

8-2013

New narratologies: an examination of the interplay between life, land, and story

Dana Turner
DePaul University, danatturner@gmail.com

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NEW NARRATOLOGIES: AN EXAMINATION OF THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN LIFE, LAND,
AND STORY

A Thesis

Presented in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

AUGUST, 2013

BY

DANA TURNER

Department of Interdisciplinary Studies

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

DePaul University

Chicago, Illinois

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my thesis committee, Dr. Francesca Royster, Dr. Bill Johnson Gonzalez, and Dr. Matthew Abraham, for their constant support and encouragement and for challenging me intellectually, academically, and professionally. Thank you to my family for their continuous support. And, lastly, thank you to the informants for telling me their stories.

Introduction

“Places do not exist until they are verbalized, first in thought and memory and then through the spoken or written work.”—Kent Ryden

I can remember as a child going to visit my grandfather, who spent his life as a farmer in the rural south, at his nursing home in Mississippi. On his wrist he wore an identification bracelet that read, “Race Unknown.” Although I did not fully understand at the time the ambiguity surrounding my grandfather’s race, this seemingly small event, in addition to the stories that family members would frequently tell, produced a lifetime of questions surrounding race and identity and a desire to research how the land that my grandfather worked contributed to who he was as a man and how the generations that followed were impacted by this foundation.

As I began the research for this thesis, I was equipped with just a vague idea that southern oral history deserved more introspection. With that idea in mind, I embarked on a lengthy journey that introduced me to many interdisciplinary areas that all had something to contribute to the discourse on vernacular cultures. As an example, there is the study of American Folklore, Folkloristics, that incorporates the study of vernacular culture and material goods in a region specific place. Sociology is also a relevant point of interest as ethnographic methodologies are often mentioned in discussions. Historians, too, have much to say about the relevance of oral narratives and their potential to create important theoretical implications. It seems that many scholars from differing fields all have something to say about these storytellers. Given that there are so many different conversations about narrators, it became clear that the field of Narratology can offer the most comprehensive approach to understanding all of these areas.

As the committee for the 2012 Conference of Narrative Matters in Paris indicated, “Narrative has a profound impact on our understanding of what it means to be human; of the

choices we make as persons; of the nature of health and wellness, teaching and learning; of the meaning of history; of how social groups work through conflict; and of how the cultural and political world is ordered.” Since undertaking this project, the Narrative Matter’s explanation is been my core understanding of the field of Narratology as well. Thus, it was natural for me to use the field as a means to explore the many questions I had surrounding rural southern culture, particularly land and its impact on the construction of identity, all while incorporating the meaning of life and narrative. As a result of these questions, it is logical to ask why land and geographical place remain an important theoretical consideration among narratologists today.

After contemplating those research inquiries, collecting stories from members of the community, and analyzing historical accounts, I then approached my findings by developing the hypothesis that memory and geography can play a role in the maintenance of traditional culture in rural community narratives. Next, from this argument I concluded that in studying the DeKalb and Neshoba Counties region of Mississippi, there are some issues that prohibit a full interpretation of the region’s historical narrative events. Concurrently, while I found some issues that prohibited the progression of research, I also found some areas that can likewise expand the discussion to include new narrative cultural practice considerations. Ultimately, through these various methodologies I found that the people in this region were dependent on land and each other for survival, demonstrating a type of self-sufficiency out of necessity. I also discovered through compelling interviews that location is responsible for the sharing of beliefs among communities. Originally my hypothesis was that location and narrative suggest that land dependence makes it possible for ideologies to become an unquestioned normative practice. Then, considering that other scholars are beginning to contemplate the impact of dwelling and working in landscape over time, it was reasonable to suggest that the way communities

remember and interact with the land is directly related to the construction of identity. I became enthralled by theories on memory, land tenure, and territorial behavior, coming to believe that this is the investigative lens that elicits the most help in understanding the connection between people, landscape, narrative, and identity. Yet despite these connections, there still are issues that are problematic in the current critical theories on memory, identity, and geographical place. Consequently, they do not push in the discussion on the consequences of land appropriation. It is my hope that the results here will effectively address this need.

A Missing Link in Narratology Theory

In 1969 Tzvetan Todorov created the term “narratologie”—the study of narrative structure—after researching the structural elements of the narrative. Later he called for a new type of discipline in academic studies that would come to be known as Narratology. Early narratologists rooted their discussions in structural linguistics, semiology, logic, and rhetorical categories as they attempted to justify the field as the science of narrative. Some narratologists in their studies have traced the core ideas of “narratological modeling” back as early as Greek antiquity. The ideas that date from the 19th century onward, however, are particularly fascinating. According to Narratology scholar Jan Christoph Meister, these elements include “phenomenological, morphological and hermeneutic taxonomies and theories of literary and folk narratives” (3). As exemplified by Meister’s assertion of narratological early academic developments, it cannot be denied that the connection between folk narratives and Narratology is viable and significant.

As my interest in Narratology grew, especially in relation to its connection to folklife and folklore studies, I questioned how they both relate to identity, race, and class. Initially what sparked my interest in the subject area were the narratives that were passed down from my father

and other family members over the years. I was always fascinated by my family's history as well as my family members' ability to pass along oral traditions and stories consistently from one generation to the next. My family and other families from the area continue to rely mainly on a narrative way of life which I find particularly uncommon or considered of lesser significance by societal standards today compared to some millennial families. Some academic scholars feel similarly that oral stories are of lesser significance because of their supposed lack of intellectual rigor¹.

In the same way that I developed an interest in folk studies, I developed the same curiosity about how history and location contribute to the social construction of identity. This led to the development of various questions about the formation of identity in these particular communities. After researching more about Narratology and Folkloristics, I found that recent scholarship focuses more on the relationship between identity and storytelling. This relationship is also categorized as hyphenated or new narratologies. The new scholarship, however, marks quite a shift considering that the field of Narratology at one time was solely dominated by structuralist theories and approaches that strictly analyzed the text.

Essentially, what I argue here is that the structure and interpretation of history that is associated with the land's physical space can further the conversations on identity and narrative. For instance, the fact that my family tells stories is not unique, but I do think the geographic, central, eastern region of Mississippi where these stories came from is. These stories originate from small, rural farming communities in the south that have many unique cultures, ways of life, and historical happenings. The history of this region plays an undeniably important role in the

¹ In *The Practice of Diaspora* there is a relevant discussion on the consideration of African-American folklore in scholarly work. In the discussion of high art and low art, Uncle Remus stories are sometimes referred to. This is the collection of animal stories, songs, and oral folktales from southern African-Americans in the post Civil War South.

shaping of this community. For example, located in Neshoba County is the town of Philadelphia where the infamous civil rights murders of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner occurred in the summer of 1964, also known as Freedom Summer. Over the years much interest has surrounded the area because of the deaths, bringing attention to this small micro-region on the map that otherwise probably would never have been heard of. This county, it seems, was virtually isolated from the rest of the country, and then following the murders was instantly thrust into the media spotlight. Given that such an important event in history occurred in this area, I thought that it was important to use this community as a place to conduct research. Many people have given their versions of what happened during this time. From Aristotle's *Poetics* we learn that characters are shaped by their actions and experiences. If this is true, do these characters have any affect on the shaping of the storyteller and how he or she retells the story? In the case of Freedom Summer, my contention was that the events and actions that occurred in the retelling of these stories had a direct impact not only on how the storyteller sees her or himself each time the story is told, but also on the geographical location where these narratives originate from.

The second community of interest is DeKalb, in Kemper County, which is 30 miles from Philadelphia. Geographically the two counties share a border. This particular community is worthy of research because of its interesting oral traditions and culture that I have come to know through personal connections. For example, in the stories I collected from this region, certain ideologies were passed down from generation to generation through stories and ways of life. One of the questions I sought to answer was how retelling stories about race helped construct the narrator's identity as the result of these ideologies. What I ultimately found directly relates to the

relationship between physical locations and region specific narratives, all of which helped to answer some of my previously unanswered questions.

Accordingly, because of this realization that there could be a connection between land and narrative, in the same way, connections can be drawn regarding the inhabitants of Kemper and Neshoba counties and their relationship to vernacular and official knowledge about the past. Some of the residents do not know why they take part in certain traditions or use the kind of rhetoric that they do. Even if the direct historical reasoning for the behavior is unknown, it is plausible to assume that the origins are encoded in everything from racial categories and farming methods to proverbs and other statements about national identity. One way to explore this notion is to move beyond the established conversations in Narratology that simply claim ideology is imposed on the masses and to widen the scope of the conversation to include the importance of geographical location.

