

The Journal of Mississippi History

Volume LXXXVI

Fall/Winter 2024

No. 3 and No. 4

CONTENTS

‘A Hard Place to Be Well’: Soldiers’ Health and the Environment during the Vicksburg Campaign 59

By Lindsay Rae Smith Privette

“The Castle That Battle Built”: Okolona Industrial School and the Failure of Accommodation, 1902-1930 85

By Shaun Stalzer

Program of the 2024 Mississippi Historical Society Annual Meeting 117

2024 Mississippi Historical Society Award Winners 121

Minutes of the 2024 Mississippi Historical Society Business Meeting 131

Book Reviews

Bunn and Williams, *Old Southwest to Old South: Mississippi, 1798-1840* 135

By William S. Belko

Aston, William Barksdale, *CSA: A Biography of the United States Congressman and Confederate Brigadier General* 137

By Kenneth V. Anthony

COVER IMAGE — Wallace Battle, founder of the Okolona Industrial School, in front of the president’s home on campus in 1916. Credit: Jackson Davis Collection of African American Photographs, University of Virginia.

Wynne, *A Hound Dog Tale: Big Mama, Elvis, and the Song that Changed Everything* 138

By Toby Glenn Bates

Wiggins, *Outliving the White Lie: A Southerner's Historical, Genealogical, and Personal Journey* 140

By Jeffrey B. Howell

Bell, *Degrees of Equality: Abolitionist Colleges and the Politics of Race* 142

By Kristy Wittman Howell

Edwards-Grossi, *Mad With Freedom: The Political Economy of Blackness, Insanity, and Civil Rights in the U.S. South, 1840-1940* 144

By Brianna Otero

Adams, *The Insurrectionist: Major General Edwin A. Walker and the Birth of the Deep State Conspiracy* 146

By Charles J. Pellegrin

Megelsh, Adelbert Ames, *The Civil War, and the Creation of Modern America* 148

By Ryan P. Semmes

The Journal of Mississippi History (ISSN 0022-2771) is published by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 200 North St., Jackson, MS 39201, in cooperation with the Mississippi Historical Society as a benefit of Mississippi Historical Society membership. Annual memberships begin at \$35. Back issues of the *Journal* sell for \$7.50 and up through the Mississippi Museum Store; call 601-576-6921 to check availability. *The Journal of Mississippi History* is a juried journal. Each article is reviewed by a specialist scholar before publication. Periodicals paid at Jackson, Mississippi. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Mississippi Historical Society, P.O. Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205-0571. Email journal@mdah.ms.gov.

© 2024 Mississippi Historical Society, Jackson, Miss.

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History and the Mississippi Historical Society disclaim any responsibility for statements made by contributors.

‘A Hard Place to Be Well’: Soldiers’ Health and the Environment during the Vicksburg Campaign

by Lindsay Rae Smith Privette

Vicksburg was a miserable place to be sick. Confederate James West Smith could attest to that.¹ He endured the siege for thirty-three days before his body began to wear out under the strain. During that time, Smith was confined to the trenches, sweltering under the hot sun without clean clothes or the opportunity for a bath. He subsisted on pea bread and collards. He watched as comrades were shot and cared for them as they took their last breaths. Yet, it was not until the night of June 20 that Smith succumbed to the environment himself. “[I] had scarcely gotten to sleep when I awoke suffering the most excruciating pain with the colic,” he wrote. After tossing and turning, Smith went in search of the regiment’s surgeon, who provided him with salts and a large dose of mercury. “Still, I grow worse and the pain is almost unsupportable.” Fortunately, after “suffering most intensely for more than an hour,” the medicine began to work. Smith was able to get some sleep, but not much. “About half past four o’clock, the enemy opened one of the heaviest fires along our entire lines that we have yet been subjected to.”²

A few miles away, Illinois Sergeant John Fletcher was also suffering. To Fletcher, the South was a great contradiction: beautiful but dangerous. Since his arrival at Milliken’s Bend on January 26, the chilling winter rains had slowly been replaced with a torrid heat. The

¹ I would like to thank George C. Rable and Caroline Janney for reading previous versions of this article and encouraging me to submit it for publication. Additionally, thank you to Megan L. Bever, Laura June Davis, Angela Esco Elder, Jonathan Lande, Laura Mammina, and Evan C. Rothera, who aided me through the revision process.

² James West Smith, “A Confederate Soldier’s Diary: Vicksburg in 1863,” *Southwest Review* 28, 3 (Spring 1943): 303, 312-313. James West Smith was paroled at Vicksburg and returned to his home. He died soon after his return.

LINDSAY RAE SMITH PRIVETTE is an associate professor of history at Anderson University in South Carolina. She has a B.A. in history from Baylor University and an M.A. and Ph.D. in history from the University of Alabama.

transformation did nothing to endear Fletcher to the region. "I don't feel very well," he confided to his diary, "nor have not since I have been here." For over a month, Fletcher experienced "tremendous" headaches and acute lethargy. Then, on June 19, he began to suffer pain in his limbs. Desperate for relief, Fletcher sought help from a surgeon and procured an oil, which he hoped would alleviate his troubles. The medicine did not work, and Fletcher began to despair: "I get weaker every day I believe, instead of stronger." Fletcher languished miserably in the heat, developing severe diarrhea and vomiting. Two days after Vicksburg's surrender, he could not muster the energy to do anything. "I don't get any better. I am afraid I shall have to go up to the hospitals, but I hope not. I ought to write home, but I don't feel well enough." Discouraged and lonely, Fletcher confessed, "I don't know what to do."³

Between May 19 and July 4, 1863, nearly 110,000 soldiers—Union and Confederate—found themselves camped along the outskirts of Vicksburg, Mississippi. During those forty-seven days, they endured a series of environmental threats that weakened their bodies and burdened their spirits. They languished in the sun and choked on the dust, endured crippling thirst and gnawing hunger, and fell victim to fever as microorganisms invaded their bodies. In many ways, soldiers' fight to control Vicksburg had as much to do with overcoming the enemies of the natural world as it did with conquering their human opponents.

Nature, of course, has always been important to historians' understanding of the Civil War. The relationship between armies and the natural world holds significant implications for military maneuvers and evolving strategy. Few scholars, if any, would deign to write about the siege of Vicksburg without first explaining how the city's jagged terrain made the Confederate fortifications impenetrable to direct assault. In some cases, battles and campaigns are even named for the environmental features that dominated the operation. Where would the Battle of the Wilderness be without the wilderness? Or the infamous Mud March without all the mud?⁴ Recently, however, there has been

³ May 12-July 6, 1863, *John B. Fletcher Diary*, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois. Hereafter cited as ALPL. John Fletcher survived the siege and was discharged on December 4, 1863.

⁴ While none of them are self-proclaimed environmental histories, studies on the Vicksburg Campaign such as Edwin Cole Bearss, *The Campaign for Vicksburg* (Dayton: Morningside Press, 1985-1986), Warren E. Grabau, *Ninety-*

a shift in how historians conceptualize the environment's role in the war. Rather than simply one of the factors that shaped commanders' decisions when planning and executing strategy, historians have begun to think of the environment as its own historical actor capable of affecting change and influencing the outcome of specific events.⁵ In the words of historians Judkin Browning and Timothy Silver, "this approach . . . grants agency to the natural world, not as the sole determinant of events but as a prominent and often neglected actor in a complicated story."⁶ Many of these studies have included Vicksburg as part of their larger quest to understand the environment's role in shaping Americans' experiences and their understanding of the war. Andrew McIlwaine Bell, for example, has highlighted the threat that malaria and yellow fever posed to Union forces trying to conquer and occupy territory in the Lower Mississippi River Valley. Lisa Brady's work emphasizes how popular conception of the wilderness

Eight Days: A Geographer's View of the Vicksburg Campaign (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), Earl J. Hess, *Storming Vicksburg: Grant, Pemberton, and the Battles of May 19-22, 1863* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020), and Timothy B. Smith, *The Siege of Vicksburg: Climax of the Campaign to Open the Mississippi River, May 23 – July 4, 1863* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2021) all highlight how the difficult geography and terrain of the Lower Mississippi River Valley shaped Grant's efforts to capture Vicksburg. For more on how environmental features come to dominate specific military engagements see Lisa M. Brady, *War Upon the Land: Military Strategy and the Transformation of Southern Landscapes During the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012) and Adam H. Petty, *The Battle of the Wilderness in Myth and Memory: Reconsidering Virginia's Most Notorious Civil War Battlefield* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2019).

⁵ For recent works that adopt this approach, see Andrew McIlwaine Bell, *Mosquito Soldiers: Malaria, Yellow Fever, and the Course of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2010); Brady, *War Upon the Land*; Kathryn Shively, *Nature's Civil War: Common Soldiers and the Environment in 1862 Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Brian Allen Drake, *The Blue, The Gray, and the Green: Toward an Environmental History of the Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015); Erin Stewart Mauldin, *Unredeemed Land: An Environmental History of the Civil War and Emancipation in the Cotton South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Petty, *The Battle of the Wilderness in Myth and Memory*; Judkin Browning and Timothy Silver, *An Environmental History of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020); Kenneth Noe, *The Howling Storm: Weather, Climate, and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2020).

⁶ Browning and Silver, *An Environmental History of the Civil War*, 4.

undermined soldiers' sense of health and safety. Kenneth Noe has aptly demonstrated that climate and weather challenged soldiers' endurance while also shaping military strategy. Finally, Browning and Silver have contextualized the siege of Vicksburg within the larger framework of food shortage within the Confederacy.

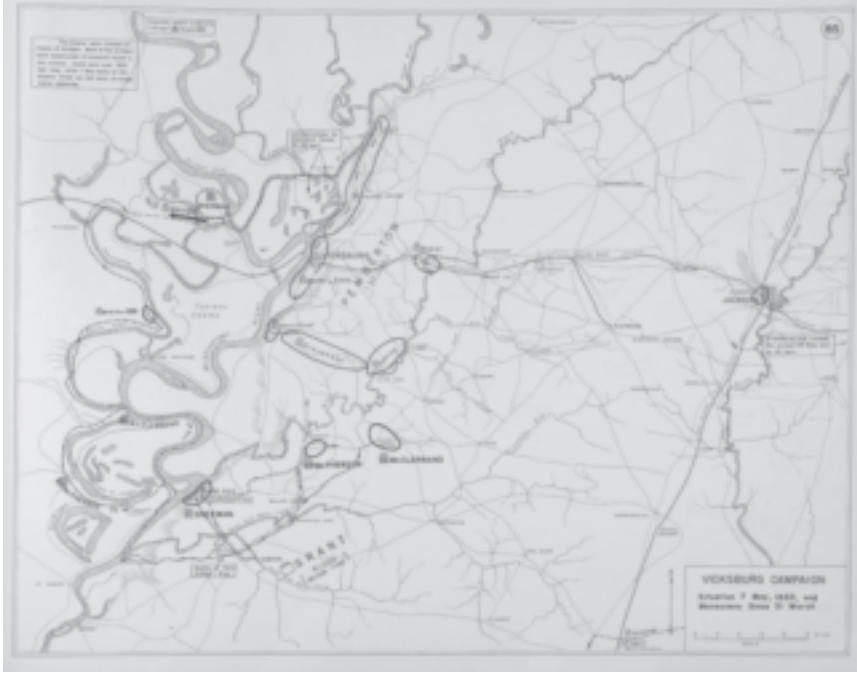
Without a doubt, each of these works offers important insight into the ways in which the siege of Vicksburg was impacted by the environment. But because Vicksburg is not their primary focus, these studies are by no means exhaustive. By narrowing their attention to one environmental factor—disease, wilderness, weather, or food—these works create a fractured view of the environment's involvement in the siege, and in doing so, diminish its importance in determining the outcome of military operations in the region.⁷ For the Union and Confederate troops stationed outside of Vicksburg, the environment was not merely a factor that shaped their experience. It was an active participant in the conflict, an enemy—or ally—that had the power to leverage each army into a position of failure or success depending on how its resources were used. But not all of the environment's resources were equally advantageous, nor were they easily manipulated.

Prior to May 1863, Confederates held the advantage by exploiting the local terrain to defend the garrison's position along the Mississippi River and threaten Union efforts to take the city. Unable to breach the Confederate fortifications, Union General Ulysses S. Grant decided to abandon efforts for a direct assault in late May. Instead, he ordered his men to besiege the city. As a result, the Union Army's ability to take Vicksburg had less to do with force than endurance. "As long as we could hold our position," Grant later wrote, the "enemy was limited in supplies of food, men, and munitions of war to what they had on hand. These could not last always."⁸ The Union transition to siege tactics essentially replaced one enemy with another. Suddenly, Confederates were not the dominant threat to Union operations. Instead, the primary enemy was the environmental conditions that compromised soldier's physical and mental health. These conditions threatened both armies equally. The growing mosquito population contributed to increased rates of remittent and intermittent fever

⁷ Bell, *Mosquito Soldiers*; Brady, *War Upon the Land*; Noe, *The Howling Storm*; and Browning and Silver, *An Environmental History of the Civil War*.

⁸ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant* (New York: The Century Co., 1895)1: 446.

as deteriorating sanitation and contaminated water led to diarrhea and dysentery. The heat threatened soldiers with sunstroke and dehydration, while food shortages put them at risk of malnutrition. All of these, combined with the monotony of siege life, made the days, at times, unbearable.



Campaign map showing Union route from Milliken's Bend to its crossing at Bruinsburg Landing. United States Military Academy, Civil War Atlas to Accompany Steele's American Campaigns, 1941.

The siege exposed Union soldiers to the same environmental threats that plagued the Confederates, but it also granted Federals uncontested access to important ecological features that prolonged the army's endurance. The ravines offered shelter from Confederate shells while the soil provided an influx of fresh fruits and vegetables. Soldiers flocked to the forests' shade to escape the heat and dug wells for fresh water. Most important of all, however, was the Mississippi River. Access to the river meant fresh supplies, more medicine, and rested troops. It meant that the Union Army could replenish the resources it lost to sickness. This was essential. After all, Union victory was no longer dependent on sustaining a strong and healthy fighting

force. Rather, Federal troops only had to remain healthier than their opponents. In the end, despite the mounting number of sick and ailing soldiers on both sides of the siege lines, Union forces' ability to leverage certain environmental features into an ally left them far better suited to endure the siege than their Confederate counterparts.

From the start of the war, Vicksburg was an environmental bastion for the Confederacy. Surrounded by bayous to the north, a river to the west, and rolling ravines to the east, the terrain alone was a formidable opponent for any invading army. Confederate forces exploited this advantage to guard the Mississippi River, one of the South's most important assets. Situated on tall bluffs towering nearly two hundred feet above the river's surface, the Confederate batteries at Vicksburg posed a daunting threat against Union naval traffic. Federal attempts to capture the city began with a failed naval assault in the summer of 1862. In December of that same year, an overland attack across the northern bayous also failed. Consequently, the Army of the Tennessee, under the command of Major General Ulysses S. Grant, spent the first three months of 1863 digging a canal to redirect the Mississippi River away from the city and its guns. This attempt also failed, and by spring, Vicksburg remained the last Confederate stronghold guarding the Mississippi River.

Having failed to capture the city from the north and west, Grant devised a campaign to lead his army across the Mississippi River at Bruinsburg, about fifty miles south of Vicksburg. From there, they would march northeast toward Jackson and nullify the Confederate presence in the state's capital. Once secure, Grant's army would turn west and fight its way into the city. The plan worked. Almost. On May 18, 1863, the Army of the Tennessee arrived on the outskirts of Vicksburg, having fought and successfully defeated Confederate forces four times in six days. The next morning, they launched their first assault against the city. The effort failed.

The Union Army did not successfully capture Vicksburg on May 19 for many reasons. For one, the attack was too rushed. Grant's orders gave his officers fewer than three hours to move their troops into position and survey the terrain before the charge began. Unfortunately, when they arrived at the front lines, soldiers discovered that the land around Vicksburg was broken and jagged, completely hostile to a direct assault against the Confederate fortifications. Centuries of erosion in loess soil carved the landscape into thin, meandering ridges separated

by deep ravines filled with cockleburs, cane, and vine.⁹ Soldiers might descend the hill easily enough, but climbing out was another matter: “the soil, when cut vertically, will remain so for years,” explained Iowa soldier George Crooke. “For this reason, the sides of the smaller and newer ravines were often so steep that their ascent was difficult to a footman unless he aided himself with his hands.”¹⁰ It was a difficult climb under the best conditions, but doubly so when under fire.

In addition to the daunting landscape, many Union soldiers reported being physically weaker than they might have been prior to the campaign. Most had not drawn full rations since the week of May 3, and hunger gnawed in their bellies even as the assault began. “We were getting pretty close to the end of endurance,” confessed William Eddington of the 97th Illinois.¹¹ To make matters worse, May 19 was an exceptionally hot day, and soldiers’ hunger was compounded by debilitating thirst. During the melee, Crooke found himself pinned to the battlefield with an empty canteen. The next few hours were agony: “the earth which we hugged so closely was like the floor of an oven,” he recalled. “I was covered with dust and perspiration and hour after hour passed by with constant aggravation of suffering from thirst.”¹² The reports written in the wake of the May 19 assault do not indicate that Union soldiers fought with less vigor or stamina than in previous engagements. Yet, there is little doubt that their bodies had been negatively affected by the environmental stressors they encountered during the campaign.

The Army of the Tennessee never did take Vicksburg by storm. Several days after the failed assault on May 19, Grant ordered another charge. The May 22 attack was even more costly, generating over three thousand casualties. Although the two days’ rest allowed soldiers to recover their physical stamina, it was detrimental in other ways.

⁹ Warren E. Grabau, *Ninety-Eight Days: A Geographer’s View of the Vicksburg Campaign* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 20-25. Loess is a rather unusual soil, and its properties played an important role during the siege; William H. Bentley, *History of the 77th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, Sept. 2, 1862- July 10, 1865* (Peoria: E. Hine, 1883), 151.

¹⁰ George Crooke, *The Twenty-First Regiment of Iowa Volunteer Infantry: A Narrative of its Experience in Active Service including a Military Record of Each Officer, Non-Commissioned Officer, and Private Soldier of the Organization* (Milwaukee: King, Fowle & Co., Boo Printers, 1891), 79.

¹¹ William R. Eddington, “My Civil War Memoirs and Other Experiences,” 11-12, William R. Eddington Memoirs, ALPL.

¹² Crooke, *The Twenty-First Regiment of Iowa*, 84-85.

During the lull, Union morale began to wane. Soldiers once eager to fight through their hunger became disgruntled and riotous. On May 21, troops watched Grant and his staff make their rounds in preparation for the second assault. Initially, soldiers' reactions to seeing their commander was subdued. "We were interested spectators," T. B. Marshall later wrote, "and our respect for General Grant prompted us to observe silence." But not everyone remained so reserved: "the gnawings of hunger overcame some of the ruder ones despite reproof from our officers." Slowly and in a low voice, one soldier began to chant, "hard tack, hard tack." Soon, the cry spread throughout the line: "Hard tack! Hard tack!" The scene left a lasting impression. Marshall recalled that the general finished his work before informing the men that the roads connecting the army to the Yazoo River were nearly complete and "as soon as [the wagons] can cover the distances, you will have all you want."¹³ Along with allowing his men to sit with their defeat—and their hunger—Grant's decision to delay the attack only postponed the inevitable defeat. There were certain environmental factors that would not change, no matter how long they waited. Any direct assault against Vicksburg would have to cross those ravines, and the heat only worsened. When the army finally attacked on May 22, the effort collapsed again. The failure prompted Grant to change tactics. Five days after the May 22 assault, the siege of Vicksburg officially commenced.¹⁴

¹³ T. B. Marshall, *History of the Eighty-third Ohio Volunteer Infantry, the Greyhound Regiment* (Cincinnati: The Eighty-third Ohio Volunteer Infantry Association, 1912), 84-85; T. H. Barton, *Autobiography of Dr. Thomas Barton, the Self-Made Physician of Syracuse, Ohio* (Charleston: West Virginia Print Co., 1890), 127-128; Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, 1: 236

¹⁴ Earl J. Hess, *Storming Vicksburg: Grant, Pemberton, and the Battles of May 19-22, 1863* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2020), xv, 87, 110.



This lithograph, printed in 1888, offers a clear portrayal of the terrain that surrounded Vicksburg, Mississippi, as well as the tactical advantage that it provided defending Confederates. Siege of Vicksburg, 1888, Lithograph, Kurz & Allison, Art Publishers, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

Grant's decision to besiege Vicksburg altered the environment's role in the conflict. Suddenly, the terrain that had once protected the Confederate breastworks from Union assault, was now a direct threat to everyone who lived behind the fortifications. The isolation that had once been a strategic advantage now threatened Confederate access to food, medicine, and ammunition. And the Mississippi River that had once given the city its significance was now home to Union gunboats that kept a continuous presence shelling the city. The landscape was no longer a Confederate ally. Instead, the ravines that surrounded Vicksburg aided Union soldiers, offering a physical and mental reprieve from the dangers of the front lines.

Conducting a siege was hard work. It was a strategy that depended on a complex infrastructure of roads, trenches, batteries, and

camps, all of which soldiers had to build.¹⁵ Throughout the siege, Union soldiers dug more than sixty thousand feet of trenches and constructed eighty-nine batteries, a feat that was not only physically demanding but tedious and mentally fatiguing.¹⁶ The Army of the Tennessee's growing alliance with the land, however, was advantageous. Because their position around Vicksburg's outer perimeter provided Union soldiers with the luxury of space, and because the army was connected to a reliable supply of reinforcements upstream, Federal troops were not confined to the trenches along the front lines.¹⁷ Instead, they scattered down into nearby ravines where they established camps along the steep gradient.¹⁸ Dividing their time between camp and the trenches, soldiers quickly settled into a routine. George Hale's regiment, the 33rd Wisconsin, typically began picket duty in the afternoon, when they could dig in the rifle pits without detection. They worked through the night and often the next day before being relieved.¹⁹ When not digging, they kept their eye on the Confederate breastworks. This, too, had its routine. "There were three men in the ditch," wrote William Eddington, "one to shoot, one to load, and one to sleep. We took two hours at a time for each job."²⁰ When the shift was over, they retreated to their camp.

