution. Pleas Traynom, who married Mammie Gaines, Bessie's half-sister, died in a single-car accident along with his entire family, only a granddaughter survived. Clyde Nash owned a garage in Myrtle and was crippled in a freak accident. Doyle Gaines, Bessie's half-brother, developed leukemia. Joe Keith Robbins became a victim of "jake leg" from his heavy drinking. Bill Greer froze to death in a ditch only a couple of miles from his home. Pauline Gaines Coffey burned to death when her electric blanket caught fire (McMahan 2012:52)

Decades later, the lynching existed in the memory of the older generation in the white community, but no attempt was made to memorialize it or to further the memory. Allen McDaniel, two generations removed from the event itself, did not know it had happened until he
asked his grandmother about any "interesting events" that had occurred in the community when he was searching for a topic for a college history class. She told him details of the event, which he recorded, and has become one of the primary sources of information in the white community (McDaniel 2017a; McDaniel 2017b).

I was able to speak with, but not formally interview, a Gaines descendant who remembers that, when she asked about the event as a young teen, she was told not to ask about it further as it was something they (the family) did not speak of (Anonymous 2018). Dr. Payne, in her remarks at a 2017 presentation on the lynching of L.Q. Ivy, noted that Betsy Gaines, L.Q.'s accuser, seems to drift away after the lynching. Betsy Gaine’s story is difficult to follow in the historical record, but she seems to have been ostracized by her family. This is also mentioned in the narrative collected by Mrs. Cofield, which notes that Betsy already had a poor reputation as a result of having a daughter out of wedlock, and that her daughter would treat her badly later in their lives (Wolfe 1994). One potential reason for the story, according to Dr. Payne, is that Betsy was once again pregnant. She had already had one child out of wedlock and did not want the further stigma. Her story of being assaulted by a black man would have been the only way to open the door to a legal abortion. One account of the doctor’s examination states that the doctor confirmed she was pregnant but that she did not appear to have been raped. She had been beaten. With no records confirming this and the direct witnesses all dead, there is no way to confirm this theory (Payne 2017; McMahan 2012; Wolfe 1994).
V. L.Q. IVY AFTER THE LYNCHING

There was some memory of the lynching in the community that persisted, quietly, for decades. A memoir by James Coffey notes that the axle, used as a stake, remained in place until at least the 1940's and was frequently pointed out to visitors. It was removed, perhaps as part of a scrap drive, and a piece of pipe was hammered in to the ground to mark the place which remained for many years and served the same purpose as a local landmark (Coffey). However, it is clear that one of the primary factors in keeping the memory of the lynching of L.Q. Ivy alive in the memory of the broader (county-wide) white community is the sporadic publication of school history papers and newspaper articles.

As mentioned earlier, Allen McDaniel wrote a paper that became an article in 1977. In 1975 he was a graduate student at the University of Mississippi and was given the assignment of writing a paper on a significant local event. He asked his grandmother for advice and her response was that the incident at Rocky Ford would be the biggest happening of which she had heard. This would have occurred fifty years after the lynching and Allen had never heard of it and had no idea it had happened. He decided to research the event and write a paper on it. In the course of this research he spoke to several older members of the white community who still had vivid memories of the lynching. They gave him names and a chain of events. While these events don't tally completely with subsequent versions told to other researchers, the bulk of the narratives do overlap. In 1975 Allen was contacted by Bill Rutledge, who then owned the New Albany Gazette, the newspaper for Union County. When I spoke to Rutledge he did not
remember how he heard that Allen had written a paper, but he did remember he wanted to include it at the time because it told an interesting, forgotten story and he needed all the material he could get for the special issue he was planning. Allen, in his interview, states that he did not entirely trust the newspaper to not print the names of his informants and those who were allegedly involved so he used a razor blade to cut out the names before giving the Gazette a copy of his paper. It was published, without names, in the April 1977 "Moving Forward Together" edition which had over 100 pages and was the largest newspaper published in the state that year according to Bill Rutledge (Rutledge 2017; McDaniel 2017a).

