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The End of Reconstruction in Mississippi: The Fraudulent Election of 1875

by Jere Nash

Of all the state and federal elections that have taken place in Mississippi since 1817–perhaps as many as 200–only four fundamentally altered the direction of the state: the 1861 election to secede; the legislative campaigns of 1875 that ended Reconstruction; the 1911 election that elevated James K. Vardaman to the U.S. Senate and Theodore Bilbo to the office of lieutenant governor and gave those two men vast public platforms to define race relations in the state for nearly forty years; and the 1959 election of Ross Barnett as governor, leading to the debacle at the University of Mississippi that he engineered in 1962 and that left a stain on the state for decades. Of those four, the election of 1875 had the longest reach and would ultimately prove the most consequential.[1]

Not only was the 1875 campaign extensively documented by national newspapers, magazines, and journals of the time, as well as wall-to-wall coverage by local newspapers in the state, it was the subject of a massive congressional investigation during the first nine months of 1876, resulting in a report exceeding two thousand pages of documents and testimony from 162 witnesses.[2]

Since that time, the 1875 election in Mississippi has been covered in virtually everything written about Reconstruction in

[1]The *Journal of Mississippi History* published Warren A. Ellem's "The Overthrow of Reconstruction in Mississippi" in its May 1992 issue (vol. 54, no. 2) at 175-201, though most of the article consists of a review of Reconstruction issues unrelated to the actual outcome of the 1875 election.

[2]William L. Coker, "The United States Senate Investigation of the Mississippi Election of 1875," *Journal of Mississippi History*, 37 (May 1975), 143-163. The Senate Report is *Mississippi in 1875: Report of the Select Committee to Inquire into the Mississippi Election of 1875, with the Testimony and Documentary Evidence* (44th Cong., 1st Sess., Senate Report No. 527, Serials 1669 and 1670; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876).

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America.[3] Almost all of those accounts conclude that White Democrats regained control of state government by using illegal and paramilitary tactics, including intimidation, threats, and violence, to deter Black Republicans from voting.[4] Writing in *A New History of the American South*, Blair L.M. Kelley declared, ". . . campaigns of outright violence led most Black voters to fear for their lives if they showed up at the ballot box."[5]

Over the years, historians have dubbed the way in which White Mississippi Democrats were able to win a super majority of legislative seats on the ballot in November of 1875 the "Mississippi Plan." Nicholas Lemann described it in his 2006 book *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War*:

> For Democrats, and especially for White Southern Democrats, this was a problem to which the Mississippi plan offered a solution. Using violence and intimidation

[3]Justin Behrend, *Reconstructing Democracy: Grassroots Black Politics in the Deep South After the Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017), 210–216; W. Fitzhugh Brundage, ed., *A New History of the American South* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2023), 294-295 & 343-345; Stephen Budiansky, *The Bloody Shirt: Terror After the Civil War* (NY: Penguin Group, 2008), 194-217; John Patrick Daly, *The War After the War: A New History of Reconstruction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2022), 119–126; David Herbert Donald, Jean Harvey Baker, and Michael F. Holt, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 615; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1988), 558–563; William Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction: 1869-1879* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1979), 152–165; Allen C. Guelzo, *Fateful Lightning: A New History of the Civil War & Reconstruction* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2012), 506; Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South From Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 298–302; William C. Harris, *The Day of the Carpetbagger: Republican Reconstruction in Mississippi* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1979), 650–689; Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War* (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), 100–169; James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, 1982), 594-596; George C. Rable, *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984), 144-162; Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction: America After the Civil War, 1865-1877* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1965), 201-203; Mark Wahlgren Summers, *The Ordeal of the Reunion: A New History of Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2014), 364–366; Richard White, *The Republic For Which It Stands: The United States During Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865-1896* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 305-306.

[4]See, for example, Daly, *The War After the War*, 120; Donald, et al., *Civil War and Reconstruction*, 615; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 559; Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction*, 154, 163; Harris, *Day of the Carpetbagger*, 686; McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 584; Michael Perman, *The Road to Redemption: Southern Politics, 1869-1879* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 170; Rable, *But There Was No Peace*, 160-161; Summers, *Ordeal of the Reunion*, 365-366; White, *The Republic for Which it Stands*, 306.

[5]Blair L.M. Kelley, "Bearing the Burden of Separate but Equal in the Jim Crow South," in Brundage, ed., *A New History of the American South*, 343-345.

> to suppress the Black vote – but subtly enough so that the federal government would not be forced to use federal troops to enforce Negro rights – the Democrats could sweep the entire South.[6]

While some scholars have suggested that fraudulently manipulating ballots at the voting precincts played a role in the Democratic victory, that practice has been largely ignored over the years in favor of portraying the months and weeks leading up to election day as rife with violence and pervasive acts of intimidation that were largely successful in deterring newly enfranchised Black men from showing up at the polls and casting their votes. To bolster these conclusions, authors have relied on the 1876 congressional report, which is replete with testimony from Blacks vividly describing acts of intimidation and violence; the files of Republican Governor Adelbert Ames, currently maintained at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, that contain a number of letters from distraught Black men and women across the state complaining about terror tactics; and the coverage given to the violent White militia tactics in the city of Clinton and the county of Yazoo in the fall of 1875.[7]

This article argues that ballot fraud and manipulation had more to do with the election outcome than acts of violence and intimidation. The historical record of Mississippi in the months leading up to the November election is certainly full of documented cases of paramilitary activity and individual acts of violence and intimidation. The question is whether those tactics were effective in actually deterring and preventing Black participation in the election. The election returns suggest these tactics were largely ineffective. Moreover, implying otherwise undercuts and minimizes what we have learned about the bravery and courage of Black men – and their families – from contemporaneous accounts of the time found in letters, reports, articles, and memoirs from Union soldiers, missionaries, Freedmen's

[6] Lemann, *Redemption*, 170.

[7] The congressional committee found, for example, "that in several of the counties, the Republican leaders were so overawed and intimidated, both Black and White, . . . and that finally they were compelled to vote for the ticket, so nominated, under threats that their lives would be taken if they did not do it," and "that on the day of the election, at several voting places, armed men assembled, sometimes not organized and in other cases organized; that they controlled the elections; intimidated Republican voters." The committee concluded that "the present Legislature of Mississippi is not a legal body." *Mississippi in 1875*, xxv-xxvii. The committee took testimony from individuals in 21 of the 35 majority-Black counties and two of the 38 majority-White counties.

Bureau and other government officials, and journalists.

Four years earlier, during the Ku Klux Klan years of 1870-1872, when documented cases of harassment, intimidation, and violence against Black Mississippians were numerous, vicious, and heartbreaking, in the end, the campaign of terror waged by the Klan and their cousin organizations failed to undermine the education of Black children and failed to prevent Black men from exercising their newly established right to vote. By the close of 1871, a year after the enactment of the public school legislation, Mississippi could boast of having 3,450 schools in seventy-five districts, employing close to 3,600 teachers, and enrolling 117,000 students in all grades. Two years later, the number of children attending schools in just grades 1-3 had alone grown to 80,000.[8]

For the 1871 elections, in which members of the legislature and hundreds of local offices were on the ballot, a record number of votes (83,588) were cast for Republican legislators. Turnout was up 10 percent over the number of Republicans who went to the polls in 1869 to support their candidate James Alcorn for governor, while the number of Black representatives in the House increased from thirty-two to thirty-eight. During the presidential campaign the following year, when Grant was up for re-election, the Republican incumbent received 82,406 votes in Mississippi compared to 47,287 for his opponent.[9]

In the face of unremitting violence, Black men and women were undaunted. Their children attended schools, and they married whom they wanted to marry, opened their own businesses, attended the churches of their choice, and ran for office and voted.

Why would 1875 be any different? In March of 1876, when the U.S. Senate was debating the resolution to create the special congressional committee, Mississippi Republican Senator Blanche Bruce urged his colleagues to support its passage by honoring his Black constituents who had exercised their right to vote even in the face of terror and intimidation.

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[8] *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Education*, Appendix to the Mississippi House of Representatives Journal, Session of 1872, 134-135. *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Education*, Appendix to the Mississippi Senate Journal, Session of 1874, 717-720.

[9] Harris, *Carpetbagger*, 426-427; Michael Newton, *The Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi: A History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2010), 37. The 1872 vote totals were submitted to the congressional committee investigating the 1875 election by James Hill, the secretary of state, at 137 (*Mississippi in 1875*, Documentary Evidence, Part III).

> There was nothing in the character of the issues nor in the method of the canvass that would produce such an overwhelming revolution in the sentiments of the colored voters of the State as is implied in this pretended democratic success. The truth of the allegations relative to fraud and violence is strongly suggested by the very success claimed by the [Democrats]. It will not accord with the laws of history to brand the colored people as a race of cowards. On more than a historical field, beginning in 1776 and coming down to this centennial year of the Republic, they have attested in blood their courage as well as a love of liberty. I ask Senators to believe that no consideration of fear or personal danger has kept us quiet and forbearing under the provocations and wrongs that have so sorely tried our souls.[10]

Unfortunately, the committee established by the U.S. Senate to investigate the 1875 election did not pursue fraudulent ballot-counting practices. Nor did the senators investigate the extent to which the White judges, sheriffs, and their appointed boards of registrars conspired with local White officials to deliver control of the vote-counting process to the Democrats or whether Democrats took control through terror or a combination. The failure to investigate fraud was not by accident.

The preamble to the original legislation creating the committee, as introduced by Indiana Senator Oliver Morton, focused more on ballot fraud than acts of violence. In his floor speech, Morton enumerated the methods used by Democrats to prevail in the election, including "appointment of registrars and officers of the election who would carry out their plan," "false" and "counterfeit" tickets, "ballot-boxes stuffed," and "spurious tickets imposed upon voters." Morton told the Senate, "The result . . . was that in several counties more votes were counted than there were ballots cast and the general returns of the elections . . . show such an increase in the popular vote as cannot be accounted for by any rational theory of registered voters or actual immigration since the last state election in 1873."

Nevertheless, during the Senate floor debate, Morton accepted an amendment by Michigan Senator Isaac Christiancy to delete "ballot box manipulation" from the congressional inquiry. Morton apparently believed the watered-down resolution was the only one that would

[10] *Congressional Globe*, March 31, 1876 (44th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. IV, Part 3), 2101.

pass, though it would change the entire focus of the investigation. Christiancy admitted in his explanation of the amendment that he was sympathetic to southerners, or as he explained, "to make more allowance for their prejudices, their habits, and occasional outbreaks of passion." Consequently, a full contemporaneous accounting of the 1875 election has been lost to history.[11]

The 1875 Election

There were legislative elections in 1875 because of the odd date on which the voters approved Mississippi's constitution and the first slate of statewide and legislative officeholders. That was in 1869. In addition, the new constitution prescribed two-year terms for state representatives and four-year terms for state senators, but with the requirement that half of the senate seats would be up for re-election every two years. Given that framework, and the four-year terms for the governor and the other six statewide offices, only the full House and half the Senate would be on the ballot in 1875, though even that would change. Election day in 1875 would fall on Tuesday, November 2.[12]

Timing is everything in politics and as the political calendar moved into 1875, White Democrats enjoyed an election dynamic that was finally in their favor after five years of Republican control of state government: the breakup of the state Republican Party, leading to disaffected White James Alcorn supporters joining with Democrats to oppose newly elected Governor Adelbert Ames; tough economic times, largely as a result of the Panic of 1873 but also the continued depressed price of cotton, leading to the kind of supercharged issue that can motivate people to vote; and a largely disinterested federal government and broader national audience, leading to the greatly

[11]*Congressional Globe*, 44th Cong. 1st Session, Vol. IV: 233-4 on December 16, 1875; 1968-9 on March 27, 1876; 2100-2120 on March 31, 1876. Following the 1874 elections, when Democrats made broad gains across the country, Michigan was no exception. In 1875, the new Michigan Legislature replaced the state's three-term senator, Radical Republican Zachariah Chandler, with the more moderate Christiancy.

[12]*Constitution of 1869*: Article 4, Section 2 prescribes two-year house terms; Article 4, Section 4 prescribes four-year senate terms; Article 4, Section 36 divides the initial senate into two classes, chosen by lot, with the first class to serve only two years, thus creating the overlapping terms; Article 5, Section 1 prescribed a four-year term for governor. Election Day was set as the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, per Section 7 of Article IV of the *1869 Constitution*.

diminished possibility of federal military intervention on election day.[13]

For 1875, three men would primarily determine the outcome of the election: President Ulysses S. Grant, Governor Adelbert Ames, and James Z. George, the Jackson lawyer chosen by the White Democrats to manage their campaign operation. Given the modest Black voter advantage, 53-47 percent, the ultimate goal of both Ames and George was to manage Grant. Ames would need the president to provide federal troops to ensure a fair election; George would need the president to withhold federal troops from Mississippi to ensure an unfair election.[14] George proved the more capable.

By the beginning of summer, the November ballot had expanded in size and importance. First, the state treasurer elected with Ames in 1873, George Holland, had died earlier in the year. Both parties would therefore be nominating candidates to replace him, which meant a statewide office would be on the ticket in every county. Second, all six of Mississippi's congressional seats would be on the ballot. Under normal circumstances, those positions would have been filled in 1874, but because of a quirk in its official calendar that year, Congress would not be holding its first official session until December 1875. As a cost-saving measure, Mississippi was permitted to add its congressional elections to the November 1875 ballot, indirectly upping the stakes for both parties. The excitement generated by the legislative campaign would carry over to the congressional elections. While running a

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[13]At the time of the 1873 campaign for governor, both Alcorn and Ames were serving Mississippi in the United States Senate. They opposed each other for the Republican nomination for governor, a contest won by Ames. Alcorn never forgave him and opted to oppose Ames in the general election. Alcorn's general election campaign attracted a fair number of White Democrats along with most of the White Republicans left in Mississippi. See, for example, Michael J. Megelsh, *Adelbert Ames, the Civil War, and the Creation of Modern American* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2024), 167-211; Harris, *Carpetbagger*, 459-480; Blanche Ames, *Adelbert Ames, 1835-1933* (NY: Argosy-Antiquarian, Ltd., 1964), 370-390; Lillian A. Pereyra, *James Lusk Alcorn: Persistent Whig* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1966), 121-163; Harry King Benson, "The Public Career of Adelbert Ames, 1861-1876" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1975); and Summers, *Ordeal of the Reunion*, 350). For the effect of the economy, see Erin Stewart Mauldin, *Unredeemed Land: An Environmental History of Civil War and Emancipation in the Cotton South* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 134-135; James L. Watkins, *King Cotton: A Historical and Statistical Review, 1790-1908* (New York: James L. Watkins & Sons, 1908), 20-31; White, *The Republic for Which it Stands*, 261-268; Ron Chernow, *Grant* (NY: Penguin Press, 2017), 777.

[14]These are 1875 estimates, by the author, of Mississippi Black and White males 21 years of age and older: 109,465 Black vs. 96,369 White, or a difference of 13,096. Harris in *Carpetbagger* at page 658 suggested Black voters had a registered majority of "about 20,000." We know from the 1869 registration of voters that the Black majority then was 24,575.

campaign to win power at the state capitol, the Democrats could, at the same time, gain control of Mississippi's congressional delegation.[15]

August 3 served as the official kick-off of the fall campaign when the Democratic-Conservative Party of Mississippi held its state convention in the House chamber of the state capitol in Jackson. The gathering represented the culmination of months of planning and years of pent-up frustration at the course of events in Mississippi since the war. Newspaper reports and other contemporary accounts of the gathering make clear that the White men attending the special occasion felt the movement of history was finally on their side and that the November elections were their opportunity to wrest control of the state from the Republicans.[16]

Congressman L. Q. C. Lamar gave the keynote, an address which took all of three hours. About a third of the way through the speech, Lamar could no longer contain his emotions and let loose with a screed about the "four million liberated slaves" and how they "cannot but endanger the nation's life" –

> There is no disputing the fact that these people have not been heretofore looked upon as part and portion of the society of the Southern States, but rather as an appendage, like unto the mistletoe, that attaches itself to the oak, but is not part and parcel of its growth, but rather as an excrescence . . . the Southern people . . . knew the capabilities of the negro and his fitness to vote, and believed that to clothe him with these awful attributes, even with freedom's ballot and the incentive of freedom's blessings before him, would be a great wrong.

"Now what can be done?" Lamar asked rhetorically. Of course, he provided the answer: "The people of the South have the moral courage and heroism upon which to base a hope for reform.[17] Later in the fall, the editor of the newspaper in Aberdeen echoed Lamar's

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[15]Ch. 336, 43rd Congress, 1st Sess., June 20, 1874; *The Daily Clarion*, February 16, 1875; "The Vacant Treasurer's Office," *The Weekly Clarion*, February 25, 1875.

[16]Lemann, *Redemption*, 151-209; Harris, *Carpetbagger*, 650-675; Timothy B. Smith, *James Z. George: Mississippi's Great Commoner* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 95-113; Edward Mayes, *Lucius Q.C. Lamar: His Life, Times, and Speeches* (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1896), 220-264; Chernow, *Grant*, 788-818; Rable, *But There Was No Peace*, 150-162; Gillette, *Retreat*, 150-165; Budiansky, *The Bloody Shirt*, 192-217; and Charles Nordhoff, *The Cotton States in the Spring and Summer of 1875* (NY: D. Appleton & Company, 1876), 74-84.

[17]Mayes, *Lamar*, 252-254.

description of the emotions surrounding the fall campaign:

> The Republican Journals of the North make a great mistake in regarding the present campaign in Mississippi in the light of a political contest. It is something more earnest and holy than that. It is, so far as the White people and land owners are concerned, a battle for control of their own domestic affairs; a struggle to regain a mastery that has been ruthlessly torn from them by selfish White schemers and adventurers; through the instrumentality of an ignorant horde of another race which has been as putty in their hands, molded to our detriment and ruin. The present contest is rather a revolution than a political campaign.[18]

The challenge faced by George and the White Democrats was daunting, especially when you consider their ultimate goal was not to gain a majority but to open the 1876 Legislature with a two-thirds supermajority in both houses. To end Reconstruction in Mississippi once and for all, White Republican Governor Ames, Black Republican Lieutenant Governor A. K. Davis, and Black Republican Superintendent of Education Thomas W. Cardozo had to be impeached, convicted, and removed from office. To accomplish that would require a two-thirds vote in the House to impeach and a two-thirds vote in the Senate to convict.

To get there in the House, George would need to keep all thirty-eight of his Democratic incumbents and win half of the seventy-seven seats held by Republicans. For the Senate, he had to keep his twelve Democratic incumbents and win half of the twenty-five districts represented by Republicans. Considering that all of the Democratic incumbents represented majority-White counties, taking seats away from Republicans meant venturing into Mississippi's majority-Black counties.

Throughout the fall campaign, George had to overcome the national press coverage of the late summer insurrections in Clinton and Yazoo by White Democrats, the explicit request from Ames to Grant to send federal troops in September, and the move by Ames to mobilize the state militia in October. Ames' September 8 request to Grant was received by Attorney General Edwards Pierrepont, a conservative New York corporate lawyer. Within a few days, northern newspapers had

[18]Aberdeen *Examiner*, October 7, reprinted in *Mississippi in 1875*, at 1144.

the telegrams and were weighing in with their own opinions, which almost uniformly consisted of pleas to stay out of Mississippi.[19]

After surveying the Cabinet and finding little to no support for Ames, Pierrepont accumulated all of the letters and telegrams and on September 13 forwarded them to Grant with his own recommendation to refrain from intervention. Ron Chernow, Grant's biographer, described the president as "on a knife edge, torn between popular revulsion against Reconstruction and his fervent wish to aid threatened Blacks. He admitted to being 'perplexed' as to the ideal course of action." In the end, while Grant wrote a long letter to his attorney general that leaned toward sending federal troops, arguing that "I do not see how we are to evade the call of the governor if made strictly within the Constitution," he left the final decision to his attorney general.[20]

Pierrepont received Grant's decision and decided to make a few unauthorized changes from Grant's message in his telegram back to Ames. It was the key moment in the fall campaign and was described by Chernow: "His letter written, Grant departed for a veterans' reunion in Utica, New York, leaving the matter to Pierrepoint, who sent Ames a message that substituted his own conservative judgment for the president's, while pretending he and Grant acted in unison . . . he chastised the Mississippi governor for not having proven the existence of an insurrection . . . or taken sufficient steps to stop the violence on his own, a rebuke that left Ames feeling "disgusted."[21]

Within a few days, state and national newspapers had Pierrepont's message disguised as Grant's message: Ames was on his own. Even though the governor mobilized the state militia, he eventually rescinded the order at the behest of an emissary from Pierrepont. The election would proceed without federal troops to supervise the polling places.

The Outcome

For the only statewide position on the ballot, the Democratic

[19]Harris, *Day of the Carpetbagger*, 663-666; Rable, *But There Was No Peace*, 156, Budiansky, *The Bloody Shirt*, 197-203; Lemann, *Redemption*, 121-123; and Gillett, *Retreat from Reconstruction*, 155.

[20]Chernow, *Grant*, 814.

[21]Chernow, *Grant*, 814. See also: Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction*, 155-160. Gillette's footnotes are extensive in documenting the correspondence between Grant and his attorney general.

candidate for treasurer prevailed with 98,715 votes compared to 67,171 for the Republican. The Republican tally was only 2,699 less than the Ames 1873 vote for governor while the Democratic count represented an unprecedented 48,225 more votes than the Alcorn 1873 total. In fact, the Republican vote in 1875 would have been sufficient to win any of the previous five contests, including the 1868 "no" vote on the constitution, then the highwater mark for Democratic turnout.[22] Five of the state's six congressional districts went Democratic, a pick-up of four seats. Only Republican John R. Lynch from Natchez would return to Congress.

But, it was with the legislative races that the final tally loomed large. Of the 115-member House of Representatives, Democrats increased their margin a staggering 150 percent, from thirty-eight seats to ninety-five. The Republicans ended up winning just twenty districts. As for the 37-member Senate, the Democrats' share went from twelve seats to twenty-seven, leaving the Republicans with only ten seats. Taking into consideration that the four-year senate terms were staggered and that twelve districts were not even on the ballot, the actual results are even more breathtaking. Of the twenty-five senate seats on the ballot, Democrats won twenty-two.[23] Impeachment

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[22]These vote totals were submitted to the congressional committee investigating the 1875 election by James Hill, the secretary of state, at 137-145 (*Mississippi in 1875*, Documentary Evidence, Part III). The Hill submission was taken from the county returns, and statewide tabulation, reported in the 1876 *Mississippi House Journal* on January 5, 1876, at 19-22. The total of 67,171 for the Republican treasurer agrees with the sum total of the county returns. The total of 98,715 for the Democratic treasurer differs from the total of 99,005 when the individual county totals are summed. During Ames's testimony to the Committee, he submitted his own tabulation, at 36-38, which differed in minor ways from that of the secretary of state. Ames had a total of 97,922 for the Democratic treasurer and 67,000 for the Republican treasurer. The 1873 returns for the Ames/Alcorn gubernatorial election were also submitted to the congressional committee by Hill at 138, which were taken from the returns reported in the 1874 *Mississippi House Journal* on January 22, 1874, at 26-27.

