

HAUNTED MISSISSIPPI: GHOSTS, IDENTITY, AND COLLECTIVE NARRATIVE

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford  
May 2018

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ABSTRACT:  
HAILEY PEYTON COOPER: Haunted Mississippi: Ghosts, Identity, and  
Collective Narrative  
(Under the direction of Kathryn McKee)

This thesis wrestles with the duality of the terms “haunting” and “ghosts” in relation to Mississippi and its collective identity and narrative. Ghostlore and haunted tourism provide insight into shared cultural constructs and indicate an absence of certain perspectives from more generally held ideas of identity. Analyses of ghost stories from around the state explore these hauntings of history and ghosted narratives, so it is ghosts v. ghosted and hauntings v. haunted. I use ghost stories from Natchez, MS to explore postsouthern spaces and performances of “southernness” and the narratives around female apparitions to study the role of southern womanhood in collective identity, while the apparitions of the University Greys and the University of Mississippi serve the examination of Lost Cause mythology. This investigation into the effects of these deletions and selected stories are told through the lens of a reflective, lifelong Mississippian as I wonder: What haunts Mississippi?

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ii
INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER I.....	19
CHAPTER II.....	42
CHAPTER III .....	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	85

## Introduction

*If you've come for a charming collection of ghost stories from Mississippi, you might be disappointed by this thesis' interpretation of haunting. As the title suggests, this is a thesis about the ghosts of Mississippi's past and the ideas that continue to haunt it in the present day. Taking inspiration from Anderson, Hagood, and Turner's Undead Souths: The Gothic and Beyond in Southern Literature and Culture, I attempt to expand the idea of haunting from the narrow definition of paranormal experience to one that explores the residual complexities of a turbulent past that often "ghosts" individuals from its accounts. In one thesis I have attempted the ambitious task of understanding the issues of history, narrative construction, and identity through the lens of ghosts and ghostlore. The results are imperfect and only scrape the surface of the intricate histories of Mississippi, but they enter the discussion of a white collective narrative and southernness, which I hope will lead to further critical analysis and forward progress. Ghosts and ghosted unite in this work to wonder: What haunts Mississippi?*

A good friend from home understood my obsession with antebellum history and culture, so we spent the rainy, dreary, December day of my twentieth birthday in Vicksburg, Mississippi, exploring the old court house, filled with Confederate artifacts, and the Vicksburg Military Park, the site of the Siege of Vicksburg and a massive Confederate loss in the Civil War. Our fourth grade

class had taken a field trip to the military park years before, and I couldn't help but notice the shifts in my perceptions from the first visit to the second. Nine year old Hailey, who came on the first visit with her class, held the South in the highest esteem: Hank Williams, Jr. was one of her favorite artists, NASCAR was still the height of competitive sport in her mind, and anyone who believed Mississippi to be anything short of perfect was, simply, misinformed. To be honest the trip to Vicksburg with my fourth grade class held a level of nostalgia and sadness for me, not only for the loss of life which occurred there but also for the idea a of South as strong and perfect as the one I had imagined for myself losing in a war of ideals. But how did a fourth grader, with only a very basic understanding of the timeline of the Civil War and its context and nine years to her lifetime come to identify so strongly with a narrative of Mississippi pride and romanticized imagery?

The second visit to Vicksburg occurred after I had taken multiple courses in southern studies, Mississippi history, and other classes related to the context of the antebellum South, so I understood much more about the context of the artifacts and spaces I was experiencing. Because of this new information, I understood the causes of the Civil War and issues surrounding the antebellum South, and my questions regarding the critical analysis of the narratives that I held dear created friction between the story I had been told about Mississippi's history for years and the findings that I was beginning to uncover for myself. These

tensions between the collective narrative that I held in such regard and the empirical evidence that I have found through my recent studies led to this critical analysis of a Mississippi that has existed within its citizens' minds for so much of history.

In 2015 Harper Lee released the much anticipated prequel to her beloved classic, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. *Go Set a Watchman* immediately became a point of contention, as long-time fans of the novel's patriarch, Atticus Finch, found the new release damning and unfair to a character whom they had cherished as a model on so many levels, while others enjoyed the character development surrounding the protagonist, Scout Finch. Atticus, long held as an example of progressive racial attitudes in a Jim Crow South, leads a White Citizens Council meeting in the novel, and the audience joins Scout in watching the romanticized image of Atticus crumble. Suddenly, the example we've set for the ideal character, who has been acclaimed for decades as a beacon of reason and wisdom, is no longer perfect. Our childlike perspective of a man, whom we elevated to godlike status, is stripped away by the reality of a deeper, multifaceted character, and many readers are unable to see past this crumbling image to a changing culture and clash of past and present.

We'll call this thesis my *Go Set a Watchman*.

Whether I like it or not, my awareness of the nuances and failings of the groups I've so long idolized is here to stay, and I'm finding I'm not alone. For many in my generation, these revelations and realizations have led to a disjointedness within both ourselves and the ways in which we interact with the

world around us. Globalization and the rise of technology have provided me and my peers with access to outside perspectives that was previously inaccessible, so there is a tension between generations due to variations on outlook. It is in this time of tumultuous discomfort that this thesis has come to be, and the finished product is my imperfect attempt to create a cohesive narrative for myself and to wrestle and overcome these questions, inconsistencies, and flawed characters that have emerged in this process.

Thus, the natural progression of my research became focused upon the narratives we, as white Mississippians, have come to believe and retell. Who decides the narrative, what does it include, what does it exclude, and why is this the narrative we choose to perpetuate? A greater, larger narrative in addition to the minor stories collected in conjunction with it have become synonymous with identity for many Mississippians. This makes anything new or differing from the established narrative personally jolting. It is this obsession with tradition and radical abhorrence of anything which strays from it that defines much of Mississippi's past, yet I cannot help but hope that introspective analyses such as this one can lead Mississippi into a new tradition: one that incorporates previously excluded stories and welcomes discomfort.

I consider myself a case study for this belief, as this new perspective on the old traditions that I had once accepted, wholeheartedly, has been eye opening, disturbing, and strangely entertaining. Each chapter of this work reflects an object or idea that has become crucial to the overarching narrative attached to the state of Mississippi, its people, and its reputation. This fixation on a Confederacy,

specifically, continuing to haunt a present civilization and its progress manifests in almost all of the stories around our identity, whether directly through Civil War ghosts and ideas or indirectly through the repercussions of these ghosts and their impacts on Mississippi's history in the Civil Rights Movement and beyond. I, myself, am a product of this narrative, as I have spent my entire life as a member of Mississippi's population, yet a critical eye developed by differing perspectives has allowed me to critically evaluate things that I have long held in esteem. Topics covered in these chapters, like plantation tourism, southern belle mythology, and the traditions associated with Ole Miss, have always fascinated me, so the destruction of their charm and simplicity has been especially unsettling.

The ghosts of Mississippi, whom I had always believed to be entertaining spectres of a time long gone, represent a haunting history that lives through to present day. These characters and their stories guide us through the larger ideas that still haunt Mississippi and provide insight into the perspective of those included in their stories and those reflected by modern storytellers. Our attempts to personify the unexplained bumps and sounds experienced within old structures reveal aspects of our collective fears and unconscious biases that mirror the larger narrative of Mississippi. By breaking these overarching ideas that have been collected into smaller, amusing tales about interesting and unique characters, ghostlore allows a raw analysis of the details of Mississippi's citizens' perspectives, which are often haunted by characters and ideas believed to be long dead.



## Chapter I

Ghosts and ghost stories allow a modern, attentive audience to study the “winning” perspectives, those that have secured a dominant, lasting position in the folklore, as their characters and backstories often speak to a pro-Confederate, romanticized version of a white-centered history. In Mississippi the physical hauntings often coincide with a haunting character or characteristic of some event which has occurred within or around the historical/haunted site, itself. These physical spaces become living, lasting connections between narrative, parable, or ideas, giving abstract concepts the ability to withstand time by occupying space. As spectres haunt the structure, the ideas and perspectives tied to them become synonymous with the structure or place, itself. This connection between memory and physical space becomes commodifiable as tourism and allows for capitalism to infiltrate the relationship. I’m unsure of how many tour group members at antebellum homes are critically analyzing every aspect of the tour, from its points of interest to historical figures to hauntings recounted, but I can’t imagine it is very many. Natchez plantations have always held stories that I have found fascinating, and the reputation of hauntings associated with the structures drew me, a member of a massive demographic interested in haunted tourism, through the gates of multiple plantation homes during the spring break of my junior year in 2017. My research on Mississippi ghostlore prior to embarking on the trip to Natchez revealed a large presence of haunted tourism, with entire books on the subject of Natchez hauntings, relaying stories of the houses and locations I intended to visit, myself. I carried one of these books with me from house to

house and read relevant passages aloud to my lukewarm audience of friends, since the tour guides seemed uninterested in doing so.

Imagine my disappointment when the tour guides on each tour denied every case of haunting I brought up during the question and answer portion at the end of the tour, during which I hoped to grasp at something for my proposed thesis about Mississippi's haunted houses. A few years prior to this trip, I had visited Natchez with a friend and her family, who had a special interest in hauntings, and the guidebooks and tourist information they followed had included a plethora of haunted tales and experiences for visitors. Tour guides had entertained us with anecdotes of their personal encounters with the ghosts of the house, and almost every home had documented spirits who haunted the living. By the time of my college spring break visit, however, the public narrative surrounding the plantation tourism industry in Natchez had undergone a major shift towards a bed and breakfast economy.

What was previously focused on storytelling and haunting characters in tours had transitioned towards objective, architectural information, and the homes' current roles as bed and breakfasts had become their most marketable quality. The idea of a filtered narrative applies to haunted lore, as the haunted tourism industry relies on the marketability of its stories and characters to generate profit. This income often cycles back into the physical structure of the plantation house in the form of renovation or upkeep in order to maintain the capitalistic cycle. This chapter's study of the plantation narrative and the commodification of history and antebellum structures acts as a reflection of the

greater haunting of Mississippi by the events and people who had left a lasting impression on the place.

Natchez, Mississippi, embodies the spirit of haunted tourism, which Tiya Miles explores in her book *Tales from the Haunted South: Dark Tourism and Memories of Slavery from the Civil War Era*. Miles asserts that dark tourism is nothing more than fragments of tragedies fluffed and sold to tourists. Natchez's historic homes host guided tours year-round for those who come to see its picturesque architecture, and its cemetery boasts the appellation "The Most Interesting Cemetery in the South." (Estes) Because the small town is situated at a bookend of the Natchez Trace, Natchez has its fair share of characters, and many of them are rumored to have remained despite death and the passage of time. The town's relationship with its past inhabitants and their stories becomes apparent during the Natchez Garden Club's annual Pilgrimage event. Complete with all things fitting the image of the Old South, the week allows for physical manifestations of the "ghosts" of the past that haunt the living, and the tours given in Natchez, particularly as part of the Pilgrimage, are highly scripted and regulated, with either the Garden Club or the Board of Directors of the tour homes dictating the "truth" of their histories (*Natchezpilgrimage.com*). Just like the greater history of Mississippi, a select handful of individuals get to decide the common narrative and who/what it includes.

Physical, tangible representations of a past often romanticized keep the polished narrative at the forefront of Natchez tourism, void of the unpleasantness of the reality of slavery. As Jessica Adams argues in *Wounds of Returning*, the

modern plantation, which is accessible to anyone who pays an entrance fee, is part of a process which works to separate slavery from the plantation (17). This separation allows the proliferation of a narrative surrounding the plantation about what the antebellum South could have looked like, rather than what it actually was. Natchez, with its prolific haunted folklore, serves as an exemplary backdrop for the analysis of ghosts as reflections of the ideals projected onto physical spaces and places. Its concrete tour scripts and guides provide a historical narrative that helps us to better understand the attitudes and mythology surrounding its haunted structures and mindsets, in addition to revealing the “ghosting” of certain characters or groups from a narrative. The exclusion of certain groups from the collective narrative is evidenced by Patricia Yaeger’s description of “throwaway bodies” in *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women’s Writing 1930-1990*, in which she argues that black bodies were regarded by antebellum whites as “things that are disposable, of no account, and can be safely thrown away” (86). These objectified individuals are discarded from any memories of the antebellum South since the desired effect is an antebellum plantation narrative devoid of violence, racism, and widespread suffering.

Throwaway bodies and ghosting in Natchez, when paired with Scott Romine’s idea in *The Real South: Southern Narrative in the Age of Cultural Reproduction* of a postsouthern narrative, argue the importance of folklore and ghostlore as commodified consumer goods, as bodies and characters must be excluded or “ghosted” in order to cultivate a more marketable product. In the case of the southern plantation tourism industry in Natchez, this manifests in the

tours and narratives bought by consumers. The commodified image of the plantation south, or the postsouthern narrative, must be palatable and include the often unspoken elements like food, manners, language, etcetera. held within the concept of “southernness” (Romine 7). Martyn Bone, in *The Postsouthern Sense of Place in Contemporary Fiction*, argues that this postsouthern construct stems from a need to create a collective, distinct southern culture in the post-Civil War era. Southerners accepted that they would not have a unified geographic or political South, and culture filled the role. Thus, southernness became a performance of etiquette, language, image, etcetera. deemed “southern”. Natchez embodies this postsouthern style in its tourism, which revolves around this postsouthern construct of space and culture to establish a unified, southern image of itself (Bone 5).