Neither Allen nor Bill recall much in the way of negative feedback directed at them, it is worth noting, however, that over 40 years had elapsed since the publication when they were interviewed. The lack of names likely played a role in limiting negative feedback, although LaReeca Rucker states in her 2000 article that she withheld McDaniel’s name from her article because of threats that had been received following the 1977 publication (Rucker 2000). McDaniel did not recall specific threats but says he does recall a woman from Tupelo recognized

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**Figure 13. New Albany Gazette article, 1977.**

The Rocky Ford Incident — Fifty Years of Guilt
one man in the article as her father by the description of his death. The woman called McDaniel to ask where he'd gotten his information. He told her, invited her to double check and contact him if she found anything seriously wrong with his version of the story. He states she did not contact him further.

McDaniel did not interview members of the African American community nor did he attempt to contact members of the Ivy family. I asked him about this during an interview, and he answered that he was under the impression they had all moved away or died, and the time limits of doing a class paper had prevented him from pursuing the matter. He remembers being contacted a few years after the publication of the newspaper article by a woman who identified herself as a member of the Ivy family. She was looking for some information he had published in the article, which he gave to her, and she has not contacted him since (McDaniel 2017b).

After the publication of Allen's paper in the *New Albany Gazette* the story does seem to have faded from active discussion for another generation. Rucker’s article would be the next to return the story to the public spotlight. Of note, the first part of the story ran in the October 18, 2000 edition of the paper, which would have been L.Q. Ivy's 94th birthday.
Lareeca Rucker was able to speak with a member of L.Q. Ivy's family and began her research there. She drew on additional information garnered from McDaniel’s article and interviews with other community members and authors.

In the early 2000's as Dr. Elizabeth Payne was researching women's lives in North Mississippi, she came across the story and began researching it. Through her efforts the William Winter Institute at the University of Mississippi has reached out to the family and is beginning the process of formally memorializing the lynching. (Payne 2017). A graduate student, Hannah McMahan, used these interviews along with additional resources to complete her Master's thesis on the lynching in 2011. As mentioned in the opening, a local songwriter, Josh Knighton has used his own research and the details in Rucker's 2000 article to write a song about the lynching.
VI. ELWOOD HIGGINBOTTOM INTRODUCTION

On September 18, 1935, exactly ten years to the day L.Q. Ivy was taken into custody, a lynching occurred in Oxford, Mississippi. Like L.Q. Ivy, the lynching received national attention, and was quickly silenced. The story largely faded from the narrative in Oxford, although a few people remembered it. The silence around Elwood's story began to lift in 1995, when Dr. Arthur Kinney visited Oxford researching the historical basis for families and events in Faulkner's work. He became acquainted with a man identified only as "Jimmy," Faulkner's nephew. In 1935, Jimmy was an eight-year-old boy, bored with a school play. He snuck out and saw a group of men and trucks surrounding the courthouse. According to his story, he hopped in the back of one of the trucks to see what was going on and became a reluctant witness to the lynching of Elwood Higginbottom. Dr. Kinney was surprised to discover he had never encountered these details before. In an effort to verify the story he visited the Oxford Eagle and discovered that all the editions of the paper from October 1935 were missing. A visit to the courthouse and the archives at the University of Mississippi confirmed that every copy of the paper for the month of October 1935 was missing from all the archives in Oxford. He was able to find the paper in the State Archives in Jackson, and the details confirmed the story he'd been told. Dr. Kinney published the link between William Faulkner’s work and Elwood Higginbottom’s lynching in 2005 in the journal *Connotations* (Kinney). Although this was the first appearance in print, its impact was limited by the small distribution of the journal.
However, in 2015 the Equal Justice Institute published their report on lynching in the South, in which they documented over 4000 lynchings in the southern states. One of these lynchings was Elwood Higginbottom, and this did begin to lift the silence around Elwood's lynching. An opinion piece by Jonathan Scott, published in the *Oxford Eagle* in 2015, gives some of the details of the case. Still, the impact seems to have been limited locally.

In 2016 Kyleen Burke was a student Northeastern University School of Law who was taking part in the School’s Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Clinic. She began researching the case of Elwood Higginbottom and traveled to Oxford in April 2017 to present her findings before publishing her report. Burke’s research unearthed details of the events leading up to the lynching and the lynching itself. During the course of her research she connected with Tyrone Higginbottom, Elwood's grandson, through an ancestry site. This brought Elwood's family back into the story. Their journey to Oxford to hear the details of what had happened spark several newspaper articles in media ranging from the local student newspaper to the *New York Times*. The deluge of media attention brought Elwood definitively out of the silence.

