

Title: From Silence to Resilience: Capturing LGBTQIA+ Stories through Oral Histories.

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When initially given the task to explore the history of USM, I eagerly looked into the different aspects of our campus. The University of Southern Mississippi, located in the greater Hattiesburg area, has played a crucial role in various historical events, one notably being the Civil Rights Movement. The McCain Library and Archives stand as a great source of information concerning many facets of campus life. There are documents with details ranging from Clyde Kennard's tragic story to insights from Women's Student Handbooks of the 1960s, along with other campus experiences. Contrasting this information with my present-day understanding of the campus highlights discernible shifts in our campus culture over time. Focusing on student newspapers, particularly editions of the [Student Printz](#) from 1970 to 1975,

revealed a notable absence of discussion about LGBTQIA+ students or communities on campus. Given the time and location in the Deep South, it was unsurprising to discover that queer narratives and experiences remained undocumented within our university's archive.

In an effort to broaden the archive on sexuality and gender, I undertook a personal LGBTQIA+ Oral History project involving three students at USM. The project aimed to emphasize the important role of oral histories in documenting ongoing history, especially in preserving LGBTQIA+ experiences. These oral histories can offer future generations insights into the struggles and triumphs of the queer community, specifically on our own campus. The goal of my project is to document the diverse backgrounds and experiences of queer students, while also capturing their perspectives on how campus administration can promote greater acceptance and recognition of the queer community. With guidance from Dr. Kevin Greene at the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage and utilizing resources like the [“How to Do Oral History”](#) guide from the Smithsonian Institution Archives, I gained comprehensive knowledge about the process and purpose of conducting oral histories. Despite the modest scale of my project, I aspire for it to inspire others to explore and document these often-overlooked histories from the past.

While the historical documentation and resources are currently limited for the queer community here at USM, it does not mean that this community did not exist in previous years. In the past, groups that were underrepresented or marginalized did not have the freedom to openly share their experiences with the public. When trying to uncover more about queer histories on campus, Dr. Greene became a great resource. Dr. Greene led me to a previous LGBTQIA+ history project conducted by two history professors at the University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. Douglas Bristol and Dr. Andrew Ross teamed with Jonathan Ned Katz at

OutHistory.org to speak about President William D. McCain in their article [“Hunting Homosexuals at Southern Miss, 1955-1965.”](#) OutHistory presents 92 pages of previously undisclosed documents that showcase the investigation of individuals labeled as “homosexuals”, “sex deviates”, and “perverts” from 1955 to 1965. Dr. Bristol and Dr. Ross aimed to shed light on the treatment of queer faculty, staff, and how institutional oppression affected the queer student population at USM. This man-hunt was led by the president and deans of the University of Southern Mississippi, including the fifth president of USM, William D. McCain. The documents disclosed on OutHistory have redacted the names of individuals McCain “hunted down” to ensure privacy and safety.

One of the documents found on OutHistory, dated November 8, 1960, discloses that William D. McCain recounted the expulsion of a male student. The expulsion was based on rumors of the student's alleged involvement with another man from the coastal area. Additionally, a young woman faced removal from her sorority due to speculations of her being a lesbian.

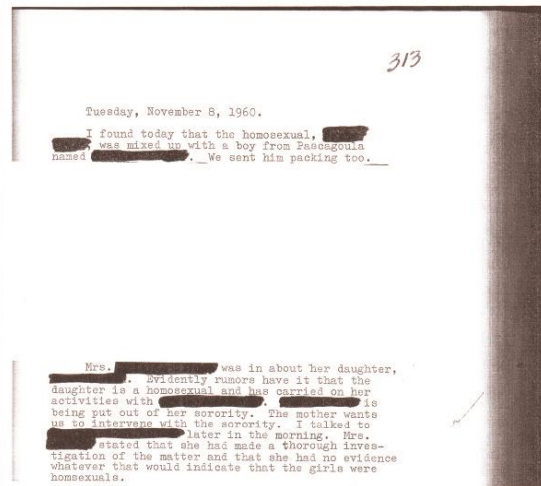


Figure 1. Image posted to OutHistory.com of President William D. McCain’s personal journal that is archived at the McCain Library and Archives. Katz, Jonathan, Douglas Bristol, and Andrew Ross. “Southern Miss Documents: 1955-1965.” OutHistory.org, 2016. <https://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/southern-miss-docs/docs>.