In the case of Natchez, tours and performances of the African American experience are offered, though none of their contents appear on the other tours of the historic homes, indicating an attempt at dichotomy of white and black histories in the city (Davis 3). The necessity of a separate market for the consumers seeking this experience points to the lack of inclusion of perspectives other than those of the powerful, white elite in the narratives perpetuated within the plantation homes that offer glimpses of the plantation narrative. Additionally, many of the events included in the agency’s repertoire are dinner performances, connecting that postsouthern performance aspect across racial divides (“Miss Lou Heritage Group & Tours - Natchez Pilgrimage Tours”). This tour evidences, however, that the figures whom Mississippians have ghosted are emerging in

modern Mississippi and that the ghosts of the ghosted are bringing their perspectives into the light. Their presence is complicating the shallow, pleasant narratives that Mississippi sustains through its collective narrative for the sake of tourism.

## Chapter II

During my middle school experience one of the major fashion trends was that of the southern belle shirt. This line of t-shirts included a consistent logo on the front pocket and some short quip about southern women on the back, usually relating to the love of a sport, Bible verse, or catchy quote about southern women being strong or sassy. The mythology of the ideal southern woman made its appearance on the backs of women all over the South, but I believe that there were few prouder of the stereotype perpetuated by these shirts or their charming aphorisms than middle school Hailey. My favorite shirt during this time period was bright pink and read, “If you mess with this Mississippi girl, you mess with the whole trailer park.” I find this disconcerting on multiple levels now because of the image associated with this southern belle character in the minds of southern women in addition to the fact that this shirt was in no way attractive, and I had never lived in a trailer park. The postsouthern image I was living through this shirt and the portrayal it gave of the southern belle displayed a collective culture that emphasized a particular postsouthern branding.

For contemporary concerns like destruction of traditional gender norms, unfulfilled lives, changing societal norms, etcetera, the female spirits and apparitions act as blank canvases for the subconscious projections of their modern

audiences. While the same can be said for many ghosts, regardless of gender, the adamant stories and personalities assigned to female apparitions and ghosts speak to the subordinate roles of southern women during the antebellum period. “The Cavalier”, “Loyal Slave”, “Violent Native”, and the “Southern Belle”:

Mississippi’s stories mostly revolve around these key figures, but the Southern Belle’s residual presence is one that continues to dominate the collective narrative of Mississippi. The stories surrounding these ghostly women are often vague in their descriptions of the woman’s character or motives, leaving modern audiences room to generate their own narratives around these intangible entities and the loosely evidenced facts of their lives.

The Southern Belle emerged with the rise of the Cult of Domesticity and the Cavalier Myth. Men who fantasized about Anglo-Saxon noble blood imagined themselves the lords of the Middle Ages, so a parallel fair lady model served as the paradigm of womanhood. Impossible to fully execute but nonetheless prescribed and insisted upon, the Cult of Domesticity, as defined by Barbara Welter in *The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860*, demanded “piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity”, but the romanticized ideology of the antebellum South heightened these expectations to polarizing levels (152). Anne Jones offers further discussion of the mythology in *Tomorrow is Another Day: The Woman Writer in the South, 1859 - 1936* by pointing out that a Southern woman must be strong but soft, pure but not to expect the same from her husband, and mindful but effortless in her attempts to emulate perfection (Jones 9). Southern belle mythology continues to manifest throughout Mississippi in its pop

culture, manners, and present image of true womanhood, so the ghostly figures of a past marked as the norm in the collective memory continue to project themselves from the subconscious to the physical world through the paranormal.

Theoretically, the southern belle figure would have died with the loss of the Confederacy and the system of slavery in the Civil War, as this character acted as the counterpart to the dominant male head of the plantation household in the post war paternalistic justification of slavery. However, just as the ghosts of that system continue to haunt Mississippi throughout its history into present day, the mythology of the southern belle lives on through the narratives held in the collective history of citizens of the state. Chapter II of this thesis explores the complexities and contradictions involved in the southern belle myth, outlining the expectations applied to women in antebellum Mississippi and comparing them to modern audiences' interpretations.

The ghost of this chapter is especially vague in the details surrounding her backstory, and the concrete evidence for the source of this legend is nonexistent. Archie Archer does not exist in the realm of the historical record, yet in the narrative, she is assigned conflicting characteristics through the popular account by Kathryn Tucker Windham in *13 Mississippi Ghosts and Jeffrey*. Archie allows modern audiences the opportunity to project their own ideas about southern womanhood onto a relatively uncomplicated backdrop: is she a lovelorn maiden, a spiteful firebrand, or maybe something else entirely? Our own answers speak to the perspectives we hold, and even my first reading of the story led me to believe this character to be potentially feminist.



Why, though? There is nothing in the text to support a feminist analysis, and there is no historical evidence to prove this characterization as plausible. In much the same way, the ghost stories Mississippians tell ourselves and each other are frightening and introspective, and many of us never realize it. Another concern I choose to focus on in this chapter deals with the women we have, intentionally or not, excluded from the ghostlore of Mississippi in addition to their connection to the greater theme of ghosting certain characters from the overarching narrative assigned to the state and its people. Black women, specifically, make few to no appearances in the ghostlore of Mississippi, which I argue reflects their absence from the greater historical narrative. Their perspective is often that of the victims of a violent and brutal society, causing storytellers to delete them from the stories we choose to preserve.

### Chapter III

There often comes a time in our experiences where we find ourselves perpetuating some sort of stereotype, and one of my many stereotypical moments came in the form of unintentionally ending up on a blind date to an Ole Miss fraternity function with a Confederate sympathizer. He had no qualms admitting that he had cried at age eight, when he discovered that the South had lost the Civil War, and his commentary throughout the evening was unashamedly correlated with Lost Cause ideology. My experience at the University of Mississippi had been relatively free of blatant pro-Confederate language, but it was on the bus ride to this event that the university's relationship with the Lost Cause hit me like a ton of bricks. This is a campus marked by its association with the plantation

narrative and the Lost Cause mythology of the post-Civil War South, but what maintains this association? Why are the ghosts of the Confederacy the ghosts that haunt us?

The themes of ghosts as a projection of the unconscious among physical spaces and structures acting as sites of memory coincide with the campus of the University of Mississippi, which is haunted by the spirits and collective memory of its Confederate past. Spectres and inaudible or invisible ghosts are joined by tangible, highly visible Confederate memorials, which act as concrete, permanent displays of the university's history surrounding slavery and the Lost Cause. These monuments, erected well after the surrender at Appomattox, reflect the mythology of the Lost Cause, which emerged following the Civil War in an attempt to maintain the identity solidified by the Confederacy after the Civil War (Neff 1). This concept of the Lost Cause, which Charles Wilson outlines in his work *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900*, is defined by southerners' ability to accept that "a southern political nation was not to be...but the dream of a cohesive southern people with a separate cultural identity replaced the longing" (1). Religion is tied to history in order to cement the unified identity found in the Civil War, and the culture that emerges around this mythology is therefore more unbending due to the fixedness of religion, especially as it exists in the South.

In Chapter III I work through the route of a ghostly parade through campus in order to explore these questions more carefully, analyzing the geographic spaces the specters encounter on their march in addition to those they

avoid and then drawing parallels between these places, structures, and the narrative aspects they reflect. The urban legends associated with the University Greys highlight key factors in the conscious and unconscious characterizations of the University of Mississippi's collective narrative and reputation as a Lost Cause stronghold.

Lost Cause mythology is further solidified in the structures constructed during its years of peak influence following the Civil War. Statues and monuments serve as physical memorials to a deceased generation, just as the ghosts of those who entrusted the cause to the generations that followed them continue to occupy space on campus, as well as within the collective mindset of the university's student body. Students are unable to forget the sacrifices and beliefs of the ghosts of the Confederacy, as the ghostlore surrounding ghosts on campus is intentionally vague yet widespread.

The ghosts of campus are almost entirely unnamed entities, unlike the ghosts of plantation homes or the multitude of vague, ambiguous female ghosts. Their contribution is collaborative, so the individual is overshadowed by the Lost Cause mythology surrounding the Confederacy. This reflects their status as members of a larger narrative, one that esteems the collective efforts of a region in order to maintain its values, rather than individual characters and contributions. Whether their personal stories were undermined by the overarching narrative of the Confederacy or there were simply too many perspectives to be documented in the tumult of defeat, characters do not emerge from the fog of the Civil War.

Individuals are beginning to appear, however, and they do not all subscribe to the Confederate ideals that have dominated memory for so long.

New perspectives, the uncomfortable and unpleasant kind that we like to exclude and ignore, from the university's past are beginning to mark their places in the collective narrative, however, and the physical structures that serve as spaces of memorial are emerging. Those who were ghosted from the narrative, just as they have been ghosted from the ghostlore, are moving inward from the periphery and demanding a space in the overarching story. It is uncomfortable and unsettling to include these, often violent and unjust, aspects of history, yet the university is beginning to take its metaphorical step back in order to watch the more ensemble, Scout Finch-esque perspective develop.

In conclusion my studies have proven that the narrative of Mississippi is complex and impossible to understand in only two years and 100 pages. Mississippi is tormented by characters and themes of the past, despite its attempts to dispel its ghosts. Its ghosts are intricate with nuanced and far-reaching implications, which is further complicated by the aspects of our history that we have ghosted from conscious memory. Tourism and capitalism perpetuate certain profitable aspects of historical imagery, with Natchez encompassing the postsouthern idea of the Old South. Southern belles and the Cult of Domesticity create a dimension which traps many characters in an exhausting, perpetual limbo, reflected in the stories we tell about female ghosts, and their sources and the conclusions they draw from us speak to their continuation into modern day. Campus at the University of Mississippi projects the past that haunts its

population through its symbolism, citing a strong sense of tradition as the source of its version of history, while attempting to finally allow ghosted groups the opportunity to interject. As we long time citizens of the state of Mississippi begin the introspective, uncomfortable process of piecing together a new overarching history that will include the stories we have worked so hard to forget, our identity and the security that comes with it are shaken. However, the discomfort that these haunting characters and their tragedies bring will lead us to a better understanding of ourselves and our stories, which will bring about a lasting improvement in the state and its people.

## Chapter I

In the quiet town of Natchez, Mississippi, lie some of the most haunted spaces in the United States, with King's Tavern topping many of the rankings in paranormal activity. According to Alan Brown, employees and visitors report footsteps, spontaneously mobile glassware that flies from its place on the shelf, a ghostly child's wailing, full-bodied apparitions, and more, and inquiring at the bar will earn a video taken by security camera that clearly shows the bar's mini-fridge opening without assistance at four o'clock in the morning. The history of King's Tavern holds harrowing tales from the time when it served as a bookend for the dangerous, violence-ridden trading route of the Natchez Trace. Constructed in 1769 and converted to an inn in 1789, the tavern has seen its share of adventurers, murder, and intrigue, but its paranormal reputation was not secured until the 1930's, when renovations awakened whatever spirits had lain dormant since the building's opening and sparked a paranormal playground.

It was during the Great Depression that construction workers discovered three long-decomposing bodies behind the inn's original fireplace, and the story of Madeline the spirit rose to prominence. According to legend, Mr. King had found a mistress in one of the inn's young, female workers, Madeline. A beautiful girl of about fifteen, Madeline became a source of jealousy for the vengeful Mrs. King, who, true to the crime-ridden tradition of the Trace, allegedly hired assassins to rid her of her husband's mistress. Proof of the contract

arranged by Mrs. King was apparently as much of an open secret as Mr. King's affair had been, so the discovery behind the fireplace, which included the body of a young woman of Madeline's age and two male bodies, only strengthened the story's flame for the locals who had believed the story for a century. It was assumed that the two additional bodies belonged to peripheral victims of Mrs. King's assassins, who naturally used the ideal hiding place as their own dumping ground. It was the discovery of her final resting place which allowed Madeline the freedom to exploit her restless spirit, for it followed this grisly discovery that she became King's Tavern's friendly residual haunt.

Curious parties from around the world travel to Natchez for experiences at spaces like King's Tavern, where the playful spirit of Madeline turns on faucets, leaves footprints in freshly-mopped floors, and hurls glass bottles across the bar from their assigned spaces on the shelf, to everyone's delight and horror. She is joined by a few other characters from the inn's Trace-esque history, including a wailing infant, whose skull was smashed into a wall by a drunk tradesman. The man, who was awakened by its cries in the night, swung the child by its ankles into the wall of supposed eternal silence. The stubborn infant, however, continues to wail when anyone ventures onto the third floor where it was temporarily silenced by one of the inn's brutal regulars (Brown 113).

### *Section I: Resurrecting and Rewriting*

The rather violent events that brought King's Tavern its claims to fame are reframed as interesting oddities, as they relate to the present, instead of horrifying incidents that were then left to history for memorial. By resurrecting Madeline

from the permanence of death as a ghost, those who come to hear the tale and experience the haunting are able to rewrite her story, to an extent. Instead of the straightforwardness of a young woman murdered by hired assassins, which invokes feelings of pity and helplessness in the general public, a ghost who enjoys physical autonomy by interacting with contemporary patrons allows the modern audience a happier ending. No longer a helpless victim, Madeline the ghost controls her physical surroundings and is able to live on, in a way, a much less discouraging image for the present, living audience, who may subconsciously feel some level of fear about the subject of control in their own lives. This is projected onto the abstract construct of the spirit of Madeline, who acts as a backdrop on which these fears can interact with identity and narrative.