[23]For the members of the 1876 Legislature, the names, party affiliations, race, home counties, and occupations are provided in appendices to the 1876 legislative journals. The list of representatives is found in the *House Journal* at 678-682 and the list of senators is found in the *Senate Journal* at 690-692. Since similar lists for earlier legislative memberships were not included in the journals, I relied on the following sources to develop information about the membership of the 1875 Legislature: Harris, *Carpetbagger*, 479; James W. Garner, *Reconstruction in Mississippi* (New York: MacMillan, 1901), 294; Vernon Lane Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1947), 176; Eric Foner, *Freedom's Lawmakers: A Directory of Black Officeholders During Reconstruction*, Revised Edition (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1993, 1996); and the website maintained by DeeDee Baldwin at Mississippi State University, *Against All Odds: The First Black Legislators in Mississippi* (https://much-ado.net/legislators/legislators/). See also Part IV, Documentary Evidence, *Mississippi in 1875*,

and removal from office for Ames, Davis, and Cardozzo was a foregone conclusion.

Only by examining the individual county returns can one discern, not only the sweep of the victory, but also the winning strategy. In the state's thirty-eight majority-White counties, where the legislative seats were already represented by Democrats, the Democratic vote for treasurer was 71 percent, compared to 64 percent two years earlier for governor. While the Democratic turnout was higher in these thirty-eight counties, so was the Republican vote. Since George could assume these counties would safely return Democrats to the legislature, neither turnout figure was outside the norm.

For Democrats to gain seats in the legislature, the party had to take them from the thirty-five majority-Black counties. In the 1873 election for governor, those thirty-five counties had produced 56,454 Republican votes and a paltry 24,983 Democratic votes. George would have to drastically alter that imbalance. In the end, that is what he did. When the final county tallies were publicly released, those thirty-five counties had produced 50,081 Republican votes and 56,566 Democratic votes, a stunning 126 percent turnaround for the Democrats.[24]

Given that recorded votes for Republicans were in line with the 1873 totals, despite unprecedented levels of violence, threats, and intimidation, it was the Democratic turnout that was the surprise of the election. Black men generally ignored threats of violence and intimidation and voted—an achievement contrary to the perception left by many accounts of the campaign. In the end, the successful Democratic initiative relied instead on manipulating precinct returns to generate thousands of fraudulent votes for their legislative candidates. What follows is an explanation of how that happened.

The Analysis

To identify fraudulent Democratic votes, an estimate of White and Black males twenty-one years of age and older, by county, was

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"Present Legislature of Mississippi" (June 19, 1876) submitted by James Hill, secretary of state, 146-148. The staggered senate terms and the changes in legislative membership from 1875 to 1876 were developed from comparing and analyzing the aforementioned sources.

[24]For the 1875 election, Mississippi had 73 counties. The majority Black and majority White county designations were based on the 1870 and 1880 Census counts for each county.

developed for an analysis of voter turnout for the 1875 election.[25] For those thirty-five majority-Black counties, the number of eligible White males came to 46,600, nearly 10,000 less than the number of actual Democratic votes. In virtually all of the majority-Black counties where Democrats picked up legislative seats, the Democratic vote exceeded the number of eligible White males, from a high of 289 percent in Clay County and 239 percent in Yazoo County to the more typical of 125 percent in Monroe County, 145 percent in Panola County, or 116 percent in Claiborne County.[26] By and large, Democrats stole the election by fabricating votes during the balloting on election day or in the counting of the ballots afterward. George and his party officials could manufacture Democratic votes, or "stuff" the ballot boxes, because of the way people voted during this time in the nation's history.

First, there was no state government oversight or control of elections and voting. Those responsibilities were left to each county government. Each county was required by state law to establish an "independent" three-person Board of Registrars. That board was responsible for registering men to vote, staffing the precincts with

[25]For this analysis, estimates were made of White and Black men twenty-one years of age and older for the 1875 election, by county, by using (1) 1860, 1870, and 1880 census returns, (2) 1867, 1868, and 1869 tabulation of registered Black and White voters by the military, and (3) reported returns for the 1867, 1868, 1869, 1871, 1872, 1873, 1875, and 1876 elections. The military registered voter figures by county and by race and the election turnout figures by county (except for 1871) were obtained from the reports, messages, and memoranda that were ultimately filed with Congress or that were included in congressional reports. An Excel spreadsheet was built with columns for those lists and rows for each county (and, of course, the number of counties changed with each election). The 1870 and 1880 Censuses gave individual county totals for men of voting age, the three Censuses gave individual county totals for Black and White men, and the 1870 and 1880 Censuses gave the statewide totals of Black men twenty-one years of age and over and White men twenty-one years of age and over. An Excel program was written to generate an estimate of the 1875 individual Black and White county totals of eligible male voters that, when summed, would generate the applicable known statewide totals, that would be in line with the known county racial breakdown for men, applicable for each election, and that would be in line with the 1867, 1868, and 1869 tabulations, in addition to the individual county returns for relevant elections.

[26]There were certainly cases where the Democratic turnout included Blacks who felt threatened and cast a Democratic ballot. Still, the county-by-county review of Democratic and Republican turnout shows a substantial number of Republican votes being counted at the same time Democratic votes are being inflated. Only in a county like Yazoo, where virtually no Republican votes were recorded, could someone claim every Black man in the county had come to the polls with a Democratic ballot (and we know from the evidence that Whites made clear Blacks were not welcome at the precincts on election day). By and large, though, writers who have claimed Republicans lost the 1875 election through the terror tactics of White Democrats argue Blacks were deterred from even showing up to vote.

workers to receive and count the ballots, and reporting the results to state officials. The sheriff appointed one member, as did the circuit judge and the chancery judge.[27] By 1875, Ames and his party had lost the support of many of the Boards of Registrars by the way the judges were originally appointed and re-appointed. When Mississippi emerged from military control in 1870, all of the judicial positions were vacant, so Governor Alcorn was given the unprecedented opportunity to fill every position. Those appointments generated the first signs of friction between Ames and Alcorn because they were all White and all friends of Alcorn. They would eventually become the more conservative Alcorn wing of the Republican Party.[28] By 1875, many of those White men, conservative to begin with, were primed to follow Alcorn to the Democratic Party after he lost the 1873 gubernatorial election to Ames.[29]

Second, there was no state or county official printed ballot. Each voter brought his ballot to the polling place. While voters were allowed to even bring handwritten ballots, by the late 1860s and into the 1870s, voters typically used a preprinted ballot that had been produced by either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party. Voters either cut the ballot out of the local newspaper, which had been placed as an advertisement, or made use of sample ballots printed by the local parties, often in different colors, and handed out at the polls. As a result, there were ample opportunities for precinct officials to alter the ballot count by swapping Republican ballots for Democratic ballots or simply adding or "stuffing" Democratic ballots into the boxes, either during the day or at the end of the day.[30]

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[27]*Laws of 1875* (Special Session), Chapter 1; *Laws of 1873* (Regular Session), Chapter LXVIII; *Laws of 1871* (Regular Session), Chapters 5 & 6. For multi-county districts, such as senator, and for house districts, the board of each county was directed to send the returns to the secretary of state, who would then open them, along with the governor, to tabulate the results. (*Laws of 1871*, Chapter 6, Section 378). Statewide officer tabulations were directed to the secretary of state, who would then deliver them to the Speaker of the House for counting in the next regular session of the Legislature. The Senate would be invited to join in the counting. (Section 383). Prior to the 1873 law, the appointing authorities for the Board of Registrars were the sheriff, president of the board of supervisors, and chancery clerk.

[28]David G. Sansing, "The Role of the Scalawag in Mississippi Reconstruction," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 1969), 156-159.

[29]While Ames would appoint some judges during his tenure as governor, he was limited to lawyers, and in some cases simply reappointed those who were originally chosen by Alcorn. See, for example, Ames' testimony to the Congressional Committee, *Mississippi in 1875*, at 29.

[30]Spencer D. Albright, *The American Ballot* (Washington, DC: American Council on

For those majority Black counties that elected White Democratic legislators, the extent to which the White judges, sheriffs, and their board members conspired with local White Democratic officials to deliver control of the vote-counting process to the Democrats or whether the Democrats took control through terror or a combination went unexamined by the 1876 congressional committee. Moreover, precinct clerks were given two days to deliver the results to the Board of Registrars. The Board would then tabulate the results and mail them to state officials in Jackson. The opportunities for adding and removing ballots, or simply changing the numbers, along the way, were too easy and too numerous. In his speech on the Senate floor in favor of the investigation, Mississippi Senator Blanche Bruce specifically highlighted the role of the registrars: "The evidence in hand and accessible will show . . . that in many parts of the state corrupt and violent influences were brought to bear upon the registrars of voters, thus materially affecting the character of the voting or poll lists; upon the inspectors of election, prejudicially and unfairly thereby changing the number of votes cast."[31]

Given the actual vote totals reported to state officials, the outcome of the election did not hinge on using violence and terror to deter Blacks from voting; the returns indicate they voted, despite the threats and intimidation. The outcome of the election, instead, was largely determined by White Democrats gaining control, either through terror or cooperation with sympathetic Boards of Registrars, of the

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Public Affairs, 1942), 21-30. In the United States, the way in which we vote today was imported from Australia, was known as the "Australian ballot" and had four components: (a) an official ballot being printed at public expense, (b) names of the nominated candidates of all parties were printed on the official ballot, (c) ballots were distributed only at the polling place, and (d) ballots were marked in secret. In the United States, most states had moved to secret ballots soon after the presidential election of 1884. After Kentucky became the last state to adopt a secret ballot, the first presidential election conducted completely under the Australian ballot was the Grover Cleveland campaign in 1892. State law in 1875 required the official in charge of the polling place to "receive and fold the ballot, if not before folded (announcing the name of the voter), examine the certificate and compare with the duplicate register [of voters] and poll-book the name therein, and check both certificate and poll-book as 'voted' and then deposit the ballot, folded, in the ballot-box." See *Laws of 1871*, Chapter 6, Section 371.

[31]*Congressional Globe*, 44th Cong. 1st Session, Vol. IV: 2100-2104 on March 31, 1876. I read the full Senate floor speeches of Oliver Morton and Blanche Bruce towards the end of my research for this article. Their complaints about the 1875 election mirrored my own findings, though it was somewhat eerie to read their words, spoken nearly 150 years ago, that so clearly described what had happened on Election Day. They knew, but what they knew never received the kind of attention it deserved from the committee.

ballot counting process and manipulating it to generate victories for their legislative candidates. To win, Democrats had to steal the election. The historical evidence gives us two clues to support this conclusion: first, there would have been no need to inflate and manipulate votes in the majority-Black counties if terrorized Blacks were not showing up at the polls. It is for this very reason that the returns from the majority-White counties were within the estimates of eligible White and Black males. Democrats did not need to manufacture votes in the majority-White counties because those were already safe seats for legislators of their party. In the majority-Black counties, if Blacks were not turning out in heavily Black precincts, and Whites were, then the legitimate White votes, within the range of eligible White males, would have carried the day. But, that is not what happened.

Second, the state law gave precinct workers two days to deliver the ballot boxes to the Board of Registrars, who then had the statutory responsibility to tabulate the votes for the entire county and to mail the results to Jackson. On the afternoon and evening of election day, George began receiving telegrams from his contacts throughout the state with the actual returns – straight from the precinct to George's campaign headquarters in Jackson. Those telegrams became public when the congressional committee that investigated the Mississippi election used its subpoena power to obtain all of George's telegrams and include them in the printed report. The list consumed forty pages of fine print. At one point in the evening, George telegraphed J. B. Chesman in Brookhaven: "The news is certain. We will carry Hinds, Yazoo, Carroll, Grenada, Panola, Marshall, and Chickasaw. News good from all quarters. How about Lincoln [County]?" By the end of election day, George's hubris got the better of him and he sent a telegram to the newspaper in Memphis: "Reports from all parts of the state indicate a sweeping Democratic victory. We have carried every doubtful county." George knew of the victory because his people were in charge of counting the ballots.[32]

When Julia Kendel wrote the history of Reconstruction in

[32]*Mississippi in 1875*, 378-420; the telegraph to Chesman is at 399; "A Sweeping Majority Claimed by the Democrats," *New York Times*, November 3, 1875. The article read, "Memphis, Tenn., Nov. 2 – Gen. J. Z. George, Chairman Democratic State Executive Committee at Jackson, Miss., telegraphs to the Appeal: 'Reports from all parts of the State indicate a sweeping Democratic victory. We have carried every doubtful county.'" The telegrams, dated November 2, to the Memphis newspaper, are at 403.

Lafayette County in 1913, she interviewed people still alive from the 1875 election and reported, "One of the chief means of fraud resorted to by the Democrats was the stuffing of ballot boxes. Sometimes the Democratic election officer would have Democratic tickets concealed up his sleeve and would substitute them for Republican tickets. At one election at the College Hill box, the Democrats had 150 majority, though there were only forty-five White voters and 200 negroes in that precinct. This result was due to the stuffing of the ballot box."[33]

On the other hand, just a few weeks after the election, an irate J. R. Ford, a Democratic official at one of the polling places in Noxubee County, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Macon Beacon* complaining about a scurrilous report circulating in the county that he had voted the Republican ticket. Ford used his letter to explain the misunderstanding that may have occurred over the assistance he provided to Black voters when they were at his precinct. After helping them cast their ballots, and unbeknownst to anyone at the time, after the voters had left, "I always scratched and put the Democratic nominees instead." Ford went on to justify his actions: "I did what I thought was my duty and every other man's duty who had his country at heart."[34]

Nevertheless, given the voter fraud that occurred throughout many of the majority-Black counties, that should not detract from nor minimize the threats and violence that White Democrats deployed to try to influence the election in their favor. The testimony from eyewitnesses revealed myriad ways Whites tried to sway Black voting behavior, from threats of actual violence to terminating employment contracts to ending lease agreements on houses.

Yazoo County was a prime example of the use of terror by White Democrats, who by force took control of the courthouse and managed the election unimpeded. The actual result unashamedly reported to officials was 4,044 votes for the Democratic treasurer and seven for the Republican. The county was 26 percent White. The Democratic vote went from 617 in 1873 to the outlandish number of 4,044 just two years later, which was a turnout of 239 percent of the eligible White males living in the county. The Republican vote for Ames just two years earlier was 2,409. Yazoo County sent three new Democratic representatives to

[33]Julia Kendel, "Reconstruction in Lafayette County," *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society*, XIII (1913), 250-252.

[34]*Macon Beacon*, November 20, 1875.

Jackson, though its one senator remained a Republican because he had been elected in 1873 and thus was not on the ballot in 1875.[35]

Clay County, then known as Colfax County, after Grant's first vice president, set the record for reporting a total number of Democratic votes that exceeded the number of eligible White males: an astounding 289 percent. In 1873, the county produced 179 Democratic votes; two years later, that number had mushroomed to 1,737. The Republican vote declined from 1,556 to 659. The 1880 Census put the White population at 30 percent. Given that a significant number of Black men were recorded as voting, either the Democratic vote was "adjusted" by switching other Black votes or it was simply inflated with bogus tickets "stuffed" into the ballot boxes. However, the local Democrats manipulated the turnout, the county sent a new representative and a new senator to the legislature—both White Democrats.[36]

Claiborne County was also home to a violent White takeover. A county that was only 24 percent White, went from 179 Democratic votes in 1873 to 1,049 in 1875. While the overall turnout in the county was roughly the same, the GOP vote fell from 1,844 to 496. The Democratic vote was 116 percent of the estimate of the White males twenty years and older. As a result, a White farmer and a White lawyer, both Democrats, would be representing a majority Black county in the state House of Representatives. As with Yazoo, Claiborne County's Republican senator was not on the ballot, having won his campaign in 1873.[37]

For the state's thirty-eight majority-White counties, the Democratic turnout exceeded the eligible White male vote in only one county (Newton). On the other hand, for the state's thirty-five majority-Black counties, the Democratic turnout exceeded the eligible number of White males in all but thirteen, and it was in those counties where Republicans won their state house seats. More importantly, from the

[35]Budiansky, *The Bloody Shirt*, 198-200; Albert T. Morgan, *Yazoo; or, on the Picket Line of Freedom in the South: A Personal Narrative* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000, reprint of 1884 edition), 453-470; Daly, *War After the War*, 124-125; Rable, *But There Was No Peace*, 154-156; and *Mississippi in 1875*, 1647-1784 (the testimony from Yazoo County consumed nearly 140 pages, from both Democratic and Republican participants). The Ames testimony about Yazoo is at 9-12.

[36]*Mississippi in 1875*, 220-259. Three Black Clay County Republican voters and two White Democrats testified at the congressional committee hearing. All three Black witnesses offered specific examples of intimidation, threats, and other scare tactics. The two Whites claimed the election was peaceful and denied hearing about any threats.

[37]*Mississippi in 1875*, 158-219; Lemann, *Redemption*, 149-150.

perspective of Black turnout, in the thirty-five majority-Black counties, the Republican turnout in 1875 was 80 percent or higher than the 1873 turnout in all but ten counties. In fifteen counties, Republicans actually increased their vote over 1873 but lost half of them because of the ability of Democrats to inflate their returns beyond the Republican turnout. Republicans in Tallahatchie County, for example, increased their vote from 1873 to 1875 by 119 percent. Democrats, on the other hand, reported a 222 percent increase in their vote, which represented 131 percent of the eligible White male population in the county.[38]

Even if the Republicans had hit their high-water mark of 83,588 from the 1871 statewide election, they still would have lost in 1875. By and large, Black Republicans ignored the threats and voted. Because federal troops were not at the precincts to monitor the counting, Democrats were able to manipulate the results. Or, as Edward Mayes, L. Q. C. Lamar's biographer, once wrote, "In the domestic history of Mississippi, the year 1875 is the supplement of 1861."[39]

The 1876 Legislature and Impeachment

The new legislature convened at noon in Jackson on Tuesday, January 4, 1876, and given that both chambers had White Democrats constituting more than two-thirds of the membership they wasted little time in invoking the provisions of Article IV of the 1869 Constitution to initiate impeachment proceedings. By February 17, the House had adopted and sent to the Senate five articles of impeachment against Lieutenant Governor Alexander Davis. On March 9, twelve articles were approved affecting Superintendent of Public Education Thomas Cardozo, and a mere four days later, the House referred twenty-one articles against Governor Ames to the Senate. Since the constitution authorized impeachment for any "high crime or misdemeanor," the Democrats included virtually any wrong they could remotely argue would qualify as legitimate "high crimes." Moreover, if twenty-one reasons to impeach Ames were insufficient for anyone, the House

[38]County vote totals were taken from the tabulation submitted to the congressional committee investigating the 1875 election by James Hill, the secretary of state, at 137-145 (Mississippi in 1875, Documentary Evidence, Part III). The majority Black and majority White county designations were based on the 1870 and 1880 Census counts for each county.

[39]Mayes, *Lamar*, 229. Mayes was one of Lamar's biographers, and this sentence came from his introduction to the chapter on the 1875 election.

Democrats added two more on March 25.[40]

By then, Davis had been convicted in the Senate and relieved of his office, Cardozo had resigned rather than face a trial, and a deal was in the works for the House to pull back the impeachment articles if Ames would consent to leave quietly. The agreement was consummated on March 29 when Ames submitted his letter of resignation early that afternoon. By 5:30 p.m., legislators were hurriedly gathering in the House chamber to witness John M. Stone, the President Pro-Tempore of the Senate and a merchant from the northeast Mississippi county of Tishomingo, take the oath of office as governor. A few minutes later, as recorded in the *House Journal* for that day, "The Speaker of the House then announced and proclaimed that Honorable J. M. Stone, having taken the oath of office, is now the constitutional and legal Governor of the state of Mississippi." Reconstruction was thus given an ignominious burial four months after its death on election day, November 2, 1875.[41]

Not content to rid themselves of Ames, Davis, and Cardozo, Democrats then rushed through legislation that reallocated the counties among the state's six congressional districts in order to create one, which it would be impossible for Black Republican John Lynch to win in his re-election campaign later that year. Lynch's new district included every county along the entire stretch of the Mississippi River, from Tunica to Wilkinson. Only four counties from his old congressional district were included in the new map. The election margin later in November was not even close, with the incumbent Lynch garnering only 44 percent of the vote.[42]

With Stone in the governor's office, the Democrats in the legislature could be assured he would approve of a reorganization

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[40]Sections 27 and 28 of Article IV of the *1869 Mississippi Constitution* governed impeachment proceedings. The Articles of Impeachment against Lieutenant Governor Davis are at *Mississippi House Journal* (February 17, 1876), 281-284. The Articles of Impeachment against Superintendent of Public Education Cardozo are at *Mississippi House Journal* (March 9, 1876), 395-408. The Articles of Impeachment against Governor Ames are at *Mississippi House Journal* (March 13, 1876), 424-449 and *Mississippi House Journal* (March 25, 1876), 516-518.

[41]Notice of Davis conviction is at *Mississippi House Journal* (March 23, 1876), 500. The resignation letter and House approval for Cardozo is at *Mississippi House Journal* (March 21, 1876), 486 and at *Mississippi House Journal* (March 22, 1876), 492. The Ames resignation is at *Mississippi House Journal* (March 29, 1876), 530-531. The Stone inauguration is at *Mississippi Senate Journal* (March 29, 1876), 544-546.

[42]*Laws of 1876*, Chapter VII, effective March 18, 1876. The new sixth district included the counties of Tunica, Coahoma, Bolivar, Washington, Issaquena, Yazoo, Warren, Claiborne, Jefferson, Adams, and Wilkinson.

of the voter registration and balloting procedures for the state. Sure enough, on April 7, he signed legislation that effectively put the Democrats in charge of appointing all new county election officials. Every county would be assigned a five-member board appointed by the State Board of Registration. On the state board would sit the governor, the president pro-tempore of the senate, and the secretary of state. The local boards, hand-picked by the Democratic governor and Democratic Senate leader would, in turn, be responsible for registering all voters, staffing all the voting precincts, and counting the ballots. These new procedures would be in place by the date of the presidential election later that year. Fraud would now be legal.[43]

Late in the session, after Ames, Davis, Cardozo, and Lynch were history or soon-to-be history, the White Democrats cut property taxes, imposed substantial reductions in spending for the public education system, and reduced the size and scope of the court system.[44]

The 1876 Presidential Election

A year later, with new election laws on the books, White Democrats showed even less restraint to ensure Mississippi's electoral votes were delivered to Samuel Tilden, the Democratic nominee for president. In a state, where 42 percent of the voting age population was White, the official results furnished Tilden with a winning margin of 68 percent, or 112,173 votes to 52,603 for Republican Rutherford B. Hayes. In a state with thirty-five majority-Black counties, only half a dozen went for Hayes. Tilden's vote represented 116 percent of the eligible White male population in the state and was nothing less than a demonstration of power and supremacy on the part of the Democrats. Tilden's record number of votes in the state would stand for more than fifty years. Not until 1928, when Mississippi Democrats delivered 124,539 votes for Al Smith against Herbert Hoover, would the 1876 record turnout be eclipsed. Of course, by then, the number of eligible voters had doubled with the passage of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote. Not until 1964 would Mississippians give their electoral college votes to a Republican, a span of almost ninety

[43]*Laws of 1876*, Chapter LXVII, effective April 7, 1876.