McCain's choice of language, exemplified by phrases such as 'We sent him packing...' and the necessity for a “thorough investigation” to retain a young woman in her sorority based on a mere rumor of her involvement with another woman, exposes his apparent bias against LGBT+ individuals. In an entry from about a year earlier, McCain speaks of Dr. J.R. Switzer, a university professor, actively targeting a group of homosexual students—a situation he deems “sickening.” He asserts that they will actively "run them down and throw them out of this college," creating a tone that borders on hostility toward the situation.

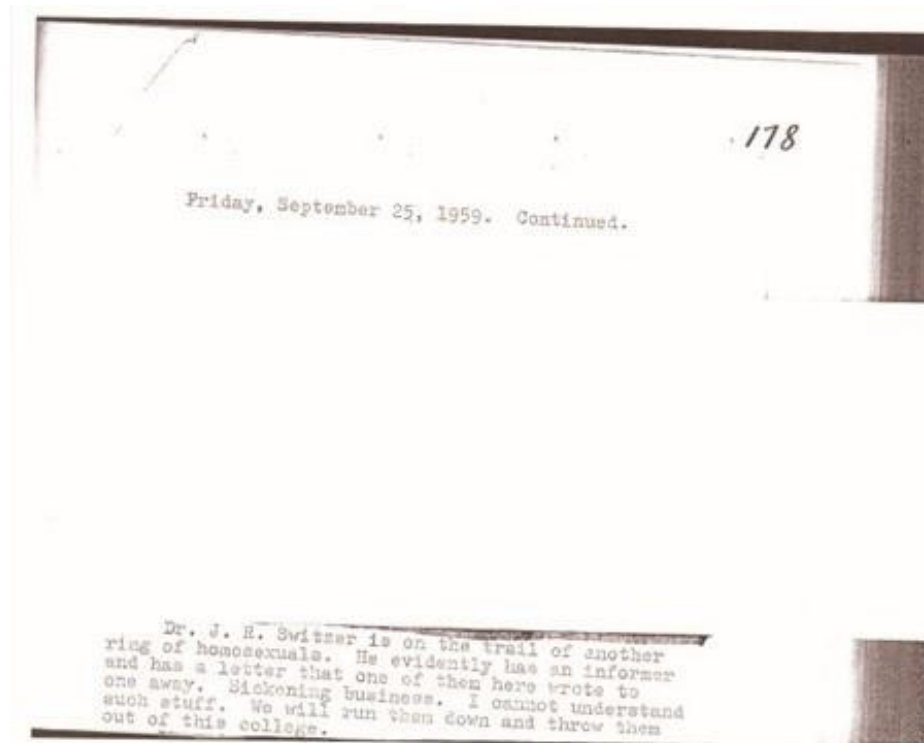


Figure 2. Journal entry from McCain posted to OutHistory.com. Katz, Jonathan, Douglas Bristol, and Andrew Ross. "Southern Miss Documents: 1955-1965." OutHistory.org, 2016. <https://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/southern-miss-docs/docs>.

Dr. Ross concludes that McCain's journals go beyond merely [exposing bigotry, homophobia, and systemic oppression](#) directed at the queer population at USM. He highlights multiple avenues through which these documents can offer insights into queer history, emphasizing the significance of broadening the archive of sexuality and exploring the broader context of the history of sexuality in the Hattiesburg area. These writings provide valuable perspectives from a marginalized community that had been deprived of the opportunity to share their experiences on a larger scale—an opportunity that McCain did have. McCain's entries, exemplified by the naming of the campus archives after him, are crucial to our campus's history. However, the undocumented stories of those he chased off campus are equally essential.

Dr. Ross's perspective provides insight into the experiences of individuals featured in McCain's journals, encompassing both students at the university and university employees.