Ghost stories are retold for the benefit of the living, and the haunted places to which we assign them serve as a space for physical representations of these narratives we celebrate as a postsouthern culture. There are, arguably, three steps to effectively commodifying a piece of history, and they are as follows: rewrite historical fact in order to make it palatable to the common consumer, establish this marketable rendition as commonly accepted truth, and then profit from the first two steps for as long as possible by maintaining the narrative's authenticity through the position of authority established in the process. It is through "ghosting" the unpleasant or unprofitable aspects of southern history that the postsouthern constructed South is commodified and marketed, and the haunted tales utilized in order to further this pattern are but stark means by which to reach this end.



Natchez's twice-annual Pilgrimage festival acts as an ideal case study for this theory, as tourists from around the world, ranging from those who have fallen in love with Scarlett O'Hara after watching their DVD copy of *Gone with the Wind* until it broke to those who have lived 100 yards from a historic home their entire lives and enjoy watching the displays of their beloved histories twice a year. Tours of "historic homes," led by guides in hoop skirts or other antebellum garb follow a script which follows a very specific historical narrative, and reenactments of Civil War events or the personalities buried in the Natchez City Cemetery temporarily resurrect the city's long-deceased reputation of a city with the highest rate of millionaires per square acre in the United States ("Fun Facts about Natchez"). Fulfillment of the illusions created by the postsouthern market can be expensive, however, as individual home tours start at \$15 per person, and the largest historical tour package runs at \$175 per person ("Insiders Tours and Packages"). The price of \$15 might appear attainable, but considering the number of historic homes in Natchez and tourism industry's widespread support, it is unlikely that a visitor would only purchase one tour. Thus, while the price of admission of one house would seem reasonable, the 15 minute tours would collaborate to an unapproachable cost for many demographics interested in the history of Natchez.

These prices serve to provide indications regarding the audiences interested in these histories, as much of the customer base for the Natchez Tourism industry, which includes those most desiring the justification of a past more stomachable than accurate, would be willing to pay the exorbitant prices

charged for multiple walking tours of historic spaces. Lofty admission prices lead to a specific demographic composition of these tour groups and lend an air of exclusivity to the tours that the general population of Mississippi might have trouble accessing financially. Price deters many from accessing the tour, which, in turn, has led to a more extensive ghosting of the aspects of history that do not serve the white, middle class or other more affluent groups. Natchez tourism is accessed by individuals from around the world, but this seemingly diverse group is limited in its economic background. Tourists flock to Natchez, willing to pay these prices and expecting a narrative that fits the one southerners have created for themselves.

Consider the cost of many history museums around the nation that educate the public on historical subjects for the purpose of a more knowledgeable public citizenry. The Smithsonian museums of American History and Natural History have no admission fees, as they are government-funded entities, intended to prove accessible to anyone seeking to understand history (“Faq’s”). Contrast this with the private ownership of the historic homes of Natchez and reliance on tourism and capitalism, and the relationship between admission prices and historical narrative becomes complicated. While grants from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and its affiliates aid in the renovations of the homes, attendance and admissions often help to cover daily expenses. In their reliance upon the number of people through the gates to earn the funding necessary for maintenance and upkeep of the structures, the historic homes of Natchez face the challenge of appealing to enough visitors to maintain additional funding. Thus,

many descendants of those ghosted from the narratives surrounding a structure are also ghosted from its tourism, as residual socioeconomic factors affect their abilities to purchase access to the historical narrative. Because homes and their narratives must attract such a large audience, the stories told on these tours must be cohesive and alluring to visitors with an interest in their history and money to spend.

The Garden Club of Natchez has executed the single most successful instance of “We better get our story straight” over its history, as the club and the owners of the historic homes’ Board of Directors have compiled a singularly promoted narrative, which combines the most popular, strangest, and/or most remarkable stories from each of the historical events of the town’s past inhabitants into one highly profitable history. This “truth”, as it is described by the Club’s extensively-trained guides, shaped by many years of consolidation, perfectly encapsulates the postsouthern idea that the accepted image of the South is the one that is promoted for its profitability. For many years, blacks and slaves held no place in this history other than the occasional mention of the placid, content house servants, and the Garden Club’s tours still omit their presence, according to this author’s experiences with them. It is the Miss Lou Heritage Group and Tours who offers the only images of life as an African American in historic Natchez, and this is the sole organization presenting this perspective. This monopoly of agency raises many questions regarding inclusion and exclusion of certain aspects of Natchez’s history, as well as those of the larger South (“Miss Lou Heritage Group & Tours”).

African Americans in Natchez have been, largely, ghosted from the plantation narrative presented by Natchez's tourism industry. Though there are few exceptions, most historic home tours do not relay the horrors of slavery or the labor that went into operating the lavish homes in which the planter class lived. These aspects of the history of the structures are unpleasant and do not accommodate the version of the narrative bent and molded into a marketable commodity by those in charge of the communication of their history, who serve the idealized image of the antebellum social hierarchy. "Servants" or other platitudes for those held in bondage replace the violence that maintained the institution, and their inclusion in the tour is relegated to instances in which their chores benefited their planter-class masters.

For example, in demonstrating the massive dinner fan installed in the dining room at Longwood, it is explained that a servant would pull the rope to move the giant, wooden fan throughout the meal in order to deter flies from landing on the food. Attention is directed to Mrs. Nutt's fine china, which would have looked similar, but much prettier, than the pieces currently on the table, and towards the dumbwaiter, which allowed the meals from the kitchen to be served still warm, yet not much is said about those responsible for preparing or serving the meal. These slaves' work and role have been ghosted in favor of period china and charming innovation on the part of the white members of the household; it is but bare necessity to explain these factors in more detail that places the slaves in the retelling at all.

The spaces visited by tourists also provide the ability to physically experience a place along with the history involved in it, but black historical experience also lacks some of these physical areas, which furthers their ghosting by those in control of the narrative surrounding historic spaces. This lack of physicality further facilitates the exclusion of most African American contribution, as the African American demographic acts independently of its role as the forced dependent to the planter class of Natchez. One reason for this lack of structures could be the poor, impermanent quality of craftsmanship or materials that went into building them, but another is natural occurrences.

“The Corral,” as it is known to Don Estes, was the site of a Union contraband camp. After Union forces captured Natchez during the Civil War, all of the slaves who now sought freedom turned to the promising Union Army, which fought for the great emancipator, Lincoln. Upon thousands of now former slaves flocking to the army for food, shelter, and resources, there grew a necessity for an organized approach to this logistical nightmare (Estes 146). An archival piece from the *New York Times* corroborates the claims that the contraband camp existed, as it is described by one visitor (*nytimes.com*). A local woman named Lizzy Brown, in her diary, speaks of a “diseased ‘corral’” of flimsy structures built with her father’s confiscated lumber. Her plantation home overlooks the Under-the-Hill area of Natchez, where the camp was located, and daily saw the uncleanliness and unpleasantness of a hastily constructed shack city (Broussard 195). Other sources, often those relating to African American history, name the space the Devil’s Punchbowl, as the site became a mass grave for escaped and

freed Natchez slaves (DiRienzo). Estes claims that 11,000+ perished according to local legend due to unsanitary conditions and lack of resources, while other sources claim even higher mortality rates (Estes 147).

The Devil's Punchbowl was notorious before the contraband camp as a hideout for pirates and thieves, but its lesser-known history as a mass grave for freed slaves points to the city's ghosting of certain demographics. Without the relatively recent recovery of the records of these bodies, their stories would not have been publicized in the modern age. They do present an unpleasant view of the Union, which fits the Lost Cause's haunting of the area, however. Following the defeat of the Confederacy in the Civil War, the people of Dixie replaced this desire for a political, geographic Southern identity with "the dream of a cohesive southern people with a separate cultural identity", which became known as the Lost Cause myth (Wilson 1). Religion strengthened the argument that those who lost the war but maintained power in the social hierarchy were correct in their beliefs, and this adherence to fabricated identity continues to haunt Mississippi. The overarching narrative of the state adheres to this mythology, so the perspectives ghosted from the Lost Cause are also ghosted from the modern account of the state's history.

It is the ghosts versus the ghosted for many of Natchez's histories, especially in light of the general historical image of the South. For example, the tours and guides focus on the period immediately preceding the Civil War, commonly imagined as the Old South, and the long clash between North and South. Natchez was established in 1716, meaning there are over 100 years of

unaccounted history not represented by most of the Pilgrimage's tours, and none of the tours that cover that period or any of the years preceding Natchez's founding during which it was Native American land, are presented by the Garden Club, the preeminent "authority" of Natchez history ("History of Natchez"). When many picture the historic South, the prescribed image of the Old South is predominant, which is neither unintentional nor underutilized in regards to profit. Just as the Garden Club and the Board of Directors consolidated the narrative from many conflicting accounts, those in positions of power furthered the Lost Cause narrative, and the cycle returns to the Pilgrimage's usage of this image to commodify and sell its image of history.

Commodifying the plantation myth has become crucial to shaping the postsouthern definition of the South, as the clearly defined boundaries of the Southern performance of antebellum customs are blurred by the shifting narratives of the twenty-first century. Even the boundaries of the Confederacy, itself, faced discrepancies due to the cultures and complexities which appeared within its geographic territory like the border states, but the idea of a physical "South" provided security to many southerners. The collective identity established during the chaos of the Civil War was a result of this definition of southern space, so following the dissolution of a physical Confederacy, something had to replace it. Former Confederates found this new solidarity of identity in abstract collectivism, rather than mappable space, and "southernness" became a collection of historic and cultural ideas. Thus, the postsouthern concept of the South is one defined by ideas and culture, rather than physical, concrete objects.

However, the plantation homes in haunted and historic tourisms act as spaces to which these old southern ideas can attach themselves, so the narratives they perpetuate are also tied to this larger definition of a postsouthern space (Bone 5).

Much like the attempts at lightheartedness with Madeline's ghost, whose playfulness is more notable than the apparent murder of a young woman, certain aspects of the histories of these spaces have been "ghosted" from the narrative. This reflects Natchez's much larger relationship to a past plagued by violence and death. An economy largely dependant upon a plantation tourism narrative, Natchez must carefully navigate a commodified image of the real South in order to market its primary product: its historic homes and buildings. The nuances involving a postsouthern plantation narrative make the commodification of sites in Natchez and its hauntings particularly telling. King's Tavern has an incredibly violent history, as made evident by the fact that its two primary ghost stories involve murdered individuals, yet this violence is understated in the retelling of them in order to appeal to tourists. In much the same way, tours of the historic homes often include nothing about their hauntings, or deny the presence of them, though there are volumes printed on these paranormal hauntings whose authors would argue differently. The stories are only told if they are marketable, thereby palatable, and the truth of these histories is often quite the opposite, which means that the physical spaces through which they are remembered must act as beautiful shields for unpleasant truths.

As Romine argues in *The Real South*, these antebellum homes provide a convenient space in which to collect all of the preconceptions that have come to



be included in the definition of “Southern” over time (Romine 29). This allows for the argument that the Pilgrimage, especially through its reenactments, represents a living, breathing example of postsouthern haunting. Pilgrimage events as well as the daily tours of the historic homes present Natchez as a performance of “southernness” that is continuous. Tourist-catering sites marketing paranormal activity and a ghostly narrative hold a particular place in the buying and selling of the historical record, just as the Pilgrimage’s live-action representations set it apart from the typical museum experience.

### *Establishing “Truth”*

Ghosts like Madeline intrigue visitors and allow modern audiences the opportunity to interact with and rewrite histories that do not have satisfying conclusions, yet it is the means of legitimizing them that allow a glimpse into the processes of cultural reproduction and commodification. What is it that cements and establishes these tales as “authentic” truth? Theoretically, ghosts are not a scientifically studied or proven topic, so how does the general public come to view certain narratives as explanations? There are no scientific journals that would offer researched theory, yet because of certain corroborations or reports, some of these stories are legitimized by local histories, publication, and even reality television. It is this process of determining truth that sets the stage for capitalistic gains, as those who establish “authenticity” simultaneously determine authority (Romine 13).

Take the Pilgrimage’s historical homes that were renovated by the Natchez Garden Club. These large structures, whose histories were frozen and

left untouched for, sometimes, decades allowed the Garden Club to purchase and renovate the homes into respected destination sites. Families who could no longer afford the upkeep on these structures passed their deeds and narratives on to the organization, who sought return on investment through tours and the sale of historical narrative. The entity of the Garden Club, thus, became the authors of the collective narrative and held a monopoly on the histories told of the properties that they maintained. In monopolizing Natchez history, Garden Club members, namely its tour guides, were established as the curators of collective identity, as it relates to the houses shown and the time periods they represent.

Therefore, the authors of the tours are the authors of Natchez's history, and the history selected for modern audiences is that which has been rewritten with the ghosted edits included in order to remain profitable. It is only logical that the tours remodel the history of a space to match the construction of remodeling the houses, themselves. They had to create a cohesive narrative for visitors that aligns with the image set by the club's peers as well as its own members. Slavery, as a system comprised of unwilling individuals, does not fit the romanticized plantation narrative that is so beloved by a public disenchanted with a world of racial conflict, economic uncertainty, and mass-produced consumer goods, so it makes strange, twisted sense from a financial standpoint that the Natchez Garden Club not include these aspects in its narrative. A handcrafted, one of a kind mirror imported from France in 1845 for \$30,000 is much more appealing to a tourist than the ruins of a violence-tainted slave

dwelling, as the lavish furnishing focuses upon an elite, exclusive artifact which has since been made available to the general public.