Thus, with this widened scope it is understood that currently Narratology is in what is called the postclassical Narratology time period (1990 to present). Relevant discussions from scholars argue that history and ideology cannot be ignored; thus, there is renewed interest in cultural approaches in the field. Narrative scholar Michael Bamberg states in his studies on narrative and identity that “In sum, narratives, irrespective of whether they deal with one’s life or an episode or event in the life of someone else, they always *reveal* the speaker’s identity” (223). What Bamberg is saying here is that all stories offer some type of meaning in identity beyond simply looking at the context of the story. He offers the idea that there should be a different lens to define identity. This was different than past narratological approaches that focused on structural elements. These structural elements were exemplified during its classical phase where there was an attempt to define narrative universals in a more systematic approach to

understanding storytelling. Consequently, this was a movement to define Narratology as a monolithic theory.

On the one hand, utilizing Narratology during the classical period as a single theory created cohesive and systematic methodologies for the study of narrative. But because this approach was essentialist, it became so reductive that it failed to address cultural and philosophical issues. On the other hand, although the classical period neglected to address various issues, it did offer a more structured approach that can be applied to all narratives, ultimately, eliminating any confusion there otherwise might be about application and appropriateness of methodologies.

Postclassical narratologists are attempting to address this issue with their continued discussions on new and hyphenated Narratologies. Mainly the problem they are trying to solve is the discipline's inability to address all the relevant individual areas such as cultural and philosophical implications while maintaining a sense of structure in its methods. This has been a struggle, in part, because each individual topic also must have its own methods of analysis. For example, narratological methods of analysis for identity are different than the narratological methods of analysis for digital narratives. Given that the two topics are so vastly different, it is obvious why individual methods are needed for each topic.

These individual methods are problematic for certain scholars, however, because some do not believe that the new and hyphenated narratologists' methods move the field forward. Despite this dissent, they do agree that we should focus on broadening the field's scope while adequately controlling its methods. The question, however, is what methods are best for accomplishing this.

One method is to analyze stories as "big stories" and "small stories." This method approaches narratives by analyzing the relationship between experience, story practice,

descriptive resources, audiences and the environment that condition storytelling. The argument here is that big stories are retold on such a large scale that the teller sees him or herself as a represented context of the story. These types of stories are representations of the world and identities in them. Conversely, small stories are good indicators of identity because they create a sameness and consistency through the process of repeated storytelling. Small stories occur in everyday conversation; they use interaction and engagements as a way to construct who they are. It is established in small stories, then, that identity is established with everyday interactions. It still remains to be seen, though, how identity is established within a geographic region. New and hyphenated Narratologies are fairly recent, only being in the discourse on Narratology for about twenty years. Still, it seems to have many supporters. This topic is important to the discipline of Narratology because it will contribute to the current discourse on the future trajectory of the field. It will offer a new contribution to the research on identity. Furthermore, the goals of this project show how identity is constructed in relation to folklife and Narratology. Specifically, research on geographic region and narratives help us understand how these elements construct identity. In sum, this thesis shows how certain paradigms of knowledge and history contribute to the formation of regional national identity. More specifically, this study fills a gap in Narratology discourse that does not already address these pressing issues.

Methodology and Procedures

There are various theories used in this thesis that are interdisciplinary. These differing theories function as methods to negotiate within the frame of current discourse topics. The various disciplines and theories include the following from Postcolonial Theory: power relations, national consciousness, and hybridity. For example, in these communities it is evident that power relations are similar to a web that permeates all aspects of society. This web intricately combines

power, authority, and knowledge that construct the predominant beliefs of the community. Also, there is a national consciousness or way that the entire group of people think here as exemplified by acts of performativity in stories of passing for white among community members and confrontation of racism. Lastly, there is a certain hybridity in the culture, meaning that there is a combination of beliefs from the colonizer and new beliefs from the colonized that have constructed a new culture which combines the two.

The disciplines of Folkloristics and Narratology have blurred boundaries; therefore, it is important for these areas to be clearly defined with clear distinctions between the two. For example, Folkloristics is an essential inclusion to the research for this thesis because it explores object and text; setting and region; event and action; and idea and thought. Out of these different approaches I use the studies of location and place to analyze my research. Additionally, the study of material culture is useful in the understanding of everyday existence. Here, material culture is defined as the objects that are part of the environment where social and cultural norms are created.

Additionally, areas of inquiry include questions that position my argument within the framework of Narratology. The thesis makes an argument within the frame of the disciplinary discussions in Narratology, while using interdisciplinary knowledge from other disciplines, as indicated earlier. As Bamberg says, “In other words, the analyses of form and content of narratives in identity research are heuristic in the effort to analyze how self and identity come to existence” (221). Part of his analysis neglects to acknowledge location of both physical space and intangible existence. Therefore, a true exploration of identity must include all of these elements. Because of this void, I was interested in knowing whether geography could be added as a viable point of contention in the discourse on Narratology scholarship, and, if so, what role

geography would play in creating cultural hegemony. Moreover, especially in this region, I was interested in knowing how material culture contributes to hybrid identities. For instance, how do geography, capital gain, and identity formation all relate? And can oral narratives result from this material and capital that creates this economic culture? This was accomplished, in part, by refuting claims by narratologists who claim that the new and hyphenated Narratologies are not a focus of immediate need in the field. My thesis then moves to theoretical considerations about story and memory in Chapter 1, and then proceeds to Chapter 2's discussion on Narratology, geography, and racial identity formations.

The research was conducted using human subjects who were interviewed via telephone, in person, and email. Because physical reactions and facial expressions can play an important role in analysis (and are important to some Narratology theories), in-person interviews were preferred; however, this was not always possible. The focus of the interviews was to learn about the way of life in Kemper and Neshoba Counties, particularly from those who have first-hand accounts. It was not always possible to obtain first-hand accounts; therefore, in these cases archived historical records were used. The target population included participants who could offer stories that took place between the dates of 1900-1970. These dates were important for recruitment because the period began after southern reconstruction and during the time of significant advancements in American industrial expansion. The time period ends in 1970 because this marks the post-segregation era and is important to the understanding of identity.

The participants qualified if they lived in Neshoba and Kemper Counties or knew someone who had at one time lived in this area at some point during the above mentioned time period. The type of questions planned were general questions about age, upbringing, what he or she remembered about growing up in the area, and if he or she could tell what they remembered

about the racial divisions in these locations. To qualify, the narratives had to be region specific and include evidence of construction of race. As each interview was analyzed, the case study approach was used in attempt to answer my research questions.

Context of this Study

In the culmination of my research I have found that the field of Narratology has undergone significant development since Todorov declared the study of narratologie in 1969. At that time, Narratology was mainly composed of the theories from the structuralist school of thought that focused on the traditional elements of textual storytelling. These previous approaches examined the core elements of the story model strictly based on surface-level, text-based factors: letters, words, and sentences. Since then, the field has undergone important transitions that have made the field interdisciplinary.

In the early stages of this evolution, narratologists attempted to solidify the field with neologism, the process of naming to give meaning to objects or subjects and then later historicity. However, the earliest models of narrative study can be traced back as early as the Greek epics of Plato and Aristotle with their representational models and the functional relation between character and action. The 19th and 20th centuries were generally dominated by formalist theories of the novel, mainly with thematic and didactic concerns.

Most contemporary theorists, however, cite the French Structuralist period between 1966-1980 as one of the most important time periods in Narratology history. This is because the theorists at this time attempted to form Narratology as methodologically coherent. The major theorists of this time besides Todorov, include Barthes, Eco, Genette and Greimas. The core of the French Structuralist period concentrates on structural analysis and semiotics. Although these theoretical models are promising and ambitious, there are certain systematic and methodological

gaps that need attention. Narratologist Genette attempts to address these issues by introducing “narratological taxonomy [that] covered three functional domains of literary narrative: the temporal structure and dynamics of representation ...; the mode of narration and its underlying logic of narrative communication; and the epistemological and normative constraints of the gathering and communication of information during the narrative process” (Meister 18). It is because of Genette’s research that discussions began on the idea of focalization in Narratology, setting the stage for debates among the postclassical narratologists.

Still, the challenge of the post-structuralist period was to widen the scope of Narratology by incorporating other concepts and theories from various disciplines. These gaps are addressed by the theorists in the current postclassical period beginning in 1990. According to Meister,

Even so, the deconstructionist and postmodernist onslaught stimulated a multitude of new approaches aimed at combining the structuralists’ concern for systematicity with a renewal of interest in the cultural and philosophical issues of history and ideology. The resulting wave of critically oriented narratological models and theories proved to be methodologically heterogeneous, prompting Herman to introduce the plural concept of “narratologies.” A comprehensive survey by Nunning & Nunning (2002) and by Nunning (2003) grouped the proliferation of “new narratologies” that got underway during the 1990s into eight categories, three of which have turned out to be the dominant methodological paradigms of contemporary Narratology [...]. (9)

The shift from text-based study of narrative to cognitive functions of oral and non-literary narrative has created new areas of investigation for narratologists. One of these new areas includes clearly defining its methodology given its vast diversification since the 1990’s. In sum,

then, “What is the principal methodological status of the undertaking now that it has transformed into a ‘Narratology beyond Literary Studies’: is Narratology a tool, a method, a program, a theory, or is it indeed a discipline?” (Meister 19). Moreover, how do narratologists decide which issues are the most important for immediate study while maintaining a sense of cohesive structure? These are all relevant questions in the current debate.