Expelled students grappled with the harsh reality of losing future opportunities, scholarships, and facing potential estrangement from families or peers. For university employees, the removal represented an abrupt and significant disruption to their careers and loss of income, while also running the possible alienation from colleagues or family members. Sadly, their narratives went undocumented and were not deemed significant for the development of USM's history. Today, we recognize the significance of the stories of those who were ostracized in contributing to the comprehensive history of our campus and how campus administration effected their lives.

Dr. Bristol and Dr. Ross's work on OutHistory.com addressed questions about the lack of representation of queer voices earlier in campus history. McCain's presidency did not facilitate a community that allowed queer individuals to live out and open; neither did the location in the Deep South. However, the article does not explain the absence of queer voices in more recent times. The University of Southern Mississippi, today, welcomes students and faculty from varying race, age, gender, ethnic background, and sexual orientation. While members of the queer community no longer need to conceal their identity or sexual orientation from administration, they hold a rather small space on campus. When thinking of ways USM has created an atmosphere for LGBT+ people to live openly, I looked to campus organizations. There are a multitude of [campus organizations](#) that offer students a variety of options to find a welcoming space where they can feel at home. I became increasingly curious about how many spaces there are on campus for those who are a part of the LGBTQIA+ community. The university has two dedicated queer campus organizations for students to join: [PRISM](#) and [SAGE](#). To learn more about these organizations, I spoke with the coordinator of PRISM, Wes Shaffer, as well as the graduate assistant during the creation of PRISM, Tegi Jenkins-Rimmer.

Tegi Jenkins-Rimmer, graduate assistant during the creation of PRISM in 2016, is a part of the LGBT+ community herself. Rimmer expressed that prior to PRISM, she struggled to discover a space on campus where she felt that she could truly belong. It was also in 2016 that Rimmer recalled a cultural shift where queer individuals became more visibly "out and proud." Before PRISM or SAGE, there was an organization called GSA, or Genders and Sexuality Alliances. Though uncertain about the organization's founding year, Rimmer described it as an invite-only group. GSA is now formally known as SAGE, or Sexuality and Gender Equity, and is open for all to join. SAGE is a student-led organization originally sponsored by Dr. Eric Tribunella, who aimed to address the exclusive nature of the GSA by moving away from its "invite-only" culture.

PRISM was also sponsored by a professor here at USM. Dr. Thomas Burt. Rimmer details that PRISM had humble beginnings, initiated by graduate students, and initially operated with limited accessibility, offering only 20 hours of open, small space per week. Rimmer also highlighted the historical significance of PRISM's creation, emphasizing that it marked the first dedicated space for queer students on a college campus in the state of Mississippi. Surprised to hear that it took until 2016 for a space to be given to the LGBTQIA+ community at USM, I wondered about any opposition from other students or faculty at the university. Rimmer explained that there was actually no pushback from students, faculty, or the community in 2016, however, the organization still had small beginnings. Initially, only about five students would frequently visit the space when PRISM opened their doors.

During my conversation with Wes Shaffer, the current coordinator of PRISM, I learned about the organization's progress over the past three years at the university. Shaffer shared that when they started in 2020, PRISM operated from a small, two-room office space. However, by

2021, they secured a larger area for activities in the [Office of Inclusion and Multicultural Engagement](#) (IME). Shaffer explained that PRISM actively hosts trainings and events, providing a welcoming space for LGBT+ students. This information piqued my interest in the operational challenges PRISM faced due to the initial limited space. When I asked about the possibility of hosting events elsewhere on campus, Shaffer outlined the difficulties encountered when trying to organize PRISM events in alternative locations such as their events being scheduled to a later date or even canceled. Given a larger space, PRISM is able to host these events without the hurdle of reserving other spaces on campus. The most recent space for PRISM provides students with free printing, computers, desks, books, and games.

Campus culture and attitudes towards diverse lifestyles have undergone significant changes in the past few decades. Both PRISM and SAGE organize open events, reflecting the presence of queerness within the student and faculty population. Additionally, they actively participate in campus-wide events during Pride Month, such as PRIDE Day at Spirit Park. Individuals now feel more at ease expressing their true selves in the public eye, and the public, in turn, has become more accepting of diversity. My focus primarily arises from the absence of queer voices within our campus archive.