It is this insider-outsider mentality to which Romine attributes the success of cultural construction that allows the owners of these homes to capitalize and profit from their properties (13). African Americans are not denied equal access to these spaces by legal policies, as they were in antebellum times, yet other factors often limit minorities' access to them. Cost, white-washed negative historical connotations, the reputation of filtered narratives, feelings of unwelcomeness, etcetera. alienate these non-white demographics from historic sites in Natchez, furthering the inequity of access historically present in the city's plantation homes. Thus, the price of admission when combined with the problematic correlations present for many marginalized individuals limits the reality of the sites' accessibility. It appears that these groups and individuals would be welcome at the historic homes if they were to venture through their gates, yet the apparent discomfort and limitations in relaying the black experience at these plantations prevent them from actually doing so. This allows the historic tourism industry to perpetuate the white-centered narrative in Natchez, so the views and expectations of audiences attracted to the homes are met by historic tour authorities.

Since the price of admission to these displays and spaces is so high, owners must make the product worth the cost, which means that the experience must impress or please the consumers of these narratives. Storylines and characters must be exaggerated or enhanced in order to fulfill this order, so the

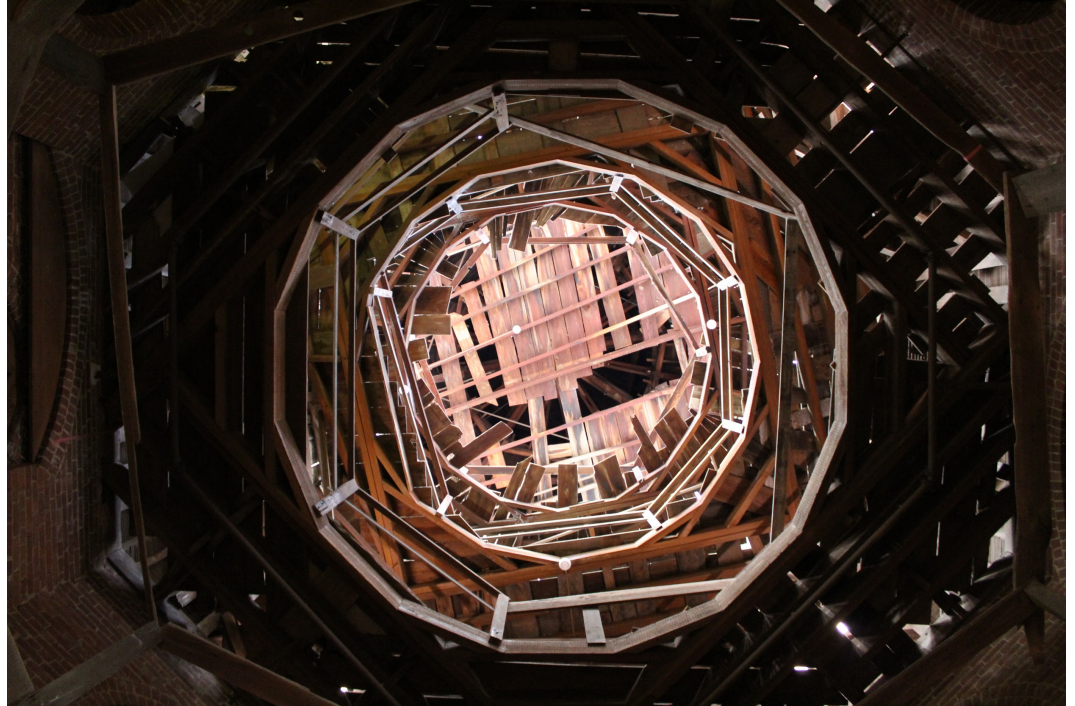
tragedies and fanciful romance are featured and average, daily life looked past. For example, the Nutt family of Longwood in Natchez is made into a drawn out, Old South tragedy in order to appeal to Lost Cause sentimentality. According to the narrative I received with my tour of the home, the Nutt family set out to build its octagonal home, with ornate furnishings and architecture that would reach new heights upon its completion, with multiple levels, the plans for which were incredible and lavish. Loyal to the Union and blissfully ignorant of the Civil War's implications within the economic sector, Haller Nutt lived with his family on the basement level of Longwood while negotiating the troublesome waters of building a mansion in a collapsing Southern economy and growing debt.

War and economics doomed the project to incompleteness, and this is the state in which it remains to this day: unfinished, only the bare bones of what was to be an exquisite piece of luxury. The family's troubled timeline includes the death of Haller, deaths of multiple Nutt children, and poverty through the time of the structure's sale to the Garden Club in 1970 ("Longwood-The Unfinished Dream Home of Haller Nutt"). Julia Nutt, the matriarch of the family, sold produce out of her garden in order to make ends meet, a point that lingers throughout the tour of the home, as the family's poverty plays a crucial role in its post-war status.

The structure appears to remain suspended in time, largely due to the efforts of the Garden Club and its excellent staging of the space. Despite the fact that the Nutt family continued to occupy the home well into the twentieth century, its nineteenth century furnishings and characteristics are on display, such as

children's dolls and other antebellum artifacts, many of which are not original to the Nutt estate. Julia and her rather large family lived in the basement level for years, the children to whom the dolls and clothing belonged maturing into adults while remaining at Longwood, yet the image presented in the physical space that I witnessed remains that of an elite antebellum home with small children.

Longwood appears as a snapshot of the days just before the Civil War, which can be seen in its antebellum furnishings, artifacts that give the Nutt children eternal youth, and the state of the incomplete upper levels of the home. Supposedly, workers dropped their tools where they were working and ran to enlist upon Mississippi's secession, which is the image I saw on the tour, yet a certain skepticism exists around this detail. Nutt had been sliding into debt as his holdings were burned in conjunction with events of the war, so it is less likely that halting all work would be as dramatic as it is portrayed in the guidebooks. Additionally, the artifacts found in the living area are largely pieces purchased or procured by the Club, according to guides who stress period accuracy.



Unfinished dome of Longwood, Hailey Cooper

However, the house has been constructed and dressed to fit the narrative promoted by the Garden Club. Though historically accurate in their additions of period pieces dating to the time when Longwood would have been at its most promising, the snapshot of antebellum days is staged in order to portray only one fraction of the home's history. Despite the structure's role in the lives of its inhabitants through the twentieth century, it acts as an image of an idealized rendition of a highly romanticized era of southern history. A tragically frozen piece of architecture maintains the Lost Cause narrative, which tourists are so eager to consume, far more effectively than one that has seen less ideal circumstances, including poverty and eventual loss of ownership. The Nutt family's curse lasted far longer than the ten years surrounding its groundbreaking and Haller's death, but its ghosts only exist dating back to that period.

Haller has been seen in the yard around the basement level, reportedly checking the progress on his house, and the deceased Nutt children still scatter their toys every night. Julia, who witnessed the death of her family members and the family's descent into destitution, seems to have passed peacefully into the afterlife, however, as she has not been seen since the time of her death. Those who survived the timespan within the authors of the tours' focus are deleted from the living visitor's physical awareness, yet those who suffered tragedy within the prescribed historical period continue to haunt present spectators. The staging of the house to represent a specific antebellum image lends credibility to the theory that the current state of the home is a snapshot of only one portion of its long history.

In order to maintain the tragic image of an Old South, with its peaceful utopia marred by Northern aggression, Longwood and its peers must remain within their roles as images of a romanticized antebellum era. Julia Nutt's fine china, which has not existed within Longwood's walls in many years due to the family's financial decline, has representation on the kitchen table through pieces dating back to the period of Longwood's construction. Tour guides proudly compare the china to that of Mrs. Nutt, despite the fact that it would have only sat on the table for a few years before poverty would necessitate its sale. Drawing upon public desire for an image of a "simpler" time, like the romanticized antebellum age, these are the details crucial to creating and maintaining a believable narrative. Maintenance and development of these principles, as

furthered by other stops on the Pilgrimage, lies in the credibility of the Garden Club, itself.

There exists a circular system for establishing authority in historic Natchez, especially involving stops on the Pilgrimage, as the same groups have been responsible for curating the historical narrative since its inception in 1927, and the pattern lies within ownership of property (Natchezgardenclub.org). The Garden Club is able to verify their tours by comparing their facts with those put forth by local historians, who have compiled a cohesive narrative from family histories and public record. Herein lies the claim to authority, as the histories and stories passed down from generation to generation have become the public record, through their publication in channels deemed reliable and truthful by much of society, like books and articles in popular, reputable magazines. Traditionally, seemingly reliable sources like books relating to the history of Natchez and its physical spaces are often published by local organizations, which makes the information more credible than that found in less scientific or trusted channels, like amateur websites or even books printed by self-publishing authors.

Monopolies on historical narrative are strengthened by a lack of evidence to challenge claims, as family histories and the particulars of local legend in Mississippi and everywhere are often recitations of previously held truth, and unbiased, scientific data is not the principal form of record-keeping. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History as well as the National Register for Historic Places contribute to this accreditation, yet the evidence and records used to corroborate are, likely, the same records created by local citizens and



historians. The greatest verification would be matching stories from a multitude of perspectives, yet slaves, one of the principal demographics present at the time the house has been staged to reflect, are deleted from any narratives but the ones in which they serve the truths of those who retell the stories. What would the ghosted individuals add to the Truth?

*“Reality” v. “Truths”*

Answering this question, based on narratives and records discovered by researchers, detailing the nature of slavery and the horrors perpetuated by its administrators, proves uncomfortable and disturbing. There is a reason that the originators of the legends left these aspects out, and their deletions have carried through to present day. Glimpses of the treatment of slaves during the antebellum era reveal a side of humanity many find difficult to justify or understand, so we as the general population continue blinding ourselves to the reality of history in order to stomach it. Those blurry figures who have been ghosted from the narrative continue to haunt the periphery, just out of our line of direct sight, and many refuse to turn their heads to face it. It is this reluctance that maintains the popular narrative and allows for its commodification.

The image of an ideal, prosperous, flourishing historical city is, objectively, one of the only factors counted as successful in Natchez, as its post-Civil War fate has been far less ideal than the affluence it enjoyed until that time. All that is left of the Cotton Kingdom’s millionaires are their mansions and the idea that there was once a time when things were good, which is what drives the tourism industry here and its decisions. Longwood’s snapshot staging secures its

memory as a beacon of Old South idealism and Lost Cause mythology, refusing to step out of the antebellum bubble in which it has shielded itself from the harsh realities of both its own past and the events that affected the rest of the city in the 150+ years since Haller Nutt embarked on his masterpiece vacation home.

While Longwood has fortified itself with antebellum period pieces, it has also distanced itself from the ghost stories included in its history. Tour guides, when questioned, assert that they've heard the rumors of Dr. Nutt's figure on the lawn or the children's toys scattered around the basement but have not witnessed any of it in their years of employment. Published, documented accounts of these hauntings are highly circulated, but the distance placed between Longwood and its ghostly legends suggests an attempt to maintain historical credibility (Brown 120). The Garden Club would not want to look as though it wholeheartedly accepted unverified truths the way many accept legends and ghosts, yet the guides will point visitors towards King's Tavern for ghosts, interestingly enough.

King's Tavern, unlike the houses on the tours, is not known for its historical agenda, so its employees are able to participate in the conjecture and lore more freely than those working to maintain credibility. Whether or not all of this is done consciously, the relationship between ghosts, credibility, and profit is an intriguing matter. The Tavern, because its reputation is that of a bar and restaurant, uses its history as a marketing strategy and plays up its hauntings in order to pique interests and sell drinks and food to those who come to investigate. Even the homes that double as bed and breakfasts only rarely acknowledge ghost

stories, as hauntings could drive away less adventurous guests, so the gap between haunted and historical widens even further.

In order to maintain the chosen narrative of a space in Natchez, the reality must remain separate from the imagined or idealized. The ghosted must remain in their assigned spaces, apart from the mainstream narrative, as the tours of black Natchez are their own entities, segregated from the histories of the houses and their white inhabitants in order to maintain the plantation narrative and Lost Cause mythology. This method of historical narration allows everyone to be a protagonist, rather than certain individuals acting as the villain. Unpleasant or disjointed aspects of the narrative are not integrated into tours as they are discovered, and the passage of time is purposely overlooked in order to secure the profitable, commodified edition of the greater history of Mississippi and its storytelling that romantic tourists and disillusioned individuals are so eager to buy.

When the collective population suppresses or reshapes the unpleasantness of the past to placate the fears of the present like rattling changes, breakdown of tradition, changing gender norms, etcetera, it allows for the commodification of a specific narrative in the pursuit of profit. The tours of historic homes on the Natchez Pilgrimage, like Longwood, through their selective inclusion of events, characters, and physical objects, offer a palatable image that fits the idealism held by many in relation to southern culture and history. This postsouthern narrative, an amalgamation of factual compromise and editorial ghostings, provides the leaders of the tourism industry a product that the average white consumer is

willing to buy. Following the creation of this narrative, it must be institutionally credited as the official, factual Truth in order to establish credibility among the public. Finally, the established, profitable Truth must be maintained in order to continue the successful marketing of the commodified narrative. Ghosts and ghosted work together to secure these principles, providing more for the living by allowing their stories to be resurrected or buried even further, than our own imaginations will allow.

Characters like Madeline of King's Tavern or Haller Nutt of Longwood, frozen in time, represent the modern commodification of historical narrative and offer glimpses of our own flaws through their blurry apparitions and violent outbursts. Interactions with living guests have rewritten the violence of Madeline's death and have recrafted it to seem playful, and Dr. Nutt's ghost haunts his structural folly that represents the skeletal remains of an Old South long debunked but maintained for the appeasement of the public. These hauntings point to a much deeper, more troubling relationship with Mississippi's past and its implications for the present, and they allow today's audience the opportunity to rewrite our flaws for the price of admission.

