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Paradoxes of the Heart and Mind: Three Case Studies in White Identity, Southern Reality, and the Silenced Memories of Mississippi Confederate Dissent, 1860-1979

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PARADOXES OF THE HEART AND MIND: THREE CASE STUDIES IN WHITE
IDENTITY, SOUTHERN REALITY, AND THE SILENCED MEMORIES OF
MISSISSIPPI CONFEDERATE DISSENT, 1860-1979

by

Billy Don Loper

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate School,
the College of Arts and Sciences
and the School of Humanities
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts

Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is meant to advance scholars understanding of the processes by which various groups silenced the memory of Civil War white dissent in Mississippi. It analyzes three case studies: F. A. P. Barnard's 1860 trial for abolitionism, the transformation of community memory which surrounded Newt Knight in the early twentieth century, and Mississippi's interaction with the Civil War through popular culture. These examples will reveal the cultural and discursive systems that have existed in the state for more than a century. This work argues that Mississippians silenced the memory of racial dissent throughout the state's history because it conflicted with the cultural norms of the region. From "Southern honor" in the nineteenth century to the rise of the new right in the 1970s, most white Mississippians refused to remember themselves as anything other than loyal Southerners. This study builds on the scholarship of Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Grace Elizabeth Hale, and Caroline Janney among others in order to explore the cultural and economic systems of the South. These efforts were so successful that Mississippians repressed the memory of dissent for many decades, wiping the reality from the public narrative. Whether it was for personal preservation, memorial sanitization, or national reconciliation, Mississippians chose to forget those who dissented against Southern norms. Instead, they championed a sanitized, shining, ahistorical Confederate past.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A great number of people have provided me with indescribable assistance throughout my work on this thesis. From the professors in the history department at USM to numerous archives and libraries, this has not been a solitary project which I tackled alone. Though history is a type of scholarship often undertaken by one hand, I could never have completed this project alone, and I owe a great deal of gratitude to everyone who has offered assistance or advice.

The person who has undeniably done the most to guide me through this project has been my advisor, Doctor Susannah Ural. She has been incredibly patient and understanding as I not only navigated the difficulties of graduate school and historical scholarship, but also this thesis and the difficulties common when writing on memory and cultural history. I know, despite the reassurance she has given me, that I have been difficult at times and frustrating at others, and I will be eternally grateful for her patience and guidance. The rest of my committee, Doctors Andrew Haley and Rebecca Tuuri, have also been instrumental in guiding my intellectual journey as a historian and a writer. At the moments where this thesis dived heavier into twenty first century cultural and race theory, they were always there to course correct me and refocus my approach. The level of detail this thesis achieves would have been impossible without them.

My wife, Miranda Kaye Espey Loper, also deserves praise of her own. She was not only my shoulder to lean on during the stress and panic that graduate school brings, but she was also my sounding board for theories, arguments, and interpretations. Despite the fact that she has little interest in Civil War history, she helped me in every way she could.

Beyond these individuals, I owe immense gratitude to a great number of institutions which provided assistance at every moment. The Dale Center for War and Society tops that list, with its support and resources making my research possible. The Mount Olive Public Library and Hattiesburg Public Library also helped me a great deal. Many of the community histories published about Jones and Covington counties were only available through these institutions, and entire swaths of my research would have been impossible without these invaluable community institutions. The Columbia University Archives, University of Mississippi Archives, and McCain Library and Archives also provided made this thesis possible. The meat of this thesis was written during the height of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and I could not have completed my research without the assistance of the archivists and staffs of these institutions.

Historical scholarship, on paper, may be a solitary process, but I certainly could not have written this thesis alone. The pages that follow would not have been possible without the support of these people and institutions.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to Barbara Jane Thompson Loper and Sharon Kay Sistrunk Carter, my grandmothers, who supported me at every turn.

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CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

“Tell about the South. What's it like there. What do they do there. Why do they live there. Why do they live at all.” -William Faulkner-Absalom! Absalom!

In 1860, scandal took the University of Mississippi by storm as chancellor Fredrick Augustus Porter Barnard came face to face with one of the most damaging accusations antebellum Mississippi had to offer: abolitionism. Similar stories of what white Mississippians often regarded as “race treachery” permeate the state’s Civil War era history. From Barnard’s trial to the memory of Newt Knight, stories of white men betraying their home and dissenting against the social norms are a mainstay of the state’s history of the war. However, memories of these events often exist in a state of confusion and perpetuated misconception with ambiguous origins. This complicated and unclear history is reflected within the states more recent memory as well. Throughout the Civil Rights eras of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the white American South grappled with how it saw itself and how popular culture, especially that produced in Hollywood, depicted the region. These three case studies, Barnard’s trial, the memory of Newt Knight, and Mississippi’s reaction to Hollywood’s South, provide unique insight into how twentieth-century white Mississippians battled for the memory of the Civil War. Through a careful look at these events, which span one hundred years of the state's history, this research can reveal the cultural and discursive systems that have existed in the state for more than a century.

This work argues that white Mississippians silenced the memory of Civil War dissent throughout the state’s history because it conflicted with the cultural norms of the

region. From the perceived nineteenth-century “Southern honor” to the fight for a solid white South in the 1960s, most white Mississippians refused to remember themselves as anything other than loyal Confederates. It is important to note that this thesis only examines the white memorialization of dissent in Mississippi. The way in which African Americans memorialized dissent took on a much different shape within black memorial traditions. Their relationship to these stories of dissent, racial divergence, and memorial white washing would have been much different than that of whites, and deserves its own dedicated examination. In order to adequately examine the breadth of white dissent, this work expands on the work of historians Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Kerri Leigh Merritt, and numerous other scholars this study explores the scholarship of “Southern Honor” and economic disparity that shaped much of Mississippi’s self-perception in the twentieth century. These were not only driving factors for dissent in Mississippi, but they were also major contributors in the efforts to erase Civil War memory. These efforts were so successful that Mississippians repressed the memory of dissent for more than a century, wiping the reality from the public narrative.

Memorialized Language: A Definition of Terms

In order to argue the above points, a few key terms require definition. The first, and most prominent, is dissent. In the context of the American Civil War, dissent can often mean radical things, and scholars often use the term to reflect firm actions like those of Newt Knight more so than casual disagreement with Confederate ideology.¹

¹“Civil War Dissent,” *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, last edited August 14, 2020, accessed on October 1, 2020, <https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/civil-war-dissent>.

However, for the purposes of this study, the term is applied more broadly to mean withholding approval. This standard definition serves this thesis far better, allowing "dissent" to be used as a catchall for desertion, armed military resistance, slave rebellion, political dissent, and general disagreement with the decisions of the Confederate government. However, to distinguish from the various types of dissent, this work offers qualifying modifiers where needed, such as "political dissent," "military dissent," and "slave dissent." It is also important to note that the case studies this thesis examines do not focus on dissent itself, but instead the white washing of its memory. Though acts of dissent are examined in two of the three case studies, the focus of this thesis is the memorialization of these events, not the act of dissent itself.

The second term which needs clarification, and which exists in a similar broad manner as dissent, is memorialization. Instead of numerous terms to discuss various forms of memory representation, this thesis uses memorialization to cover all of those mechanisms. Though memorialization is often meant to refer to monuments and other physical structures, this thesis uses commemoration to refer to the processes that create historical memories such as silences, ceremonies, and selective preservation. The processes through which Mississippians white washed the memorialization of dissent is examined within the context of memory silences and selective preservation, and all of these efforts fall under the broader umbrella of memory commemoration. Further explanation is given when necessary to clarify the group or groups shaped or affected by commemorations.

The final term which requires explanation is discourse. As poststructuralists and historians use it, this is a complex, multilayered epistemological approach that examines

the structures of human life. Its changing and nebulous nature makes a concrete definition difficult, but for the purpose of this thesis I adopt a traditional Foucauldian approach. To Foucault, discourse was the perpetual power of knowledge and the communications that surrounded, created, and reformed human life and understanding. In other words, it is a structural pillar of human existence.² Discourse theory, as Foucault established it, peels back the epistemological and rhetorical layers that create knowledge and reveals the constructs of power underneath. This thesis utilizes the same method but with a more focused attention on memory instead of general knowledge. Discourse theory is the fundamental theoretical lens behind the analysis of power structures, cultural rhetoric, and media representations that exists therein.

Honor and Power: Historiographic Background

The historiography of Confederate motivations relating to dissent and memory in the long Civil War era is extensive, and so is the historiography of the South's manipulation of Civil War memory. However, the point where these two ideas converge around Confederate dissent has remained unexplored. The landmark works of historians like Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Keri Leigh Merritt, Victoria Bynum, David Blight, Caroline Janney, and many others weave around one another as they attempt to unravel the complex tapestry that is Confederate ethics, economics, and memorialization, but despite the enormous advancements these four historians have made, they have not yet filled this unexplored gap. This is the failure in the historiography this thesis aims to fill. Through a

²Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 1992), 20-22.

look at the cultural memory of Mississippi Confederate dissent, it aims to further the historiography of Southern ethics and their effects on the American Civil War, showing not only why some Mississippians resisted the Southern Cause, but also why the memory of this dissent is absent from the public consciousness.

Published in 1982, Wyatt-Brown's *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* is a foundational work on the Old South's morality and cultural norms. It is a wide-spanning analysis of the cultural systems that dominated Southern culture prior to the American Civil War that every analysis of Southern motivations and Antebellum culture engages. To Wyatt-Brown, honor and ethics were central to the coming of the Civil War, and he argues that cultural systems and moral expectations caused Confederates to fight and continue to fight the war.³ He centers his arguments on the precarious balance between honor and class that he claims anchored the lives of white Southerners, poor and elite, throughout the region. He explains, "violence was the social necessity for men of all ranks to preserve white manhood and personal status in the fraternity of the male tribe to which all belonged. Through violence. . .the balance wheel of race, order, and rank was maintained."⁴ This "balance wheel" serves as the through line of his argument, and in turn it allows him to show how cultural pressures affected the South's decision to secede. The class aspect of the balance wheel is essential to Wyatt-Brown's treatment of poor whites and yeomen. He declares that "those who lacked honor also lacked reputation . . . poor whites in the Old South were subject to the ancient

³Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), xviii.

⁴Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 369.

prejudice against menials, swineherds, peddlers, and beggars.”⁵ However, many researchers in the decades that followed Wyatt-Brown found his treatment of class conflict unsatisfactory. In 2017, thirty-five years after the publication of *Southern Honor*, Merritt sought to fill the historiographical gap in the research of poor whites and yeomen with her book *Masterless Men: Poor Whites and Slavery in the Antebellum South*.

In *Masterless Men*, Merritt discards the centrality of honor and argues that economic pressures drove the South, and in turn the region’s poorest whites, to war. She argues, “the plight of poor whites helped push slave holders into disunion.”⁶ This relationship between poor whites and slave holders is key to Merritt’s argument. To further emphasize the centrality of slavery to the lives of poor whites, she establishes the concept of “Duel Emancipation.” Merritt explains that because of the economic pressures elite gentry exerted on the poor, the emancipation of African Americans freed poor whites from the metaphorical shackles of economic oppression.⁷ Placing the connected nature of slavery and economic strife at the center of secession separates *Masterless Men* from the high-minded ideals of *Southern Honor* and grounds it in a more tangible concept. Slavery, not honor, bound poor whites to the Confederacy, and emancipation had the potential to free them. Merritt addresses Wyatt-Brown directly claiming that though his “theories about southern honor are certainly compelling, his analysis does not allow for a full consideration of the ways slavery influenced the notions of honor;” however, this simplifies *Southern Honor*, as the gap between the two centered more on

⁵Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 46.

⁶Keri Leigh Merritt, *Masterless Men: Poor Whites and Slavery in the Antebellum South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 3.

⁷Merritt, *Masterless Men*, 6.

economic class connections than the issue of slavery.⁸ Beyond this, though *Masterless Men* fills some historiographical gaps, both Wyatt-Brown and Merritt characterize the South as a monolithic region in their analyses.

Though *Southern Honor* looks at both the upper and lower South, the book devotes most of its analysis to the elite. *Masterless Men* worked to fill the chasm Wyatt-Brown left surrounding the lower classes of Antebellum Southerners. However, almost all of Merritt's source base centers on Tennessee, creating a skewed analysis more applicable to the upper South than lower sections of the region. Though experiences in both parts of the region were similar, Merritt treats the two regions as a near total monolith, not taking into consideration the distinctions between the two regions. Though they do so to different aspects of Southern culture, both Wyatt-Brown and Merritt contribute to a monolithic interpretation of the Civil War era South. No issue in Confederate society was unique to the rich, poor, or yeoman Southerners. Albeit in diverse ways, dissent, economic collapse, and homelife disruption occurred within both the upper and lower classes. However, the exact nature of these events in the Upper and Lower South, and even state to state, differs a great deal. Though this research cannot fill this historiographic failure in its entirety, this study of elite and poor Confederate dissent in Mississippi will help chip away at the monolith that is the solid white South.

The third key work this research aims to engage is Victoria Bynum's *The Free State of Jones: Mississippi's Longest Civil War*. Throughout her book, Bynum analyzes how the group of deserters who formed the Knight Company were different from others who often rejoined the Confederate military in a matter of months after deserting. She

⁸Merritt, *Masterless Men*, 140.

explains, “those who joined the Knight Company intended desertion to be permanent. Drawing on crucial support of civilians, they refused to ‘skulk’ in the woods as dishonored men.”⁹ This work will expand Bynum’s research into an analysis on the memorialization of dissent. Throughout the second half of the book, she discusses the various modern representations of Knight and the aftermath that came in his wake, but she does little to discuss why his memory was silenced in the late twentieth-century. Bynum often analyzes the way Knight fit into the honor systems described by Wyatt-Brown and how Knight’s descendants worked to wipe his memory from local consciousness, but she never examines how the moral systems of *Southern Honor* might have contributed to these sanitization efforts.¹⁰ This is an important aspect of Knight’s story that requires exploration. An analysis of the Free State of Jones through the lenses of both Southern motivations and silenced memory brings part of the cultural history of Confederate dissent into focus.

Though these three works are the core historiographic leanings with which this thesis engages, there are a number of other works that are vital to this research that must first be addressed. Two of the historians who have the greatest impact on the scholarship of this work are Michael Kammen and David Blight. Kammen’s *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* is the foundational work of American memory studies, and it is impossible to engage with the field without understanding the theory and processes for American memory making that Kammen established. Blight approaches memory in a similar manner, but instead of the wide berth

⁹Victoria E. Bynum, *The Free State of Jones: Mississippi’s Longest Civil War* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University Press of North Carolina, 2001), 94.

¹⁰Bynum, *The Free State of Jones*, 188.

of *Mystic Chords of Memory, Race and Reunion* has a much tighter focus on the Civil War. Blight lays out the various methods through which the public has dealt with the complicated memory of the war, and his description of the three types of Civil War memory—reconciliationist, white supremacist, and emancipationist—and the conflicts between these groups is key to this research.¹¹ I take these heuristic devices and examine how they interact with the memory of dissent, a topic he does not significantly cover. Outside of these works there are a number of others such as, Karen Cox's *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Presentation of Confederate Culture*, Coleman Hutchinson's *Apples and Ashes: Literature, Nationalism, and the Confederate States of America*, Stephanie Rolph's *Resisting Equality: The Citizen's Council, 1954-1989*, and Timothy B. Smith's *Mississippi in the Civil War: The Homefront*, that will serve as foundational works throughout this thesis. These pieces, along with others, are addressed in the notes when appropriate.¹²

Mississippians both joined and left the Confederate cause for a number of reasons. Whether it was honor, the defense of slavery, economic pressures, homefront collapse, or some combination of the three, Southerners experienced conflict from every angle. The historiography is reflective of the complex nature of the situation, often examining the motivations and memory of support for the South but also avoiding the more complicated nature of dissent. Many researchers, such as Wyatt-Brown, Merritt, and Bynum, have examined the reasons Southerners felt compelled to stay loyal to the

¹¹David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2001), 2.

¹²A plethora of other works on memory, memorialization, and Southern culture also play important roles in the analysis of this thesis, including Grace Elizabeth Hale's *Making Whiteness*, Dan T. Carter's *The Politics of Rage*, and Charles Bolton's *Poor Whites of the Antebellum South* among others.

cause, and others have looked at the complex ways that America has memorialized its dark and painful past. However, few researchers have analyzed how these pressures both created and silenced the memory of dissent in Mississippi. Though researchers such as Gaines Foster, Karen Cox, and Gary Gallagher have examined Lose Cause ideology to an exhaustive extent, the Lost Cause movement was constantly in flux throughout the twentieth century and many aspects of it remain unexplored. The Lost Cause began with memorializations and memoirs in the late-nineteenth century and continues to this day. As this thesis will show, its tenets and principals evolved during that time. The Lost Cause was never static and it often reflected other socio-economic pressures of the times. This thesis seeks to examine the ways the Lost Cause interacted with memory mechanisms to help silence Civil War dissent throughout the state, especially its racial elements. In order to argue these points, each of the three case studies draws from a unique primary source base in order to analyze a part of Mississippi's cultural interaction with dissent. These sources will reveal the cultural systems that silenced the state's memory of dissent.

Traditionally Non-Traditional: A Note on Primary Sources

The research of cultural memory requires analyses of a variety of primary sources. Throughout this thesis sources range from traditional archival formats (such as letters, diaries, and government records) to television programs. In all three case studies, this thesis also uses poetry, fiction, and other popular media to supplement traditional archival sources when necessary. However, despite the regular appearance of these types of sources, they do not dominate the source base. More traditional sources are used in each chapter to anchor the complex media (such as film, television, and popular fiction)

analysis in historical reality. For each case study the sources are adjusted to bring the unique cultural moments that lie behind them into the foreground in the clearest possible manner.

The case study of F. A. P. Barnard is shaped predominately by traditional archival sources. The John Jones Pettus Papers at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in Jackson, Mississippi, is one of the key collections used throughout this case study. This collection contains a variety of correspondence and official papers sent to the Governor's office throughout the state's history.¹³ For the purpose of this case study, the papers from 1859-1861 are critical. Barnard, his supporters, and his detractors all wrote Mississippi governor John Jones Pettus voicing their opinions on his trial. Beyond these direct mentions of Barnard, this collection also houses a number of letters and telegrams from Mississippians discussing their fears of Union invasion. The second archival collection this case study makes use of is the Papers of F. A. P. Barnard housed at the Rare Books and Manuscripts Libraries at Columbia University in New York City. This collection holds all of Barnard's personal papers and allows a great deal of insight into his life before and after his career at the University of Mississippi. In conjunction with these archival sources, this case study also uses nineteenth-century poetry and newspapers to examine how the contemporary interpretation of the war interacted with Barnard's trial.

¹³This collection contains two sections, Series 757 and Series 762. The first of which is written correspondence sent to the governor's office; the second is telegrams sent to the governor's office.

Poetry comes primarily from two published collections. The first, Sophia Graves Foxworth's *The Old Mansion and Other Poems*, appeared in 1896.¹⁴ Foxworth's poetry reflects on the war and the life that came afterward but was largely written during Reconstruction. In order to provide some context to the antebellum and war-time years the collection *Poetry of the Civil War* is also used. This collection, published in 2015, is divided into Northern and Southern perspectives and provides a great deal of period poetry in an accessible manner. Though soldiers wrote much of the poetry in this collection, a great deal of it also comes from civilians and proves useful in understanding nineteenth-century interpretation of the war. These collections of poetry allow this research to relate the events described in the Barnard trial, and the societal climate that surrounded it, in the same cultural terms of those who lived through the war. An analysis of Allen Cabaniss's *The University of Mississippi: The First Hundred Years* also brings this case study into the twentieth century. A 1971 reprint of the 1949 monograph *A History of the University of Mississippi*, this book is an excellent source of twentieth-century memory. Cabaniss might have intended it as a secondary source, but the dated analysis it contains is an excellent memory-centric primary source.