Some narratologists are exploring these new narratologies in combination with cultural history and identity politics to further understand the socio-cultural impact of narration. The shift in methodological analyses over the years, although vast, still leaves many questions. One of these problems is that identity is simply reduced to the actions and interpretations of characters in a study. Hence, considering the previous research, there is room for additional inquiry. I contend that these potential discoveries have the ability to further advance the field of Narratology and offer significant applications for the discipline.

Further Discussions and Issues in Dispute

Several disciplines have attempted to define the meaning of identity through the years. In their efforts to create a cohesive definition, some scholars find it necessary to take an interdisciplinary approach. For instance, psychology, anthropology, and sociology all offer necessary contributions to this discussion with their core methodological principles used in theories of the “self” and the “life story.” With this range of disciplines, “it can be argued that the early studies by the members of the Chicago School, and in particular ‘oral’ history popularized by the works of Studs Terkel, lack [...] the analytic component of modern day narrative inquiry. However, with out these origins ... the foundation of the Research Committee on Biography and Society would have been unthinkable” (Bamberg 4). In essence, the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to identity and narrative studies is imperative. The cohesive

incorporation of these methods contributes to a definition of identity that is complex and multi-faceted, leading to many new areas of discovery.

In these new areas, for instance, narratologists embrace approaches to identity by linking, life, narration, and identity all together. However, this method is problematic because of several factors. First, this approach seems to have a reductive effect on the narrator and his or her sense of self by linking all these factors together. For example, this approach causes the storyteller to either look at life as reflexive or life as lived. Second, it causes the storyteller to ask if his or her life has meaning or purpose based upon the narrative. The narrative then becomes a point of judgment and is assigned value according to this evaluation.

Additionally, there seem to be relevant issues about how discourses on identity focus on authenticity of the narrator through reflection and reference. Because the speaker takes a reflective position or the “vis-à-vis” self as character approach, some narratologists contend that this helps define the narrator and character. But in actuality this approach can also be reductive and just as damaging as this previous method. Some theorists caution that a study of identity based upon reflexive content does not offer true insight. According to Bamberg,

While most research on biography has been quite aware of the situated and locally occasioned nature of people’s accounts (often in institutional settings) and the problems this poses for claims with regard to the speaker/narrator’s sense of self or identity, a number of researchers have launched a large-scale critique of the biographic turn as reducing language to its referential and ideational functions and thereby over extending (and simplifying) narration as the root metaphor for the person, (sense of) self, and identity. At the core of these voices is the call for a much needed antidote to the longstanding tradition of “big stories” which, be they

in the form of life stories or of stories of landmark events, have monopolized the inquiry into tellers' representations of past events and themselves in light of these events. (223)

According to Bamberg, the narrator's story can be categorized mainly into two groups "big stories" and "small stories." However, these categories are problematic considering that big stories encompass large-scale events. Ultimately what is at stake here is that big stories limit identity in the content of the story, not allowing the identity to become fully realized.

"Small stories" do offer more room for identity development and cohesiveness. Furthermore, they are important because they allow the narrator to negotiate within their given space while maintaining agency. These stories acknowledge communicative space, which the previous methods ignore. The key to the cohesive study of identity in narration is the successful negotiation of these communicative and integrative spaces. Thus, the narrative is then able to resolve any ambiguities while maintaining the narrative subject's identity in social relationships and everyday interactions.

The most troubling aspect of the previously mentioned methods in identity-Narratology studies is their reliance on text critical analysis such as the hermeneutic circle to define identities. In other words, it is the idea that one's understanding of the text is made by creating a reference to the individual parts. That person's understanding of the individual part then is referenced to the entire text. In short, it is the process of how we interpret what is read in the story. Consequently, text based characters have different parameters for exploring identity than oral narratives with factual past-time events.

It has been established that the objective of narrative identity studies combined with oral histories is to condense and unite, to resolve ambiguities, and to deliver answers that will lead to further

inquiry into identity formation. Moreover, discourses on communicative and integrative negotiated spaces are all beneficial in furthering the field of identity-narrative study.

This information is important because the valorization of whiteness and the devalorization of blackness, as exemplified in the stories from these counties, is an issue that affects all communities and not just the region in question for this thesis. Exploring identity through Narratology gives us new tools to question the construction of the self, not just in Narratology, but in all disciplines. This thesis concludes by suggesting that ideologies and certain values can be passed down mainly through oral narratives and everyday practices. The conclusion, moreover, introduces the idea that everyday practices create a collective unconsciousness or way of thinking in a culture that goes unquestioned as a way of life and existence.

In the chapters that follow, Chapter 1 discusses the historical factors that affect the interpretation of stories as well as how these stories are told. The main idea of this chapter answers the questions, “How does history construct identity?” and “How does history construct the narrative process?” This chapter is the foundation of the thesis with the premise that physical places do not exist until they are verbalized through memory and then spoken or written as words, hence the importance of storytelling. Furthermore, this concept not only emphasizes the importance of story preservation, but also the idea of collective memory and how historical knowledge is transmitted across generations. This is important because collective memory is needed for understanding the stories, images, and cultural codes that have been transmitted over time from one generation to the next. Additionally, the chapter explores the issues of self and narration; the problems of linking life, narration and identity; and narration as identity formation in normative practice using the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, the theories of Hayden White, and

the historical consciousness theories of French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. Lastly, both approaches are compared and contrasted with the historical analysis of narrative identity.

Overall, the discussion on Ricoeur and White focus on the influence of memory and history on identity, while the discussion on Halbwachs discusses how historical consciousness influences identity.

Chapter 2 discusses the role that geography plays in the maintenance of the traditional culture and narratives of this region. This chapter further explores Anthony Cohen's ideas that "The invisible landscape, the feel of a region and its distinctive sense of place is not so much a series of facts as it is accumulated human experience and response translated through the shared sets of values which animate the culture" (10). In the end, the research shows how geography has a direct impact on community isolation, lack of education, independence, and racial demographics of a community. The chapter ends by expanding on the idea that physical location is an imperative link to understanding narrative identity and should be included in the new narratological discourse.

The concluding chapter summarizes the results of the research with a discussion of the limitations of the research as well as suggestions for the future trajectory of the field.

Chapter 1

Historiography, Memory, and Narrative: Finding a Place in History

How is the truth maintained in narrative versions of historical events? As these oral histories are passed down over time, it is reasonable to wonder what role memory plays in the preservation of truth. The relevance of truth in memory and narrative reveals more than the meaning of a situation: truth in oral histories can also be a revelation of cultural identity. Arguing the distinction between truth and fiction, while important, is inconclusive when compared to the possibilities of historiography, memory, and collective identity. Since there is such divisiveness on the topic, the most influential scholars who have written on narrative and history should be analyzed to determine if their debate offers relevant insight. These scholars are Paul Ricoeur, Hayden White², and David Carr. Ricoeur is probably the most influential of the three, often referred to as the father of Narrative Identity Theory. Accordingly, because of this influence, the conceptual framework for this chapter is foregrounded in Ricoeurian theory. Subsequently, for additional support in this study, Carr and White provide a concomitant, yet polarizing discourse that further cultivates Ricoeur as preeminent. Therefore, given the disputed distinctions between identifiable markers in personal narrative, it follows then that scholars with a vested interest in oral narratives and history continue this conversation.

The relationship between Ricoeur, Hayden, and Carr is so vast that to maintain a current dialogue one must be acquainted with the context of their scholarly beliefs. Therefore, a brief explanation of each scholar will be provided before I transition to the focal point of my

² White is professor emeritus of history of consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He is considered controversial because of his radical critiques of historians and narratologists' historiographic methodologies. Many scholars think White's concepts have nothing to offer the discipline as a result.

discussion. It seems that Ricoeur is a common factor in most scholarly conversations about history and narrative because of his significant, seminal work in philosophical anthropology. This is important because as a phenomenologist he established the linguistic turn with his conception of historical time and narrative, setting the original tone for this debate. In contrast to his philosophical peers, Ricoeur was more of a humanist, believing that the construct of the narrative is also the construct of identity. His beliefs were not so inextricably rooted in a scientific tradition, but more so in the feelings, actions, and thoughts that explicate our life stories. For this reason, he serves as the crowning point in this chapter and many Narratology discussions that have followed, including those between Carr and White. In fact, if Ricoeur is the crowning point of debates in history and narrative, then the discourse between Carr and White would later be considered the arm that extends it. Next, through this extension of knowledge, Carr argues that history is true to the nature of human experience, and that these experiences are not linear or sequential but temporal. Interestingly enough, he sees narratives as groups of smaller and larger stories; it is the sum of all of these parts or life events that cause the smaller stories to feed into the larger ones, defining a broader social story of the human experience. In great contrast, however, White believes that no historical narrative is entirely credible because of emplotments and ideological structures that are imposed on to these stories. Consequently, he largely views stories as employed tropes following a strict, structural foundation.