Knowing the existence and deserving recognition of these communities on campus, the following step involved engaging the public with this project. In order to assess participation among my peers, I sent a poll to the SAGE GroupMe chat. The poll included an explanation of the purpose and scope of my project, along with questions about the person's name, age, pronouns, and willingness to volunteer their story to our campus archive. Out of a total of 6 responses expressing interest in participating, only 3 interviews could be conducted due to time constraints and conflicting schedules. The three oral histories I conducted will be submitted to

the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage. This step initiates the process of documenting these minority histories, preserving them for future researchers to explore and unravel the queer narrative at USM.

Every narrator generously volunteered their time and energy to bring this project to fruition, serving as an inspiration for future endeavors. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to each one of them. Some participants faced challenges in joining this project. For example, my initial narrator was Amber, a junior at USM, who chose to use a different email address, prioritizing confidentiality over her school address. She also opted to not release her last name in order to keep her involvement in the project away from her family. Every narrator encountered distinct challenges throughout their journey, all specific to their individual experiences. However, all of these challenges are rooted in extreme religious and conservative ideology present in Mississippi. Each being from the state of Mississippi and attending college here also provides valuable insight into the challenges of being a queer individual in the South.

Prior to the interviews, each narrator received a list of questions they would be asked, along with a selection of questions they felt most comfortable answering. This approach acknowledges the sensitivity and, at times, triggering nature of the topics discussed in these conversations. The questions are as follows:

1. What is your name?
2. What are your pronouns?
3. How old are you?
4. Where are you from?
5. What is your major?
6. Why did you choose USM?
7. Can you share your coming out experience and how it has shaped your identity?
8. How has your LGBTQIA+ identity intersected with your race/ethnicity and cultural background?
9. Could you talk about your experiences with religion and how it has influenced your journey?
10. In what ways has your class/economic background impacted your LGBTQIA+ experience?
11. How has your LGBTQIA+ identity influenced your educational journey and experiences on campus?
12. Can you share any significant moments or events related to LGBTQIA+ activism or advocacy on campus?

13. How has your involvement in LGBTQIA+ organizations or communities on campus impacted your sense of belonging?
14. Have you faced any discrimination or challenges due to your queer identity on campus? How did you navigate them?
15. Can you share any memorable stories about finding love, forming relationships, or building chosen families within the LGBTQIA+ community on campus?
16. How do you think campus administration can impact the acceptance of queer communities on campus?

The narrators were all posed with questions one through six and 16, while also having the flexibility to select four to five questions from questions seven to 15. I also aimed to provide the narrators with sufficient time to consider their responses, acknowledging the potential intimidation associated with answering these types of questions on the spot. Ten minutes prior to the formal, recorded interview, I sat down with each narrator to establish their rights as the speaker, and principles of the [Oral History Association](#), as well as signing the Gift of Personal Statement and biographical forms for the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage at USM.

I had the pleasure of beginning the conversations with Amber, as mentioned earlier. Amber shared her experiences grappling with her religious upbringing, recounting her coming-out journey, navigating instances of discrimination, and building friendships at USM. Amber, a junior majoring in Computer Science at USM, is 20 years old and comes from the small town of Hurley, Mississippi. Although originally born in Houston, Texas, she has spent the majority of her life in Mississippi. Describing Hurley as a close-knit community where "everyone knows each other," Amber notes that the town tends to buzz with gossip when something noteworthy happens due to its typically quiet nature.

When discussing her coming-out experience, Amber shared something particularly intriguing. She emphasized that the process of "coming out" is an ongoing journey, stating, "It's one of those things where it hasn't stopped." Amber first realized she wasn't straight in middle school, but it wasn't until high school that she connected with a community of queer and trans

individuals through an online music community. It was in high school that she gained the confidence to come out as a trans-woman to a few close friends. The act of even telling a few friends was a difficult endeavor, as she was scared of her family being told.

While Amber comes from a religious family, with her grandfather being a pastor, it was in middle school that she realized she did not hold the same beliefs. She reminisced that as a child she never bought into the gospel, yet convinced herself she did to maintain a relationship with her family. It was also around this time she started grappling with depression. The family's approach to mental health concerns, encouraging prayer as a solution, sheds light on the challenges she faced in opening up. However, she hesitated to confide in her family as she had been advised to “pray about it.” Today, Amber remains unsure of how she identifies religiously but explained in our interview how she believes that not religion itself, but organized religion, generates hate and bigotry towards those who choose to live differently.