Elwood's descendants and many Oxford community members desired to see a more tangible reminder of the events and, towards that end, began to work to have a memorial placed in Oxford. The work, assisted by the Equal Justice Initiative and the William Winter Institute, saw fruition in a little less than a year, with the marker installed following a remembrance ceremony with E.W. Higginbottom, Elwood's only surviving child, in attendance (Griffin 2018).
The memorialization group, at this time, has formed a group called “Lynching Memorialization in Lafayette County Mississippi” and is moving forward with plans to continue its work and memorialize the other 6 known lynching victims in Lafayette county.
Elwood’s family has used different spellings of their last name. In newspaper accounts of the time, Elwood Higginbottom's last name was spelled Higginbotham, and this seems to have been the spelling the family used at the time. Higginbottom is an alternative spelling used by both Elwood's descendants and the extended family today, so I have standardized on that spelling. There is some speculation Elwood's family altered the spelling on their arrival in Memphis to avoid being found by remnants of the lynch mob. Regardless of the reason it is the spelling they prefer.
VII. ELWOOD HIGGINBOTTOM TIMELINE

Elwood Higginbottom was a 28-year-old married father of three young children. He was a sharecropper and, some newspaper accounts suggest, a union leader for the Sharecroppers Union. He lived with his wife, May Lissie Higginbottom in a three-room house on land owned by a local schoolteacher named Glen Baird. Glenn Roberts, a white planter, lived on adjoining property and the story of Elwood Higginbottom's murder begins with a confrontation between the two men. Roberts had been driving cattle across the fields farmed by Higginbottom, and the men exchanged words. Higginbottom eventually built a fence across his field to spare his crops from the cattle. This may be what prompted the final confrontation. Local newspapers are vague about what transpired, but investigations by anti-lynching organizations at the time, as published in their notes and out of town newspapers, relate a scene in which Roberts rallied a group of white man armed with pistols and went to find Higginbottom to "whip him". They arrived about 9:30PM, after he and his family were asleep. The family was awoken by a member of the group demanding the family open up and Higginbottom come out. Higginbottom refused, and Roberts used an axe to break down the back door of the cabin. As Roberts forced his way further into the house Higginbottom warned and pleaded with him to come no further. When Roberts continued into the room where the family was gathered Higginbottom shot him with a shotgun, killing him. Elwood fled after shooting Roberts and avoided apprehension for two days and nights. During this time his sister and law was savagely beaten, and his brothers were threatened with burning to death, not unlike L.Q. Ivy a decade earlier. His wife and
children fled Oxford while he was in hiding and moved to Memphis. Higginbottom was eventually found in Pontotoc county and immediately taken to the Lee County jail at Tupelo to avoid a lynching from the Lafayette county mob. The sheriff then took him to Jackson where he was held in the “lynch proof” Hinds County jail. While there, he was visited by District Attorney Fred M. Belk and County Attorney Bramlett Roberts, the nephews of Glenn Roberts. Unsurprisingly, the attorneys returned with a confession in which Higginbottom supposedly admitted to lying in wait and killing Roberts out of malice. After spending so much time reviewing and researching lynchings, the consensus among researchers is confessions were frequently extracted with torture, as in the case of L.Q. Ivy, or with threats against family members, as may well have been the case here. Higginbottom was held in the Hinds County jail from May 23, 1935 until his trial, which began on September 17, 1935. The Judge's instructions to the jury specifically instructed them to consider self-defense (Burke 2017).

The court charges that if you believe from the evidence in this case that the deceased went to the home of the defendant on the night of the homicide and entered the home of the defendant in a rude, and angry manner, and then and there held a pistol pointing toward the defendant who then and there had reasonable grounds to believe and did believe his life to be in immediate danger at the hands of the deceased, then defendant had the right to shoot and kill the deceased in his necessary self-defense, then the jury should find him not guilty.