Far removed from the constant threat of shot and shell, Union camps represented order and civility. They were a constructed space where soldiers might recreate some semblance of the banal routines that characterized their life prior to the war.²¹ T. B. Marshall of the 83rd Ohio remembered his camp well. "We were in a deep gully, perfectly shielded from all possible danger from the enemy's artillery," he wrote. Satisfied with their location, Marshall and his comrades took pains to ensure their camp was as comfortable as possible. Because they were

¹⁵ Solonick, *Engineering Victory*, and Smith, *The Siege of Vicksburg*, offer the most detailed examination of the strategy employed by the Army of the Tennessee between May 22 and July 4.

¹⁶ Edwin C. Bearss, *The Campaign for Vicksburg*, vol. III, *Unvexed to the Sea* (Dayton: Morningside House, 1986), 953.

¹⁷ Charles Dana, *Recollections of the Civil War: With the Leaders at Washington and in the Field in the Sixties* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1902), 78.

¹⁸ May 24, 1863, William M. Reid Diary, ALPL.

¹⁹ May 26-27 and June 1-2, 1863, George Hale Diary, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison Wisconsin. Hereafter cited as WHS.

²⁰ William Eddington, "My Civil War Memoirs and Other Reminiscences," 13, ALPL.

²¹ Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012) 116-137.

not on level ground, extensive modifications were needed to make the site habitable. Soldiers used shovels to level sleeping grounds and carve benches.²² Given the limited number of tents, they crafted temporary shelters—known as shebangs—into the hillside and reinforced their construction with excess timber. Over time, the camps became more elaborate. To Phineas Underwood, a relief worker arriving with the United States Sanitary Commission in June, the camps looked like small cities, stretching as far as the eye could see. “In the ravines and on the side hills we would see regiment after regiment encamped, occasionally riding by a group of tents in a pleasant grove with a U.S. flag erected which were headquarters of some of the Generals, or with a red flag which indicated the hospitals.” Underwood was scheduled to camp with the 72nd Illinois, but his journey had taken longer than expected, and he arrived late into the night. “They were all asleep in their shebangs—the Colonel’s large one in the center.” Settling in, Underwood found his surroundings deceptively tranquil. He was less than one mile from the Confederate breastworks, yet “there was a fine breeze drawing through the ravine and the moon in all its splendor rode above us and my first thought was of a huge happy picnic party.”²³ Nestled safely into the crevasses of the jagged terrain, camps offered both physical and mental rest. Soldiers filled their free time with card games and letter writing. Some slept, and others read. Nearly everyone carried a Bible.²⁴ Most importantly, the camp was where Union soldiers felt safe.

Underwood’s description of the Union camps offered a dramatic contrast to the Confederate experience. With a fighting force less than half the size of their opponents and no access to supplies or reinforcement, Confederate commanders could not rotate troops from the front. Instead, soldiers occupied the trenches full-time. And though they took turns on guard duty, their constant presence on the front lines was physically and mentally draining. Although Union camps

²² T. B. Marshall, *History of the Eighty-Third Ohio*, 88-89.

²³ P. L. Underwood to William Underwood, June 12, 1863, *Benjamin Underwood Letters*, Old Courthouse Museum, Vicksburg, Mississippi. Hereafter cited as OCM.

²⁴ S. C. Jones, *Reminiscences of the Twenty-Second Iowa Volunteer Infantry: Giving Its Organization, Marches, Skirmishes, Battles, and Sieges, as taken from the Diary of Lieutenant S. C. Jones of Company A* (Iowa City: Iowa, 1907), 41.

offered soldiers a sense of safety and the opportunity to stretch and exercise their tired limbs, Confederates rarely had the opportunity to stand. The final measurements of the trenches constructed at Vicksburg often varied, but many sources suggest that most were somewhere between three and four feet deep. Consequently, soldiers had to maintain a prone, sitting, or crouched position to protect themselves from enemy fire.²⁵ Confederate's physical hardship was exacerbated by the unending tedium of siege life. "Monotony does not convey all that the sameness of these days imposes on one," lamented Confederate lieutenant William Drennan, "There is a tension of the nerves—an extreme anxiety like you may have experienced for a few moments—and that you have felt . . . that it would craze you." Union artillery kept up a steady fire, supported by naval ships on the river. By May 30, Drennan feared that if the siege lasted a month longer, "there will have to be built or . . . a building will have to be arranged for the accommodations of maniacs."²⁶ With no reprieve from the siege, Confederates felt increasingly trapped, hemmed in with no escape. As morale faltered, desperation grew.

If the ravines offered Union troops some semblance of physical and mental rest, they also concealed unseen dangers. As May melted in June, diagnoses of remittent and intermittent fevers were on the rise, giving credence to one of the environmental dangers that Union soldiers feared most. Soldiers misidentified the actual threat, though. They thought that they would get sick from a combination of the heat and humidity coupled with the bad, stagnant air that clung to marshy land. "Our camp is between two ridges of hills," complained surgeon Robert Jameson, "low and swampy."²⁷ Rainwater drained into the gullies, mixing with a thick deposit of silt. Within this boggy tract grew bamboo, which merged into thick tangles woven with honeysuckle,

²⁵ Smith, "A Confederate Soldier's Diary," 306; Charles A. Hobbs, "Vanquishing Vicksburg: The Campaign Which Ended in the Surrender of America's Gibraltar," *National Tribune*, May 17, 1892; Solonick, *Engineering Victory*, 70. According to Solonick, the final measurements of the trenches constructed at Vicksburg varied, but many of the sources suggest that they were roughly three feet deep.

²⁶ Matt Atkinson, ed., *Lieutenant Drennan's Letter: A Confederate Officer's Account of the Battle of Champion Hill and the Siege of Vicksburg* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 2009), 35-36.

²⁷ Bell, *Mosquito Soldiers*, 11; June 18, 1863, *Robert Edwin Jameson Diary, Diary and Letters of Major Robert Edwin Jameson*, LOC.

greenbrier, and poison ivy.²⁸ In reality, the region's hot, humid summer and stagnant waterways created a breeding ground for *Aedes Aegypti* and *Anopheles* mosquitoes, which transmit yellow fever and malaria respectively. Unfortunately for those stationed around Vicksburg, the deep ravines and crevasses that surrounded the city were especially conducive to a growing mosquito population. And there were plenty of mosquitoes. Soldiers wrote about them constantly, identifying them as another example of the land's undesirability. "Mosquitoes are certainly blood thirsty and ravenous monsters," wrote surgeon Seneca Thrall. "At night they swarm by the hundreds in my tent . . . each of them humming sweetly all the time."²⁹ Thrall was not the only one whose sleep was disrupted. By early June, Confederate Samuel Swan reported that the days were growing terribly hot and miserable. The only solace came at night when it was "cool enough to sleep pleasantly," if only his sleep were not so troubled by insects.³⁰

Many Confederates took it for granted that Vicksburg would be saved by the harsh southern summer. After all, southern physicians had long argued that the South's unique climate, geography, and racial makeup made the region medically distinctive from other parts of the country.³¹ If Grant's campaign had gone according to plan, Union forces would have captured the city on May 19, leaving plenty of time to establish an occupation army and leave Vicksburg ahead of the sick season beginning in June. Now, the siege would keep them there well

²⁸ Grabau, *Ninety-Eight Days*, 22.

²⁹ Seneca Thrall to Mollie, August 6, 1863, *Seneca Thrall Letters*, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa. Hereafter cited as SDCA.

³⁰ George C. Osborn, "A Tennessean at the Siege of Vicksburg: The Diary of Samuel Alexander Ramsey Swan, May-July 1863," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (December 1955): 366.

³¹ The idea of regional medical distinctiveness held that an individual's health was adapted to familiar surroundings and therefore unable to adequately deal with the conditions of another region without a substantial seasoning process. Thus, it became one of the main components of the states-rights medicine debate prior to the war. For more on acclimation, regional distinctiveness, and state's rights medicine see James O. Breeden, "States-Rights Medicine in the Old South," *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 52 (1976): 348-371; Ronald L. Numbers and Todd L. Savitt, eds., *Science and Medicine in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989); Valenčius' *The Health of the Country*; and Christopher D. Willoughby, "His Native, Hot Country: Racial Science and Environment in Antebellum American Medical Thought," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 72, no. 3 (2017): 328-351.

into summer. Union troops began to worry: "The men, coming from a northern climate, endure a heat which even an acclimated person avoids," fretted one Ohioan.³² Confederates, by contrast, rejoiced, believing that the unforgiving climate and native diseases would protect their homeland and expel the invaders. "We were told," reported the *Natchez Weekly Courier*, "that the . . . diseases of the climate would decimate [Grant's] army and compel him to raise the siege."³³ In fact, Robert E. Lee was so convinced that the Deep South's diseased climate would thwart Grant's campaign that he declined to send troops to reinforce the Vicksburg garrison. On May 10, 1863, Lee wrote to Confederate Secretary of War James Seddon to explain that reinforcements "could not reach [Vicksburg] until the last of this month. If anything is done in that quarter, it will be over by that time, as the climate in June will force the enemy to retire."³⁴ Instead, Lee proposed an invasion into Pennsylvania.

Although Union soldiers worried about being unacclimated to the muggy heat that pervaded the Mississippi summers, both Union and Confederate soldiers fell victim to the mosquitoes. But even though mosquitoes were a universal problem, some soldiers had the ability to mitigate the threat. Many Union regiments took advantage of the space afforded them outside of the siege lines to seek refuge from both mosquitoes and miasmas by relocating their camps to higher ground. By mid-June, General William T. Sherman announced an improvement in his soldiers' circumstances. "Our camps used to be on the low, level and sickly banks of the River," he wrote his wife, "but we have fought our way to the top . . . you would be surprised to see how comfortable we all are."³⁵ Confederate forces, however, did not have the

³² Bering and Montgomery, *History of the Forty-Eighth Ohio*, 105.

³³ *Natchez Weekly Courier*, December 25, 1863, quoted in Lisa M. Brady, *War Upon the Land: Military Strategy and the Transformation of Southern Landscapes During the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 65. The idea that disease could alter the outcome of battle is further explored in Paul E. Steiner, *Disease in the Civil War: Natural Biological Warfare in 1861-1865* (Springfield: C. C. Thomas, 1968) and Bell, *Mosquito Soldiers*.

³⁴ Robert E. Lee, *The Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee*. Clifford Dowdey, editor. (Boston: Little Brown, 1961), 438.

³⁵ William T. Sherman, *Sherman's Civil War: Selected Correspondence of William T. Sherman, 1860-1865*, eds. Brooks D. Simpson and Jean V. Berlin (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 481.

luxury of space. They could not change camps. Unlike Union soldiers who constantly shifted between trenches along the front line and their camps in the rear, most Confederate soldiers had nowhere to go.

While mobility granted some Union soldiers the chance to escape their unhealthy environments and avoid the fevers, the Mississippi River provided Union surgeons with the medicine to treat those already sick. Quinine was, undoubtedly, one of the most effective drugs within the Civil War pharmacopeia. For the surgeons who had to maintain soldiers' health through the sick season, access to sufficient quantities of quinine was vital.³⁶ Thomas Madison Reece, surgeon of the 118th Illinois, prescribed copious amounts of the drug to the soldiers under his command. Reece noted in his records for June that it "was not unusual to dispense one or two ounces of quinine every day to a regiment of 300." In fact, the medicine was so important to his patients' health that Reece constantly felt the squeeze of shortage. Consistent among all his supply requests for June and July was the need for more quinine, and he expressed frustration at the army's medical director, Madison Mills, for tightly rationing surgeons' access.³⁷ Reece's complaints were not unusual. Few surgeons in Grant's army considered themselves amply supplied with the drug. But they still had far greater access than their Confederate counterparts. Even before the siege, quinine was a scarce commodity within the Confederacy. Because few, if any, medicines were manufactured in the southern states prior to secession, the Confederate Medical Department struggled to provide medical supplies equal to the war's demand. By 1863, quantities were so low that Confederate scientist Francis Peyre Porcher suggested dogwood, willow, or thoroughwort as a substitute.³⁸ Nevertheless,

³⁶ An alkaloid remedy derived from cinchona bark, quinine prevents the parasite causing malaria from multiplying in the bloodstream. By the Civil War, surgeons were not only using the drug to treat malaria but administered it as a prophylactic to prevent the initial onset of symptoms. Surgeon General's Office, *The Medical and Surgical History*, 6:185; Michael Flannery, *Civil War Pharmacy: A History of Drugs, Drug Supply and Provision, and Therapeutics for the Union and Confederacy* (Baton Rouge: CRC Press, LLC, 2004), 118-119.

³⁷ June 1863, Thomas Madison Reece, box 4, BV, ALPL.

³⁸ Guy R. Hasegawa and F. Terry Hambrecht, "The Confederate Medical Laboratories," *Southern Medical Journal* 96, issue 12 (December 2003): 1221-1230; Lindsay Rae Privette, "More than Paper and Ink: Confederate Medical Literature and the Making of the Confederate Army Medical Corps, *Civil War History* 64, no.1 (March 2018): 30-55; Francis Peyre Porcher, *Resources of the Southern Fields and Forests: Medical, Economical, and Agricultural*

sources indicate that there was quinine present in the city prior to the siege. On June 10, Confederate surgeon Benjamin D. Lay reported extensive shell damage to City Hospital, which destroyed “the entire stock of drugs, except some morphine and quinine.”³⁹ With no hope of restocking, Confederate surgeons watched helplessly as supplies dwindled in response to growing need.



This picture shows the numerous shebangs built down the hill east of Wexford Lodge. “Quarters of Logan’s Division in the Trenches in Front of Vicksburg,” 1863, Library of Congress.

Just as the ravines harbored deadly mosquitoes that threatened the lives of both Union and Confederate soldiers, so too did the climate and terrain collude to restrict soldiers’ access to fresh, clean drinking water just when they needed it most. By early June, Vicksburg had been gripped by an oppressive heat that overwhelmed soldiers’ already weary bodies, driving some to the brink of collapse.⁴⁰ “The weather

(Charleston: Evans & Cogswell, 1863), 9.

³⁹ *OR* 24 (2): 423.

⁴⁰ John A. McClernand to John A. Rawlins, June 17, 1863, Report on Operations of the 13th Army Corps since March 30, *Abraham Lincoln Papers*:

here is hot," Cyrus Wilson complained to his father back in Iowa, and "warm is no name for it."⁴¹ Whether Union or Confederate, the soldiers at Vicksburg were held captive. Heat dominated every aspect of their lives. They wrote about it constantly, noting how it "boiled," "scorched," and "ragged," as if searching for the perfect word to describe what they felt.⁴² It was exhausting to labor under the sun's blistering rays, and soldiers were keenly aware of their diminishing stamina. "[It is so] awful hot, one does not feel like doing anything that he is not actually obliged to do," wrote Union soldier Robert Edwin Jameson.⁴³ When not on duty, Federal troops spent their time searching for shade. Yet, even in the shade it was uncomfortably warm. Surgeon Seneca Thrall estimated that temperatures ranged between 90 and 95 degrees.⁴⁴ Confederates did not have consistent access to shade. Instead, they languished uncomfortably in the sun. Drennan came to fear that his men would get sick from the heat, and his prediction ultimately came true as reports of sunstroke began to increase.⁴⁵

Not only did rising heat undermine the body's ability to regulate its internal temperature, but it also amplified soldiers' need for water. Unfortunately, clean water was difficult to find. Thanks to relatively impermeable loess soil, the hills surrounding Vicksburg retained little groundwater. Now that both armies were largely stationary, they drew continuously from the same supply. The month of June, however, brought little to no rain to replenish these reserves, and, consequently, water resources were rapidly depleted, sometimes lasting only days

Series I. General Correspondence, 1833-1916, Library of Congress, Washington D.C. Hereafter cited as LOC.

⁴¹ Cyrus Wilson to father, June 7, 1863, *Cyrus Wilson Civil War Papers*, SDCL.

⁴² Crooke, *The Twenty-First Regiment*, 84; Elliot, *History of the Thirty-Third Regiment*, 46; May 16, 1863, William Lewis Robert Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama. Hereafter cited as ADAH.

⁴³ July 4, 1863, *Robert Edwin Jameson Diary*, LOC.

⁴⁴ Seneca Thrall to Mollie, June 28, 1863, Seneca Thrall Letters, September 19, 1862—May 5, 1864, SDCL.

⁴⁵ Atkinson, *Lieutenant Drennan's Letter*, 61; June 10, 1863, *J. W. Greenman Diary*, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi, quoted in Lisa Brady, *War Upon the Land*, 65; Ambrose, *A Wisconsin Boy in Dixie*, 83; June 26, 1863, *Job H. Yaggy Diary*, ALPL; Osborne Oldroyd, *A Soldier's Story of the Siege of Vicksburg* (Springfield: Published for the Author, 1885), 56.

before drying up completely.⁴⁶ The water shortage was fairly typical for the region. Having already adapted to these conditions, Vicksburg residents depended on cisterns, large underground containers designed to collect rainwater, for their supply. Altogether, the city's cisterns sustained a population of five thousand, but each year, their reservoirs were nearly depleted by the end of September. In March 1863, the Warren County Board of Police worried about a siege and recommended a series of repairs aimed at increasing the town's water supply. Their request was never heeded. By the end of May, the Confederate garrison had grown to approximately thirty-three thousand soldiers—five times the population originally supported by the cisterns.⁴⁷

The most obvious water source was the Mississippi River, and both armies took advantage of it. But the logistics of supplying water from the river were staggering. One scholar estimated that the Union Army needed over 338 wagons devoted to collecting and transporting water to meet soldiers' minimum needs.⁴⁸ This process could be dangerous. The regularity of soldiers' trips to the river made them subject to enemy fire. On May 23, Sherman complained to Admiral David Dixon Porter that his "men get water out of the Mississippi at the cattle pens. The enemy has a 32 parrot which sometimes reaches that point."⁴⁹ The danger also extended to Confederates. As the siege wore on, Samuel Swan reported that enemy fire was "beginning to interfere with the water haulers and are making the lower part of the

⁴⁶ See Lindsay Rae Privette, "Contaminated Water and Dehydration during the Vicksburg Campaign," in *American Discord: The Republic and Its People in the Civil War Era*, eds. Megan L. Bever, Lesley J. Gordon, and Laura Mammina (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 99-115; Grabau, *Ninety-Eight Days*, 21, 25; Noe, *Howling Storm*, 299-317; Surgeon General's Office, *The Medical and Surgical History*, 4:95; Grabau, *Ninety-Eight Days*, 443. Grabau estimates that the Union Army needed 120 full cisterns a day to keep the army properly supplied.

⁴⁷ Grabau, *Ninety-Eight Days*, 18-27; Minutes of the Board of Policy of Warren Country, March 21, 1863, reprinted in the *Vicksburg Daily Whig*, March 24, 1863.

⁴⁸ Grabau, *Ninety-Eight Days*, 443-444. Grabau estimates that the Union Army required about 81,240 gallons of water each day starting in May, when Grant's army numbered around forty-two thousand men. By the end of the siege, the Army of the Tennessee had swelled to seventy-seven thousand soldiers.

⁴⁹ William T. Sherman to David Dixon Porter, May 23, 1863, *James McClintock Signal Corps Messages*, LOC.

town rather warm.”⁵⁰ Not all brigades consumed river water, however. Some preferred to dig wells or collect from nearby springs.⁵¹ But these strategies also had disadvantages. The closest spring to Union hospital steward Thomas Barton’s regiment was situated directly between the contending armies, forcing thirsty soldiers to expose themselves to enemy fire. “It was like running a blockade to get a drink of water,” he quipped.⁵² Regardless of soldiers’ location, it seemed that accessing water came at a cost.

While heat and drought eliminated some water sources, bacterial contamination made other existing water sources non-potable. Over time, the health of both armies suffered from deteriorating sanitation, resulting in contaminated water. This unhealthy outcome was the natural result of nearly one hundred thousand soldiers living clustered together without the benefit of proper sewage disposal, drainage, and permanent shelter. After all, maintaining a sanitary camp took effort. In addition to caring for their own personal hygiene, communal latrines required constant attention. “[The latrines] should be at least four feet in depth, and the bottom should be covered with charcoal,” advised Union Surgeon General William Hammond. “When the matter reached within two feet of the surface, cover with charcoal, and fill up with earth a little above the level of the adjacent surface.” At that point, soldiers should dig new latrines.⁵³ This method was the ideal, but it was not always practiced. An inspection of the Union camps and field hospitals in June revealed that soldiers often avoided the sinks. “The men have been in the habit of going out into the bushes, and not unfrequently only thirty- or forty-feet from some of their tents, and relieving themselves,” complained medical inspector John Summers. He added that “human excrement has been promiscuously deposited in every direction, until the atmosphere, as the dampness of evening and night approaches, is so heavily loaded with the effluvia that it

⁵⁰ Osborn, “A Tennessean at the Siege of Vicksburg,” 367.

⁵¹ Charles Dana to Edwin Stanton, June 16, 1863, 1863, Feb. 12- May 4, *Edwin McMasters Stanton Papers*, Correspondence, 1831-1870, February 12-May 4, LOC; John Ordronaux, *Hints on Health in Armies for the use of Volunteer Officers*, 2nd ed. (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1863), 53

⁵² Barton, *Autobiography*, 155.

⁵³ William Hammond, *Military Medical and Surgical Essays: Prepared for the United States Sanitary Commission* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1864), 22-23.

is sickening.”⁵⁴ While Summers’ inspection focuses on deteriorating sanitation in Union camps, it also suggests something of soldiers’ water supply. If troops were drawing water from a nearby source, there is little doubt that human excrement would eventually contaminate their drinking water. Inevitably, the soldiers had the time and energy to search for their own water, located away from their camp and other forms of contamination, and had the best chance of satisfying their thirst. Once again, the mobility enjoyed by Federal troops offered them a distinct advantage.

During the summer of 1863, both Union and Confederate soldiers endured heat and dehydration. They suffered gastrointestinal ailments and succumbed to malaria. But the most important factor contributing to the deterioration of soldiers’ health—malnutrition—was endured by Confederates alone. It was not surprising that hunger would play a significant role in Vicksburg’s capitulation. Locals familiar with the city’s defense declared the town “impregnable against any force but starvation” as early as March.⁵⁵ In preparation for the siege, Confederate commanders spent much of May expanding the garrison’s food stores.⁵⁶ As of May 12, there were approximately 1,966,000 rations of meat in the city, enough to feed the garrison for nearly sixty-five days.⁵⁷ Once Federal troops arrived outside the city, however, all Confederate supply routes were choked off. Rations were cut in the first week of June to conserve what remained.⁵⁸

The siege undoubtedly agnified the food shortage within the

⁵⁴ Surgeon General’s Office, *The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870-1888) 4: 95.