## Chapter II

As legend and Kathryn Windham have it, there was a young woman named Archie Archer, who lived in the house called Anchuca in the river town of Port Gibson, Mississippi. A spitting image and the favorite of her father, Archie played a major part in her father's plan to farm oysters in the property's pond. The plan, which included Mr. Archer filling the pond with salt water and oysters, was known throughout the area as an expensive, smelly, and disastrous project. Thus, the Anchuca plantation first rose to local fame as the family with the tragic oyster pond. However, Archie's celebrity overshadows that of her family due to the fact that, unlike the oysters, who died and faded from the earthly world, Archie continues to inhabit the Anchuca property.

One of nine children, Archie was an exact replica of her father, and this similarity in appearance sparked to a matching relationship in which the two shared views on politics, art, literature, etcetera. until the day Mr. Archer thwarted Archie's romantic plans. After a few weeks of Archie disappearing on horseback every afternoon and returning glazed and happy in appearance, Mr. Archer followed her one afternoon to see the beau who had earned his daughter's favor. Upon discovering his favorite daughter with the son of the plantation's overseer, Archie's father was far from supportive of the match. A suitor of the boy's low social ranking stood in opposition to the tradition that dictated planter class women marry men of similar station. Young Josh promised honorable intent and

requested his love's hand in marriage, but Mr. Archer is said to have answered his pleas with a whip lash to the face. Archie begged her father to allow the match, but when he banned the relationship and announced that he was banishing the overseer's son, Archie swore that if he followed through she would never again eat at her father's table. Both characters stubborn and slighted, Mr. Archer exiled Josh, and Archie ate stone-faced at the mantle in the parlor. The relationship, which had previously been so close, crumbled, and Archie never again ate at her father's table or forgave Mr. Archer for his decision to exile Josh (Windham 81).

Following Mr. Archer's death, the family sold the house, which was moved to Vicksburg, and new residents inhabited it. Not all of the former residents vacated, however, as the new family and their staff reported sightings, starting in 1966, of a young woman, dressed in a brown antebellum dress. She stands by the mantelpiece, and those who have seen her report feelings of pity, not fear, for the eternally youthful ghost (Windham 83). Locals assert that Archie stands in eternal anticipation of the return of her long-lost love, though others have theorized that she might stand in eternal anger, directed at her father for extinguishing her happiness. A closer look into the story of Archie, however, leads to more questions than answers.

The tale of Mr. Archer bringing notoriety upon his family's name with an oyster pond is outlandish. It is not mentioned, as far as I have found, outside of Kathryn Tucker Windham's *13 Mississippi Ghosts and Jeffrey*, and the tale would likely have greater popularity if it were well documented. Windham relays that Archie and her father share similar views on arts, culture, politics, etcetera, and

that Archie had aided in the planning of the oyster pond. These characters' lack of rational thought, displayed by this project, shows a level of entertainment value that has been assigned to them. They are the ideal characters for a series of tall tales, as this whimsy comes through again in the absurdity of a woman stubbornly eating every meal at a fireplace for decades. In creating these characters, who are largely spontaneous and passionate, Windham generates the potential for and provides wild stories based upon their foundation.

Additionally, the plot-driven portion of the story ends with Archie's declaration that she will begin taking her meals at the mantle; after this the details are all generalizations or speculation. The audience is told that Archie never ate at the table again and that her ghost has been seen at the mantle occasionally, but the final portion of Archie's chapter is no longer eventful. Her characterization takes center stage, particularly her stubbornness. This suggests that the audience is able to create their own ideas about the ghostly characters, which allows a modern generation to project their own fears and perspectives on a vague, antebellum character like Archie.

#### *Interpreting "Truth"*

The fact that the story is not corroborated in any semi-reputable publication, other than Windham's, proves its interpretive nature. Websites for haunted locations and lists of ghosts with tourist-driven reviews and accounts of Anchuca's hauntings are independently published or found on kitschy websites for haunted tourism. Brown's book *Ghosts Along the Mississippi River* even lists Windham's account as sole source material for its retelling. Perhaps the most

revealing aspect of this story's questionable validity is the fact that Mr. Archer and the Archer family do not exist in the Anchuca mansion's published history. The mansion, which is now a bed and breakfast, has a website, and the history of the home is detailed here. Unlike Windham's assertion that the house was transported to Vicksburg after Archer's death, it states that the house was built in 1830 by a man named Maudlin in its current location within the heart of downtown Vicksburg (*Anchuca.com*). These facts, presented by the current curators and managers of the home, present an entirely different history from the one purported in *13 Mississippi Ghosts and Jeffrey*, which indicates a collective fabrication perpetuated by the hauntings narrated by Windham in her account.

Archie's ghost was first seen in 1966 by the new owners of the mansion, and the context of that date speaks to the story that emerged (Windham 84). The 1960s were marked by immense social revolutions, with the Civil Rights Act's passage in 1964, Voting Rights Act in 1965, and the feminist movement. White, elite audiences of this time would have been looking for some sense of security in a shifting society, and the prospect of a headstrong woman who lived in misery for eternity after challenging social norms would provide it. Thus, the story of a woman who was put back into her niche after attempting to break the mold reflects the contemporary fear in the 1960's of shifting gender norms and subsequent needs to reinforce tradition. Archie attempted to marry outside of the prescribed barriers, but she was restrained and returned to acceptable practices. This might reflect the southern audience's idea of acceptable protest: a woman



remaining in her place in the domestic sphere, making a minor adjustment that did not affect the position of other women's roles.

A similar story, told by William Faulkner, of a ghost named Judith Sheegog shares a few plot points with that of Archie: beautiful, aristocratic daughter falls in love with an unsuitable match and is banned from seeing or marrying her beloved by tradition or a powerful force. Faulkner explained that Judith had done the unthinkable and fallen in love with a Yankee soldier, a match her father would never approve. However, unlike Archie, Judith planned to elope with her suitor and climbed from Rowan Oak's front window to join him at the meeting place under the cover of night and cracked her head on the brick sidewalk in the fall from the second story of the house. The details of the discovery of her corpse are not relayed, nor are the details surrounding the suitor and their romance. In this way the story begins to break down, though Faulkner claims that it is Judith who haunts the house, making loud noises on the stairs and showing her presence in other harmless ways (Hubbard 36) .

Both of these ghostly women participated in socially unacceptable relationships, yet their reactions to the dispelling of these matches resulted in the difference between life and death. Archie, by pouting but accepting the banishment of Josh, reflects the acceptable response; she rebels by rejecting her seat at the table, something over which she has control in her status. Judith, in dramatically rebelling, symbolically ushers in her own demise due to overstepping her socially prescribed "natural" role, which predetermines who she can and cannot marry. These two studies in failure of obedience and its

prescribed consequences reflect that aspect of the Cult of Domesticity. Rejecting or acting in a way that is unsupported by social norms results in, symbolic or literal, death if not checked.

In mirroring the constructs around southern womanhood, according to the norms of the antebellum period in which they lived, Archie and Judith reflect modern audiences' interpretation of their environments. Archie's ghost was first reported in 1966, just after the 100th anniversary of the end of the Civil War, and no one had heard of Judith until Faulkner brought her story to light during his time at Rowan Oak. The women, who have remained within the realms they navigated in life through to the afterlife, present modern audiences with supported images of idealized womanhood through pity for Archie and Judith. Witnesses of Archie's spectre reportedly feel sympathy, rather than fear, in her presence and either mourn her lost love or feel everlasting anger towards her father. Judith, a product of an unfair system of marriage and courtship, also elicits sympathy, especially considering the gory nature of her demise.

#### *"Reality" and Evidence*

However, perhaps the most southern belle-esque characteristic of these two is the fact that there is no substantiated evidence that neither of these women exist on record as actual, living people. Anchuca's historical record details all former inhabitants of the home and its physical location, neither of which mention a Mr. Archer or Port Gibson. Rowan Oak was home to the Sheegog family, but there is no record of a daughter named Judith ever being born. Like the ideal southern lady, both of these pieces of ghostlore emerge from a collection of

narratives and collective storytelling, a long-developing narrative that has been supplemented and multiplied in order to convey a particular image. The haunting lessons transferred to modern audiences through these stories are those that have shifted and augmented original details while maintaining the belief that every new rendition is the original, authentic history.

The gender roles perpetuated by and projected onto these ghosts adhere to the strict code of the Cult of Domesticity. Under this code of behavior, elite southern women are expected to subscribe to the idea of the perfect Southern Belle. This character takes the “piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity” of the Cult of Domesticity to paradoxical levels (Welter 1). A Southern Belle is expected to be strong but soft, sexually pure without expecting the same of her husband, and mindful yet effortless in her attempts to emulate perfection (Jones 9). While the execution of this ideal characterization is impossible, it was used to assess Mississippi’s women, and this is still the standard of womanhood today. The examples set by women like those represented in the ghost stories of Anchuca and Rowan Oak haunt modern women, and the basis of these images lie in complex historical constructs.

Particularly, in Mississippi history, the cavalier myth holds significance for the identity of the antebellum white planter class and its modern admirers. The myth relates to white slaveholders’ belief that their role of slave master likened them to European aristocracy of the Middle Ages. Slaves mirrored the similarly oppressed serfdom, so supposed “ownership” of this group maintained white elites’ superior social status (Cobb 26). Because the white, male planter class

represented medieval lords, their female counterparts duly took on the role of medieval lady (133). Members of the southern planter class, however, combined this medieval image of a lady and molded it to fit the needs of an antebellum slaveholding plantation narrative.

A southern perspective of a medieval lady serves as the female, maternal counterpart to the patriarch of the paternalist argument. Paternalism justified slavery as a benevolent system, with slavemaster acting as patriarch of a massive plantation “family” structure. The rationalization of enslavement came from the belief that those of African descent were uncivilized and incapable of independence, so inferior Africans had to depend on their masters for the necessities of life. This troubling and misguided mindset was particularly popular in the world of antebellum Mississippi, where elites had only secured forty-four years of statehood prior to the Civil War in which to establish themselves as aristocracy. Many of these individuals had been lower in the social hierarchy prior to moving to the Mississippi territory in the years before statehood in 1817, so the superiority established by holding slaves helped to quickly secure elite status for newly wealthy whites (Mitchell 80).

Southern belles, then, should have died with the defeat of slavery and the Confederacy, since their role existed within the antebellum cavalier mythology and paternalistic defense of slavery. Instead, this trope strengthened. Southern belle mythology continues to haunt Mississippi women, as contemporary women are still held to many of the same standards as the white plantation women who lived in the antebellum era. Though not to the same extent or in the same areas as

antebellum women, domestic skills like cooking, cleaning, child rearing, etcetera. are expected of modern southern women. Slaveholding elite women serve as models for many contemporary audiences, and haunting images of popular culture uphold these paradigms.

An unrealistic representation of plantation life, like *Gone with the Wind*, still holds clout with modern audiences. As a result, the unrealistic expectations that Scarlett O'Hara strives to attain remain visible to 21st century women, who attempt to emulate certain aspects of this image as part of a larger, romanticized southern image. Physical beauty, effortless charm and poise in the presence of male suitors, and a carefree attitude are only some of the characteristics of Scarlett and the southern belle that appeal to modern women and their ideas of the plantation south. Though Scarlett and the women around her in the fictional account are not able to uphold the ideals they strive to achieve, modern women still hold the mask they wear and the impossible standards to which they are held by institutions and greater society as the paradigm for southern womanhood. Because the southern belle mythology is so well circulated, it has become a primary example of womanly perfection. This standard is complex and unsettling, and it is directly tied to other pieces of historical mythology, like the plantation myth.

The pleasant image of antebellum Tara leads to an unrealistic view of plantation slavery and subsequent southern ladyship that includes contented slaves, wise and kind slave owners, and respected and maternal elite women. This unrealistic, romanticized portrayal of a brutal, violent system influences

many modern individuals to seek to emulate the imagined portions of it. *Gone with the Wind's* film adaptation, in particular, and the beloved idealized performances of antebellum southernness present a troubling glimpse into the fears and ideas of a contemporary audience. Modern perspectives and the exclusions they build into the narratives surrounding this imagined system speak more than the aspects they choose to include. Like the image of southern womanhood, this widely propagated theme of an agricultural utopia reflects the necessity to delete portions of its reality in order to maintain popularity.

Projection of modern fears surrounding shifts in identity, culture, and tradition and the application of these expectations onto ghosts and the collective narrative often exclude the portions of history that are unpleasant or inconsistent with the image of the southern belle. In creating the image of a perfect southern lady, many historical facts must be forgotten by the general public. Therefore, the present image of a kind, benevolent mistress who cares for her slaves as though they were her own children, is missing key elements of the larger reality. For example the mythology of the southern belle dictates that any violence or unpleasantness must be carried out by the men. Ladies, as they have been portrayed to subsequent generations, never raised a hand against anyone and earned the respect of her slaves with her personality and charity. Any violence or punishment came from the heartless overseer, who worked in the fields with the slaves, while the mistress represented kindness and maternal love (Glymph 26).