Rumors immediately began to spread that the jury would acquit Higginbottom on grounds of self defense. At 8:30pm, no verdict had been returned and it was reported that two jurors were indeed holding out for acquittal. While the jury continued deliberating, a mob assembled at the jail, their faces covered in dirt as a disguise. The sheriff was away when the mob arrived. Higginbottom was removed from the jail by approximately 50 men and driven two and a half miles north to a wooded area near a spot known as the "Three Way.” Higginbottom
fought against his attackers, catching the rope they placed over his head in his teeth and holding it until they resorted to using a tire iron to force it out. He was finally jerked off the ground and left hanging as several members fired pistols into his body. The body was left hanging until the sheriff and his deputies retrieved it sometime after midnight (Burke 2017).
VIII. ELWOOD HIGGINBOTTOM AND THE PRESS

As Elwood Higginbottom was being buried several articles were published. The *Oxford Eagle* published an article on September 19, 1935 with the headline "Mob Lynches Higginbotham Negro." One article of note was published in *The Daily Worker* on September 25. Written by John Wood, it was titled "Elwood Higginbotham -- Hero of the Sharecroppers". It provides significant detail not included in other accounts, based on a letter written by a "native white worker, and Communist Party leader in Oxford." Burke (2017) tentatively identified Gustav Uth as a likely candidate for this letter writer. Elwood Higginbottom may not have been affiliated with the Sharecroppers Union, but Wood (1935) used the occasion of his death to highlight the dangers faced by black tenant farmers.

Another source of information is a report by Jessie Daniel Ames, a researcher for the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching. Of particular note is that Ames points out the accounts in the Oxford Eagle and other local papers, Associated Press, and United Press leave out details of the lynching itself, reading as if Higginbottom had encountered a vigilante who had shot him outside the courthouse. When Ames questioned the editor of the Oxford Eagle about the omissions he was told "he (the editor) had to live in Oxford and that he wanted to get along with the people there, and that the race situation made it practically impossible to carry the facts about the killing" (Ames 1935).
IX. SILENCE AND MEMORY

Taken together, the articles published throughout the decades since both lynchings and response to them show a clear pattern of mostly passive resistance to the remembrance of the events on September 20, 1925 and September 18, 1935. Despite the reluctance of the older generations to speak about the events, the sporadic, decades apart, publication of newspaper articles has been enough to keep the memory alive and spread it beyond the smaller local community. I suspect this process is mirrored in other communities where lynchings have occurred. Robin Diangelo identifies a similar pattern she terms "white silence" (DiAngelo 2012). Picca and Feagan (2007) identify a similar phenomenon as occurring when whites are conversing in private versus in public. While both examples are framing this in a participatory, individualist framework, the practice may extend to a broader socio-historical context as a broad methodology for preserving white dominance by both actively and passively hushing discussion and memory. This would help explain the continued silence around lynchings, even in cases where the principal actors and their children are long dead, no longer taking active parts, yet the silence persists and is actively reinforced. Even in cases such as the two examined, actors in the community not directly tied to the original lynching may work to passively and actively continue the silence as part of this engrained, habitual, strategy.

Despite the silence around the specifics, the lynchings were obliquely remembered in another way, through their impact on authors in the area, most notably William Faulkner.
Faulkner was no stranger to lynchings in the South and was likely familiar with the details of at least three which had occurred in the area. Nelse Patton, Elwood Higginbottom, and L.Q. Ivy. Faulkner seems to draw from the murders by mob violence of these black men. Nelse Patton was lynched in 1908 on the town square in Oxford after being accused of murdering a white woman. Faulkner was 10 at the time and likely saw, or at least heard, the lynching and crowd of over 2000 people that gathered. (Sassoubre 2007). Faulkner was not in the area in 1925 but returned by early 1926 and may have heard of the lynching of L.Q. Ivy from newspaper and local accounts. Faulkner was living in Oxford in 1935 and would have been familiar with the details of Elwood Higginbottom’s death. Given that the prevalence and brutality of lynching ensured accounts were frequently published in newspapers at this time he may have drawn on accounts of many more lynchings that occurred throughout the United States.

The details of the cases and the proximity to Faulkner suggest these three were particularly influential, however. For example, "Dry September," a short story, features a lynching that seems to draw on the details of L.Q. Ivy in some regards. It's not an exact retelling, but there are traces.
X. THE DOCUMENTARY

The research into the lynchings has turned out to be anything but straightforward in many ways. The project was originally conceived as a film, and originally I had anticipated producing a relatively straightforward documentary incorporating interviews with local community members addressing two primary questions: "have you heard about L.Q. Ivy" and, if so, "how/when did you hear about the events"? As detailed in earlier chapters, I wasn't able to ask those questions. As a result, the film went through several iterations and, on more than one occasion, I considered giving up the project altogether. The final form of the film was to be as an introspective journey, considering how I found out about the lynching, what it meant to me personally, and how the silence I encountered shaped my feelings about my hometown. That hasn't worked either, as the lack of visual material made it impossible to tell the story in that way. Over the months of gathering material it became clear that the project would need to be an audio piece, augmented by still images and video for public "live" presentations.