⁵⁵ Charles A. Dana to Edwin Stanton, March 26, 1863, *Edwin McMasters Stanton Papers*, Correspondence, 1831-1870, February 12- May 4, LOC.

⁵⁶ Theodore Johnston to J. Shauff, May 2, 1863, box 1, folder 1, entry 101-95, *Commissary Papers*, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives Building, Washington, DC; Theodore Johnston to John C. Pemberton, May 4, 1863, box 1, folder 1, entry 101-95, *Commissary Papers*, RG 109, NARA. Shortly after the skirmish at Grand Gulf, Pemberton ordered all extra supplies, including those once housed at Jackson and Bovina to be transported into Vicksburg. This move not only strengthened the number of rations available for Confederate troops stationed in Vicksburg. It also was an effort to prevent Grant’s Army from capturing Confederate supplies.

⁵⁷ *OR* 24 (3): 869.

⁵⁸ *OR* 24 (3): 941-942, 952-953, 964.

Confederate army, but it did not necessarily create that shortage. Just as quinine had become a limited commodity in the months leading up to the siege, Confederate commissary agents were already struggling to procure enough food to bolster the troops. With farmlands stripped and transportation lines unreliable, starving families and hungry soldiers quickly lost the ardor for fighting. By 1863, the Confederacy was wearing down under the struggle to feed both citizens and soldiers.⁵⁹ For the men stationed at Vicksburg, hunger had been a near constant companion for most of the preceding winter. "I have no salt, no small rations; beef very scarce, and the bacon, which arrived this morning, is reported tainted," complained Confederate General John S. Bowen.⁶⁰ By the end of March, things were so bad that Louisiana private Henry Morgan doubted that the war could continue. "I think we will starve out," he confided to his wife. "I can't tell you how bad we fair, but bad anuff [sic] to eat all the rats we can git [sic]."⁶¹ Soldiers adapted the best they could, supplementing their dietary needs with forage. "The rations were short for 20 days," E. D. Willett wrote, "[we] had no meat at all, but the men foraged in the cane brake and procured an irregular supply of meat."⁶² This shortage, he reported in early March, occurred well before the Army of the Tennessee even left Louisiana.

Both officers and surgeons recognized the necessity to maintain a well-fed army. After all, hungry men could not win wars. As surgeon John Ordranax pointed out, "The conquering races of the earth have always been the best fed races," not because they participated in "luxurious indulgences," but because they consumed food which "impressed upon the system a vigorous tone, and thus developed physical courage." There was no variation between Union and Confederate medical theories regarding food and nutrition. Since the mind and body were integrated, the same diet that encouraged physical strength also promoted mental fortitude. As a result, Ordranax believed that one of the greatest dangers in a soldier's diet was "monotonous uniformity."

⁵⁹ See Andrew F. Smith, *Starving the South: How the North Won the Civil War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011); *OR* 24 (3): 607, 616; Browning and Silver, *An Environmental History of the Civil War*, 71-101.

⁶⁰ *OR* 24 (3): 680.

⁶¹ Henry T. Morgan to Ellen, March 28, 1863, *Henry T. Morgan Letters*, box 82, folder 17, Civil War Document Collection, United State Army Heritage Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Hereafter cited as USAHEC.

⁶² E. D. Willett, *Pickens Planter Diary*, 1862-1864, 46-47, E. D. Willett Papers, ADAH.

He asserted that “however good any single article may in itself be, its continued and exclusive use for any length of time is sure to inspire disgust, and consequently to impair its nutritive character.”⁶³ In other words, a repetitive diet could undermine morale. It certainly did for the soldiers and civilians trapped inside Vicksburg. After months of eating nothing but beef and cornbread, Texas surgeon Edward Cade found that he could barely “force it down.” With no other options available to him, he developed a trick. “I wait until I get very hungry and then it eats very well.”⁶⁴ The restorative properties of good food extended well beyond its physical benefits. It affected soldiers’ emotional health and provided a much-needed boost to their mental stamina.

Of course, none of this suggests that Union diets consisted of satisfying and pleasurable meals. During the campaign, soldiers’ diets expanded to include an unprecedented amount of fresh meats, fruits, and vegetables. Still, soldiers had been limited to what they could forage, and resources were limited. Now that they had arrived at Vicksburg, new supply lines meant that the Union Army returned to full rations with supplemental subsistence provided by the Sanitary Commission. This improvement did not necessarily end soldiers’ foraging expeditions, but it did change their purpose. For one, foraging parties took on a defensive role during the siege. Worried that an army of relief commanded by General Joseph Johnston would launch an attack from Jackson, Grant sent soldiers to strip the land of any resources that would sustain such an assault. In doing so, he transformed the land from a collaborator helping to sustain the Union army into an accomplice working to defeat the Confederates.⁶⁵ Additionally, foraging continued as an informal activity that supported soldiers’ mental health as much as their physical needs. Spurred by a combination of restlessness and distaste for desiccated vegetables, soldiers wandered to nearby farmsteads and took their fill. “An hour’s march brought us into a man’s vegetable garden, where we pitched out tents, much to the injury of the green stuff,” wrote William Reid of the 15th Illinois. “The men found Irish potatoes as large as hen’s eggs here.” Reid and his comrades loved their “vegetable camp” and spent days feasting on

⁶³ Ordronaux, *Hints on Health*, 61- 63.

⁶⁴ John Q. Anderson, ed., *A Texas Surgeon in the C.S.A.* (Tuscaloosa: Confederate Publishing Company, 1957), 67.

⁶⁵ *OR* 24 (1): 41.

potatoes, peas, and beans “all at the expense of the natives who live on the place.”⁶⁶ Freshly ripened fruits and vegetables were especially tempting. “I frequently met soldiers coming into camp with buckets full of mulberries, blackberries, and red and yellow wild plums,” recalled Charles Dana.⁶⁷ Nearly everyone went berrying at some time or another, and when they returned, they made delicious pies.⁶⁸

While Union soldiers’ diets improved with the siege, Confederate diets declined. Whatever effort commanders had made to stockpile food within the city failed. “Vicksburg had not been prepared,” admitted Confederate surgeon John Leavy. “Our breadstuffs were soon exhausted . . . we had bacon that was not fit to eat; we had no vegetable supply.” Perhaps worse, there was no means to supplement the meager rations. There was little forage left within the city—aside from rats and mules—and soldiers were generally not permitted to leave the front lines anyway.⁶⁹ Before long, Confederate bodies deteriorated beyond the point of hunger and began to show signs of nutritional deficiencies. With little to no vegetables of any kind, scurvy appeared within the ranks, a debilitating condition that first presents with bleeding gums, fatigue, and shortness of breath. If left untreated, symptoms rapidly progress to include painful and swollen limbs, loose teeth, and unexplained ulcers.⁷⁰ The extent to which scurvy affected Confederate bodies was not documented. Few medical records exist, and those that do were created by Union surgeons after Vicksburg’s surrender. Nevertheless, Leavy described scurvy as pervasive. “Our men were exhausted for want of rest and nourishment and the hospitals and field infirmaries were filled by those unable for military duty.” By the end of the siege, even Leavy was “barely able to walk, suffering so severely from this detestable disease.”⁷¹ In the end, it was not simply

⁶⁶ May 28, 30, 29, 1863, *William Reid Diary*, ALPL.

⁶⁷ Dana, *Recollections of the Civil War*, 57.

⁶⁸ Seth J. Wells, *The Siege of Vicksburg from the diary of Seth J. Wells* (Detroit: William M. Roe, 1915), 63, 79; *Philip Roesch Memoirs*, 8, box 99, folder 21, Civil War Document Collection, USAHEC.

⁶⁹ John Leavy, “Diary of John A. Leavy, MD; Surgeon—Green’s Arkansas Brigade,” 22-23, box 2, folder 59, *Journals/Diaries/Letters, Vicksburg Campaign Series*, Vicksburg National Military Park, Vicksburg, Mississippi. Hereafter cited as VNMP.

⁷⁰ John C. Gunn, *Gunn’s New Domestic Physician: or Home book of Health* (Cincinnati: More, Wilstach, & Baldwin, 1864), 685.

⁷¹ John Leavy, “Diary of John A. Leavy, MD; Surgeon—Green’s Arkansas

hunger that defeated the Confederate garrison. It was a breakdown in soldiers' muscle mass, increased apathy, and listlessness resulting from cellular degeneration and the collapse of their immune system.

By the end of June, the environmental stressors—heat, dehydration, fever, mental fatigue, and starvation—had ravaged the health of both armies. Union surgeon James Whitehill estimated that a little over three thousand soldiers in Brigadier General Nathan Kimball's Provisional Division were under medical care. According to Whitehill, this number represented 1 in every 2.48 men in the command: "There have been twenty deaths, three officers, and seventeen enlisted men; being a mortality of one in 152.6 of the cases treated, and one in 379.95 of the command."⁷² Conversely, Samuel Swan noted that Confederate "hospital reports show about ten thousand under the charge of the surgeons." That was approximately one-third of the fighting force.⁷³ By these estimates, the chances of an individual soldier falling ill at Vicksburg were staggering. Once again, however, the Union army's close alliance with the Mississippi River brought relief in the form of medicine, reinforcements, and, if necessary, evacuation. The same could not be said for Confederates.

Inside the city, sick and emaciated men poured from the trenches, quickly filling the hospitals. And soon, surgeons began searching for new places to house the infirm. If possible, they placed officers in private homes. When a chaplain inquired if William and Emma Balfour would open their home to a wounded officer, Emma readily agreed.⁷⁴ Permanent structures soon became a limited commodity. Medical officers turned to tents, but James West Smith questioned whether these tents could be considered hospitals at all. "The word hospital ever presented a different idea from what is realized here. I thought it property meant a building furnished with bunks and many other conveniences for the accommodations of the sick and wounded But alas, not so here." Ill himself, Smith left his command in search of medical care, but when he arrived at a nearby hospital, he found disorder. "I look around and find the tents

Brigade," 22-23, box 2, folder 59, Journals/Diaries/Letters, Vicksburg Campaign Series, VNMP.

⁷² Surgeon General's Office, *The Medical and Surgical History*, 1: 334.

⁷³ Osborn, "A Tennessean at the Siege of Vicksburg," 366-367.

⁷⁴ May 30, 1863, Emma Balfour Diary, box 1, folder 13, Journals/ Diaries/ Letters, Vicksburg Campaign Series, VNMP.

are filled to over-flow, besides are several pale and weakly looking fellows living promiscuously on the ground, under a very thin willow shade. I take my blankets and after selecting my 'position,' throw them down, and being exceedingly fatigued, sweetly repose."⁷⁵ Eventually, space became so limited that there was nowhere for the sick to go. When H. M. Compton forwarded the "very sick and badly wounded "of Stevenson's Division to a nearby general hospital, many of them were returned. "The surgeons say that they cannot obtain admission for all whose conditions required hospital care," Compton complained. But Compton found this unacceptable. "The sick of the brigade are as well cared for as they can be by the Medical Officers of the brigade," he wrote, but this was not enough. The medical officers near the front lines did not have the equipment to treat the "very sick and badly wounded whose condition required permanent hospital care."⁷⁶ With nowhere to go, men stayed in the trenches.

By the start of July, disease was ubiquitous throughout the Confederate army. Nearly one third of the garrison was hospitalized, and the remaining two-thirds were in questionable health. Realizing that his army was near the end of its endurance, Pemberton sent a dispatch to his generals, inquiring if their soldiers were strong enough to fight their way out of the city. The answer was a resounding "no." "The command suffers greatly from intermittent fever and is generally debilitated from the long exposure and inaction of the trenches," reported Brigadier General Seth Barton. He went on to say that one-half of the soldiers reporting for duty were "undergoing treatment" and should not even be in the field. Barton's assessment was echoed by Brigadier General Alfred Cumming, who reported that 50 percent of his troops were unfit for duty. Alexander Reynolds reported that two-thirds of his troops were so weak that they would not make it ten miles.⁷⁷ Unable to fight and with no relief in sight, Pemberton surrendered. On July 4, 1863, the first federal troops entered the city.

"This is a hard place to be sick in," Union soldier Albert Chipman wrote of Vicksburg. It was also a hard place to be well, but

⁷⁵ Smith, "A Confederate Soldiers' Diary:" 316-317.

⁷⁶ H. M. Compton to Major Reen, June 25, 1863, box 6, entry 131, *Papers of Various Confederate Notables*, John C. Pemberton, May-July 1863, Letters Received, War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁷⁷ *OR* 24 (2): 347-349.

Chipman conceded that “if a man is well, he can stand a good deal of hardships.”⁷⁸ For forty-seven days, Union and Confederate troops experienced many hardships in the effort to control Vicksburg. They fought off mosquitoes, endured bone-chilling fevers, languished in the heat, and labored under a blistering sun. They drank contaminated water. Their diet was often inadequate—at times dangerously so. However, though soldiers’ individual experiences were often similar across siege lines, the armies’ ability to mitigate these hardships varied considerably. Because of the siege, Union forces had access to a greater array of resources to combat its environmental enemies. The river was perhaps the greatest of allies. It provided Union soldiers with a limited but unending supply of food, clothing, medicine, munition, and reinforcements. This advantage, in turn, gave stationary troops the mobility and freedom to forage for water, shade, fresh air, and rest, which was readily supplied in abundance by the surrounding countryside. Confederates had no such advantage. With resources running low and space almost nonexistent, the line between sick and healthy became barely distinguishable. By July 4, virtually everyone in the Confederate army was either sick or seriously debilitated. There was no fighting force left.

⁷⁸ Albert Chipman to Wife, June 3, 1863, *Albert Chipman Papers*, box 1, January–December 1863, ALPL.

“The Castle That Battle Built”: Okolona Industrial School and the Failure of Accommodation, 1902-1930

by Shaun Stalzer

Founded in 1902 by Wallace Aaron Battle, the Okolona Industrial School offered industrial and teacher training for generations of Black men and women in northeastern Mississippi. The institution was one of the most successful industrial schools in the state, having a plant of 380 acres in Chickasaw County and a valuation of nearly a quarter million dollars by the 1920s.¹ Like many associated with industrial schools during this era, Battle took inspiration from the success of Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Institute. He modeled his school after Tuskegee in terms of its structure and board of trustees and mimicked Washington in his statements of accommodation in the press. In taking these steps, Battle did everything possible to accommodate a segregated and openly hostile South.² For most of its history, the school

¹“Statement of President Wallace A. Battle, May 1925. Wallace Battle to W. E. B. Du Bois. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. Available at <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/collection/mums312>. *The Crisis*, Vol. 34. October 1927, pp. 261-262 and pp. 282-283. Available via Hathitrust. For a list of other schools and colleges in Mississippi that offered industrial education during this time period see: Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, *Negro Education: A Study of the Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States*, Bulletin 16, Vol. II, 333-377.

² The political and social status of African Americans during this time was at its lowest point since slavery. Politically they had been disfranchised throughout the South, with Mississippi being the first state to do so in its 1890 Constitution. Legalized segregation also became commonplace in all manner of public forums, such as theaters, hotels, restaurants, and trains. Yet it was lynchings and the threat of mob violence that most traumatized Black Southerners during this era. Although overall statistics on lynchings are debated, most historians place the number of African Americans lynched between 3,700 to 5,000, with approximately 500 of that total occurring in Mississippi. However, such statistics also do not include the violence and intimidation directed towards Black institutions such as schools, churches,

SHAUN STALZER is a senior archivist for the Government Records section at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. He holds master's degrees in archival science and history from the University of Texas and Texas State University, respectively.

had peaceful race relations with its surrounding neighbors, but during the 1920s, the school faced an unprovoked campaign of intimidation, violence, and murder from local extremists that sparked fear in the African American community and nearly caused the permanent closure of the school. Such attacks reveal the limits of accommodation and the inability of both Black and White leaders to stop racial violence from occurring.

President Battle was born on May 10, 1872, on a cotton farm in Hurtsboro, Alabama, and was one of thirteen children. His formal education included Talladega College in Alabama and Berea College in Kentucky, where he completed his bachelor's degree and was later awarded an honorary master's and doctorate. He specialized in classical studies at Berea and graduated in 1901 (just three years prior to the Kentucky Legislature mandating the segregation of schools throughout the state). After graduation, Battle taught for a year in Alabama before deciding to open his own school in Mississippi.³ He later explained his reasoning behind this decision:

In Mississippi alone we have one million Negroes—one tenth of all in the country; and half of these can neither read nor write a single word. In this state the blacks outnumber the whites three to two, but the school attendance is eighteen to eleven, and the

and businesses, which went largely unreported at the time and are difficult to quantify. For more on disfranchisement, see: R. Volney Riser, *Defying Disfranchisement: Black Voting Rights Activism in the Jim Crow South, 1890-1908*, Louisiana State University (2010); and Michael Perman, *Struggle for Mastery: Disfranchisement in the South, 1888-1908*, The University of North Carolina Press (2001). For more on Jim Crow segregation, consult: C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, Oxford University Press (2002); Leon Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow*, Alfred A. Knopf (1999). Michael Newton, *The Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi: A History*, (2010), p. 62. More information on lynching can be found in the following works: Neil McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow*, University of Illinois Press (1990); Amy Louise Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940*, UNC Press (2009); Brandon Jett, *Race, Crime, and Policing in the Jim Crow South: African Americans and Law Enforcement in Birmingham, Memphis, and New Orleans, 1920-1945*, LSU Press (2021); W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Under Sentence of Death: Lynching in the South*, The University of North Carolina Press (1997).

³ Berea College Archives, RG 8, "The Pursuit of a Dream: Okolona," by Wallace Battle, compiled posthumously by Effie T. Battle, his widow.

number of teachers employed is five to three in favor of the whites. School desks are absent from 98 percent of them. Seeing this condition I determined as soon as I had graduated from Berea to go into the jungles of Mississippi and help to ameliorate their condition. Although there was just \$2.60 to begin with, I did not set out soliciting funds, but solicited the friendship and cooperation of the leading white people of Okolona and of the state. Today there are six million Negroes in the black belt not provided for. The urgent need in the black belt today is a chain of these schools running from Savannah by way of Tuskegee on to Texas.⁴

Battle chose one of the more challenging locations for his school, as Chickasaw County was no stranger to racial violence. During Reconstruction, for example, the Ku Klux Klan kidnapped teacher Cornelius McBride, “pistol-whipping him and flogging him with black-gum switches before he fought clear and escaped.” At the same time, the county school superintendent, A. J. Jamison, had his home torched. More directly, Benjamin J. Abbott, an early trustee of Okolona Industrial, was once arrested for assaulting a freedman with a heavy piece of timber and shooting him in the shoulder.⁵ Abbott and W. G. Stovall, the father of longtime trustee A. T. Stovall, were also reportedly both captains of the Ku Klux Klan.⁶ The elder Stovall

⁴“Work of Okolona College: Mr. Cable and President Battle Tell of Industrial Education.” *Springfield Republican*, Undated. Available via Carnegie Corporation of New York Digital Archive: <https://dlc.library.columbia.edu/carnegie/cul:4mw6m90783>.

⁵Ancestry.com. Freedmen’s Bureau Records, 1865-1878, Records of the Field Offices, microfilm roll 15, Complaint No. 56, p. 27. Undated record but possibly 1867. “1st Lt. Allan Almy, 34th infantry was sent to Egypt Station for the purpose of investigating the complaint. Ben. Abbott claimed that the shooting was done in self-defense. He was arrested and taken before a justice of the peace and placed under bond of \$500 to answer at the next term of circuit court.”

⁶WPA Historical Research, Assignment No. 22, Reconstruction, Mrs. J. C. Hightower, Supervisor, WPA Historical Research Project, pp. 140-146, available via Mississippi Library Commission. “Several years later, Mrs. Stovall remembering her husband’s Ku Klux suit, stowed away in the attic, and decided she would have some fun with it at the expense of her Negro yard boy.”

was appointed captain of a company in Nathaniel Bedford Forrest's command during the Civil War, and Forrest launched a Klan "den" in neighboring Monroe County in 1869 while visiting the region on railroad business.⁷

To avoid such violence, Battle took a number of steps to ensure the protection of his school. Foremost was his adoption of the industrial school model, which was considered by many to be the most acceptable form of education for rural Black Southerners. Industrial education was favored because it continued to tie African Americans to manual labor, and it relied upon a myth of racial inferiority. The leading example of this model was the Hampton Institute in Virginia, where its founder, General Samuel Chapman Armstrong, trained formerly enslaved people in industrial skills and tried to develop in them a respect for labor so that they could then go out and teach others in their own communities. Another defining characteristic of Armstrong, however, was his racial prejudices, i.e. that his students "learn the lessons of humility, cleanliness, thrift, and, above all, the love of the white race."⁸ He thus fell in with those who believed in the

⁷ Michael Newton, *The Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi: A History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2010), 7, 32. William Gilbert Stovall (1843-1907) was a member of Co. B, Stewart's Cavalry in Virginia until 1863, when he went to North Alabama and was appointed captain of a company in Forrest's command. He settled in Monroe County after the war before moving to Chickasaw County. He was elected sheriff from 1882-1896; a member of the state legislature; and also elected to the capitol commission in 1900 to help build the new capitol. He was a farmer with a 200-acre farm near Okolona, and he died in 1907. "Men Who Built Capitol," *Jackson Daily News*, June 3, 1903. Benjamin J. Abbott (1843-1923) was born in Mississippi, and at age seventeen left school and enlisted in the Confederate army. He lost an eye at the Battle of Gaines Farm and served the remainder of the war as a lieutenant in the Mississippi cavalry. He was listed as a farmer on the 1870 census and a city marshal of Okolona on the 1880 census. He died in 1923. U.S. Censuses for 1870, 1880 and Death Index available via Ancestry.com. Military service record available via Fold3.com.