The second case study is a close analysis of the various twentieth-century memorializations of Newt Knight and his band of deserters. For this section, the utilized primary source base diverges from the traditional archival practices of the Barnard analysis. The primary sources utilized throughout this chapter are dated local histories

¹⁴Sophia Graves Foxworth was a Mississippi Piney Woods native who was born in the early 1840s in the Zion Seminary community. She lived her entire life in the state and is buried in current day Columbia, Mississippi. The influence the war had on her poetry is obvious, and a careful reading of select poems provides important cultural context.

and historical fiction written about Knight from the twentieth century, both of which clarify the area's perception of Knight. Ethel Knight's *The Echo of the Black Horn*, is a 1951 community history written by a member of Knight's own family. Ethel Knight was ashamed of her ancestral heritage, and she chose throughout *Black Horn* to attempt to "clear" her family's name.¹⁵ As a counter to this source, this case study also makes use of a close analysis of James Street's 1942 novel *Tap Roots*. It is one of, if not the earliest popular interpretations of Knight's story, and it, unlike *Black Horn*, shined a positive light on the Free State of Jones.¹⁶ These cultural interpretations of Knight will allow for a close examination of the way his memory changed throughout the twentieth century.¹⁷

The third case study of this thesis will focus on the media representation of the shifting politics of the 1960s and 70s and how that interacted with Mississippi's choice to silence parts of its past. Throughout this section of the study, film, television, and popular fiction of the 1960s and 1970s makes up the bulk of the primary source base. Classic television programs often dedicated entire episodes to topics surrounding the Civil War and programs such as *Bonanza*, *Gunsmoke*, *The Riflemen*, and *The Rebel* all serve as powerful examples of Mississippi's interaction with the broader national memorialization efforts. Outside of popular television westerns a number of films also reflected these themes of reconciliation, with John Wayne's *Rio Lobo* (1970) and Clint Eastwood's *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976) standing as two of the most prominent examples. These same

¹⁵Ethel Knight, *The Echo of the Black Horn: An Authentic Tale of "The Governor" of "The Free State of Jones"* (New York, NY: The Maple-Vail Book Manufacturing Group, 2005).

¹⁶James Street, *Tap Roots* (New York, NY: The dial Press, 1942).

¹⁷The analysis method utilized to examine the various poems and fiction pieces is the same literary rhetoric analysis established by literary historian Coleman Hutchinson in *Apples to Ashes: Literature, Nationalism, and the Confederate States of America*.

themes also appeared in popular fiction written by Mississippians as well, with the state serving as the birthplace for numerous popular writers of western fiction.¹⁸ In order to analyze these popular-culture sources, this thesis examines them in conjunction with newspaper and magazine reviews from the state that reflect on the various pieces of media and the broader nature of popular culture. These types of sources, whether television programs, films, or music, reflect the nation's interpretation of the Civil War. Through an examination of how Mississippians reacted to them, this thesis can further explain the cultural meaning of Confederate dissent in the state.

Though the source base of each of these three case studies is varied, they all share a single factor. Each of these is a cultural artifact left to the mercy of those who came after. They represent the cultural and memory mechanisms that created, and in turn distorted, every aspect of Mississippi's Civil War history. Only a careful examination of their complex layers can reveal the mechanisms that lie at the center and how Mississippians manipulated them to represent a unified Southern cause.

A Through-line Across the Centuries: Three Case Studies

This work dedicates a chapter to each of these case studies—F. A. P. Barnard's trial, the memorialization of Newt Knight, and Hollywood's representations of the South. Each of these chapters establishes a historic background which is followed by three periods of analysis which trace the evolution of memory's relationship to civil war dissent. Though the early years of these chapters depend on the case study, they all end in

¹⁸Mississippi's rich literary culture gave birth to many successful western authors, many of whom engaged with the exact same cultural mechanisms as the television programs and films of the era.

the 1970s. Through this careful periodization, the evolution of memory becomes clear, as it reveals the shifting cultural mechanisms both in Mississippi and across the entire United States which influenced the silencing of dissent.

Chapter 2 focuses on F. A. P. Barnard's 1860 trial for abolitionism. Then chancellor of the University of Mississippi, the faculty of the university accused Barnard of having reservations about the institution of slavery. These accusations ranged, depending on the accuser, from claims that Barnard "unsound" on the issue of slavery to accusations of hardline abolitionism. This work argues that the charges against Barnard were directly related to his supposed violations of Southern norms. Already viewed as an outsider, his acceptance of a slave's testimony over that of a white student's version cast him as a "race traitor" who had come to corrupt the morality of the students at the university. This analysis of Antebellum cultural norms relies a great deal on both the scholarship of Southern culture and Southern memorialization, as the interactions between the two serves as the foundation for memory's silences. Within this interaction, the understanding of both Barnard's nineteenth-century experience and twentieth-century memorialization is revealed. This revelation brings the memory processes that sanitized his past into the foreground.

Chapter 3 provides a close analysis of Newt Knight's later life, with special attention paid to his dual family and the way in which local Jones County citizens memorialized him. Knight was a Jones Countian who dissented against the Confederacy and became infamous for both his open distaste for the Confederacy and his choice to take an African American common law wife. This chapter argues that many Jones County citizens made efforts in the postwar period to distance themselves from the

reputation of Knight, whom they saw as a traitor to both his home and his race. By taking an African American common law wife and beginning a second interracial family, housed next to his white family on Knight land, he, like Barnard, faced communal charges of violating Mississippi's cultural norms. That community then silenced his memory through a perpetuation of a distorted past. This research analyzes these events through a broad exploration of both pre-war and post-war cultural constructs in order to create a clear line of delineation between the different forms of Knight's memory. The processes established by historians such as Blight and Cox also serve as important points of contextualization on Knight's story. Through these processes, the reasons local citizens silenced many of Knight's "dishonorable" acts and the relationship between his experience and Barnard's becomes clear.

Chapter Four focuses on an analysis of how white Mississippians reacted to the Civil War's representation in popular culture and what that meant for the state's interpretation of the Civil War era. This chapter argues that though at times Mississippians reacted positively to media that depicted them in a negative light, popular media succeeded most in the state, unsurprisingly, when it depicted the region in positive ways. Due to this trend, one that existed across the entire South, popular culture began to take a more positive turn toward the region. Blight's explanation that the reconciliation of historical memory served as a way for white Americans to re-unify in the years after the war is key to this argument. The reconciliationist perspective dominated popular-culture's depiction of the South, and this combined with the changing political landscape that swept the nation in the 60s and 70s to create a perfect environment for memory

silencing. These memory mechanisms and the racial undertones that lie beneath are fundamental to the way Mississippi white-washed its Civil War history.

Headed into Nowhere: Conclusions

The historic research presented in this thesis is both painfully original and entirely derivative. Few other historians have examined the Barnard Trial, Newt Knight, or Hollywood's South through a post-structuralist, cultural model in the way that is done throughout the pages that follow. No researcher has studied the cultural systems behind the memorialization of Mississippi Confederate dissent, outside of the Free State of Jones. Still, many historians have examined Lost Cause ideology and its effect on Civil War era memory. Many historians have researched the motivations of Civil War, era Southerners to take up arms against the North and declare themselves independent.¹⁹ However, there is still a significant weakness around studies of Confederate motivations, and more importantly the far more complicated *lack* of motivation, and the cultural artifacts that the messy process of memory making leaves behind. This thesis cannot fill this entire gap, but it can establish how Mississippi contributed to this process and establish a method for looking at similar events across the nation. The late Tony Horwitz described backwoods Mississippi as “a myth-encrusted badlands for so many Americans,” however a key mistake exists in that sentence.²⁰ It is not only Mississippi's “backwoods” that are myth laden; mistaken memory and local legend permeates every

¹⁹Most notably is Aaron Sheehan-Deen's 2007 work *Why Confederates Fought: Family and Nation in Civil War Virginia*. Though things differed between the upper and lower South, a great deal of direction has been taken from Sheehan-Deen's scholarship.

²⁰Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1998), 190.

region of the state. From the streets of Oxford to the thickets of the Piney Woods, white Mississippians battled throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to establish their version of the Civil War. These three cases will reveal how those battles came to be.

CHAPTER II - “YANKEE INVADERS”: F.A.P. BARNARD AND THE UNIVERSITY
OF MISSISSIPPI

“Nationalism is never a zero-sum prospect; it is instead a structure of feeling...”

-Coleman Hutchison

Fredrick August Porter Barnard’s arrival at the University of Mississippi was neither the catalyst nor the climax of his academic career. Following his 1828 graduation from Yale University, Barnard worked in the academy throughout New England before coming south in 1848 to the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. In 1854, he arrived at the University of Mississippi and started his career there as a professor of Mathematics and Natural Science.²¹ Barnard’s arrival in Oxford, Mississippi, was the beginning of his difficulties in the South. Two years after he started at the university, the board of trustees named him chancellor, and it was this move that defined his career in the state. On March 1, 1860, the perfect storm of racial, political, and personal tensions engulfed Barnard when his faculty accused him of abolitionism. When Barnard took the testimony of an enslaved woman named Jane over that of a white student, members of the faculty at the university began to question his status as a Southerner and his place in the University community. These accusations exposed the cultural mechanisms that underpinned life in Mississippi and defined the state’s history as it slowly distorted the Civil War into a divergent and unrecognizable memory. The processes that triggered Barnard’s trial are representative of the methods Mississippians used to silence the history of dissent and racial division in their state during and after the Civil War.

²¹David G. Sansing, *The University of Mississippi: A Sesquicentennial History* (Jackson, MS: The University Press of Mississippi, 1999), 28.

The Winds of Change: Mississippi and the Northern Threat

Despite his centrality to this chapter, Barnard's story does not begin and end with his arrival at the University of Mississippi. Though Mississippians in the 1850s and 1860s, as one historian noted, "did not know they were living in the 'antebellum' period," they were painfully aware of the powerful sectional crises that permeated the landscape.²² White Mississippians of every walk of life felt the push and pull between their society and the institution of slavery. Whether these tensions centered on Bertram Wyatt-Brown's "Balance Wheel of Class and Power," Kerri Leigh Merritt's "Dual Emancipation," or any other Southern cultural system does not matter. It is undeniable that white elites and poor whites alike were concerned with the stability of slavery.²³ In turn, as the sectional tensions between North and South intensified and the threat of secession became ever more eminent, so too did the threat of Northern abolitionism. The cultural tensions of Southern life were not the only representations of these threats.

These political and social fears became so severe that on November 30, 1859, just over three months before Barnard's trial, a writer who identified himself as "An Abolitionist" wrote Governor John Jones Pettus warning of a coming assault on Vicksburg, Mississippi. "An attempt will be made very soon to get up an insurrection on a very large scale in Mississippi. . . ." he wrote, ". . . You will not notice this until it is too

²²Gary W. Gallagher and Joan Waugh, *The American War: A History of the Civil War Era* (State College, PA: Flip Learning, 2015), 6.

²³This is one of Merritt's most important historiographical contributions. She shows that poor whites and yeomen from across the region were not unaware of slavery, but instead were painfully aware of the institution's importance to their precarious social position.

late to do any good but it is every word true and much more is true.”²⁴ The writer stressed the severity of this potential attack and urged Pettus not to disregard its vital importance. However, he remained anonymous and stressed how the movement went beyond what he supported, obviously making efforts to save his own reputation.²⁵ Though news of this potential attack never made it into newspapers, stories of abolitionist fears did appear in local papers across the state. In early February, a Jackson newspaper asked, “The Abolition of Enemies of the South—What they are driving at” and claimed, “there are but two parties in the North; the Democratic and the Black Republican.”²⁶ The term “abolitionist” is not mentioned once throughout the article, but “Black Republican” is mentioned three times. To the editors of the *Mississippian and State Gazette*, to be an abolitionist was race treachery, and their language left no room for misinterpretation. Papers in Vicksburg expressed similar concerns about the growing tensions between North and South.

An early October issue of *The Vicksburg Whig* included an editorial titled, “Yancey Secession Mottoes,” written by ardent fire eater John A. Quitman. Quitman wrote about so-called secession mottoes of the North such as, “SLAVERY AND THE UNION CANNOT CONTINUE TO EXIST TOGETHER,” and declared these mottoes were part of a cycle of “Northern Abolitionism and Southern Submission.”²⁷ He saw the submission of the South to Northern encroachments on slavery as a dark mark on the

²⁴Letter from “An Abolitionist” to Mississippi’s Governor John Jones Pettus, November 30, 1859, Box 930, Folder 1, Series 757, The Governors’ Calendars Collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, MS.

²⁵Letter from “An Abolitionist.”

²⁶“The Abolition Enemies of the South—What are they driving at” *Mississippian and State Gazette*, Jackson, MS, February 3, 1858.

²⁷John A. Quitman, “The Yancey Secession Mottoes,” *The Vicksburg Whig*, Vicksburg, Mississippi, October 3, 1860.

region's reputation. Quitman went on to discuss how white Mississippians would no longer bend to Northern abuse, and if disunion was the outcome, then it was the North that had forced secession, not the South. The core of both of these articles were the same. Race and abolitionism laid at the center of Mississippi's cultural life, and as the letter to Pettus showed, these fears at times felt very real.

Sectional tensions permeated every aspect of culture in antebellum Mississippi. It filled the newspapers and drove the citizens of the state to contact their governor. The anonymous writer saw his connection to the abolitionist movement as a potential risk to his reputation. Quitman saw the very idea of abolitionism as a threat to the South's reputation and economic stability. Regardless of what social class Mississippians came from and whether they opposed or supported slavery, the charge of abolitionism or race treachery was one of the most damaging accusations that could be leveled. However, the accusations the faculty made against Barnard did not materialize out of nowhere. His early career at the University of Mississippi was marred with controversy as well.

“Private Letters this Day Received”: Barnard's Early Years

Barnard arrived at the University of Mississippi in 1854, and in 1856, months before he became Chancellor of the University, he found himself embroiled in a controversy so severe it mandated a printed and published response. August 19, 1860, Barnard printed a scathing response to criticisms made by Lewis Harper, who worked as the State Geologist and professor of chemistry at the university. At that time Barnard served on the board of trustees, and just before he wrote the circular, the board had given Barnard Harper's former position as professor of chemistry. Barnard explained, “Private

letters this day received inform me that advantage has been. . . by LEWIS HARPER, State geologist of Mississippi, to put forth a paper designed to injure me.”²⁸ He pointed to the board of trustees’ decision to remove Harper from his professorship before passing the position to Barnard because they saw it as a possible conflict with his work as state geologist as the core reason for the attack.²⁹ However, despite the attack, he did not immediately retaliate.

Barnard, perhaps because of his appointment as Chancellor, decided against circulating the rebuttal in its original form. Still, his reaction to the attack brings the core of Barnard’s values to the surface, and it is clear that Barnard saw Harper’s words as an attack on his honor and reputation. He refused to even read Harper’s letter, explaining he saw Harper as beneath him and unworthy of his time while still taking the time to criticize his attacker.³⁰ One of the clearest representations of Barnard’s feelings towards Harper came in his declaration that, “to turn the torrent of his invective upon me, is an act about as sensible as it would be for a criminal to make personal quarrel with the executioner who is to hang him.”³¹ Barnard’s broader purpose in his unpublished retaliation, however, seemed to have been an attack on Harper’s character and qualifications. Throughout the letter, Barnard addressed Harper using his last name or as “Mr. Harper,” never doctor. “It may, perhaps, be noticed that I have omitted, in this card, to give to Mr. Harper his favorite distinctive title. I do so. . .because he calls himself a

²⁸Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard, *To the People of Mississippi* circular, August 19, 1856, Box 6, Folder 48, Manuscripts and Published Materials, The F. A. P. Barnard Papers Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.

²⁹Barnard, “To the People of Mississippi.”

³⁰Barnard, “To the People of Mississippi.”

³¹Barnard, “To the People of Mississippi.”

doctor of laws—a title to which he has no right whatever. This constant assumption of a degree which was never conferred on him, is in itself enough to forfeit to him any all claim to respectability in the world of letters.”³² Here, in no uncertain terms, Barnard questioned the reputation and respectability of his attacker. For Harper, who clearly considered himself an educated and respectable man, this attack on his honor, preferred title, and reputation would have been as grave an injury as a minié ball. Bertram Wyatt-Brown analyzes the place that title held in Southern society a great deal, and through his analysis some clarity is brought to the Barnard-Harper controversy.³³

Southern honor was an ethereal concept. It was not a tangible, material force but instead an unspoken cultural system that many historians argue served as a foundation of Southern society. However, through this exchange between Barnard and Harper, it is clear that honor and reputation played a significant role in their lives. For both of these men entitlements were vital to their understanding of personal honor. Wyatt-Brown explains that, “honor was inseparable from hierarchy and entitlement,” in turn showing the importance of professional and community reputation to men like Harper and Barnard.³⁴ He explains that Southern culture instilled this system of hierarchical deference in early childhood. He describes it as a cultural milestone for a Southern child to understand proper entitlements. He states, “these signs of deference, first required at

³²Barnard, “To the People of Mississippi.”

³³It is important to note that while much of the discussion of Southern honor found within this chapter relates to the research of Bertram Wyatt-Brown and Eugene Genovese, this is because of their focuses on the concepts of stoicism and entitlement. Beyond that, the concept of Wyatt-Brown’s “Balance Wheel of Class and Power” also plays a major role. Many other historians, including William K. Scarborough and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, took similar stances on slavery and its ancillary role within Southern honor and culture. While these historians, and many others, have expanded on Wyatt-Brown’s analysis, this chapter makes a constant use of his specific heuristic devices.

³⁴Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 4.

home, prepared the child for later pledges of submission to community authorities, with their honorific titles.”³⁵ The importance of these honorific titles clarifies why Barnard chose to declare that Harper was unfit for his chosen title, and what that specific attack meant for their broader places in Southern culture.

Questioning Harper’s title did two things for Barnard. First, it stripped Harper of his respectability within the university community. Second, it refused Harper the hierarchical power that the title “doctor” lent him. No longer were the two men equals. Barnard pushed Harper into the lower rung of society and asserted his own cultural and hierarchical dominance. Barnard graduated from Yale, grew up in the North, and spent much of his early academic career in New England. His position within the Southern honor system differed from his Southern attacker. For elites, Southern honor often hinged on ancestral and community honor, while Northern honor rested less on familial names and more on personal achievement and economic freedom.³⁶ This distinction does create some confusion around the Barnard-Harper controversy. The University of Mississippi was both Barnard and Harper’s core community, that much is obvious, but according to Wyatt-Brown’s explanation, these interactions of honor, entitlement, and community should have been very different. It could be that Barnard thought the controversy hinged on his personal achievement, but that explanation still does not clarify the clearly Southern cultural mechanisms at play. Another point that complicates this idea is that Honor, and especially the concepts of entitlement, were rarely solidified ideas. Historians of tradition have noted that most traditions were invented in order to serve the immediate

³⁵Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 157.

³⁶Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 123.

needs of the culture who created them. They note that especially the concepts of entitlement have often been created out of hope to create deference, not support it.³⁷ In turn, if the tradition of entitlement in the South was created to represent a hierarchical structure that may not have often existed in practice, then the tendency of both Harper and Barnard to pick and choose what parts of the culture applied to them makes perfect sense. However, the postscript Barnard wrote for the circular in June of 1857 provided more clarification.

In the postscript Barnard explained that he had reconsidered his decision not to publish the original circular because the attacks from Harper had continued for almost a year. He stated, “this insanely infatuated man has been engaged in a secret renewal of his unscrupulous and vindictive warfare, by circulating a fresh coinage of his ingenious malignity, in the shape of a paper which the contents can only be described as *diabolical*.”³⁸ Barnard’s traditional dramatics pour from this postscript just as they did from the original rebuttal, and he focused much of his energy on justifications for his position in Southern society. Barnard considered the core of the Harper controversy to be his recent arrival in Mississippi. He explained, “The undersigned [Barnard] is but a recent resident in Mississippi; and it is only this circumstance which makes a fabrication like here spoken deserving of any attention at all.”³⁹ Here it is clear that he was aware of his outsider status and how it affected his reputation. He also emphasized that he, by any

³⁷Historians David Cannadine and Bernard S. Cohn explore this in great detail in their entries within the essay collection *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger.

³⁸Fredrick Augustus Porter Barnard, *To the People of Mississippi* Postscript, June 6, 1857, Box 6, Folder 48, Manuscripts and Published Materials, The F. A. P. Barnard Papers Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.

³⁹Barnard, *Postscript*.

measure, belonged in Southern society. He explained that he was, “a resident of Mississippi by invitation. Nearly seventeen years of his life immediately preceding, have been spent in the neighboring State of Alabama.”⁴⁰ Barnard never considered himself an outsider to Southern culture, but instead saw himself as a fully assimilated Southerner. Despite his Northern origin, this self-perception transformed Barnard’s position within the South’s honor systems.

Though it is certain for both Barnard and Harper that at least part of the controversy hinged on their reputations, Barnard made it clear that community and Southern society were at the heart of the issue. Historians of Southern culture argue that the core of honor, and the central concept which proved Southern honor’s existence, was the community. One historian explains that antebellum Southerners worked to behave in a way that “connected them to community’s self-image,” in a wholly positive manner.⁴¹ Therefore, Barnard’s assertion that he was not an outsider, and instead an established citizen of Southern society, placed him in a unique position within the region’s cultural system. Barnard’s dual identity as an outsider and an assimilated Southerner created an intense game of tug-of-war during his career at the University of Mississippi. Though he saw himself as an honorable and well-respected Southerner, Barnard’s early career the university showed that many members of the university community saw him only as a Yankee invader. Barnard recognized and resented this duality, but despite his assertions of his Southernness, this conflict between his self-perception and his community reputation followed him throughout his career. This struggle manifested in a catastrophic

⁴⁰Barnard, *Postscript*.