[44]*Laws of 1876*: Chapter LXXIII reduced the state millage rate; Chapter CXIII cut funding for public education; and Chapter CXXXIV scaled back the judiciary.

years.[45]

In six of the counties carried by Tilden, his vote totals exceeded by 200 percent the eligible White male population; in three of those counties, all majority Black, the reported turnout for the Democrat was more than 300 percent. Leflore County, a major cotton-producing county in the Delta region of the state, had an estimated 645 White males twenty-one years or older living in the county in 1876. On election day, Tilden received 1,360 votes from Leflore (in addition to the 698 votes reported for the Republican candidate). Either Blacks who came to the polls and submitted tickets for the Republican had their votes switched during the counting process or Democratic officials simply manufactured the final number, or both.[46]

In the Delta county of Washington, with a 14 percent White population, officials there reported 2,901 votes for Tilden and 1,598 votes for Hayes, or a 64 percent win margin for the Democrat. The Republican vote was virtually the same in 1876 as the 1,638 recorded in 1875— no change there. Instead, the Tilden vote represented 301 percent of the eligible White male population. Given that there was no change in Black turnout, White officials just fabricated votes for their candidate.

And then there was Yazoo. In 1875, that county reported seven votes for the Republican candidate for Treasurer. A year later the election officials, apparently embarrassed at giving the Republican too many votes the previous year, reported two votes for Hayes. The margin in that majority-Black county was 3,672 to 2. Two other majority Black counties replicated the Yazoo model: Tallahatchie reported one vote for Hayes (1,144 to 1) and Lowndes, which showed a final result of 2,073

[45]The Mississippi statewide and county vote totals for the 1876 presidential election come from: W. Dean Burnham, *Presidential Ballots, 1836-1892* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), 552-571. A list of county returns and the statewide tabulation for the 1876 election can also be found in: *Mississippi: Testimony as to Denial of Elective Franchise in Mississippi at the Elections of 1875 and 1876* (44th Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Misc. Doc. No. 45, Serial 1725; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1877), 813. The voting age population statistics, and county racial population, were derived from 1870 and 1880 census data.

[46]To be fair to the Democrats, they might argue that the increase in votes for the Democrat came from Black voters, since the overall turnout for Leflore was less than the total eligible male population for the county. But, if that was the case, if Black voters in those numbers had suddenly, in less than a year, become willing Democrats, then one would see similar results in majority-Black counties all over the state, and that didn't happen. In fact, in Leflore's neighboring counties of Sunflower and Carroll, the Tilden vote represented 97 percent and 105 percent respectively of eligible White male voters.

for Tilden and two votes for the Republican.

And, as was the case in 1875, the United States Senate, still under Republican control, empowered a committee to investigate the election. The final report, released in early 1877, included testimony and exhibits covering more than a thousand pages. As with the congressional report from the previous year, it was printed, distributed, ignored, and forgotten.[47]

The Consequential Election

The 1875 election was the state's most consequential election because its effects lasted for ninety years, and then some. White Democrats spent the better part of the twenty-five years following the impeachment of Ames, Davis, and Cardozo putting in place a brutal system of laws and constitutional provisions that effectively removed Black Mississippians from participation in the affairs of the state. Schools were the first to get the "separate but equal" treatment from the legislature. Less than three years after the 1875 election, the legislature prohibited the teaching of "White and colored pupils" in the same schools.[48] Passenger rail cars were the next to be affected. In a bill euphemistically titled "An Act to promote the comfort of passengers on railroad transportation," the legislature required all trains traveling through the state to provide "equal but separate accommodations for the White and colored races."[49]

Then came the Constitution of 1890. Delegates to the convention that year enacted a variety of provisions such as poll taxes and tests to determine a potential voter's eligibility to register that effectively removed the Black Mississippian from the voting booth. James Z. George, by then a United States senator, having been elected by the legislature to replace Blanche Bruce, chaired the committee that drafted the sections on the franchise. Never bashful about making clear his position, George told a group the previous year, "Our chief duty when we meet in convention is to devise such measures . . . as will enable us to maintain a home government, under the control of the

[47]*Mississippi: Testimony as to Denial of Elective Franchise in Mississippi at the Elections of 1875 and 1876* (44th Cong., 2nd Sess., Senate Misc. Doc. No. 45, Serial 1725; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1877).

[48]*Laws of 1878*, Chapter 14, Section 35.

[49]*Laws of 1888,* Chapter 27.

White people of the state." Unlike the framers of the 1869 Constitution, the 133 White men who wrote the 1890 document refused to submit it to the people for approval. They simply willed it into existence, a move that was affirmed by the Mississippi Supreme Court in 1892. Later that year, in the presidential election, the Republican vote in Mississippi dropped by 95 percent to 1,398, the lowest recorded vote for the Republican nominee among the states for that election.[50]

Not until the enactment of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were the promises of the 14th and 15th Amendments restored in Mississippi. Not until the resolution of multiple school desegregation lawsuits in 1969 was the promise of an equitable public school system free of discrimination restored. Finally, it would take another ten years for the United States Supreme Court to enforce the Voting Rights Act and restore the promise of full representation in the state legislature for Black voters and still another three years for a federal district court judge to restore the promise of full representation in Congress for Black voters. Only then would Black Mississippians regain many of the freedoms they had lost during the intervening ninety-plus years.

[50]*Sproule v. Fredericks*, 69 Miss. 898 (1892) was the Mississippi Supreme Court decision. The George address was covered by a Jackson newspaper and included in James P. Coleman, "The Origin of the Constitution of 1890," *Journal of Mississippi History*, XIX (April 1957), 69-92. While the poll tax and understanding provisions also affected many poor and uneducated Whites, local election officials, all White, gradually relaxed the applicability of the provisions for White voters.

Greenfield Farm: Faulkner, Mules, and Time

by Jim Gulley

It was cold that Friday morning in November 1950 when the phone began jingling in the pantry off the kitchen. Sven Ahman, the New York correspondent for the Stockholm daily newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*, was on the line. For months, rumors had been flying around literary circles and Oxford, Mississippi, society that the Swedish Academy would likely award a Nobel Prize to author William Faulkner. Ahman called to break the good news and get the scoop from the writer himself. When asked if he was looking forward to the upcoming trip to Stockholm, Faulkner replied, "I won't be able to come to receive the prize myself, it's too far away. I am a farmer down here and I can't get away."[1]

As the day progressed and the news spread, friends began showing up at the Faulkner homestead, Rowan Oak, to visit and offer congratulations. First on the scene was Faulkner's longtime friend, Phil "Moon" Mullins of the *Oxford Eagle*. Other friends Mac Reed and Bill Fielden joined Mullins at Rowan Oak. At 2:15 p.m., the official call from the Nobel Committee came. As word spread, reporters from Memphis began descending on the estate. To one and all, Faulkner's message was the same. He was thankful for the honor of the prize, but he had no intention of traveling to Sweden to get it. It was too far, he was too old, and there was too much work to do on his farm located a few miles northeast of Oxford.[2]

Faulkner's reluctance to travel to Sweden was unexpected and almost created an international incident. On November 20, 1950, America's ambassador to Sweden sent a cable to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles expressing concern over Faulkner's recalcitrance. Not only were many Swedes looking forward to his visit, but many

[1]Joseph Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 1974), 1337–38; "Memphis, TN Weather History," temperature (daily) (Weather Underground, November 10, 1950), https://www.wunderground.com/history/daily/KMEM/date/1950-11-10.

[2]Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 1341-43.

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in the academy risked their reputations by voting for Faulkner. With international pressure mounting, Faulkner remained steadfast in his decision. Only after a word from his wife, Estelle, did Faulkner decide to go. The work on his farm, Greenfield, would have to wait.[3]

Greenfield Farm was a passion project for William Faulkner. Through possession of this land, Faulkner sought to establish his identity as a gentleman farmer and, in the process, re-establish his family’s waning prominence. Although Greenfield was a financial drain from the moment Faulkner bought it, the award-winning author drew literary inspiration from the land, his tenants, and their neighbors. The farm served as his sanctuary, pastime, and convenient excuse for the rest of his life.

On February 16, 1938, Faulkner closed the sale of the movie rights to his novel *The Unvanquished* to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer for $25,000.[4] He told his agent he did not want to spend the MGM windfall on everyday living expenses. Instead, he needed an investment to produce extra income but without the risk of the stock market.[5] Less than a month later, on March 9, he completed the purchase of a 362 1/2-acre tract of land fifteen miles northeast of Oxford that he named Greenfield Farm.[6] With $500 cash from the MGM sale plus a $2,000 mortgage at 5 percent interest to the New Orleans Land Bank,[7] Faulkner acquired, in essence, a time capsule, his way of preserving the past. It calls to mind perhaps his most famous quote, “The past is never dead. It’s not even past.”[8] At Greenfield, he planned to play the part of the gentleman farmer. He conceived his plan at a moment in time when urban spaces and mechanization were beginning to overtake the agrarian South.

At the outset, Faulkner made three curious decisions

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[3]Blotner, 1347–49.

[4]Blotner, 983.

[5]Blotner, 984.

[6]“Lafayette County Land Records,” n.d., Book 111, Page 46, Lafayette County, Mississippi Chancery Clerk. Note: the Blotner biography records the size of the farm as 320 acres (page 986), however, the description of the deed is 362 ½ acres. This is subsequently corroborated by an oil lease that Faulkner entered into.

7“Lafayette County Land Records.” DT Book 223, 154

[8]William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun* (New York, NY: Random House, 1951), 92.NY”,”publisher”:”Random House”,”publisher-place”:”New York, NY”,”title”:”Requiem for a Nun”,”author”:[{“family”:”Faulkner”,”given”:”William”}],”issued”:{“date-parts”:[[“1951”]]}},”locator”:”92”,”label”:”page”}],”schema”:”https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json”} Gavin Stevens to Temple Drake in Act I, Scene III.

regarding Greenfield. His net proceeds from the MGM sale after commissions were $19,000, but the investment in Greenfield Farm was only $2,500. He could have bought a farm five times as large if he wanted to maximize an investment property. Also, why did he finance 80 percent of the Greenfield purchase price? The modesty of the investment and use of leverage are at odds with the goals he described to his agent.

The other questionable decision was to raise mules. From 1840 to 1890, mules were a fundamental component of the plantation economy. They were the "tractors" for the fields. However, by 1938, the agricultural economy of the South had rapidly mechanized. Tractors began replacing mules, which enabled harrows to replace plows. Faulkner's Uncle John and brother Johncy advised raising beef cattle, but Faulkner was adamant. Greenfield was to be a mule farm.[9]

The property, located near the Union County line in Beat Two of Lafayette County,[10] was a mixture of gently sloping pasture, soggy bottomland on the Puskus Creek, and heavily forested woods of pine and assorted hardwoods.[11] The inhabitants of Beat Two were predominantly White and had a reputation for their disdain of the "townfolk" from Oxford. They were known to be fierce, independent, and inclined to violent settlement of disputes. In 1925, Whites took the law into their own hands when they lynched a Black man named L. Q. Ivy. The murder took place across the Union County line, about five miles from Greenfield. While Ivy was in custody at the Maye's Hospital in New Albany, an angry mob took him from the hospital and burned him to death in a nearby field.[12] In another incident, shortly before the farm purchase, Johncy Faulkner reported a killing on the other side of Puskus Creek over redistricting a school zone.[13] Edward Ayers chronicled the forces of "the towns, the stores, and

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[9]John Faulkner, *My Brother Bill: An Affectionate Reminiscence* (Oxford, Miss: Yoknapatawpha Press, 1975), 177.

[10]Beats, or districts as they are sometimes known, are political subdivisions of a county administered by elected officials known as supervisors.

[11]202 1/2 acres of the farm was located in the West half of Section 21, Township 7 South, Range 1 West in Lafayette County. The rest, 160 acres, lay south of there in the adjoining Northwest Quarter of Section 28 in the same Township and Range. The property was contiguous. "Lafayette County Land Records."

[12]Jonathan Smith, "Silence Descends: Lynchings and Their Aftermath in Lafayette and Union Counties, Mississippi" (Oxford, Mississippi, University of Mississippi, 2019), Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 1561., https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd/1561.

[13]Faulkner, *My Brother Bill: An Affectionate Reminiscence*, 177.

the law" eroding country folk's self-sufficiency in the emerging New South.[14] The people in Beat Two resisted these modernizing forces and clung to their established social order.

Beginnings

When Mississippi became a state on December 10, 1817, the vast majority of the 48,430 square miles was a wilderness, sparsely populated by Choctaw and Chickasaw people. For hundreds of years before this, the area that would become Lafayette County was either Chickasaw territory or one of their coalescent society predecessors.[15] These people lived a subsistence life, primarily hunting and gathering, but also including horticulture. Due to warfare and disease, the native population in north Mississippi never grew beyond a few thousand people.[16] Faulkner was keenly aware of the Chickasaw history in north Mississippi. His fictionalized Chickasaw Indian chief, Ikkemotubbe, appeared in many of his works, including "The Bear," *Absalom, Absolam!*, and *The Sound and the Fury*.[17]

After Mississippi statehood, White settlers began crowding out native peoples. The Andrew Jackson administration relocated native people from lands east of the Mississippi River to current-day Oklahoma. In 1830 and again in 1832, United States government delegations, both led by John Coffee, negotiated treaties with the Choctaw and Chickasaw native tribes that ceded most of north Mississippi to the federal government in exchange for the land in Oklahoma. In 1836, the state carved Lafayette County out of this land mass.[18] Ker Boyer, Leroy M. Wiley, and Malachi B. Harmer became the first citizens of Lafayette County to own the property that would eventually become Greenfield Farm.

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[14]Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction - 15th Anniversary Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2007), 190.

15Robbie Franklyn Ethridge, *From Chicaza to Chickasaw: The European Invasion and the Transformation of the Mississippian World, 1540-1715* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 1–2.

[16]David Newhall, "Chickasaw," in *Mississippi Encyclopedia* (University Press of Mississippi, 2018), www.mississippiencyclopedia.com.

[17]Malcolm Cowley, *The Faulkner-Cowley File: Letters and Memories 1944-1962* (New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1966), 42, 44, 53–55; Robert W. Hamblin and Charles A. Peek, *A William Faulkner Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 193–94.

[18]Richard Aubrey McLemore, *A History of Mississippi*, vol. 1 (Hattiesburg: University & College Press of Mississippi, 1973), 265–66.

The trio obtained a land patent from the United States government on August 14, 1838.[19] Over the next forty years, the property changed hands four times until F. C. Parks acquired it in 1875.[20] There is no historical evidence that enslaved people lived or worked on the property that became Greenfield Farm. Twenty-seven years passed between the time of the original land patents and emancipation in 1865. During the era of slavery, the tract of land appears to be owned by a string of absentee land speculators.

Faulkner bought the property from the Federal Land Bank of New Orleans, which acquired it by foreclosing on G. H. Cannon. Cannon purchased the place from Joe Parks in 1919 after Parks had inherited the property from his grandfather, F. C. Parks.[21] Joe Parks was somewhat of a Falkner family nemesis. Local legend has it that he forced Faulkner's grandfather, J. W. T. Falkner, out as president of First National Bank, taking it over in 1920.[22] Parks sold the Beat Two property to buy Faulkner's parent's home on North Street. He also purchased Faulkner's father-in-law's hotel on the Square.[23] Eighteen years later, Faulkner immortalized the feud when he published *The Town*. In the book, antagonist Flem Snopes took over the Sartoris bank and bought protagonist Manfred de Spain's house in town, much as Parks had done in real life.[24]

Greenfield Farm was not an investment; it was a trophy. The farm connected him to his family's past as a member of the landed gentry and rehabilitated his perception of his family's social standing in the community. Greenfield also provided him with a self-deprecating identity as a simple farmer. Faulkner[25] was born on September 25, 1897, in New Albany, Mississippi, twenty-three miles east of Greenfield. His great-grandfather, Colonel William

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[19]"Lafayette County Land Records," Patent Book, T7, R1, Sections 21, 28.

[20]"Lafayette County Land Records," Book H, 772; Book I, 164; Book M, 186; Book V, 201.

[21]"Lafayette County Land Records," Book 79, p. 358.

[22]Will Lewis, Jr., Interview RE William Faulkner, Greenfield Farm, in person, June 1, 2022, James R. Gulley, Sr. personal archives; Will Lewis, Sr., "The Story of Banks and Banking: Activity in Oxford Through the Years" (Oxford, Mississippi, June 1986), FNB Oxford archives; Joel Williamson, *William Faulkner and Southern History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 260.

[23]Williamson, *William Faulkner and Southern History*, 260.

[24]Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 1615.

[25]The original spelling of Faulkner's surname was Falkner. He changed the spelling in early 1918 when he applied for service in the Royal Air Force in Canada. Subsequently, many of his family members adopted the new spelling as well. Blotner, 210-211.

C. Falkner, was a Confederate Civil War officer. A wealthy lawyer with several business interests from Ripley, Mississippi, he founded the Ship Island, Ripley, and Kentucky Railroad Company. After his death, he was referred to as the "Old Colonel" to distinguish him from Faulkner's grandfather, John Wesley Thompson Falkner, the "Young Colonel." J. W. T. Falkner was a successful lawyer and businessman in Ripley in his own right. He and his wife, Sallie Murry, had a son, Murry (Faulkner's father), and a daughter, Mary Holland. They moved to Oxford in 1885, where he rose to become president of the First National Bank.[26] Murry also had a half-brother, John W. T. Falkner, Jr., from his father's first wife. J. W. T. Falkner groomed his son to take over the family railroad, but he sold the company when Murry Falkner proved unequal to the task of running it, and his directors favored merging with a larger firm to extend the line's reach. When a rival faction forced J. W. T. Falkner out of First National Bank, his son, Murry, was left to fend for himself.

The decline of the Falkner family seemed complete with William. He did not graduate high school and only managed three semesters at the University of Mississippi. After his brief stint in college, he worked various jobs to make ends meet. From December 1921 to October 1924, he served as the postmaster of the university post office.[27] The postal authorities fired him for malfeasance after numerous customer complaints. In the fall of 1929, Faulkner went to work for the university power department. There, in the wee hours of the morning, he wrote *As I Lay Dying*.[28] Faulkner's ascendancy as a writer, and the financial windfall of the MGM deal, redeemed the family name. Greenfield Farm served as a tangible reminder that William Faulkner restored what he and his father had almost squandered.

Another consideration in Faulkner's mind was his younger brother, Johncy Faulkner. His brother had been piloting a small plane – crop-dusting and taking passengers on joy rides. The Depression-era economy, however, did not provide many "barnstorming" opportunities. After Faulkner bought the land, his brother agreed to manage the farm. Johncy and his family—Dolly,

[26]Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 14–41.
[27]Blotner, 218–19.
[28]Blotner, 633–34.

Jimmy, and Chooky Faulkner—moved into the old farmhouse in 1938 and began making repairs and renovations.[29] This arrangement ended in January 1940 when their mother, Maud Falkner, prevailed upon Oxford's mayor to appoint Johncy Faulkner as an engineer on the city's Works Progress Administration construction projects. He and his family moved into town, and Faulkner was on his own to manage Greenfield Farm.[30]

Johncy Faulkner was proud of the crops he oversaw during his tenure at Greenfield but felt underappreciated by his brother and took offense at some of Faulkner's comments.[31] Johncy was a writer, though much less renowned than his older brother, publishing under his formal name of John Faulkner. At Greenfield, he began writing *Chooky*, a compilation of short stories, for his younger son. He would go on to write several novels, including *Dollar Cotton* and *Men Working*. Faulkner helped him with critical advice and made introductions to possible publishers like *The Saturday Evening Post*. Their mother read both of her son's works and believed that Faulkner plagiarized some of Johncy Faulkner's work. This charge caused conflict between the two.[32] But even after Johncy Faulkner left Greenfield in 1940, the farm continued to inspire him. He set his 1951 novel, *Cabin Road*, at Greenfield Farm.[33]

The Tenants

Soon after buying Greenfield Farm, Faulkner moved Ned Barnett, an associate of the Falkner family dating back to the Old Colonel, and his common-law wife to a cabin on the farm. There, they joined seven tenant families living on Greenfield when Faulkner bought the property in 1938.[34] Barnett kept the barn, fed and milked the cows, and gardened a plot of land. His milk cow grazed with the

[29]Blotner, 990–91.

[30]Faulkner, *My Brother Bill: An Affectionate Reminiscence*, 200, 206; Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 1057; U. S. Census Bureau, "1940 U.S. Census," 1940, https://data.census.gov.

[31]Faulkner, *My Brother Bill: An Affectionate Reminiscence*, 195.

[32]Faulkner, 204–10.

[33]John Faulkner, *Cabin Road: A Gold Medal Original* (New York: Fawcett Publications, Inc, 1951).

[34]U. S. Census Bureau, "1930 U.S. Census," 1930, https://data.census.gov; "Greenfield Farm Commissary Ledger" (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1938), MSS 9817-I, box 6, William Faulkner Collection, University of Virginia, Small Special Collections Library.

Faulkner herd. Barnett kept his personal livestock well-fed, often at the expense of other animals. Many of Faulkner's letters to family and friends in Oxford during his travels included a warning to be wary of Barnett's feeding predilections.[35]

Born in Ripley, Mississippi, sometime after the Civil War, Ned Barnett served four generations of Falkner/Faulkners. He worked on the Old Colonel's plantation as a youth and sharecropped for the Young Colonel as a young man. As late as May 1930, Barnett was boarding with the Moffitt family in Beat Two of Tippah County outside of Ripley.[36] Shortly after that, he moved to Oxford, where Murry tried to find jobs that he would accept. When Murry died in August 1932, Faulkner took him in at his home, Rowan Oak. To these four generations, Barnett would be known as "Uncle Ned."