⁸ Following the Civil War, most White Southerners resisted public education for African Americans, even violently, but still supported industrial education as the most acceptable form of education for keeping African Americans tied to manual labor. *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 47. See *From the Beginning*, Samuel Chapman Armstrong, 3, 24-26 for a biography of Armstrong. Quotation is from: *Twenty-Two Years' Work of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute at Hampton, Virginia*, 13. See also Eric Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, Chapter Two, The Hampton Model of Normal School

paternalistic notion of “civilizing” other races and established early on that industrial education relied on a myth of Black inferiority.⁹

Armstrong’s protégé, Booker T. Washington of the Tuskegee Institute, became the most prominent spokesperson of this movement following his “Atlanta Compromise” speech of 1895, where Washington emphasized the importance of African Americans staying in the South, developing industrial skills, and foregoing any efforts to fight for full social and political equality.¹⁰ Washington’s philosophy of accommodation resonated with many across the country. White Southerners supported his racial politics and the steady supply of cheap labor that industrial education offered, while northern philanthropists were attracted to his overall message and donated millions to Tuskegee and other educational causes throughout the South. With such support, Washington was able to build a network of supporters across the country known informally as the “Tuskegee Machine,” which included those associated with newspapers, businesses, and a wide variety of schools and colleges.¹¹

Industrial Education, 1868–1915.

⁹ Even industrial education could be considered too progressive for some Southerners, as the rhetoric of Governor Vardaman demonstrates: “I am not anxious even to see the Negro turned into a skilled mechanic. God Almighty intended him to till the soil under the direction of the white man and that is what we are going to teach him . . .” Vardaman is quoted in *Following the Color Line*, by Ray Stannard Baker. Available via Project Gutenberg: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34847/34847-h/34847-h.htm#Page_252, 248. See also: William F. Holmes, *The White Chief: James Kimble Vardaman* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1970), 103–115; Cal M. Logue and Howard Dorgan, *The Oratory of Southern Demagogues* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1981), 73–81; George Coleman Osborn, *James Kimble Vardaman: Southern Commoner* (Jackson, MS: Hederman Brothers, 1981), 41–53.

¹⁰ Washington founded Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute in 1881, and by the turn of the century, the Hampton-Tuskegee model “represented the ideological antithesis of the educational and social movement begun by ex-slaves. The strife between these two ideologies and systems of education did not subside until the late 1920s, when Hampton and Tuskegee radically reformed their curricula and moved closer to the ideological mainstream of black education.” Eric Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 53. The “Atlanta Compromise” Address by Booker T. Washington, Principal Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute, at Opening of Atlanta Exposition, September 18, 1895. Available in *Works of Booker T. Washington*, 91. “In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.”

¹¹ For more on the General Education Board and the various philanthropic organizations, see *Dangerous Donations*, 4. Although similar in structure,

Accommodation was not without its critics, however, as a cadre of Black intellectuals represented by W. E. B. Du Bois denounced Washington's leadership style and philosophy. Rather than learn skills for menial jobs and continue to accept the status quo, Du Bois advocated for efforts to secure full political and social equality and pushed for Black universities to be at the forefront in training future generations of leaders. In particular, Du Bois criticized Washington's "depreciation of the value of the vote, his evident dislike of Negro colleges, and his general attitude, which seemed to place the onus of blame for the race problems upon the Negro himself rather than upon the whites." Such thinking, along with continued racial violence and rioting occurring throughout the country, eventually led to the Niagara Movement and the formation of the NAACP in 1909, which largely opposed the political philosophy of Washington and fought many legal battles on civil rights issues in the following decades.¹²

the volume of resources and facilities available at Tuskegee was considerably greater than Okolona due to its large endowment gifted by Northern philanthropists. Tuskegee had the support of wealthy industrialists such as Robert Ogden, William Baldwin, and John D. Rockefeller, who were instrumental in the creation of the G.E.B., the most important philanthropic organization designed to improve education in the U.S. "without distinction of race, sex, or creed." Okolona likewise had to rely on a mix of local and national donors, supplemented by fundraising campaigns and the school's modest income from its agricultural department. G.E.B. bylaws, 1902. Available at: <https://dimes.rockarch.org/objects/BzmU7w5YkB7KMWqkBifx7W/view>.

¹² The NAACP's methods included legal assistance to the victims of racial injustice, and publishing its periodical, *The Crisis*, which dedicated itself to "agitation" through exposing the "nation to the crying evil of race prejudice." Such efforts were far more effective than accommodation in the long run, with several early court victories, membership in the tens of thousands, and a major push for federal anti-lynching legislation by the 1920s. One of the major criticisms of Washington was his lackluster response to violence and race riots during this time period. For example, the Atlanta riot of 1906 showed the ineffectiveness of accommodation when the White leadership of the city failed to prevent continued violence by the White mob against Black residents. It was widely reported that Washington's rhetoric of accepting Black criminality as one of the justifications for lynchings only added fuel to the inferno. Washington's response following the riot was to urge Black residents to use caution and not attempt to retaliate, while also supporting the idea that it was not feasible for the federal government to intervene in a local matter. As in all such cases of White violence, there was no effort to bring members of the mob to justice, and only superficial changes were implemented afterwards. Race riots continued in several other cities during this time period, including Brownsville, Springfield, St. Louis, Houston, and Chicago. Du Bois, *A Pageant in Seven Decades*, 42.

Battle sided with Washington in this debate and directly asked him for advice on how to best organize his school as well as requested teacher recommendations on several occasions.¹³ Both Okolona Industrial and Tuskegee were created to provide instruction for students in the practical application of agriculture, mechanical arts, and domestic science, as well as offer courses in the training of teachers.¹⁴ Further cementing this relationship was the fact that

Washington's response to the rise of the NAACP could be described as one of paranoia and jealousy. See *The Booker T. Washington Papers*, ed. Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2021), 62, 67-68. Manfred Berg, *The NAACP and the Struggle for Black Political Integration* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2005), 14. NAACP, *The Crisis*, Vol. 1, 1910. Available at <https://modjourn.org/issue/bdr507789/>. Louis Harlan, *Booker T. Washington, The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1983), 295-303. Other riots include those in Brownsville in 1906, and Springfield in 1908. The Brownsville Riot also showed the inherent weakness of accommodation, as President Theodore Roosevelt summarily dismissed three companies of Black soldiers accused of being involved in the affair without so much as a trial, and Washington was powerless to convince the president otherwise. Despite the betrayal by Roosevelt, Washington refused to criticize the president at this time because of his desire to hold on to his role as informal advisor on Black affairs. Washington did speak out against lynching on occasion. "A Protest Against the Burning and Lynching of Negroes," Booker T. Washington. February 22, 1904. Available via the Library of Congress <https://www.loc.gov/item/91898237/>.

¹³ Battle asked Washington for advice on how best to set up his industrial school. For more information on their relationship, see: Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division, The Booker T. Washington Papers, General Correspondence: (1903) May 20, 1903, June 18, 1903, and July 11, 1903. Box 211, microfilm reels 210-211; (1907) July 17, 1907, Box 294, reels 276-277; (1911) May 25, 1911, Box 388, reels 324-325.

¹⁴ Charter of Incorporation for Okolona Industrial College. MDAH. RG 28. Series 1099 Charters of Incorporation, Box 33110, p. 532. Signed by Governor James Vardaman in 1904. For a list of the Okolona faculty in this early era see: *The Letter*, Vol. 1, October 1907, p. 4. The faculty of Okolona in 1907 consisted of the following individuals: M.J. Jordan, farm; S.M. Henderson, carpentry; C.M. Drungole, brick masonry; C. B. Brown, assistant in carriage shop, forge and carriage building, engineering; Mary J. Calvert, primary and boys' matron; Clydie Johnson, intermediate and typewriting; Stella Davis, laundry and assistant intermediate; Ella Wilson, music and millinery, grammar and normal; Effie Threat Battle (Wallace Battle's wife), normal and grammar; and Wallace Battle, teachers' normal. *The Letter*, Vol. 1, October 1907, p. 2. Although industrial training was viewed as the primary goal of such schools, in fact most students pursued teacher education. For example, only 45 of Hampton's 656 students were enrolled in its trade school division, and only four students were listed as majoring in agriculture by 1900. Eric Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, Chapter Two. Student records are not

several Okolona trustees were members of Washington's National Negro Business League and regularly attended conventions for the organization during this time period.¹⁵

Crucial to the success of Okolona was its board of trustees, consisting of prominent local and national leaders. Local White board members of Okolona Industrial included Adam Tonquin Stovall, a lawyer and railroad president; Benjamin J. Abbott, a farmer and former Confederate soldier; and Lovick P. Haley, a lawyer. The longest serving of these individuals was Stovall, who remained on the board from 1902 until his death in 1938. Stovall was born in Okolona and attended the University of Mississippi before being admitted to the bar and practicing law. He served as president of the Mississippi Bar Association, was a counselor of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, and president of the Columbus and Greenville Railroad.¹⁶

The following description of a board members' visit to the campus in 1906 demonstrates the influence of both Stovall and President Battle on Mississippi politics: "I was entertained while in Okolona by A. T. Stovall. Governor Vardaman was a guest at the same house, and I found nothing but the highest praise for the work that Battle is doing. He is not trying to make mechanics of farmers, but better farmers of farmers. The secret of the school lies in the personality of its head and his efficient wife. He knows his 'place' as they say down there."¹⁷ It is clear that the work done at Okolona was impressive to board members, and that such influence even extended to Governor

available for Okolona prior to 1928, but later student records for the school reveal the same pattern, with approximately 50 percent enrolling in some form of teacher education coursework. See MDAH, Manuscripts Collection, Okolona Student Records, Z/2396.000/S.

¹⁵ *Annual Catalog*, Tuskegee Institute, 1903-1904, pp. 7-15, and Tuskegee Institute, 1914-1915, pp. 5-13. Available via Hathitrust. Booker T. Washington was the most prominent spokesperson of industrial education and the most influential Black person of his day. Under Washington's leadership, Tuskegee developed into one of the foremost Black institutions in the country, and by 1915 (the year of Washington's death), the school had a faculty and staff of over two hundred individuals, and a total value in property, equipment, and endowment of over nearly four million dollars.

¹⁶ "Hon. A.T. Stovall Dies at Columbus." *The Enterprise-Tocsin*, Indianola, Mississippi, March 3, 1938. See also Findagrave. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/26928750/adam-tonquin-stovall>.

¹⁷ Carnegie donation, p. 28. Royal W. Raymond to James Bertram. February 1, 1906.

Vardaman, a notoriously racist demagogue and one of the most vocal critics of Black education. Such support also demonstrates that Battle was adept at following the pattern of accommodation established by Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee and in securing the backing of prominent southern Whites.¹⁸

For local Black leaders, Battle relied on several dry goods merchants to serve on the Okolona school board, including Phillip McIntosh, Charlie W. Gilliam, Caleb W. Carterdry, and David Webster Turner.¹⁹ Most notable of these was Charlie W. Gilliam, who owned a general store in Okolona for more than seventy years. Inspired as a child by Philip McIntosh, perhaps the oldest Black merchant in Mississippi at the time, Charlie Gilliam began his grocery business in January 1893 and by 1900 he estimated his store was making \$35,000-\$40,000 per year. His house in Okolona was also celebrated for its handsomeness and offered eight rooms for rent.²⁰

¹⁸ Gaining the support of Vardaman was no easy feat. As governor, Vardaman based his political ideology on his opposition to Black public education: "I believe every dollar invested on negro education under our present free public school system is an indefensible and unwarranted prodigality of cash. It is a crime against the white man who furnishes the dollar and a disadvantage to the negro upon whom it is spent." MDAH, Gov. Vardaman address to Mississippi Senate, *Mississippi Senate Journal*, 1906, 15.

¹⁹ A list of the board members is found at the top of the official Okolona letterhead, which changed when new members were added or removed. Wallace Battle's correspondence with George W. Cable is a good source for the stationery used. See Tulane University, George Washington Cable papers, Box 5, Folder 16: Battle, E.T., 1912-1914; Folder 17: Battle, Wallace A., 1903-1910; Folder 18: Battle, Wallace A., 1911-1922; and Box 82, Folder 1: To Battle, Wallace, 1912-no date. Another source is the correspondence in the Booker T. Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division..

²⁰ NNBL Report of 10th annual national convention in 1909. "A Successful Merchant," pp. 92-93. For more information on C. W. Gilliam and his role in the National Negro Business League, see National Negro Business League Annual Reports, Fifth Annual Convention, Indianapolis, Indiana, August 31-September 2, 1904. Tenth Annual Convention, Louisville, Kentucky, August 18-20, 1909. Fifteenth Annual Convention, Muskogee, Oklahoma, August 19-21, 1914. Eighteenth Annual Session, Chattanooga, Tennessee, August 15-17, 1917. Available via Tuskegee University archives.



Wallace Battle in front of the president's home on the Okolona campus in 1916.²¹

The non-local board members of Okolona Industrial were mostly concentrated in the Northeast and included well-known supporters of Black causes, such as Moorfield Storey, lawyer, anti-imperialism activist, and longtime president of the NAACP; and Archibald Grimké, lawyer, consul to the Dominican Republic, civil rights activist, and vice president of the NAACP.²² Another significant Okolona board member was George W. Cable, a noted Louisiana author who was forced to move north due to his racial egalitarianism. Cable was a board member from 1907 to at least 1923 and was intimately familiar with southern society and the need for reform. In his 1903 work, *The Negro Question*, Cable discussed the many issues faced by African Americans, including segregation and disfranchisement. He also demonstrated a firm understanding of Black educational needs,

²¹ Photograph available via the University of Virginia Library. Jackson Davis Collection of African American Photographs. Collection call number MSS 3072, 3072-a, viu01291, MSS 3072, 3072-a. Available online at: <https://v4.lib.virginia.edu/sources/images/items/uva-lib:330176?idx=0&page=1>.

²² William Hixson, *Moorfield Storey and the Abolitionist Tradition* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1972); M.A. Howe, *Portrait of an Independent Moorfield Storey, 1845-1929* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1932). Dickson D. Bruce, *Archibald Grimké: Portrait of a Black Independent* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1993).

calling for national appropriations to fund public schools if southern states continued to fail to address issues such as illiteracy, which were contributing to what he termed a “national societal debt.”²³

Battle also frequently made statements of accommodation in the press to signal that his school and its students were not a threat to the existing social order in the South. Battle did his best to flatter his southern neighbors by stating that “the white people of the South have given more money for our uplift than northern white people.”²⁴ On another, he declared that “notwithstanding occasional freaks of justice here and there, the best white people are in Mississippi and in Okolona.”²⁵ Even early on, Battle and other leading Black Okolonans came together in order to protect themselves from the threat of mob violence. At one meeting, they adopted resolutions stating that there was “goodwill between the races in Okolona,” and that the Black citizens would do “everything in their power to suppress crime among their own people,” but also called upon their White neighbors to “protect us under the law.”²⁶ Demonstrating a complete understanding of the issue even as early as 1913, Battle stated, “There is no need in the South greater than that of law and order. No section of the country can have a permanent healthy growth unless that section makes life and property reasonably safe.”²⁷

Battle even utilized the student body of the school to secure the support of the local town. An example of an early student was Tommie E. Austin. In her first year at Okolona, she boarded with Della Bobo, a relative of Philip McIntosh (one of the board members of Okolona and a prominent local Black merchant). Austin also boarded with the family of James Edward Edens, a White banker, planter, and livestock dealer in Okolona. The importance of Okolona students boarding with prominent local families, both Black and White, was also emphasized frequently by President Battle in his fundraising efforts.²⁸ The students were hired out to various local families, and in return, they were

²³ George Washington Cable, *The Negro Question* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), 59-65.

²⁴ “Okolona Industrial College,” *Okolona Messenger*, June 22, 1904, p. 9.

²⁵ “Okolona Industrial College,” *Okolona Messenger*, July 22, 1903, p. 9.

²⁶ “Okolona Negroes,” *Okolona Messenger*, October 10, 1906, p. 9.

²⁷ “The South and the Negro as Seen by Wallace Battle,” *Springfield Republican*, March 26, 1913, 7.

²⁸ MDAH, Manuscripts Collection, Z/2396.000/S, Tommie Austin.

provided with room and board. This arrangement provided students in financial need with the ability to pay for some of the cost of their tuition and gave Battle the opportunity to highlight the local support the school had from the surrounding community.

In 1921, Okolona Industrial also became associated with the Episcopal Church under the aegis of its affiliate organization, the American Church Institute for Negroes (ACIN). As part of its missionary efforts, the ACIN provided financial support to a handful of Black schools throughout the South.²⁹ The daily operation of the school was still retained by staff and the school board, but denominational allegiance was transferred to the Episcopal Church. For Battle and Okolona Industrial, this decision was highly beneficial, as the school received an annual stipend. Battle did not have to constantly solicit donations through northern tours.³⁰ Such support became a mixed blessing, however, as it not only offered financial stability, but also increased the prominence of the school in the local community and made it a greater target for extremist vitriol and attack.

²⁹ The American Church Institute for Negroes (ACIN) began in 1906 and was “established to coordinate the Church-affiliated schools and refocus attention on the educational needs of men and women of color. Its goal was to train African Americans to be successful skilled tradesmen, businessmen, teachers, and clergy. Generally, only one school was supported in each state.” By 1921, there were nine schools including Okolona. Episcopal Archives website. Available at <https://www.episcopalarchives.org/church-awakens/exhibits/show/divergence/acin>. See also The Archives of the Episcopal Church, RG 61, Records of the American Church Institute (ACI), 1867-1968.

³⁰ Battle also frequently toured the North speaking at churches and other public forums to solicit donations from Northern congregations and philanthropists. Over a twenty-five-year period, Battle toured constantly in order to supplement the modest revenue the school earned from its agricultural and other departments. His efforts earned donations from such wealthy philanthropists as Andrew Carnegie, who gave a one-time donation of nearly \$6,500 after a fire devastated the school in 1906. Yet such large donations were not a regular occurrence, and the numerous industrial schools had to compete with one another as well as with the larger, more established schools, such as Tuskegee and Hampton. To combat this trend, as well as the problem of donor fatigue Northern philanthropists experienced, Battle and other principals joined together in forming the Association of Negro Industrial Schools in 1913. Tellingly, such conferences were not attended by Booker T. Washington, but were attended by those associated with the NAACP, such as Oswald Garrison Villard and W. E. B. Du Bois. For more information, see Henry S. Enck, “Black Self-Help in the Progressive Era: The ‘Northern Campaigns’ of Smaller Southern Black Industrial Schools, 1900-1915” *The Journal of Negro History* 61, no. 1 (1976): 73–87.



McDougall Trade Shop on the Okolona campus. The building was destroyed by fire in 1919.³¹

The Campaign of Violence

President Battle used every tactic of accommodation to build up his school's reputation in the community and to shield it from violence. Such methods worked for the first few decades of the school's history but failed by the mid-1920s. The inherent weakness of the policy of accommodation meant that extremists could attack the Black community indiscriminately and not face repercussions. The murder of an Okolona faculty member on school grounds in 1925 and the lack of prosecution for the guilty parties only led to continued attacks by those same White extremists in 1926 and again in 1929.³²

³¹ Ibid. Available at: <https://v4.lib.virginia.edu/sources/images/items/uva-lib:330172?idx=0&page=1>.

³² Even before the violence at Okolona Industrial in 1924, there was a noticeable effort to intimidate Black residents. For example, George Walker and David Webster Turner were both accomplished Black businessmen who were forced to flee Okolona out of fear of violence directed toward them. George W. Walker was a successful barber and farmer in Okolona. He was born on February 2, 1880, in Mississippi and was classified as mulatto with a wife and five children on the 1920 census. He was forced to flee Okolona sometime in 1924 or 1925 and took up residence in Columbus, Ohio, by 1926 where he remained for the rest of his life. David Webster Turner was a dry goods merchant and

The violence that occurred at Okolona Industrial during the 1920s was part of a long tradition of White violence against Black schools dating back to the Reconstruction Era. Yet only a handful of examples of violence connected with industrial schools can be found in the historical record. Besides Okolona, the only other known examples include the attempted lynching of Thomas Harris at Tuskegee in June 1895 and the murder of Laforest Planving at Pointe Coupee Industrial in Louisiana in 1903.³³ The violence that occurred in all of

early board member of Okolona. The genealogical record for Turner indicates he was born in 1855, making him significantly older than any of the other victims. If he was attacked in 1925, he would have been approximately seventy years old. He was supposedly forced to leave Okolona because he “resisted an assault by a white man, the white man being the aggressor.” He fled to an unknown location, and it is not known if he ever returned to Okolona. George Foster Peabody Correspondence, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division. Box 29. Robert Patton to Theodore Bratton. August 9, 1929. 1900-1940 U.S. Censuses. WWI Draft Registration Card. 1926 City Directory for Columbus, Ohio. Available via Ancestry.com. By the 1940 census, he was living and working as a barber in Franklin, Ohio, and he lived there until his death in 1960. Genealogical information available via Ancestry.com. U.S. Censuses, 1870-1910. Turner’s son Isaac was a physician and surgeon, who later took up practice in Indianapolis, Indiana, by WWII. Isaac Turner’s WWII Draft Registration Card shows his location as Indianapolis, Indiana. It is possible that the elder Turner moved to Indiana with his son as well, although the historical record is sparse.

³³ The following themes were central to both cases of violence at Tuskegee and Pointe Coupee: “outsiders” preaching about social equality; prominent Black men with successful businesses being attacked; no repercussions for the guilty; and no recourse (legal or otherwise) for the victims. More than likely, such events were more common than current sources indicate. The principal of an industrial school in Ramer, Alabama, supposedly had to flee a lynch mob in 1902, but no sources could be found to confirm this event. Robert J. Norrell, “Booker T. Washington: Understanding the Wizard of Tuskegee” *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, no. 42 (2003): 96–109. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3592453>. See also the attempted lynching of Thomas Harris in 1895 in Alabama. The White community of Tuskegee objected to a Northern White man from Ohio (Rev. Kelly) preaching to local Black residents about social equality. The Northerner stayed with Thomas Harris, a local Black lawyer. A lynch mob, led by Dr. W. J. Gautier, confronted the men, while Harris fled to his neighbor’s house. In the resulting confusion, Harris’ White neighbor, John Alexander, was shot in the back of the neck, while Harris was shot in the leg. Harris’ son Wylie took his father to the Tuskegee Institute for medical aid but was denied entry by Washington on account of the pursuing mob. Harris escaped with the help of his son and wrote to Washington from time to time, asking for information about his family and if a return home would be possible. By December 1895, Harris had made his way to Okolona

these incidents is strikingly similar, except that the Okolona violence consisted of multiple attacks that occurred over some half-dozen years.