⁴¹Eugene Genovese, “The Chivalrie Tradition in the Old South,” *The Sewanee Review*, Vol. 108, No. 2 (Spring 2000), 204.

manner during the events that surrounded his 1860 trial and Barnard's place within Southern culture became the topic of intense scrutiny.

Tensions Boiled Over: The Trial of F. A. P. Barnard.

Underlying social fears and the Harper controversy served as key catalysts to the tensions between Barnard and the faculty, and those growing divisions began to plague Barnard more and more throughout his career. Still, these two issues were not the only reasons faculty members disliked Barnard. It is undeniable that, regardless of the validity of the claims Harper made towards him, Barnard's response was filled with fiery passion and reactionary rhetoric. Barnard was clearly a passionate and outspoken individual, and this personality created a great deal of conflict for him at the university. Correspondence from a group of unnamed students to Barnard in May of 1858 help reveal a deeper reasoning behind the increased tensions. On May 17, 1858, a group of students wrote Barnard requesting the removal of university professor W. G. Richardson. "There has been considerable disturbance in the college, owing to the foolishness of W. G. Richardson. We do despise him so and would be glad to rid ourselves of him."⁴² It is difficult to discern what made these students comfortable enough to write Barnard with this request, but it is known that as chancellor, Barnard had established himself as a friend of the students and as a modernizer of the University, even when it put him in opposition to the faculty.⁴³

⁴²"Many Students" to F. A. P. Barnard, May 17, 1858, Box 5, Folder 23, Catalogued Correspondence, The F. A. P. Barnard Papers Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.

⁴³David G. Sansing details this in his book *The University of Mississippi: A Sesquicentennial History*. He describes Barnard as constantly pushing for modernization, even against the faculty. Much of this modernization included broader course offerings and longer semesters.

Barnard had begun his modernization efforts immediately following his selection as chancellor, and they intensified in 1858 when he called for expansive changes. Barnard identified what he saw as the university's weaknesses and offered solutions. His criticisms focused on the belief that the university's administration should have higher standards for its educators. He stated, "If schools without any teachers at all would be good for nothing, then schools with teachers themselves of inferior scholarship and a limited range of attainments are not much better."⁴⁴ These arguments for higher standards for professors, which in many ways mirrored Barnard's criticisms of Harper, angered some members of the faculty.⁴⁵ In turn, the societal tensions across the state and his efforts to modernize the university combined to create the perfect storm. As these tensions boiled over, a group of professors attempted to force him out of the university community through any means necessary.

In late February 1860, three professors began to plan their accusations against Barnard. These professors, W. G. Richardson, George W. Carter, and H. B. Branham had all experienced altercations with Barnard in the past, often for his efforts to modernize the university. The primary accuser was Branham, who had supported Harper during the Barnard-Harper controversy. He also campaigned for his brother-in-law L. Q. C. Lamar for the position of chancellor and expressed clear disdain when Barnard received the

⁴⁴Fredrick Augustus Porter Barnard, *Letter to the Honorable Board of Trustees of the University of Mississippi*, 1858, Box 9, Folder 3, Manuscripts and Published Materials, Columbia University, New York, NY, 104.

⁴⁵David G. Sansing, *The University of Mississippi: A Sesquicentennial History* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1999), 34-36.

title.⁴⁶ The charges Branham brought against Barnard were extensive, and the board of trustees heard nine in total. The charges were as follows:

1. That he (Barnard) was unsound upon the slavery question.
2. That he was in favor of. . .taking the negro testimony against a student.
3. That H. (a student) was arraigned and tried upon negro testimony.
4. That upon the question of the expulsion of H. the vote was sectionally divided. . .the Southern men voting in the negative.
5. That, pending the discussion upon the case of H., Barnard asked Richardson [W. G. Richardson] if he would not believe his negro man, Henry, against a student. . .he said he would not, Barnard said *he would*.
6. That all the information in the H. Case was furnished by a Negro woman.
7. That Barnard stated that June (the negro woman) afterwards recognized H., and pointed him out as the man who had assailed her.
8. That notwithstanding the vote of expulsion failed, Barnard wrote to the guardian of the student to take him away.
9. That if the Board of Trustees persisted in their refusal to arraign and try Barnard, he (Branham) would publish the whole thing.⁴⁷

These charges echoed the key events that led to the trial, and as this controversy began to spread beyond the university community, newspapers across the South reported on it.

On March 14, two weeks after the trial, several newspapers across the state published detailed accounts of the Barnard situation. An article copied from the *Oxford Mercury* described in detail the attitude the people of Oxford held towards Barnard. It stated, “we have never seen so much feeling exhibited among our citizens as was shown on the streets Saturday. . .it amounts to a perfect storm of indignation against the northern born Professors.”⁴⁸ There the issue presented in the fourth charge was apparent. The entire trial was a sectional issue between North and South. A Tuscaloosa, Alabama

⁴⁶Sansing, *The University of Mississippi*, 96.

⁴⁷*Record of the Testimony and Proceedings, in the Matter of the Investigation by the Trustees of the University of Mississippi, on the 1st and 2nd of March, 1860, of the charges made by H. B. Branham, Against the Chancellor of the University*, Special Collections, The University of Mississippi Libraries, The University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS.

⁴⁸“The Irrepressible Conflict at the University of Mississippi,” *Vicksburg Whig*, Vicksburg, MS, March 14, 1860, 3.

newspaper gave a similar account in their March 31 issue, but took a far more positive outlook on Barnard. The article titled *The University of Mississippi*, focused on Barnard's place within Southern society. It declared that the accusations against Barnard rested on the Northern origin of his birth, and stated, "We see but little difference in principle between old Brown's raid upon Virginia and this attack upon a man merely because he is of northern birth."⁴⁹ These two articles show that the sectional tensions between North and South had penetrated the University of Mississippi, and both sides of the controversy recognized this. These tensions did not only appear in the newspapers which reported on the events, but also in the testimony of the trial itself.

The board of trustees questioned H. B. Branham in detail. They asked why he believed Barnard was against slavery and if he thought him to be a "Free Soiler."⁵⁰ Branham responded, "because he admitted negro testimony as circumstantial evidence against a student; because he wanted the University catalogue printed at the North. . . I never heard him make any remark, *pro* or *con* on the subject of slavery."⁵¹ Branham's assertion that silence on slavery was equal to an endorsement of abolitionism appears throughout the statements of those who testified against Barnard. J. M. Phipps, a Southern professor not associated with the accusations, almost echoed Branham directly. He commented that "I have known Dr. Barnard since 1854. I never heard him say anything about slavery, which showed that he was inimical to the institution."⁵² Beyond

⁴⁹"The University of Mississippi," *The Independent Monitor*, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, March 31, 1860, 2.

⁵⁰"Free Soilers" were members of the Free Soil Party. Examined in detail by Eric Foner in his book *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, Free Soilers were a group of anti-slavery individuals largely associated with the Democratic Whig Party.

⁵¹*Records of the Testimony*, 7.

⁵²*Records of the Testimony*, 8.

this, the testimony of Barnard's supporters showed that they too saw the claims of "unsound on slavery" and "abolitionist" to be one in the same. One of his supporters stated that he refused to comment on if Barnard was unsound on slavery, and that when he was asked if Barnard "was an abolitionist, I declined answering, because I thought the question an improper one."⁵³ To the Southern professors, Barnard's silence on slavery was an announcement of his resentment towards the institution, and even his supporters recognized the gravity of these claims. However, it was Richardson who made the clearest declaration of Barnard's true violation. When asked if he considered Barnard's acceptance of an enslaved woman's testimony proof that he was anti-slavery, Richardson stated, "I did not then regard this as an evidence of his unsoundness on that subject, but only as an objectionable act, and in violation of our social and political economies."⁵⁴ This declaration, despite its clear purpose of deflecting the question, provides the clearest explanation of the entire Barnard situation.

To the accusers, and many of the other Southern professors in the university community, Barnard's acceptance of an enslaved woman's testimony against a white student was a clear violation of the state's established cultural norms. However, these norms were not only part of the state's honor systems but were also entrenched in the systems of slavery and racial hierarchy that dominated Mississippi's culture. Historians of Southern honor describe Southern culture and its systems of societal expectations as often unrelated to slavery and race. However, through Richardson's statement about Mississippi's "social and political economies," this argument is brought into question.

⁵³Records of the Testimony, 11.

⁵⁴*Records of the Testimony*, 11.

The state's economic reliance on slavery was the issue many members of the Mississippi Secession Convention cited for their support of the state's secession, and Barnard's trial broadcasted those economic concerns in the months that preceded the convention.⁵⁵ The rhetoric of those who testified against Barnard made clear that the norms he violated were related more to the states' established racial hierarchy than the issues of honor and reputation. Through Barnard's own responses to these accusations, his internalization of this dichotomy becomes apparent.

Barnard began his defense with a reiteration of his place in Southern society. He declared, "I invite. . .an examination into the tenor of my past life. . .for the period of twenty-two years that I have spent in unwearied devotion to the cause of Southern education."⁵⁶ Here, much like in his response to Harper, Barnard tried to assert his position in Southern society and show that he was a devout member of the Southern cause. His response to the accusations regarding his position on slavery emphasized this same rhetoric. He insisted, "the question which concerns the Board and the public, is not, whether, on a particular occasion, I committed an error of judgement or not; but whether I do entertain the principles which it is sought by these charges to fasten upon me: and in regard to this I aver that I am as 'sound on the slavery question' as Dr. Branham, or any member of this board."⁵⁷ This bold statement served a dual purpose. First, it further cemented his argument that he was a devout Southerner. Secondly, it established him as an outspoken supporter of the region's central economic and cultural system, slavery.

⁵⁵Timothy B. Smith, *The Mississippi Secession Convention: Delegates and Deliberations in Politics and War, 1861-1865* (Jackson, MS: The University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 12-14.

⁵⁶*Records of the Testimony*, 4.

⁵⁷*Records of the Testimony*, 6.

Both of these pieces, without a doubt, were working to serve Barnard's balance wheel of class and power.

Ultimately, the results of the trial conflicted with the interpretation the larger community held of these events. The board cleared Barnard of all charges, stating that "we as Trustees and as Southern men have found our confidence in the ability and integrity of the Chancellor."⁵⁸ However, newspapers across the state questioned Barnard's place within Southern society. Barnard had secured the support of the Board, but in the weeks that followed their decision, Branham, Carter, and Richardson tendered their resignation as a final act of defiance.⁵⁹ Here the balance wheel was in full force. Though he claimed that slavery had no centrality to honor, the Barnard situation proves this false. To Barnard, the issue had rested on his reputation and place within Southern society, but to the professors who accused him, his position in Southern society was inseparable from his position on slavery. The issue was both one of honor and the racial norms of Southern society because the two concepts were inseparable to Barnard's accusers.

Following Mississippi's secession in 1861, Barnard left the University of Mississippi and returned North to Washington, D. C. where he worked on the United States Coastal Survey until taking the position of President at Columbia University in 1864.⁶⁰ Despite the Board's decision and Barnard's own assertions on his place in Southern society, it appears that his trial at the University of Mississippi made him feel

⁵⁸*Records of the Testimony*, 29.

⁵⁹Sansing, *The University of Mississippi*, 99.

⁶⁰Frederick A. P. Barnard, 1809-1889, "Presidential Profiles," Columbia University Archives, Columbia University, accessed November 2, 2020, https://library.columbia.edu/libraries/cuarchives/presidents/barnard_frederick.html.

unwelcome in the South. However, honor systems were not the only processes at play which caused these antebellum tensions to surface around Barnard. Despite the fact that many of those involved were unaware, the tensions of the Barnard Trial revolved around the cultural mechanisms of the South. At the heart of the issue was the creation of Mississippi's cultural memory of the Civil War era.

“Lo, the manhood of the South:” Southern Poetry and Mississippi’s Living Memory

At the same time in which F. A. P. Barnard endured his trial for abolitionism, elites across the South worked to create a vein of nationalism unique to the region. In the 1850s, poets and novelists across the South rushed to create a regional identity which stood in response to Northern authority.⁶¹ Barnard’s perceived uncertainty on slavery and his precarious position within Southern society came into direct contradiction with the establishment of this regional identity. The rhetoric presented in Southern poetry from throughout the Civil War era, which formed around an anti-union bias and a reverence for the Confederacy, creates a clear conflict between Barnard’s reality and the South many elite Southerners hoped to present.

As the secession crisis erupted into disunion and Barnard left Mississippi to return North, an anonymous poet declared

The pathway that leads to the Pharisee’s door
We remember, indeed, but we tread it no more;
Preferring to turn, with the Publican’s faith,
To the path through the valley and shadow of death!⁶²

⁶¹Coleman Hutchison, *Apples and Ashes: Literature, Nationalism, and the Confederate States of America* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2012), 2-8.

⁶²Farewell to Brother Jonathan,” in *Poetry of the Civil War*, ed. John Boyes (London: Arcturus, 2015) 98-99.

This poem, widely read at the time of its publication, served as a response to Oliver Wendell Holmes's poem "Brother Jonathan's Lament for Sister Caroline," where Holmes pleaded for the North and South to reconcile their differences and turn away from secession. The response, titled "Farewell to Brother Jonathan," represents the nationalist movement that swept the South as states began to secede from the Union. Its declaration that "we remember, indeed, but we tread it no more," made the assertion that these states, and in turn their growing nationalist identity, had no intention of giving up. Barnard's Northern birth would have put him in opposition to this growing national pride. At a time when Quitman railed against "Northern Secession mottoes" and faculty in-fighting at the University of Mississippi revolved around slavery, Barnard had become fundamentally incompatible with this growing sectional culture. The nationalist nature of this new Southern literature served to counter the abolitionist trends many Southerners claimed were present throughout Northern literature.⁶³ Therefore, the claim that Barnard was an abolitionist, or at the very least unsound on slavery, made him unwelcome in this growing cultural identity. The poetry of the South not only contained a strong anti-union bias, but a complete distaste and disconnection between North and South, and Barnard was incompatible with this nationalist culture. As the Civil War came to an end in 1865 and this nationalism evolved into an idealization of a bygone era, the memory of Barnard as an unwanted outsider was cemented in Mississippi's consciousness.

Despite the end of the Civil War and the beginning of Reconstruction, Southern nationalism, as one historian noted, "did not abate until well after Appomattox—and,

⁶³Hutchison, *Apples and Ashes*, 52-53

some might argue, until nearly one hundred years after that.”⁶⁴ As Barnard lived out the end of the Civil War and the decades that followed in the North, the South’s fledgling national identity gave way to a process of memorialization which crystalized Confederate nationalist ideology through the Lost Cause.⁶⁵ Southern poetry served as a pertinent example of this shifting rhetoric, and Mississippi itself provided two powerful masters of this trend, Abram Ryan and Sophia Graves Foxworth. Both of these poets wrote a great deal of Confederate-States-of-America focused poetry in the decades that followed the Civil War, and their poetry represents a clear effort to memorialize a stoic, loyal, and unquestionable Confederate man. A Confederate man in complete opposition to Barnard’s reality.

Abram Joseph Ryan was not a native-born Mississippian, but he spent much of his life prior to the war serving as a priest in a Catholic church in Perry County, Mississippi. Though he was a chaplain in the Confederate army from 1862 until the end of the war, he did not become renowned across the South for his poetry until Reconstruction. In 1866, he published two poems, “In Memoriam” and “The Conquered Banner” which led Southern nationalists and proponents of the Lost Cause to declare him both the “Poet Priest of the Confederacy” and the second “Poet Laureate of the Confederacy,” titles which the United Daughters of the Confederacy championed throughout the twentieth century.⁶⁶ However, another exemplary poem of Ryan’s was “C.

⁶⁴Hutchison, *Apples and Ashes*, 62.

⁶⁵David Blight details this process in his discussion on Lost Cause ideology forefather Edward A. Pollard. He explains that people like Pollard worked to cement C. S. A. ideals in Southern society.

⁶⁶“Abraham Joseph Ryan,” *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, ed. by Patricia L. Faust (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1986), 649.

S. A.”. Published in 1876, this six-stanza poem exalts the glory and honor of Confederate dead. From the beginning, the poem’s purpose is clear:

Do we weep for the heroes who died for us?
Who living were true and tried for us,
And dying sleep side by side for us;--
The Martyr-band
That hallowed our land
With the blood they shed in a tide for us.⁶⁷

Ryan's poem argued for the glorification and reverence of every Confederate soldier. In this process he also worked to continue the threads of Southern nationalism which “Farewell to Brother Jonathan” established.

Though these two poems paid tribute to two separate aspects of Confederate culture, their end goal was the same. “Farewell to Brother Jonathan” discussed the secession of the South and “C. S. A.” spoke of the sacrifice of Confederate soldiers, but they both aimed to preserve the political and social ideals presented in early Confederate nationalism. Ryan worked to bring this nationalism into the post-war era through Lost Cause ideology. The lines “we remember indeed but we tread it no more” from “Farewell to Brother Jonathan” and “the Martyr band” from “C. S. A.” show that the authors hoped to solidify both Southern ideals and Confederate nationalism. These lines left no room for doubt, questioning, or Southerners with uncertain loyalties. In other words, they left no room for men like Barnard.

However, these two poems could have been the exception, not the rule. “Farewell to Brother Jonathan” was a reaction to one of the South’s most politically charged historical events. In comparison, Ryan was a clear champion of Southern nationalism,

⁶⁷Abraham Joseph Ryan, “C. S. A.,” *Father Ryan’s Poems* Electronic Edition, Documenting the American South, accessed November 02, 2020, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/ryan/ryan.html>.

Confederate ideology, and the Lost Cause. His poem “C. S. A.” and its intense rhetoric was an obvious servant to those motivations. It could have been that the intense nature of these poems amplified the nationalist ideals Barnard contrasted. However, the poetry of Sophia Graves Foxworth shows that this Southern nationalism persisted in the minds of everyday citizens well into the late nineteenth-century. While her poems were not wide read at the time, they do show that the concepts of Southern reverence and solidarity were at least on her mind, and that these ideals had penetrated well into Southern society. Foxworth was a Mississippi native, born in Covington County, Mississippi, in the 1840s. In 1896, she published a collection of poetry titled *The Old Mansion, and Other Poems* which featured a large collection of original poetry.⁶⁸ Many of her poems focused on nature, but the titular poem, “The Old Mansion,” focused instead on the longing she felt for the Old South, and it told this story through the eyes of a personified aging plantation manner.

Uncharacteristic of Foxworth’s other poetry, “The Old Mansion” dealt with named battles, paternalistic slave narratives, and a longing for the return of fallen soldiers. The poem was also far longer than the others, many of which were a single stanza. “The Old Mansion” contained a total of thirty-six stanzas aimed at presenting an idealized Old South. The most apparent examples of this were stanzas twenty-six and twenty-seven, which read

But ere their wedding day, war’s dread alarms
The country filled and called its pride to arms—

⁶⁸Though her poetry was read little at the time of its initial publication, by the early 1900s and the memorial craze that came with it her works had become favorites of local United Daughters of the Confederacy chapters, local preachers, and local Confederate preservationists. Many of her poems appeared in U.D.C. programs and newspaper articles focused on the preservation of confederate culture. (See the March 1, 1926 issue of the *Daily Mississippian Clarion and Standard* for one such example).

Then he as captain went to lead the brave
Who gallant fought their sunny land to save.

No fairer morn e'er dawned than on the day
The noble sons in uniform of gray,
Their mother kissed and left this very door
To face the foe and cannon's deadly roar.⁶⁹

The language used in this poem was far different than the other two, but its core rhetoric remained the same. Though "C. S. A." focused on the martyred Confederate dead, and "The Old Mansion" focused more on feelings of remembrance, both worked to memorialize a shining Confederate hero. Graves's poetry shows that the stories of heroism and Confederate reverence existed in the minds of common Mississippians in the first decades after the war, and, in turn, that they struggled to understand Barnard's place in their memorialized Southern society.

These three poems exemplified the Mississippi's interaction with the Southern nationalist identity and its transformation into a prominent memorialization of the Civil War. They also help show that Barnard's experience in 1850's Mississippi was not unusual. It is doubtless that many Northern-born men who lived for decades in the South experienced criticisms and attacks from within their communities as the tensions between North and South grew, despite the fact that they were well accepted in the years prior. As the South formed its national identity, it created one in perpetual conflict with the North. As the fleeting moment that was the Confederacy dissolved into romanticism, the Lost Cause molded that nationalism into a memory of the Civil War era which championed only a perfect, loyal Southerner. It created a South in prideful opposition to the North and

⁶⁹Sophia Graves Foxworth, "The Old Mansion," *The Old Mansion and Other Poems* (Buffalo, NY: The Peter Paul Book Company, 1896), 30.

a Southern man, whether politician or soldier, loyal and dedicated to the Southern cause. Barnard's trial labeled him as a race traitor and an abolitionist in a time when the South fought to defend slavery, and as he returned North those early memory formations cemented him as a dissenter. Because of this, Southerners viewed Barnard as a Northern invader well into the twentieth century.