Barnett collected the old clothes of the Old and the Young Colonel and preserved them in a trunk in his room in the backyard of Rowan Oak. He dressed formally most every day, sometimes wearing a necktie while milking a cow. On walks to the square to conduct business and fraternize with locals, he often donned the Old Colonel's finery, including a top hat and frock coat.[37] One day, as he watched Barnett walking down the cedar-lined lane at Rowan Oak, Faulkner mused, "so that, glancing idly up and out the library window, the middle-aged would see that back, that stride, that coat and hat going down the drive toward the road, and his heart would stop and even turn over." In Barnett's ceremonious pilgrimage to the Square, Faulkner found a quiet dignity and admirable sense of duty.[38] Barnett served as Faulkner's butler, de facto manager of the servant staff and repository of the family's history. The legend of Ned Barnett lives on in Faulkner's fiction as a prototype for the characters of Lucas Beauchamp in *Intruder in the Dust*, Simon Strother in *Sartoris*, and Barnett McCaslin in *The Reivers*. His dignity and loyalty to the family endeared him to generations of Faulkners.[39]

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[35]Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 1148; William Faulkner, "Letter to James Avent," August 9, 1943, MSS 9817-f, box 1, University of Virginia, Small Special Collections Library; M. Thomas Inge, ed., *Conversations with William Faulkner* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1999), 40–41.

[36]U. S. Census Bureau, "1930 U.S. Census."

[37]Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 52–53, etal.

[38]Robert W. Hamblin, "Lucas Beauchamp, Ned Barnett, and William Faulkner's 1940 Will," *Studies in Bibliography (Charlottesville, Va.)* 32 (1979): 281–83.

[39]Hamblin.

In the early 1940s, Barnett, well into his 80s, told Faulkner that he thought he was about to die and asked to return home to Ripley. Faulkner agreed, advanced Barnett's portion of that year's crop, and took responsibility for Barnett's part in the upcoming harvest. Around Christmas, Barnett returned to Greenfield Farm and resumed his duties. This pattern continued every summer, and Faulkner fulfilled the man's wishes each year. Finally, in 1947, Barnett's prophecy came true. Faulkner arranged his funeral and had him buried in the Ripley cemetery under the gaze of the Old Colonel's statue.[40]

Lawrence Arenza McJunkins was born, most likely, on August 24, 1911, on the farm that would become Greenfield. He was the youngest of nine children born to Charles McJunkins, Sr. and Sallie McJunkins. "Renzi," as he was called, had six older brothers and two older sisters. The gap between him and his eldest sibling, Charles McJunkins, Jr., was twenty-one years. Both of his parents were born in around 1863, likely into slavery. It is unknown when the family moved to Beat Two, but they were present in the 1910 U.S. Census.[41]

Arenza McJunkins was an industrious, intelligent, and dedicated man. He never married and was the primary caregiver for his elderly mother until she died in the 1940s. When his brother George died in February 1950, Arenza McJunkins took his sister-in-law Bertha and her son Tommy, who was ten years old, into his home. Although he was the youngest head of a household on Greenfield Farm, Faulkner chose him to manage the farm when McJunkins returned from the war in 1946. As the years passed, Faulkner relied on him as the primary conduit for bringing things to and from the farm and town. He also began accompanying Faulkner on the annual hunting trips in the Delta.[42]

Arenza McJunkins is the only tenant who appeared in a 1952

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[40]Williamson, *William Faulkner and Southern History*, 261; Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 1242–43.

[41]"Military Records, WWII" (U.S. Military, n.d.), Ancestry.com; U.S. Census Bureau, "1910 U.S. Census," 1910, https://data.census.gov; U.S. Census Bureau, "1930 U.S. Census."

[42]"Bethlehem Church Cemetary, Abbeville, Mississippi Site Visit and Photographs," July 7, 2022, James R. Gulley, Sr. personal archives; U.S. Census Bureau, "1950 U.S. Census," 1950, https://data.census.gov; Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*; John B. Cullen, *Old Times in the Faulkner Country* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 49-50.

Ford Foundation documentary on Faulkner. The documentary filmed four scenes at Greenfield Farm. In the first, he and Faulkner talked while propped behind a wagon drawn by two mules. In the second, Faulkner drove his tractor down the lane across the ridge from the commissary and farmhouse. When Faulkner walked up, McJunkins was in the wagon with his nephew, Tommy. Faulkner joked that he will lose his best tractor driver when Tommy McJunkins returns to school next week. As they talked, the farmhouse loomed in the background. The final scene was of Faulkner and Jim Buddy Smith trying to fix a barbed-wire fence. Faulkner's jeep was in the background, and several chickens ran on the grounds.[43]

Before winning the Nobel Prize in 1950, Faulkner protected his privacy and routinely spurned entreaties from the press. The documentary marked a departure from this practice. Faulkner cooperated this time to shape his public image as a farmer who also happens to write. Faulkner controlled the script, deciding who and what was important. The predominance of Greenfield Farm in the documentary demonstrated how Faulkner used this land to shape his identity.[44]

John Faulkner's memoir, *My Brother Bill*, is the most extensive primary source on farm life at Greenfield. Over twenty Black people lived on Greenfield Farm at any given time. In it, he repeatedly referenced "Negroes" on the farm but only mentioned six by name: Barnett, Oscar Parham, Arenza McJunkins, James and Nat Avent, and Gate Boone.[45] Boone was a transient resident who appeared in the Greenfield story for a brief time. He was a blacksmith in Oxford. Faulkner began taking him around the county to help him evaluate livestock purchases. After a while, Faulkner started seeking his advice about all farming matters. He had Boone move in with James and Nat Avent in their cabin at Greenfield.

Gate Boone ingratiated himself with Faulkner when Faulkner visited the farm. However, as soon as Faulkner left, Boone began barking out orders to everyone. Johncy became so enraged after one episode that he threatened to shoot Boone with his pistol. The farmhands hustled Boone out of the way. After the incident with

[43] *William Faulkner*, Documentary (I Q Films, 1952), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1tQ-wt-eas.

[44] Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 1435-39.

[45] Faulkner, *My Brother Bill: An Affectionate Reminiscence.*

Johncy, Boone moved back to town. Boone would come back to Greenfield occasionally but only in Faulkner's company.[46]

The Commissary

In rural Mississippi, at the turn of the century, most families, Black and White, grew vegetable gardens and ate protein they raised, hunted, or fished. Milk cows and chickens produced dairy products and eggs. Other food and supplies came from a country store or a plantation commissary.[47]

The Faulkner brothers operated a commissary to benefit the Greenfield Farm tenants and their neighbors. Johncy Faulkner managed the store, just down the lane from the farmhouse. He stocked it with staple foodstuffs: sugar, molasses, flour, cornmeal, cheese, lard, baking soda, and corn. He also sold soap, leather, tobacco, and farm implements. Tenants and neighbors recorded purchases in the store's ledger. Faulkner fronted capital for the inventory and settled accounts after harvest time in November or December. The store sold Coca-Cola, candy, and ice during the annual Fourth of July barbecue.[48]

Faulkner made an atypical business arrangement with his tenants. In an ordinary sharecropper-landowner relationship, the tenant farmer got a share of the crop in exchange for his labor in planting, tending, and harvesting the crop. The landowner provided the fields, seeds, fertilizer, and anything else the tenant needed to plant the crop. Since the tenants were cash poor, the landowner extended a line of credit to the commissary that they settled once the tenant harvested the crop. The crop was always cotton, the most lucrative in selling for cash. The line of credit was known as the furnish. The agent who marketed the crop and settled accounts was known as the "factor."

After the cotton harvest in October and early November, the factor ginned, weighed, graded, and sold the cotton lint to a broker. The factor would calculate the tenant's share, deduct the furnish balance, and pay the difference. This process was rife with fraudulent

[46]Faulkner, 180-90.

[47]Thomas Dionysius Clark, *Pills, Petticoats, and Plows: The Southern Country Store* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 25.

[48]Faulkner, *My Brother Bill: An Affectionate Reminiscence*, 192–95.

weights, measures, assessments, and payments – unscrupulous factors took advantage of Black tenants. Many tenants ended the season owing money to the commissary, starting the following year in arrears.[49]

Faulkner did something different. He paid his tenants a weekly wage credit to his commissary. They purchased supplies as a debit. Single tenants earned $1.05 per week, while a family earned $2.10. Tenants planted, tended, harvested crops, and cared for Faulkner's livestock in exchange for these wages. Johncy Faulkner, and later Faulkner himself, kept general ledgers that recorded the financial transactions between the farm, the tenants, and the store.[50] Four of Greenfield Farm's ledger books are archived in the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia. The ledgers are from 1938-1943, 1944 and 1946, 1949-1955, and 1955-1960. The original ledger, which began when he bought the farm in 1938, was a small, three-ring binder with a stiff, brown cardboard cover gold stamped with the word CHAMPION. The third ledger was a larger book designed explicitly for bookkeeping purposes. Its pages were pre-lined for dates, entries, debits, and credits. Its cover made of coarse, cloth-covered cardboard with the words SINGLE ENTRY LEDGER printed on them.[51]

Faulkner provided tenants with a dwelling and gave them use of five to ten acres for their livestock and garden. He also supplied a grist mill, tractors, tools, mules, seeds, and other supplies. Most tenants owned a milk cow, pigs, and chickens. While the tenants did not get a share of the crop, they could earn additional store credit by doing other work for the farm. These tasks might include working with the mules and horses, harvesting timber, or helping with construction projects.[52]

Between 1938 and 1942 Greenfield Farm hosted nine tenant family units, all African Americans.[53] In addition to the nine tenant

[49]Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction - 15th Anniversary Edition*, 116-18.

[50]"Greenfield Farm Commissary Ledger."

[51]Site visits by James R. Gulley, Sr. from June 14-15, 2022

[52]Jim Hiller, "Grist Mill," December 9, 1988, Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum. NOTE: The grist mill from Greenfield Farm is on display at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum in Jackson, Mississippi. It was donated to the museum by Faulkner's nephew, Jimmy Faulkner.

[53]U. S. Census Bureau, "1930 U.S. Census"; U. S. Census Bureau, "1940 U.S. Census"; "Greenfield Farm Commissary Ledger."

families, twenty-six neighbors (all but three were Black) did business with the commissary during this period. A promissory note secured many of these accounts recorded in the ledger. Typical is this one with Charlie McJunkins, Jr.:

$25.00 May 27, 1940
On or after Nov. 15, 1940 I promise to pay to Falkner Bros. the sum of twenty-five dollars ($25.00) at 8% interest, the above amount is secured by one cow and two hogs which are owBarnett solely by me
Charley McJunkins
(sigBarnett) Charlie McJunkins

All the notes were due on or after November 15 to align with the marketing of the cotton crop.[54]

Farm operations

From March through November, Greenfield Farm teemed with activity. Tenant farmers planted cotton, corn, and hay in the bottomland fields on either side of Puskus Creek. Corn was not a cash crop, but its use was essential for livestock feed, human consumption, and as a primary ingredient for homemade whiskey. Though national prohibition ended in 1934 with the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment, Mississippi and Lafayette County remained dry. The home production of spirits was widespread, nowhere more so than in Beat Two.

Over time, Faulkner diversified his income from the farm and developed the property in a variety of ways. Barbed-wire fencing along the ridge north of the bottom land hemmed in mules, horses, milk cows, beef cattle, and pigs. Chickens ranged free at Greenfield. Faulkner netted $2,203.50 from the harvest of pine timber in 1947, the only year Greenfield had a positive cash flow.[55] In addition to the

1, James Avent family
2, Ned Barnett and his common law wife
3, Arenza McJunkins, his sister-in-law and nephew
4, Oscar Parham family
5, Payne Wilson family
6, George McJunkins, his wife (Bertha), and mother-in-law Maggie Duke
7, Henry McJunkins family
8, Willie “Bubber” Wilson family
9, Alvis and Collie McJunkins

[54]“Greenfield Farm Commissary Ledger.”

[55]“Greenfield Farm Ledger (1955-1960)” (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1955), MSS

farmhouse and commissary, numerous structures dotted the property. A blacksmith shed and barn served livestock needs and sheltered any farm implement. An unknown number of cabins and dog-trot houses provided homes for the tenants. Faulkner built his hunting cabin just up the lane from the farmhouse; he called it "The Lodge."[56]

While 1947 was exceptional because Greenfield managed to turn a profit, most years the farm operated at a loss. The best glimpse into the farm's financial condition comes from Faulkner's 1943 income tax return. He declared $571 in income from cotton sales and an additional $47.75 from cotton seeds. The amount of income is puzzling. The average price for cotton in 1943 was $.19 per pound. At that rate, Greenfield yielded approximately three thousand pounds of cotton. If it achieved a typical yield of two hundred pounds per acre, then only fifteen acres were devoted to cotton. Even if the yield was extremely poor, say one hundred pounds per acre, it would still mean that only thirty acres were planted in cotton out of one hundred and twenty acres of bottomland.

His expenses in 1943 totaled $1,655.01 for a net loss of $1,036.36. The largest single expenditure was $567.49 for livestock feed. He spent $451.66 on labor. Other expenses included repairs, plow gear, veterinarian services, insurance, interest on the note, tractor fuel, fertilizer, and seed. There was no expense for utilities. The farm did not have electricity or telephone services at that time.[57]

After World War II, the McJunkins brothers returned to Greenfield after their military service and resumed working on the farm. Faulkner did not keep as detailed records after the war as he had before the war, opting to focus primarily on wages. He hired new tenants and wages increased from $1.10 to $2.50 per week for each farmhand.[58] In 1949, Faulkner departed from his standard tenant arrangements by entering into crop lease agreements on twenty acres

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9817-I, box 6, William Faulkner Collection, University of Virginia, Small Special Collections Library.

[56]Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*.

[57]"Mississippi Income Tax Return, William Faulkner - 1943," 1943, MSS 9817-I, box 6, William Faulkner Collection, University of Virginia, Small Special Collections Library.

[58]"Greenfield Farm Ledger (1944, 1946)" (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1944), MSS 9817-I, box 6, William Faulkner Collection, University of Virginia, Small Special Collections Library. New names began appearing in the ledger in 1946: Charlie, Enis, and Starling McJunkins. Also, Gene, Sarah, John, and Wallace are all first names that he wrote in the ledger without a surname.

at Greenfield with Arenza McJunkins and forty acres with Alvis McJunkins. In exchange, they agreed to give Faulkner 25 percent of their cotton and corn crop. These were formal contracts, recorded in the chancery clerk's office of Lafayette County, and the only two crop leases ever recorded at Greenfield.[59]

Throughout the farm records, Faulkner kept detailed notes concerning his farm animals. Beginning in 1938, he recorded in the commissary ledger all the mules he purchased to start his pack. He invested $1,660 for eight animals: John, Fannie, Beauty, Mollie, Lightning, Dixie, Sara, and Topsy. Faulkner kept detailed records of the mating activities of his pack in a stud book. He maintained these breeding records for four years until abruptly ending the practice with the last entry on May 29, 1942.[60] For the next seven years, there were no mentions of livestock in the records. On November 9, 1949, he broke his silence when he recorded the sale of four cows to H. C. Wals for $275.[61] For the rest of his life, Faulkner commingled the farm's finances with those of Rowan Oak and his personal income and expenditures.

His recordkeeping was erratic and incomplete. The four extant ledgers from 1938 to 1962 lack data from some months and years.[62] In 1947, he recorded a timber sale of $2,203.50 which almost recouped the cost of the land he acquired nine years before. He sold more timber in July 1952 to W. C. Billingsley for $962.21.[63] Faulkner also generated non-farm income by selling oil, gas, and mineral leases. He owned half of the mineral acres on the farm; the Federal Land Bank reserved the other half, and he leased his share on December 15, 1938, to W. L. Stewart for two years. In return, he received twenty-five cents per acre in payment and one-eighth of any minerals produced on the property.[64] He leased the minerals again to Kennard Cook on July 25, 1942, with the standard terms of ten years and one-eighths royalty on anything of value discovered during that

[59]"Lafayette County Land Records," bk. 124, p. 419; "Lafayette County Land Records," bk. 126, p. 131.

[60]"Greenfield Farm Commissary Ledger."

[61]"Greenfield Farm Ledger (1949-1955)" (Charlottesville, Virginia, 1949), MSS 9817-I, box 6, William Faulkner Collection, University of Virginia, Small Special Collections Library.

[62]"Greenfield Farm Commissary Ledger"; "Greenfield Farm Ledger (1944, 1946)"; "Greenfield Farm Ledger (1949-1955)"; "Greenfield Farm Ledger (1955-1960)."

[63]"Greenfield Farm Ledger (1949-1955)."

[64]"Lafayette County Land Records," Deed of Trust Book 230, Pages 119-120.

period.[65] Cook's lease payment was probably modest, $1 to $2 per mineral acre.

Despite Faulkner's efforts, Greenfield Farm was a poor financial investment. By 1940, Faulkner subsidized the farm operations by about $50 each month.[66] His losses mounted, as shown by his 1943 tax return. He complained of running out of mules to mortgage, of colts dying, and a neighbor's cattle venturing onto his property and doing damage. Significant flooding of Puskus Creek in 1946 and 1947 ruined half his crops and required expensive site work and dirt-moving to fix the problem. It was not until the sale of *Intruder in the Dust* in July 1948 to MGM that Faulkner finally put his hand-to-mouth financial existence behind him.[67]

Greenfield in Faulkner's Literature

Greenfield was a source of inspiration, a living history theater of the characters, sounds, and landscapes of Faulkner's writing. When he created a map for *Absalom, Absalom!,* he set the fictional McCallum farm on the Greenfield site. Puskus Creek could have reminded him of the brook prominently featured in *The Sound and the Fury*. He fictionalized the neighbors in Beat Two. They were the McCallums in *Sartoris*, the Snopes family in *The Hamlet*, and the Bundrens in *As I Lay Dying*. When Ike McCaslin obsesses over his ledgers in *Go Down Moses*, the reader might imagine Faulkner's small, neat longhand in Greenfield's commissary ledger.[68] When Tommy McJunkins was growing up on the farm, he was roughly the same age as Chick Mallison's companion, Aleck, in *Intruder in the Dust*.

Greenfield affected how Faulkner depicted his White families. Prior to Greenfield, Faulkner championed the White yeoman farmers like the McCallums, whom he first introduced in *Flags in the Dust*. After Greenfield, the White families became meaner and less noble, as depicted by the McCaslins in *Go Down Moses* or the Gowries in

[65]"Lafayette County Land Records," Book 111, p. 22.
[66]Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 1048.
[67]Blotner, 1042–43, 1246–47, 1256–59, 1282–83.
[68]Carl Rollyson, *The Life of William Faulkner: This Alarming Paradox, 1935-1962*, vol. 2 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020), 182–83.

Intruder in the Dust.[69]

Time at Greenfield changed his relationship with Black characters, too. Before Greenfield, Faulkner wrote about Black life based on his experience with domestic servants like Caroline Barr and Ned Barnett. On the farm, he dealt closely with Black tenants who were self-sufficient and skilled in areas he was not. These experiences likely inspired him to create independent, Black characters like Lucas Beauchamp in *Intruder in the Dust*. Lucas was not a tenant but a landowner who owned his livestock and farming equipment. He did not depend on White-dominated economic and power structures. He irritated the White establishment in Jefferson by carrying himself in public with dignity and assertiveness.

Intruder in the Dust proved an economic boon for Oxford. Beginning in March 1949, MGM shot the movie version of the novel in the town and in Lafayette County. Local citizens participated as bit players or extras. Director Clarence Brown filmed four scenes at Greenfield Farm on the bridge that spans Puskus Creek. In a pivotal scene, Nub Gowrie leaps off the bridge near Greenfield and into quicksand to find the body of his murdered son, Vinson.[70]

Paternalism was a dominant theme in Faulkner's life, philosophy, and writing. He took responsibility for the livelihood of kin and others. In November 1935, Faulkner's brother, Dean, died in a small airplane crash. Faulkner had encouraged his brother to fly. Feeling guilty over Dean Faulkner's death, Faulkner provided for Dean Faulkner's widow, Louise, and her daughter, Dean, for the rest of his life. At any given time, Faulkner allowed three or four Black men and women to live on the property surrounding his house. These people worked various jobs in and around Rowan Oak in exchange for room, board, and modest wages.

Faulkner showed his concern for tenants' well-being by keeping prices at the commissary low. In early 1939, Oxford Wholesale, the commissary supplier, raised its prices. Johncy marked up the items in the store. When Faulkner found out, he spoke with Johncy Faulkner. "It was not the Negroes fault that prices went

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[69]Jay Watson, Interview RE Greenfield influence on Faulkner's Literature, in-person, Oxford, Mississippi, July 14, 2022, James R. Gulley, Sr. personal archives.

[70]Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 1278; *Intruder in the Dust* (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1949); "*Intruder in the Dust* World Premier Invitation," October 11, 1949, MSS 9817-I, box 4, University of Virginia, Small Special Collections Library.

up and he wasn't going to penalize them for it," Johncy Faulkner reported in *My Brother Bill*: "So I marked the prices back down."[71]

No direct historical evidence exists to support the contention that Faulkner wrote at Greenfield Farm; however, it is a logical conjecture that he did. He constantly shuffled things back and forth between Greenfield and Rowan Oak, but his typewriter was not one of them. He wrote many drafts of his manuscripts in longhand, but Faulkner did not make a habit of noting dates and locations in the margins. It is not hard to imagine, though, that Faulkner wrote many of these longhand pages during the nights spent at The Lodge. Simultaneous to the early years of Greenfield, he worked on *The Hamlet* and *Go Down, Moses*. Greenfield echoes in the characters and settings of both of those novels.

At Rowan Oak, Faulkner wrote novels, rode horses, settled debts around town, and drank Old Grand-Dad. There he and Estelle threw lavish parties for their friends in the Oxford gentry. But out at Greenfield, he was a country farmer, raising mules, making notations in his studbook, riding a tractor, and sipping moonshine from a jug. Estelle rarely visited Greenfield, and parties on the farm were simple barbeques rather than elegant dinners.

Faulkner's Exit

Social acceptance in Mississippi was elusive for Faulkner. Even at Greenfield Farm, his Beat Two neighbors thought that he was not a "real" farmer, scratching subsistence from the red clay. He was a dilettante. Faulkner's relationship with Oxonians was complex. Born into a prominent family, he inherited the social standing of his grandfather and benefited from it. The postmaster job and a bid to the SAE fraternity at Ole Miss are two examples. However, he squandered those and other opportunities because his heart and talents lay elsewhere. For most of his early adulthood, Faulkner's relationship with Oxford was that of a debtor, struggling to pay his bills and pursuing interests that seemed unlikely to satisfy his creditors. Even after his literary success and consequent financial gains, the scars from these social pressures lingered. His relationship with Ole Miss consisted of disappointments to Faulkner and

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[71]Faulkner, *My Brother Bill: An Affectionate Reminiscence*, 195-96.

squandered opportunities by the institution. It is hard to imagine how a Pulitzer and Nobel prize-winning author was not offered a faculty position at his hometown college, but the university did not embrace Faulkner until after his death.[72] Faulkner and his wife began to think of a life away from North Mississippi.