Possible motives for the violence towards Okolona Industrial include economic, personal, and racial reasons. The ringleaders who perpetrated the violence, the Andersons, were a single family of father and sons who moved to Okolona in 1919. The family had ties to the livestock trading business, which potentially put them at odds with the industrial school's agriculture department. The fact that the victims were all influential leaders in the community with businesses patronized by both races also lends credence to an economic motivation. A second explanation, that of personal disputes between the victims and the Andersons, was offered by White board members as the principal reason for the violence, but this excuse falls short of explaining why the Andersons carried out multiple attacks against prominent Black residents affiliated with the industrial school for no apparent reason. More convincing is the explanation for the violence

and requested that Washington again speak with the "better class of white people" on his behalf, although he did not believe he could ever return to his law practice in Tuskegee. It is not known if Thomas Harris ever returned home, but his wife and children remained in Tuskegee and are listed on the federal censuses for the years 1900 to 1950. For more information on the Harris episode, see Louis Harlan, *Booker T. Washington Papers Volume 4: 1895-98*, (University of Illinois Press, 1975), 44, 51-52, 74-75, 81-82, and 97. "A Social Equality Preacher," *The Weekly Democrat*, June 12, 1895. See also a blog dedicated to the subject: <http://strangefruitandspanishmoss.blogspot.com/2015/11/june-1895-attempt-to-lynch-tom-harris.html>. See also the murder of Laforest Planving in 1903. Laforest Planving (b. Petrus Laforest Albert Plantevigne) was principal of Pointe Coupee Industrial School. He was shot and killed on August 30, 1903, near his home in Oscar, Louisiana. The American Missionary Association made annual appropriations to the school and was in regular contact with Planving and directed his work. When he established the school, he consulted with local White planters and gained their approval. Contemporary reports claimed that Planving's assassination was due to his making incendiary speeches to the Black community and telling them not to work or have anything to do with White people. Booker T. Washington was scheduled to be a speaker the following month as the guest of Planving. In addition to preaching Washington's message of work, he went further and said that they should work only for themselves; they should own the land and cultivate it for themselves. As a result, it was difficult to get domestic work done on the plantations. For more information on the Planving murder, see *The American Missionary*, 1903, 237-239. "Shooting of Planving," *Natchez Democrat*, September 2, 1903. "Planving's Assassination," *New Haven Courier*, September 2, 1903. "Race Hatred Murder," *Portland Daily Press*, September 2, 1903.

due to racial prejudice. The fact that the Okolona president, a faculty member, a successful former student, and a Black board member were all violently attacked on separate occasions indicates a concerted effort to harm the school and what it meant for the local Black community. When examined altogether, it is clear that these personal disputes were not isolated, but rather an overt campaign against one of the most prominent Black institutions in the region.³⁴

The Baskin Murder

According to President Battle, the threats and intimidation directed toward Okolona did not begin until 1924. In a remarkable firsthand account, Battle detailed repeated instances of intimidation and violence committed against the school and its staff. Several threats on his own life in 1924 preceded the culmination of events that led to the murder of one of the school's faculty members, Ulysses S. Baskin, a year later.³⁵

The alleged perpetrators of these crimes were recent arrivals to the area. The principal instigators were several members of the Anderson family, who moved to Okolona in 1919 by way of Huntsville, Alabama, but originally came from Tennessee. The patriarch of the

³⁴ It should be noted that much of the information for these attacks comes from hearsay and rumor. None of the perpetrators of the crimes were convicted in a court of law due to witness intimidation, so exact knowledge of what transpired is nearly impossible to prove with existing sources. Nonetheless, it is a fair recreation of what the African American community of Okolona likely experienced during the 1920s. Sources include Wallace Battle's unpublished statement on the violence, W. E. B. Du Bois' article in *The Crisis*, and correspondence from the director of the ACIN and the Episcopal Church. One of the murders did have a trial (*McAllister v. State*) and is also a source for this article. Attempts to track down the court cases from 1925 and 1929 at the Chickasaw County Historical Society and the courthouses in Okolona and Houston were not successful. Most likely these cases for the Second Judicial District in Okolona were disposed of at some point in their life cycle.

³⁵ The main sources for the Baskin murder are as follows: "Statement of President Wallace A. Battle, May 1925. Wallace Battle to W. E. B. Du Bois. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. Available at <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/collection/mums312>. *The Crisis*, Vol. 34. October 1927, 261-262 and 282-283. Available via Hathitrust. *Dangerous Donations: Northern Philanthropy and Southern Black Education, 1902-1930* (1999). George Foster Peabody Correspondence, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division. Box 29. Robert Patton to Theodore Bratton. August 9, 1929.

family, Garland Hayden Anderson Sr., was a farmer throughout his life, roughly the same age as President Battle, and had three sons.³⁶ The eldest son, Charles “Charlie” Anderson, was a World War I veteran, livestock dealer, and a sheriff for Chickasaw County from 1936-1940.³⁷ Garland “Dick” Anderson Jr. also worked in livestock and was involved in several encounters with the law. In 1934, he was convicted of contempt of court for abducting a key witness in a murder trial so that the witness could not testify. In 1938, upon discovering his wife in bed with a younger employee, he shot and killed them both in supposed self-defense. His older brother, Charles, then a sheriff, aided in protecting his brother from prosecution.³⁸ The youngest son, Dewey “Hob” Anderson, also worked in the family business. He was named by Battle as being involved in the murder of a faculty member in 1925 and was a deputy sheriff for the 1926 case of *McAllister v. State*, involving the murder of a former Okolona student. Hob was a candidate for

³⁶ 1880-1940 U.S. Censuses. 1906 Voter Registration Roll. All available via Ancestry.com. Findagrave memorial. Available at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/27179983/garland-h-anderson>. Garland Haden Anderson Sr. (1873-1948) was born in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, in 1873 and was listed as living on a farm in Tennessee for the 1880 census. He was listed on a 1906 voter registration for Huntsville, Alabama, but the 1910 U.S. Census lists him as living in Gibson County, Tennessee. He arrived in Okolona in 1919 and engaged in farming and livestock. The 1920-1940 federal censuses have him living in Okolona and still working as a farmer.

³⁷ 1900-1940 U.S. Censuses. WWI Draft Registration Card and WWI Transport List. Available via Ancestry.com. *The Honor Roll: Gibson County, Tennessee, 1917-1919*, p. 18. Findagrave memorial. Available at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/36361691/charles-william-anderson>. Charles “Charlie” William Anderson (1895-1982) was a horse and mule dealer prior to 1917 in Huntsville, Alabama. During WWI, he held the position of sergeant in the 161st infantry, serving in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive from September to November 1918 (the deadliest battle for the U.S. during the war). After his discharge, he moved to Okolona in 1919 and operated Charlie Anderson’s Mules & Mares. He was likely a deputy sheriff during the 1920s and was elected sheriff of Chickasaw County from 1936 to 1940.

³⁸ “Okolona,” *Clarion Ledger*; March 20, 1938, 10. Garland Haden “Dick” Anderson Jr. (1905-1985) was born in Huntsville, Alabama, graduated from the University of Mississippi and received a J.D. from Cumberland University. A veteran of WWII, he was a cattleman, farmer, and store operator in Okolona. In 1938, on returning to his combination store and home, he discovered his wife in bed with Wade Stuart, a younger store employee. He allegedly shot and killed Stuart in self-defense, and “accidentally” killed his wife in the process. His brother Charlie, then sheriff, helped him evade prosecution. The victim, Wade Stuart, was also married with two children.

sheriff in 1939 but did not win the election. He died of a self-inflicted gunshot to his right temple while visiting his parent's home in Okolona in 1941.³⁹

The first attack on the school occurred in August 1924 and was directed at Battle and his family, who were driving in their car and were repeatedly cut off by a group of White men driving a Ford automobile. The mob pursued them throughout the town, cut them off, and threatened the frightened family. Battle managed to evade the mob by driving at a high rate of speed and escaping to the safety of the school grounds. Battle gave no indication if the Andersons were involved in this attack, but the director of the ACIN's version of the events placed at least one Anderson inside the attacking car.⁴⁰

The second assault on Battle was even more alarming, with "H. Anderson" stopping him in town near the post office and threatening to kill him while holding a gun in his hand. Anderson told Battle that "although he was a decent Nigger he had too much influence for a Nigger and that he had better watch his step or he would come out to the school and get him." The apparent reason was the mistaken belief that Battle was talking to the mayor of Okolona about a previous assault Anderson made on an undisclosed Black resident. Battle explained he was only talking with the mayor in his office about his plans for the upcoming county fair and suggested they both go to the mayor to confirm the subject of conversation, but Anderson refused to do so.⁴¹

Born a Southerner, Battle knew how to disarm such situations

³⁹ Dewey Gibson "Hob" Anderson, WWI Draft Registration Card, September 12, 1918. Hob Anderson, 1920 U.S. Census. Both available via Ancestry.com. *McAllister v. State*, Case No. 26340, Series 6, Box 16353. Available at MDAH. Findagrave memorial. Available at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/64389489/dewey-hobson-anderson>. Dewey Hobson "Hob" Anderson (1899-1941) was born in Tennessee and was listed as a teamster for the Baxter Brothers Company in Huntsville, Alabama, in 1918. On the 1920 census, he and his wife boarded with William E. Patterson in Huntsville, and he was listed as a horse salesman. He was a deputy sheriff for the *McAllister v. State of Mississippi* Supreme Court case in 1926-1927.

⁴⁰ George Foster Peabody Correspondence, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division. Box 29. Robert Patton to Theodore Bratton. August 9, 1929. "Statement of President Wallace A. Battle, May 1925. Wallace Battle to W. E. B. Du Bois. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. Available at <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/collection/mums312>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

by “turning the other cheek” and bringing the matter up with longtime Okolona board member and prominent railroad counsel, A. T. Stovall. Battle requested that Stovall meet with Anderson and learn about his grievances with Battle, but in the end, it was only suggested that the matter be dropped. Battle protested and threatened to resign his position, but Stovall convinced him to stay at the school and continue his life’s work for the time being.⁴²

Several seemingly minor events followed these first attacks. In October 1924, the school lost one of its hogs, and after hearing that Mr. Anderson was seen driving his truck with a similar looking hog in the back, the head of the agricultural department, Ulysses S. Baskin, went to Anderson to see if it was the school’s property. Anderson admitted taking the animal, but said it looked like one he had lost, so it was mutually agreed that Anderson would pay cash for the animal that he took.⁴³

In May 1925, some magnolia trees planted by the United Daughters of the Confederacy and white columns that lined the entrance to the school were torn down by a tractor or other heavy machinery. Around this same time, rumors circulated in the Black community that unnamed members of the mob were making plans to shoot up the school. Other rumors circulated that the school was to be burned. These rumors became even more ominous when, during a student play attended by many Okolona residents, mysterious cars were seen driving on the school grounds, and staff noticed that the school’s water supply line had been cut. These events culminated in the murder of the head of the agriculture department, Ulysses S. Baskin, on commencement day, May 20, 1925.⁴⁴

Commencement day was supposed to be a momentous occasion, as Governor Henry Whitfield agreed to attend the ceremonies and signal his approval of industrial education for Black students

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ George Foster Peabody Correspondence, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division. Box 29. Robert Patton to Theodore Bratton. August 9, 1929. *The Crisis*, Vol. 34. October 1927, 261-262 and 282-283. Available via Hathitrust. “Statement of President Wallace A. Battle, May 1925. Wallace Battle to W. E. B. Du Bois. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. Available at <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/collection/mums312>

⁴⁴ George Foster Peabody Correspondence, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division. Box 29. Robert Patton to Theodore Bratton. August 9, 1929.

throughout the state. A long proponent of industrial education and a racial moderate, Whitfield encouraged such education and saw it as crucial to the future progress of Mississippi.⁴⁵ Whitfield's attendance would have undoubtedly helped Battle to further secure the permanent success of his school throughout the state.⁴⁶

The mob had other plans, however. The week prior to commencement, three dogs had entered the school's livestock pasture and killed one of the school's goats. In response, Baskin shot the dogs, one of which happened to be owned by Anderson. On the morning of commencement day, the Andersons confronted Baskin about the matter. Baskin acknowledged shooting the dogs but said he had no knowledge as to whose dogs they were and would justly compensate the owners. Upon hearing Baskin's words, the father and son shot him seven or eight times, mortally wounding Baskin in front of his wife and two children, commencement visitors, and several teachers. Baskin lived for another two days, which allowed Battle to hear firsthand his telling of the attack.⁴⁷

In the aftermath of the killing, Battle indicated that a trial

⁴⁵ *Catch the Vision: The Life of Henry L. Whitfield of Mississippi* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1974), 107-110.

⁴⁶ 1900-1910 U.S. Censuses. Roster of Company 17, Training Detachment, Western University, Quindaro, Kansas. Available via Ancestry.com. MDAH. Series 1731. Ulysses Baskin, Statement of Service Card, No. 821. Available at <https://da.mdah.ms.gov/wwicards/show/26496>. For more information on the Rahe Auto and Tractor School see <https://kchistory.org/islandora/object/kchistory%3A108829>. Baskin was born on October 27, 1891, in Buena Vista, Mississippi. His parents Clem and Mattie were farmers, and his father was listed as a preacher on the 1930 census. Baskin was a graduate of both Okolona and Tuskegee and a veteran of WWI. From August 1918 until the end of the war, Baskin trained at the Rahe Tractor and Auto School as part of the Student Army Training Corps at Western University in Quindaro, Kansas. He returned to Okolona after the war and began teaching at the school sometime during the early 1920s. In early 1918, the US War Department created the Student Army Training Corps (SATC) to hasten the training of soldiers for the war. Students would enlist in SATC and simultaneously take college courses and train for the military.

⁴⁷ George Foster Peabody Correspondence, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division. Box 29. Robert Patton to Theodore Bratton. August 9, 1929. *The Crisis*, vol. 34. October 1927, 261-262 and 282-283. Available via Hathitrust. "Statement of President Wallace A. Battle, May 1925. Wallace Battle to W. E. B. Du Bois. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. Available at <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/collection/mums312>.

occurred but that only Baskin's father could be mustered to testify due to the level of intimidation directed toward any potential witnesses. The mob warned Battle personally that if he took any active part in prosecuting this case before the grand jury, they would shoot him on sight. Given that Charles and Hob Anderson had connections with law enforcement and were likely responsible for the shooting, it is little wonder that more witnesses could not be found.⁴⁸

Battle placed the cause for the affair on his ability to win over the leading White residents of Okolona, who respected him and the work he was accomplishing at the school. Always an astute observer, Battle reasoned that those aligned with the mob accounted for one-quarter of the White population of Mississippi, or about twelve percent of the total population. Yet despite their negligible number, they were able to effectively nullify the law as well as the sentiments of the majority of the community.⁴⁹

Battle immediately tried to resign from his position after the Andersons were acquitted of the charges of murdering Baskin. He also wrote a synopsis of the murder for publication in the press. He was dissuaded, however, by the Okolona board and the leadership of the ACIN. In a meeting in Memphis, Stovall and other trustees counseled Battle not to publicize anything about the murder, saying it would only cause further harm to the school's reputation. Stovall believed that the cause of the murder was not racial in origin and that the Andersons would have killed a White man under the same circumstances.⁵⁰

Dr. Robert Patton of the ACIN also did not support Battle or Okolona at this time and entertained offers to transfer the school to another location. In particular, Patton received word from William Holtzclaw, principal of the Utica Industrial School in Hinds County, that his school would be willing to partner with the ACIN and replace Okolona as the primary receiver of Episcopal support in Mississippi. Patton was in favor of such a proposal, but the members of the Okolona board did not support moving the school at this time.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Rev. Dr. Robert W. Patton served as director of the ACIN from 1919-1944. He was born in Lindsay, Virginia, in 1869. He attended Randolph-Macon College, studied law at the University of Virginia, and graduated from the Virginia Theological Seminary in 1895. He served as rector of churches in

Patton also focused on the financial loss caused by the violence rather than the violence itself. At the October board meeting of the ACIN, he expressed concern over the impact that the murder had on the school's ability to raise funds. Due to the disarray caused by the violence, Battle and Bishop Bratton were unable to campaign for donations from longtime supporters of the school, and Patton estimated that the school needed an immediate \$2,500 before the next board meeting in December of that year.⁵²

For his part, Bishop Theodore Bratton similarly failed to stand up for Battle and the Okolona school following the Baskin murder. In their diocesan journals, Bishop Bratton and his Coadjutor, William Mercer Green, made no mention of the murder, despite them both being in attendance at the graduation ceremonies. The bishop's journal mentions an "excellent school play, admirably staged and acted" on May 19, and on May 20, the day of the murder, Bishop Bratton noted the "most interesting reminisces of the school made by several speakers" during the commencement exercises. The Bishop Coadjutor William Mercer Green also ignored any mention of the murder in his journal, saying laconically that "he was in attendance upon the board meeting . . . and he had a share in the commencement exercises."⁵³

For two years, Battle remained silent about the murder to the press but ultimately felt that he could no longer stay in the South and continue his work after what had happened at Okolona. The director of the ACIN later recalled Battle's resignation statement, "Dr. Patton, I

Virginia and Pennsylvania before becoming the secretary of the Province of Sewanee, which included nine Southern states. He was the longest-serving director of the ACIN. See "Dr. Patton Succumbs at 75 Years," *Richmond Times Dispatch* September 10, 1944, p. 29. During his tenure, Patton was able to build a political alliance with the Southern bishops, particularly with Theodore Du Bose Bratton, Bishop of Mississippi, and Thomas F. Gailor, Bishop of Tennessee. See Eric Anderson and Alfred A. Moss, *Dangerous Donations: Northern Philanthropy and Southern Black Education, 1902-1930* (1999), 155-189.

⁵² Episcopal Archives, Series 1: Board of Trustees, Box 2, Folder 2: Minutes, 1924-1944, October 9, 1925, Board Meeting, Patton. Bishop Theodore Du Bose Bratton was born in South Carolina in 1862 and obtained his divinity degree in 1889 from the University of the South. He became the Bishop of Mississippi in 1903 and held that position until he retired in 1938. See the Episcopal Church glossary <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/glossary/bratton-theodore-dubose/>.

⁵³ MDAH. *Diocese of Mississippi Journal*, 1925. Catalog number 283.063/P94, 91 and 106.

don't mind staying here and being killed if my staying would help the cause. But satisfied that my usefulness has ended, I don't want to be shot down like a dog,' a pun on the allegation that a dog was the cause of the killing of Baskin." Despite the tragedy, Battle remained on good terms with the ACIN and accepted a position as Field Secretary with the organization, which allowed him to leave Mississippi and still work with the other ACIN schools.⁵⁴

Once Battle accepted his new position and moved to the Northeast, he also decided to publicize the matter. Through Okolona trustee, Moorfield Storey, Battle established contact with W. E. B. Du Bois, editor of the NAACP periodical, *The Crisis*. Battle gave Du Bois all the necessary information about the Baskin murder, providing Du Bois with the ammunition to pen a skillfully written account of the murder and highlight the failure of the local board members and the Episcopal Church in holding the killers accountable.⁵⁵

Du Bois noted that Battle expected the best members of the White community to support him and the school and that the Episcopal Church would demand justice. After all, it was an egregious attack on not just one individual but also the school, the community, and the church itself. Numerous opportunities existed for the White leadership to do the right thing. The upcoming General Convention of the Episcopal Church was to be held in the fall of 1925 in New Orleans, and Battle was supposedly scheduled to speak at the convention.⁵⁶ What better way for Battle to tell the world the story of how the Andersons had murdered Baskin and the justice system of Mississippi had failed to find them guilty? Du Bois also mentioned that the NAACP was asked to send a neutral party to gather evidence and lead an investigation into the matter. Both of these suggestions, however, were turned down by the school board and the Episcopal Church, who claimed that "any airing of the matter would bring the wrath of the surrounding white

⁵⁴ George Foster Peabody Correspondence, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division. Box 29. Robert Patton to Theodore Bratton. August 9, 1929.

⁵⁵ *The Crisis*, Vol. 34. October 1927, 261-262 and 282-283. Available via Hathitrust.

⁵⁶ Episcopal Archives, *The Journal of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church*, New Orleans, 1925, p. 236. Available at <https://www.episcopalarchives.org/governance-documents/journals-of-gc>. Patton did attend the convention and delivered an address on the work of the ACIN, but said nothing of the Baskin murder.

neighbors" down upon the local Black community.⁵⁷

Captain Stovall, in particular, led the opposition to publicizing anything about the murder in the press or elsewhere. He insisted that the Baskin murder was simply a private dispute and that there were no racial issues in Okolona. He emphasized that there were no witnesses willing to come forward and that it was a sign of guilt for a Black person to protect his flock or to carry a gun. Stovall also felt that Battle was unnerved by the situation and suggested he take a vacation. Battle did not speak at the convention, and he officially resigned as school president on July 20, 1927.⁵⁸

Du Bois did not miss the opportunity to criticize the Episcopal leadership over the matter. He noted how the Episcopal Church was likely the wealthiest denomination in the U.S. and the only one not to split over the subject of slavery. Yet it had done little to improve Black education over the years. Regarding lynching and the prevention of mob violence, Du Bois also noted that the church suffered a "moral paralysis," due to its southern White members blocking any and all efforts to speak out against such perversions of justice. Instead, the leadership silenced Battle and blocked any attempt to publicize the

⁵⁷ George Foster Peabody Correspondence, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division. Box 29. Robert Patton to Theodore Bratton. August 9, 1929. *The Crisis*, vol. 34. October 1927, 261-262 and 282-283. Available via Hathitrust. "Statement of President Wallace A. Battle, May 1925. Wallace Battle to W. E. B. Du Bois. W. E. B. Du Bois Papers, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries. Available at <https://credo.library.umass.edu/view/collection/mums312>.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* Following his resignation, Battle moved to New York to work as field secretary for the ACIN. He also was awarded a fellowship for the Rosenwald Fund for his study of race relations in Brazil. He retired from the ACIN in 1937 and moved to Connecticut. He passed away in 1946 at the age of 74. See Berea College Alumni Records, RG 8, Wallace Battle. Battle's wife, Effie Threat Battle, remained at the school and took over as interim principal until a more permanent replacement was found. She was born in Okolona and claimed Choctaw ancestry through her mother, who was one-quarter Choctaw. She graduated with her bachelor's degree from Rust College and taught teacher education and grammar at Okolona. She married Wallace Battle in 1903 and published a book of her poems entitled, *Gleanings from Dixie Land*, in the 1910s. After Wallace Battle resigned in 1927, she took over administration of the school for several years but eventually rejoined her husband on the east coast, living in New York and Connecticut. See Ancestry.com for her Dawes Census Card and Choctaw Application for Enrollment. Also see the U.S. Census records from 1900-1950. Wallace and Effie's marriage record card is also available on Ancestry.

affair or to have outside organizations investigate matters further.⁵⁹

The Logan Murder

The violence at Okolona did not end with the death of Baskin. In October 1926, Randal Logan, a former Okolona student and successful blacksmith in the town, was murdered on his own property under questionable circumstances by two assailants. Logan was born in 1888 in Okolona to Alma and Harriet Logan. His father Alma was a merchant grocer according to the 1910 census, and Randal had seven siblings. Logan attended Okolona Industrial School sometime during the 1910s and became a prominent blacksmith in the town during the 1920s.⁶⁰

The case appeared before the Second Judicial District of Chickasaw County. *McAllister v. State* is remarkable in that it was tried only four days after the murder occurred, and the prosecution relied on two principal witnesses: the wife of Logan and a ten-year-old boy. The dual trials lasted only a few days before White McAllister and James Carter (alias Guinea) were convicted of the murder of Logan. Devastating to their defense were the testimonies of the wife of Logan (Willie), who identified them as having asked to see her husband before he was murdered, and also a ten-year-old boy, Joe Crumpton, who was with Logan when he was shot and named them as the shooters.⁶¹

According to the defense, McAllister and Carter were frequent gamblers and not highly respected in the Okolona community. They were made scapegoats when public sentiment clamored for justice immediately after the killing. The defense also argued that Logan's

⁵⁹ *The Crisis*, vol. 34, October 1927, 261-262 and 282-283. Available via Hathitrust.