“Temperamental and Sensitive:” Allen Cabaniss and F. A. P. Barnard

In 1949, historian Allen Cabaniss wrote one of the first twentieth-century histories of the University of Mississippi, aptly titled *A History of the University of Mississippi*. In 1971, he released an almost identical second printing with a modified title, *The University of Mississippi: Its First Hundred Years*. These two books served as a juxtaposition of historical analysis and memorialization. Cabaniss was a lifelong Southerner, Presbyterian minister, and historian of religion who worked at the University of Mississippi from the early 1940s until his retirement in 1970.⁷⁰ Cabaniss researched the university's history to an exhaustive extent and revealed details about its early board of trustees and obscure events from its past. It was when his research met his interpretation of the university's Civil War era that he shifted from analysis to memorialization.

Cabaniss's interpretation of F. A. P. Barnard shows just how much Mississippi's memorialization of the Civil War influenced his twentieth-century writing. Barnard received a total of twenty-one index entries in the book, with a total of thirty-six pages

⁷⁰“Biographical Note,” The Allen Cabaniss Collection, Special Collections, The University of Mississippi, accessed November 2, 2020, <https://libraries.olemiss.edu/specialcollections/pages/finding-aids/mum00059/>.

focused on the former chancellor.⁷¹ These covered the expanse of his career, but Cabaniss's analysis seemed divided and uncertain. At his introduction of Barnard, Cabaniss described Barnard's, "extensive scientific learning, increasing fame, incredible Yankee energy, bitter sensitiveness to criticism, and unfortunate ability for making enemies."⁷² Here Cabaniss commended Barnard's dedication, but condemned his sensitive and fiery nature, and Cabaniss seemed conflicted in his writing on how he hoped to interpret Barnard. These two aspects of his interpretation fought against one another throughout *A History of the University of Mississippi*. During his discussion of modernization at the University, Cabaniss stated that Barnard had the commendable goal of "making it something more than a mere college of liberal arts, in fact making it a true university of all learning."⁷³ Still, he ended on a negative note, describing Barnard as "A Northern man, an ardent Unionist, temperamental and sensitive about his own importance, he made an illustrious achievement at the University."⁷⁴ Despite Cabaniss's own concessions that Barnard labored to improve the university, his final note was on Barnard's reputation and personality. The conclusions he drew were the very same criticisms H. B. Branham aimed at Barnard during the trial. Cabaniss's chief criticisms of Barnard conflicted with the statements made during the Harper controversy and his trial. Cabaniss described him as an "ardent unionist" despite often citing the trial records, sometimes the exact page, in which Barnard described himself as a "true Southerner."⁷⁵ It

⁷¹Allen Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi: Its First Hundred Years* (Hattiesburg, MS: University and College Press of Mississippi, 1971), 201.

⁷²Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi*, 32

⁷³Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi*, 40.

⁷⁴Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi*, 54.

⁷⁵Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi*, 171.

is certain through his language towards Harper and in the trial that Barnard was a passionate, and perhaps at times unpleasant individual, but what is key is that Cabaniss chose to focus on those aspects of Barnard's life and use them as evidence of Barnard's uncertain loyalties.

There are a number of things that might have led to Cabaniss's skewed interpretation of Barnard's past. The nationalist ideology of the South, Southern honor systems, or the processes of Lost Cause memorialization which swept across the country as Cabaniss wrote *A History of the University of Mississippi* could have all contributed to his interpretation of Barnard. By the time Cabaniss wrote about Barnard, Confederate nationalism had evolved into the Lost Cause and permeated the minds and memories of many white Southerners. Though Cabaniss's writings were not part of the Confederate or Southern literature which one historian noted "was an essential vehicle for Confederate nationalism," that same rhetoric influenced him on every level.⁷⁶ Cabaniss did not explore the idea that Barnard could have been Southern in mind, but Northern in origin, because the monolithic image of the Civil War era South had permeated his cultural consciousness.

It could have also been Cabaniss's conceptualizations of manhood and gentility which influenced his interpretation of Barnard. A key aspect of Southern honor systems is the importance of stoicism, dignity, and chivalry within the elite, an idea which Cabaniss seems to admire. Stoicism was often key to defining manhood and reputation, especially in correspondence with how Southern gentility reacted to criticisms.⁷⁷ Beyond

⁷⁶Hutchinson, *Apples and Ashes*, 3.

⁷⁷Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 108-109.

the concept of stoicism, Southern elites were often expected to behave within the confines of traditional chivalry, with this expectation engrained in them from a very young age, and while it is certain that many Southern white men failed to live up to these standards of stoic chivalry, it is also certain that these ideals were present within the culture.⁷⁸ This system could have influenced Cabaniss's understanding of what made a Southern man in the 1850s, an idea Barnard clearly failed to uphold. However, the very period in which Barnard was reacting with a "temperamental and sensitive" nature was also the time in which a Southerner physically assaulted a Radical Republican for criticizing slavery.⁷⁹ This conflicts with Cabaniss's reality. However, if what was called stoicism and chivalry was instead a romanticized view of honor, the Lost Cause could have changed modern perception of that system.

There are, however, other memory mechanisms which could have influenced Cabaniss's perception of Barnard. David Blight describes his conceptualizations of Civil War memorialization in three terms: reconciliationist, white supremacist, and emancipationist.⁸⁰ However, it is important to note that these reconciliation systems were not perfect, and as Caroline Janney points out, reconciliation was rarely complete process.⁸¹ Though Blight explains that White Supremacists and Reconciliationists often "locked arms. . .and by the turn of the century delivered the country a segregated memory

⁷⁸Genovese, "The Chivalrie Tradition of the Old South," 191-201.

⁷⁹Joanne B. Freeman, *The Field of Blood: Violence in Congress and the Road to Civil War* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018), 188-190. Freeman details that the caning of Charles Sumner, when pro-slavery legislator Preston Brooks assaulted Radical Republican and Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner, represented the violent nature of Antebellum politics.

⁸⁰David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2001), 1-2.

⁸¹Caroline Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 9-10.

of its Civil War on Southern terms,” Janney points to a very different aspect of Civil War memorialization which could have also influenced Cabaniss.⁸² She shows that “to Confederates, ‘Yankee’ was a foul word that came to symbolize money-grubbing, self-righteous, cold hearted abolitionists bent on destroying all that was good in America,” and this idea certainly aligns with the common opinions on Barnard both during and after the war.⁸³ It is difficult to know what aspect of memorialization from the early to mid-twentieth century might have influenced Cabaniss’s early life and caused him to view Barnard in opposition to the South. However, it is undeniable that he was viewing Barnard’s career through the Lost Cause, which many white Southerners made constant use in subtle and overt ways within their memorialization efforts. From stone memorials and museums to community histories and education programs, the Lost Cause transformed and shifted to best fit the needs of its most fervent supporters throughout the twentieth century. Lost Cause proponents sought to “write and control the history,” and they wrote a history in which the Civil War was not fought over slavery and the entire South was in opposition to the entire North.⁸⁴ It is this Lost Cause memorialization of Barnard which Cabaniss presented in *A History of the University of Mississippi*, not the complicated and conflicted reality.

Cabaniss’s characterization of Barnard as quick tempered and reactionary was not wrong. It is undeniable that Barnard was a passionate and fiery individual, but it was Cabaniss’s characterization of him as a Northern man which Barnard would have argued against. In the 1850s and early 1860s, Barnard saw himself as an assimilated Southerner,

⁸²Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 2.

⁸³Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 12.

⁸⁴Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 259.

but by the time Cabaniss wrote *A History of the University of Mississippi*, the memorialization of Barnard's time at the university had placed him in total opposition to the South. When Cabaniss set out to write his history of the university, he likely meant it to be an unbiased historical approach, but biases are impossible to escape. The three mechanisms which shaped the state's understanding of the Civil War certainly influence all of Cabaniss's writings on Barnard. Southern nationalism, Southern honor, and the Lost Cause influenced Cabaniss's interpretation of Barnard at every moment.

Conclusions: Silenced with Fury

Three threads connected every moment of both Barnard's career and its memorialization: Southern honor systems, Confederate nationalism, and Lost Cause ideology. However, the key aspect which spurred F. A. P. Barnard's trial was race. The university placed Barnard on trial for accepting the testimony of an enslaved woman over that of a white student, and, despite his protestations, his position in Southern society rested on his interpretation of Mississippi's racial hierarchy. In turn, white Mississippians silenced the memory of Barnard's career in Mississippi because it did not align with the states established cultural systems. Mississippians, both during the Civil War era and in the New South, could not reconcile Barnard as a Southerner and Barnard as a man in possible opposition to slavery. This issue of racial hierarchy, however, placed Barnard's reality into conflict with Southern honor systems.

Though the ideals of Confederate nationalism and Civil War memorialization apply to Barnard in clear and concise ways, classical Southern Honor does not. That does not mean his ideas of Southern Honor do not apply to Barnard, and they, in fact, at times

apply more so than any other. Barnard's trial undeniably rested on both race and honor, despite the fact that historians of Southern honor asserted that the two were often separate ideals entirely. For Barnard and Branham, honor was equal parts racial hierarchy, recognition, and reputation. This understanding of honor explains why Barnard's reputation did not rest on his achievements at the university but instead his stance on slavery. The contradictory nature of Barnard's stance within typical Southern honor systems points to historian Eric Hobsbawm's assertion that traditions often came from a process where, "a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designs, producing new ones."⁸⁵ This flexible model for not just Southern honor but all of human culture not only explains the contradictory nature of much of Barnard's story, but its solidification into a silenced memory. Lost Cause ideology carefully manipulated Southern honor in order to exalt Southern soldiers while downplaying the racial dichotomies that formed the system.⁸⁶ Though many historians claim Southern honor did not rest on racial tensions, Barnard shattered that claim. In fact, his memory was silenced because honor, reputation, and Southern heroism conflicted with the racially tinged reality.

Cabaniss memorialized a version of Barnard's past that remained the standard for decades. The second printing of his book in 1971 was the last history of the University of Mississippi published until David Sansing's *The University of Mississippi: A Sesquicentennial History* in 1999. For more than fifty years, Cabaniss's characterization of Barnard as a temperamental and sensitive Northerner remained the standard. Not only

⁸⁵Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition* ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 4.

⁸⁶Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 78-80.

did the accusations of Branham, Carter, and Richardson mold Cabaniss's understanding, but so did the mechanisms that transformed Barnard's memory after he left Mississippi. Though much of the University of Mississippi might have moved on from Barnard's trial and accepted the board of trustees' decision, parts of the community continued to remember him as a Northern invader who had come to corrupt the minds of their young people with his abolitionist rhetoric. As nationalist ideology formed around the fledgling Confederate States of America, as that nationalism gave way to an enduring memorialization of Confederate culture, and as memorialization molded views on Southern honor, Barnard's past was transformed into an event which aligned with the state's interpretation of the war. The tide of memory washed away any other part of his past. While Cabaniss did make some mention of Barnard's work to modernize the university, much of his analysis hinged on the fact that Barnard was a temperamental, Northern man, despite the fact that Barnard spent his entire career in Mississippi fighting that notion. The silencing of Barnard's memory came in the form of a constant and powerful amplification of one aspect of his memory in the favor of another. The memory of Barnard the modernizer faded in favor of Barnard the political dissenter, race traitor, and abolitionist. Cabaniss's *A History of the University of Mississippi* shows how powerful that silencing was.

As Cabaniss wrote what would unwittingly become the longest lasting twentieth-century memorialization of one of the University of Mississippi's most infamous chancellors, Jones County, Mississippi was fighting over the interpretation of another infamous Mississippian. A little over two hundred miles away dueling interpretations of Newt Knight, Mississippi's most infamous dissenter, came into existence in the mid-

twentieth century. However, Barnard and Knight had more in common than their status within twentieth-century Mississippi culture. Knight's position in Southern society, much like Barnard's, rested on his racial dissent and how it interacted with honor, manhood, and Civil War memory.

CHAPTER III - A TRAITOR TWICE OVER: THE TRANSFORMED MEMORY OF
NEWT KNIGHT

“One of the most powerful stresses collective memory is expected to assuage is, of course, the stress of war.”

-Michael Kreyling

Deep in the Mississippi Piney Woods, far removed from the conflict Fredrick Augustus Porter Barnard faced at the University of Mississippi, the whispers of civil war started to penetrate the thicket of Jones County, Mississippi in 1861. Those whispers turned into shouts as class and social conflicts swept across south Mississippi, and by 1863 parts of Jones County had entered into open conflict with the Confederate States of America. Newton Knight, a man whose reputation far outgrew him in the twentieth century, led this organized opposition to Confederate rule in a county which became known as “The Free State of Jones.” Throughout the twentieth century, as the Southern white identity formed around the oppression of African Americans, Knight gained a public reputation as a dual traitor. By standing against the Confederacy, critics argued, Knight had betrayed his home. By taking an African American common-law wife, he had betrayed his race. Knight's status as a dual traitor created controversy over his memory, but the battle for the *memory* of the Free State of Jones was not fought in the swamps of Jones County, but instead on the written page. Jones County citizens attempted to distance themselves from the negative aspects of Knight and his family, and in turn simplified his memory at every chance, amplifying the perceived negatives in a way that wiped out a large part of his past.

Piney Woods Revolution: A Short History of the Free State of Jones

In her seminal work *The Free State of Jones: Mississippi's Longest Civil War*, Victoria Bynum establishes a clear and comprehensive timeline of the Free State of Jones story, and that timeline is integral to this chapter. In order for the conflicting narratives around Knight's memorialization to be clear, this work must first establish the past. The story of the Free State of Jones incident was a layered and complex part of Jones County's Civil War era history, and a basic timeline will help clarify the transformative nature of these local histories.

Knight never held slaves in his life, but he was born into a family with a history of slave ownership. The Knight family eventually became divided on the topic of slavery, with parts of the family owning slaves, while others resisted becoming involved in the institution. Newt Knight, however, remained firmly on the nonslaveholding side of the issue and lived as a well-established yeoman farmer throughout the war.⁸⁷ With these lines of tensions established within the family, as the Civil War spread, it engulfed them in a way that echoed throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Seventh Battalion, Mississippi Infantry, in which many members of the Jones County community fought, saw combat at the Battle of Corinth in October 1862 and the Vicksburg Campaign of May through July 1863.⁸⁸ The trauma of combat, Confederate conscription policies (which seemed to favor planters), and the growing economic crises

⁸⁷Victoria E. Bynum, *The Free State of Jones: Mississippi's Longest Civil War* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University Press of North Carolina, 2001), 63-66. The timeline established by Bynum in this work is integral to this chapter and is discussed at length. While Bynum has written articles expanding on the Free State of Jones story, and other monographs have tackled the topic, such as Sally Jenkins and John Stauffer's *The State of Jones*, this chapter focuses on the timeline established by Bynum in *The Free State of Jones*.

⁸⁸Bynum, *The Free State of Jones*, xx.

on the Mississippi homefront led to many soldiers in the Seventh deserting and returning home. Many of these men became embroiled in a local conflict that by late 1863 “exploded into full-scale rebellion. . .when a number of Jones County deserters organized and armed themselves into a deadly fighting force.”⁸⁹ As local Jones and Covington countians grew disgruntled with Confederate policy, most notably the “Twenty Slave Law” which allowed Mississippians who owned twenty or more slaves to avoid conscription, Newt Knight became the leader of a band of dissenters which grew in numbers and came into open conflict with local Confederate forces. This decision to dissent against the Confederate government became a highly divided decision, both during the war and after it, and started Knight down a road which transformed Jones County.

By April 1864, the conflict between Confederate forces and the Knight band turned violent, with Colonel Robert Lowry’s cavalry company as their opponents. In the grand narrative of the Free State of Jones, Lowry, a Jones countian himself, became posed as the primary villain, representing not only the Confederate government but also the local Jones County community members who resented Knight’s band of deserters.⁹⁰ Unsurprisingly, another major force opposing the Knight band was the Confederate national government. Early on in the group’s existence national leaders in the Confederate government had taken notice of Newt Knight and his band of dissenters. Bynum explains that Confederate leaders saw the band as “both outlaws and unionists,” who represented the larger threat desertion held towards the Southern war effort.⁹¹ These

⁸⁹Bynum, *Free State of Jones*, 94.

⁹⁰Bynum, *Free State of Jones*, 116-117.

⁹¹Bynum, *Free State of Jones*, 118.

military and political oppositions characterized the conflict between the Knight band and Confederate authorities, but the time period of armed combat was short. In 1865 the Civil War ended, and so too did the combat efforts of Knight's deserter band. However, the battle for the memory of those events continues to this day.

The personal memorialization of Newt Knight "the man" often played a major part in this memorial war. However, another figure who often took center stage next to Knight was his wife, Rachel. Rachel Knight was an enslaved woman bought by Newt Knight's brother in the mid-1850s, who eventually became intertwined with the Free State of Jones story and the common law wife of Knight.⁹² Two aspects of Rachel Knight's life, her racial identity, and her relationship with Newt Knight, became key points of contention for many Jones Countians. Rachel and Newt Knight's marriage would have been illegal by every standard in nineteenth-century Mississippi, both because Newt was already married to Serena Knight and because of the laws prohibiting interracial marriages, but although their marriage was an "open secret," no formal action was ever taken against them.⁹³ By the era of Jim Crow rule her relationship with Knight, her race, and the race of her descendants became an important discussion within the community as local leaders barred her descendants from attending white schools.⁹⁴ This conflict over her ethnicity led to the 1948 miscegenation trial of Davis Knight, and in turn the renewed attention on Newt Knight and his story.

Davis Knight was the great-grandson of Rachel Knight, and the racial identity of his great-grandmother created an uproar of concern when it was discovered he had

⁹²Bynum, *Free State of Jones*, 86.

⁹³Bynum, *Free State of Jones*, 144-145.

⁹⁴Bynum, *Free State of Jones*, 144-145.

married a white woman, in turn violating Mississippi's long standing "one drop rule," which stated that individuals with any amount of African American ancestry could not marry whites.⁹⁵ Though the debate over Newt Knight's past actions had existed in the area for decades, the Davis Knight trial renewed focus on Newt Knight and his descendants and created a boom of interest around him, his past, and his violation of Mississippi social norms. Between 1920 and 1951 four major versions of the Newt Knight story were published, and through a careful look at each of these, the shifting efforts to silence Knight's memory become apparent.

A Shifting Legend: The Retellings of the New Knight Story

The story of Newt Knight's life was the subject of intense scrutiny from the Jones County Community. In the twentieth-century community historians released four major versions of the legend, and each re-examined Knight's past in their own ways. Meig Frost's 1921 interview with Newt Knight, Tom Knight's 1934 biography of Newt Knight, James Street's 1942 novel *Tap Roots*, and Ethel Knight's 1951 book *The Echo of the Black Horn*, each served as a snapshot of how the memory of Newt Knight and the Free State of Jones evolved throughout the twentieth century as the tensions between white and black Mississippians worsened. However, these histories are not only snapshots of their decade's interpretation of Knight. Instead, they are each part of an evolving narrative of memory, social upheaval, and white resistance that shows the way in which the dissent of one man, both politically and racially, was representative of the intense upheaval and unease in Jones County.

⁹⁵Bynum, *Free State of Jones*, 1-2.

Performed not long before Knight's death, Frost's extensive interview with him laid the foundations for many of the wide spanning public narratives which surrounded Knight in the early twentieth century. Frost began with a romantic description of Knight and painted him as a stoic figure. "Testimony of men now living, or men long dead, has been taken for and against him. Frugal of speech, he has gone his way through the years, careless of what men said of him in the outside world into which he ventures rarely. In simplicity primeval he has lived, as in primeval simplicity he will die."⁹⁶ Here, Frost described Knight as a reclusive, solitary woodsmen undisturbed by the meaningless arguments of those that surrounded him. These characteristics are present in later versions of the story, but these defining representations of the stoic version of Knight was not the only parts of his story Frost established.

Most notably, he established early on the conflicting nature of Knight's memorialization within the Jones County community. The interviewer stated that supporters of Knight and his band of deserters thought of them as, "owning no slaves, believing in the Union of Abraham Lincoln," and that those who were "staunch Confederates" thought of the group as composed of, "bushwhacking deserters."⁹⁷ Later versions of the story did not address this dual interpretation, but each one of them were created in reaction to it. One descendant of a Knight band member described the commonplace nature of these stories "of gathering, and whether you hated or loved Newt

⁹⁶Meigs O. Frost, "South's Strangest 'Army' Revealed by Chief: Newt Knight Aged Leader Speaks After Fifty Years," in *The Life and Activities of Captain Newt Knight and His Company and the Free state of Jones County* by Tom Knight (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1934), 101.