Transitioning the discussion to her time at the University of Southern Mississippi, we dived into the relationships she has cultivated on campus. She explained that expanding her social circle had been a gradual journey, hindered by social anxiety and the fear of her family discovering her true identity. Despite these challenges, she has successfully developed meaningful connections within the campus community and actively participates in LGBT+ events on campus. During our discussion, Amber noted something that I feel other LGBTQIA+ students may resonate with, as I know I do. When discussing SAGE and its meetings, she notes that her attendance has been limited due to nervousness. Stated earlier in our interview, some of her anxiety stems from not being obviously “feminine presenting”, creating the notion of not fitting within her community. She expresses, “I don’t want to ruin my one chance at this.”

Reflecting on this, she realizes that this is not necessarily the case. However, having only two main safe spaces for queer individuals can induce anxiety, creating a sense of limitation.

During my second interview, I spoke with Cameron Hermann, a junior at the University of Southern Mississippi majoring in Elementary Education. Despite frequent moves as a child, Cameron primarily lived in Long Beach, Mississippi. The realization that he didn't identify as heterosexual, like the rest of his family, emerged during middle and high school. After coming out to a few friends in middle school, he decided to test the waters of coming out to his parents as bisexual. Cameron shared with his parents that one of his close friends was bisexual. Unfortunately, his parents responded by not allowing the friend in their home.

Despite not having a clear understanding of his own identity at the time, Cameron's anxiety intensified as he grappled with the fear of his parents uncovering his sexuality and the potential threat of losing his family. As a result of this event, combined with his father securing a job in the same school district, heightened Cameron's anxiety, leading him to refrain from fully embracing his true identity with his family—an aspect that holds great significance for him due to his close relationship with his family.

Cameron grew up in a religious household that adhered to regular church attendance on both Wednesdays and Sundays. Throughout his entire life, he attended the same church, which had multiple branches. He describes this church as being kind, but strict. He recalled that there were not many instances where being gay was discussed. One particular memory stands out, where Cameron's youth pastor shared an experience of her sibling coming out as gay. His youth pastor continued with how her sibling wished and prayed not to be gay and to be “normal.” Hearing this experiences about another LGBTQ+ person influenced Cameron, leading him to yearn to be different than he was and pray to be "normal."

Although Cameron began to question his gender as far back as middle school, he was unable to explore and express his true identity. When initially entering college, Cameron still identified as a female due to the limited opportunities to explore his gender at home. It was the beginning of summer 2022 when Cameron embraced identifying as a trans-man and made the difficult decision to come out to his family. He highlights that assuming the role of the "oldest daughter" added an extra layer of anxiety to the situation. The high pressure of being a role model for siblings and upholding the standard of how "well their parents raised them" is something many could relate to. He chose to FaceTime his family to deliver the news, which was not taken very well. Cameron described the following months to be abnormal and that he did not speak to his parents much. To let them know that he would be beginning hormone therapy, he sent a letter home letting his parents know. This was also not met with a warm response, but Cameron continued to do what was best for him. Surrounded by a great community, Cameron was met with acceptance from his friend group. Despite his parents' initial response to Cameron's true identity, after more communication, they have become more accepting and open in recent times.

Interestingly, Cameron was able to receive hormone therapy from a clinic right here in Hattiesburg. Founded in 2014, [The Spectrum Center](#), also referred to as the Other Clinic, offers a multitude of medical and social services for the LGBTQIA+ community of Hattiesburg. Despite facing numerous challenges with Medicaid, Cameron successfully navigated through them to visit the Spectrum Center and obtain approval for hormone therapy promptly. It has been 14 months since Cameron began hormone therapy, and he expresses absolutely no regrets. Supportively, his sister-in-law and parents encouraged and assisted him in discovering a new

name, ultimately settling on Cameron. His family continues to support his endeavors, including the pursuit of top surgery, as he seeks to embrace his true self.