For many years slaveholding women have been portrayed as either loving mother figures to their slaves or fellow victims of white, male oppression. This

mythology of the southern belle as the epitome of kindness and grace excludes or “ghosts” the violent reality of plantation womanhood, however, as plantation mistresses often performed acts of violence and abuse within their households, according to Thavolia Glymph in *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household*. Glymph explores the idea that passivity and submissiveness, though perpetuated by the collective narrative as key elements of white southern womanhood, did not maintain power dynamics within plantation households. Placid, content slaves are a construct of this narrative, yet the deletion of slaves’ opposition and insubordination continues the idea of the plantation narrative into present day. Slaves were not, in fact, submissive and accepting of their oppression, as evidenced by their small acts of defiance. Breaking tools, working slowly on purpose, pretending to be ill, all served as methods of undermining the plantation hierarchy, which dispel the myth of the contented slave (“Slave Resistance, Enslavement, African American Identity: Vol. I, 1500-1865, Primary Resources In U.S. History And Literature, Toolbox Library, National Humanities Center”). Therefore, violence became the primary means of power maintenance. White slave owners used violence and fear to maintain power, and white women were often the aggressors in these cases.

Slaveholding southern women often asserted dominance through violence, but this abusive imagery could not infiltrate their polite, pleasant outward image. This is one of the key reasons that the southern belle mythology so easily excludes violence and imperfection: the violence that was ghosted from the illustration of these women for modern audiences was also hidden from their

peers. Sarah Morgan, a slaveholding woman in an antebellum household, reflected in her diary that it was unsettling to watch her friend socialize effortlessly immediately following an unnecessary act of physical violence against her slave. Thavolia Glymph uses this account in her work *Out of the House of Bondage* to exemplify a woman who must expertly use her “costume” of a “southern lady” to appear as an amiable, gentle belle while utilizing violence behind the scenes (Glymph 46).

Lucy Parke Byrd brutally beat her slaves in front of company. This was seen, even in antebellum times, as a “major breach of etiquette in Virginia where slaves were supposed to be beaten after the guests had gone home”. Her husband and peers all saw this as a major rupture of decorum, yet they did not find it surprising that the lady had used physical violence (Glymph 47). Southern Belle mythology forgets this violence and any other flaws on purpose. These characteristics do not fit the image contemporary audiences hope to see from what is supposed to be model womanhood, so they are deleted from the collective memory. By ghosting the cruelties and violence of plantation womanhood and the corresponding triggers of these actions, the flaws of the plantation south and southern belles vanish to leave behind an unrealistic, highly idealized image and mythology.

Why do we, as the contemporary audience, need this image of the southern belle to live on, and what other haunting elements of history does it indicate? The terror of slavery is shocking, and the violence associated with it reveals some of the worst traits of humanity. Slave owners’ mental gymnastics in



regards to justifying the steps they took to maintain power shows the inhumanity of their actions, and modern audiences mirror these measures in the ghostlore they perpetuate. Just as violent slaveholders had to rationalize by exclusion in their treatment of slaves, modern audiences delete the more violent accounts of slavery and plantation life. Mississippi, known for its particular cruelty, has more to compensate for in this regard than other slaveholding states for this reason.

According to the legend, witnesses of the ghost of Anchuca feel no fear upon seeing the woman at the mantle, only a deep pity, which mirrors the attitude of audiences towards intentionally vague, female ghosts in Mississippi (Windham 89). Even if the story of Archie were true, she would have had decades of characterization that are glanced over in the tale. I would argue that Archie's oversimplified, redacted history personifies the larger, abridged mythology of the southern belle. Any character flaw that does not garner sympathy or illicit entertainment value is deleted; what is left is the image of a woman who has simply been denied happiness by powerful forces out of her control. Had Archie beaten a servant or enacted violence against another white family member, it would be redacted from the story until all that was left is a miserable woman at a fireplace, whom audiences could pity. In this way the southern belle is a haunting mythology with ghosted elements that survives due to the romanticization of a violent, flawed demographic.

Ghostlore and haunted narratives allow subsequent generations the opportunity to rewrite the past, in a way. These retellings often focus on the tragic circumstances surrounding a character or event, rather than the shocking

cruelty that might have been synonymous with their subjects. As a result, entire demographics are ghosted from these narratives, which represent the collective history perpetuated by modern audiences. A prime example of this deletion of a demographic from popular narrative is that of enslaved black women. With lives marked by violence, sexual assault, little to no autonomy, and constant fear, the remaining narrative is still less than idealistic. The image of southern womanhood maintained by the southern belle myth leaves no room for the contributions and sufferings of enslaved women, as their white mistresses occupy the dominant position in the collectivization process. Because elite whites are able to control the direction of the collective narrative, contradictory narratives to those that paint the planter class as anything but amiable, benevolent masters are deleted.

African American women's perspectives and memories consistently demonstrate the fallibility of the white collective memory, so they are prevented from contributing to it. Recollections of former slaves relate the horrors of deadly beatings, hard labor required mere days after giving birth, whippings, and more (Glymph 55). These accounts destroy the benevolent image of the planter class, as their testimony relays the brutality of a system that used violence in order to elicit fear among the oppressed. White women were also victims of domestic abuse at the hands of white men, but the acceptance of widespread violence and horrors against slave women display the privilege of mistresses in their status as ladies, or even as human (54). The ghosts of these marginalized women occupy

the periphery of the history of Mississippi but are rarely invited towards the center of it.

It is important to note, then, that slave women are not present in the ghostlore of Mississippi so far as the popular narratives that feature women are concerned. Suffering and tragedy serve as the foundations of ghost narratives, but only certain categories of these themes of suffering are permissible, like death by natural causes or spinsterhood. Abstract and unfortunate circumstances are present in the ghostlore of the state, but suffering or death at the hands of a member of the planter class is not documented in the collective narrative. While African American women did face natural tragedies, the primary source of their misfortune stemmed from their position as forcibly enslaved individuals in antebellum Mississippi.

The binary of black and white dominated antebellum society, making differences more defined and, therefore, easier to enforce. Whereas the white plantation mistress represented purity, piety, etcetera, the black female body served as a symbolic foil, representing sexual promiscuity, amorality, and uncivilized disobedience of a “Jezebel” or was rendered asexually as “mammy” (Jones 12). It was this characterization that allowed those in power, namely white males, to maintain dominance in the antebellum society. The overlapping categories of white v. black and male v. female gave rise to the social hierarchy, which prioritized white and male and subjected black womanhood to the bottom of the social ladder (Jones 8). Class and economic difference were overshadowed by race because black bodies were seen by white southerners as property.

Additionally, this focus on racial constructs provided the planter class the ability to appease the poor, white sector of society, so slave women fell at the lowest point of the societal construction.

Not only were black women stationed at the bottom of the antebellum social hierarchy, they were also characterized in a way that positioned them around the imagined perfection of the southern lady. Due to the idea that black women were uncivilized, their characterizations were either hyper-sexual, primitive whore or docile, domestic, asexual mammy figures (Glymph 65). Instead of a spectrum upon which to classify, these were the binary options, neither of which accurately described a majority of the demographic they were intended to define. Whereas the entire order of chivalry was created to protect white females' sexual purity, the objectified status of black women painted them as uncivilized opposites, whose sexuality was open and natural -- even willing and definitely available.

In order to perpetuate the image of a perfect southern lady, white society misrepresented black women to justify the system which held the races in positions of dominance and oppression. McGuire's *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance- a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power* explores the issues of race and sexual violence in the South. Rape of black women by white plantation owners contributed to the confusion and mental gymnastics involved in an irrational system and further separated the races by highlighting the differences in prosecution and justice. Black men accused of inappropriate advances towards a

white woman were often killed, while white men were well known to have raped their black, female slaves, and these instances of institutional, legal racism helped to cement the narrative put forth to protect white supremacy in the antebellum south as well as throughout Jim Crow Mississippi (McGuire 10).

The overlapping female issues of chastity and motherhood found further disparity and oppression in the forced roles of black women in motherhood and supplementary maternity. Mammies acted as the support for white motherhood, as the ideal lady had to carry on the lineage and uphold her duty, and the asexual polar option became the response to white women's need to mother children. In the strange, consistently oppressive system of antebellum slavery, black women were expected to sacrifice bodily autonomy and their maternal role for their own children to offset white chastity and motherhood. This meant that black mothers were prevented from allowing the full, necessary attention be paid their own children. From birth, black children were sacrificed for the comfort and image of white families.

A historical account in Patricia Yaeger's *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women's Writing, 1930-1990*, for example, recounts an anecdote in which slave women are put back into labor-intensive fieldwork almost immediately after giving birth. The infants are placed in a trough at one end of the field, and the women start at the other end of the field in order to work their way back towards the babies. This account explains that while some of the women work their way back, a sudden rainstorm strikes, yet they are not allowed to pause their work. By the time they reach their infants at the other end of the

field, the troughs have flooded, and “every baby in it was floating round in the water, drowned” (Yaeger 75). The mothers are not given time to grieve their stolen motherhood, and they are not compensated for the perceived “property” lost in the process. While white motherhood is protected, black motherhood is seen as harmful to labor productivity and treated as a nuisance unless it is in the pursuit of repopulating the slave population, even through the Jim Crow era.

Black mammies were characterized by their white oppressors as innately maternal, sweet, and unassuming, and this character is as close to an image of a black family-oriented structure as the Old South narrative allows. Mammy is part of the family image ingrained into white children from a young age, yet it must remain clear that she is not equal to the child, socially, which allows the hierarchy to continue to exploit black women. One anecdote relayed the promise of a young mistress named Margaret, who told her “mammy” Rachel that she would sing at the young woman’s wedding one day, and the “mammy” held onto this promise for years, until Margaret became engaged and revealed that the agreement was one made by a child and could not have been taken seriously (McGuire 72). This shifting mentality from childhood to adulthood is perfectly encased in this story, as the familial relations shift into those prescribed by racial attitudes as elite, white southerners grow in order to maintain separation between the races.

In this story, however, Rachel’s first hand perspective is missing. Her emotions are recounted through the filter of a white narrator, who is remembering the situation with many years separating her from the events. Though Margaret

speaks on behalf of Rachel, the audience does not hear this account from Rachel, herself. The apparent loyalty of Rachel is not reciprocated by the white planter class, but the emotions recounted through the story of the wedding promise traps Rachel in this narrative of the loyal slave. Rachel's voice is not present in the story, so Margaret is able to portray her in a way that confirms the white narrative surrounding slavery. Perhaps Rachel did not care about singing in the wedding and knew that it was an empty promise made by a white child, but this viewpoint does not surface because it is not a white viewpoint.

The narratives Mississippians hand down from generation to generation become popular history, and that history continues to affect modern society through its implications and biases. In excluding black women from the folklore, which is more accessible to many than archival evidence, their roles are unnoticed or misrepresented by much of the modern audience. Archie's ghost at Anchuca solicits pity and sympathy for the injustices and inequalities experienced by white women in antebellum times, opening a dialogue for the topic of patriarchy and misogyny. A similar pity is unavailable to enslaved women, as evidenced by their absence from the folklore of Mississippi, because their tragic circumstances were created by the dominant racial and economic classes of the time. By maintaining the mythology surrounding the planter class of antebellum Mississippi, contemporary narrative practices, which exclude the sufferings of black women from popular histories, continue to ghost these women from the collective narrative.

This ghosting of black women from popular narratives also appears in popular understanding and retellings of events of the Civil Rights movement in addition to the major incidents which led to the success of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. In the case of Rosa Parks, for example, she has long been depicted as a tired, old woman who refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man because she was too weary from working all day to move seats. Her actions are believed to have inspired Martin Luther King Jr. to begin the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which is all much more comfortable to general audiences than the reality that a well-educated, young black woman knowingly acted as a catalyst for the events sparking the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's. The comfortable image of Rosa Parks caters to a wider audience, as she comes across as a laborer, older in age, and a meek woman (McGuire 83). Essentially, Rosa Parks becomes the projection of mammy-like characteristics in the narrative surrounding the Civil Rights Movement in order to create a more gradual transition of the racial constructs in the Jim Crow era. A capable, intelligent black woman would have embodied more factors than could have been effectively absorbed by a white audience at the time. Race became the primary call to action, with black womanhood left to wait its turn, in many cases.

The hauntings that facilitate the retelling of Mississippi's history are, largely, collectivizations of multiple, conflicting narratives that must compromise and settle into one working story. Southern belles and greater images of southern womanhood are made evident by the folklore of the state, and the images projected onto southern belles like the spirit of Archie Archer point to the



intended perception of these characters by a modern audience. As in other mythologies that comprise the collective narrative of Mississippi and the wider scope of southern plantation slavery, unpleasant truths must be “ghosted” and forgotten in order to maintain their ideology. Violence from plantation mistresses and the cruelty inflicted upon enslaved women are deleted from the larger history in order to filter reality into a more palatable story. These unrealistic expectations established by the mythology surrounding southern womanhood continue to haunt women through the modern day, especially in their presence in Mississippi’s ghostlore and histories. The ghosts of the female perspectives deleted from the state’s collective history dance along the border of memory, just out of reach, like the expectations perpetuated through their absence.

### Chapter III

When the moon hangs bright overhead on Halloween night, and all the students are joining in their revelry, a line of ghostly Confederates makes its way from the University of Mississippi's Confederate monument in the Circle to the Confederate Cemetery beyond the Tad Smith Coliseum. Every Halloween at midnight, freshmen are told by upperclassmen, the spectres of the University Greys, the company that consisted of Ole Miss faculty and students, make their pilgrimage from classroom to grave, dressed in full uniform and completely silent in their march. Despite the fact that campus is far from peaceful on most party-filled Halloween nights, corroborating evidence for this ghostly spectacle is particularly difficult to find, and the mythology surrounding these men and their university shares that same mystical element. I, myself, have only heard the tale via rumor and offhand comments, and there does not seem to be anyone who has actually seen the Confederates make their march.