⁶⁰ 1910 and 1920 U.S. Census records. Available via Ancestry.com. His first name was also written as Randel or Rondel.

⁶¹ MDAH, Series 6, *McAllister v. State*, Case No. 26340, Box 16353. White McAllister was born in 1904 and married to Annie M. McAllister. He was listed as a common laborer at the time of his death, and he lived on 209 Wheeler Street in Okolona. Death certificate number 14474, Mississippi Board of Health, Available via MDAH. On the 1950 Census, his widow, Annie McAllister, was listed as an elementary teacher and married to Nelce McAllister, a street cleaner. U.S. Census records, available via Ancestry.com. Search attempts for James Carter were not successful in the genealogical records. There is a Findagrave memorial, but his death date is incorrectly listed as December 3, 1926.

wife was not actually able to see the two men who came to her porch to ask for her husband, and she only wanted justice after the tragic loss of her partner. Most importantly, the testimony of the child Crumpton was simply not believable in most instances.⁶²

The believability of Crumpton is the most crucial matter of the whole affair. While awaiting trial the young boy was sequestered by none other than Hob Anderson, then serving as a deputy sheriff for the county under questionable circumstances.⁶³ According to the defense, Crumpton did not even name the defendants as the perpetrators of the crime until after being held by Anderson. Most concerning of all, following the convictions of McAllister and Carter, and their impending executions, Crumpton recanted his testimony and said that it was, in fact, Charles Anderson who murdered Logan and not the two condemned men.⁶⁴

Despite efforts to secure a stay of execution, McAllister and Carter were hanged on July 15, 1927, reportedly the first such executions in Chickasaw County since the nineteenth century. According to reports, the sheriff at the time, D. S. Bishop, was unable to perform the executions because he believed the two men innocent and became physically ill, and a deputy had to carry out the executions instead. Furthermore, the then mayor of Okolona, W. F. Buchanan, also reportedly believed McAllister and Carter were innocent.⁶⁵

The Black community of Okolona held their own opinions of what really happened in the Logan murder case. As part of Logan's

⁶² MDAH, Series 6, *McAllister v. State*, Case No. 26340, Box 16353. Assignment of Errors, George Bean, attorney for defendant, April 21, 1927.

⁶³ Curiously, Hob Anderson was not listed as a deputy sheriff on any other court cases during this period, begging the question of how he became associated with the case. The only deputy sheriffs found for Chickasaw County were Seymore C. Jones (1925), Oliver Enochs Shell (1928), and John W. Wylie (1934). See the civil and criminal cases for the 2nd judicial district, Okolona Courthouse.

⁶⁴ "May Stay Execution New Evidence," *Clarion Ledger*, July 15, 1927.

⁶⁵ In a later interview with Battle in 1944, he suggested that the mayor might have been poisoned because of the indignation that he expressed over the executions, thus leading to the remote possibility that the mob caused the death of another victim. Berea College, RG8 Wallace Battle 001, "Visit at the Home of Dr. Wallace A. Battle, Chaplin, Connecticut." Mayor Buchanan died on November 4, 1927, of gangrenous pancreatitis, with a contributing gastric hemorrhage according to his death certificate. State of Tennessee Board of Health, Death Certificate, available via Ancestry.com.

business practice, he often bought ready-made suits and sold them on layaway to the community. The two men executed for the crime, White McAllister and James Carter, bought suits on layaway from Logan. One of the Anderson men allegedly learned of this fact and used it to build up a case of circumstantial evidence against McAllister and Carter, framing it as an economic motive for the killing. One source even suggested that Logan had loaned the Andersons a sum of \$1,500. Yet another rumor was that one of the Anderson men had improper relations with Logan's wife. The murder of Logan thus provided the Andersons with several benefits: the removal of a successful Black businessman and former Okolona student; the cancellation of a \$1,500 debt owed to Logan; and gaining access to Logan's wife for one of the Andersons. Although impossible to prove through historical sources, such rumors nonetheless cast a shadow of doubt over the executions of White McAllister and James Carter, who protested their innocence to the very end.⁶⁶

The Attack on Gilliam

The mob continued its attacks on Okolona in 1929 with the attempted murder of Charlie W. Gilliam, a prominent dry goods merchant and a long-standing African American board member of the industrial school. Gilliam was attacked in his own home by a group of masked men who shot him in the back and left him for dead.⁶⁷

The attack on Gilliam was supposedly led by a prominent member of the Okolona community, Dr. Bell Devan Hansell. Late at night on June 29, there was a knock at Gilliam's door from Dr. Hansell, who said he had a sick patient down at the hospital who needed to see him. Gilliam's wife said he was not home, but the mob broke in while Gilliam hid in the attic. Gilliam and his wife noticed three men in addition to Dr. Hansell among the mob. The men searched every room before they burst into the attic, shot Gilliam, and dragged him downstairs. After the mob left him for dead, Gilliam's wife called for Dr. A. F. Wicks, who arrived to find Hansell already there. Hansell

⁶⁶ George Foster Peabody Correspondence, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division. Box 29. Robert Patton to Theodore Bratton. August 9, 1929.

⁶⁷ George Foster Peabody Correspondence, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division. Box 29. Robert Patton to Theodore Bratton. August 9, 1929.

acted as if he was unaware of the attack, but Gilliam and his wife had seen his face in the light of the flashlight and were certain he was involved.⁶⁸

The justification for Dr. Hansell's alleged involvement in the Gilliam shooting is more difficult to determine than that of the Andersons. Hansell was also a recent arrival to Okolona, but unlike the Andersons, he was well respected by members of both the Black and White communities. In 1926, Hansell successfully sued Gilliam over \$162 in unpaid medical bills that Gilliam's son, Raymond, had accrued, but there is no indication that a grudge was held by either party involved. A racial motive also cannot be conclusively determined from existing sources. Hansell's longtime nurse, Margie Walker, a woman of color, reportedly continued in his service for years after the shooting despite protests from others in the African American community.⁶⁹

Nonetheless, Dr. Robert Patton of the ACIN confirmed that it was the general opinion of the community that Dr. Hansell was the one who shot Gilliam. He also stressed that there were three others who went inside the house, and he corroborated the rumor that two cars that contained one or more of the Andersons were parked outside in front. As in the other instances of violence directed at the Okolona school, the perpetrators faced no repercussions for their attacks.⁷⁰

The Gilliam shooting seriously threatened the continued existence of the school, however. At its October 1929 board meeting, the ACIN decided to sever its ties with Okolona Industrial because of repeated acts of violence. Bishop Bratton was convinced that these acts of violence were not because of any racial problem existing toward

⁶⁸ *Okolona Messenger*, March 10, 1949. According to his obituary, Dr. Bell Devan Hansell (1889-1949) was born in Nettleton, Mississippi, and graduated from the University of Tennessee medical program. He began his practice in Egypt, Mississippi, in 1913, moved to Okolona in 1920, and was in practice for a number of years with Dr. Armon French Wicks. Hansell appears to have been a well-respected member of the Okolona community for years. In 1936, for example, he and Dr. Wicks were praised for being among the first to respond to a devastating tornado that hit nearby Tupelo. "Okolona Medics Serve at Tupelo," *Clarion Ledger*, April 11, 1936.

⁶⁹ George Foster Peabody Correspondence, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division. Box 29. Annie Battle to Wallace Battle, August 30, 1929.

⁷⁰ George Foster Peabody Correspondence, Library of Congress, Manuscripts Division. Box 29. Robert Patton to Theodore Bratton. August 9, 1929.

the school but were just part of regular occurrences prone to happen throughout the South. Moreover, Bratton said the better element of the White residents protested such disturbances and that the man who shot Gilliam was just a recent arrival to the city. Bratton also proffered the excuse that no witnesses could be found, and the court even extended its session so that more witnesses could come forward. His final argument was that in closing the school, the ACIN would only hurt the supporters of the school and hand victory over to those who carried out the crimes.⁷¹

The leadership of the ACIN pushed for the end of their affiliation with Okolona and the transfer the school to another location in Mississippi on multiple occasions. After the Gilliam shooting, they renewed such calls, and Dr. Patton suggested Mound Bayou or Meridian as possible locations. Patton placed much of the blame on the community itself for failing to protect its Black residents:

If there exists in the community an alien group powerful enough to petrify law and order, to banish, beat, and murder the best Negroes in the community without redress to the injured or punishment to the guilty, then the community is impotent to perform its share of the partnership. In the case supposed there is nothing left, however pained as we may be, but to form a partnership elsewhere.⁷²

For his part, Gilliam was persuaded not to pursue any charges against those who committed the violence. At the February 1930 board meeting, many prominent members of the town spoke out about the decision to close the school. Gilliam attended the meeting and said that he had lived in Okolona for over thirty years, and his store was located on the main street next to prominent White businesses that had always treated him well. He also stated that it would be better for the school not to seek prosecution since the shooter was masked and Gilliam was only able to recognize his voice. He continued that the attack had been personal and not connected to his being a trustee and that the loss of the school would be a severe blow to the community.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

By May 1930, the town came together and agreed upon the following resolutions: 1) deplorable things had happened in the past, some between White and Black and some between Black and Black; 2) the White residents know that these events were not caused by any racial enmity between the races but of a purely personal nature; 3) everyone supports fairness, justice, and equal opportunity for all races; 4) the White citizens will continue to support Okolona Industrial School; and 5) will defend the school from attack if necessary. A donation of \$6,000 was pledged to the school for the next year in the hopes that the ACIN would reestablish its connection with Okolona. Given the resolutions adopted and the money pledged by the town, the ACIN agreed to reestablish its affiliation with the Okolona school at its April 1931 board meeting. This partnership continued until the permanent closure of Okolona in 1965 due to financial difficulties.⁷³

The violence and intimidation that Okolona Industrial School experienced was remarkable for several reasons. It was likely the most violence that any industrial school ever witnessed in the South during the post-Reconstruction era. The example is also noteworthy in that it shows the great lengths that President Battle went to prevent the violence from occurring. He adopted the most acceptable form of schooling for Black students in the rural South and ingratiated himself with the leading White members of the local community for decades in order to secure his life's vision.

Yet the Okolona example also demonstrates that a small number of racial extremists were able to effectively nullify law and order despite the school having the support of a majority of both Black and White residents. The limits of White paternalism became clear when racial extremists moved to Okolona and began to intimidate and attack the school and its faculty. When violence occurred, the White leadership was incapable or even unwilling to prevent such actions from happening. The White leadership of the school board, the director of the ACIN, and the state clergy for the Episcopal Church all failed to protect the school from attack. They shirked their responsibilities,

⁷³ Episcopal Archives, Series 1: Board of Trustees, Box 3, Folder 5: Reports to National Council, October 8-9, 1930 Report, 1-3. In the following years, the school restructured its curriculum by offering junior college courses in addition to its industrial and high school departments. The school officially closed its doors in 1965 mainly due to financial difficulties and competition from larger universities and colleges.

covered up the truth for years, accused President Battle of overreacting, stymied any effort to hold the guilty accountable, and looked for any excuse to cut their losses and move the school to another location.

When racial violence occurred, there was no recourse for Black residents as the White leadership ignored their part of the “compromise” of accommodation and failed to hold the transgressors responsible. Accommodation only worked when African Americans gave up their rights and asked for next to nothing in return. When violence struck, the school and the Black community had to fend for themselves, with their only recourse being to flee their homes or stay and risk violence and death. Those who left, like President Battle, often found better opportunities in the North, while those who stayed were subject to being murdered, or, as in the case of Gilliam, nearly murdered by a mob in his own home.

Program of the 2024 Mississippi Historical Society Annual Meeting

by William “Brother” Rogers



Excellence in History Award - Hill County Project for preserving the history of the Civil Rights Movement in Benton County. Pictured are Stephen Klein, Sharon Gates-Albert, and Roy DeBerry. Presented by MHS President Will Bowlin.

The Mississippi Historical Society (MHS) held its annual meeting February 22-23, 2024, at The Inn at Ole Miss in Oxford. The program began on Thursday morning, February 22, with the board meeting and the annual business meeting.

The opening session and luncheon was led by MHS president Will Bowlin. Both Kathryn McKee, director, Center for the Study of Southern Culture, and Noel Wilkin, provost and executive vice chancellor for academic affairs, University of Mississippi, welcomed participants.

The keynote speaker was author Ralph Eubanks, a faculty fellow at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, who spoke about the history of difficulties encountered by some of the first African American students who attended the University of Mississippi.

Von Gordon, executive director and youth engagement manager, The Alluvial Collective, led the first afternoon session titled, “How History Teachers Teacher Difficult Subjects.”

The second afternoon session was a panel on student research in Mississippi history moderated by April Holm, associate professor of history, University of Mississippi. Panelists included University of Mississippi Ph.D. students Andrew Bolt, “One City, Two Occupations: Corinth, Mississippi under Confederate and Union Military Occupation,” Paul Mora, “Cracking

the Closet Door: Same-sex Relationships in Greek Letter Societies;” and Jeannie M. Speck-Thompson, “I Paint my Memories: The Legacy of Mr. M.B. Mayfield’s Art.”

The writing awards were presented at the evening banquet, with Rebecca Tuuri, MHS vice president, presiding. The winner of the Book of the Year Award was University of Virginia professor Grace Elizabeth Hale, author of *In the Pines: A Lynching, A Lie, A Reckoning*. William R. Sutton won the Journal of Mississippi History Best Article Award for “The Friars Point Coup and Aftermath: Historical Memory and Personal Character in the Era of Redemption.”



Book of the Year Award - Grace Elizabeth Hale for In the Pines: A Lynching, A Lie, A Reckoning. Presented by Mississippi State University professor Anne Marshall.

Jodi Skipper, associate professor of anthropology and Southern studies, University of Mississippi, led the first morning session on Friday, February 23. The topic was the Behind the Big House project, which interprets slavery by exploring the surviving slave dwellings associated with antebellum homes in Holly Springs.

University of Mississippi faculty members Jeff Jackson, chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, and Charles Ross, professor of history and African American studies, led a session about the findings of the University of Mississippi Slavery Research Group, which since 2013 has been discovering the history of enslaved people at the university.

MHS president Will Bowlin presided over the awards luncheon. Incoming president Rebecca Tuuri adjourned the meeting. Afternoon activities continued with tours of the campus, Rowan Oak, Burns-Belfry Museum, and L.Q.C. Lamar House.



Excellence in History Award - Behind the Big House Project for its multi-year work to interperate slavery in Holly Springs.



Outgoing president Will Bowlin with incoming president Rebecca Tuuri.

2024 Mississippi Historical Society Award Winners



Lifetime Achievement Award - Charles Reagan Wilson, professor emeritus at the University of Mississippi. Presented by MDAH director Katie Blount.

The Mississippi Historical Society held its annual meeting February 22-23 in Oxford to honor its 2024 award winners, including the best Mississippi History Book, the lifetime achievement award, teacher of the year, and awards of merit.

Charles Reagan Wilson, professor emeritus of history and Southern studies at the University of Mississippi, received the Lifetime Achievement Award. He was the Kelly Gene Cook Sr. chair of history and professor of Southern studies at the University of Mississippi, where he taught from 1981 to 2014. He worked extensively with graduate students and served as director of the Southern studies academic program from 1991 to 1998, and director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture from 1998 to 2007.

Grace Elizabeth Hale, commonwealth professor of American studies and history at the University of Virginia, received the Book of the Year Award for *In the Pines: A Lynching, a Lie, a Reckoning*. The book examines the role of Hale's grandfather, a Mississippi sheriff, in the 1947 death of a black man accused of raping a white woman in the era of Jim Crow. It also tells a broader story of the history of the Piney Woods, Jefferson Davis County, and the town of Prentiss, and the Black and white citizens of the region.

William R. Sutton won the Journal of Mississippi History Article of the Year Award for "The Friars Point Coup and Aftermath: Historical Memory and Personal Character in the Era of Redemption,"

which examines racial violence during Reconstruction in a small Mississippi town.



Journal of Mississippi History Best Article Award - William Sutton for “The Friars Point Coup and Aftermath: Historical Memory and Personal Character in the Era of Redemption.” Presented by MHS Vice President Rebecca Tuuri.

The Outstanding Local Historical Society Award was presented to both the Ashland Benton County Historical Preservation Commission and the Benton County Historical and Genealogical Society for their work to plan, organize, and implement the 150th anniversary celebration of the Benton County Courthouse.



Outstanding Local Historical Society Award - Benton County Historical and Genealogical Society and Ashland Benton County Historical Preservation Commission.

The Teacher of the Year Award was presented to Caitlin Thomas of Lafayette Middle School.



Teacher of the Year Award - Caitlyn Thomas of Lafayette Middle School. Presented by MHS secretary-treasurer Brother Rogers.

Awards of Merit were presented to the B.L. Moor High School Alumni Education Association for preserving the history of a former African American school in Oktibbeha County; Bob Willis of Oklahoma for his sculpture of Hiram Rhodes Revels for Zion Chapel A.M.E. Church in Natchez; city of Long Beach for the restoration of the W.J. Quarles House, the home of one of the most prominent early settlers of Long Beach; Coulter Fussell, for preserving the early history of Water Valley; Coahoma Collective and StoryWorks for their work on a living history documentary play entitled “Beneath an Unknown Sky,” which highlights the importance of the Freedmen’s Bureau and Black leaders during Reconstruction; Paul Cartwright, Gene Horton, and Tricia Nelson for publication of the book, *A Shared History: Copiah County 1823-2023*, as part of the Copiah County Bicentennial Project; Friends of Valena C. Jones School for its oral history project interviewing former students and faculty of the school, preserving their memories of the Hancock County institution, and documenting their experiences during integration; Hancock County Historical Society for the production of the historical drama *Mercy Train: Next Stop Bay St. Louis*—an original one-act play about the history of Orphan Trains and the lives of five children from Bay St. Louis in the early 1900s; Historic Biloxi Schools Collection Oral History Project for collecting voices and histories of people who attended or worked in Biloxi Public Schools showing a history not found in textbooks; Jackson State University for the Gowdy Washington Addition Exhibition about one of the first African American communities in the city of Jackson; The LaPointe

Krebs Foundation for the restoration of the state's oldest documented standing building, the de la Pointe Krebs House in Pascagoula; Michael H. Logue for publishing *Echoes from the Bluffs*, a book about the Vicksburg Campaign; MoreStory Monuments Project for recognizing African American history at Mississippi University for Women; Rex Jones for creating two short films—*Libation* and *Legislation: The Story of Mississippi's Legislative Frat House* and *Steve Holland: Jesus Was a Democrat*; and the University of Mississippi Slavery Research Group for projects and teaching about the history of slavery and enslaved people in Oxford and at the University of Mississippi.

Northeast Mississippi Community College instructor Will Bowlin completed his term as president of the society and welcomed the new president, Rebecca Tuuri, associate professor of history, University of Southern Mississippi. Roscoe Barnes III, cultural heritage tourism manager at Visit Natchez, was elected vice president. New board members are Tony Bounds, Tougaloo College; Kasey Daugherty, The Max; Heather Denné, Jackson State University; Kristi DiClemente, Mississippi University for Women; Linda Fondren, Catfish Row Museum; and Malika Polk-Lee, BB King Museum.

The Mississippi Historical Society, founded in 1858, encourages outstanding work in interpreting, teaching, and preserving Mississippi history. Membership is open to anyone; benefits include receiving the *Journal of Mississippi History*, the Mississippi History Newsletter, and discounts at the Mississippi Museum Store.



Keynote Speaker Ralph Eubanks, Faculty Fellow & Writer-in-Residence, Center for the Study for the Study of Southern Culture, University of Mississippi.



Award of Merit - BL Moor High School Alumni for preserving the history of an African American school in Oktibbeha County. Pictured are Jackie Ellis and Dorothy Johnson.



Award of Merit - Michael H. Logue for publishing “Echos from the Bluffs.”



Award of Merit - MoreStory Monuments Project to students from the Mississippi School for Math and Science in Columbus.



Award of Merit - City of Long Beach for restoration of W.J. Quarles House. Accepting are Mayor George Bass and Courtney Cuevas.



Award of Merit - Coahoma Collective StoryWorks for their work on a living history documentary play entitled "Beneath the Unknown Sky," which highlights the importance of the Freedman's Bureau and Black leaders. Accepting are Amana Wallace and Charles Coleman.