My third and final interviewee was William Murray, a freshman at USM double-majoring in History and World Languages with a focus on French and German. Coming from Waynesboro, Mississippi, a town he characterizes as "conservative" and lacking acceptance for queer individuals, William highlights the contrast he found upon arriving at USM: "I've never been in an accepting place before USM." He goes on to share;

“Like I said before, I never felt like I belonged anywhere because they [hometown] kept trying to censor me. Every place I'd ever been was trying to censor my existence, but then I came here and suddenly we're allowed to talk about it. We're allowed to be gay in public with people looking at us. And that was crazy.”

Through the student organization SAGE, William was able to build his own community on campus. Reflecting on a recent high school experience, William recounts an incident where his girlfriend, wearing a PRIDE pin on her lanyard, was summoned to the office, and asked to remove it. Interestingly, while his hometown exhibited a lack of acceptance for the LGBTQ+ community, only part of that sentiment held within his own family.

William was assigned female at birth but did not come out as a trans-man until 2023. His first coming-out experience was in sixth grade when he asked a girl to be his girlfriend at school. He recalls that when the teacher found out, there was a sense of fear and anger directed toward him. Transitioning to high school, William continued identifying as a lesbian, primarily because of limited opportunities to explore his gender identity. However, he started feeling less isolated as other peers also began coming out during this time. William's initial attempt to come out as a lesbian to his family involved disclosing this information to his grandmother and father, whom he was living with. When he shared with his grandmother that he identified as a lesbian at the time, her response was, "Oh, okay. As long as you're not one of those 'tr*nnies.'" During this

period, William felt a sense of security, as he wasn't identifying as transgender. Although his grandmother was accepting of his lesbian identity, William would later realize that he would identify as transgender.

Following his grandmother's passing in the summer of his 10th-grade year, William moved in with his aunt and uncle. Despite his grandmother's earlier comments about transgender individuals, William suppressed his feelings regarding his potential transgender identity until his senior year of high school. In 2023, he mustered the courage to confide in his aunt about his gender identity. Although her tone initially suggested disapproval, she ultimately supported him. However, contrary to his request for confidentiality, his aunt divulged the information to the entire family. Instead of allowing William to come out on his terms, his family discussed the situation openly in the living room. Despite the initial shock, William came to accept the fact that everyone in his family now knew about his gender identity.

Now out to his family, William began looking into hormone therapy to feel himself in his skin. When speaking about how his economic background has influenced his journey, healthcare is an important issue. Ensured by Medicaid, William went to see his primary care physician about being put on testosterone. Initially, he was told that he would be put on the hormones once he could bring in a letter from a therapist. Once he obtained the letter and brought it to the office, he was then told that Medicaid would not cover gender-affirming care. Thankfully, William was also able to get in touch with The [Spectrum Center](#) in Hattiesburg. He was able to be placed on testosterone for roughly sixty dollars a month.

One of the questions each narrator was presented was number 16 or, “How do you think campus administration can impact the acceptance of queer communities on campus?” Interestingly, all three narrators’ response included sentiments concerning religious protestors

that visit USM's campus. As a student that has experienced this group first-hand, I was curious to hear their first-hand experiences. According to an article titled "USM Students Shout Down Protestors Touting Anti-Gay Message on Campus," published by *Hattiesburg American*, the group consists of "[anti-gay protestors from The Church of Jackson in Brookhaven](#) [Miss]."

Initially, when each narrator mentioned the protestors, they were hesitant to if that could even be a response to the question, because the protestors are legally allowed to be present due to the universities [Free Speech, Demonstration, and Protest Policy](#). The policy states,

"The University has established high visibility areas on campus in order to facilitate robust debate and the free exchange of ideas. These Free Speech Zones may be used by any person, including non-students and other campus guests."