⁹⁷Frost, "South's Strangest," 101.

depended on if he robbed or helped your family.”⁹⁸ While this duality is one of the most powerful influences on the community histories, the interview also established many of the other most common aspects of Knight’s story.

Newt Knight himself named the band of dissenters the Free State of Jones, stating ““They used to call Jones County, Mississippi, the Free State of Jones. . .that started a lot of stories about the county.”⁹⁹ These stories, he explained, centered not on whether there was ever an uprising in the county, but instead if it actually seceded from the Confederacy. This conversation on the accuracy of Jones County’s status as a “Free State” served as a key point of analysis for both the community histories and the legend’s earliest modern historians.¹⁰⁰ Another important point was the mention of the twenty-slave law. Knight stated, ““then the rebels passed the Twenty-Negro Law. . .Jasper Collins was a close friend of mine. When he heard about that law. . .he threw down his gun and started home. This Law, he says to me, makes it a rich man’s war and a poor man’s fight.”¹⁰¹ Though stereotypical, this rhetoric of “a poor man’s fight,” shows both how Knight and his men were tiring of Confederate politics and the treatment of their homes, and how that war weariness led to their desertion. The other community histories mentioned the twenty-slave law, and it served as the core explanation for the dissention of Knight and his men for most of them. A little over a decade later, in Tom Knight’s

⁹⁸Oral History with Janice Kervin, Performed by Author, The Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage, The University of Southern Mississippi.

⁹⁹Frost, “South’s Strangest,” 106.

¹⁰⁰Both James Street and Ethel Knight state that though Jones County never seceded legally, it was certainly a social secession for those involved. However, Rudy Leverett, one of the first professional historians to write on the Free State of Jones, claimed it never truly seceded. In his 1984 book *The Legend of the Free State of Jones*, he argued no secession ever actually occurred, echoing semantic arguments common in efforts to deflect the difficult parts of Newt Knight’s memory.

¹⁰¹Frost, “South’s Strangest,” 107.

biography of his father, the Jones County community had amplified the ideas presented in this interview.

From the beginning Tom Knight described his father in a way that far surpassed the honorific tone of Meigs Frost. Tom Knight stated that Newt Knight was “one of the greatest men that ever lived for his hospitality and kindness he showed the poor women and their little children during the war.”¹⁰² This statement alone speaks volumes about how he and those within the community who saw Newt Knight as a hero understood the Free State of Jones. Southern white male Mississippians of the Civil War era often saw reputation as tied to their dedication to their community. This was hard wired into manhood in the South, and this fact helps explain the duality of Knight’s memory.¹⁰³ This idea of dedication helps explain why those who saw Knight as a hero saw him as a defender of their community, and those who saw him as a coward considered him a traitor to his home. Tom Knight labored to create an air of reverence around his father that counteracted Newt Knight’s detractors and cast him as Jones County’s own folk hero.

Tom Knight wrote to dismantle what he saw as false accusations against his father and a muddled history of Jones County. He claimed “I know and there are hundreds of others who know there was not a more peaceable man to be found than my father. He stayed at home attending to his own business unless he had business away from

¹⁰²Tom Knight, *The Life and Activities of Captain Newt Knight and His Company and the Free state of Jones County* (Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, 1934) 1.

¹⁰³Dora L. Costa and Matthew Kahn, *Heroes and Cowards: The Social Face of War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 13. These ideas are also examined in detail by historians of Southern honor such as Bertram Wyatt-Brown and Eugene Genovese.

home.”¹⁰⁴ Here he hoped to represent his father as a strong and honorable man dedicated to his family and his community. In his discussion of the twenty-slave law Tom Knight once again focused on his father’s dedication to his home. He explained that after the passage of the law, Newt Knight “went to his captain and asked for a furlough, and he and Jasper Collins came back home. They found that the confederate army had been all through Jones County destroying everything they could.”¹⁰⁵ To Tom Knight, his father’s desertion was only tangential to the twenty-slave law, and the heart of the issue was in the condition he found his home when he returned on furlough.

Much of the destruction Tom Knight described came from Confederate raids the army used to both resupply their forces and prevent supplies from falling into Union hands.¹⁰⁶ He described them as leaving families without food to eat, crops to tend, or clothes for their children, arguing “think of this before you say hard things about Newt Knight and his company and ask yourself if any red-blooded man could stand for such conduct and not resent it.”¹⁰⁷ To Tom Knight, and likely to all of those who considered Newt Knight a hero, it was not a matter of disdain for the Confederate government but instead a matter of dedication to his community and a stoic integrity that made him a hero. Integrity was a trait that many considered mandatory for respectable and honorable Southerners, often seen as a long-standing tradition passed to them by their Scots-Irish ancestors.¹⁰⁸ This idea of stoic integrity influenced how individuals like Meigs Frost and

¹⁰⁴Tom Knight, *The Life and Activities*, 12.

¹⁰⁵Tom Knight, *The Life and Activities*, 22.

¹⁰⁶Timothy B. Smith, *Mississippi in the Civil War: The Home Front* (Jackson, MS: The University Press of Mississippi, 2010), 78-80.

¹⁰⁷Tom Knight, *The Life and Activities*, 59.

¹⁰⁸Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor*, 38.

Tom Knight not only saw Newt Knight, but how they defended him against those who spoke against him. However, absent from both the 1922 interview and Tom Knight's account was a crucial piece of the Knight story. As racial tensions in the South began to intensify, Newt Knight's violation of the community's racial norms became the center of discussion. And, despite the fictionalized version of the story presented in James Street's *Tap Roots*, that thread of racial norm violation appeared in force.

In 1942 James Street published the historical novel *Tap Roots*, which told the story of the Dabney family in fictional Lebanon County, Mississippi. Initially Street denied that Knight and Jones County served as the historical basis for the story, claiming that he only saw Knight as a rebellious inspiration at most.¹⁰⁹ However, by the ninth printing released in early 1951, Street claimed a more direct influence. He referenced the widespread nature of Confederate dissent in an address directly to the reader stating, "It may surprise some of you to read that the South had many Unionists, Abolitionists and slavery haters. . . .The idea that the South rose to a man to defend Dixie is a stirring legend. . .and nothing more."¹¹⁰ Street recited much of the rhetoric seen in both the 1922 interview and Tom Knight's version of the story. His reliance on these community histories was not just in his personal understanding of the Civil War, but also in the content of his story. He explains, "Perhaps the most famous Free State, however, was Jones County, Mississippi, where I was reared. And the history of Jones County is the basis for this book."¹¹¹ He went on to state that though he changed many facts and took

¹⁰⁹Bynum, *Free State of Jones*, 2.

¹¹⁰James Street, *Tap Roots* (New York, NY: Dial Press, Ninth Printing, 1951), 9.

¹¹¹Street, *Tap Roots*, 9.

liberties, the legend of Newt Knight and his band of dissenters was undeniably the basis for *Tap Roots*.

The character of Hoab Dabney served as Street's metaphor for Knight. Throughout the book James presented Hoab in a way that drew direct parallels to Tom Knight's interpretation of Newt Knight. Hoab was a white Southerner who was never anti-South, but instead was an anti-North unionist who wanted a peaceable resolution. Hoab, when asked if he believed the South could have prevented secession, stated, "Most assuredly I do. . .if we can just keep fools like Harriet Beecher Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher quiet."¹¹² Here Hoab appeared as a unionist only interested in protecting his home, not in Southern submission to what he saw as an increasingly abolitionist North. While Street does characterize his representation of Knight as a unionist, he also shows him here to be a man tired of Northern intervention on Southern matters. Beyond this representation of Knight as Southern minded, Street also presented him as a heroic figure worthy of reverence

He characterized Hoab throughout the book as a stoic warrior, slow to violence but unrelenting in his protection of his home and his people. In an effort to solidify this representation, Street had Hoab wounded during a battle with Confederate cavalry near the end of the book, and the moment is treated as one of heroic martyrdom, with Hoab fighting off advancing Confederates with an empty rifle. In the fight he swung the rifle and "crushed a skull, then swung again and missed, and the stock of the rifle was shattered against a tree. He used the barrel as a club and waded among his enemies," allowing his men to escape fire and regroup before he returned to them, collapsing from

¹¹²Street, *Tap Roots*, 242-243.

his injuries.¹¹³ While this masculine hero can largely be attributed to the traditional figure of the hero often present in Southern literature from the twentieth century, it is also undeniable that Hoab's heroism was at least partly inspired by Street's own opinion on Knight.¹¹⁴ Throughout *Tap Roots* Hoab served as a vehicle through which Street presented his own idealized version of Knight, and it was one that was a stoic, heroic Southerner.

These points, however, were not the only thing that revealed Street's understanding of the Free State of Jones, and Hoab Dabney was not his only metaphorical vehicle. Instead, the Lebanon County community existed as a separate character throughout the book, and in turn served as Street's representation of Jones County during the Free State of Jones incident. Street explained his understanding of the citizens of Jones County who joined Knight with the same "poor man's fight" rhetoric present in both the 1922 interview and Tom Knight's story.¹¹⁵ This was apparent throughout Street's discussion of the relationship between slavery and poor whites. Often using Hoab Dabney as a vehicle for this discussion, Street characterized the poor and yeoman farmers of Lebanon County as disconnected from the idea of slavery and often wholly opposed to it. He wrote that "a slow and careful thinker, Hoab reasoned that the poor whites of the South would vote slavery out if given an opportunity."¹¹⁶ Street presented this anti-slavery stance throughout the book not as a feeling of hatred for the

¹¹³Street, *Tap Roots*, 556.

¹¹⁴The idea of the "figure" of the Southern hero is laid out by Michael Kreyling in his 1987 book *Figure of the Hero in Southern Narrative*. He explains it as a masculine, stoic, paternal embodiment of a perceived Southern past.

¹¹⁵Street, *Tap Roots*, 10.

¹¹⁶Street, *Tap Roots*, 31.

injustice of slavery among the citizens of Lebanon County, but instead as an understanding of slavery's role in increasing poverty among poor and middling whites.¹¹⁷

In turn, Hoab Dabney served as *Tap Roots*' stand-in for Knight, a strong and fiercely loyal hero, and Lebanon County served as its version of Jones County, a community of poor whites and yeomen farmers opposed to the idea of slavery. It is apparent from Street's discussion of his upbringing in Jones County that early community histories influenced his interpretation of the Free State of Jones on every level. However, the most important element of Knight's story which Street addressed was the story of Rachel Knight and Newt Knight's racial dissent. Though published only a decade after Tom Knight's biography of Newt Knight, it is clear that the rising racial tensions of the mid-twentieth century had influenced Street.¹¹⁸ Throughout *Tap Roots*, Street's concerns surrounding the racial elements of the Free State story manifested in two key ways: constant references to abolitionism, and the character Kyd, who served as Rachel Knight's stand-in.

The first of these points, the topic of abolitionism, served as Street's method for deflecting Knight's dissentious acts. He casts the Dabney family as entirely anti-slavery abolitionists who also intensely opposed Northern intervention. The most apparent example of this characterization is Hoab Dabney's monologue on John Brown's raid in Harper's Ferry. One of Hoab's children brings the news to him that Brown had attacked the armory and Hoab reacts calling him a fool. Hoab stated, "If he strikes in the South

¹¹⁷Both Charles Bolton and Keri Leigh Merritt show that many poor whites were aware that slavery led to their increased poverty.

¹¹⁸In *The Making of Whiteness*, Grace Elizabeth Hale established that by the 1940s the "white identity" was firmly established as one in total opposition to blacks and the ideology of racial hierarchy and segregation was firmly entrenched in Southern society.

it'll set the [abolitionist] cause back ten years. He's playing into the hands of the slavers. Don't those Yankee idiots know anything? One Yankee bullet will mold the South into a clan—slavers, abolitionists, rich and poor.”¹¹⁹ Here it is clear that Street saw Knight as a devout Southerner who opposed slavery but believed that Southerners themselves should best handle its dismantling. Whether or not this was a representation of Street's personal understanding of Knight's personality, or if it was instead an effort to deflect claims that he was an ally to African Americans was unclear. However, it is certain that the Knight family's understanding of race, slavery, and ethnicity was undoubtedly on Street's mind as he wrote.

A clear example of this was in Street's character Kyd. Kyd was characterized early on in the book as a woman of unclear ethnicity, described as “among the exiled Acadians who fled to Louisiana and spilled over, eventually into the swamps of the Lebanon county. Trappers and fishermen and small farmers, they were lusty people, and clannish.”¹²⁰ This representation of Kyd as an Acadian creole is characteristic of the twentieth-century attempts of Mississippians to create distance between themselves and mixed-race individuals. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries white Americans began a process of defining racial identities into more concrete, absolute categories, and created degrees of separation between these groups. This characterization of Kyd as a creole represented the community's understanding of Rachel Knight's real-life ethnicity. Before the end of the 1940s, her ethnicity became the subject of a great deal of scrutiny, as Jones Countians argued over if she was a “Creole, an Indian, or just a

¹¹⁹Street, *Tap Roots*, 48.

¹²⁰Street, *Tap Roots*, 17.

regular Negro woman.”¹²¹ It was obvious that Street’s representation of Kyd as a creole woman of uncertain ethnicity was representative of the Jones County community’s early understandings of Rachel Knight’s ethnic identity, and this fact became even more apparent in the later sections of the book.

Throughout the book, Street hinted at Kyd’s true ethnicity, despite her early establishment as a creole. In the end he revealed that Kyd was not only a creole from Louisiana, but also descended from slaves with known African heritage. However, the weight of this reveal was not in her ethnicity, but Hoab’s relationship with her. Hoab and Kyd did not represent the physical relationship between Newt and Rachel Knight, and instead Hoab’s white son was her love interest and Hoab her adoptive father. When Hoab, who knew this information when he adopted her a year prior, revealed her race it is shown to trouble him a great deal. He stated, “‘Thank God, Papa died without knowing this, and without knowing that his grandson is in love with a woman of colored blood’.”¹²² The reasoning for these creative choices cannot be known for certain. Street’s decision to cast Hoab not as Kyd’s lover but instead as her father figure could have come from a great number of places. This choice could have originated in the unclear interpretation of Rachel Knight’s past common during this time, from a solely creative choice for the purposes of his story, or to deflect the racial reality of Newt Knight’s past in a way that preserved his Southern-ness. However, it is undeniable that in the early 1940s, the racial identity of the Knight family was under increased scrutiny, and this

¹²¹Bynum *Free State of Jones*, 1.

¹²²Street, *Tap Roots*, 446.

trend would only intensify into the 1950s when Ethel Knight's *Echo of the Black Horn* transformed Newt Knight from hero to villain.

More than any of the other community histories on the Free State of Jones, *Echo of the Black Horn* was a reactionary work. In 1948 Davis Knight's racial identity became a point of powerful conjecture when he married a white woman and was in turn brought before Jones County authorities on claims of miscegenation.¹²³ The glowing treatment of Newt Knight in Tom Knight's biography of his father and *Tap Roots* combined with the increased attention on the racial identity of the Knight family to inspire Ethel Knight to write her own interpretation of the Free State of Jones story. However, unlike those that came before her, Ethel Knight wrote her version of the story at the peak of racial tensions in the community. In turn, her internalization of twentieth-century racial politics is shown in crystal clarity. She declared, "when disunity rears its ugly head, elements foreign and unwelcome creep in to belittle the efforts of the majority to uphold the good name of the county. . . through these are admitted the communistic elements that would seek to tear down the good reputation of Jones County."¹²⁴ Ethel Knight, who had married into the Knight family, was an ardent segregationist and white supremacist, and these influences were clear in her interaction with the previous community histories.

She alluded to James Street when she stated, "fiction writers, with itching palm, which has too often been greased, by these same elements outside the realm of Jones County, have helped to heap undue criticism upon this land."¹²⁵ Through this thinly

¹²³Bynum, *Free State of Jones*, 1-3.

¹²⁴Ethel Knight, *The Echo of the Black Horn: An Authentic Tale of "The Governor" of "The Free State of Jones*, (New York, NY: Maple-Veil, 1951), 7.

¹²⁵Ethel Knight, *Echo*, 7.

veiled reference to Street, it is clear that she saw him as influenced by the communistic elements plotting against the county. However, her attention to Tom Knight was far different, as she contextualized his writings through a presentation of new material he provided, which represented his own fundamental shifts in understanding. According to Ethel Knight, Tom Knight had told her everything about his father and stated that he now openly lamented, “the disgrace and shame that my father heaped upon me when he went to the N_____!”¹²⁶ Tom Knight, who in his later life had become embarrassed by his father’s actions, felt the rising racial pressures of the mid twentieth century. However, it was Ethel Knight who took full advantage of those pressures to radicalize Newt Knight and the Free State of Jones into a horror story of dissent, racial mixing, and anti-Southern sentiment.¹²⁷ As one historian notes, by the 1900s, white identity had become firmly rooted in segregationist culture and an oppositional stance to African Americans that led segregationists “backward into imaginary pasts for the regrounding of authority.”¹²⁸ It is through this process of recontextualization, of stepping backward into an imaginary, pure past, that Newt Knight, the hero of Tom Knight’s story and *Tap Roots*, was transformed into a completely different figure. He became a figure who persisted in the public consciousness long after the memory of Hoab Dabney and Lebanon County faded away.

Ethel Knight did not see New Knight as a hero of any measure. Instead, she presented him as a conniving and violent deserter, motivated not by moral opposition to the twenty-slave law, but by a selfish jealousy and bloodlust. Ethel Knight represented

¹²⁶Ethel Knight, *Echo*, Front Jacket. The quoted passage included a racial slur that was omitted out of respect to the African American Community.

¹²⁷Bynum, *Free State of Jones*, 178-179.

¹²⁸Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 42.

Newt Knight's motivations as based on his wife Serena having an affair with Bill Morgan, an outlaw who had taken up refuge in the Knight family home. According to Ethel Knight, he murdered Morgan, after procrastinating for days due to his cowardice, before fleeing into the woods and seeking refuge in nearby slave communities.¹²⁹ She declared that Knight "knew he could trust the Negroes. With this in mind, he set out, a hunted man, a fugitive from justice, and a traitor to his country."¹³⁰ This depiction of Knight was founded in accurate history, as he did kill Morgan, but this murder cannot be claimed as his singular reason for fleeing into the countryside and was instead only a small piece of the puzzle.¹³¹ However, this version of Knight's motivations does help explain Ethel Knight's attempts to re-contextualize his past.

Her reactions to the previous interpretations of the story, and their representations of Knight as a heroic figure, served as the driving inspiration behind her attempts to change his memory. In comparison to the positive approaches taken by Tom Knight and James Street regarding Newt Knight's stances on slavery and abolitionism, Ethel Knight represented him as a champion of the slave rebellion. "There was not a Negro in Jones County," she wrote, "that did not know that a white man had run away from the army, to come back and lead the slaves out of bondage."¹³² This statement, when placed in context with the rest of her book, does less to reveal Knight's past, and more to assert a new version of his story, one entrenched entirely within her segregationist politics.

¹²⁹Ethel Knight, *Echo*, 66-69.

¹³⁰Ethel Knight, *Echo*, 69.

¹³¹Bynum, *Free State of Jones*, 100.

¹³²Ethel Knight, *Echo*, 75.

Ethel Knight's inability to separate her work from her politics was well known within the Jones County community, and the accuracy of her book was often called into question. One community member stated, "my family always said that Ethel's book wasn't any more accurate than any of the others. She, like most folks back then, couldn't get past the fact that he'd married a black woman, and I'd met Misses Ethel several times and she was definitely one of them."¹³³ Ethel Knight's inability to see through her politics was not only represented in the community's reaction to her work, as her later works also carried the same segregationist rhetoric. Fifty years after the publication of *Echo*, she self-published another community history, this time on the small town of Hot Coffee, Mississippi. Throughout this book her treatment of African Americans, though cooled from her fire-eating days at the height of segregation, still carried the same paternalistic, patronizing tone. "We had black people who contributed greatly to this part of the county," she stated, "Just up in the edge of Hot Coffee we had the Hopewell school and we had educated black people."¹³⁴ This paternalistic rhetoric held over from the segregationist era shows how firmly entrenched she was in her dedication to preserving the racial hierarchy of Mississippi. It was this dedication that caused her to focus almost the entirety of her book on the racial make-up of the Knight family.

Whereas Street discussed Rachel Knight's identity through his character Kyd and used her as a way to soften the accusations of racial mixing, Ethel Knight puts her and Newt Knight's relationship at center stage. She introduced Rachel Knight early in the story and established her ethnicity as African descent, regardless of any potential creole

¹³³Oral History with Janice Kervin.