Award of Merit - University of Mississippi Slavery Research Group. Accepting are professors Jeff Jackson and Charles Ross.



Award of Merit - Coulter Fussell for preserving the local history of Water Valley.



Award of Merit - for the publication of the book, “A Shared History: Copiah County 1823-2023,” as a part of the Copiah County Bicentennial Project. Accepting are Paul Cartwright, Tricia Nelson, and Gene Horton.



Award of Merit - Friends of Valena C. Jones School for its oral history project interviewing former students and faculty of the school, documenting their memories of the Hancock County institution and experiences during integration. Accepting are Cheryl Thompson and Clarence Harris.



Award of Merit - Hancock County Historical Society for the production of the historical drama "Mercy Train: Next Stop Bay St. Louis." Accepting is Jim Codling.



Award of Merit - Historic Biloxi Schools Collection Oral History Project for collecting voices and histories of people who attended or worked in Biloxi Public Schools. Accepting is Superintendent Marcus Boudreaux.



Award of Merit - LaPointe Krebs Foundation for the restoration of the states oldestst documented standing building, the de la Pointe Krebs House. Accepting is Walter Gautier.



Award of Merit - Jackson State University for the Gowdy Washington Addition Exhibition about one of the first African American communities in Jackson. Accepting are Heather Denne, Felicia McClinton, and Melvina Deans.



Award of Merit - Rex Jones for creating two short films: "Libation and Legislation: The Story of Mississippi's Legislative Frat House" and "Steve Holland: Jesus Was a Democrat."

Minutes of the 2024 Mississippi Historical Society Annual Business Meeting

February 22, 2024

The annual business meeting of the Mississippi Historical Society was held on Thursday, February 22, at 11 a.m. at The Inn at Ole Miss on the campus of the University of Mississippi.

William J. Bowlin, president, Mississippi Historical Society (MHS), presided at the business meeting. William “Brother” Rogers, secretary-treasurer, acted as secretary for the meeting. Candace McKenzie, public information officer in the Programs and Communication Division of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), recorded the minutes.

The following business was transacted:

I. The president called the meeting to order at 11 a.m. and thanked everyone for attending.

II. The secretary-treasurer moved that the minutes of the March 8, 2023, annual business meeting of the Mississippi Historical Society be approved as distributed. An amendment to correct the spelling of Jeff Rosenberg’s name was approved. The motion was seconded by Jeff Rosenberg and unanimously approved.

III. The secretary-treasurer provided a financial report on MHS. As of December 31, the operating account had \$58,105.97. The Fidelity account had \$242,457.13. The main expenses are the annual meeting, publishing and mailing the Journal of Mississippi History, and paying authors in The Mississippi Heritage Series. The main income is from membership dues and registration for the annual meeting. The Society made its third of five annual \$5,000 donations as part of its \$25,000 pledge to the William and Elise Winter Endowment to fund school field trips to the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson.

IV. The president thanked the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, the Office of the Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, the Bank of Anguilla, and Mr. Elbert Hilliard for being sponsors of the annual meeting in 2024.

V. The president presented gifts to outgoing board members April Holm and Jeff Rosenberg and thanked them for their service. He also thanked departing board members Amanda Clay Powers and Joyce Dixon-Lawson who were not present.

VI. The secretary-treasurer presented an update on the Journal of Mississippi History. He stated that the publication has two issues per year: Spring/Summer and Fall/Winter. He as the managing editor and Dennis Mitchell as the editor are on the lookout for new scholarship to include.

VII. The secretary-treasurer thanked Dr. John Marszalek, who was present and is the originator of the Heritage of Mississippi Series, which are books published by the University Press of Mississippi on different periods of Mississippi history. Nine books are complete, including *Old Southwest to Old South: Mississippi, 1798-1840* by Mike Bunn and Clay Williams in 2023. *Reconstruction in Mississippi* by Jere Nash is at the publisher, and *The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* is due from Charles C. Bolton in 2026.

VIII. The secretary-treasurer presented an update on the Mississippi History Now website, detailing that new articles are in the works on a variety of topics. Three articles were published in 2023 on James Meredith, The Lost Cause, and Muddy Waters.

IX. The secretary-treasurer reported that future sites for the annual meeting include Jackson (2025), Meridian (2026), and Jackson (2027).

X. Al Wheat, MDAH director of education, presented an update on Mississippi History Day. Wheat stated the program is growing, especially since it has split into northern and southern regionals at Mississippi University for Women and the University of Southern Mississippi respectively, with the state finals in Jackson. He plans to continue to build the program and made a call for more teacher and student involvement.

XI. On behalf of Daphne Chamberlain, chair, Nominations Committee, the president presented the following slate of new officers and board members:

Officers for the term 2024-25

President – Rebecca Tuuri, associate professor of history, University of Southern Mississippi

Vice President – President; Roscoe Barnes III, cultural heritage tourism manager, Visit Natchez

Secretary-Treasurer – Brother Rogers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History

William J. Bowlin will serve as immediate past president.

The following six individuals are nominated to serve three-year terms on the Society's Board of Directors (2024-2027).

Tony Bounds, college archivist, Tougaloo College, Jackson.

Kasey Daugherty, youth educator, The Max, Meridian.

Heather Denne', director, community engagement, Jackson State University.

Kristi DiClemente, chair, Department of History, Political Science, and Geography, Mississippi University for Women, Columbus.

Linda Fondren, director, Catfish Row Museum, Vicksburg.

Malika Polk-Lee, executive director, BB King Museum, Indianola.

April Holm moved that the aforementioned slate of nominees be accepted by acclamation. The motion was seconded by Brian Perry and unanimously approved.

XII. Sarah Campbell, deputy director of the MDAH Programs and Communication Division, provided a brief report on four initiatives of the department: creating a visitor center about the Vicksburg Campaign near the Vicksburg National Military Park, creating a field preservation school at Historic Jefferson College, constructing a new visitor center at Grand Village of the Natchez Indians with new interpretation based on Native American perspectives, and developing a green space called Crigler Park across from the Two Mississippi Museums to provide an unobstructed view of the museums from State Street.

XIII. In the matter of other business, Keena Graham, National Park Service Superintendent of the Medgar & Myrlie Evers National Monument, reported that the site set a record for visitation. The secretary-treasurer informed the attendees that MDAH, with help from a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, will conduct two summer teacher workshops in honor of the 60th anniversary of Freedom Summer. Seventy teachers from across the country will come to Mississippi to learn civil rights history. Marszalek requested an update on former MHS director Elbert Hillard. The secretary-treasurer reported that Mr. Hilliard has relocated to St. Catherine's Village, but hopes his health improves and will allow him to attend the annual meeting in 2025 in Jackson.

XIV. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by the president.

BOOK REVIEWS

Old Southwest to Old South: Mississippi, 1798-1840

By Mike Bunn and Clay Williams

(Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2023.

Acknowledgements, illustrations, maps, notes, index.

Pp. xvi, 303. \$40.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781496843807)

For anyone seeking an appealing, comprehensive survey of Mississippi's formative years, which includes Alabama prior to its statehood, this book fulfills that purpose. The authors, both experienced public historians, accurately observe that this integral period of the state's history has been "relatively neglected" and frequently "ignored in contemporary times," resulting in the foundational years being "mostly unknown or poorly understood" (xii). Their fascinating study of Mississippi's origins and development in the decades leading to the Civil War rectifies this shortcoming. Although previous works by Thomas D. Clark and John D. W. Guice, William C. Davis, and Robert V. Haynes have addressed aspects of the Old Southwest, the authors here build upon such studies to craft a superb, detailed synthesis that provides a broad

overview of life in early Mississippi. While comprehensive in coverage, addressing just about every possible facet of Mississippi history and culture, their survey nevertheless offers a flowing narrative that holds the reader's attention.

The authors take a topical, rather than a strictly chronological, approach. Their early chapters cover the region's initial settlement by Whites and the evolving governmental administration. Topics range from the annexation and Americanization of the future Mississippi Territory in the aftermath of the War of Independence to the contentious and controversial

development of territorial government and the attainment of statehood, with a new capital situated in the interior on formerly Choctaw land. Fraught relations with Native Americans, conflicts over land grants and squatters, and the fateful introduction and evolution of cotton cultivation and



slavery receive close attention. The Creek War and the War of 1812, previously the subject of detailed analysis by the same authors, especially loom large in the story. Mass in-migration rapidly escalated following the cession of Creek lands, contributing to the transformation of a peripheral frontier society into a thriving pillar of the cotton kingdom.

The latter half of the book delves more deeply into the day-to-day lives and patterns of work of Mississippi's residents, connecting them with larger social, economic, and technological developments. Indian Removal, fully detailed in another volume in the *Heritage of Mississippi Series* by James F. Barnett, and the impact of the cotton gin and steamboats on cotton cultivation provided the larger context in which Mississippians carved out a living, including over 100,000 enslaved persons who were forcibly brought into the state between 1830 and 1840. The authors painstakingly detail the construction of homesteads and farms, agricultural practices, the precariousness of rural family life in an often inhospitable and disease-ridden environment, the life and work of the enslaved, and the culture of a rough and tumble frontier society. Only toward the end of the period, as trade and transportation networks expanded, did significant urban areas develop beyond the original Natchez District. The authors conclude with an analysis of the rise of Jacksonian democracy, a potent political movement centered around the

figure who personified many of the themes evident in this formative era of Mississippi. Andrew Jackson's return to his old haunts in Mississippi in 1840, utilizing the steam-driven riverboats and the railroad to reach his namesake capital city, fittingly symbolized the evolution of the area from a remote colonial frontier to an established and prosperous state.

The book is well-written, provides a pleasant read, and, although geared primarily toward a general audience, would be an ideal text for any undergraduate course addressing the "Old Southwest" before it became the "Old South." The content is sufficiently cited with both primary and secondary sources, and an extensive bibliography demonstrates the wealth of research the authors put into developing a complete overview, yet one that avoids getting bogged down into too much detail. Possibly the sole shortcoming is the lack of modern mapping to show the population growth, settlements, and natural and man-made features comprising the Mississippi Territory and early state. Still, this work is comprehensive and balanced, and fulfills its stated objective of delivering a "sweeping, straightforward, subject-driven narrative" (xiv) of a largely ignored, yet extremely important period of Mississippi's history and culture.

William S. Belko
John Wood Community College

William Barksdale, CSA: A Biography of the United States Congressman and Confederate Brigadier General Changed Everything. By John Douglas Ashton (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 2021. Acknowledgments, maps, notes, index. Pp. xi, 297, \$39.95 paper. ISBN: 9781476683744.)

John Douglas Ashton aims to provide a “definitive biography” (3) of William Barksdale. He achieves his goal by delivering a comprehensive narrative of Barksdale’s early life and military service in the Mexican War and reflecting on its impact on his political career and his subsequent role in the Civil War. The only other complete accounts of Barksdale’s life previously available were James Willette McKee’s unpublished master’s thesis and doctoral dissertation at Mississippi State University written in the mid-1960s. Ashton expands upon McKee’s works by drawing from previously unused sources, including soldiers’ diaries, family letters, masonic records, and family histories, to create a thorough and readable biographical study.

Ashton challenges the notion that Barksdale was a fire-eater bent on destroying the Union. Here, he builds on similar points made by McKee but does a more thorough job documenting his argument with evidence. Using various sources, such as Barksdale’s speeches and newspaper coverage of his political campaigns, he argues that Barksdale was a complex

personality, and that the political terrain of antebellum Mississippi was more nuanced than fire-eaters versus Unionists. He demonstrates that Barksdale, for a time, held seemingly contradictory positions. While a supporter of slavery and states’ rights, he was also a Unionist who opposed secession. Ashton argues that Barksdale’s complexity and contradictory positions allowed him to navigate the political divide between Unionist and states’ rights factions in Mississippi to secure election to Congress.

Although Barksdale is recast as a “cross between a limited Unionist and a restrained States’ Righter” (36), Ashton provides a compelling account of Barksdale’s involvement in the personal conflicts in Congress over slavery, including the caning of Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner. Interestingly, he corrects a historical myth by offering evidence that Barksdale played no role in the caning. Nevertheless, he concedes that Barksdale was a hot head who was ready and willing to fight on the floor of the House of Representatives. As the political conflict over slavery became more heated, Barksdale had several personal altercations, including his own “scalping” at the hands of Wisconsin’s Cadwallader Washburn. Ashton’s recounting of Barksdale’s robust advocacy for slavery and Illinois Republican Owen Lovejoy’s forthright case for abolition provides the reader with a microcosm of the depth of the national divide over slavery on the eve of the Civil War.

One notable weakness in the biography is Ashton's unnecessary assertion that slavery was not the fundamental cause of the Civil War, and he ultimately undermines his own thesis. Almost immediately after declaring that "the institution of slavery was the issue that sparked the conflict, it was not the underlying root cause," he writes that "the entire Southern culture, social order, and economy, were dependent on the continuation of slavery" (78). In a biography that largely recasts Barksdale as a nuanced and principled politician who supported slavery but worked to avoid secession until the election of Abraham Lincoln, it hardly seems necessary to attempt to split hairs about the pivotal role that slavery played in precipitating the Civil War.

The most compelling part of the book is the depiction of Barksdale as a military leader during the Civil War. Barksdale's experiences in the Mexican War led him to gain "a true appreciation of the importance and inherent difficulties in maintaining effective supply and logistics, and recognize the importance of military discipline" (29). While furthering our understanding of Barksdale's military career, Ashton also provides a detailed and readable account of Barksdale's combat experiences, his role in various battles, and the daily life of soldiers. Although the account is generally sympathetic toward Barksdale, Ashton notes incidents where he failed as a leader, including when he got drunk during his Mississippi Brigade's march to

Leesburg, Virginia in August 1861. While intoxicated, he insulted his soldiers, resulting in his arrest and court martial, although he was eventually restored to command and apologized to his men.

Ashton effectively situates Barksdale's career within the larger history of the Civil War and demonstrates how he contributed to Confederate actions on the battlefield. The ultimate example was his brigade's charge at Gettysburg on July 2, 1863, which resulted in his death. Ashton's well-documented and detailed description of Barksdale's leadership in the Civil War and his nuanced narrative of Barksdale's political career both deepen our knowledge of antebellum politics in Mississippi and provide a broader understanding of Civil War tactical leadership at the brigade level. A readable and well-researched biography, Ashton successfully rescues Barksdale from historical obscurity while contextualizing his actions within larger critical events in United States history.

Kenneth V. Anthony
Mississippi State University

A Hound Dog Tale: Big Mama, Elvis, and the Song that Changed Everything. By Ben Wynne. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2024. Illustrations, acknowledgments, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. vii, 166. \$29.95 cloth. ISBN: 0807181140.)

Ben Wynne's well-written and exhaustively researched book provides an important contribution to 1950s American cultural history by examining the long-neglected history of one of that decade's biggest songs. Simultaneously, his research into the *Hound Dog* narrative greatly contributes to the complicated racial, gender, generational, legal, and cultural controversies attached to rock-and-roll long before Elvis Presley sang one note or swiveled one hip. As Wynne writes, the song is: "evocative of a particular era, but the racial, gender and generational issues that were part of its creation are still relevant today" (123). This book should quickly find a place in collections and college classrooms examining twentieth-century American histories of culture, race, gender, and music.

Wynne should be commended for his clear writing. In four succinct chapters, his work follows a complicated musical narrative. The author introduces eclectic characters attached to the early rock-and-roll scene, and specifically the *Hound Dog* song, who challenge the overused all-White portrayal of 1950s America. First are the song writers, two northern-born White Jewish teenagers who wrote for Black artists and scored their first hits by the early 1950s. Others include a first-generation Greek American producer who married interracially before World War II, a Black Texas record producer of interracial parentage who enjoyed connections to Black organized crime, and many early-1950s White

and Black performers who, through different arrangements and even genres, tried to replicate *Hound Dog's* initial 1953 commercial success.

Many may have first learned of Alabama-native Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton and her personal connection to *Hound Dog* in the 2022 Baz Luhrmann film, *Elvis*. Wynne's work offers so much more, revealing her regional success as a gospel singer, her gift for rhythm and blues, her emergence as a bold national character in the music business, and her challenging of contemporary racial and gender norms. Her vocal talents on *Hound Dog*, a song written specifically for her, brought brief national success, but foreshadowed oncoming heartbreak.

Sam Phillips, a White Memphis record producer already known for recording Black artists, here somewhat surprisingly serves as an example of Black artist exploitation. Trying to replicate Thornton's *Hound Dog* success, he quickly released *Bear Cat*, which had the exact same melody and chord structure as *Hound Dog* but featured Marshall County, Mississippi, native and popular Memphis DJ Rufus Thomas singing different lyrics. The song's quick success soon saw Phillips facing bankruptcy in a copyright infringement lawsuit. Phillips was saved financially by signing and recording a young Tupelo, Mississippi native who was working for a Memphis electric company, Elvis Presley. Two years later, that same singer would, through

television, share his version of *Hound Dog* with the entire nation. With these performances, Wynne writes, Presley had become “a truly unstoppable force” (4). In a sign of the depth of Wynne’s pre-Presley *Hound Dog* research, the singer’s famous 1956 television appearances do not appear until page 100 of a 123-page narrative. Wynne even adds a new jewel to the well-worn Presley narrative, pointing out that Elvis’s *Hound Dog* version owed more to *Freddie Bell and the Bellboys*, an all-White band from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, than to Thornton.

Wynne’s work shines because of thorough original research. His notes and bibliography encompass over one-fourth of the book. His extensive primary sources include archival collections, interviews, radio and television material, memoirs, newspapers and magazines, many published more than thirty years prior to the 1950s rock-and-roll phenomenon.

Wynne directly confronts the issue of cultural appropriation. Regarding Presley, he notes the singer’s consistent acknowledgment of “African American influence in his early music” as well as his following and acceptance among Black audiences and artists alike, leading him to assert that “. . . casting Presley as one of the primary villains . . . might be a bit harsh” (93). As for *Hound Dog*, Wynne states that the song’s consistent inclusion of different racial and ethnic elements, no matter the performer, reveals the strength of diversity within

American culture and “the song’s creation and ultimate introduction” remains “too convoluted to view singularly in racial terms” (93).

Wynne convincingly argues that *Hound Dog* simultaneously reflected a 1950s youth rallying cry and a complex American origin story that included the best and worst of our nation. In relating his complex argument, the author confirms that the song has enjoyed a life just as colorful and controversial as the man who made it famous.

Toby Glenn Bates
*Mississippi State University -
Meridian*

Outliving the White Lie: A Southerner’s Historical, Genealogical, and Personal Journey. By James Wiggins.

(Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2024. Acknowledgements, index, bibliography. Pp. vi, 291, \$99 cloth, \$25 paper. ISBN: 9781496850355.)

Robert E. Lee was a southern gentleman who hated slavery and fought for the Confederacy because of familial duty. The southern states seceded not over slavery but over states’ rights. Reconstruction represented a terrible national government experiment in which unscrupulous carpetbaggers took advantage of clueless African Americans. It behooved the Redeemers to restore order to the South. In the South, democracy reigned among Whites. What are

these statements? For many White southerners, they are foundational truths. Grounding his arguments in southern historiography, James Wiggins calls these outright lies.

Wiggins, a community college history instructor and newspaper columnist in Natchez, Mississippi argues that White supremacy has been the foundational principle throughout much of American history. He digs into the racist lies that have undergirded White southern education, government, social life, and religion from the antebellum period to the present. Wiggins acknowledges that the study of this history aided his own journey of enlightenment, and thus the book targets fellow White southerners who, like him, grew up imbibing this skewed, mythical narrative.

There is nothing new here as far as experts in the field are concerned. Wiggins desires to translate extensive mainstream historical scholarship into digestible bites for lay readers and clarify what scholars have long known. Slavery was about brutal capitalism, and White slave owners created a racist mythology to soothe their consciences. He argues that the notion of White equality from the antebellum period to the 1960s was mostly a myth. White elites enslaved African Americans and later during the Jim Crow era kept them in quasi slavery through disfranchisement, violence, and economic exploitation. But White elites also took every opportunity to disfranchise, impoverish, and denigrate poor Whites. Controlling

the government, the economy, the press, and even the pulpit, White oligarchs used racial fearmongering to convince poor Whites to join the elite in a façade of racial solidarity, thus cutting their own economic throats and forgoing a more inclusive democracy.

A unique feature of the book is Wiggins's personal connection with the narrative he is describing. He is not merely the dispassionate historian with a bird's eye view of events. Throughout the book, he tells personal anecdotes of family members and ancestors and how they benefited from slavery or Jim Crow segregation. For example, Wiggins discusses how his mother profited from the unequal school spending Mississippi dispensed for White children compared with African American children. For every dollar spent for a Black child, White children got five. Many White school boards redirected funds intended for Black schools into White ones. His own mother reaped the rewards of this White privilege as her home county of Noxubee disbursed funds at a ratio of 15:1 in favor of White students. Wiggins discusses his personal struggle to overcome being raised in this racist world. While his parents forbade the use of the N-word, they embraced the ideology of Jim Crow, and indoctrinated him to accept and benefit from this racialized system. Wiggins argues that these deep-seated prejudices and stereotypes impact individuals on a subconscious level, and only by acknowledging these issues and continually battling them is a

more informed and empathetic life possible.

Wiggins not only recounts the sordid history and impact of White supremacy on the South and the nation, but he also makes the case for national restitution. He believes that White supremacy must be rooted out of American society, starting with a government plan of reparations for centuries of racism. He expounds that the American political system should be reshaped to become more majoritarian by abolishing the Senate filibuster and the electoral college and restoring federal oversight of voting rights to defeat state level voter suppression tactics such as gerrymandering. He calls for the overturning of the Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United case which has allowed wealthy elites to drop billions of dollars into political campaigns. Obviously, these are all contentious political issues, but Wiggins states that if the destructive nature of White supremacy is to be addressed, then these measures are essential to fulfilling Martin Luther King Jr.'s credo that the United States can only achieve greatness by living up to its egalitarian creed.

This is a fine book. Wiggins succeeds in his purpose of leading nonspecialists toward a more truthful understanding of the nation's painful past. The one major flaw is the absence of footnotes. While he references an extensive bibliography, it would have been helpful to supply page numbers to accompany his prodigious use of quotations.