By 1955, Faulkner's interest in Greenfield Farm was fading. Fences needed mending, weeds overtook the pastures, and no one had lived in the farmhouse full-time since 1940. Faulkner took no action to reverse the decline and admitted in a letter to a colleague that he "must either let it [Greenfield] go in 1958, or give a little more time to it during planting time."[73] In early 1959, he began talking with his new colleagues at the University of Virginia about relocating to Charlottesville. He sought advice from his agents about the feasibility of buying a farm in Virginia. It appeared as though he would sell this Greenfield and replace it with a new Greenfield. As 1962 rolled around, he began quietly closing out accounts in Oxford. The permanent move looked eminent.[74]

His novel writing also shows Faulkner's diminishing interest in Greenfield. After *Intruder in the Dust* in 1948, Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha novels focused on Jefferson. Neither *Requiem for a Nun* (1951), *The Town* (1957), *The Mansion* (1959), nor *The Reivers* (1962) set significant reference scenes or borrowed any characters from Beat Two.[75] Faulkner ruminated to his Random House publisher, Robert K. Haas, that he was considering writing his memoirs. He envisioned it to resemble a biography, though, "actually half fiction," and "will mostly be confined between Rowan Oak, my home in town here, and the farm, Greenfield."[76]

Early Sunday morning, June 17, Faulkner saddled his horse, Stonewall, for a routine ride into the country. Faulkner had long been an avid horseman but was never very proficient, suffering from

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[72]Faulkner was embraced by the University of Virginia, who wooed him to Charlottesville as their first Writer-in-Residence in 1957. The bulk of Faulkner's archives are housed in the Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia.

[73]Joseph Blotner (editor), *Selected Letters of William Faulkner* (New York, NY: Random House, 1977), 411-12. The letter was written on September 9, 1957, to a UVA professor, Floyd Stovall.

[74]Williamson, *William Faulkner and Southern History*, 331, 348; Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 1679, 1682, 1689.

[75]Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 220. Note: Faulkner fictionalizes Beat Two in Lafayette County, Mississippi as Beat Four in Yoknapatawpha County.

[76]Blotner (editor), *Selected Letters of William Faulkner*, 320-21.

numerous falls. Something spooked Stonewall that morning as they emerged from Bailey's Woods to cross Old Taylor Road, and Faulkner fell off with great force. A riderless Stonewall alerted the servants at Rowan Oak, who found him in a heap, battered and bruised. After the fall, Faulkner's health steadily declined. He turned to drink, as was his habit in his times of pain and duress. His family took him to Wright's Sanatorium in Byhalia, Mississippi, about forty miles north of Oxford. They admitted him at 5:50 p.m. on July 5, and eight hours later, he died at age sixty-four of an acute pulmonary edema of probable cardiac origin.[77]

On February 6, 1970, Jill Faulkner Summers conveyed Greenfield Farm to her first cousin, Jimmy Faulkner. The warranty deed claims that Summers inherited the property from her father according to stipulations in his will. However, the item numbers referencing this bequeath are blank.[78] William Faulkner's last will, dated June 1, 1960, was recorded in the office of the chancery clerk of Lafayette County. It appears to place all his real property assets in a marital trust.[79] Estelle Faulkner's death in 1972 cleared up what little cloud there might have been on Jimmy Faulkner's title to the property.

Faulkner's will does not mention tenants. He made life estate provisions at Greenfield Farm for specific tenants in earlier versions of his will. The 1940 version provides a rent-free life estate to Ned Barnett for the house he was living in and title to the house and "ground on which it rests" if Faulkner died without indebtedness.[80] Barnett died in 1947, rendering the provision moot. A 1951 version of his will bequeathed to Payne Wilson the right to continue farming the land he used for fifty dollars per year in rent. Also, Faulkner gave Arenza McJunkins the option of farming his part of the farm rent-free.[81] In 1954, Faulkner amended the tenant section by removing Wilson's obligation to pay rent.[82] Neither Payne Wilson nor Arenza

[77]Blotner, *Faulkner: A Biography*, 1826–39; Jack D Elliott Jr and Sidney W Bondurant, "Death on a Summer Night: Faulkner at Byhalia," *Journal of Mississippi History* 79, no. 3 (2017): 2.

[78]"Lafayette County Land Records," Book 252, p. 57.

[79]"Lafayette County Land Records," Will Book 5, p. 230.

[80]William Faulkner, "Last Will and Testament of William Faulkner," 1940, Louis Daniel Brodsky Collection, Southeast Missouri State University.

[81]William Faulkner, "Last Will and Testament of William Faulkner," February 1951, Louis Daniel Brodsky Collection, Southeast Missouri State University.

[82]William Faulkner, "Last Will and Testament of William Faulkner," August 1954,

McJunkins was provided for in the 1960 will. Though no records are extant, Wilson likely died between 1954 and 1960. Despite Arenza McJunkins' absence in the final will, Jill Summers allowed him to live out his days on Greenfield. Arenza McJunkins died on December 15, 1969, and his family buried him in the nearby Bethlehem Church Cemetery.[83] Summers sold the farm less than two months after his death.

Presumably, Jimmy Faulkner bought the property for sentimental reasons since he and his brother lived there for two years as boys. By this time, Jill Summers was married with children and firmly entrenched in the hunt country culture of northern Virginia. In 1974, Evans Harrington and Ann Abadie co-founded the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference at the University of Mississippi. The conference meets in Oxford annually in the summer, bringing together Faulkner scholars and enthusiasts. Harrington directed the conference from 1974 to 1994 and often led field trips to Greenfield Farm. During this period, Harrington and Abadie's visits to Greenfield Farm maintained the association of Faulkner's legacy to the land. They also witnessed the deterioration of the property, which laid the groundwork for future actions.[84]

Jimmy Faulkner sold the farm to Malcolm Reese on May 11, 1982.[85] While the exact terms of the sale are unknown, Reese financed the transaction with First National Bank of Oxford with a loan of $350,000.[86] If the bank followed its standard policy, it would require a 15-20 percent down payment, indicating a total transaction of $400-450,000.[87]

Five months later, on October 8, 1982, Reece sold the northern ~200 acres in Section 21 to Dunlap & Kyle Realty Co. of Batesville, Mississippi, for an undisclosed sum.[88] On November 30, 1983, Dunlap & Kyle sold the property to the United States

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Louis Daniel Brodsky Collection, Southeast Missouri State University.

[83]Garry Bertholf, "Greenfield," June 16, 2020, James R. Gulley, Sr. personal archives.

[84]Joseph T. Reiff, "Living in Mississippi: The Life and Times of Evans Harrington by Robert W. Hamblin (Review)," *The Journal of Southern History* 84, no. 4 (2018): 1060–61, https://doi.org/10.1353/soh.2018.0319.

[85]"Lafayette County Land Records," Book 356, p. 160.

[86]"Lafayette County Land Records," DT Book 479, p. 550.

[87]Johnny Barrett, Interview RE various topics, in-person, Oxford, Mississippi, multiple occasions 2022, Zotero, James R. Gulley, Sr. personal archives.

[88]"Lafayette County Land Records," Book 358, p. 111.

of America, where it became a part of the United States Forestry Service.[89] As of July 2022, the Forestry Service still owned that land.

It is likely that Reese was a land speculator who knew he could sell the north part of the property to Dunlap & Kyle for a profit and figured he could unload the rest. He was unsuccessful in this endeavor and First National Bank of Oxford foreclosed Reece's property on May 17, 1983.[90] At the time of the foreclosure, the bank's President, Bill Gottshall, recognized the property's historical significance. He considered marketing the property nationally to leverage the connection with Faulkner but decided to create goodwill in the community by donating a portion of it to the University of Mississippi. First National held the property until 1988 when they carved out a 20.43-acre parcel surrounding the farmhouse, The Lodge, and commissary buildings.[91] They sold the remaining 139.57 acres to Jerry A. Morrisson on November 29. At the time of this writing, soybeans are growing in this bottomland.[92]

Epilogue

On August 23, 1990, First National Bank of Oxford conveyed its 20.43-acre parcel to the University of Mississippi Foundation,[93] a "tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation chartered in 1973 by the state of Mississippi to operate exclusively for the benefit of The University of Mississippi and its students, alumni, faculty, and staff."[94] The Foundation formally conveyed title to the property to the University on February 9, 2000.[95]

Soon after First National Bank deeded the 20.43-acre parcel to the Foundation, Foundation President Don Fruge appointed two Oxonians, Linder G. McNeely and Patricia Young, to organize a steering committee to develop an ambitious plan for the property. They assembled a group of Oxford business and professional people,

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[89]"Lafayette County Land Records," Book 364, p. 19.

[90]"Lafayette County Land Records," Book 361, p. 21.

[91]Bill Gottshall, Interview RE Greenfield Farm conveyed to UM Foundation, phone interview, June 8, 2022, James R. Gulley, Sr. personal archives.

[92]"Lafayette County Land Records," Book 391, p. 276.

[93]"Lafayette County Land Records," Book 404, p. 485.

[94]"UM Foundation Mission Statement," https://umfoundation.com/our-mission/, 2022.

[95]"Lafayette County Land Records," Book 480, p. 555.

representatives from the University, potential donors, and John Leslie, Oxford's mayor. The plan envisioned acquiring 202 1/2 acres owned by the U.S. Forestry Service. They also intended to restore the farmhouse, The Lodge, and storage shed; and build cabins and other buildings to accommodate visitors. The intent was to create "an outdoor historical museum which will illustrate and interpret everyday life in rural Mississippi during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."[96]

From its inception, the committee recognized that the project would rely solely on private donations until a going concern could become self-sufficient. The University's leadership endorsed the project: Chancellor Gerald Turner, Vice-Chancellor for University Affairs Don Fruge', Dean of the College of Liberal Arts Gerald Walton, Director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture William Ferris and Associate Director Ann Abadie.[97] The committee got an endorsement letter from Mississippi Commissioner of Agriculture Jim Buck Ross.[98]

The project envisioned three phases. Phase one required $75,000 to stabilize the three existing structures warranting preservation within the next six months. Phase two budgeted $950,000 and two years to restore the historic buildings and construct some of the cabins and meeting facilities to open the museum to the public. Phase three budgeted $3 million to acquire 194 acres from the United States Forest Service. The final phase consisted of the construction of cabins and other buildings. At that point, the Greenfield Farm Project would be totally operational. There was no mention of a budget for staffing the project.

On June 30, 1993, the steering committee met in the board room of Barnard Observatory, the location of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. Five of the six committee members were present: Chairman McNeely, Patricia Young, Will Lewis, Jr. of Neilson's Department Store, Hilda Hill, and Johncy's son, Murry "Chooky" Faulkner. Lisa Howorth, co-owner of Square Books, did

[96]Don Fruge', Sr., "Greenfield Farm," June 3, 1993, Evans Harrington Collection, University of Mississippi Libraries, Department of Archives and Special Collections.

[97]"Greenfield Farm Project," n.d., Evans Harrington Collection, University of Mississippi Libraries, Department of Archives and Special Collections.

[98]Jim Buck Ross, "Greenfield Farm Project Endorsement," undated, Evans Harrington Collection, University of Mississippi Libraries, Department of Archives and Special Collections.

not attend. Fruge' and Walton attended as ex-officio members. Howard Duvall, Jr. (owner of a clothing store), Evans Harrington (English professor), and Thomas Dewey (art history professor) attended as advisory members. McNeely and Young updated the group on fundraising efforts. McNeely urged all members to "disagree agreeably." Hill, a representative of the United States Department of Agriculture, spoke about ways to begin the project and provided examples of similar efforts in the South.[99]

This was the committee's only formal meeting. Many informal meetings ensued between community members with ties to the Oxford-Lafayette Heritage Foundation and the University. University Chancellor Gerald Turner expressed a keen interest in the project and pledged support, but he left in 1995 to become the president of Southern Methodist University. After his departure, the committee could not raise sufficient funds for phase one. Greenfield Farm seemed destined to oblivion.[100]

In January 2022, John T. Edge founded the Mississippi Lab at the University of Mississippi. He convinced the University's provost, Dr. Noel Wilkin, that the Lab could serve a vital purpose by spearheading projects to drive imagination and creativity. Years before, Edge spent time at the Rivendell Writers Colony in Sewanee, Tennessee, where he was Editor-in-Residence and wrote his last book, *The Potlikker Papers: A Food History of the Modern South*. His time at Rivendell was bittersweet: his experience there inspired him, but the Colony later closed due to lack of institutional support. Could he create something similar to Rivendell, but in a different vein and with more substantial financial backing?

Edge's projects at the Mississippi Lab included establishing a residency program that would empower Mississippi writers, particularly those with limited means, to free themselves from everyday life and devote one to four weeks to unencumbered, intensive writing. He knew the University owned twenty acres at Greenfield Farm from his association with Dr. Abadie at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at Ole Miss. Abadie had continued to advocate for the productive use of the property and as

[99]"Greenfield Farm Project."

[100]Don Fruge', Sr., Interview RE Greenfield Farm acquisition by UM Foundation, in person, June 1, 2022, James R. Gulley, Sr. personal archives; Ann J. Abadie, Interview RE GF project, in person, June 28, 2022, James R. Gulley, Sr. personal archives.

a way to maintain the University's association with Faulkner since the original effort in 1993. Edge and Wilkin found little resistance to using it for the proposed project since the University had yet to develop the property in its over thirty years of ownership.[101]

In the following months, Edge made ten site visits to artist residencies and served as a fellow at, among other residencies, The Hambidge Center in Rabun Gap, Georgia. These experiences inspired his vision of what Greenfield Farm could become. Armed with this vision and a passion for enabling writers, he assembled a team, developed a project plan, and gathered the resources needed to make the dream a reality. The resulting plan envisions hosting fifty to sixty writers annually on a retreat-style campus of individual studios and common buildings. One of the studios will be Reverend Will D. Campbell's old writing cabin, which the University, in cooperation with the Campbell family, is relocating from Mt. Juliet, Tennessee.

As of February 2024, Edge has raised over half of the $9 million project costs from charitable foundations, the University, and interested patrons for the Greenfield Farm Writers Residency. Plans are in place to break ground and begin the initial construction projects later in the year. If all continues to go as planned, writers in residence will be crafting stories, composing poems, and writing histories in late 2025.[102]

Today all that remains of The Lodge is a small portion of the brick foundation. The farmhouse has mostly caved in. Several walls and a bit of the roof are still holding on. We found a chimney in the woods. No trace of the barn, blacksmith shed, or tenant houses remains. A storage shed still stands, fortified by a solid metal roof. The roof has rusted, and the plank walls are weathered, but it is salvageable. Inside is a mountain of debris. What lies within that refuse? Might there be clues to unlock more of the mysteries of Greenfield Farm?

One day soon, a new generation of writers will craft their stories under the same pines and stars that inspired William

[101]John T. Edge, Beginnings of the Mississippi Lab and the Greenfield Farm Writer Residency, phone interview, February 9, 2024.

[102]Edge; John T. Edge, "Greenfield Farm Writers Residency," https://www.greenfieldfarmwriters.org/; Caroline McCutchen, "Greenfield Farm to Revitalize Southern Storytelling," *The Daily Mississippian*, August 31, 2023, https://thedmonline.com/greenfield-farm-to-revitalize-southern-storytelling/.

Faulkner over eighty years ago. What literature will the soil of Greenfield Farm produce in the future? Mississippi, and the world, is anxious to find out.

The Road to *A Raisin in the Sun*: The Hansberry Family of Gloster, Mississippi, and Its Link to Alcorn A&M College

by J. Janice Coleman

When Felecia M. Nave was president of Alcorn State University, she emailed me information about Elden Hays Hansberry, the grandfather of Lorraine Hansberry who wrote *A Raisin in the Sun*. A part of the screenshot image that she sent was from the *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Alcorn Agricultural & Mechanical College, 1912-1913*. It shows the year, 1891, that E. H. Hansberry graduated from Alcorn A&M and his status as an alumnus, which indicates that he is deceased.[1] Dr. Nave requested that I explore the link between the Hansberry family and Alcorn State. That there is a connection between the Hansberrys and Alcorn is common knowledge, but exactly what is it? About her work, Lorraine Hansberry says, "I am a writer. I am going to write."[2] Dr. Nave's request for information stems from the question, "What's Alcorn got to do with it?"

In *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*, Lorraine Hansberry states:

> I was born May 19, 1930, the last of four children. Of love and my parents, there is little to be written: their relationship to their children was utilitarian. We were fed and housed and dressed and outfitted with more cash than our associates and that was all. We were also vaguely taught certain vague absolutes: that we were better than no one but infinitely superior to everyone; that we were the products of the proudest and most mistreated of the races of man; that there was nothing enormously difficult about life; that one *succeeded* as a matter of course.[3]

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[1]Elden Hays Hansberry died at age thirty-two on August 6, 1896, five years after he graduated from Alcorn. His status as "deceased" is noted on page 55 of the *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Alcorn A. and M. College, 1912-1913*, and is repeated in the alumni report in several of the early catalogues.

[2]Lorraine Hansberry, *To Be Young* (New York: Signet, 1970), 105.

[3]Ibid., 48.

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This paper focuses on that *matter of course*—the course that ran from the Hansberrys' roots in Gloster, Mississippi; to Alcorn A&M College in Lorman, Mississippi; to other parts known and unknown but ultimately to national as well as international acclaim for the family. If Lorraine had been asked to write this exploratory report herself, she might have looked backward and borrowed a line from the narrator in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* who says, "But my grandfather is the one . . . and I am told I take after him."[4] After all, this matter of course began when her grandfather Elden enrolled at Alcorn in the fall of 1887.

Elden Hays Hansberry was born to William and Arminda Walker Hansberry on February 27, 1864, in Clinton, Louisiana. His birthdate coincided with the closing years of the Civil War when there was little or no schooling for Blacks in his home area. In Clinton, he and his siblings grew up as farmhands on the land that his father worked.[5] In his late teens, he moved to Gloster, a railroad town located just across the state line in Amite County, Mississippi, and at age twenty-three, he enrolled in the preparatory school at Alcorn where he would eventually advance to the college level, majoring in agriculture.[6] Because of his background in farming, Elden might have considered agriculture the most practical field of study. After all, at this time in the school's history, it had already undergone a name change from Alcorn University at its founding in 1871 to Alcorn Agricultural & Mechanical College in 1878. This change reflects the shift in the curriculum from one that centered on the liberal arts to one centering on agriculture and trades such as shoemaking, laundering, masonry, painting, plumbing, and printing—with blacksmithing and carpentry to come. As Elden's collection of books would later indicate, however, he had a strong interest in fields such as history, anthropology, archaeology, paleontology, and sociology. He graduated from Alcorn in 1891, the year which marked

[4]Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Vintage, 1995), 16. Ellison published *Invisible Man* in 1952, while Hansberry published *Raisin* in 1959.

[5]According to the U. S. Census Bureau of 1880, the occupation of sixteen-year-old Elden, who was still living in Clinton, Louisiana, was farming, and so was that of each of his siblings aged eleven or older.

[6]The preparatory school at Alcorn College served to grant students of junior high and high school ages the equivalence of a high school diploma since many late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century schools for Blacks extended only to the eighth grade, and some classes that Alcorn offered were "sub-preparatory."

the twentieth anniversary of the college and the year in which he began teaching and farming in Gloster.[7] By 1895, he had landed a teaching position at his alma mater. The *Catalogue of the Officers and Students, 1895-96,* lists E. H. Hansberry, B. S., as the sole "Professor and Superintendent of Farm" in the Department of Agriculture.[8] Unfortunately, his tenure as a college professor was short-lived because he died on August 6, 1896.

Elden left behind a widow, Harriet P. Bailey Hansberry, a native of Woodville, Mississippi, whom he had married on October 4, 1891, and two young sons, two-and-a-half-year-old William Leo Hansberry and fifteen-month-old Carl Augustus Hansberry. To these sons he bequeathed what the older son would later call "a reasonably well stocked library."[9] William Leo was an avid reader; he devoured the content of his father's books, but they left him unfulfilled because they offered nothing about the history of Africa, the second largest continent and the home of *his* ancestors. Yet, despite this omission of information on Africa, Elden's library was a gift that gave William Leo an awareness of world civilizations. Through this first-born son, that library would keep on giving to Elden's successive generations, shaping the lives of his second son Carl and his granddaughter Lorraine on national and global landscapes in a manner that few could have imagined given their roots in the small, rural town of Gloster. The fascinating books ignited in William Leo a lifelong quest for information on Africa, especially about the continent's ancient development and growth. He would rely on this information to enlighten the rest of the world about the region that was often misrepresented as a conglomerate of "gigantic jungles which were then and always had been hardly more than the haunts of 'savage

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[7]According to David S. Dreyer, a resident of Natchez, Adams County, Mississippi, and independent scholar, Elden H. Hansberry purchased five acres of land in Gloster on October 5, 1892. In a binder under the heading "Amite County Hansberry Roots," Dreyer includes this note along with his sketch of the location of the land, the location of Elden's tombstone in Gloster's Woodlawn Cemetery, a Hansberry family tree, and other records pertaining to the Hansberrys. A copy of the binder is in the J. D. Boyd Library at Alcorn State in the Archives and Special Collections.

[8]*Catalogue of the Officers, 1895-96*, 3. This information is repeated in the same catalogue's "Alumni Report," p. 6. It reads: "E. H. Hansberry. Agricultural Instructor. Alcorn College, Westside, Mississippi." The Westside village, located adjacent to the campus, may have been the temporary home of the college's post office at that time. The enclave was also a part of Hansberry's local address.

[9]William Leo Hansberry, "W. E. B. DuBois' Influence," *Freedomways* 5, no.1 (Winter 1965): 74.

beasts and still more savage men.'"[10]

Tombstone of Elden Hays Hansberry in Woodlawn Cemetery in Gloster, Mississippi. Photo courtesy of David S. Dreyer.

From the beginning of William Leo's life on February 25, 1894, and his brother Carl's on April 30, 1895, their father Elden and mother Harriet had high hopes for them educationally. They were determined to see that their sons mastered the fundamental elements of learning and that they were forever building upon those basic skills. Two years after Elden's death, Harriet remarried, and she, along with her sons' stepfather, Elijah J. Washington, continued the commitment to educate the boys, which may have included a significant amount of homeschooling since both parents had somehow acquired an impressive level of education. By the fall of 1912, both William Leo and Carl were enrolled in the preparatory

[10]Ibid, 78.

school at Alcorn, where they were taking courses in English, math, history, and the sciences but also working to fulfill the requirement of mastering a trade, in their case, carpentry, for which each would earn a certificate of proficiency upon completion of the multi-layered course.[11] Later that year, the names Carl and "Leo" Hansberry are listed together under "senior preparatory class," an indication of the progress they would make toward enrollment in the school's college course of study if they followed the advisement plan.[12] Pages later, the brothers are again listed together but as "second year students" on the "Agricultural Roll of Students."[13] On the preceding page is a statement of the objectives of the agricultural major:

> It is the aim in finishing students in this course to give them such rounded conceptions of the dignity of labor and of farm labor in particular; and such a knowledge of the scientific principles underlying their calling, as will enable them to go forth with a reasonable measure of confidence in their ability to succeed at it, and imbued with a love for its educative, softening, and refining influences upon the race, to the end that in whatsoever community it may fall their lots to reside, they may be enthusiastic teachers and leaders in this particular field of endeavor and a standing inspiration to the agricultural interests of their several communities.[14]

The statement later concludes, "Students finishing this course receive the degree of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture." For this desired outcome, William Leo might have respected the idea of the reward for one's having completed the requirements for such a degree, but for himself, a second-generation bibliophile, he rejected the notion of a degree in a non-scholarly field.