Meanwhile, historicists continue to reject the notion of personal narrative, categorizing them as fiction instead of recognizing them as unequivocal science based upon annals and chronological facts. Still, I want to reiterate that Ricoeur is responsible for not only examining

history and the narrative, but for championing in the later stages of his career the utilization of narrative form through various disciplines. At this point, therefore, for the purpose of this chapter, I want to clearly state the importance of the philosophical lens he used to explore memory and the effects of time and temporal existence in narrative. Although some might say the emphasis is redundant, I maintain an extended discussion on his influence in these opening paragraphs is necessary. In either case, one cannot dismiss how even after his passing, he can be credited with providing Narratology with arguably one of its earliest forms of narrative turn.³ This matters because he introduced a brilliantly complex method of interpreting how stories, history, and the narrator are all related through his highly regarded work in *Time and Narrative*⁴, a three volume collection that was met with praise and criticism from his colleagues. As a result, Ricoeur created a debate surrounding his phenomenological approach to philosophy and speculative history that examines the complications of time and memory largely influenced by Proust, Braudel, Aristotle, Augustine, Kant, Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger. Accordingly, his inclusion of these past theorists were met with expected dissent but later became a catalyst for lively discussions. As a result, there emerged postclassical, new narratologies over the past three decades. And, thus, the foundation was formed for future researchers to create new areas for inquiry.

³ Narrative turns are recent developments in the postclassical era of Narratology regarding content from a number of different fields. Narrative discussions have included the exploration of cultural practices in the social sciences, i.e., psychology, cultural anthropology and ethnography.

⁴ *Time and Narrative* is the work of Ricoeur where he claims that time is not just a part of the story structure. There is also a human relation component that should be considered. He argues that Narratology focuses too much on the semiotics of narrative, reducing the field to linear functions, citing that the narrative time line affects the interpretation of the story. *Time and Narrative* is a criticism of the narrative; however, later Ricoeur changes his position and becomes a strong supporter of Narratology.

The early foundation of Narratology was not without its critics, similar to the early foundations of Ricoeurian Narrative Identity Theory which was previously addressed. Particularly, in the new narratologies, identity studies is extremely timely; and, therefore, deserves a persuasive defense. The trajectory of narrative historiocity may accomplish this by illustrating that although early studies were dismissed, current studies bring renewed interest. For example, “In this respect, the narratological-semio-logical analysis of historiography is an unfulfilled promise of the 1970’s and 1980’s that arrived on the academic scene with great fanfare but never amounted to much of a practical success”(Kansteiner 30). It stands then that with the popularity of narrative turn’s focus on historiography, the keen attention to this topic from interdisciplinary scholars and its lack of practical success, justifies a consideration of Ricoeur’s philosophical research in time, memory, history, and narration as a logical research decision within the study of narrative identity.

Still it remains that with renewed interest in the new narratologies, impassioned arguments from historicists and narrativists remain current. For this reason, interpretation of history, its direct impact on the collective unconsciousness of descendents of history, and how these findings create hybrid identities have important implications. These implications regarding identity create necessary questions such as why as storytellers and followers of history should we care about how narrative reliability helps construct hybrid identity. Researchers with an interest in southern racial identity may benefit from knowing why is it important that we know that history is accurately told, especially for this time period. Research suggests it is because history is usually told from a privileged position which can be explained in two ways. First, through

ontogenesis⁵, generations may pass down inaccuracies over time. Not only are these inaccuracies constructed histories, but more importantly they may be ascribed ideological thought processes. Therefore, history becomes a constructed psychological manifestation, an affective realm, evolving from power that was established and is still recognizable long after those colonizing powers have left. Second, these histories begin to shape what we perceive as reality, eventually becoming part of a larger metanarrative. It is this discursive construction, then, that has more authority than reality itself. As an example, one can turn to one of the most widely studied philosophers, Hegel, to see how philosophical inaccuracies can become part of a collective social consciousness. To further illustrate my point, when Hegel speaks about the history of the African and the geography of the continent in *The Philosophy of History*, he writes,

At this point we leave Africa, not to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the World; it has no movement or development to exhibit. Historical movements in it-that is in its northern part-belong to the Asiatic or European World...What we properly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature, and which had to be presented here only as on the threshold of the World's History. (Hegel)

His writings hold particular significance because he is writing about both the history and the space that defines an entire race of people. His views, of course, reflect the shared consensus of his peers in the 19th century, completely disregarding any culture that is not Anglo through a system of numerical importance, the African being “placed”⁶ below eastern ethnicities, but located somewhere above native peoples. Not only is he dismissive about the African, but his

⁵ Ontogenesis meaning the origin or beginning of where ideas began.

knowledge of the geography of Africa is incorrect, too. The psychological manifestations of his fallacies are erroneous, impacting generations to come. What this illustrates is that identity is not only a representation of history, but also a representation of the bodies that are situated in that constructed space. Consequently, the African holds little to no space at all, physical or cognitive; hence, the study of oral narratives. Ultimately, the oral narrative provides an understanding of how identity is historically constructed, cognitively, and spatially.

To emphasize my point, we may conclude from narratives that (1) constructed histories can be created by the colonizing powers and passed via written text or story practices (in the case of southern Mississippi, the colonizers and past slaveholders who create oppressive narratives based upon only their claims⁷), or (2) you cannot prove that all accounts retold through narratives are mostly inaccurate. If this were true, it must be asked how do these manifestations impact a particular geographic area of people centuries later? Moreover, if the origin of the manifestation becomes questionable, how do we allow credibility to the narrator and the story itself? Is it reasonable to conclude that most of written history is full of fallacies as well? (3) Based upon the assumption that there is no historical movement, it is evident that the exclusion of histories related to the African Diaspora is indeed a manifestation of the evolution of colonization. Therefore, I maintain that it is equally justified to trust the autobiographical narrative story that maintains consistency through content, structure, and performativity rather than simply trusting a written text that focuses on a sole representative context to make conclusions about identity.

⁶ The numeric positioning of the African in Hegel's system of racial order is compared to the narratological definition of history and space that privileges, "studies of the historical and cultural variability of the semiotic oppositions (such as 'high-low', 'inside-outside,' 'closed-open,' that determine topology of narrative worlds.

⁷ The constructed histories would have been created by the colonizers and past slave holders.

Moreover, consider, for instance, a refutation of White's claims that storytelling has the inability to capture historical events truthfully as an additional clarification of my argument. As discussed earlier, White is a narrativist who believes that plot and meaning is imposed on the narrative. On the contrary, Wulf Kansteiner questions White by saying that he is not a credible source in his discussion on historical representation and historical truth. Kansteiner argues that "White's rhetoric and his idiosyncratic methods of analysis have not helped his cause. All of these factors explain the interesting reception-history of White's texts. Only a few academics have used White's insights and those of like-minded theorists for concrete analyses of historical prose" (29). Kansteiner goes on to elaborate on the apprehension of some historians who refer to White's work, accentuating that White is rarely used by historian purists: "White's work remains vilified by some mainstream historians ... and retains a faithful following only among a small group of post-modern-inclined historical theorists" (Kansteiner 29). The reference to White as being "vilified by some mainstream historians" is an interesting comment. If it is true that mainstream historians, his own academic peers, fail to see the relevance in his arguments, then logically it would seem difficult for other disciplines to champion his claims against narrative as well.

Though I concede that it is reasonable for White and his, according to Kansteiner, few followers to question the usefulness of oral accounts in history, I still insist that they play an important role in examining the past, one that should not be dismissed, especially in the study of Neshoba and Kemper Counties, the focus of this thesis. Similarly, as stated by *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Ricoeur provides ample evidence that "Narrative identity takes part in the story's movement, in the dialectic between order and disorder" (Dauenhauer). Essentially, what Dauenhauer's *Stanford* citation explains is that identity is formed through the story's

structure in a way that does not impose unnecessary meaning, but in a way that gives insight into the arrangement of lived events through cultural appropriation⁸. Identity is created in a story's structure, in the story cognitive process and, in what this paper proposes, an unspoken ideological structure: the collective unconscious. My research suggests that when narrative is seen through a heuristic model it becomes a cognitive instrument that provides a coherent identity for the narrator. This is a model that is derived from an ontological structure. This coherent identity is a structure that imposes order upon life events and experiences.