Tiya Miles presents the issues with ghosts and dark tourism in the preface of her book *Tales from the Haunted South: Dark Tourism and Memories of Slavery from the Civil War Era*. Ghost stories fall apart when placed under any level of scrutiny, as the details around the original kernel of truth are fabricated and supplemented over the years. Because the story surrounding the historic or factual grain is built by the musings of subsequent audiences, it crumbles under skepticism. In this book's preface Miles recounts her experience with a historic

home tour in Charleston, South Carolina, which she finds fascinating. However, when she questions the tour guide for more information on the tragedies that happened in the house at the end of the tour and asks where she can find corroborating evidence, she is given a rock band's business card and ushered out of the home.

In the same way, the ghosts in the Circle dissolve upon inspection. They start their march at the foot of a monument that did not exist at the time of their enlistment; the Confederate statue was built forty-one years after Lee surrendered ("Civil War Timeline-Gettysburg National Military Park"). Students claim that the monument stands where the University Greys hurriedly dumped their books on the way to enlist, but the deployment process was, in no way, this hasty. Oxford hosted days' worth of parades and recitals prior to bidding farewell to their University Greys, who then left for battle. Chancellor Barnard and university faculty attempted to rein in the secession-crazed students, but they had been training and drilling for months in anticipation of the opportunity to shoot a "Yankee" (Enzweiler 54). A book-dumping ceremony did not happen, so the site of the parade's initiation holds no significance in the historical account of the University Greys, who are supposedly the individuals who inspired the monument and whose ghosts march across campus.

Additionally, the company marches in the wrong direction if it is going to war, as their train is on the opposite side of campus from the cemetery. Why are these soldiers going straight to the cemetery, if not for the purpose of metaphor? Their trajectory is impractical, but perhaps it leads the modern audience to think

figuratively about the University Greys and the university's role in the war. More symbolic than accurate, the ghosts' path leads to the site of dozens of dead Confederates. Their direct transition from book-drop to grave implies a greater responsibility to die for a larger cause than if they represented the succession of locations and events tied to a soldier's war experience. Instead of stopping at locations like the Depot, where the company was seen off to war, or the Barnard Observatory and Magnetic Observatory, where injured soldiers received treatment for wounds or disease, the men move directly to the cemetery. These soldiers on their march are, strictly, here to die for the face of the Confederacy, as evidenced by their parade route.

Halloween night, additionally, brings the story's credibility into question. Mississippi seceded in 1861; Lee surrendered at Appomattox on April 9, 1865. The Battle of Gettysburg, which claimed many remaining Greys as casualties, occurred between July 1-3, 1863, and no major battle occurred on October 31st ("Civil War Timeline-Gettysburg National Military Park"). Contemporary associations of ghosts and hauntings with the holiday are the motive behind the perpetuation of this date, as modern audiences expect spirits to wander on this night. The University Greys did not have any connection to this date, so Halloween serves as a representation for contemporary, living audiences to associate the Confederate soldiers' ghosts with a corresponding date, associated with fear. This date coincides with location to indicate a modern projection of themes like history and ghostlore onto a narrative form. Ole Miss's traditions and

narratives, like these ghosts, are shrouded in complexity and depth, so its hauntings are similarly rich upon analysis.

### *A Planter Class Tradition*

The history of the university is, likewise, marked by a complex pattern of historical evidence, legend, and popular mythology, which intertwine to prevent progressivism in university affairs and conspire to maintain tradition. However, what dictates tradition, and who decides the universal narrative for Ole Miss? The complexities involved include emotion, pride, and a flair for storytelling, all prominent in Mississippi's oral histories, and it is this relationship between fact and tradition that shape the past and dictate the foundation for the future. Ole Miss's history, the fabrications added to it for effect, and those deleted from it for continuity's sake, act as a microcosm for the study of collective storytelling and its effects on the modern workings of Mississippi. It is through these hauntings that the university wades its way through a tumultuous past into a more modern, progressive present.

Mississippi's Institution of Higher Learning Board of Trustees was created at the time of the university's charter on February 24, 1844. Its purpose was to ensure that leaders at the state government level maintained the ideals and policies affecting the upcoming generations of Mississippians, yet the institution has also created complications in Mississippi's history of higher education (Sansing 27). Since the Board was first comprised of high-ranking state officials, its origins lie steeped in highly elitist, white supremacist ideology, as those in the Mississippi legislature belonged to the slave-holding class. The early history of the university

is laced with attempts to compromise educational advancements with the traditions of slavery and its systemic implications, particularly in regard to university leadership.

The University Greys, who haunt the path from the Circle to the Cemetery, are part of a long-honored tradition of pro-slavery indoctrination at the University of Mississippi. Fearing that the sons of the planter class, who would become the future of slaveholding, were becoming sympathetic to the abolitionist ideologies of their northeastern classmates at northern universities, members of the Mississippi elite petitioned the state's Congress to allocate funds for a finishing college more appropriately located within the borders of antebellum slavery. Thus, the elitist reputation of the University of Mississippi was born, as sons of the planter class flocked to Oxford for an unadulterated, Ivy League caliber education at the Harvard of the South (Sansing 19).

An example of the IHL's influence and impact on the University of Mississippi lies in the selection, tenure, and departure of Chancellor Barnard, who served as Chancellor from 1856-1861. Born in Massachusetts but a veteran professor at the University of Alabama and the University of Mississippi, Frederick Barnard faced immense challenges from members of the IHL due to his northern origins. After finally successfully convincing the white supremacist members of the Board that he was appropriately racist in supporting the institution of slavery, he was appointed Chancellor and began his attempts to modernize university curriculum. His main goal was to develop the University of Mississippi as a premier scientific research institution, disregarding the

complexities of the relationship between higher education and slavery (Sansing 79).

In spite of consistent challenges from the IHL Board, Barnard pioneered the construction of projects like the magnetic observatory (later called the “Dead House”), a lead-lined room for research involving magnets and magnetic fields, and the Barnard Observatory. The Observatory would house what would be the world’s largest telescope, upon that equipment’s arrival. The Civil War’s effects were far reaching but began by thwarting Barnard’s plan for the telescope. Upon Mississippi’s decision to secede in 1861, the fighting prevented the telescope’s delivery, and Alvon Clark and Sons’ work never arrived at the University of Mississippi (“Barnard Observatory - Center For The Study Of Southern Culture”). Barnard Observatory and the magnetic observatory stood side by side, a haunting reminder of what could have been a leading scientific institution, until the Dead House’s demolition in 1958 (Thompson). In 1861, upon the university’s closure during the Civil War due to lack of student enrollment, Barnard resigned and moved to New York, and the campus’ structures became administrative buildings for the Confederacy (Sansing 103).

### *The Shadow of War*

Shrouded in the illusion of honor, the university’s service as a hospital in the Civil War was multifaceted and, largely, bureaucratic. The original buildings of campus, including the Lyceum, Croft building (then the Chapel), Barnard Observatory, Dead House, and other buildings surrounding the Circle that have since been demolished, served mostly administrative roles until

the Battle of Shiloh in 1862 . This battle saw injured from both the Confederate and Union forces shipped through Corinth to the uninvolved Oxford for surgery, recuperation, or final measures for comfort, and the Lyceum is still haunted by the screams and scenes of death that its walls witnessed during this time, according to many (Enzweiler 72). The Barnard Observatory, instead of the cosmos, saw spillover medical cases as the Lyceum filled with wounded, and the dead from both surgical locations were placed in the cool, dry, lead-lined Magnetic Observatory, which became the morgue. Thus, the university saw men, the likes of whom had studied within its walls, dead and buried in the Confederate cemetery just beyond the bustle of campus (76). Further than the Battle of Shiloh and its role in that battle, the most eventful role for the university came when Grant's army occupied Oxford in December of 1862 (83). Campus saw no active violence as Confederate and Union troops clashed on the town square, yet students and visitors, alike, believe the glorified image of a campus engaging in open combat with the Union army (88).

On a tour that I took of campus during the summer before senior year at the University of Mississippi, one of the guides pointed to what is now the Croft building and asked if anyone had seen the cannonball in its wall. No one had seen the cannonball, but the tour did not stop to point out its specific location, either. The guide made a vague gesture with her hand and told the group that in one of the outer walls of the building, a Civil War cannonball was visible. She claimed that Union forces had opened fire on the University of Mississippi's campus and that the building, which was one of the first on campus, still had the mark of this



event permanently installed in its wall. However, it is important for modern audiences to note that there is no cannonball in the wall of the Croft building. This story's popularity points to a widespread dramatization of Ole Miss's participation in the Civil War, and the story stems from collective exaggeration of the events of the war.

### *Curating Campus Narrative*

One of the university's narrative curators, comparable to that of the Garden Club of Natchez, is the office of Admissions, which selects, trains, and oversees the Ole Miss ambassadors. These ambassadors lead prospective students on tours of campus, and the script that they follow acts as many individuals' first or only glimpse of campus history, which allows Admissions a large share of the responsibility of the narrative for the university's buildings and history. Like the thoroughly vetted and trained Natchez tour guides, these students undergo a detailed application and selection process and must pass a tour test. This test is administered by more experienced ambassadors and ensures consistent factual information about dates, names, locations, etcetera prior to a new ambassador's clearance to lead tours independently. The training and tours are visible to those walking through campus, and those in training will explain that they are shadowing ambassadors or taking their tour test in order to understand protocol.

However, unlike the strict uniformity and adherence to the "truth" of the Garden Club of Natchez, the Ole Miss ambassadors have certain leeway over the additional information they include in their tours; not all of it strictly factual. It is the colorful, off-script moments that are added by each ambassador that lend a

personal flair to tours and provide relatable, anecdotal glimpses into student life, but these moments of improvisation often lead to more mythological interpretations of campus. These legends, of sort, are perpetuated through unofficial channels, such as snippets ambassadors add to their own tours based on something they hear on another ambassador's tour. A clear example of this method's potential for incident with the historical narrative came in 2017, when the *New York Times* published a piece with information given on one of the official university tours. It reported that a tour guide had asserted that football fans at Ole Miss dress in their Sunday best for football game days just as their predecessors dressed in their Sunday best to see the young Confederate soldiers of the University Greys off to war against the "Yankees" (Saul).

While university officials in Admissions denied the blunderous statement to the press, students tried to understand how such a claim, so commonly believed among members of the student body, could have become such mythology if it so quickly disproven. A quick survey of members of the ambassadors team proved that many of them had, simply, passed along the narrative from separate tours they had heard earlier in their college careers. It is likely the case in many common University of Mississippi legends that similar perpetuations of stories appear to fit the cultural narrative of Ole Miss as a Confederate holdout. Thus, the image of a university is haunted by a Confederate history in which it had ideological, but little physical, involvement.

### *Mythology of the Greys*

This haunting mythology surrounding the University Greys plays a major role in justifying the symbolism in the university's monuments and nomenclature, and this misguided focus contributes to the Lost Cause mythology so closely related to Ole Miss's history. The processional on Halloween night highlights some important associations that continue to pervade the conscious memories of those who consider Ole Miss dear, particularly those who also hold the Old South mythology close to heart.

Some of the more commonly believed claims about the University Greys are that the company consisted of the entire student body of the University of Mississippi and that every member of this company was killed in action at the Battle of Gettysburg. In actuality, however, many of the students who chose to enlist did so with a variety of companies, like the Lafayette Rifles or a company from their hometown. The University Greys did reach a near 100% casualty rate, but the important distinction that is often misconstrued lies in the distinction between casualty and mortality rates (Enzweiler 100). Many newspaper updates on the Greys report the men shot by accident or friendly fire, often not even in relation to a battle (*American Citizen*). Therefore, those who hear and retell the more dramatic yet inaccurate 100% mortality rate of the University Greys speak to the context of collective imagination on campus.

Additionally, if the ghosts of the company who, supposedly, died at Gettysburg are on their way to war and grave as they march towards the cemetery, they are either directionally challenged or entirely symbolic. The University Greys, after extensive parades, pageants, and ceremonies, walked to the Depot to

board the train for Tupelo, and the town of Oxford came to wish them well. This depot, though the original building is gone and replaced by a replica, was located on the opposite side of campus from the cemetery (Enzweiler 54). These specters and their legendary march serve a strictly symbolic purpose, one that speaks more to the mindset of the present audience, or at least subsequent Lost Cause audiences, than that of the Civil War.

### *The Parade Route*

On the symbolic walk, physical space plays a crucial role. Like the plantation homes often celebrated in Mississippi tourism, the spaces themselves become entities which take on a more romanticized or pleasant history for themselves through decades of retellings and modifications from individuals. This morphing often presents modern audiences with an interpretation of the past that has filtered through a large number of individuals, all with different perspectives and motives, and the university's relationship with the antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction eras point to this assignment of modified history to a physical space.

On the student soldiers' march, the starting point for modern audiences' purposes lies at the base of the Confederate Statue. A controversial symbol for a multitude of reasons, the physicality of the statue is important to note. It stands, as a full-bodied apparition, at the entrance to campus utilized by anyone entering the Circle by road, and this area of campus holds the primary administrative offices housed in the Lyceum. Thus, guests to campus or anyone entering by car must pass the Confederate soldier, who stands guard in the prominent place. The

soldier also stands upon a massive marble pedestal, allowing him views of most of University Avenue and large swaths of campus in addition to placing him within the sight of anyone within a large radius.