Instead of finishing his degree at Alcorn, William Leo transferred to Atlanta University in the spring of 1914 in search of more information about Africa. "By the end of my freshman year in college at Old Atlanta University,"[15] he states, "I had become, largely

[11]*Catalogue of the Officers*, *1912-13*, 26.

[12]Ibid, 39.

[13]Ibid, 38.

[14]Ibid, 37.

[15]"Old Atlanta" of which Hansberry speaks was established in 1867 to educate students who were largely former slaves. The curriculum, primarily "sub-collegiate," centered on teacher training and industrial and domestic science trades. In 1929, Atlanta University became *new* when it adopted a more stringent curriculum and changed its

through independent reading—and in my own estimation—something of an authority on the 'glory that was Greece' and the 'grandeur that was Rome.'"[16] But despite his being a self-assigned reader, William Leo admits that while engaging in these independent studies, he had learned little "that added to [his] exceedingly limited knowledge of Black Africa's story in olden days." Yet a reward did accompany his transfer to Atlanta; he learned about the work of W. E. B. DuBois. In 1895, DuBois completed a dissertation entitled *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade* and became the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard University. According to Horace Mann Bond, one of DuBois' former students, this scholarly man had found a home at Atlanta between 1898 and 1910, twelve years during which he published numerous studies on Africa.[17] Before William Leo discovered these studies, he had begun to doubt that anything other than "scattered and inconclusive references to Africa existed," but afterward, these studies became his saving grace, having "rescued [him] from the horns of these academic and psychological dilemmas" which caused him to vacillate between erroneous ideas about Africa's existence and her reality.[18]

In June of 1916, which marked the end of William Leo's freshman year at Atlanta, he returned to Mississippi to work at Brown's Wells, a health resort near McComb, Mississippi, where he had been employed as the operator of a garment-pressing shop the two previous summers and where, in his spare time, he was free to read. His preference was anything "which treated in anywise of Africa and the African at home or abroad." At this time, the only publication which fit the bill was *The Crisis*, the official magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) of which DuBois was a founder and editor. From one of the magazine's issues, William Leo learned that, a year earlier, in 1915, a publishing house had released a new book by DuBois entitled *The Negro*. This 240-page book was, he says, partially "a review of the then current available evidence bearing upon the history of Black Africa in earlier times. I

name to Atlanta University Affiliation. As an affiliate, it was a graduate school with Morehouse and Spelman serving as its undergraduate colleges. Visit **https://www.lost-colleges.com/atlanta-university**.

[16]Hansberry, "W. E. B. DuBois' Influence," 74.

[17]Horace Mann Bond. "The Negro Scholar Biographical and Professional in America" in John P. Davis, editor, *American Negro Reference Book*, 554.

[18]Hansberry, "W. E. B. DuBois' Influence," 75.

ordered a copy immediately and when it arrived, I soon discovered that the little book contained just the type of information for which I had been searching for many months." What made *The Negro* such a jewel was that DuBois had included an appendix which listed thirty additional books that others might read if they were interested in learning about Africa's history. William Leo's intent was to read all the books on the recommended list as quickly as possible, but, he states, "It is hardly necessary to say that no one of these volumes could be found at Brown's Wells, nor were they perhaps, available, for that matter, elsewhere in Mississippi."[19]

When William Leo returned to Atlanta in the fall of 1916, he located only four of the books listed in DuBois' appendix, but these were not the ones that he was most eager to read; therefore he heeded the advice of one of his professors, Harvard graduate John Bigham, who counseled him to go farther east, stating that he could find most of the books that he wanted only in the Library of Congress or in other notable libraries such as those at Harvard or other Ivy League schools. Professor Bigham further advised him to enroll at Harvard after he completed his undergraduate work at Atlanta so that he could obtain a master's degree in African history. What the professor didn't know was that an extended stay at the Atlanta school was not in William Leo's plan unless he could gain access to the prized books on DuBois' list. Impatient to read all the recommended texts as well as some others on African history, he transferred to Harvard after spending only two weeks at the beginning of his sophomore year at Atlanta. At Harvard, he faced many challenges, which he sums up as "a human-interest story of grit, gall, and guts of the first order," but by June of 1921, not only had he read nearly all the books pertaining to ancient Africa that were on DuBois' list and several other relevant texts, he had also met the "rigorous requirements" for Harvard's Bachelor of Arts degree in anthropology.[20]

With his bachelor's degree, Hansberry began his teaching career. Three or four months before he graduated from Harvard, he had accepted a faculty position in New Orleans at Straight College, now Dillard University, where he taught for one year, from February of 1921 to February of 1922. That fall, he joined the faculty

[19]Ibid, 81.
[20]Ibid., 81-82.

at Howard University, a research institution which served as his academic affiliation while he engaged, as he often did, in scholarly pursuits away from its grounds. For example, in 1932, he completed a master's degree in anthropology at Harvard and later studied at the University of Chicago, the University of Oxford in England, and Cairo University in Egypt. He also created a home life. In 1937, he married Myrtle Kelso, a Meridian, Mississippi, native whom he met in Chicago. The couple had two children, Gail Adelle Hansberry and Myrtle Kay Hansberry, both of whom were born and still live in Washington, D.C. His wife Myrtle was a social worker and language teacher, who, along with their daughters, often accompanied him as he made his mark as a national and international scholar by traveling the globe extolling the virtues of Mother Africa as a place of enlightenment rather than the "Dark Continent" of popular consciousness. St. Clair Drake, another of DuBois' former students, observes that it was not long before Professor Hansberry had earned a place on a few lists with DuBois as one of a small group of scholars who was contributing to the positive change of images and perceptions of Africa, further explaining:

> They were devoted to correcting error and misinformation and to fostering appreciation for African cultures. They also called attention to neglected aspects of African history and sociology which were favorable to the continent and its people. They were concerned to 'vindicate the race' by 'setting the record straight.' In defending Africa they were defending themselves against the charge of 'a people without a past' and of being the descendants of savage and uncivilized people (as were those still living in Africa were reputed to be), people inferior in inborn ability and incapable of successful self-government.[21]

Christopher Tinson, associate professor of Africana studies and history and director of the African Studies Program at Saint Louis University, also notes that Professor Hansberry had become an eminent researcher of African history and culture and states that at some point, he was not only on the list with DuBois as a leader in the development of African Studies but rather that he had come to head the list as DuBois, "an almost unparalleled giant" in the

[21]St. Clair Drake, "New Americans and the African Interest," 677.

study of African history, greatly benefited from Hansberry's work.[22] These benefits included a collaboration between the scholars that paid dividends, particularly for DuBois, whom, following Hansberry's leads, was able to significantly increase his number of publications pertaining to the ancient empires of Africa.

After World War II, Professor Hansberry, in his early fifties, still maintained a robust schedule of lecturing and other initiatives that underscored Africa as a leader in the continuing civilization of the world. During the week of February 11-18, 1951, which was the first Negro History Week following the April 3, 1950, death of Carter G. Woodson, the Week's founder, Professor Hansberry accepted the challenge to celebrate the week with "a memorial worthy of [Woodson's] achievements."[23] He spent that entire week lecturing on African affairs at the historically Black colleges and universities in Texas: Wiley College, Bishop College, Jarvis Christian College (now Jarvis Christian University), Texas College, Butler College (which closed in 1972), and Texas State University (now Texas Southern University). In 1953, he founded the African American Institute as a unique African-oriented educational venture that was headquartered in New York with offices in Washington, D.C., and the African countries of Nigeria and Tanganyika, now Tanzania.[24] This establishment exceeded Professor Hansberry's expectations when it evolved into a learning enterprise with an interracial board of trustees that managed its hefty scholarship fund, educational leadership program, and its publication, entitled *African Report*. On September 24, 1957, Professor Hansberry spoke at the opening of the Center for African Studies, which was held at the New School for Social Research in Manhattan. Geneva C. Turner, author, educator, and regular contributor to the *Negro History Bulletin*, states the general subject as "Africa—Its Past Glories and Present Promise."[25] Professor Hansberry spoke of the wealth of resources that Africa has and that makes it possible for the continent to produce much needed products such as copper, gold, cobalt, uranium, and cocoa. He also touched on a recurrent theme of his speeches—the African cultures which had been thriving since prehistoric days.

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[22]Christopher Tinson, "Solidarity and Excellence," n. p.
[23]"*Negro History Week 1951*," 108, 119.
[24]St. Clair Drake, "New Americans," 694.
[25]Geneva C. Turner, "For Whom," 65-66.

In 1959, after nearly forty years of service to Howard University, Professor Hansberry retired. A retrospective of his career, however, reveals that his start as a young faculty member in the history department was "no crystal stair"[26] and that his position was a source of heavy criticism for some years to come. In a 1961 *Ebony* magazine article, Marc Crawford writes of the aspersions that some of Professor Hansberry's colleagues cast against him during his early years at Howard University because his views on the origins of humankind and other subjects pertaining to the prehistoric empires of Africa conflicted with theirs. For instance, while other authorities were insisting that early human life originated in Asia, Professor Hansberry was contending that it "sprang from the loins of Africa."[27] Because of this dissenting view and similar ones, his colleagues spoke of him as an eccentric, labeling him "a little strange" and "a crackpot." They urged Howard's president, Dr. J. Stanley Durkee, to fire "the brash Mississippian" to save the history department and the school itself from the embarrassment of what they deemed the professor's baseless research.[28] President Durkee refused to fire Professor Hansberry, but the lingering effect of the criticism from his colleagues might have been the reason that funding for some of the fellowships that he had secured were denied when the grants had formerly been renewed. The criticism might also have been the reason that he was not promoted from instructor to assistant professor until 1938. By that time, the master's in anthropology from Harvard that he had completed years earlier and his further studies at other research universities might have been validating factors in his "revolutionary teachings."

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[26]This phrase is from Langston Hughes' poem "Mother to Son," 30. The metaphor has come to symbolize the struggle of black life in America.

[27]Marc Crawford, "Scholar Nobody Knows," 60. In a parenthetical remark, Crawford states that anthropologists now generally agree that Africa *is* the birthplace of human life. It is likely, then, that Africa was a bellwether in other areas such as advanced technology. As a proponent of her uncle Leo's teachings, Lorraine Hansberry emphasizes this point in *Raisin* when she speaks through the voice of college student Beneatha Younger to remind African Americans of the progress they can make if they shun assimilationist views and remain true to their native land of Africa. When Beneatha's upper-middle-class date George Murchinson reduces her heritage to "nothing but a bunch of raggedy-assed spirituals and some grass huts," she is appalled. "GRASS HUTS!" she screams. "See there . . . you are standing there in your splendid ignorance talking about people who were the first to smelt iron on the face of the earth! The Ashunti were performing surgical operations when the English were still tattooing themselves with blue dragons" (See p. 81).

[28]Ibid., 59.

While the debate continued about whether Professor Hansberry's research was credible, Howard University was citing one other reason for its reluctance to grant him an ascension in rank: the professor had not earned a terminal degree in his field. Dr. Earnest A. Hooton, however, an internationally known anthropologist who was Professor Hansberry's mentor both times that he studied at Harvard, was quick to come to his protégé's defense. He argued that the professor had not earned a terminal degree because of the uniqueness of the field that he was in, and, as he further explained, "No present-day scholar has anything like the knowledge that Hansberry has developed. He has been unable to take the Ph.D. degree in his chosen subject here (Harvard) or anywhere else because of a lack of proper persons to supervise his thesis and because there is no university or institution, so far as I know, that has manifested a really profound interest in the subject."[29] In addition, Hooton pointed out, Professor Hansberry's study had "passed far beyond the state of detailed knowledge of his problem in which I or any other scholar in the United States can be of any use to him." Despite Hooton's argument in defense of Professor Hansberry, the university still failed to acknowledge that the professor was a *stand-alone* expert in the field of African history who had studied the subject "from the dawn of mankind to the coming of the Europeans in modern times." This reference to the "times" is the idea that prompts Crawford to suggest that the problem of Hansberry's research just might have been one of ill-timing. "Few Negro scholars," he states, "were interested in or had identified themselves with Africa 40 years ago and most seemed in a mad dash to assimilate Western intellectualism. And this Hansberry was a disturbing fellow. The things he taught if taken seriously might cause a man to re-orient his entire outlook."[30]

After retirement, Professor Hansberry's long career at Howard never came to a full stop. On campus, he continued to serve the university in various capacities and to represent it as an ambassador when he traveled back to the familiar and to the previously unexplored territory of Africa. During his employment at Howard, his classroom was a lively and engaging learning space, to be sure, but it was also nontraditional. Outside the box—having

[29]Ibid., 59-60.
[30]Ibid., 60.

walls only in the physical sense—it mimicked the mobile classroom of today because Professor's Hansberry's teaching domain was *wherever he was*. In 1962, the Governing Counsel of the University of Nigeria Nsukka named the Institute of African Studies the Hansberry College of African Studies, only to rename it two years later the Hansberry Institute of African Studies, a name it carries to this day. Yet not until 1972, when Professor Hansberry had been deceased for seven years, did Howard re-evaluate his fifty-year alliance with the university and pay tribute to him by naming a lecture hall in the department of history in his honor.[31] By that time, Professor Hansberry was generally known in academe as the progenitor of African studies.

To his credit, Professor Hansberry harbored no malice toward his critics about any of the proceedings of his academic career. He notes, "To many Americans of African descent the feeling of being a Negro is often embarrassing, and the ethnocentric impulse has been bred out of them or suppressed. There is nothing in prevailing literature that gives the Negro a sense of pride in African origin."[32] At the end of his career, though, Professor Hansberry was confident that he had at least made some inroads into changing the mindset of the African American who might have been ashamed of his cultural heritage, for his life's mission had been to labor "so that even a Mississippi plowboy may take pride in his origin."[33] He further states that he had lived without regret, declaring, "if I had to do it all over again, I would change nothing. It has been an intensely rewarding life, and I would live it as I have." Dr. Kwame Wes Alford, who wrote a dissertation on Professor Hansberry and the origins of the discipline of African studies between 1894 and 1939, attributes the basics of the professor's *fait accompli* as a scholar to a combination of resources in the rural village of Gloster that raised and mentored him from his boyhood to the time that he left Alcorn for Atlanta University. As Alford expresses it, "The initial stages in his development as an academician and intellectual derived from the foundation he received from his family, the tradition of resistance and black nationalism in the African American community in Mississippi, and the succession

[31]Ibid., 68.
[32]Ibid., 62.
[33]Ibid., 68.

of committed administrators and educators at Alcorn State University."[34]

On November 3, 1965, at age seventy-one, Professor Hansberry was visiting relatives in Chicago when he died of a cerebral hemorrhage. The tributes to him began immediately and continued, intermittently, for years to come. In an obituary that was published in the January 1966 issue of *The Crisis*, Nnamdi Azikiwe, the President of Nigeria, writes:

> The death of Professor William Leo Hansberry is a sad and personal loss to me. He was my teacher in Anthropology during my undergraduate years in 1928 and 1929. . . . His deep and abiding interest in ancient and medieval African history was a source of inspiration. Indeed, his researches on this vast untapped source of historical scholarship have been an original contribution to human knowledge. . . . The name of William Leo Hansberry is now a hallowed one in the hall of Africa's most populous nation, as the Hansberry Institute of African Studies at the University of Nigeria has been named for him, in grateful appreciation and recognition of his immortal services to the Continent of Africa and the people of African descent.[35]

In 1961, four years before Professor Hansberry died, President Azikiwe credited his professor for instilling in him "a zeal to probe into the labyrinthian corridors of African history."[36] This compliment speaks to the lasting effect that Professor Hansberry's teaching had on his students and colleagues alike, yet Crawford reflects on his relative obscurity, lamenting the omission of Hansberry's name from the *Who's Who in Colored America* list and from the educational directories where the names of leading academicians attest to their eminence as scholars. "To many," Crawford writes, "he is [still] better known as the uncle of prize-winning playwright Lorraine Hansberry rather than he is for his far-reaching contributions to the body of human knowledge."[37] Crawford's observation begs the question: Is

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[34]Kwame Wes Alford, 269.

[35]Nnamdi Azikiwe, "A Teacher Remembered," vol. 73, no.1. *The Crisis* (January 1966): 54-5.

[36]Crawford, 59.

[37]Ibid., 60. Note: As the first quarter of this twenty-first century nears its close, Professor Hansberry is gaining in reputation as an eminent scholar apart from the fame that the name Hansberry might have bestowed upon him because of his famous niece's

Carl, Professor Hansberry's younger brother and Lorraine's father, also more remembered in the annuals of time because of his familial link to Lorraine?

Being only fourteen months younger than Professor Hansberry, Carl was reared in the shadow of his older brother; they had the same biological parents, they lived in the same geographical areas, and they both attended Alcorn College until William Leo's 1914 transfer to Atlanta. Like William Leo, Carl entered Alcorn College as a student in the preparatory department, where the lifelong patterns and priorities of his life began to take shape. The *Catalogue of the Officers and Students,1912-1913,* portrays Carl as a young man who can advance swiftly through his academic classes as well as his multi-level elective course in carpentry, the finer points of which would prove to be a key factor in his future success as a real estate developer. On the other hand, the minutes of the *Faculty Record of Alcorn A. & M.,1912-1921,* show that he was inclined to protest, to push back on perceived injustices. A case in point took place on September 28, 1914, when Carl was nineteen and one of forty-five male students summoned before the faculty on a charge of "insubordination and rebellion against the order of the faculty."[38] The minutes of that day show that the "trouble" began when the faculty initiated a new seating arrangement for the students in the dining hall.[39] Under the previous seating arrangement, students were

success as a writer and dramatist. For example, on Saturday, February 25, 2023, which marked the 129th anniversary of Professor Hansberry's birthday, sixteen distinguished members of the William Leo Hansberry Society of both ancient and modern African history participated in a five-hour webinar on Professor Hansberry's research alone. The symposium also observed the centennial of Hansberry's being "the first person to create and teach an African Studies curriculum in an American university." Overall, the symposium honored "his seminal role in research and higher education." View the symposium at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXcLju5DM3E. Symposia of the last two years are also available for viewing on YouTube.

[38] *Faculty Record (unpublished minutes of) 1912-21*, pp. 85-86.

[39] Note: Before coming to the college, each student was "urged to read" the "Discipline Rules" that were printed in each previous year's catalogue in a special section of the "Announcements." Regarding the seating arrangement in the dining hall, the rule was that "each student shall have his particular place at the table, and such place shall not be changed without permission of the Steward of the hall." The rule spelled out the penalty for disobedience: "As obedience and subordination are essential to the purpose of the College, any student who shall disobey a legal command of the President or any professor, or instructor, or any superior officer, or behave himself in a refractory or disrespectful manner to the constituted authorities of the College, shall be dismissed or less severely punished according to the nature of the offense." *Catalogue of the Officers, 1914-15*, p. 77.

grouped by class; under the new, the students were to be "scattered promiscuously throughout the room." According to Charles F. Jones, the college secretary, "These young men rebelled, and the faculty called them before it and instructed them to take the seats assigned to them or they would be dismissed from the institution." Dr. Allan D. Snodgrass, a science professor who also served as the college chaplain, motioned that all who did not take their seats be expelled from the college. The faculty voted in agreement, leaving Hansberry, like the other revolting students, to decide whether to stay at the college or to leave. Carl stayed and even returned for the 1915-1916 school year, which was his junior year; however, the "insufficient time" that he spent in the classroom that school term might have signaled his boredom with or distraction from his studies.[40] It was his last year at Alcorn. If he had returned the following year, he would have been required to repeat his junior year. He opted not to return.

A short time later, Carl relocated to Chicago where many of his relatives were already established. Known for his superb math skills, he soon landed a job as an accountant for Binga National Bank, Chicago's first Black bank. Shortly afterward, he established a bank of his own, the Lake Street Bank, and on June 1, 1919, he married Nannie Perry, a native of Columbia, Tennessee, who became one of his tellers. Between January 1920 and April 1923, Carl and Nannie had three children: Carl Hansberry Jr., Perry Holloway Hansberry, and Mamie Louise Hansberry. Seven years later, on May 19, 1930, Lorraine Vivian Hansberry was born. On Lorraine's birth certificate, a copy of which she includes in *To Be Young*, Carl's occupation is listed as U. S. Deputy Marshall, while Nannie's is listed as Ward Committeeman.[41] Nevertheless, Carl became known as a real estate developer, one who amassed significant wealth from putting "his considerable financial talents to use."[42] He had other talents too—in legal study, science and invention, and social and political activism. Add a natural intellectual curiosity to the list, and the full measure of the man emerges. Lorraine, as the youngest of his children, was the beneficiary of all these talents except, as she admits, her father's superior math skills,[43] but she was able to masterfully weave all the

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[40]*Catalogue of the Officers, 1915-16.*

[41]Lorraine Hansberry, *To Be Young*, 47.

[42]Anne Cheney, 2.

[43]Lorraine Hansberry, *To Be Young*, 63. In *To Be Young*, Lorraine admits that "to

others into the writing of *A Raisin in the Sun*, for which, in 1959, she won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award. For one who had proven herself adept at writing poetry, essays, autobiographical sketches, and social and political commentaries, this honor was a crowning achievement.

Though Carl's move from the South to Chicago was not to continue his education as his older brother's relocation to Atlanta and subsequently to Harvard had been, he was still connected to the Black intelligentsia and engaged in many intellectual pursuits. Anne Cheney, a Lorraine Hansberry biographer, writes, "The [Carl] Hansberry home had long been a mecca for black leaders in the arts, society, and politics. One of the most distinguished visitors was Dr. W. E. B. DuBois; his classic *The Souls of Black Folk* [was] one of the books in the Hansberry library.[44] Because of DuBois' erudition, Carl welcomed opportunities to exchange ideas with him, especially on the subjects of history and private enterprise, to which Lorraine says that her father 'utterly subscribed.'"[45] During gatherings at the Hansberry home, sometimes [Carl and DuBois] "would disappear for hours into the library, oblivious to food, gaiety, and the other guests."[46] Since Carl would have been intimately familiar with the content of *The Souls of Black Folk*, a quote from the book might have been one of his truths to live by: "To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor race in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships."[47] Living in the metropolis of Chicago, a world away from small town Gloster, Carl was determined not to be a poor man; he was determined to make his mark in real estate.

As a real estate developer, Carl understood the universal key to success in business: knowing the individual needs of his clientele and supplying those unique needs. Most of his tenants were African Americans who had followed the trail of the earlier Great Migration from the South northward in search of adequate housing and better

this day—I cannot count properly. I do not add, subtract, or multiply with ease . . . . The mind which was able to grasp university-level reading materials in the sixth and seventh grades had not been sufficiently exposed to make even simple change in a grocery store." She attributes her mathematical inefficiencies to her underfunded education in the segregated Chicago public school system where arithmetic classes were "put aside" to make "the system work in other areas."