Therefore considering the previously discussed evaluation, what follows is a discussion on how the construction of knowledge and history amongst a collective consciousness creates hegemonies that are central to this particular region and people. Furthermore, this investigation seeks to answer questions such as, "How does the combination of historical power, domination and cultural hegemonies lead to a configuration of narrative that is a representation of identity?" The main purpose of answering these questions is to (1) investigate how history affects narrative identity using Ricoeurian theory, and (2) find how historical knowledge, epistemology, and collective memory create identity in narrative hegemonic communities. The main purpose is to know how this knowledge is transmitted across generations. Lastly, as a result, how does this knowledge influence generations to come? To be clear, the goal is to make an argument that will expand the discussion in support of Ricoeur's historical narrative identity theories, while suggesting alternative, novel narrative process analysis options for narratologists to consider and use in interpretation. It is after this explanation where I will examine the influence of memory and history on identity while defending Ricoeur's views. By the end of this chapter, it should be

clear that it is possible to address the skepticism of critics while offering new contributions to Narratology.

A Multi-Criteria Model in Defense of History and Narrative

Examination of Ricoeur's ideas on construction of identity are important for several reasons. One of these reasons is the inclusion of identity in time and liminal space. The inclusion of his philosophy has the possibility to create a multi-criteria model that utilizes and challenges his methods with the possibility of new considerations that question historical truth and refine the Narrative Identity Theory⁹. There is a need to address the conceptual foundation of historical epistemology with historical consciousness theories. For this purpose, the theories of French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs has the potential to show how historical realism constructs the hegemonic values of this southern region in the early 20th century. Together, the combination of narrative identity and historical epistemological consciousness might yield new additions to the already established multi-criteria model.

However, the problem of the identity model in narrative theory comes from the naiveté of narratologists who enter the historical representation debate without the ability to firmly take a stance on these issues in a cohesive manner. For example, in a study of family stories and performativity, Kenneth J. Bearden says in his study on family narratives that

Even “trained” scholars, as opposed to Yocom’s “untrained” ones, have difficulty determining and agreeing on exactly what is being studied: personal narratives, life history, oral history, life story, family folklore, personal experience narratives, personal-family research. What exactly are we referring to when we call an

⁹ Narrative Identity Theory is based upon Ricoeur's idea that we make sense of ourselves and our lives through contemplation of told and untold stories. These life stories become internalized as the narrator reconstructs the past while negotiating between the past and present.

informant's verbal recollection a narrative or a story, or talk about a repertoire, or refer to the informant as a storyteller? (53)

Philosopher Louis O. Mink in his debates with White addresses this problem by pointing out the significance of temporal existence in the identity model, noting that "the significance of past occurrences is understandable only as they are locatable in the ensemble of interrelationships that can be grasped only in the construction of narrative form" (148). This suggests that Mink is a proponent of the narrative as a signifying identity. And, although later Mink makes subtle comparisons between the personal narrative and its similarities to fiction, he does not necessarily regard personal narratives as such. He clarifies by saying we can only understand these relationships because they are in fact interrelationships that are all connected through the construction of narrative form. He clarifies further by saying in defense of oral histories that

[...] if we accept that the description of events is a function of particular narrative structures, we cannot at the same time suppose that the actuality of the past is an untold story. There can in fact be no untold stories at all, just as there can be no unknown knowledge. There can be only past facts not yet described in a context of narrative form." (Mink 90)

In other words, each person who speaks of past events has an important role in contributing to the realm of history. The perception of what happened with events holds as much credence as the actual events that occur; they hold the larger picture of the truth. Donna McGee tries to explain how these "submerged truths" are particularly significant:

This is reminiscent of the distinction Barry Ancelet has made between historical truth and psychological truth. In the "storification of oral history," Ancelet believes that psychological truth is more significant than historical facts because it

“is vital to understanding how tellers feel about their own past”...Ancelet maintains that “memory usually determines present values and attitudes more than plain fact. Oral history informants bring an otherwise undocumented past to life, but in their own terms. (13)

Beyond there being a connection between history and interrelationships as Ricoeur said, there is a connection between “function” and “actuality” as well. Mink as part of the postmodern dialogue on history believes that the personal narrative may be given meaning if structure is imposed on historical events. This is a stark contrast to White who follows in the tradition of speculative philosophy of history. As further explanation of White’s views, I would like to refer to one of his most well known texts, *Historiography as Narration*, in which he argues against misrepresentation. It is here where the foundation of his argument against historical memory is foregrounded in his belief that the discipline serves the purpose of guarding against this misrepresentation. Additionally, he is credited with clarifying the importance of examining plot in historical narratives. His contribution to the discussion was establishing that narrative theories are inadequate because of ever present emplotments and tropes. Therefore, it is impossible for any historical narrative to encompass all of the past with its many complexities. The two scholars’ only similarities, if any, are that they both contributed to the “linguistic turn” in Narratology studies with their comparison of personal narratives to fiction, one being for the practice of and the other being against. However, Mink especially believes that meaning at times can be imposed on the narrative, which is not necessarily a bad notion due to it possibly leading to a more complete understanding of the self.

Actually in White’s perspective, as a historian who largely rejects incorporation of the oral narrative as historical documentation, oral history is no more than a form of inventive

imagination. Mink explains the contention of other scholars who dismiss the practice leading to a revelation regarding functionality, one that elicits a better argument for the progression of research:

Historians have never much liked the analogy between history and memory—largely, I believe, because they know history to be hard work while recollection seems passive, noninferential, and unverified. But White’s description of annals suggests a renewed consideration of the analogy. (234)

Mink in his explanation gives reasons why narrative chronological representation is worth revisiting. He agrees that the cognitive process in the recall phase is excellent evidence of its complex nature. Such complexities in the cognitive historical narrative, which the narratives from Kemper and Neshoba exemplify, are a representation of the physical act of experience. These are experiences that provide meaning and value to the narrator’s existence. Furthermore, what these stories show is that retelling past events through story cannot be a passive act if the memory of the event is traumatic or has caused the storyteller significant mental anguish. As Mink observed, seemingly, some historians remain indignant over the fundamental bifurcation of history and narrative. What the lived experience shows, however, and in the narratives that are to follow, is that composite representations in the recollections of historical events in this region do reveal valuable insight into the past. In considering the research of the cognitive narratologists, for instance, who research the complexities of the mind during temporal perspective experiences, it is evident that “recollections” are indeed a complicated series of cognitive processes in consciousness representation, all of which White fails to acknowledge

In contrast, despite the dismal findings of White, Ricoeur’s work after *Time and Narrative* seems to address narratologists’ questions more reasonably by strategically combining

narratological study and historical interpretation through a cognitive lens. Ultimately, Ricoeur was a proponent of integrating both narratological study and historical interpretation (much to the dismay of history scholars) in his work post *Time and Narrative*. Ricoeur's academic article "Narrative Identity" even argues that life takes place before and during the process of narration; therefore, any retelling of events is most likely an accurate depiction. Regarding the retelling of events he says specifically,

And do not these "life stories" themselves become more intelligible when what one applies to them are the narrative models-plots-borrowed from history or fiction ...? The epistemological status of autobiography seems to confirm this intuition. It is thus plausible to endorse the following chain of assertions: self-knowledge is an interpretation; self interpretation, in its turn, finds in narrative, among other signs and symbols, a privileged mediation ... (Ricoeur 188)

One could consider White's substantial argument in his refutation of Ricoeur by acknowledging that structure and meaning is imposed upon the narrative by narrator and historian; therefore, any meaning that is derived from its telling is consequently inaccurate. Meuter summarizes White's ideas regarding the authenticity of historical narrative: "According to White, the *real* events of the past are molded into an *artificial* narrative form, giving them a certain meaning they did not inherently possess." White makes an interesting suggestion about the imposition of meaning, even going as far to say that oral narratives blindly follow the form of romance, comedy, tragedy, and satire. Ex-slave narratives are an excellent example of how exposure to the classical narrative genre actually helped to give their life-story accounts validity and introspection into the human condition and the larger machine that was slavery in the United States. Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs directly used a prescribed literary format to convey their stories.