As the project developed from film to audio, one key aspect has been to present L.Q. Ivy as a person, rather than just as a victim. To that end I have researched what I can of his appearance and life, such as he wore his hair in braids and was dating a young woman in his community, as recorded in the account by Rucker (2000). The descriptions are taken primarily from her interviews with L.Q. Ivy's sister-in-law, Mattie Ivy Boyd.

There are four voices and six total narrators. I will be one, telling my own story, and recounting historic details of the lynching. I also incorporate part of Roulmac's piece describing
the scene at the hanging, as read by a local theater actor. I have researched and watched several other films relating to lynchings. *An Outrage*, for example, effectively used archival material but uses a different narrative form than my own proposed work. I include segments of interviews with Valerie Reeves, a Higginbottom descendant and family historian, and Allen McDaniel, who wrote the 1975 report. I also incorporate quotes Mattie Ivy Bruce, L.Q. Ivy's sister-in-law, as she had been the driving force behind memorializing L.Q. Ivy until her death a few years ago.

The audio piece opens with my voice to establish the location and narrator. The piece opens with an introduction to myself and the project:

> Two men were lynched a decade apart in neighboring counties. One has been memorialized, one has not. Why is memorialization such a difficult subject? I'll get this out of the way first - I'm a white guy. I'm connected to both these lynchings though, and that connection is why I wanted to tell this story. I'm most directly connected to the story of L.Q. Ivy. He was burned to death in Union County, where I grew up. Researching his story connected me to Elwood Higginbottom. He was shot and hanged in neighboring Lafayette county.

The next section introduces my story and how I first heard about the events. The next section covers the events around Elwood Higginbottom's lynching in a condensed version of the account presented earlier in this paper. The next session introduces L.Q. Ivy and tells the story of his lynching and aftermath. The final section is the concluding piece and, again, as it is a condensed version of the material already included, I will not repeat it in this chapter.

For public presentations I plan to put together an "illustrated radio story", that includes stills and videos to illustrate the events in the narration without distracting from it. It will not be a film, rather, it will be an alternative approach to provide a version of the audio story suitable for presentation to groups rather than individual listening. I will make the radio version available
as a podcast through some outlet. At present I am deciding whether it should be a standalone episode or part of a series following the public presentation.

Over the course of developing and creating this project I have learned much about my own process as well as production in general. One of the key lessons has been to spend more time at the beginning developing a three-sentence description of the project. Documentary projects often their focus over the course of project, however, having a defined target from the beginning gives a path to begin on and prevents wandering lost in the volumes of data, interviews, and imagery gathered over the course of a project such as this. In addition, having a defined scope to start with would have helped narrow down potential interview subjects, allowing me to spend time developing relationships.

I realized as I began that a documentary based on a historic event with limited visual material and no one living who was present at the event would be a challenge. I still grossly underestimated how much of a challenge it would be. Referencing the point above, a more tightly defined tagline or statement of purpose for the project would have let me more effectively analyze the volume of material I had and give more time to develop alternative approaches to telling the story. Despite the difficulties, I am reasonably pleased with the project and I do feel it will be an effective way to open conversations within communities, specifically my own hometown, with regards to memorialization of lynching victims.

I am developing a web site to host the material from this project. It will be hosted at buriedinsilence.org and will contain a copy of the illustrative audio piece, historic documentation, and a timeline of events initially. I have some hope that it will grow into a clearinghouse of memorialization success sources. I envision this as a resource for others who
are working to begin a memorialization project, providing positive examples of the outcomes of such projects.
XI. CONCLUSION

As I mentioned in the opening, this paper began as an attempt to gather the historical material and tie it into a broader social context. However, as this process unfolded and I continued to collect interviews, and meet resistance to interviews, I realized that it was more important to identify the method by which the memory of the event was being sustained in this one instance. Many hours of interviews and archives research later I have made a solid start on this process. In the case of L.Q. Ivy, the prompting of community memory by newspaper and other memory seems to be the primary method by which the memory has been passed down from generation to generation in the white community. Recognizing and acknowledging the importance of these articles lends further credence to work such as the Equal Justice Initiative to memorialize victims of lynching and thereby open discussion and sharing in the communities. In my interview with Josh Knighton he made the observation that the younger generation ”may not be able to do much, but we can talk about it.” I suggest that talking about it is the most powerful means of ensuring the memory stays alive and, more importantly, communities can begin to recognize the less than savory aspects of their past and work together prevent them from happening in the future.