¹³⁴Ethel Knight, *Down Home in Hot Coffee*, (Collins, Mississippi: The News Commercial, 2000), 54.

heritage. However, because this version of the story deals with Rachel Knight's time a slave, Ethel Knight also inserts her segregationist rhetoric from the beginning. She represented Rachel Knight's time in slavery as one of peaceable happiness, with her declaring that "None of the slaves could remember of a time when they had not been called into the family altar, as that was the custom of the good people."¹³⁵ This representation of Rachel Knight's life is constant throughout the entire book. Ethel Knight portrayed her as an ungrateful slave who fell in with a rebellious traitor, and this became more apparent as she took her version of the story into areas no other community history had ventured.

Ethel Knight took her analysis of the story well past the Civil War, focusing a great deal on Newt Knight's life during Reconstruction. Because of her segregationist background, she characterized this time period as the era of carpetbag rule and Confederate redemption in Jones County. Much like the way in which she presented Rachel Knight's owners as benevolent figures, she characterized the reconstruction era South as a period of heinous Northern interference. She declared that "The law disenfranchised most all the leading white men of the South and placed the ballot in the hand of the Negro."¹³⁶ Black Republican political power was the antithesis for everything hoped for by the Confederate redeemers who eventually took power back in the late nineteenth-century.¹³⁷ Ethel Knight and her segregationist cohort were the political heirs

¹³⁵Ethel Knight, *Echo*, 38.

¹³⁶Ethel Knight, *Echo*, 230.

¹³⁷Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1988), 369.

to redeemer rule, and her representation of reconstruction as an era of carpetbagger rule shows how involved she was in those ideals.

This understanding of the social status of African Americans before and after the Civil War influenced Ethel Knight's entire interpretation of the racially charged pieces of Knight's post-free state life. Similar to the characterization of Kyd in *Tap Roots*, Ethel Knight presented Rachel Knight and Newt Knight's relationship as a paternal one instead of a physical one. However, instead of presenting Newt Knight as the loving father figure she casts him as a sexual manipulator who used Rachel Knight as a tool. She explained that "he felt that he was entirely responsible for the existence of. . .the white child born to Rachel. . .Because he knew that it was he who had detained Rachel to satisfy the evil pleasures of his men."¹³⁸ This characterization of Rachel Knight as a seductress, lustful and corrupt, and Newt Knight as her manipulator who used her to corrupt his fellow soldiers represented Ethel Knight's recontextualization of the hero narratives that surrounded Knight in the years prior.¹³⁹ Beyond this, it served Ethel Knight's core purpose of demonizing him as a total race traitor. Through this idea of Knight as the manipulator, Ethel Knight both represented him as a corrupting figure for all of those who rode in his deserter band, manipulating them into becoming traitors to the white race through Rachel Knight as well, and deflected any true racial mixing away from the Knight family. Ethel Knight, however, was not satisfied presenting him as a villain, instead she worked to represent Knight's reclusion as something involuntary.

¹³⁸Ethel Knight, *Echo*, 260.

¹³⁹Bynum, *Free State of Jones*, 110.

Chapter twenty-two, titled “Shunned by Society,” presented a Knight family totally excluded from the societal systems of Jones County because of “all this ‘Negro talk.’”¹⁴⁰ Ethel Knight stuck to the statement that Newt Knight was never involved with Rachel Knight physically and did not father any of her mixed-race children. Instead, she presented Knight as a race traitor not physically, but socially. To Ethel Knight, and the Jones County citizens which shunned him, his acceptance and support of Rachel Knight and her African American family was enough to justify total ostracism. Ethel Knight’s final two statements on Knight solidified him as a reclusive shunned by the good and decent people of Jones County. She recontextualized the lucid descriptions of a stoic recluse presented in the 1922 interview when she described him as “an old man with a warped and twisted mind, a man almost wild in his habits.”¹⁴¹ Ethel Knight’s version of Knight ends not as the aged hero living peacefully in the woods, and not even as the father to a mixed race family, but instead as the old and senile man living deep in the Piney Woods whose words and stories could not be trusted.

Each of these community histories presented a different version of Newt Knight, but it was not until *Tap Roots* that the racial dynamics of the Free State of Jones incident were represented. However, as those early racial tensions presented by Street boiled over, Ethel Knight took up the mantle of Jones County community historian and melded the Newt Knight story with her segregationist ideology. The timing of this evolution of Knight from hero to cowardly race traitor was key to the transformation of his memory. The social tensions, racially charged politics, and rapidly changing racial hierarchy in

¹⁴⁰Ethel Knight, *Echo*, 273.

¹⁴¹Ethel Knight, *Echo*, 315.

South Mississippi molded community interpretations of Knight. It was this changing interpretation, and the reliance on racist rhetoric in order to contextualize Knight and the Free State of Jones, which led to the silencing of his memory.

Dismantling Memory: The Story of Newt Knight and Racial Hierarchy

Though Knight's story and the Free State of Jones incident took place in the nineteenth century, these community histories show the memorialization around him took place in the 1900s. Though the ideas that surrounded the deserter band began to stick in the minds of Jones County citizens throughout the Civil War era, the traditions of American memorialization that forged Knight into a hero, and later into a traitor, were a part of the South's transition into the twentieth century. The tradition of American memorialization by the 1950s had shifted to a period of "nostalgic obsession," focused on presenting heritage, not an accurate past, through a romantic lens, and the memorialization of Newt Knight as a hero of Jones County conflicted heavily with this idea.¹⁴² The Free State of Jones incident could not be a nostalgic moment if it was also an open armed conflict with the Confederacy, because the Confederacy was the nostalgic core to white memorialization in Mississippi. However, through this nostalgic lens individuals like Ethel Knight labored to contextualize Knight's memory with the segregationist rhetoric and racially charged politics of the era.

This recontextualization, in turn, did not happen in the context of the social norms of nineteenth-century Jones County, but instead it was a process of filtering and changes

¹⁴²Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York, NY: Random House, 1991), 531.

that took place almost entirely in the twentieth century. The social norms which Knight violated within his Jones County community came from the era of Ethel Knight, and both his dissention as a deserter and as perceived race traitor were contextualized within the growing tensions of racial hierarchy. His existence as a Confederate deserter helped explain his life after the war as a recluse, as “shame and community ostracism” often led to reclusiveness among Civil War deserters.¹⁴³ However, while this idea of shame and ostracism does fit the Knight family to some degree, Newt Knight and his band of deserters were not only deserters, but dissenters in open conflict with the Confederacy. Still, at least as Meigs Frost and Tom Knight presented in their early community histories, Knight was seen as a respectable man before and during the war, so his actions as a dissenter, including his desertion from the Confederacy were not the sole reasons for his ostracism. Instead, that aspect of his past is linked to the increasing racial tensions of the mid twentieth century and his relationship with Rachel Knight.

Ethel Knight saw Newt Knight’s choice to dissent as connected with the African Americans in Jones County from the very beginning, as he was meant lead them out of bondage. Though the fears of racial violence and slave rebellions were certainly a historical reality in the nineteenth-century, Ethel Knight’s depiction of this likely stemmed instead from a place of fear within her own segregated society. Whites in the segregated South often used the fear of race riots to increase the tensions between whites and blacks, and this helped create a system racial segregation that transcended class distinctions.¹⁴⁴ This version of Knight was not just a dissenter against a tyrannical

¹⁴³Costa and Kahn, *Heroes and Cowards*, 184.

¹⁴⁴Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 236.

Confederate government, but an ally to enslaved people, and this helped Ethel Knight separate him as far as possible from any potential perceptions of honor and heroism.

For individuals like Ethel Knight, remembering was not a passive act, but instead one with “powerful social and political connotations” never focused on reconciling Southern systems with the North but instead focused on championing the South’s political and social efforts.¹⁴⁵ Meigs Frost, Tom Knight, and James Street were all involved in this memory making processes, regardless of their more positive depictions, but it was segregationist culture intertwined with white reactionism and the Lost Cause which solidified Knight as a traitor for white Mississippians. For the earliest versions of the story, presenting him in a wholly positive light were likely as much about silencing the racial aspects of the story as they were about forging him into a hero. Tom Knight wrote his biography in the 1930s when the South had become “a stage on which southerners presented the South both as they wanted to see it” and as they understood others wanted to see it.¹⁴⁶ In his biography of his father, Tom Knight was presenting not only the version of his father he hoped to remember, but one that he hoped to present to those interested in his story and the story of the Free State of Jones.

By the time that James Street wrote his version of the tale, the racial hierarchy, and systems of segregation in the South had crystalized into a much more intense process and the racial elements of Knight’s story could no longer be avoided. By the 1940s “southern whiteness that segregation created provided a cultural foundation for the very

¹⁴⁵Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 5.

¹⁴⁶W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 184.

‘natural’ racial differences white southerners had hoped to protect.”¹⁴⁷ Through his representation of Hoab as a paternalistic father figure to Kyd he painted Newt and Rachel Knight’s relationship in a similar light as the slave-master relationship Ethel Knight utilized a decade later. This created a degree of separation between Knight and his violation of the community’s racial norms large enough to allow that aspect of his story to fit comfortably into the culture of segregation. However, as racial tensions increased into the 1950s both African American groups and forces outside of the South began to threaten that culture of segregation, and Knight’s racial violations could no longer be justified within Jones County societal norms.

By 1951, when Ethel Knight wrote *Echo of the Black Horn*, the time for compromise and silencing Newt Knight’s violations had passed. At publication, the whispers of the Civil Rights movement and efforts to push back against segregation had just started. Just three years later *Brown vs. the Board of Education* started the processes of desegregation and the Mississippi Citizens’ Council declared that “‘either we will all stay white together, or we will be integrated county by county.’”¹⁴⁸ This was the beginning of white resistance against the civil rights movement, and these tensions influenced Ethel Knight as she retooled the story of Newt Knight and the Free State of Jones. Across Mississippi, both male and female whites began to realize in the early 1950s that their system of segregation was ending, and communities across the state began to work towards a unified massive resistance effort against the ideas of

¹⁴⁷Hale, *Making Whiteness*, 9.

¹⁴⁸Stephanie R. Rolph. *Resisting Equality: The Citizens Council, 1954-1984* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2018), 13.

integration.¹⁴⁹ In turn, *Echo of the Black Horn* existed not only as a community history of the Free State of Jones story, but also as a piece of these massive resistance efforts. She felt the tensions of the collapsing systems of white supremacy and her reinterpretation of Newt Knight's memory as an unforgiveable racial traitor served as her primary, and longest lasting, reaction to this change.

Throughout *The Free State of Jones*, Victoria Bynum made ample use of these community histories, but their evolution and the subsequent silencing of Knight's memory has never been put into the context of the evolving racial hierarchy of the twentieth-century. The culmination of this transformation came in Ethel Knight, who "achieved a difficult political and personal task" when she completed her transformation of Newt Knight's story.¹⁵⁰ Ethel Knight not only spoke for her own worries, but the shifting opinions of the community at large. As the racial tensions of South Mississippi grew, so too did the presence of the racial aspects of Knight's story. When Ethel Knight published *Echo of the Black Horn*, the community could no longer separate the racial from the heroic and Knight's story became buried under an amplification of his so-called racial treachery. Back in the Northern Clay Hills of Mississippi, Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard had undergone a very similar experience, as his violation of the state's racial norms had buried the memory of his service at the University of Mississippi. Barnard and Knight fell victim to the same systems as the state grappled with its past in an ever-changing world.

¹⁴⁹J. Todd Moyer, *Let the People Decide: Black Freedom and White Resistance in Sunflower County, Mississippi, 1945-1986*, 57.

¹⁵⁰Bynum, *Free State of Jones*, 189.

Conclusions: Violators of an Unspoken System

F. A. P. Barnard and Newt Knight never interacted with one another. They lived in different parts of Mississippi and came from different backgrounds. However, the same broad social systems dictated much of their lives, and the same mechanisms transformed their memories throughout the twentieth century. The racial norms and systems of white supremacy that existed in the state throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries proved to be powerful tools whites used to silence the memory of dissent in Mississippi. Both Barnard and Knight had their experiences erased or skewed through an amplification of the negative aspects of their stories. Allen Cabaniss chose to focus on Barnard's "incredible Yankee energy, bitter sensitiveness to criticism, and unfortunate ability for making enemies" in the context of his violation of racial norms over his service to the University of Mississippi.¹⁵¹ Barnard's choice to take the testimony of an enslaved woman over that of a white student cast him as a race traitor in the eyes of his contemporaries, and almost ninety years later Cabaniss still chose to echo those same ideals. Much like the community members of Jones County, those who managed Barnard's memory in the mid-twentieth century could not separate his successes as chancellor from his violation of racial norms. In the same era, Ethel Knight manipulated the memory of Newt Knight by emphasizing the racial aspects of his story at every moment, silencing his memory as yeomen farmer who defended his home.

A fundamental difference between Cabaniss and Ethel Knight was their status. *Echo of the Black Horn* was seen, even upon its initial publication, as a fictionalized

¹⁵¹Allen Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi: The First Hundred Years* (Hattiesburg, MS: The University and College Press of Mississippi, 1970), 32.

community history while Cabaniss's *A History of the University of Mississippi* was a far more formal, academic work. It was not until 1971, a year after the second edition of Cabaniss's book was released, that Newt Knight would receive a more formal treatment with Mary H. Kitchens and Theresa Blackledge's *A Mini-Confederacy: The Free State of Jones 1862-186—, A Source Book*. However, this book was an enormous divergence from the previous published histories. It did not attempt a complete reinterpretation of Knight's story, but instead was a collection of oral histories and primary sources focused entirely on the war years. Despite including excerpts of *Echo of the Black Horn*, the story of Rachel or Newt Knight's racial treachery does not appear anywhere in the book, and instead it focuses much of its attention on whether or not Jones County technically seceded from the union.¹⁵² However, the unspecified ending date of the title does seem to recognize that the story of the Free State of Jones incident did not end with the Civil War. Even still, the authors seemed reluctant to place any of the story into its twentieth-century context in the same way that Ethel Knight had attempted.

Similar to Cabaniss's representation of Barnard, *A Mini-Confederacy* attempted to create layers of separation between Jones County and the negative connotations brought on by Knight's violation of racial norms. One source in the book declared that "Knight and his men lived in the county, condemned by some, admired by others, but until the end of their days recognized as individualists among individualists."¹⁵³ However, this statement is careful never to overstep the assertions laid out by Ethel Knight regarding his violation of racial norms and speaks only of the events that took place in the county prior

¹⁵²Mary H. Kitchens and Theresa Blackledge, *A Mini Confederacy: The Free State of Jones 1862-18—, A Source Book* (Ellisville, MS: The Progress-Item, 1971), 31.

¹⁵³Kitchens and Blackledge, *Mini-Confederacy*, 94.

to 1868. Americans have always been very careful about what they choose to “recall and reject about the past,” often choosing to consume the easiest aspects of history.¹⁵⁴ The exact reason the story of the Free State of Jones shifted towards the county’s secession and away from Newt Knight as the central figure is difficult to discern. What is certain, however, is that in a post-segregation, post-Civil Rights Movement era, the white citizens of Jones County found it easier to talk little at all about Newt Knight than to engage with the racial aspects of his story in much the same way that Barnard largely disappeared from the University of Mississippi’s history after the 1950s.

Cabaniss and Ethel Knight both struggled to represent dissent during the Civil War in the mid-twentieth century, unable to separate the racial aspects of their stories from their twentieth century lives. From the time they both published their histories until the end of the Civil Rights movement white Southerners fought to commemorate the war in a way that championed their views while condemning both the federal government and the fight for racial justice. The memory of both F. A. P. Barnard and Newt Knight became trapped in this fight.¹⁵⁵ White Southerners struggled with their racial identity throughout the mid-twentieth century and silencing the memory of people like Barnard and Knight through an amplification of their negative characteristics, and eventual abandonment of them all together, became increasingly common throughout the era. However, the stories of Barnard and Knight were scarcely told on a national scale. Instead, the national and regional consciousness of the South was molded by the popular

¹⁵⁴Kammen, *Mystic Chords*, 655.

¹⁵⁵Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 307.

media consumed across the country, and through Mississippi's reaction to that media the broader transformation of dissent in the state's Civil War memory becomes apparent.

CHAPTER IV – PROJECTING THEIR PAST: MISSISSIPPI, THE CIVIL WAR, AND
TWENTIETH-CENTURY POPULAR CULTURE

*“Are you gonna pull those pistols or whistle Dixie?”-Clint Eastwood, The Outlaw Josey
Wales*

The American South, and especially the Civil War, has served as the inspiration for countless pieces of the popular culture produced throughout the twentieth century. Across the country, pop-culture representation of the war interacted with the shifting processes of memorialization to create a sanitized past that became incompatible with the memory of dissent in Mississippi. White Mississippians grappled with the ideas presented in pop-culture within the context of the world around them, and the way they interacted with these trends reveals a great deal about how their understanding of Civil War memory changed throughout the twentieth century. As the national political landscape shifted away from the racial rhetoric common in the South, a large number of Mississippians began to adjust their memorialization and consume media which avoided, rather than confronted, racial issues. This process served as a continuation of the work of those like the United Daughters of the Confederacy and Tom Knight in a way that made those same memorialization processes more palatable for a national audience. From film and television to novels and pulp fiction, popular culture allowed Mississippians to silence the aspects of their Civil War past that did not fit into the shifting national narrative. As the national landscape transformed, popular culture allowed the state to leave the story of Civil War era dissent, and in turn the stories of men like Barnard and Knight, behind in favor of a Civil War history more palatable on both a state and national

level. The popular culture consumed and produced by white Mississippians throughout the mid-twentieth century gave Mississippians an easy outlet through which they recontextualized their past in an ever-changing national South.

Mountains out of Mole Hills: The Limits of Reception Studies

Pop-culture analysis of any kind has inherent limitations that require explanation. Like any kind of art, pop-culture mediums are often representative of the cultures that produce and consume them. However, the reach of their representativeness should not be overexaggerated. The most dangerous place this often takes place is within the analysis of media reception, and how that relates to the cultural understanding. Pop-culture examples have limits in their ability to represent any given moment of history, and they can often obscure a solitary occurrence and cause it to appear like a much larger event.¹⁵⁶ The reception of a piece of media does not accurately represents an entire population's opinion of it. In turn, this chapter relegates reception studies to an ancillary position, and a usage of traditional media analysis takes its place.

While reception studies can represent a piece of pop-culture as more important than it actually was, analyzing these same pieces of media through a lens of cultural production allows researchers to fully understand their importance without exaggeration. By analyzing the mechanisms represented within the media a culture either produced or consumed, the importance of these systems becomes apparent.¹⁵⁷ This provides two

¹⁵⁶Simon Godhill, "The Limits of the Case Study: Exemplarity and Reception of Classical Literature," *New Literary History*, Vol. 48, No 3 (Summer 2017), 416.

¹⁵⁷An excellent example of this in practice is John Bodnar's *The Good War in American Memory*, where he spends an entire chapter analyzing the mechanisms represented in WWII movies and how they represented American culture.

benefits over reception studies, first that raw statistical data about viewing numbers can be avoided, and second that more niche examples can be included in order to show how prevalent the represented cultural mechanisms were. This chapter utilizes this broader form of media analysis in its examination of both visual and textual media. Through this tool, this thesis can reveal the cultural understandings white Mississippians held about their Civil War past.

The Rising of a New Order: Mississippi, Civil Rights, and the Rise of the New Right

The popular culture which this chapter examines comes from a political transformation in the American South that influenced every aspect of the region's culture. In the years that followed the Civil Rights movement, American conservatism transformed from a system of moderate Republicans and segregationist Democrats to a cultural powerhouse that dominated American politics. This process, called the rise of the New Right, connected white resistance to Black freedom struggles at every moment. However, this transformation differed across the country, and while historians traced part of its origins to Southern California, another aspect, and one more focused on the oppression of African Americans, came from the South. Mississippi politicians like Trent Lott were the heirs apparent to the Dixiecrat political platform, and their policies, though not openly segregationist, remained rooted in the oppression of African Americans.¹⁵⁸

In the South, segregationists like Ethel Knight made the slow transition to Republicanism alongside their most influential state politicians, but they did not abandon

¹⁵⁸Joseph E. Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 1-2.

their segregationist views on African Americans. The same rhetoric that influenced the United Daughters of the Confederacy to write that their work was sacred, and to insist that honoring the Confederacy was them “striving to fulfill God’s teaching and honor their fathers,” was the rhetoric that guided Southern white politicians in their public policies well into the 1970s.¹⁵⁹ By the late twentieth-century, former segregationists had transitioned into the Republican party. Ethel Knight declared that she was “the first woman in the area that officially joined the republican party,” but as *Down Home in Hot Coffee* shows, her rhetoric towards African Americans never changed.¹⁶⁰ This transformation of Southern politics characterized the transition from the 1960s and the Civil Rights movement to the 1970s and the era of the new right. As the South once again became a center piece of American political power, the influence of segregationist policies on the region remained, but their representation in popular media did not.¹⁶¹

This trend in American politics held deep influence on white Americans, both North and South. However, as politics began to shift, the cultural systems and expected social norms remained largely the same. The culture of segregation that had existed in the minds of whites throughout the early twentieth century persisted, even though the politics began to express it in less overt ways.¹⁶² This shifting expression of the dynamics between politics and culture in the South, in turn, influenced the popular culture the region chose to consume. As Hollywood and other creators of popular culture interpreted

¹⁵⁹Madge Burney, “Unnamed Address,” The Madge Burney Papers, Box 1, Folder 8, McCain Library and Archives, The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.