This was as the result of a strategic approach to speak to their audiences in a way that would champion their cause in the abolitionist movement. Despite the fact that their stories were told using narrative devices, their stories actually gained useful insight that empathetically connected the reader to the narrator's experience. Overall what is most important is how the readers responded to the past events that constituted these life histories. Furthermore, cognitive narratavists would claim that the memory of the ex-slave is structured as codes, resulting in a personal interpretation of life history. The personal interpretation is extremely telling, especially because it is the repetitiveness of these life actions that reveals the space that constructed their hybrid identities. Thus, the historical narrative then becomes a method that locates identity by utilizing specificity and individualism that contributes to the individual and cultural landscape as a whole.

Although in today's studies of life-stories the reflective positioning of the self takes a privileged position over its structure, Douglass and Jacobs' assumption that format is most important seems dated. To be clear, their imposition of narrative devices does add coherence, but it seems the relationship between life, story, and physical space is a more contemporary, effective approach to understanding the complex hybrid identity of an ex-slave.

Still, it is important to note that White further demonstrates his theoretical opposition to the philosophy of history with his book *Metahistory*¹⁰ which emphasizes his beliefs about the many inadequacies of history and historical narratives. As stated before, since the current climate of Narratology studies focuses on the hyphenated new narratologies which incorporate such

¹⁰ *Metahistory* is the work of White in which he claims that structure is imposed on the narrative when the story is told by the storyteller. This work suggests that emplotment and ideological implications are created as events are chronologized into systematic order. White refers to the work of master historians when he uses the term "dialectical tension" to describe the different modes of analysis in historical structures.

issues as identity and cognitive process, there must be some type of concession that acknowledges these hyphenated Narratologies in the cultural narrative turn. Therefore, results of time, memory and history are valuable, I contend, because of the failure of past scholars to discuss their full impact on identity at length, instead focusing on linear, semiotic, and functional elements that essentially encompass the outdated structuralist school of thought as represented in the the research from White. Given the narrow development of Ricoeur's ideas and the thoughts of some of his critics, scholars should consider a proposal to view structure in a different way. Examining historical Narratology through the critical lens of ideological memory¹¹ could yield discoveries about this geographical area and its community of people. Specifically, it could reveal that the ideology found in the memories of historical events have a correlation to other human beings and their memories, all of which are good indicators of identity.

In the same way, like the narratives that were collected, the discipline can benefit from a newer, broad spectrum model that expands upon Ricoeur's established ideas, yet cohesively utilizes the social sciences. The new research area should begin with Ricoeur, who believed that our mind subconsciously selects which memories to tell in a story. This could be how ideology from narrative is formed. These stories are then passed down from generation to generation. Pleasant memories are remembered and some unpleasant memories are forgotten. Just as ideology is considered to be like a web of knowledge because it is constructed from the inside out and ensconced from view, by the time these stories are passed down the threads of ideology have long since become fortified in the unconscious. Because of this, the study of ideology,

¹¹ "The 'narrative turn' raises questions about the relation between ideology and narrative. Recent critical literature considers narratives from the perspectives of power and persuasion; some emphasize the normative nature of narratives. Others, most notably empirical work in women's studies, health studies and sociology, typically assume an emancipatory potential for narratives; storytelling is seen as a form of emancipation, or 'giving a voice' to otherwise silenced groups."

history, and the narrative is especially important to this region because of the impact of racist ideologies over time. Therefore, as scholars continue to debate the validity of historical narratives in this era of new narratologies, continued research on this issue will reveal that truth is not solely in the linguistics of the narrative, but in the unspoken ideology passed down behind the narrative as well. In essence, the unspoken truth is the origin of all ideological findings.

Finding Truth and History in the Narrative: A Ricoeurian Approach

The movie *Mississippi Burning* was released in theaters in 1988, 24 years after the infamous murders of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner. Based upon the historical events surrounding the murders of these civil rights workers during Freedom Summer 1964, the movie is usually the first introduction that people have to the Neshoba and Kemper Counties region. Although the movie is mostly a Hollywood dramatization with actors and a script, for the most part the screenwriters understood the main idea: if you were African-American in the 20th century living in this region, you probably lived your life in fear.

The movie brings up some interesting notions regarding racism and social geography. In the past, geographers have briefly studied spatial sociology¹² as a means to discuss the construction of race. However, what this movie metaphorically represents is an additional notion of the geography of racism, and, therefore, the opportunity to further define space and territory as it relates to narratological theory. Although within the film's narrative space there are dramatized scenes, fictional names, and dialogue, the loosely based story has an overall relationship to the life-stories of those who lived it. I anticipate that White would completely dismiss the film as a historical representation because of its emplotments and tropes. However, these impositions are

not necessarily a bad thing when applying Ricoeurian theory. When seen from a life-story perspective, the general plot of the movie becomes the overall “plot” of the regional identities. The film then becomes not just a narrative, but a representation of a moral code. The territories of Neshoba and Kemper become spaces of moral contention as well. Identity becomes intertwined with land for so many generations that the collective unconscious cannot help but define memories between distinctions of “good and bad” and “insider and outsider.” In sum, the film is made of smaller stories that transition to larger ones, all of them creating an identity that is the basis for a larger social context.

For this reason, Narratology can be helpful in defining individual and community identity. Or, essentially, it can define exactly the difference between truth and fiction in narrative history and identity studies. Accordingly, then, understanding historical events in Kemper and Neshoba Counties and beyond this region in the larger context of academia means contemplating Ricoeur and considering Halbwach’s theories. Despite the notion that Narratology has no impact on the discipline of history, by the end of this chapter, my research will have challenged those questionable assumptions, concluding that in order to comprehensively reconstruct the past, scholars must acknowledge personal narratives, their bearing on the future, and all they have to offer.

The following is an excerpt from an interview conducted by interviewer Donald Williams with Mr. Obie Clark who was born in rural Kemper County in 1932. An application of Ricoeur’s philosophy on time and narrative from his influential work in *Memory, History, Forgetting* offers significant insight regarding the link between history, memory, and identity.

Civil Rights Documentation Project: An Oral History with Mr. Obie Clark

¹² Spatial sociology means “the quantitative measurement of segregation and of other patterns of social interactions”

Williams: Let me kind of regress a little bit. You were born in Kemper County in 1932. Let me just state that your recollection is pretty good here, with these names. I usually have to drag names out of people, but you're just right on top of them, Mr. Clark. Coming up as a kid, when did you first realize--? Tell me about your family. Your dad. What did your dad do?

Clark: Well, my daddy was a farmer. We called it, you know, he was a farmer, but, a farmer. He was a good dad, a good man. And he had his pride. He purchased his own land. And he raised eight children on the farm. Cotton was our cash crop. We didn't grow cotton like they did up on the Delta, you know. We just made five or six bales of cotton a year, and then we lived off of the land. We had two mules. Two hundred and fifty-eight acres of land. So, we were poor, but we didn't realize we were poor. We didn't get no government assistance. Didn't want none. There wasn't none, you know. But, anyway, when I graduated from high school--. Now, this is the home county of the late Senator John C. Stennis. Now, my daddy borrowed money from the Stennises to make his crops there in De Kalb, Mississippi, which is the county seat. So, when I graduated from the little rural elementary school there--.

Williams: Do you remember the name of it?

Clark: Yes. Pleasant Grove.

Williams: Pleasant Grove Elementary. OK.

Clark: That little rural school there had one teacher, Ms. Davis, Luvenia[?]. And so, Senator Stennis was going around campaigning for reelection, even though he didn't have to. But he was going around, you know, using politics, telling the white people, not to worry about black kids riding on a yellow school bus, like the white children were riding. He said his granddaughter will be picking cotton before black kids will ride in yellow school buses. So, when I graduated from elementary school, in order to go to high school--. We lived twelve miles from De Kalb, and we didn't have transportation. So one year, my daddy--. Well, let me go back. The high school was created by a gentleman from right up here in Canton, Mississippi. Mr. W.H. Whisenton came from Canton, over to De Kalb, and established the high school, and they named it after him, Whisenton High School.

Williams: How do you spell that?

Clark: W-H-I-S-E-N-T-O-N. Mr. Whisenton. Sam Houston Whisenton. Now. So, after he got his school, he didn't have no way to get the kids to school. So he built a dormitory. And so, it helped kids. You know, now they talk about, you live a mile away from the school, you're entitled to a bus ride, but people [were] living a mile and more, and couldn't get back and forth. So, he built a dormitory to

accommodate the black parents in that county. And then, in the forties, late forties, the school board got liberal enough. We didn't know anything about no school board. We didn't know who was making the decisions. But apparently it was the school board, got liberal enough to allow men to go out and buy two-and-a-half-ton trucks and let them build, they called it a bed, or whatever, on the back of it. One of them put a little house on it. A little house on it! And, you hauled children around in it. All them curves.