The soldier memorialized by the statue speaks to the physical representation of a Lost Cause narrative that pervades much of the reputation of Ole Miss, as it is important to note that the Confederate did not begin his watch until 1906 (*nps.org*). Those who had lost ancestors in the Civil War were, by 1906, largely adults with more expendable income, which allowed them the opportunity to memorialize the Confederate dead with physical representations. Additionally, the political environment surrounding the statue's construction favored racial tension and the need to reassert antebellum hierarchy. In 1903 James K. Vardaman, who campaigned on the platform of white supremacy, was inaugurated as governor, and Mississippians thwarted by Reconstruction found a new comfort in "redemption" and Confederate memorialization ("Mississippi History Now | James Kimble Vardaman: Thirty-Sixth Governor Of Mississippi: 1904-1908"). The delay in construction of the Confederate statue was partially due to a prior lack of funds for the monument, as many factors following the war contributed to a widespread state of poverty (Cox).

Therefore, the man on the pedestal represents a member of a beloved generation, who were beginning to die off, and the fear of their descendants that their legacy would either die with them or morph into a new narrative over decades of retellings. These unflattering accounts, which would be largely dictated by someone deemed an "outsider" like a teacher or author, would not

have been told with the same emotion and admiration as they would if told by a Confederate sympathizer. The university's Confederate statue, for this group of fearful descendants, represents a refusal to relinquish the historical narrative that held the white planter class in the highest esteem with a very physical, visible image of a guard figure on a massive, marble pedestal. With this understanding, however, it is important to ask: What is the soldier guarding? And from what?

### *Symbolism and Identity*

On their path from the Confederate statue, where legend has it that the students who went to enlist dropped their books and any ideas that the institution's purpose had been unrelated to slavery, to the cemetery lie important landmarks that allow glimpses of the Confederate statue's purpose. The ghosts can only take a few steps before reaching the flagpole at the center of the Circle, which held the state flag of Mississippi just below the United States' flag over the riots of 1962 and through fall of 2015, when student leaders voted to discontinue its exhibition after heated debate. Prominently displaying one of the battle flags that came to symbolize the Confederacy during the war, the flag came under fire by many in the university community and sparked national attention (*nps.gov*).

It was during the period surrounding 2015, when the fate of one of the symbols of the Lost Cause came under fire, that outspoken support of the flag and the "stars and bars" reemerged as a national representation of the University of Mississippi. The symbol of this particular flag came into practice during the tumultuous, violent years surrounding the late nineteenth century. In 1890 Mississippi became the first state to include poll taxes and literacy tests in its

Constitution, and it set the trend for other southern states. White lawmakers used the laws to disenfranchise black voters and restore white supremacy; the legislation called for separate schools for blacks and set other regulations which codified the previously unspoken cultural customs of slavery (“MISSISSIPPI BEGINS ANALYZING ITS RACIST CONSTITUTION OF 1890”). Firebrand Confederates established the flag as a symbol for the Old South myth’s idealized, romantic view of the antebellum South, and problems surrounding the representation of this symbol on an emblem representing the entire state came to light during the Civil Rights movement, when the flag is openly adopted as a symbol of white supremacy (“A Brief History Of The Confederate Flags | Mississippi History Now). Because Lost Cause ideology and the historical narrative it provides were so strongly associated with Mississippi and its flagship university, the moment it was called into question, the backlash from surrounding citizens and groups in addition to that from groups of students, themselves, was swift, heavy, and enduring.

The radical response from groups like the Ku Klux Klan to the resolution to remove the flag from campus reflected the response some felt to a new, more holistic and accurate view of Confederate history. Modern Klansmen organized on campus on October 15, 2015, near the flagpole to protest the decision to remove the flag but were removed when weapons were found in one member’s vehicle (“Feds: KKK Members Charged With Having Guns On Ole Miss Campus”). In threatening the pro-Confederate commitment to the cause that placed the flag and Confederate statue in their elevated positions, the removal

signaled a crisis in identity for many who had associated the university with the positively spun Confederacy narrative. It is in the removal of the Confederate symbolism so long held in the most prominent spaces of the state and institution that the, often unconscious, tolerance of a pro-Confederacy and pro-slavery narrative comes to light and demands a response from the modern audience. Time and again the physical representations of this Lost Cause narrative remind present observers of the prescribed truth, and the Confederate at the entrance of campus guards that narrative from alteration.

### *Integration and New Perspectives*

The Confederate has not overcome every challenger, however, which is made evident to the ghostly regiment of University Greys as they pass by their Lyceum, where they attended class and upheld the strict decorum of the plantation elite. In the courtyard just behind the stately, well-known administrative building stands a statue unlike the one in the Circle. James Meredith's physical representation stands as testament to the concept that the armed guard protecting the lost cause of an ideal Old South has failed in this part of the battle. Meredith, Ole Miss's first openly African American admitted student, walks through a door, representing the open door of opportunities provided by education.

Meredith was not the first African American admitted to the university, however, as an African American World War II veteran with light skin and wavy brown hair, named Harry S. Murphy was mistakenly classified as white and admitted to the university in 1946. Unknown to Ross Barnett and those attempting to maintain the university's segregation, the battle for racial purity at



Ole Miss had been lost sixteen years earlier (Hobbs). Murphy's story epitomizes the concepts of ghosting within the Lost Cause narrative; his erasure of his own racial stigma by "passing" as white undermined the mythology of a postbellum Lost Cause identity. By ghosting a part of his own narrative when given the opportunity by a clerical error, Murphy exposed the fallibility of the Lost Cause, so Meredith's difficulties in 1962 are a continuation of disillusioned white southerners' false ideas about their collective identity.

The differences between the statues of Meredith and the Confederate are striking. Meredith's statue stands with both of his feet on the ground, rather than upon a lofty pedestal, and there is no finery like marble anywhere. Instead, the statue is made of bronze and is inscribed with four simple words, "courage, perseverance, opportunity, and knowledge" (Mitchell 532). At the statue's unveiling, the reasoning behind the inscription was revealed by vice chancellor for university relations, Gloria Kellum, to represent Meredith and Congressman John Lewis' "tremendous courage and perseverance in their struggle to secure equal opportunity and access to knowledge for everyone, regardless of race, gender or other criteria" ("University Sets Oct. 1 Dedication For Civil Rights Monument"). Rather than an inaccessible, intimidating statue, Meredith's is surrounded by low walls, which act as benches, a sign of approachable conversation and discourse. The Confederate ghosts would have to walk past and take note of this physical figure, and the contrasts between the pro-slavery Confederates and the first openly black student at Ole Miss make for an interesting intersection of symbolism for the imaginative.

The year 2014 saw a very real incident involving the Confederacy and Meredith statue's interaction, however, when two fraternity brothers vandalized the statue with a noose and an outdated Georgia state flag, which included the problematic symbol of the Confederate flag ("Ex-Ole Miss Student Sentenced for Noose on Statue"). No imagination is necessary for this clash of Confederacy and Civil Rights, which highlighted the issue of racism on campus and sparked a widespread conversation about the university's Confederate past. The ghosts of the Confederacy were no longer vague spectres in uncorroborated urban legends to the Ole Miss community; they manifested as concrete, identifiable people and actions that could physically threaten and harm those who stood against them. Despite the defeat of the Confederate States in the Civil War, the violence of the system for which they fought continues to present itself in modern times, and southerners' creation of material memorials keeps it fresh in the minds of present audiences.

At a glance, the pro-Confederate narrative of Ole Miss dominates the physical representations on campus, in general. Until the counter-cannon of Meredith's statue's construction, there were three Confederate memorial sites on campus: the Confederate Statue, the Confederate cemetery, and the Tiffany stained glass window in Ventress Hall, yet there were no memorials to represent characters who did not fit the Lost Cause narrative's portrayal of powerful, white figures. Only the graves in the cemetery predated Reconstruction, however, meaning that all but the dead bodies of the Confederate soldiers, who had lain

beside Union troops, pre-dated the reconstructed Confederate narrative of the Lost Cause.

Spring of 2017 and 2018 saw more challenges to the Lost Cause narrative so closely associated with the University of Mississippi through contextualization plaques at many sites marked by pro-slavery and other Confederate names or histories. These markers are of similar prominence to the marble pillars associated with Confederate memorialization, but they give attention to the portions of the university's past that have been excluded, purposefully or not, from the historical narrative surrounding campus. What the ghostly soldiers miss in marching towards the cemetery instead of the Depot are the parts of the story that have been excluded.

#### *Anonymous Spirits*

The University Greys are major contributors to the ghostlore of campus, but they are not the sole ghost story about campus locations, as most of the original buildings on campus that saw death at some point are listed among the haunted structures of Mississippi in web and print sources like *Haunted Halls of Ivy* by Daniel E. Barefoot, the *Oxford Eagle*, and *hauntedplaces.org*. The Lyceum is reportedly home to many spirits of those who died following the Battle of Shiloh, and St. Anthony Hall even has a more recent haunting from the late 20th century of a deceased fraternity brother. However, it is the notable lack of names attached to paranormal activities that is abnormal when compared to other Mississippi hauntings, as a majority of campus' ghosts are unnamed

Confederates, while the rest of the state's hauntings are attributed to specific people with thorough back stories attached.

This anonymity of the ghosts on campus points to two contributing causes, either or both potentially accurate. The Civil War is a greater concept than the individuals who participated in it, and the ideology of the Lost Cause symbolizes more than the soldiers who contributed to its violent defense. Therefore, the sounds and swinging doors attributed simply to "a Confederate soldier" indicate a general presence of a haunting idealism surrounding the ideology of the confederacy. Rather than a ghost named John with a tragic history in which he lost his wife and child to illness, the ghosts of buildings like the Lyceum belong to unnamed soldiers. By leaving the spirits anonymous, the focus remains on the larger themes of the Confederacy and Civil War, rather than on an individual. That helps to maintain a mythology, rather than a history, as generalization and speculation are the norm, and both concepts rely on a filtration of narrative.

However, the anonymity might also correspond to the ghosting of African Americans from the narrative. Just as the unpleasantness and abuse surrounding slavery has been excluded in the justification of the system, much of the contributions of slaves and free African Americans have been filtered out of the history of the university, and acknowledgement of this has only recently begun. A name allows the present audience an opportunity to reflect upon the perspective of a historical character to which it is assigned, but the majority of Ole Miss's slave population remains unnamed and undocumented. Only eight of the hundreds of slaves who lived and worked on campus between 1848-1863 have

been named, even though the original buildings on campus were completed using slave labor. Enslaved individuals were rented from nearby plantation owners for the projects, and personal slaves lived in buildings on campus and maintained daily operations for the university (“Ole Miss Unveils New Contextualization Plaques”).

One unnamed occurrence of paranormal activity on campus lies within the Barnard Observatory, which has served a variety of purposes over time, due to the lack of a telescope to house within its dome. These roles range from Chancellor's house to sorority house to private home, eventually becoming the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. While the building accommodated a medical ward during the Civil War in addition to the continued containment of Chancellor Barnard's crushed hopes, there is another, lesser-known spirit who haunts the building, and no one has any idea who she is. Her story does not exist in the traditional ghost-story sense of the word, as she exists only as a mischievous, temperamental energy within the Observatory's offices. Typically, ghosts in buildings like Barnard Observatory are attached to well-known pieces of lore with either a Confederate tagline or elaborate backstory, but this ghost holds an unusual air of mystery and anonymity for a Mississippi spirit, especially considering the common desire to assign a life lesson or parable to a female apparition.

The woman of the Observatory serves as an interesting juxtaposition of multi-faceted concepts related to the university and state, as she remains unnamed and uncontextualized, despite the popularity surrounding the building she haunts.

Accounts of her presence exist only among Ole Miss faculty whose offices are located in her area, so she is not among the common, documented ghost stories of campus. A similar haunting anonymity surrounds the identities of slave women in university history. It is well known that slaves built the structure, yet there is only one female name associated with that history, which belongs to an enslaved woman named Jane.

Jane, the victim and accuser in the Branham affair, named her rapist, a white student, and her testimony led to the student's expulsion from the university. This crime occurred in the courtyard of the Observatory, so it would be reasonable to believe that the building has seen its share of slavery and its abuses ("Ole Miss Unveils New Contextualization Plaques"). Slavery's grip on identity and narrative is evident in this case, as Jane's story was only documented because it involved the reputations of wealthy, white men and her sexual abuse. Daily contributions of enslaved women, even those of Jane, have been erased unless the account involved a powerful white man, and the account's central theme of rape speaks to the abused status of enslaved women. There is not a picture, quote, or biography for Jane, either, which further proves that she only served the narrative of her oppressors. The sufferings of Confederate soldiers are memorialized with statues, legends, traditions, and folklore, while the documented, life-long abuse and sufferings of slaves in the same geographic location have only recently been recognized with contextualization plaques. Notably, African Americans remain absent from the ghostlore of campus, as do

Native Americans which indicates a much deeper absence through the deletion of their roles in the university's history.

Ghost stories and hauntings are a form of memorial, similar to the statues on campus: representations of those long-dead, out of fear that they will be forgotten by the ages or rewritten by less sympathetic audiences. Confederate soldiers have long been memorialized by the ghosts of campus, yet even the haunting presence of slaves, who suffered and died on university grounds as well, has been ghosted from the conscious narrative. Ghosts serve the present audience by recalling tales of the past or providing a slate upon which to project the fears and beliefs of a modern audience that is constantly wrestling with a past that is often contradictory and unsettling. Many of the ghosts of campus represent a greater ideology, rather than an individual tale of woe, to perpetuate a certain, arguably pro-Lost Cause, image of the historical narrative. By excluding slaves and the horrors they endured under this commonly accepted imagery of the antebellum period from even the folklore, the system of slavery and Confederate sympathy are allowed to endure as the romanticized, hyper-filtered narrative held by many in its constituency.

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