¹⁶⁰Ethel Knight, *Down Home in Hot Coffee*, Collins, MS: Self Published, 2000), 54.

¹⁶¹Lisa McGirr details this on a national level in her book *Suburban Warriors*, as a focused shift from oppression through policy to an oppression through social norms and inherit economic systems. She explains, however, that the morals of these two periods remained largely the same for whites, and it was instead the way that politics interacted with those morals that changed.

¹⁶²Lowndes, *New Deal to the New Right*, 107-109.

the Civil War throughout the mid-twentieth century, this shifting political landscape combined with efforts memorialize the South and helped silence the difficult aspects of the state's Civil War era history.

Television, Film, and Reconciling the Civil War

Popular television and film manifested efforts to memorialize the American South and foster reconciliation with powerful clarity. One of the clearest examples of this, however, comes not in dramatizations about the Civil War itself, but instead in T.V. programs and films in the Western genre. With their common focus on stoic male figures, unabridged freedom, and lawlessness, the Western genre served as the home for numerous stories of the Civil War era. The genre was often removed from the representation of the more common political and military aspects of the war, and instead revealed not only how national popular consciousness conceptualized the war, but also how America's reaction to it changed in the mid-twentieth century.

Take, for example, the 1959 *The Rifleman* episode titled "The Sheridan Story," which interpreted the Civil War through a clear lens of reconciliation. It also, however, refused to romanticize the Confederacy in a way that later films and shows would. Main character Lucas McCain, a proud veteran of the Indian Wars, hired a bitter and wounded ex-Confederate named Frank Blandon who harbored a deep resentment for General Phillip Sheridan.¹⁶³ The episode exemplified the reconciliationist tendencies common in America's memorialization during that era, but it also showed that even those who

¹⁶³"The Sheridan Story," *The Rifleman*, Season 1, Episode 16 (Four Star Productions, 1959), Amazon Prime Video, https://www.amazon.com/End-of-a-Young-Gun/dp/B071721S2Q/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=the+rifleman&qid=1618882869&sr=8-1.

adapted the stories of the war recognized the limitations of reunion. The episode began with Bandon verbally attacking the main characters, who he disgusted with both his behavior and his physical appearance. However, their consciences overcame them, and they offered him a job and shelter despite their reservations.¹⁶⁴

Things took a turn halfway through the episode when Sheridan arrived at McCain's ranch and revealed he was responsible for the Confederate's wounds. The episode furthered this shift when it revealed that the Confederate was not just wounded in battle, but while he was attempting to flee combat.¹⁶⁵ The episode juxtaposed the Confederate, pathetic in his self-loathing, against an angry and unflinching representation of Sheridan. The program showed that Sheridan held disdain for Bandon not because he was a former enemy, but because he was a coward and a deserter. Bandon's confrontation with Sheridan, and in turn the Union, led to his realization that it was his own failures which were responsible for his wounded state. Acting as a powerful metaphor for the reconstruction of the country, Sheridan accepted Bandon's change of heart and had his doctors heal the Confederate's wounds. Bandon, accepting the good mercy of his former enemies, stated "It ain't gonna hurt no more," speaking both to his physical wounds, and the trauma his cowardice caused.¹⁶⁶ Here Bandon served as a metaphor for the modern South's insistence on a victim narrative, and Sheridan, though depicted as a hard-nosed and angry man, as the North's reconstruction efforts. By 1959 North and South were well into the process of reconciliation, and this episode represented

¹⁶⁴"The Sheridan Story."

¹⁶⁵"The Sheridan Story."

¹⁶⁶"Sheridan Story."

that process in the broadest way possible.¹⁶⁷ However, not all TV Westerns took such a positive outlook on the South or the processes of reconciliation.

In 1962 the television program *Bonanza*, one of the most popular TV Westerns of the twentieth century, aired the episode “The War Comes to Washoe,” which took a different approach to the representation of the South. *Bonanza*, unlike *The Rifleman*, took place during the war years in the Nevada territory. This episode did not tackle the aftermath for soldiers, but instead the political and social nature of the war for those in the West. The episode opened with a party held at the main characters’, the Cartwrights’, home where a drunken Southerner began to disrupt a stage play by singing “Dixie,” and this confrontation evolved into a fight as another Southerner came to the defense of the Confederate cause.¹⁶⁸ The episode carried this negative tone from the beginning, and there were no attempts at television-reconciliation. Instead, it focused on a critique of the South’s reliance on racial discrimination in a way that at times served as a commentary more on the twentieth century than the nineteenth.

As the episode continued, two of the main characters argued over the South’s real purpose behind the war. One character, Joe Cartwright, argued that the South wanted to handle its problems alone, while his brother Adam stated that “you mean they just want to hold on to slavery for another one hundred years.”¹⁶⁹ This overt confrontation against the South and its racial systems continued into the heart of the episode. Ben Cartwright,

¹⁶⁷Though Janney correctly points out the limits of reconciliation that Blight established, Hollywood and popular media served as one of the clearest places for the attempted reconciliation between North and South.

¹⁶⁸“The War Comes to Washoe,” *Bonanza*, Season 4, Episode 11 (National Broadcasting Company, 1962), DVD.

¹⁶⁹“The War Comes to Washoe.”

patriarch of the Cartwright family, was forced to confront the politics which surrounded the Civil War as the Southerners attempted to bring Nevada into statehood as a Confederate state. In the end the Southerners lost, Nevada did not enter the Confederacy, and the would-be Confederates left the area disgraced.¹⁷⁰ This representation of the Civil War through TV Westerns does not overtly deal with dissent the way that “The Sheridan Story” did, but it does show how popular media grappled with the war’s memory.

Bonanza was one of the most popular television Westerns of its era, and it was also one of the only programs that took place during the war and not after it. Despite this, the war did not come up often in the show, and only served as the focal point for “The War Comes to Washoe.” The origins of this episode’s confrontational approach, however, did not originate with the producers or writers of *Bonanza*, but instead with one of its stars. Pernell Roberts, who played Adam Cartwright, requested that an African American play his on-screen wife, but NBC rejected the idea. However, after a great deal of pressure from him and leading man Lorne Greene, the executives agreed to a compromise which resulted in the politically charged nature of “The War Comes to Washoe.” At the time of the episode’s airing, *Bonanza* was a national ratings powerhouse, and it is clear that the executives and producers involved recognized the potential damage an episode like this could do. However, the racial politics of the 1960s influenced efforts of its stars to push the show into a critical representation of the South. Still, the episode was a unique occurrence in the program, and it was the exemption that

¹⁷⁰Melany Shapiro, *Bonanza the Definitive Ponderosa Companion* (Nipoco, CA: Cyclone Books, 1997), 13-14.

proved the rule, as many other Civil War-focused T.V. programs of the era, including *Bonanza*, chose reconciliation over confrontation.

One of the clearest examples of Hollywood's utilization of reconciliation is the short-lived program *The Rebel*. The program, which ran from 1959-1961, followed "The Rebel" Johnny Yuma as he travelled across the West during the aftermath of the Civil War fighting the injustices he came across. Yuma wore his Confederate uniform throughout the show, and often pondered the realities of the cause he had fought for. Episodes often dealt with other characters in the show coming to trust him despite his life as a former Confederate. However, it is also important to note that Yuma had fled the Reconstruction-era South to escape the oversight of the Union government. Despite this, the show scarcely mentioned the processes of Reconstruction and Emancipation.¹⁷¹ The show was a massive success, especially with Southern audiences, and, despite its short on-air life, it maintained a lasting legacy for the rest of the decade. It was enough of a success that in 1965 a Jackson, Mississippi newspaper published a feature on the program's star Nick Adams, which looked back on the show and lauded Adams for his portrayal of a reluctant rebel with an honorable heart.¹⁷² Despite its time as a ratings success, *The Rebel* was cancelled at the end of its second season in 1961, with the American Broadcast Channel citing a high level of violence as its reason.¹⁷³ Its popularity with viewing audiences, however, did not go unnoticed by other networks as, just like

¹⁷¹*The Rebel* (American Broadcast Company, 1959-1961), Amazon Prime Video, https://www.amazon.com/Johnny-Yuma-at-Appomattox/dp/B07YGNZLA/ref=sr_1_2?dchil=1&keywords=the+rebel+johnny+yuma&qid=1618883751&s=instant-video&sr=1-2-catcorr.

¹⁷²"Rebel Visitor here to Choose Locations," *The Clarion Ledger* (Jackson, MS), January 3, 1965.

¹⁷³James Lewis Baughman, "ABC and the Destruction of American Television, 1955-1961," *Business and Economic History*, Vol. 12 (1983), 64-66.

The Rifleman, this version of Hollywood reconciliation continued throughout many of the other popular Western programs of the twentieth-century.¹⁷⁴

These messages of reconciliation were popular across the United States, but that popularity only represented part of the memorialization process. The way these episodes approached the Civil War represented the broader themes of memorialization common across the country. Beyond that, they also shed light on what parts of Civil War history former Confederate states, such as Mississippi, wanted to represent within the national narrative. Western television programs reached their height at the same time in which the African-American Civil Rights Movement launched into the national consciousness. As the movement intensified and radicalized, programs touching on the Civil War became less interested in confronting Confederate responsibilities for slavery. Instead, these programs represented an increasingly common message of reconciliation. Though there were limits to the successes of reconciliation, Hollywood's depiction of the relationship between Confederate and Union forces lent itself to a combined glory through, as historian David Blight explained, "deflections and evasions, careful remembering and necessary forgetting," in a way that created no good guys and bad guys, only heroes.¹⁷⁵

Popular Western television programs were not the only place Hollywood hoped to profit from historic tensions between North and South without actually addressing Civil Rights-era tensions that dated back to that conflict. 1965's *Shenandoah* could serve as an exception to this, with its rejection of the image of a united white South and its attention

¹⁷⁴For an example of this continuation see *The Virginian*'s 1966 episode "Nobody Said Hello" and *Gunsmoke*'s 1969 episode "The Mark of Cain." Both worked to show the good and bad of both the North and South and reconcile the two sides.

¹⁷⁵Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 5.

to emancipation and black military service. *Shenandoah* told the story of a family in upper Appalachia during the Civil War who resisted becoming involved out of a “moral opposition,” as they argued that there was good and bad on both sides. The film featured Confederates, Union forces, and unaffiliated bushwhackers all cast as villains, as the main characters attempted to protect their home from all sides of the war.¹⁷⁶ In this sense, *Shenandoah* is not an exception. It fits the late-1960s and early-1970s filmmaking trend that refused to make a direct commentary against the South, and instead praised and blamed all sides of the war.

The 1970 Howard Hawks film *Rio Lobo* served as a powerful example of the early shifts in reconciliation that happened in the 1970s, as it stood in an interesting halfway point between the “both the North and South heroes” of the 50s and 60s and what came later in the 1970s. In the film John Wayne played Union Colonel Cord McNally who joined forces with two Confederates after a traitorous Union officer caused the death of his close friend. The film took place in the years immediately following Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Courthouse, following a short introduction during the final year of the war, and followed McNally and his new Confederate allies as they chased the traitor.¹⁷⁷ The film made constant use of earlier styles of reconciliation, as McNally and his Confederate allies learned to trust one another throughout the movie and to recognize that neither side was totally good or totally bad. However, this film’s treatment of the war as a whole, and especially its treatment of its villain, is a major departure from those earlier pieces of media.

¹⁷⁶*Shenandoah*, Universal Pictures, 1965, DVD.

¹⁷⁷*Rio Lobo*, Batjac Productions, 1970, Video Cassette.

Unlike the previous views on the relationship between North and South, the villain was not a representation of the evil of which both sides were capable. In fact, no Confederate villains were presented in the film. It also differed a great deal from the rare Southern criticisms like “The War Comes to Washoe,” as there was no criticism of the South at all. Instead, the villain was a morally corrupt Union officer whom greed and power led astray while the Confederates were just men following orders. During the war, the villain sold information to McNally’s eventual Confederate allies that led to the death of his friend. However, he did not hold that against the Confederates, but instead placed the blame on the treacherous Union officer’s shoulders.¹⁷⁸ This shift in the treatment of the story’s villain, although slight, represented a fundamental change in the understanding of what made those who fought in the Civil War good or bad. In the film, McNally still represented the popular masculine stoicism present in shows like *The Rifleman*, and the Confederates exuded a kind of youthful energy. However, the film’s villain was a coward only concerned with his own preservation and with a complete disregard to his duty towards America. This shift in interpretation mirrored a great deal of America’s own understandings of masculinity, cowardice, and duty to one’s country in an era of increasing conservatism.¹⁷⁹

The public's understanding of the Civil War, national pride, and masculinity, as well as its roots in the Deep South, are best exemplified in the 1976 Western *The Outlaw Josey Wales*. It built on the systems laid out in *Rio Lobo* and took a final step away from

¹⁷⁸*Rio Lobo*.

¹⁷⁹Examples of how blue-collar patriotism interacted with the rise of the new right can be found in Jefferson Cowie’s *Stayin Alive*. Most notably, a discontent with democratic policies and an increase in moral conservatism served as the corner stones for blue-collar patriotism.

the reconciliation of the previous decades and rooted itself firmly in a new type of reconciliation founded in the rise of new conservatism. Popular Western film actor Clint Eastwood directed and starred in *Josey Wales*, and its story represented a powerful continuation of the early trends *Rio Lobo* established. The story followed the titular Josey Wales, a Missouri Confederate sympathizer and bushwhacker who spent the Civil War fighting in Confederate guerilla groups. Much like *Rio Lobo*, the film opened with a brief introduction showing the events that took place during the war before it transitioned to the immediate aftermath and the reconstruction era. Wales and the rest of his guerilla band surrendered to Union forces, but after one of their members betrayed them, the guerillas were ambushed and all of them killed except Wales. He then escaped and fled to Texas in hopes of leaving the war behind.¹⁸⁰ The similarities to *Rio Lobo* are obvious from the beginning, with both stories focused on betrayal and revenge. However, there were a few core differences that show the final transformation of reconciliation in the 1970s.

Unlike *Rio Lobo*, the villains of this story were not part of the Union military, but instead a small Unionist radical abolitionist guerrilla group common in Missouri and Kansas called the Red Legs.¹⁸¹ This mild distinction was made even more important when the traitor to the Confederate allies was shown to be regretful about his mistake,

¹⁸⁰*The Outlaw Josey Wales*, Warner Bros Productions, 1976, Amazon Prime Video, https://www.amazon.com/Outlaw-Josey-Wales-Clint-Eastwood/dp/B0093QDUDG/ref=sr_1_1?crd=ZWDII26LUR31&dchild=1&keywords=the+outlaw+josey+wales&qid=1618884313&s=instant-video&sprefix=the+outlaw+j%2Cinstant-vid%2C241&sr=1-1.

¹⁸¹Red legs were often confused with “Jayhawkers,” but instead were a free-state side of the Bleeding Kansas conflict prior to the war. The Red Legs were a secretive organization of abolitionists who were hand selected for harsh duties along the border. Their depiction in the film is highly fictionalized and paints them in a negative light. More information can be found at <https://civilwaronthewesternborder.org/encyclopedia/red-legs>.

while the Union allies were shown as blood thirsty and evil characters throughout the film.¹⁸² This juxtaposition between the film's Confederate and Union-allied villains was most apparent in the film's final monologue. At the end of the movie, the leader of the Union allied guerilla group caught up to Wales and, after an extended confrontation, Wales killed him in a bloody battle. The fight left Wales wounded, and not long afterwards, the Confederate traitor caught up to him. However, in a twist the traitor refused to acknowledge him and spoke to him as though he was a stranger. Even though he had a chance to capture Wales, the traitor had a change of heart and stated, "I think he's still alive. I think I'll go down to Mexico to try and find him. . .I think I'll try to tell him the war is over." Wales responded, "I reckon so. I reckon we all died a little in that damn war," and the film ends with Wales riding one direction, and the Confederate traitor, redeemed in his change of heart, riding in the other.¹⁸³ This ending, and the film's overall treatment of the Confederate traitor as a confused and misguided man while the Union allies were treated as monsters, revealed the heart of reconciliation in the 70s.

Whereas *Rio Lobo* showed a North and South equal in their capacity for heroes and villains, *Josey Wales* took those themes, along with the larger theme of patriotic manhood, a step further. The Confederate traitor was a good man capable of redemption and honor, while the Unionist Red Legs were power hungry monsters who deserved vengeance. The commentary between North and South was clear, as the proud Josey Wales wanted to put the past behind him but was still fearless in his defense of the past. Counter to Wales as a representation of the Confederacy, the Northern allies in the film

¹⁸²*The Outlaw Josey Wales.*

¹⁸³*The Outlaw Josey Wales.*

were cold, power hungry monsters unrelenting in their pursuit and unforgiving in their treatment of others.¹⁸⁴ This plot was not only a metaphor for North and South, but also a larger commentary on the changing political structure and the new conservative culture in the United States. Wales was not only a manifestation of the battle between North and South, but a broader post-Vietnam war masculinity as well. Popular culture in the 1960s and 1970s became home to the “masculine mystique,” which represented the desire of American men to be strong, silent protagonists in the vein of Eastwood and John Wayne.¹⁸⁵ The in the Vietnam era, that masculine mystique transformed into a more specific image. As one historian notes it became an image of “the American fighting man. . . the lone gunman, stoic and deft with his weapon.”¹⁸⁶ Within the context of Josey Wales, these manifestations of Vietnam war era manhood combined with white supremacist rhetoric to create a representation of the Civil War era that many Americans would never recognize as founded in racist ideologies. The root of this foundational ideology becomes clear in the originator of the Josey Wales character, Asa Earl Carter.

Asa Carter was the head speech writer for George Wallace, infamous segregationist Governor of Alabama, and was responsible for the often repeated “Segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever” speech.¹⁸⁷ However, after his political career came to an end, Carter left Alabama and moved to Texas where he adopted the moniker “Forrest” Carter and it was under this pseudonym that he wrote

¹⁸⁴*The Outlaw Josey Wales.*

¹⁸⁵Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006), 166.

¹⁸⁶Heather Marie Stur, *Beyond Combat: Women and Gender in the Vietnam War Era* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 144.

¹⁸⁷Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, The Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 9-10.

Gone to Texas, the novel which served as the basis for *The Outlaw Josey Wales*.¹⁸⁸ Carter was a member of the Ku Klux Klan, an ardent white supremacist, and intense supporter of the preservation of segregation across the South, and his political origins came under the explicit guidance of George Wallace, the originator of Richard Nixon's Southern strategy.¹⁸⁹ Here the reason for *Josey Wales*' Southern bias is clear, but this also reveals a secondary plot foundation which connects directly to *Rio Lobo* and the broader changes of reconciliation.

Josey Wales represented not only the South's view of the North, but also the larger shift in American politics towards a conservatism layered with a hatred for federal intervention and a strong basis towards moral individualism. Josey Wales was not just a stoic Southerner, but instead a new kind of American, opposed to federal power and unafraid to defend his rights with violence. As one historian notes, Josey Wales's "resistance to state authority establishes his position both as an outlaw and representative of his people. . . .He defends a racist agrarian order in the midst of social breakdown from what is seen as an intrusive, modern, carpet-bagging state" without ever directly engaging with the racial issues of the Reconstruction era.¹⁹⁰ For Southerners, this film and the change it represented made a connection with both their hatred of the North, their past as a rebellious nation, and their desires to understand the shifting political landscape in a way that cemented its importance to the state's memorialization of the Civil War.

The 1970s became a decade of transition on numerous levels, but most importantly it became a decade where the national narrative shifted away from racial

¹⁸⁸Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right*, 140-142.

¹⁸⁹Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, 372.