Man, I rode that bus, man, that thing leaning. Dangerous as all go. But that is how we got to high school. And when I graduated from high school, I had one objective, and that was to go to the city, because I had seen some of my uncles and cousins who had left Kemper County, you know, out of the fields, and they were tough-skinned and all that, but when they went up North, then in a couple of years they would come back, their skin was all smoothed up and they had their hair all processed, driving a car. And, I thought that was like, you know, the promised land. So my objective when-- I didn't care nothing about no college. When I graduated from high school, my objective was to-- If I get too personal here, you tell me. (Clark)

After close analysis of Clark's narrative using Ricoeur's concept of narrative time and identity¹³ there are several conclusions that can be considered regarding Mr. Clark. First, according to Ricoeur, when a story is told the characters in it are forever linked to each other. This matters because these interactions serve in the construction of a generation of attitudes. Mr. Clark's cognitive retelling and remembering is a lesson in cultural studies that teaches us about cultural analysis within oral narrative constructs. As a result, each character has a direct impact on the other character's identity. The narrativization of events and facts is more than retelling a list as a historiographic chronicle. It suggests that it could have tropological¹⁴ encoding from the narrator, meaning these facts are given a figurative meaning. If this is the case, then perhaps we should consider tropological encoding as a heuristic function. This could, however, be problematic because figurative stories are more of metaphor and not necessarily true. Consequently, the oral narrative could suffer this false interpretation.

Narratology addresses this issue in its discussion of big and small stories. Big stories look at representations within the world. However, small stories examine the tellership of everyday practice and what that reveals about exploration of the self. A smaller story examination using the Narratology approach reveals that a sense of the self was constructed through his previous interactive engagements. Therefore, in the case of Mr. Clark, his narrative shows that his identity was constructed by everyday interactions. His story analysis shows that conclusions about identity cannot just be made from the mere context of his narrative, but also are drawn from the consistency found in the daily process of remembering. Because this process of remembering is a psychological ritual of sorts, it is a direct contrast to the Aristotelian application of Poetics that White would attempt to connect. Such a process would indicate that a tragedy, when told in the form of a story, shares similarities with dramatic fiction. Although Mr. Clark's narrative has mimetic abilities, it is far from Aristotelian Poetics as White would argue. Instead, this narrative is an example of giving representation to "objects" in the world. For example, one might see the dangerous school transportation or the winding roads as representative of the treacherous path of racism and its depth of impact. These logical relationships in the previous story help us vision the connections in our lives with cognitive ability.

It is then possible to conclude that the interaction with Senator John C. Stennis played a significant role in Mr. Clark's cognitive reasoning and his story tellability. As a whole, the "we identity," or Mr. Clark's inability to disassociate from his relationship to Stennis, may have led to a type of double consciousness. Mr. Clark's double consciousness is similar to what was first described by W.E.B. DuBois as a type of psycho-social dimension that divides the personality

¹⁴ Tropological encoding is the idea of history as allegory. It is model that uses symbols to conceptualize history.

into different sides. It is with these differential facets that we make sense of our personal identities in much the same way we do the identity of characters in the stories we tell. To completely understand this correlation, however, then the characterization of Senator Stennis and his impact on this geographical region during this time period is imperative. Secondly, as discussed by Ricoeur, narrative identity also takes part in the story's movement; there is meaning in the order and disorder of the narrative. Despite the evidence regarding this notion of order and disorder, some narratologists see "narrative as a cognitive instrument, and maintain that when we tell our life stories we impose order on chaotic events, structuring amorphous, lived experience" (Herman, Jahn, and Ryan 231). Seemingly, it makes sense that we can only make sense of ourselves through our involvement with others. However, this must not be confused with the imposition of structure, which was previously explained. To put it another way, the mere idea of dismissing the legitimacy of a story because of structure is not only theoretically dated, but also simplistic. It is reminiscent of the early days of the structuralist narratologist movement. As an example, when Mr. Clark describes his school transportation he seems affected by the instability and discriminatory practices which took place during his elementary school experience. Here he exhibits "lived history" or the defining moments of one generation that become available from one generation to the next each time the history is told as a natural occurrence in story. What is at stake here is the potential to understand the implications of re-enacting the past in the present. Therefore, examination of these defining moments calls into question how education was valued then and now. It also questions how these defining moments affect the individual, the community, and the generations to come. These defining moments from Mr. Clark illustrate how

This is significant to White's idea that history can become allegory.

narratives can be used as coping strategies and meaning-making processes that ultimately lead to a negotiation of not only identity but also geographical space.

In order to understand these meaning-making processes, one must know the climate in which these processes took place. In regards to this time period, Senator Stennis was in office for 41 years. Under his jurisdiction many African-Americans were killed for acts of political resistance or for “speaking up.” To understand the plight of African-Americans at this time, one must know that economic and political powers kept minority populations living in poverty, and under Stennis, fear. Cotton at one time was the economic savior for the entire state. After the mechanized industrial revolution, the usage of manual labor significantly diminished the need for human land workers. Then poor populations spiraled into even more desperate situations. This was a period when, astonishingly, farmers who were sharecroppers were being swindled out of basic human rights and liberties, beaten severely, falsely imprisoned, and institutionalized for going against the system structured by Stennis. For instance, he was the co-author of the “Southern Manifesto,” written in 1956, a document that championed segregation. In fact, some say his political career would not have been possible without this document that led to his participation in the tortured, coerced confessions of three sharecroppers for crimes they did not commit. Each man was flogged and beaten severely in order to produce these confessions; the beatings ultimately gave Stennis notoriety and respect in the community. The fear inflicted on these communities, in turn, has an inextricable impact on tellability which has been compromised as a result of the limits of discretion. When a group of people are subjected to a culture of fear, there is potential for the storyteller to question his or her value as a person. In this self-analysis the story itself becomes valuable; therefore, the narrator recognizes the self with authority as well.

Hence, it follows that the discursive agency within the story is also the same authority that potentially constructs the identity of Mr. Clark. For example, he says, “And when I graduated from high school, I had one objective, and that was to go to the city ...” His narrative also suggests that because he was a part of this community he was not as valuable as his cousins who left to live in the north. He says, “they were tough-skinned and all that, but when they went up North, then in a couple of years they would come back, their skin was all smoothed up and they had their hair all processed ...” Could it be that that because when Mr. Clark remembers the history associated with Senator Stennis and his community that he defines these memories and moments in history as something to aspire to? There is something to be said about his perception that perceived the North as an aspiration.

The historian’s argument is to disregard Mr. Clark’s account because the biographical story is riddled with inaccuracies. Historian René Rémond further explains the barriers that modern historical scholars face:

A long tradition has taught [historians] to be on their guard against subjectivity, their own as much as others’. They know from experience the precariousness of recollection, the unreliability of first-person testimony. Their professional training has taught them that everyone has an unconscious tendency to introduce a factitious coherence into the path of his life. They have no reason to believe that they are better armed against these distortions. They have no reason to think that they have any better chance to avoid the tricks of memory that they have learned to spy out in others. (62)

Rémond makes notable commentary on the biographer’s ability to objectively make contributions to historical scholarship. The main idea here is that historians are not only skeptical

of using biography but are even more apprehensive in the usage of autobiography. It is agreed that scholarship can particularly inhibit the collection of life stories. However, to counter this problem, biographical projects can benefit from the documentation of community stories and not solely rely on single-event cognitive recollections. Thus, if there is some type of summary or collective average maintained from many stories in addition to hard evidence from historical documentation, perhaps the personal narrative might be given more validity.

In the following example, one former Kemper County resident speaks about the fearful climate in Kemper in 1956. This is an additional first-hand perspective that describes the traumatic life of sharecroppers who lived in fear of resistance. This story exemplifies how several versions of the same narrative event can yield information about the larger historical picture at hand. This oral history narrative was told to the interviewer via casual conversation.:

The Story of the Beaten Sharecropper by C. Turner Age 69

At that time if you were getting ready to change schools you would turn in all of your school books and the teacher would check off all of the books that you had been issued. The teacher would send their records along with them because they would have plans to leave the area. Around this time a few days later one of the kids came back with the records and turned them back over to the school because they weren't allowed to leave DeKalb. They came back and had to finish out the school year. I believe it was probably a couple years later when they did finally move. As far as knowledge that I know, they slipped out in the middle of the night. A small shed, part of the barn or something where they would gather the cotton got burned down. One of the children was playing with a lighter or

something and the cotton ended up catching fire. After this happened one of the children got burned pretty bad. They ended up finishing all of the crops in the fall. Then Christmas came. It was Christmas Eve and they came up missing. I remember that because that was 1956 when that happened. I was 12. From my knowledge when they were doing that kind of share cropping it was very poor records on their parts and I think they always would be led to believe that they were not caught up with their expense because of the owner of the land. They could never pay off their debt. So at that point, [following the fire] after all that happened that was the year that they fled. I had heard that the brother knew the land owner because his land joined his with a little country store right by there. We used to walk to this little store. People were telling it. This fella was looking out for him to swindle him out of his money. His wife wrote back to his sister and somehow the land owners found out. They went all the way up to St. Louis to get him and bring him back. They beat him pretty bad. They whipped him pretty bad.