[44]Cheney, 6.

[45]Lorraine Hansberry, *To Be Young*, 50.

[46]Cheney, 6.

[47]W. E. B. Dubois, *Souls*, 20.

economic and educational opportunities. However, many found themselves living in cramped, substandard housing on Chicago's South Side where they were subjugated to a life in segregated areas that were akin to the more undesirable side of the tracks that they thought they had left behind when they fled from *down South*. In this city whose grandness the poet Carl Sandburg expressed by calling it "Hog Butcher for the World," "Tool Maker," "Stacker of Wheat," "Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler," and "City of the Big Shoulders,"[48] Carl Hansberry addressed their needs when he discovered an edge in the housing market that allowed him to pull ahead of his competitors. Initially he and Nannie, a young couple who themselves had migrated from the South, could afford to live in only one room, but they became prosperous when life in their incommodious apartment inspired Carl to make optimum use of their space. In an interview with Cheney, Carl's daughter Mamie says of her father:

> He struck upon the idea of the kitchenette. When he got an opportunity to buy a piece of property, he put little stoves and sinks into each one or two bedrooms, and this [became] a kitchenette. . . . He made quite a fortune during the Depression because the white landlord simply couldn't collect the rent, and he could. Things just grew from there. Most people were going broke. He was making quite a lot of money and set up our business. We had a maintenance crew and housekeepers, and his half-sister came as a secretary and my mother's niece was secretary and his half-brother was collector. He'd have to collect from all the buildings from the housekeepers, and the housekeepers would collect the rest . . . from the tenants. That grew and grew and things got better and better.[49]

During the Depression, Carl was building a real estate empire, at least in the eyes of his friends and neighbors, but there was a downside to the family's success. Though the Hansberrys were generous to others in their community, they sometimes flaunted their wealth as if it were nobody else's business, but some in the neighborhood reacted in a manner that demonstrated the contrary.

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[48]Carl Sandburg, "Chicago," 1230.

[49]Cheney, 2. The construction of "the kitchenette" might have been a skill that Carl learned in his carpentry class at Alcorn A&M.

For example, during these nationwide lean years, the Hansberrys sent five-year-old Lorraine to kindergarten in a white fur coat with matching cap and muff. This show of ostentation was to the young girl's detriment. Lorraine's classmates, who had already dubbed her a "rich girl," beat her up.[50] Reflecting on the experience, Lorraine recalls: "I think it was from that moment that I became—a rebel." Her transformation from an unassuming kindergartener to child maverick can be best summed up as, "Like father, like daughter." Sometime later, Carl would press his older daughter Mamie and her "nervous escort" to integrate "an exclusive Chicago restaurant" when they went on their first date.[51] That Mamie and her companion responded with some reluctance indicates that they, at least, did not think that the family's success in business warranted a civil rights agenda that would play out during their social engagement. Yet, by ordering Mamie and her date to protest the lack of inclusiveness of the upscale restaurant, Carl was doing what he himself would have done—and did at times.

Carl's demand that Mamie and her date openly oppose the restaurant's discriminatory practice also highlights a philosophical difference between him and William Leo that marked their relationship as a proverbial house divided. According to Cheney, "As a professor of African studies at Howard University, William Leo Hansberry had not always lived up to Carl Hansberry's notion of a practical, aggressive man" despite that he, like Carl, "did not shrink from controversial ideas."[52] Nigeria's President Azikiwe once described Professor Hansberry as a "pious, soft-spoken, and kind man,"[53] and perhaps this is the brotherly persona that Carl found anachronistic or enigmatic in a world of so much racial and social injustice. Like his mentor DuBois, Professor Hansberry presented scholarly claims that he could support only "with social and historical evidence and testimony"; to argue with less was to proceed without "the caution of a true scholar."[54] Judging from his professional body of work, his mantra was that the pen is mightier than the sword, whereas Carl was more visibly rebellious, fighting racism and other

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[50]Hansberry, *To Be Young*, 63.
[51]Cheney, 60.
[52]Ibid., 9.
[53]Azikiwe, "Teacher Remembered," 55.
[54]William Leo Hansberry, "W. E. B. DuBois' Influence," 79.

injustices by participating in various forms of conspicuous protests.

The most significant demonstration of Carl's natural inclination to rail against racial injustice occurred in the years leading up to World War II when he staged a protest that resulted in his making a name for himself not just in the "Land of Lincoln" but nationwide. In 1937, Carl bought a home on Chicago's Rhodes Avenue, an all-White neighborhood with a restrictive covenant that barred residents from selling houses to African Americans and other minorities. Though Carl purchased the house as an absentee owner or "ghost buyer" from a "Caucasian liaison," Ron Grossman, a writer for the *Chicago Tribune*, states that "he knew perfectly well what he was getting into when he moved to Rhodes Avenue," but he bought the flat "to have the very idea of restrictive covenants permanently abolished within the public policy of Illinois and the nation."[55] When Carl and his family moved into the new home, neighbors met them with hostility, even violence.[56] One threw a brick through their window that was a close call for seven-year-old Lorraine. Fearing that Carl would rent space in the flat to other minorities, Anna Lee, a White resident, and her neighbors sued Carl in the Cook County Circuit Court to preempt such a sale. The judge in *Lee v. Hansberry* ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, stating that not only was Carl in violation of the community's restrictive covenant but that he should not have gone where he was unwanted. "I don't go where I'm not wanted," he said.

Rather than risk eviction, Carl voluntarily moved his family out of their flat while his legal team, composed of lawyers from the NAACP, appealed the case at the Illinois State Supreme Court. The judge in *Hansberry v. Lee* upheld the lower court's decision, but Carl persisted in his fight, taking his case to the United States Supreme Court. On November 13, 1940, this court of final appeal ruled in Carl's favor, making him "understandably jubilant," but later, when

[55]Ron Grossman, n. p.

[56]Around the time that Carl Hansberry moved to Chicago, black and white race relations on the city's South Side were volatile. In the summer of 1919, these strife-filled relations culminated in riots that garnered nationwide attention. During that Red Summer, so-called because of the voluminous bloodshed of the rioters, the poet Claude McKay composed "If We Must Die," a sonnet lamenting the imbalance of power between the blacks and the whites, calling upon the outnumbered and under-resourced blacks to, nevertheless, fight back in noble fashion rather than passively die "like hogs, hunted and penned in an inglorious spot, / While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs, / Making their mark at our accursed lot."

Carl took stock of the racial composition of Chicago's neighborhoods and noted that they were as segregated as ever, he feared that his fight to have restrictive covenants forever banished had amounted to nothing more than an exercise in futility. Disheartened, he moved to Mexico, where friends welcomed him. Lorraine recalls that, for the first time in his life, her father felt free, unburdened, as if the weight of the world had been lifted from his shoulders. Unfortunately, his life in this newly found free world spanned only five years. He died on March 17, 1946, at age fifty-one from a cerebral hemorrhage, the same medical condition that his older brother would die from twenty years later. Lorraine, a fifteen-year-old high school sophomore at the time, declares that "'American racism helped to kill him.'"[57]

Was Carl's U. S. Supreme Court victory a classic case of one's having won the battle but lost the war? He might have thought so, but time would prove otherwise, especially when Lorraine wrote *A Raisin in the Sun*, a drama loosely based on the circumstances surrounding *Hansberry v. Lee* and interspersed with scholarly thought from her Uncle Leo's teachings about Africa. Set in the era of World War II and following, Lorraine's play captures the living conditions of the five-member Younger family who resides in an aging "rat trap" on Chicago's South Side that is so congested that even the potted plant of protagonist Lena, the family's matriarch, is struggling to survive. When Mama Lena learns that her daughter-in-law Ruth is pregnant with her second child, she is determined to head off the mounting frustration that her growing family will bring. "When it gets like that in life," she says, "you just got to do something different, push on out and do something bigger."[58] As the beneficiary of a life insurance policy from which she receives $10,000 after her husband Walter Sr.'s death, she uses the money to buy a modest home in an all-White neighborhood, a purchase which prompts the neighborhood improvement association to offer the family a buy-out of the contract at a price which exceeds Lena's down payment. The family, however, rejects the offer. Days later, they occupy their new home, which is spacious, has abundant sunlight, and is missile-free. Just as important, Lena's plant, an extension of herself, is in an environment where it thrives. The play's ending reflects the best possible outcome

[57]Cheney, 8.
[58]Lorraine Hansberry, *Raisin*, 94.

for the Younger family, and Lorraine would have it no other way. Her play represents a re-imagination of the outcome of her father's efforts, an assurance to readers that her father's fight was not in vain. The restrictive neighborhood covenants which Carl fought to have banned fade into oblivion as Lorraine constructs the going-forward lives of the Youngers. "Sadly," Grossman writes, "Carl Hansberry didn't get to see his daughter's success or to savor the victory of the cause for which he fought. He died in 1946, two years before the U. S. Supreme Court declared, pure and simple, that restrictive covenants were unconstitutional."[59] In *To Be Young*, Lorraine reflects on the matter:

> The fact that my father and the NAACP 'won a Supreme Court decision in a now famous case which bears his name in the lawbooks, is—ironically—the sort of 'progress' our satisfied friends allude to when they presume to deride the more radical means of struggle. The cost, in emotional turmoil, time and money, which led to my father's early death as a permanently embittered exile in a foreign country when he saw that after such sacrificial efforts the Negroes of Chicago were as ghetto-locked as ever, does not seem to figure in their calculations.[60]

As an activist or "race man," which Grossman defines as "someone deeply committed to the struggle for equal rights," [61] Carl left an indelible imprint on his author-daughter, who remembers him as an "educated soul" or a brilliantly busy man "whom kings might have imitated and properly created their own flattering descriptions of."[62] In that case, Lorraine, as the symbolic apple, does not fall far from the tree. As Cheney notes, "All knew that Lorraine was young, gifted, and black." [63]

Gifted—that is what Lorraine was, and all also knew that her gifts had been passed down to her through her family lineage. Lorraine was, after all, a Hansberry, and as Cheney observes, "she sensed that she had inherited the natural drive and talent of her remarkable family." By the time she was ten, Lorraine was an admirer of Toussaint L'Ouverture and Hannibal, men whom she

[59]Grossman, n. p.
[60]Lorraine Hansberry, *To Be Young*, 51.
[61]Grossman, n. p.
[62]Lorraine Hansberry, *To Be Young*, 50.
[63]Cheney, 5.

held in high esteem because of their valiance, and Pearl Buck was one of her favorite writers. By the time she was in the sixth grade, Lorraine could read on a college level. Aiding in that ability was "the fine family library" that the Hansberrys had, which was "replete with world classics, works of black writers, and an encyclopedia." Cheney also states that it was a foregone conclusion that the Hansberry children would go to college. While in elementary school, Lorraine fancied that she would attend Howard University, where her esteemed uncle William Leo held a teaching post, or the University of Wisconsin. After she graduated from Chicago's Englewood High School in January of 1948, she chose the University of Wisconsin, where for the first time, she saw a real play—Howard Richardson and William Berney's *Dark of the Moon*—and was spellbound by the musical drama's "theatricality." Eight years later, in 1956, she tried her hand at writing her own drama, which became *A Raisin in the Sun*, but one might argue that the true seeds of her writing the drama germinated on the shelves of the library at her grandfather Elden's home in Gloster, Mississippi, more than sixty years earlier. When on January 12, 1965, Lorraine died of pancreatic cancer, she was thirty-four years old and a third-generation Hansberry who had built a successful life—with home libraries and books at the center.

The matter of course that ran from Lorraine's grandfather Elden's matriculation at Alcorn A&M helped to fulfill his dream of a well-educated progeny who inspired others to dream of a more fulfilling life than work as a "Mississippi plowboy" offered. His offspring includes his two sons, William Leo and Carl, both of whom followed in their father's footsteps and attended Alcorn College for a significant number of years. Though neither one graduated from the college, William Leo and Carl left with the scholarship and the skills necessary to make the most informed decision about what their next steps in life would be—a scholar nonpareil and a successful businessman, respectively. Elden's descendants also include the granddaughter who wrote *A Raisin in the Sun*, which would have made him, the one after whom she takes, proud. In a reflection on the impact of Lorraine Hansberry's literary career on other African American writers, Alex Haley, the author of *Roots*, who attended Alcorn A&M during the 1937-38 school year, states: "Throughout her

creative lifetime, she served as a model for us all." [64]

From the time that Elden Hays Hansberry set foot on the grounds of Alcorn A&M in 1887 to the time that he graduated in 1891, he was laying the foundation for his sons and his granddaughter to take hold of a common thread, the tie that binds the three generations being books that led to a thirst for or centered in large part on knowledge of their African roots. Elden's untimely death may have thwarted his personal aspirations, but they were not dreams deferred. The success of his granddaughter can be traced to that "reasonably well stocked library" in Gloster, Mississippi, a place which Lorraine brings forward in *To Be Young,* by including a copy of her birth certificate which states her father's birthplace as Glaston, a misspelling of Gloster, in the state of Mississippi. Elden's descendants blazed trails as they carved their individual paths in life, and Lorraine understood how the sacrifices of one generation could surface as benefits or blessings in future generations. In *Raisin*, she highlights this generational effect through the voice of Mama Lena, who quotes her deceased husband Big Walter who once said: "Seem like God didn't see fit to give the black man nothing but dreams—but He did give us children to make them dreams seem worthwhile."[65] Elden's dreams would not dry up "like a raisin in the sun."[66] Because he graduated from Alcorn A&M College, they would not "fester like a sore—and then run," and granddaughter Lorraine might say, as Beneatha Younger, the first-generation college student who is bound for medical school once says in *Raisin*, "And I for one say, God bless Mama for that!"[67]

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[64]Alex Haley, i.

[65]Lorraine Hansberry, *Raisin*, 33.

[66]This simile and the one in the next line are from Langston Hughes' poem "Harlem," 426, which Lorraine adopted as the title of her play.

[67]Lorraine Hansberry, *Raisin*, 26.

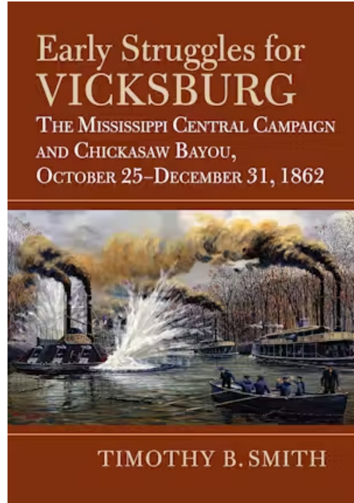
BOOK REVIEWS

Early Struggles for Vicksburg: The Mississippi Central Campaign and Chickasaw Bayou, October 25-December 31, 1862, and *Bayou Battles for Vicksburg: The Swamp and River Expeditions, January 1-April 30, 1863*

By Timothy B. Smith

(Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2022 and 2023.
Preface, prologue, illustrations, maps, notes, index.
Pp. xxv, 576. $59.99 cloth. ISBN: 9780700633241.
and Pp. xxiii, 526. $49.99 cloth. ISBN: 9780700635665)

The historiography of Civil War military history has witnessed a surge in multi-volume operational analyses of specific campaigns. These include Harry W. Pfanz's three-volume work on the Battle of Gettysburg, Gordon Rhea's five volumes on the Overland campaign in Virginia in 1864, and current works in progress such as Glenn Robertson's projected three-volume study of the Battle of Chickamauga and Ethan Rafuse's multi-volume study of operations in Virginia in 1862, focusing on the Peninsula Campaign, among others. Edwin Bearss's three-volume study of the Vicksburg campaign was, for years, the standard study of that campaign. Until now. Timothy B. Smith's five-volume study of Vicksburg is not meant to supplant Bearss, but it significantly expands upon it.



Smith is uniquely suited to tackle this daunting project. He worked as a National Park Service Ranger at Shiloh National Military Park and received his Ph.D. from Mississippi State University. Smith's works prior to this five-volume study focused on military operations in west Tennessee and northern Mississippi. His books, all well reviewed, include in-depth studies on the battles of Forts Henry and Donelson (February 1862) Shiloh (April 1862), and the siege and battle of Corinth (April-October 1862). His understanding of the context of the Vicksburg campaign is crucial to the high quality of these studies. The Vicksburg campaign is one of the most complex military campaigns in American history. It was conducted over a period of nearly nine months and encompassed at least six attempts by U.S. Major General Ulysses S. Grant to capture the key to unlocking the entire Mississippi River valley. If anyone is up to the task it

is Smith.

In the first volume of the study, Early Struggles for Vicksburg: The Mississippi Central Campaign and Chickasaw Bayou, October 25-December 31, 1862, Smith tackles Grant's initial attempts to take Vicksburg, via the overland route north of Vicksburg through north central Mississippi as well as the attempt to get directly to Vicksburg via Chickasaw Bayou. Smith places these campaigns within a discussion of the prevailing military theory of the time, specifically the writings of Antoine Henri de Jomini and Karl von Clausewitz. While most Civil War leaders on both sides were not familiar with either theorist, the West Point graduates would have been familiar with Jomini's works, specifically his Art of War, as they were a central part of the academy's antebellum curriculum. Jomini took a more scientific view toward war, using basic tenets of operational maneuver such as utilizing interior lines and securing vital lines of communication. Clausewitz's On War was not translated into English until after the Civil War, and very few officers would have been familiar with his work. Although often painted as diverging, Jomini and Clausewitz had much in common. Yet a proper understanding of both Jomini and Clausewitz, which Smith clearly possesses, is crucial to any military analysis of any land operation. Grant's boss, Major General Henry Halleck, wanted the former to follow these ideas carefully in his campaign. In his first movement with Memphis as his base, Grant used the available railroads in Mississippi to move south towards Vicksburg in classic Jominian fashion. And yet Grant failed to take Vicksburg, in part because his opponent, Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton, was also a West Point graduate familiar with Jomini.

Smith argues that Grant's first two attempts to take Vicksburg ended precisely because he adhered too much to Jomini. If Grant hoped to conquer Vicksburg, he would have to figuratively throw out the books to capture the Confederate Gibraltar. It pays to keep in mind that the Grant of late l862 was not the Grant of 1864 who was called to Washington, D.C. and the Eastern Theater to win the war. The earlier Grant was still trying to find his way as a general and leader, and to stay out of Halleck's doghouse. The reverses he suffered in these first two campaigns to capture Vicksburg helped him to become the war-winning general that his commander-in-chief sought.

In the second volume, Bayou Battles for Vicksburg: The Swamp and River Expeditions, January 1-April 30, 1863, Smith focuses on Grant's initial attempts to get at the high ground east of Vicksburg. In this endeavor, Grant decided to throw out Jomini and use unorthodox methods to achieve his objective, which he finally attained in April 1863. Grant's adaptability served him well, while Pemberton's inability to adapt ultimately doomed him, and perhaps the Confederacy. But that is saved for the later volumes of Smith's studies. Grant's early unsuccessful efforts to get to the

east bank of the Mississippi River have rarely been studied in detail, but Smith demonstrates their importance. They represented a testament to Grant's will, ingenuity and ability to get things done, and his eventual realization that doing things by the book was a recipe for failure.

Both volumes are indispensable to the student of not just Mississippi Civil War history, but Civil War history generally. The research and narrative focus on the leaders, Grant and Pemberton, but also on the soldiers in the ranks and the civilians caught up in these operations. Smith's in-depth research, like his other works, is impressive. He scoured just about every archive and newspaper to find sources to help craft his narrative. The result is a well-rounded history of the Vicksburg campaigns from start to finish. While the research is exhaustive, reading Smith's prose is not. He writes in a clear, easy-to-understand manner that professionals and casual readers alike will appreciate. This review focuses on the first two volumes of Smith's five-volume set. The other three volumes are equally well researched and well written. All are required reading for Civil War military historians.

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Segregation in the New South: Birmingham, Alabama, 1871-1901. By Carl V. Harris. Completed and Edited by W. Elliot Brownlee. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2022. Acknowledgements, illustrations, maps, notes, index. Pp. ix, 328. $50 hardcover. ISBN 9780807178379.)

Carl V. Harris's final monograph, Segregation in the *New South: Birmingham, Alabama, 1871-1901*, provides key insights into understanding the continual power of racism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries by examining the history and social psychology of segregation in Birmingham, Alabama. Key to Harris's analysis is his incorporation of the social construction of group boundaries, informed by the work of sociologist Herbert Blumer. His book traces the interplay between socio-emotional and instrumental, or the politically or economically driven, components of prejudice from Birmingham's founding in 1871 to Alabama's formal adoption of disenfranchisement in 1901. Harris extends arguments first made by historian and sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) which locate the beginnings of the systematic separation of Blacks and Whites in the period between emancipation in 1865 and Reconstruction. This contradicts historian C. Vann Woodward's position in *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1955) that a strict system of segregation in the New South did not emerge until around

1900 when African Americans were disenfranchised by southern whites. Central to Harris's monograph is an attempt to complicate Woodward's interpretation of the origins of segregation in the New South by incorporating the socio-emotional dimensions of prejudice that the latter overlooked.

Harris leverages a variety of archival sources, such as city directories, newspapers, and maps, to provide support for two main arguments: first, that the socio-emotional sources of racism were more powerful in shaping segregation in the New South than the instrumental dimensions; and, second, that these socio-emotional aspects resulted in a very early demarcation of Jim Crow lines in postbellum Birmingham. By centering the social aspects of segregation, Harris interprets the early history of Jim Crow using theoretical and empirical research in social psychology rarely deployed by historians.

Divided into three parts, *Segregation in the New South* covers a breadth of topics examining the social, economic, and political dimensions of Birmingham life. The first part, composed of three chapters, investigates the subordination of Black women and men by Whites in the social realm through rules and images which reinforced separation during the emancipation and Reconstruction period in Birmingham. The second part, consisting of four chapters, describes the history of educational, residential, and economic segregation in Birmingham and how Black residents confronted the barriers created by Whites. The final two chapters of the monograph, organized chronologically, explore the role of Black political leaders in challenging White control of civic life in Birmingham and how the White community responded. Harris uses this final section to drive home his point that the political system which disenfranchised Blacks in 1901 was influenced by an already established standard of social separation.

To tap into the socio-emotional dimensions of segregation, Harris paints poignant portraits of influential figures, such as Pastor Isaiah H. Welch, and recounts pivotal moments, such as the financing of a schoolhouse for Black children. This approach is successful in highlighting the intense emotions and important context surrounding segregation, but an even stronger contribution would have been provided by a more in-depth integration of Blumer's theory. Harris's analysis of the socio-emotional component of prejudice would have also benefited from engaging with the important work of Black feminists, specifically sociologist Patricia Hill Collins's scholarship on controlling images.