Further, as noted by Dora Apel (2008:218), the stories told by public monuments becomes the official stories and represent the moment the memorial is produced rather than the moment commemorated. Monuments can make visible the black social, political, and cultural presence. I further contend that the process of creating the memorial, when done is collaboration
with representatives of all interests in a community becomes a physical manifestation and reminder of a desire to recognize past wrongs and prevent them in the future. The process of communication, the opening of dialog, is what has the lasting impact, the monument is that which embodies it in the physical landscape.

Throughout this entire project, I had to ask myself what was I hoping to achieve? I hadn't set out to pin to the blame on anyone, or even cast my hometown in a particularly negative light. Lynchings are not uncommon, particularly the southern states, so my hometown isn't unique there. The Equal Justice Initiative has identified over 4000 at current count.

I think I wanted two things. I wanted people to talk about it, because I believe if you don't address the past you can't face your future. I also wanted to see a memorial. At the time, I wasn't sure what form that would take or why.

I'm still not sure what physical form would be best, or where it should be placed. That's not up to me, anyway. I do want to see one erected. Not as a symbol of how progressive the town is. I want to see people get together and talk about this. Just talk. Become a better community just by becoming more understanding of each other. As painful as it is, this is a story that is part of my hometown, and we just need to start talking about it. Everything else can follow from there.
Ames, Jessie Daniel

Anon
1926  *To Prevent and Punish the Crime of Lynching* HEARING BEFORE A SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY UNITED STATES SENATE SIXTY-NINTH CONGRESS FIRST SESSION ON S. 121 A BILL TO ASSURE TO PERSONS WITHIN THE JURISDICTIONOF EVERY STATE THE EQUAL PROTECTION OF THE LAWS, AND TO PUNISH THE CRIME OF LYNCHING. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, Washington DC, February 16.

Anonymous
2018  Interview With Gaine’s Descendent. August.

Apel, Dora

Burke, Kyleen

Coffey, James Major
2005  *Crossing the Tallahatchie River at Rocky Ford, Mississippi : Historical and Biographical Rocky Ford, My Home Town.* Morris Publishing.

DiAngelo, Robin

Equal Justice Initiative

Griffin, Neal
Kinney, Arthur

McDaniel, Allen

2017a First Interview with Allen McDaniel. November 17.

McMahan, Hannah Maureen

Oxford Eagle

Payne, Elizabeth

Picca, Leslie Houts, and Joe R. Feagin

Puntscher, Sibylle, Christoph Hauser, Karin Pichler, and Gottfried Tappeiner

Roberts

Roulhac, J.L.

Rucker, LaReeca  

Rutledge, Bill  

Sassoubre, Ticien Marie  

Sumatra Post  

1925 LEVEND VERBRAND. *Sumatra Post* November 13.

Ward, Jason Morgan  

Wolfe, Peter  

Wood, Amy Louise  

Wood, John  
VITA

Jonathan Smith, MFA MA RPA

Education:

University of Mississippi
M.F.A. Documentary Expression, Center for the Study of Southern Culture
May 2019

East Carolina University
M.A. in Anthropology
December 2010

University of Mississippi
B.A. in Anthropology, Minor in Computer Science
May 2006

Professional Presentations:


“The Past Viewed Anew: Documentary Film/Photography, Historic & Contemporary Storytelling”, Panel Chair, January 2019, Southern Studies Conference. Montgomery, AL

“Turning the Camera Around: Introspection, Memory, and Local Narrative”, January 2019, Southern Studies Conference. Montgomery, AL

“Archaeology from the Ground Up: Local History and Community in Anthropology”, March 2009, Southern Anthropological Society. Wilmington, NC


“Communities in Stone: Marker Variation and Sense of Community in a Frontier Town”, January 2007, Society of Historical Archaeology Conference. Williamsburg, VA

Public Presentations and Performance:


“Cemetery Preservation and Restoration for Beginners”, presented at the Union County Heritage Museum, April, 2010. New Albany, MS.