Jeffery B. Howell
East Georgia State College

Degrees of Equality: Abolitionist Colleges and the Politics of Race. By John Frederick Bell. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2022. Preface, introduction, acknowledgements, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. x, 312. \$45.00 cloth, \$19.95, electronic. ISBN: 9780807171943.)

Three of the nation's most racially progressive, antebellum educational institutions are the subject of John Frederick Bell's thoughtful examination in *Degrees of Equality*. His work provides a comparative analysis of Oberlin College in Ohio, New York Central College, and Berea College in Kentucky, with a unique focus on African American students' experiences. At the work's core is a play on its title, which Bell makes periodically in the text; even in the most radical of institutions, commitments to students' equality came incrementally, by degrees, and fluctuated in response to administrative demands, donors' interests, and broader societal changes.

The book opens with an examination of Oberlin College, where Bell illustrates students' equal footing and interracial camaraderie with two widely differing statistics. First, the number of leadership positions African American and White students held together demonstrates their ease in amplifying a common voice in

campus governance. Second, and more amusingly, the range of low-level conduct violations committed by groups of campus men shows that students felt comfortable enough with each other to get in trouble together, regardless of race. As Oberlin's successful abolitionist commitments gained popularity among educators, interest in casteless campuses grew, leading some Oberlin-affiliated leaders to consider creating, or reforming, other colleges to match the Oberlin mold. Bell's reliance on student voices, wonderfully common throughout the book, is brilliantly on display in a second chapter on Oberlin which examines the lives of four African American women, focusing on their challenges as they worked to exemplify for White leaders the best of their race and gender.

Unlike Oberlin, New York Central College was created as an abolitionist college from the outset, and throughout its twelve years in operation, struggled in twin uphill battles for stable leadership and financial security. Despite these challenges, New York Central succeeded in hiring an interracial and co-educational teaching corps, some of whom were Oberlin graduates, and dismantled the barriers between men's and women's educational opportunities common to other institutions. Nevertheless, leadership churn and fundraising problems led to the college's eventual closure. Bell also highlights the institution's inability to resolve the tensions between radical campus change agents and

those who sought institutional continuity.

Kentucky's Berea College also worked to balance radical change and institutional stability, while it became the only institution of the three Bell examines that ever enrolled a plurality of African American students. Bell's two-chapter treatment of Berea clearly illustrates the effects of shifting social mores through Radical Reconstruction and post-1877 conservative retrenchment. It also shows the interconnectedness of leadership at abolitionist colleges, as graduates, relatives, and members of the American Missionary Association (AMA) all assumed varied leadership roles at Oberlin, New York Central, and Berea. Like New York Central, Berea was, in its postwar collegiate phase, established as an integrated institution. Unlike New York Central and Oberlin, however, its creation after emancipation and its successful recruitment of African Americans generated deeper student support for social equality than the AMA and its followers ultimately found too radical. In 1872, Berea's conservative trustees enacted new rules prohibiting interracial marriages, which contributed to increased racial antagonism among, and departures from, the faculty. Following changes in rules and staffing, Bell shows that unrest in administrative circles led to increased social division among students, as well. By 1889, the situation reached a tipping point, when White students created Berea's first segregated

dining table. By 1892, Berea's new leadership under president William Frost stepped back from the institution's commitments to an interracial ideal and began to recruit more White students from Appalachia.

Degrees of Equality is a rich, detailed, and unique horizontal history of abolitionist colleges. Amid a swirl of single-institution histories focused on administrative minutiae, Bell examines cross-institutional abolitionist education with a welcome reliance on student voices, augmenting the student focus with illuminating glimpses of philanthropic challenges, community concerns, and leaders' successes and failures. Even more importantly, Bell's narrative shows how imperative it was that successful institutional leaders championed the work of social equality from the top-down rather than abdicating responsibility to students. This work is highly recommended for higher education professionals, scholars, or casual readers alike.

Kristy Wittman Howell
*University of North Carolina at
 Greensboro*

Mad With Freedom: The Political Economy of Blackness, Insanity, and Civil Rights in the U.S. South, 1840-1940. By Élodie Edwards-Grossi. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2022. Acknowledgements, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. ix, 163. \$45 hardcover. ISBN: 9780807177747.)

Élodie Edwards-Grossi illustrates how physicians' discourse about African American insanity was politicized over a century. Her analysis significantly contributes to the historiography of nineteenth and early twentieth century psychiatry and has broader implications for scholars of race, medicine, and the civil rights era. She expands this historiography both temporally and spatially. She notes in her introduction that most works on mental health institutions highlight exceptional cases, but she seeks to provide a broader synthesis on medical theory. She argues that white physicians naturalized racial differences in African American psychiatry, and their theories justified discriminatory legislation and treatment of African Americans throughout the South in the period 1840-1940.

The author begins by detailing theories about African American insanity during the antebellum era. She expertly argues that most White physicians believed that the enslaved were less prone to madness than free people of color. The "Sane Slave" narrative not only denied African Americans mental health treatment but also absolved

White politicians and slaveowners of responsibility for their slaves' mental health. She goes on to investigate the "strange career" of the 1840 census, which was "used by anti-abolitionist circles . . . to argue that enslaved people were less affected by madness than free African Americans in the North because emancipation provoked episodes of insanity" (41). The census quickly became a sectional issue and even attracted international attention. Spanish physician Ramon de la Sagra, for example, concluded that "maybe the disproportion between the numbers of enslaved and free Blacks" diagnosed as insane "had nothing to do with slavery but with the social environment in which free African American people lived" (54). Edwards-Grossi effectively demonstrates how southern medical practices affected international medical and political discourse.

Following Emancipation, racialized ideas continued to shape mental health institutions and practices. Given the prevailing view that freedom would cause more madness, additional psychiatric institutions opened. While newly appointed African American legislators opposed racially segregated facilities for fear of unequal services, however, White legislators insisted upon them. Simultaneously, White legislators were willing to "organize welfare distribution schemes only when they thought that poor Whites would benefit" (74). Thus, White legislators enforced racial segregation and provided

inferior funding for African American spaces. Similarly, treatment varied according to race. Physicians prescribed physical labor for African American patients, sustaining the dominant idea that African American bodies were physically different and needed the "natural" laboring conditions of enslavement" (98). Edwards-Grossi argues that physical labor was a front for "promoting docility while finding a solution to financial difficulties that were crippling the state institutions for black patients" (111). It had limited effectiveness as a treatment protocol but reinforced prevailing biological beliefs about the "natural" state of African Americans and became an economic necessity to sustain underfunded segregated facilities.

The author closes by analyzing the larger medical codification of racial difference. She notes that European psychoanalytical theorists interacted with Jim Crow physicians to shape medical theory throughout the mid-twentieth century. These theories influenced both the medical and the political worlds, framing the debates surrounding the enactment of anti-African American legislation. She convincingly argues that "a transnational global network of European and American psychoanalysts" served to justify regional Jim Crow legislation (157-58). White physicians played a crucial role in propagating the theory that African Americans were "naturally unfit for freedom" (160). Her ambitious work effectively synthesizes the historiography of

mental illness and civil rights in the South and is useful for historians of medicine and the region more generally.

Notably absent from this book is the experience of the African American mental patients themselves. The author acknowledges this limitation in her introduction, stating that she was “limited by the historical sources to be found in the archives” because African Americans “have been erased from the institutional reports and physicians’ papers” (11). Perhaps a second investigation, drawing heavily upon nontraditional sources such as oral histories, ethnography, and other anthropological evidence, could yet create a synthesis of the African American patient experience in the South. Regardless, this work accomplishes the task of synthesizing the impact of White physicians’ theories in both the South and among a larger transnational network.

Brianna Otero
Hot Springs, Arkansas

The Insurrectionist: Major General Edwin A. Walker and the Birth of the Deep State Conspiracy. By Peter Adams. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2023. Acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, illustrations, index. Pp. x, 280. \$39.99 cloth. ISBN: 0807179922.)

Since the publication of Richard Hofstadter’s “The Paranoid Style in American Politics” in Harper’s Magazine in 1964, there has been an ever-growing body of historical literature seeking to analyze the activities of far-right organizations, their leaders, and their ideological adherents in the United States. Such work has become more relevant as ultra-conservative extremism has again found its way into the mainstream, as it did in the 1950s and 1960s. During that period, Edwin A. Walker became a scion of the far right. A major general in the U.S. Army, Walker resigned his commission and gave up his pension rather than accept a transfer as punishment for using John Birch Society publications to indoctrinate troops under his command. He became a contentious figure as both the embodiment of massive resistance against the civil rights movement and the champion of conspiratorial notions that the Soviets and secret agents inside the federal government were set on destroying the United States.

Peter Adams’s book is a welcome addition to the historiography of contemporary American conservatism and the far right. Organized chronologically according to the key events in Walker’s public life, *The Insurrectionist* analyzes the embattled general’s second career as a mercurial firebrand, rabblouser, and conspiracy theorist. Adams situates Walker at the intersection of massive resistance, Cold War political paranoia, Christian

fundamentalism, and violent extremism. Throughout the book, Adams foregrounds Walker's advocacy of the "control apparatus," whereby "deep state actors in the State Department, the Pentagon, and throughout the government [worked] with coconspirators in the Kremlin and at [United Nations] headquarters to create one-world government" (1). Walker and his ilk "feared impending tyranny from Washington" (2) by an all-powerful federal government and desired to return to a mythological place in American history. Walker advocated these sentiments throughout his post-military career, aligning with like-minded individuals, such as Kent and Phoebe Courtney, Reverend Billy James Hargis, and Robert Welch. Their conspiratorial views hauntingly foreshadowed those held by many participants in the current QAnon movement and the deadly insurrection on the grounds of the U.S. Capitol building on January 6, 2021.

Adams provides significant context for Walker's erratic behavior and irrational beliefs. He argues that Walker was essentially an unstable individual who embraced dangerous conspiracy theories at a time when the country faced significant domestic and international stress. Although he obeyed President Dwight D. Eisenhower's orders (with which he disagreed) to uphold a federal court order during the 1957 integration of Little Rock Central High School, Walker became increasingly unhinged during his post-military

career. The most nefarious example of this behavior was his instigation of the riot during the University of Mississippi desegregation crisis. Following his arrest, Walker was transferred to a federal prison in Missouri where he undertook a battery of tests to determine his psychological frame of mind before trial. Adams argues that his "brief incarceration not only fed radical Right conspiracy theories about psychiatry and mental health treatment but also contributed to a national debate about the rights of politically prominent figures suspected of being mentally unstable" (108). The discussion prefigured current concerns about the mental acuity of contemporary political figures and their ability to manage the affairs of state.

Walker increasingly associated with advocates for Christian fundamentalism and violent extremism. Both he and Texarkana-based Hargis sought to tie together a "literal interpretation of the Bible" and a "return to authentic Americanism and constitutional originalism" (8). Walker joined Hargis on his *Midnight Riders* tour in early 1963, where he railed against the federal government, integration, and anything else that threatened his narrow view of Americanism. Meanwhile, his associations with the Texas Minutemen and the Ku Klux Klan captured the attention of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Although he adopted coded wording rather than openly espousing insurrection, "Walker was not averse to working secretly

with a number of groups, some acting as fronts for the Klan,” but he “was careful to avoid lending his name publicly to groups of the neofascist Right” (182). Nonetheless, Walker briefly leveraged fear and hate into personal income.

After the passage of civil rights legislation, Walker’s increasingly erratic behavior drew consistently negative press commentary, and the disgraced general disappeared from public view. He returned to the spotlight under dramatically different circumstances in the mid-1970s when he was twice arrested for sexually propositioning a male police officer in a public space. Drawing upon recent work on masculinity and evidence from FBI reports, Adams speculates that Walker was probably a closeted homosexual who created a hyper-masculine persona to mask his true identity. At a time when homosexuals were considered a security threat, and homosexuality was portrayed as part of the communist conspiracy to destroy the United States by undermining the American family and manhood, Walker could not allow his private life to become public.

The *Insurrectionist* is a significant contribution to the literature on far-right activities in the United States and is as frighteningly prescient as it is historiographically relevant. Very well researched and engagingly written, the author made extensive use of primary source materials from the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, where Walker’s

papers are housed, the Dwight D. Eisenhower and John F. Kennedy presidential libraries, and FBI investigative files. There is much here that readers will find oddly familiar – right-wing groups and individuals espousing and performing insurrection, hyper-masculinity, Christian nationalist racial rhetoric, and claims that an unelected deep state secretly controls the governing apparatus. Historians of American politics, the Cold War, and gender and sexuality will find tremendous value in Adams’s work. More than just a political biography of the provocative and divisive Walker, *The Insurrectionist* weaves a cautionary tale upon which historians can draw in attempting to explain contemporary American politics.

Charles J. Pellegrin

Northwestern State University

Adelbert Ames, the Civil War, and the Creation of Modern America. By Michael J. Megelsh. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2024. Acknowledgments, illustrations, maps, notes, index. Pp. 328. \$39.95 paper. ISBN: 9781606354674.)

Michael J. Megelsh’s excellent biography of Mississippi’s Reconstruction governor represents the most comprehensive analysis of this important but often overlooked leader. Megelsh notes that Ames’s story “has been caught in a historical purgatory” (10) due

to the prevalence of Lost Cause historiography that portrayed Ames as the lead tyrant of Mississippi's Reconstruction. Megelsh, however, shows Ames to have been an intelligent politician who was both ambitious and caring. After witnessing the violent upheaval in Mississippi firsthand, Megelsh writes, Ames "came to believe that legal protection for all could only be provided if the laws of [Mississippi] recognized Black equality and the legislature produced civil rights bills." (157-58). Megelsh intends to portray Ames as "not a figure worthy of being placed on a pedestal" (8) but rather to provide "a thorough depiction of his life [that] credits his accomplishments, makes his shortcomings known, and contributes to preexisting historical works" (8). Megelsh succeeds in accomplishing his purpose.

The book is separated into twelve chapters. The first six cover Ames's life, from his youth in Maine, where he showed a knack for getting into fights and a penchant for music and literature, to his world travels aboard his father's merchant ships, where he witnessed the depredations of slavery worldwide, and his experiences in the American Civil War. Megelsh presents Ames as a reluctant abolitionist (compared to his family members), a meticulous soldier, and a relentless status-seeker, a soldier who was equally concerned with the righteousness of the Union cause and his own personal ambitions within the U.S. Army. Ames organized and trained the Twentieth Maine Regiment,

providing military education to famed college professor turned war hero Joshua Chamberlain. Ames was wounded at Antietam, fought at Fredericksburg and Gettysburg, and rose through the ranks when Ulysses S. Grant headed east. Throughout these chapters Megelsh presents Ames as an intellectual who supported Union efforts to bring the Confederacy to heel, marveled at the ineptitude of his commanders, and, despite being a staunch Republican, questioned the Lincoln administration's will to bring about a swift end to the war. Megelsh's descriptions of Ames's experiences in battle are captivating, particularly the page turning action of Ames's assault and capture of Fort Fisher, North Carolina in early 1865. Megelsh succeeds in portraying Ames as "an ambitious, proud, and increasingly frustrated officer" (107) who served bravely across the battlefields of the American Civil War and who grew as a leader of men.

Following an entertaining chapter on Ames's trip across Europe in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, the remainder of the book examines the rise and fall of Ames's political career in Reconstruction Mississippi. Megelsh shows that Ames was doomed from the start. As a United States senator, Ames was hamstrung by the charge that he had appointed himself to the position. As governor of Mississippi, Ames operated under the cloud of being a so-called "carpet bagger" and constant unfounded charges of corruption. His support for equal

rights for Black Mississippians made him public enemy number one for most White Mississippians. His impeachment trial and subsequent resignation from office fueled the historical narrative of Ames as the leader of a corrupt Reconstruction regime in need of redeeming.

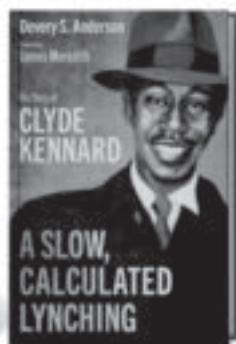
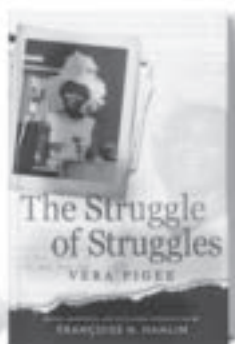
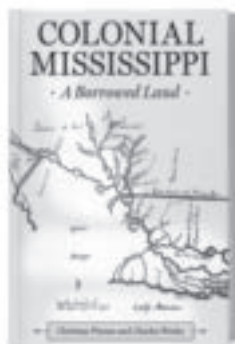
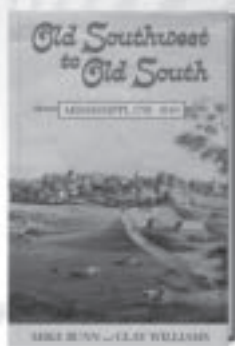
Megelsh does a good job of portraying the political rivalries in the state of Mississippi that led to Ames's downfall and, subsequently, to the downfall of equal rights for Black Mississippians and the rise of the Lost Cause narrative that centered White racists as the heroes of Mississippi.

Megelsh utilizes several excellent primary source collections and nineteenth-century histories to craft his narrative. He mines numerous regimental histories, Ames family manuscripts, newspapers, and state and federal government documents throughout the book. However, his citations do not show research into the Governors' Papers at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History nor the exceptional Civil War and Reconstruction Governors of Mississippi digital project. Had Megelsh utilized these resources, he would have found hundreds of letters from Black and White Mississippians to Ames that illuminate the violence and uncertainty, as well as the hopefulness, of Reconstruction in Mississippi. These sources would have buttressed an already excellent biography of Mississippi's oft misunderstood political hero, Adelbert Ames.

Ryan P. Semmes
*Ulysses S. Grant Presidential
Library
Mississippi State University*

New from the University Press of Mississippi

*WINNER
OF THE
MHS
BOOK OF
THE YEAR
AWARD*



Available at your local bookseller.

upress.state.ms.us



The Southern Quarterly

Published by The University of Southern Mississippi since 1962, *The Southern Quarterly: A Journal of Arts & Letters in the South* is a scholarly journal devoted to the interdisciplinary study of Southern arts and culture, including literature, history, anthropology, and the traditional arts.

TO SUBSCRIBE:

Individuals \$40/year

Institutions \$70/year

Send article, poem, photo essay,
or interview submissions through
aquila.usm.edu/soq.



CONTACT:

The Editor, SoQ

118 College Drive #5078

Hattiesburg, MS 39406

SouthernQuarterly@gmail.com



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN
MISSISSIPPI

JOIN THE MISSISSIPPI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

and receive the

Journal of Mississippi History

plus the

Mississippi History Newsletter

Join or renew dues online at www.mississippihistory.org
or complete the form below.

First name	Middle initial	Last name
Mailing Address		Apt/Suite #
City	State	Zip code
email address		

Annual Dues (Add \$10 for all foreign subscriptions.)

\$35 Individual

\$50 Family

\$75 Supporting

\$100 Corporate

\$200 Patron

\$500 Lifetime

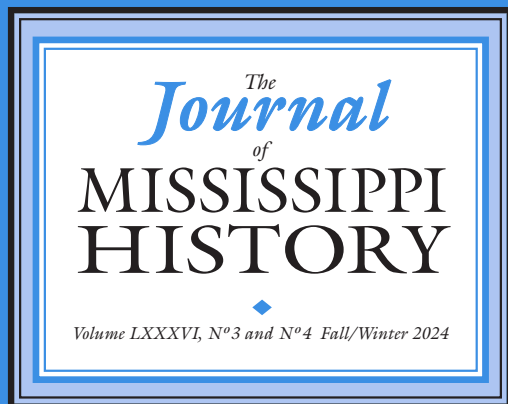
Mail completed form and check (made payable to Mississippi Historical Society) to Mississippi Historical Society, P.O. Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205-0571.

NOTE TO PROSPECTIVE CONTRIBUTORS

Initial submissions should be made to editor Dennis J. Mitchell, dmitchell@meridian.msstate.edu or P.O. Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205-0571. Preferred manuscript length is 25–40 pages (double-spaced), exclusive of footnotes. The *Journal* encourages the inclusion of illustrations—photographs, drawings, maps, tables—that enhance the essay.

The Chicago Manual of Style (latest edition) should be followed, with some exceptions (primarily dates: the *Journal* prefers “December 1, 1866,” to Chicago’s “1 December 1866”).

For more information contact *Journal of Mississippi History* editor Dennis J. Mitchell at dmitchell@meridian.msstate.edu or 601-479-6293.



The *Journal of* MISSISSIPPI HISTORY ◆ Volume LXXXVI, N°3 and N°4 Fall/Winter 2024

The Mississippi Historical Society

Founded November 9, 1858

2024-2025 OFFICERS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
KATIE BLOUNT
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

EDITOR
DENNIS J. MITCHELL
PROFESSOR EMERITUS, MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY-MERIDIAN

MANAGING EDITOR
WILLIAM “BROTHER” ROGERS
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR
Richard V. Damms
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY-MERIDIAN

PRESIDENT
Rebecca A. Tuuri, University of Southern Mississippi

VICE PRESIDENT
Roscoe Barnes III, Visit Natchez

SECRETARY–TREASURER
Brother Rogers, Mississippi Department of Archives and History

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
William J. Bowlin, Northeast Mississippi Community College

EX-OFFICIO
Katie Blount, Mississippi Department of Archives and History

2024–2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DEEDEE BALDWIN
Mississippi State University

JEAN GREENE
Hinds Community College-Utica Campus

BARBARA N. BOSCHERT
Delta State University

SHARELLE GRIM
Mississippi Delta Community College

TONY BOUNDS
Tougaloo College

ANNE MARSHALL
Mississippi State University

KASEY DAUGHERTY
Meridian

BRIAN PERRY
Jackson

HEATHER DENNE'
Jackson State University

MALIKA POLK-LEE
Indianola

KRISTI DICLEMENTE
Mississippi University for Women

RORY ROBIN RAFFERTY JR.
Pass Christian

LINDA FONDREN
Vicksburg

PERRY SANSING
University of Mississippi

SYLVIA GIST
Durant

TJ TAYLOR
Madison

KEENA NICHELLE GRAHAM
Jackson

Mississippi Department of Archives and History
www.mdah.ms.gov

Mississippi Historical Society
www.mississippihistory.org

www.mississippihistory.org