The strength of *Segregation in the New South* lies in Harris's attention to detail and ability to make impactful connections. His fine-grained case study of Birmingham brings a fresh perspective to assessing the similarities and differences in the timing and intensity of segregation and is an invitation for future comparisons with other cities of the New South. Finally, recognition must be extended to W. Elliot Brownlee for his purposeful

and thoughtful completion and editing of Harris's posthumous manuscript.

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A Brief Moment in the Sun: Francis Cardozo and Reconstruction in South Carolina. By Neil Kinghan. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2023. Illustrations, index. Pp. vii, 255. $45 hardcover, $30 paper. ISBN: 9780807178997.)

Eight years after declaring secession to protect race-based slavery, South Carolina elected the first African American to hold statewide office in the United States. *A Brief Moment in the Sun* chronicles the life of Francis Cardozo, an educator and statesman, as he fought to achieve racial equality during Reconstruction. Historian Neil Kinghan sets three goals for his book: to restore Cardozo to the historical record, to bring awareness to his careers in education and politics, and to refocus the history of Reconstruction from his perspective.

Kinghan argues that Cardozo's life refutes the misconception that Reconstruction led to unchecked corruption. Following the end of Reconstruction, White supremacists crafted a myth known as the tragic era, claiming that Republican led southern states witnessed "corruption and violence, incompetence and greed" (xi). Early historians, and in particular members of the Dunning School, supported this conclusion in their academic work and wove malicious myths into a White supremacist historical narrative. More recent scholarship has contested this tragic era interpretation, and Kinghan joins this growing phalanx of historians.

A Brief Moment in the Sun emphasizes Cardozo's incorruptible nature in private and public life. Born in 1837, he was the son of a White Jewish father and a formerly enslaved African American mother. He grew up in a society where his family could not enjoy full rights, and the threat of enslavement was omnipresent. After his education in Scotland, Cardozo returned to South Carolina in 1865 where he presided over the Saxton School with assistance from the American Missionary Association. The school provided education for African American children, including the previously enslaved. Cardozo contended that the Saxton School could gain support from moderate White South Carolinians if he administered the institution efficiently. His belief in the power of persuasion to win over opponents of Reconstruction carried over to his career as a statesman.

The Reconstruction Act of March 1867 ensured African Americans could seek public office, allowing Cardozo to run for secretary of state for South Carolina in 1868. Once in office, he opposed mismanagement and dedicated his efforts to achieving reforms, including advancements

in education and land ownership for African Americans. Concern over the misuse of state bonds and corruption within land commissions led to eventual conflict with Governor Robert Kingston Scott and his successor, Franklin Moses. Throughout his career as secretary of state and then state treasurer, Cardozo was determined to maintain an honest public image. Kinghan claims: "He [Cardozo] saw himself, and was seen by the press, as a role model in government, as he had intended his school to be . . . in demonstrating that black children could learn just as well as white" (107). Cardozo's political career ended when the elections of 1876 were marred by violence by the Red Shirts and other opponents of Reconstruction, and the removal of federal troops led to the return of White Democratic control over the state government.

After Reconstruction, South Carolina officials imprisoned Cardozo on a fabricated charge of corruption. The allegation served to further erode public support for Reconstruction by discrediting the notably virtuous statesman. As the embodiment of political integrity, Francis Cardozo was an ideal target for the new Democratic administration. He maintained his innocence and after spending months in prison received a pardon. With the ascendance of the tragic era myth, historians initially paid little attention to Cardozo's life and achievements, and those who did focused primarily on the charge of corruption. Despite these assaults on Cardozo's legacy, Kinghan contends that "reputations can be restored, false legends set aside" (5). Kinghan achieves his goal in this compelling biography.

The use of extensive primary sources to analyze Francis Cardozo, South Carolina, and the Reconstruction South more broadly constitute an impressive aspect of Kinghan's research. When possible, he uses Cardozo's own writings alongside other sources, such as White-run newspapers like the *Daily News* in Charleston. These publications, which might have been expected to adopt an antagonistic approach to the African American statesman, occasionally praised Cardozo, fueling Kinghan's assertion that Cardozo's reputation deserves further attention. Unfortunately, given the scarcity of Cardozo's own writing about his political career, Kinghan is less able to fulfill his goal of refocusing Reconstruction around Cardozo's perspective.

Neil Kinghan's well-researched work brings awareness to a once prominent figure in the history of Reconstruction. *A Brief Moment in the Sun* is a necessary work that restores the memory of Francis Cardozo, a leader who possessed a virtue that enemies of Reconstruction sought to destroy.

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Empire of Brutality: Enslaved People and Animals in the British Atlantic World. By Christopher Michael Blakley. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2023. Acknowledgments, preface, epilogue, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. v, 236. $45.00 hardcover, $19.95 e-book. ISBN: 978-0-8071-7886-7.)

In *Empire of Brutality*, Christopher Michael Blakley argues that throughout the British Atlantic world, enslavers engaged in a process through which they sought to exploit human-animal relationships to dehumanize people and establish a false hierarchy that equated enslaved people to property. The deliberate effort to draw connections between people and animals was a fundamental component of enslavement and the "ongoing degradation of humanity" (16). This process, Blakley argues, was neither linear nor brief. Instead, dehumanization evolved over long periods of time and varied across the broader Atlantic region. An initial trade of animals in Atlantic Africa connected that region with western Europe in the late seventeenth century and laid the groundwork for what would become chattel slavery.

Enslaved people were not passive actors during the dehumanization process. By approaching archival sources from a human-animal conceptual lens, Blakley utilizes letters, natural history catalogs, and plantation manuals to provide numerous examples of the myriad ways in which people actively and forcefully resisted any notions they were akin to animal property. Not only did enslaved people author eloquent and persuasive letters confirming their humanity, but they also thought about and interacted with animals and nature in such a significant manner that ultimately historians will have to refocus their narratives on early modern science toward a more African influence. Work on plantations—Blakely focuses primarily on those in the Caribbean and the Chesapeake regions—required tremendous amounts of manual labor, performed almost entirely by enslaved people and draft animals working in concert. Not only did slaveholders draw proximal connections between animals and enslaved people, but they also further entwined the two by providing similar diets to both livestock and enslaved laborers. Despite those dietary deficiencies, enslaved people hunted and fished beyond the confines of the plantation and, additionally, grew gardens within the outlying structures. The most aggressive forms of resistance are detailed in the final two chapters, where Blakley recounts how enslaved people stole and, in some instances, used the plantation environment to kill slaveholders' domestic animals and livestock. In a twist of irony, moreover, enslaved people used animals as vessels to escape slavery. By these various acts of resistance, enslaved people established a "rival geography" that directly challenged slaveholders' concep-

tions and definitions of people, land, labor, and animals (127).

To be sure, enslaved people took it upon themselves to maintain their humanity. A deep archive of their letters, pamphlets, and portraits demonstrates those acts of agency and defiance. Blakley, however, achieves something almost as meaningful—he himself reinforces the humanity of the people in his sources. The people in this book are not simply enslaved people. They are Kate, Jemmy, Affadoe, Bashaw, and Charles. Their individual and collective struggles are thus not confined to broad swaths of historical time and description but are instead kept alive and celebrated as human fortitude, resourcefulness, and unity. Through these stories African Americans today can draw a direct link to their past and cite the individuals and families who outwardly rejected dehumanization and enslavement.

This is an outstanding book. Extensively researched, expertly organized, and exceptionally written, Empire of Brutality is a thoughtful and convincing work that draws important connections between multiple disciplines of historical inquiry. The work's key themes and arguments are accessible to general audiences and scholarly readers will undoubtedly be fully engaged with Blakley's historical intervention. Situated at an intersection of environmental, racial, labor, and scientific histories, *Empire of Brutality* challenges readers to reconsider approaches to enslavement, defiance, and the diverse interactions between enslaved people and the natural world.

Nathan Drake
Mississippi State University

Wading In: Desegregation on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. By Amy Lemco. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2023. Acknowledgements, notes, selected bibliography, index. Pp. xii, 185. $99 cloth, $22 paper. ISBN 9781496850348.)

Since the mid-1990s, histories of the civil rights movement in Mississippi have not only transformed scholars' understanding of the Magnolia State in the twentieth century, but they have also made a profound impact on interpretations of social movements across the world. John Dittmer's *Local People* (1994) and Charles Payne's *I've Got the Light of Freedom* (1995) demonstrated how the specific stories of the people building and orchestrating movements for civil rights—and, crucially, those individuals at the local level fighting *against* freedom for African Americans—are key to understanding movements writ large. *Wading In* is an heir to these important civil rights histories. Focused on the local narrative, but with just enough national context, this concise and well-written book is a fantastic addition to the history of the civil rights movement in the state.

At its broadest, *Wading In* is the story of Black Mississippians' attempts to gain access to the state's segregated Gulf Coast beaches. On May 14, 1959, Gilbert Mason, a local medical doctor, and

some of his neighbors decided to desegregate Biloxi's Whites-only beach. In some ways, the act was that simple: they walked out onto the sand, spread out some towels, and sat down. A police officer soon told them to leave the area, but Mason protested, asking exactly what law they were breaking. Here Lemco's excellent writing style and eye for detail begins a story of surprising complexity. Questions arose about federal and state regulation of coastal lands, the politics of Black "respectability," the racial categories of bodies and recreation, policing, school desegregation, and of simple White supremacy. In just over one hundred action-packed pages of text, Lemco explains the fight for beach access as a hard-fought victory with national implications.

What is crucial about this kind of local history is the fine-grained approach: Lemco tells us the names of Mason's neighbors and allies, of the police chiefs and their officers, even the identity of the young White man who poured hot coffee down Mason's back as he sat eating breakfast in the Biloxi hospital's integrated cafeteria. Those personal details matter to Lemco, and they convey to the reader a tangible sense of time, place, and personality that histories of social movements sometimes lack. This is a book I will assign my undergraduates because it will keep their attention and my graduate students as a model of how to write a detailed local history that moves.

Wading In should take its place among the important histories of civil rights in Mississippi, but it will not be the last word on race and the Gulf Coast. As rich as this history is, one can wonder if the setting—the environment of the coast, where the sea hits the land—is not more important to the social, political, and economic history than scholars have yet considered. There is more room for the natural world in histories of civil rights in Mississippi, but that certainly does not detract from the accomplishments of this book.

James C. Giesen
Mississippi State University

Food Power Politics: The Food Story of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement. By Bobby J. Smith II. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2023. Acknowledgements, illustrations, abbreviations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. ix, 201. $99 cloth, $24.95 paper. ISBN: 978146967507.)

Bobby J. Smith II uses an interdisciplinary approach to examine the centrality of food insecurity in the civil rights movement. Food insecurity was a powerful motivator for Black participation in the freedom struggle. Smith focuses on Black communities in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta, a region mired by an extensive history of agricultural production predicated upon the exploitation of Black labor.

Smith convincingly argues that

Black Mississippians engaged in a process that enabled them to reconfigure and reimagine what it meant to weaponize food through emancipatory terms, and that the food story of the Mississippi civil rights movement provides the quintessential perspective on understanding food power politics in Black life. He employs a wide range of interdisciplinary theories from historians, legal scholars, and political scientists. Inspired by the concept of "food power," which scholars use to describe food as a weapon during wartime, Smith envisions a more context-specific framework for Black food struggles. His framework of "emancipatory food power" accounts for how food access was weaponized against Black people and interprets how they responded to that oppression. Smith sees food power and emancipatory food power as relational and theorizes the interplay between the two as "food power politics," which he defines as "any set of interactions during times of conflict, whether formal or informal, between social actors who strategically use food in oppressive or emancipatory ways to mitigate the impact of the conflict" (3).

To address archival silences around food and civil rights, Smith reads his sources "at an angle" to counter narratives that privilege social and political activism (11). These sources include memoirs, manuscripts, print media, organizational records, and oral histories. Smith builds upon the historiographical tradition of civil rights scholarship that focuses on the movement as a bottom-up enterprise. Charles Payne's *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (1995) included a relatively short portion on the Greenwood Food Blockade, which provided a launching point for Smith to question both the Greenwood Blockade's history as well as the wider role of food in the civil rights movement. Smith's book adds to a growing body of scholarship exploring the intersection of political activism and food justice, such as Greta de Jong's *You Can't Eat Freedom: Southerners and Social Justice after the Civil Rights Movement* (2016).

Smith's work is divided into four substantive chapters. Chapter One focuses on the Greenwood Food Blockade. Smith shows how between November 1962 and May 1963, the movement navigated the use of food as a tool of voter suppression by White politicians. The Leflore County Board of Supervisors eliminated the federal surplus commodities program, citing budgetary shortfalls. Yet, civil rights activists saw this as a form of punishment for Black citizens' voting attempts. An overwhelming number of Black sharecroppers depended on the commodities program for sustenance. In response, civil rights groups created the "Food for Freedom" program, an early example of emancipatory food power. The ultimate success fighting the blockade planted roots for further food power politics in Mississippi. Chapter Two explores the White-owned Lewis Grocer Company's campaign to replace the federal sur-

plus commodities program with federal food stamps. The company's president, Morris Lewis, Jr., was the wholesale provider to approximately four hundred grocers in the region. This campaign was a key example of weaponizing food against Black communities. Chapter Three examines local Black people creating emancipatory food power through the North Bolivar County Farm Cooperative (NBCFC). The NBCFC sought to empower Black residents by creating a local Black food economy under the leadership of activists. The NBCFC sought to provide food, education, and jobs to former sharecroppers in the wake of agricultural mechanization. Though the NBCFC ultimately disbanded, it served as an exemplary model for modern activists combatting food insecurity and fighting for food justice. The current iteration of the food justice movement in Bolivar Country is the subject of Chapter Four, where Smith ties together the region's history of food power politics to its present iteration, the North Bolivar County Good Food Revolution.

This book offers a fascinating look into how food power politics shaped the civil rights movement in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta. Smith masterfully employs interdisciplinary methodology to show how food was a central component of the civil rights movement. Historians may quibble with the choice to dedicate the final chapter to more current events, effectively skipping over approximately forty years of developments, but this is a minor critique. This book is well suited for undergraduate and general audiences alike, as it offers a compelling framing of the civil rights movement in Mississippi.

Charles E. Jones
Mississippi State University

Slavery's Fugitives and the Making of the United States Constitution. By Timothy Messer-Kruse. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2024. Acknowledgements, notes, index. Pp. vii, 226. $45.00 cloth. ISBN: 978087182765.)

In his most recent work, Timothy Messer-Kruse (Bowling Green State University) offers an important contribution to discussions about the role of slavery in the shaping of the United States Constitution. Augmenting works such as Paul Finkelman's *Slavery and the Founders*, Eliga Gould's *Among the Powers of the Earth*, and David Waldstreicher's *Slavery's Constitution*, Messer-Kruse focuses on the role played by enslaved Americans who flocked to the British lines during the Revolutionary War. He contends that the "carried off," as American government officials and diplomats called them, became a regular point of contention between Americans and British officials, and that American leaders' inability to secure their demands highlighted the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation and prompted the new Constitution as

a potential remedy. Although the new federal government initially enjoyed no more success than its predecessor in resolving matters, the question of the "carried off" remained a feature of Anglo-American diplomacy through the peace negotiations of the War of 1812 and helped to set the stage for partial compensation by the British for the "carried off" of that war.

Messer-Kruse traces this compelling argument across the book's five chapters by marshaling a wealth of primary sources to reveal the perspectives and activities of leaders such as John Adams, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison on the issue. These sources range from official correspondence and personal letters to pamphlets and newspapers and various government documents. Unfortunately, the book is less convincing when the author briefly wrestles inconclusively with the relative significance of more widely acknowledged factors, such as the questions of federal funding, federal debts, paper currency, and Shays's Rebellion, in prompting the drafting of the Constitution. Fortunately, this diversion does not detract from the significance of Messer-Kruse's main argument.

While Mississippi is not specifically addressed in the book, Messer-Kruse gives some attention to the role of Native American nations, such as the Choctaw and the Creek. In particular, the author focuses on the treaties established between the new national government and Native American nations. While the broader contours of the treaties are addressed, Messer-Kruse gives special attention to American demands for the return of any fugitive enslaved as well as to the repercussions for the Native Americans when this was neglected. Certainly, these actions further illustrate the significance of the runaway or the "carried off" enslaved; however, they reveal more than this. These episodes also highlight the seemingly capricious adherence to the terms of treaties by the new American governments. Yet, while these treaties call into question the sincerity with which some American officials (Benjamin Franklin, for instance) decried the British disregard for returning the "carried off," the fact remains that those American officials raised the issue consistently on behalf of their government during the 1780s and 1790s.

In the end, Messer-Kruse provides more than a fresh examination of an often-overlooked story. He offers a compelling argument for the centrality of the "carried off" for the formation of the U.S. Constitution. Students of America's formative period will do well to take notice of *Slavery's Fugitives*, but the book should also appeal to and benefit non-specialists. The author's clear and engaging writing style affords a broader audience the opportunity to both follow and appreciate his argument while gaining a more robust understanding of the role that slavery played in the crafting of the Constitution.

William Harrison Taylor
Alabama State University

The Wild Woman of Cincinnati: Gender and Politics on the Eve of the Civil War. By Michael D. Pierson. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2023. Acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. ix, 192. $40 Cloth. ISBN: 9780807178720.)

During the summer of 1860, Cincinnatians crowded to witness the so-called Wild Woman, a mysterious figure displayed in a grim spectacle as either a feral or insane individual restrained to a bed. Silent and enigmatic, she became a lightning rod for debates about morality, mental health, and societal exploitation. Michael D. Pierson's *The Wild Woman of Cincinnati: Gender and Politics on the Eve of the Civil War* examines this case to explore how her captivity, public exhibition, and trial reflected broader intersections of gender, class, and political power during the tumultuous years leading up to the Civil War. Drawing on limited historical records, Pierson illuminates how public anxieties over gender norms and sectional conflict shaped the Wild Woman's story, revealing deeper national tensions tied to the commodification of marginalized individuals and competing conceptions of morality.

The Wild Woman's story, Pierson argues, embodies the cultural and ideological divisions of antebellum America, exposing deep-seated anxieties about gender roles, sectional strife, and contested claims of moral authority by the North and South. Through meticulous analysis of primary sources, such as newspapers, trial transcripts, and correspondence, he reveals how different groups projected their values onto her narrative. Northern Republican newspapers framed her as a victim of male exploitation, aligning with their broader critique of unchecked power, while southern Democratic outlets portrayed her as complicit in a hoax, reflecting patriarchal assumptions about women's roles and autonomy. Pierson effectively highlights that these regional narratives illustrate how sectional divides were deeply entwined with gendered expectations and social reform.

The book's structure effectively supports its arguments, with each chapter exploring a distinct theme. Pierson begins by examining the Wild Woman's public exhibition, drawing comparisons to antebellum spectacles such as P. T. Barnum's Joice Heth. He then investigates the reform movement that successfully ended the display, the partisan biases evident in media coverage, and the societal forces that shaped her narrative. The final chapter delves into her possible identity, questioning whether she was feral, mentally ill, or complicit in the spectacle, as Pierson seeks to uncover elements of her agency within a story primarily shaped by external perspectives.

Pierson's analysis excels in its attention to media and public reception. He highlights how the Wild Woman's story was not merely entertainment but a bat-

tleground for competing visions of morality and power. Southern Democratic papers emphasized her supposed deviance, while Republican narratives centered on her victimization, reflecting their critiques of patriarchal authority. This nuanced examination of media biases adds depth to Pierson's argument about the Wild Woman's role as a symbol of broader societal tensions.

The author also deserves credit for addressing the dehumanization inherent in the Wild Woman's treatment. His critique of the medical professionals who examined her during the trial exposes how legal and medical systems pathologized women to reinforce social hierarchies. Their invasive procedures, rooted in assumptions about women's mental health and reproductive roles, reflected broader anxieties about deviance and control. Pierson's work highlights the interplay between voyeurism, institutional power, and gendered norms, demonstrating how these forces shaped the Wild Woman's fate.

A deeper engagement with disability and mad studies scholarship, however, could have enriched the analysis by examining how societal norms about sanity and gender were enforced and highlighting the potential agency of individuals subjected to institutional control. Pierson acknowledges the ambiguity surrounding the Wild Woman's mental state, commenting: "The state of her mental health seems impossible to know" (128). Further exploration of her lived realities and resistance could have enriched the analysis, emphasizing her role as more than a passive victim of systemic forces.

Ultimately, *The Wild Woman of Cincinnati* rekindles interest in this compelling episode by revealing how cultural and political tensions both shaped and were influenced by marginalized lives. Through meticulous research and a coherent narrative, Pierson connects a local story to national debates, offering a valuable contribution to scholarship on gender, politics, and societal transformation in the nineteenth century. For historians and general readers alike, the book serves as a model of microhistory, demonstrating the enduring relevance of small events in understanding larger historical dynamics.

Emma L. Waldie
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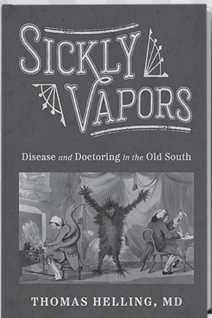

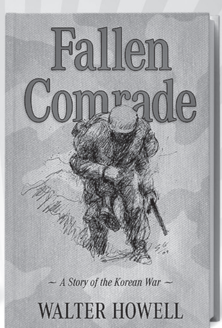

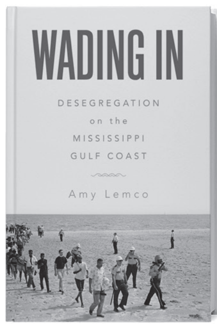

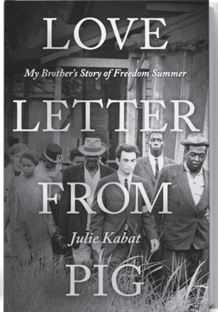

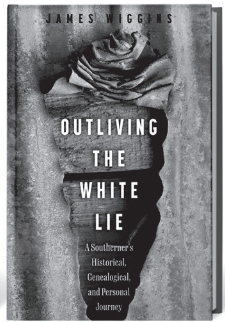

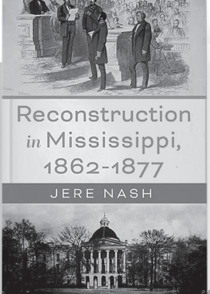

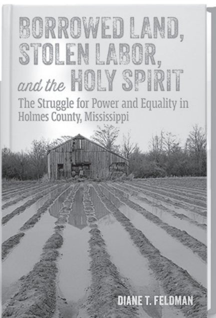

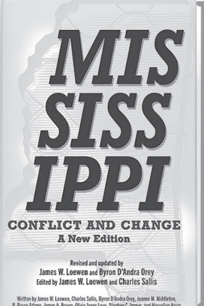

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The Chicago Manual of Style (latest edition) should be followed, with some exceptions (primarily dates: the *Journal* prefers "December 1, 1866," to Chicago's "1 December 1866").

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