¹⁹⁰Lowndes, *New Deal to the New Right*, 148.

politics in the wake of the new right. All of these Westerns, in both television and film, represented that shift in a powerful way. Though each of these pieces of media differed from each other, none of them included an in-depth representation of African Americans in their focus on the Civil War. Even *Bonanza*'s "The War Came to Washoe," which started as an attempt to increase African American representation, became a broad criticism of the institution of slavery without a single black actor in the episode. Beyond that, they focused less on the conflict between North and South and more on the broader concepts of honorable and dishonorable men, with the heroes often portrayed as reluctant, stoic individualists and the villains as power hungry monsters. It is important to note that Mississippi saw *The Outlaw Josey Wales* as one of the best Westerns in years, and it is doubtless that its foundations in Southern culture influenced that reception.¹⁹¹ However, white Mississippians were not often involved with the production of either Western T.V. programs or major motion pictures, but that does not mean that they were not involved with this national memorialization mechanisms. Instead, they interacted with these same constructs, and the larger shifting political landscape of the twentieth century, through a different medium, the fiction novel.

Western Fiction and Mississippi's Memorialization Efforts:

Much like television and film, fictional literature of all types served as one of the core media formats through which Americans grappled with Civil War history. In the grand narrative of the Mississippi novelist, two stand out the most when discussing

¹⁹¹"The Decline of the Western Movie," *The Hattiesburg American* (Hattiesburg, MS), September 15, 1976.

fiction written on the American Civil War: William Faulkner and Shelby Foote. Both native Mississippians, Faulkner and Foote focused much of their writings on Mississippi's past and a constant reflection on what it meant to live in the state. Faulkner became Mississippi's most revered author, with his works often focused on the complications of life between the South's old and new way of life.¹⁹² Foote, on the other hand, set many of his novels in a more traditional historical fiction space, with many of them focused on events from the war and examining life in the Old South. His most well-known work, the three-volume series *The Civil War: A Narrative*, was a narrative history on the war itself which launched him into national renown when Ken Burns featured it in his award-winning documentary "The Civil War."¹⁹³ However, both the works of Faulkner and Foote often focused on presenting their understanding of Mississippi's relationship with the Civil War. Despite their established importance within the Mississippi literary cannon, they took a much deeper point of analysis on the war than the popular media of the mid-twentieth century. Instead, the works white, male Mississippians produced with an express intent of mass consumption served as a clear example of Mississippi's silencing of Civil War era dissent.

Mississippi's literary culture produced many authors of Western fiction in the late twentieth-century whose work mirrored the themes of the popular television programs and films of the era. These short stories and novels often focused on vengeance, stoic male main characters, and were often set in the Southwest. Many of these authors

¹⁹²"William Faulkner," *Mississippi Encyclopedia Online*, Accessed April 12, 2021, <https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/william-faulkner/>.

¹⁹³"Shelby Foote," *Mississippi Encyclopedia Online*, Accessed April 18, 2021, <https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/shelby-foote/>.

received a great deal of recognition on a genre-level, with Mississippi authors often appearing in pulp magazines focused on the Western genre.¹⁹⁴ One of the state's most successful writers in the Western genre, John H. Culp, did not even live in the state when he wrote many of his most popular works. Culp was born and raised in Mississippi, but his later life took him to Texas and Oklahoma, where he lived when he wrote many of his most well-known works. One of his most successful novels, *The Bright Feathers*, however, showed that his experiences in Mississippi still influenced his writing. The novel follows a young man in Reconstruction-era Texas as he learned how to control his emotions and become a hero, transforming throughout from a naïve and hot-headed child to an honorable and fearless hero.¹⁹⁵ Like many of the contemporary television programs and films, there were no African-American characters, no mention of Civil War politics, and no mention of the process of reconstruction. Instead, it focused its entirety on masculine stoicism and honorable cowboys.

Despite leaving Mississippi, the state held great deal of influence over Culp. A Mississippi reviewer of his work noted that “Culp may have left Mississippi, but he is not without some memories of his home state,” and pointed out that many characters in the book seemed to be based on well-known local legends from the state.¹⁹⁶ More importantly though, *Bright Feathers* showed how the shifting national mood affected Mississippians, whether former or otherwise. Much like the T.V. programs at the time, Culp showed that he was less worried with representing the challenges of Civil War era,

¹⁹⁴Western pulp magazines like *Famous Westerns* published Mississippi authors like George Hudson Smith often, with many first finding success at that level.

¹⁹⁵John H. Culp, *The Bright Feathers* (New York, NY: Holt, Rineheart and Winston, 1965).

¹⁹⁶Kenneth R. Tokiver, “Rough and Ready Old West Days,” *The Delta Democrats-Times* (Greenville, MS), April 4, 1965.

and instead was happy to ignore them in favor of a narrative focused on heroism and white, masculine pride. This ideology appeared ten-fold when Mississippi authors attempted to dismantle these systems. Carl Corley, a Mississippi author who moved to Louisiana early in his publishing career, wrote a different kind of Western novel. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Corley was a prolific author of gay pulp novels that varied from genre to genre, but always focused on the themes of masculinity and the gay experience. Though he was well known in Mississippi for his work in science fiction and romance, his career as an author of gay Erotica and pornographic fiction was not public knowledge, despite his prolific career.¹⁹⁷ However, Corley's 1968 gay erotica novel *Satin Chaps*, served to reveal the deep-rooted cultural nature of the stoic male persona popular at the time.

Satin Chaps walked the line between erotica and gay pornography, but its lurid contents were not the parts of it which worked to reveal how white Mississippians understood the cultural systems which influenced them. Corely's life as a gay male in the South influenced him in his writing, as the main character of the novel is a Louisiana man who fled to Texas during the Civil War, seeking a place of lawlessness where he was free from the constraints of Southern society. Throughout the book he used this character to dismantle the masculine constructs presented in popular culture, and he did not hide his intention to do so. He posited in the book that many men in the South were hiding their "true selves" under the constraints of Southern society, and once they left, they relinquished those masculine constructs.¹⁹⁸ The masculine culture that these men were

¹⁹⁷Pat Flynn, "State Author Covers his Walls in Art," *Clarion-Ledger* (Jackson, MS), September 25, 1960.

¹⁹⁸Carl Corely, *Satin Chaps* (San Diego, CA: Publishers Export, 1968), 30-34.

fleeing in the book less resembled the culture of the Civil War era South than it did the culture of the twentieth-century South, and it is certain that Corley's own feelings about that system, and what it meant for his sexuality, influenced his writing. In fact, the Western genre often became the home of "sexual fantasy that captivated suburban men," both within straight and gay culture in the mid-twentieth century.¹⁹⁹ Corley's efforts to deconstruct the Western genre and reveal the realities of its masculine constructs, in turn, revealed his desire to understand his experiences in Mississippi. This is not to say, however, that Corley shed all of the tropes of the Western genre. In his description of Texas, he wrote that "there were Negro slaves everywhere," but that was the extent of his commentary on the life of enslaved people in the Civil War era.²⁰⁰ No enslaved people played a major role in the story, he gave no commentary on interracial relationships, and he made no effort to bring race relations to the forefront of his work. Here it is clear that though Corley worked to dismantle the masculine culture of the South through his writing, the life of African Americans in the Civil War era South was, like most other writers and producers in the Western genre, far from the first thing on his mind.

Much like the transition that film and television experienced in the mid-70s, Western fiction also began taking a turn towards the anti-governmental interference that *Josey Wales* represented. Mississippi writer Ralph D. Cross's 1979 book *Denton's Army* took the rhetoric of *Josey Wales* even further. The novel is a revenge story where a stoic cowboy with an unstoppable fast draw is hunting for a former Union soldier who killed his brother.²⁰¹ However, this time instead of a narrative of the Confederate sympathizer

¹⁹⁹Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 166.

²⁰⁰Corely, *Satin Chaps*, 24.

²⁰¹Ralph D. Cross, *Denton's Army* (New York, NY: Leisure Books, 1979), 16-18.

running from the unwanted interference of the North, the novel flipped that narrative and follows a former Confederate hunting down the villain, a former Union officer who now runs corrupt para-military group in the Southwest.²⁰² Throughout the novel Cross portrayed Denton, the former Union officer, as a murderous and power hungry monster who occupied a small town against their will, forcing them to live under his tyrannical rule. This narrative served as not only a clear commentary on the Reconstruction era, but also on the Civil Rights era South. Many Southerners, most segregationists like Ethel Knight, seeing both events as periods of intense federal overreach and Northern interference. It was clear that the shifting politics of the 1970s influenced Cross, and that he saw government oversteps as a clear violation of his American ideals.

Through the works of Western fiction they wrote, it is clear that the concepts and systems represented in popular Western T.V. programs and films were not abstract concepts to Mississippians. On a national level, they interacted with a very specific version of the Civil War past. They sought not to present an era strife with racial issues, but instead one centered around a narrative of heroism and constant government overreach. By the 1970s, the national narrative that surrounded the anti-federal government sentiment common in the South had shifted away from racial rhetoric, and, as Richard Nixon built his new Republican majority, so too did the efforts to memorialize the South. Nixon's new majority was based on Southern rhetoric self-determination and moral conservatism, but it left behind the South's reliance on overt racial politics.²⁰³ This left no room in the national representation of the American South for an open

²⁰²Cross, *Denton's Army*, 20-25.

²⁰³Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 370-372.

commentary on the racial pressures of the Civil War. These interactions with popular culture transformed the way that the national and local narratives around the war were represented, creating a culture of unspoken support for the South in the era of the New Right. In turn, Mississippi silenced the memory of men like Barnard and Knight through a process of simple avoidance.

Conclusions: Barnard, Knight, and Josey Wales

Much like how the same white supremacist mechanisms affected the memory of Barnard and Knight throughout the twentieth century, the way white Mississippians interacted with popular media later in the century showed why it was so easy for the memory of people like Barnard and Knight to be radically transformed. At first, it is certain that the South's resistance to reconciliation due to the racially charged politics of the 1950s and 1960s caused these memories to become distorted, but by the 1970s the shifting political landscape made it even easier for Mississippians to disregard parts of their past. The memories of Barnard and Knight were silenced due to their violation of the South's racial norms, that much is certain, but it is also important to note that as the national climate began to shift to a narrative of conservative morality and anti-government overreach, white Mississippians left the memories of men like Barnard and Knight behind.

Southern resistance to a total reconciliation between North and South persisted well into the mid-twentieth century, with the South seeing the federal government's interference in the region as a renewed version of the fight for a "southern way of life."²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 306-307.

However, it cannot be said that the combined efforts of reconciliation and white supremacists were not a “prelude to future reckonings,” and the idea that Americans choose what to accept and reject about their collective pasts rings true within the world of popular media.²⁰⁵ On a national scale, this process of accepting and rejecting pieces of the past manifested clearly in popular Western television programs and films. The story of fiery, sensitive men like Barnard did not fit into the narratives of stoic masculinity popular at the time, and this, combined with his racial dissent, caused Mississippians to leave his memory behind in an ever-changing cultural landscape. In regard to Newt Knight, the earliest versions of his story fit into this tradition of heroic stoicism well. James Street’s *Tap Roots* told a story similar to *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, with Knight’s stoic masculinity presented in full force. However, that story erased (because of his racial dissent) an idea that could not make it past the South’s self-filtered representation of its history. While the representation the Civil War was filtered through the new right in the 1970s, it is important to note that it was women like Ethel Knight who served as the pioneers of that transformation. Popular media which avoided racial topics and presented a Civil War era free of those stories allowed for those architects of the new conservatism to easily silence Mississippi’s history of dissent. In the end, the silenced memory of Barnard and Knight was the result of a regional conflict of interests and continual filtering of the Civil War past.

Barnard and Knight, despite the positive aspects of their memories, represented a part of the South’s past that the region did not want to preserve. Barnard was a fiery and confrontational man who dissented against the South’s social expectations, and Knight

²⁰⁵Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 397.

was a dissenter who held open distaste for the Confederacy and violated the state's deeply held racial norms. On a state level, as massive resistance to the Civil Rights movement gained support from white Mississippians, they left behind racially charged aspects of the state's past in favor of a more nationally appealing self-image. The South struggled with a national representation of itself, and through popular media like *The Rifleman* and *Bonanza*, it is clear that the northern and Western portions of the country also held a great deal of uncertainty over the potential for reconciliation. Even as southern politicians like George Wallace broke onto the national stage, the intense racial rhetoric popular in the South repulsed many of those outside of the region.²⁰⁶ As the overt segregationist politics of the South began to change, race still held a great deal of influence over the South, and in turn the entire country, and this was one of the core influences that led popular media to ignore the racially charged aspects of the Civil War. This combined with the shifting politics of the 1970s, as the political landscape shifted away from the racial politics of the 50s and 60s, to form a political landscape where the South could avoid its racist past.

These factors left the stories of Barnard and Knight behind. In an era where the focus was on the dissolution of the working class, the rise of the New Right, and Richard Nixon's new majority, the story of men like Barnard and Knight did not fit into Mississippi's preferred self-image. Much like the topic of race, many Mississippians still debated the stories of Barnard and Knight into the 1970s, but on a national scale their stories of racial dissent no longer fit the narrative that the state hoped to present.²⁰⁷ As

²⁰⁶Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 371.

²⁰⁷Historian Fitzhugh Brundage points out that in the mid-70s, even George Wallace had softened on racial resistance and accepted some aspects of racial progress.

Mississippi stepped away from its open discussion of race in the late 70s, it also walked away from a more open discussion of dissent. Efforts were made to forget aspects of the state's past and create a new kind of Civil War history free of racial issues. However, as scholar David Rieff points out, memorialization "is a place for solidarity rather than subtlety."²⁰⁸ White supremacy silenced dissent in Mississippi in the first sixty years of the twentieth century, and in the 1970s the state's shifting place in national politics did just the same.

²⁰⁸David Rieff, *In Praise of Forgetting: Historical Memory and Its Ironies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 111.

CONCLUSION– RACE, SELF-IMAGE, AND THE SILENCING OF DISSENT IN
MISSISSIPPI

“But without at least the option of forgetting, we would be wounded monsters, unforgiving and unforgiven.”-David Rieff

Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard and Newt Knight were only two of an unknowable number of white men who dissented against the cultural systems of Civil War-era Mississippi. However, the way that white Mississippians manipulated, transformed, and eventually silenced their memories throughout the twentieth century was characteristic of similar cases throughout the state. The memory of dissent in Mississippi passed through three distinct stages of memorialization. First, the memorialization that took place at the moment of dissent, second the memorialization which took place in the decades immediately after the event, and third the memorialization which came over a hundred years after the war. The stories of Barnard, Knight, and Mississippi’s interaction with popular culture show the power these memorial stages held over the state and the way in which these mechanisms, from the fluctuating nature of the Lost Cause to the rise of the New Right, developed. White dissent was only a small part of the shifting nature of the Lost Cause, but it shows how Confederate culture and white reactions to race held an immense amount of power over the way white Mississippians memorialized dissent. Beyond the Lost Cause, white identity and its reactionary stance on race held an immense influence on the way that the New Right and popular culture interacted with the memories of Barnard and Knight on numerous levels.

Barnard's violation of racial norms within the confines of antebellum southern honor and Knight's dissent against the Confederate government and complicated family structure were controversial at the time, but throughout the twentieth century those events became amplified within the constructs of Southern white society. The segregationist culture of the South was founded on the idea of a white identity in total opposition to black identity, and stories like those of Barnard and Knight threatened that system and Mississippi silenced them in the name of Southern culture and white supremacy. Though the state did at times recognize the positive aspects of these stories, a constant process of selective memory and reinterpretation amplified the perceived negatives in a way that rendered the memories of men like Barnard and Knight unrecognizable. Throughout the 1970s, Mississippi molded a self-image that white citizens of the state could accept and this was finalized as the national political landscape shifted away from racial rhetoric and toward the rise of the new right. Popular culture showed that Mississippians were aware of this change, at least on some level, and in turn focused much of their popular media on a version of the Civil War free of commentary on slavery or the South's racial hierarchy. Even as racial oppression continued into the 1970s, it did so in more subdued ways less obvious to the public, and Mississippi's efforts to silence Civil War era racial dissent followed suit. Gone were the days of Ethel Knight and open manipulation of the past; instead, a process of simple avoidance took its place. However, people like Ethel Knight and her political influences utilized, and at times pioneered, that processes of avoidance in order to further cement the South's place within the new conservative majority. These ideas, in turn, built on the traditions and cultural systems that had influenced the south for more than a century.

The ideas of Southern honor, masculine stoicism, and white identity were each invented tradition in the truest sense. The nostalgic obsession which characterized American memorial traditions amplified these processes in the second half of the twentieth century. As those processes transformed, white Mississippians made efforts to create a new version of the Civil War era past founded in southern pride, modern patriotism, and masculine pride that also left behind the stories of racial politics. However, that is not to say that the transformed memories of Barnard and Knight served as part of the reconciliation process. Instead, the way that Mississippians manipulated their memories and silenced positive aspects of their past represented a fundamental opposition to reconciliation. As white Mississippians grappled with the perceived northern interference in the Civil Rights movement, their oppositional stance to black identity caused them to totally reject the idea of racial dissent and a history worth of memorialization coexisting. However, popular-culture representations of the South did represent a kind of reconciliation aimed at presenting both sides of the conflict as capable of great good and great evil. Through this new lens of memorialization, Mississippians attempted to forget aspects of their past in favor of creating a new kind of Civil War history for the state; thus, the memories of racial dissenters, men like Barnard and Knight, were left behind.

However, the stories of Barnard and Knight were not left behind forever. Today, the memorializations of both these men has once again transformed. The memory of Barnard as a champion of science and academic achievement is well represented on the campus of the University of Mississippi. He is the namesake for one of the University's National Merit Scholars scholarships, and the nineteenth-century scientific observatory

on campus is named after him. Today the observatory is the home to the Southern Studies Program, which focuses on the examination of southern history and culture.²⁰⁹ However, this modern interpretation focuses entirely on Barnard's scientific achievement and avoids the issues of his racial dissent and trial all together. No mention is made of the trial or his efforts to defend Jane on campus, and no efforts are made to contextualize his scientific achievement alongside those events. Instead, much like how white Mississippians silenced Barnard through an amplification of his negative traits, modern day Mississippians are once again avoiding the tough aspects of Barnard's story.²¹⁰

Newt Knight has experienced a similar renewed interpretation. The story of Knight and the Free State of Jones, which was once a controversial story warred over by the Jones County community, now serves as the centerpiece for the county's tourism system. The Knight Family cemetery now offers guided tours that champion Knight's heroic efforts to defend both the white and black citizens of the county, and Jones County has named itself, "The New State of Jones," ensuring visitors that they are indeed in Knight's Free State.²¹¹ Not only is Knight's story used as a consumeristic tool, but the national interpretation has also utilized this renewed vision. In 2016 Bynum's monograph was loosely adapted into the major film *The Free State of Jones* which characterizes Knight as a brave, honorable hero and champion of the enslaved in a way that exceeds

²⁰⁹More information about the Barnard scholarship can be found at <https://finaid.olemiss.edu/tnc/barnard/> and more information about the Barnard Observatory can be found at https://web.archive.org/web/20070503102832/http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/u_museum/barnard.htm.

²¹⁰There is a great deal of interpretation of Barnard's trial and racial dissent, along with an interpretation of his status as a slave holder on campus at Columbia University, more information can be found at <https://columbiaandslavery.columbia.edu/content/fap-barnard-10th-president-columbia-university>, however none of this renewed interpretation has yet appeared on campus at the University of Mississippi.

²¹¹Information on the Knight family cemetery is available at <https://newtknightsfreestate.com/> and Jones County's tourism efforts can be seen at <https://thenewstateofjones.com/>.

even James Street's *Tap Roots*.²¹² White Mississippians have renewed the memories of Barnard and Knight, but they have done so in a way that continues to silence the difficult aspects of their stories. This change might characterize both of these dissenters in more positive ways, but it does so in a way that continues to whitewash the reality of the past. Barnard is a champion of academic progress, but his dissent is never mentioned, and Knight is a perfect hero with the complexities of his character obscured by bombastic action and consumerism.

None of this is to say that the stories of Barnard, Knight, and popular culture represented the entirety of Mississippi memory making processes. The inherent limitations of case studies means that no combination of analysis can ever totally represent a period in history. However, through the analysis of these three case studies, the major themes that molded the white memory of Civil War dissent in Mississippi become apparent. Southern cultural norms, white supremacy, and memory manipulation caused the state to transform the memories of racial dissent into something which the state could disregard in its larger memorialization of the war. By 1979 white Mississippians had firmly transformed the story of dissent in the state. Though that new memorialization was challenged on a local and national scale throughout the rest of the twentieth century, it is undeniable that the way racial dissent clashed with the state's conceptualization of white identity caused the memory of Barnard and Knight to be reshaped throughout the era. Throughout the first seventy-nine years of the twentieth century, the memory of Civil War era dissent was silenced in the name of Mississippi white cultural norms.

²¹²*The Free State of Jones*. STXFilms, 2016. Digital Streaming. Amazon Video, 2020.

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