When Amber initially mentioned the protestors, she simply says that it would be nice to not have people yelling, harassing, and even following her at times so that they can "share the gospel." She does mention that she is appreciative for the students that show up for the counter-protest and even partakes in debating with the religious group herself. She goes on to describe their presence on campus as harmful and that the group had made her and others uncomfortable and unhappy. William also brought up the protestors as a harmful force on campus that condemns people for having different beliefs. In Cameron's interview, the protestors were discussed in the context of LGBT+ advocacy and activism. In his freshman year, he participated in a larger counter-protest against a group that was telling students they were destined for hell because of their sexual orientation. During the protest, the [Student Media Center](#) was able to capture an [image of Cameron](#) in his efforts to muffle the anti-queer protestors by standing in solidarity waving a Pride Flag.



Grove, Garret, and Sara Kofman. "Student Essay Gains Significance Amid Recent Events Against the LGBTQIA Community." SM2, February 23, 2022. <https://sm2media.com/29946/news/student-essay-gains-significance-amid-recent-events-against-the-lgbtqia-community/>.

Given the hatred and bigotry this group spreads on campus, it is clear to see as to why students would feel uncomfortable on campus. In the same article published by the *Hattiesburg American*, an image was released from another protest that took place during Diversity Week in 2019.



Beveridge, Lici. "USM Students Shout Down Protesters Touting Anti-Gay Message on Campus." Hattiesburg American, November 15, 2019. <https://www.hattiesburgamerican.com/story/news/education/2019/11/14/anti-gay-anti-muslim-protesters-march-usm-campus/4193221002/#:~:text=A%20group%20of%20anti-gay,the%20renewing%20of%20the%20mind>

The messages on the protesters' signs, specifically stating that "Homosexuals, lesbians, sodomites, adulterers ... will all burn in hell," is provocative and offensive towards students, faculty, and staff at USM. This expression has the potential to lead to intimidation and disorder, potentially causing students to skip class to join the counter-protest or even avoiding classes altogether to steer clear of the commotion on campus. Such actions may breach the [university's policy](#), which prohibits speech that poses an immediate and serious threat to the orderly operation of the institution.

Despite the legal aspects of the situation, it falls upon the administration of USM to prioritize the physical and mental well-being of students, faculty, and staff on their campus. The recurring visits of these protestors to the campus, delivering the same bigoted message, display insensitivity to the inclusive atmosphere our campus aims to foster. In my conversation with Cameron, he raised a noteworthy point that could be incorporated into the Free Speech, Demonstration, and Protest Policy. He emphasized, "There is a line between free speech and hate speech, and hate speech is not allowed." While free speech is valued and protected, expressions that incite or propagate hatred and harm are not considered acceptable within the framework of open dialogue and expression. The distressing remarks made by these protestors to passing students or during debates are disheartening, raising concerns about the impact on the campus environment.

Through the narratives of these three students, readers or listeners gain valuable insights into the queer experiences of individuals on a college campus in the Deep South. These stories

illuminate the challenges associated with limited accessibility to gender-affirming care in the region, while also highlighting the supportive role of The Spectrum Center for the queer community in Hattiesburg. These oral histories not only document the diverse experiences of queer individuals but also capture the distinctive challenges associated with coming out. As highlighted in Amber's perspective, "It's one of those things where it hasn't stopped," readers can observe how each narrator had to navigate the process of coming out to multiple people, multiple times throughout their lives, a reality that may still persist for them. The narrators demonstrate how USM has created a supportive environment that allows these individuals to live and express themselves through a more inclusive nature and campus organizations. However, they also acknowledge the negative impact of religious protestors on the campus atmosphere, highlighting the need for administration to foster a better campus environment. When thinking of the climate William D. McCain created on campus, it is relieving to see how much progress has been made in the last few decades. However, the LGBTQIA+ community on campus still faces issues and the university will always have room to improve.

With the assistance of Dr. Greene and the Center for Oral History, the intention is to house these recordings within the Southern Miss Archive. Although I lack professional qualifications in conducting oral histories, and this being an amateur effort, I am optimistic that these records will prove valuable to future researchers and contribute to the expansion of our university's archive. Personally, reviewing these interviews has offered me insights into areas for improvement and allowed me to adopt effective methods for the future. While my focus has been on the queer community at USM, it is crucial to recognize the need for documenting the stories of other minority groups. I hope that this work serves as inspiration for others to embark on

documenting previously unrecorded histories and understanding the essential role these stories play in comprehending the complete history of our campus.

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