Exhibitions:

2018 MFA Fall Projects. (Group) The Powerhouse. Oxford, Mississippi


Grants and Awards:

2018 Magnifying Glass Film Grant
2019 William Winter Scholar, Natchez Literary and Cinema Festival

Filmography:

2018 Taming the Tarasque. Short Film, filmed and edited.
2018 Sweet Sorghum. Short film, filmed and edited.

Employment:

University of Mississippi New Albany, MS August 2017-May 2019
Graduate Assistant, Southern Documentary Project and J.D. Williams Library
• assisted media curator in cataloging and preparing material for archives and digitization
• produced content for departmental web site
• edited pilot podcast episodes

Hill Country Network New Albany, MS June 2015-present
Broadcast Manager/Editor/IT
• Spec’d, installed, and developed manual for digital broadcast server
• Produced original programming
• Maintained broadcast schedule
• Edited original programming
- Produced and implemented live broadcasts

Earth Search, Inc   New Orleans, LA   June 2010-September 2012
Archaeologist
- Project Manager - Responsible for archaeological survey, crew lead, monitoring, and producing written project status reports and final reports.
- Conservation Specialist – performed basic conservation procedures on artifacts, documented procedures and results, oversaw work of lab technicians
- Worked in variety of environments including urban, rural, and coastal surveys.

East Carolina University, Phelps Archaeology Lab  Greenville, NC  August 2007-June 2009
Lab Manager, Graduate Assistant
- Responsible for maintaining inventory of equipment, maintaining equipment and lab facilities
- Assisted with Summer Ventures 2008, instructor in the archaeology field school
- Performed multiple GPR surveys, surveyed and recorded sites using Total Station and data collector, created maps from total station data, processed GPR data.
- Performed multiple surveys of cemeteries using GPR and total station equipment, assisted in identifying grave location prior to cemetery relocation

Archaeological Field Tech, GIS technician, and Network Administrator
- Field technician duties included several archaeological survey projects performing shovel testing and pedestrian surveys
- Generated maps from GPS data, hand-drawn field maps, and total station data using ArcGIS
- Set-up and operated GPS equipment in field including Trimble GeoXT and Recon units.
- Provided maps and GIS support for field crew, developing field maps and final maps for reports
- Maintained in-office computer network

University of Mississippi, Anthropology Department   March 2006
Hwy. 6 Furrs Exit, Phase 1 Survey
Primary Investigator:  Bryan Haley, University of Mississippi
- Performed shovel tests along 20M transects and recorded presence or absence of artifacts.

Network Administrator
Water Valley Interchange   Water Valley, MS   2001-2003
- Performed duties related to maintaining the network, servers, and customer support. Responsible for documenting network changes and level 2 customer support.
Network Consultant
Integrated Network Solutions Tupelo, MS  Feb. 2000-June 2000
• Designed and implemented network systems including servers, printing, and backup, as well as providing end-user training and support.

Senior Technician
Everest Sales Tupelo, MS  March 1999-Nov. 1999
• Assembled and maintained custom computer systems, performed installation and troubleshooting of network equipment, and managed inventory.

Consultant
Morris Scrap Metal New Albany, MS  1997-1998
• Implemented and provided end-user training for upgraded e-mail system.

Student Worker/NT Administrator
Mississippi State University Mississippi State, MS 1996-1997
• Managed undergraduate Windows NT lab and provided support to faculty and students.

Professional Organization Membership:
Independent Documentary Association
Professional Photographers Association
Society for Historical Archaeology
Association for Gravestone Studies
Register of Professional Archaeologists

Field School:
University of Mississippi, Summer 2005
• Performed traditional excavation, artifact cleaning, and artifact identification on Mississippian mound sites
• Assisted in Geophysical surveys of several historic and pre-historic sites ranging from Four Corners slave market in Natchez, MS to Mississippian Mound sites near Clarksdale, MS
• Processed geophysical data

University of Virginia and APVA, Summer 2004
• Historical archaeology at Jamestown Island, VA
• Included traditional excavation, ground truthing of geophysical data, filling out excavation forms, and mapping features and artifacts
• Lab work including artifact cleaning, sorting, identification, and labeling