This conversational story leads to a questioning of narrative and space, physical as well as liminal. The story is a well known community recollection of what happened to the sharecropper who did not “know his place.” The consequences of his actions served as a cautionary tale passed around the community, yet it is also a concretion of identity:

According to Nietzsche, while in the world of animals genetic programs guarantee the survival of the species, humans must find a means by which to maintain their nature consistently through generations. The solution to this problem is offered by cultural memory, a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behavior and experience in the interactive frame work of a society and one that obtains through

generations in repeated societal practice and initiation. (Assmann and Czaplicka 126)

The exploration of community memory is a means to approach identity. In other words, the previous quotation from the journal article *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity* illustrates that the cautionary conversational story was constructed and passed down as a means of survival. Finally, it becomes community knowledge that they are a marginalized population, validated not through the self, but from the everyday communications that neglect inherit validation.

Collective Community Memory Approach in Story Analysis

Interpretation of historical events can influence the collective unconsciousness of a community. What I propose as a result of these findings is that the descendents from this area eventually develop hybrid identities with a certain tellability¹⁵ that allows human life to become relevant through the speaking self. According to Bamberg, “Narrating enables speakers to dissociate the speaking/writing self from the act of speaking to take a reflective position” (133). It is only through the speaking self that the complexities of this constructed hybrid identity becomes a tangible force that has the potential to impact an entire culture. In the case of Kemper and Neshoba, it is plausible that a culture of silence and fear surfaced when confronted about the racism of the past eventually emerged over time. Furthermore, what the field of Narratology reveals about individual identity through oral history narratives is that the autobiographical story itself is based on a hierarchical system. This system creates a sense of identity through the combination of structures made of cognitive frames and temporal memory. Given this understanding of just how complex cognitive structures are, Bamberg’s explanation of such

processes deserves further investigation. It seems that he has only scratched the surface, leaving room for more research. For example, although Bamberg makes an interesting point about cognitive structures, there remains the question of whether a narrator disassociates to avoid reliving traumatic events. One must still ask whether the narrator capable of taking a reflective position despite this disassociation from the speaking/writing self. Is the narrator actually capable of making an objective examination of the previous events? This question is not only significant to the development of the narrator, but is also crucial to making the connection between individual identity construction and community identity. Consequently, what is at stake could be the construction of a collective consciousness that becomes a complex blend of race, class, and identity, directly associated with Rosemary Levy's idea of "dialogue of dissent."¹⁶

Possibly the results are a self-hating culture that permeates into the community as a whole. According to the definition of identity and narrative from *The Living Book of Narratology*, any claim of identity faces the problem of "construct[ing] agency as constituted by self (with a self-to-world direction of it) and by world (with a world-to-self direction of it)." The world-to-self view could be a helpful approach when answering questions regarding narrative objective examination and its impact on collective consciousness. However, what this study aims to explore further is how the narrative affects the world-to-self discernment. This is because it is known in the discipline, for example, that the progression of narrative identity naturally begins with understanding of the self "over time in the face of constant change," after which the individual acknowledges how the self negotiates its relation to regional space. Hence, it is this

¹⁵ Tellability means that the speaking self is different that the writing self.

¹⁶ Dialogue of Dissent is an idea created by folklorist Rosemary Levy who focuses her research on bridging the gap between anthropology and literary scholars. She contends that there must be a broader range of comprehension of folklorist studies that includes history. She believes that field work and collection should consider involving history as a means of presentation and interpretation, especially in regional collecting.

self reasoning that addresses how an individually objective examination results in a regional collective consciousness.

My discussion of narrative up until this point addresses the larger issue that there is a neglected narratological association to regional space. Now that this chapter has laid out the premise for understanding the individual space, the narrative study has a natural progression toward inclusion of geographical place within narrative and identity. Just as scholar Patrick Mullen suggests, landscape may act as the context for reminiscing and storytelling, but there is also a relationship between physical setting, local history, and the recall of events in the “ritualized memory.”¹⁷ In fact, the ritualized memory is active during conversation, but of course narratological discussions have managed to overlook this important implication. An example of history, memory, and ritualization explained by HE Mordechay Lewy indicates these implications in his description of ritualization:

Routinization refers to automaticity in behaviour. Features of automaticity include among others unintentionality and lack of awareness but stand also for efficiency. Ritualization develops through repeated execution of a behaviour [and] in our case by religious-liturgical practice. Moreover, single behaviour steps are not consciously chosen but form a pattern that is stored in memory. (Lewy)

This is an important implication because of its interdisciplinary ability to combine study of routinizational ability in both the brain and community culture. In summary, folklorists have accomplished this throughout the duration of their discipline; however, Narratology remains void in its creation of a distinct area that can clearly define study of memory, ritual, and community.

What the field of Narratology is missing is what Folkloristics has already discussed at great length: examinations of identity that include stories, vernacular culture, music, customs, *and* land.

As this thesis continues to explore the themes of community, identity, and storytelling, there still remain questions regarding how we define identity within the confines of a homogenous community or ethnicity created by a material culture. This directly relates to the current climate in postclassical Narratology as the field continues to experience its narrative turn. Scholars are contending with the historicity and contextuality of different modes of narrative representations that afford the field. The issues addressed in this chapter utilize both the contextualist and cognitive narratological lenses that examine story through cultural, historical, thematic, and ideological contexts as well as the intellectual and emotional processing of narrative in the mind. Still, some narratologists will concede that the most immediate need in the field is the research of cultural history and narrative. I maintain that while this is true, and there is an immediate need for cohesion, there is also a great need for expansion.

The combination of narrative and ethnography as constituted by Gubrium and Holstein suggests there is a relationship between experience, story practices, descriptive resources, audiences, and environment. What has mainly emerged through the study of autobiography is that the idea of ritual and daily reoccurrence as told through narrative is a good indicator of identity. Nowhere is the idea of exploring identity more relevant than application in a rural farming community where working with the land and community relationships are a normative practice.

¹⁷ Ritualized Memory means a ritual or symbolic gesture that can be a means of making the invisible visible through the display of symbolic gestures that rely on a pattern of behavior.

Ultimately, these findings have important consequences for the broader domain of narrative discourse because of its impact upon identity studies: it reformulates how narratologists and historians define the narrative structure in the conversation. It potentially can give the field credibility and an established cohesiveness, which thus far remains to be seen. Furthermore, identity must be designated not only through the exploration of characters and story development, but also in the space in which these identities are constructed. In summary, the oral narrative exists within an institutional foundation that thrives on material goods and labor. Furthermore, the previous discussion examines the power of memory, history and its relationship to community. Accordingly, a topic for further discussion should argue how the ritualization of land is associated with community narrative identity.

Chapter 2

Locating Identity: A Study of Culture, Land Tenure, and Geographical Place

From Chapter 1 it is evident that Ricoeurian theory can be used to establish historical knowledge, individual identity, and space within story structure. Essentially, it is important to understand how narrative impacts the individual identity before studying an entire community. I have previously reflected on the individual and the space that the narrator's identity holds in a particular space. However, in what follows, the study will show how groups of individuals contribute to that established location. On a larger scale, this project focuses on the idea of geographical space and place. Furthermore, the discussion leading up to this chapter has addressed how place affects the individual, but scholars have yet to establish how place affects a community as a whole. Currently, scholars considering topics for further investigation consider stories in "real-world places" a promising area of discussion. After analyzing stories from this region, I agree with their considerations and believe there is enough sufficient information to make a timely contribution.

Initially what sparked my interest in the topic of space in Narratology is the notion that communal identities have a relationship to land. Specifically, land and geographical place is important in the maintenance of traditional culture and narrative identity in these southern communities. These variations on location in the maintenance of culture and identity are different from the previous chapter where markers of identity are explored through the historical events and time periods of the stories. Instead, this chapter proposes that the environment where the storytellers or the story takes place has promising potential in the topic area of narrative communal identity. Up until now, narratologists in the discussion on space have privileged the

concept of time, leaving the idea of physical space relatively unexplored. Despite this absence, research in this area can reveal much about the construction of regional identity. Similarly, narratologists can benefit from considering that in relation to community land practices, “Territoriality is intimately related to how people use the land, how they organize themselves in space, how they give meaning to land, and how they give meaning to place” (Sack 2). This idea is important because land then becomes not just a physical location but also becomes influential in how people orient themselves within the land and its boundaries as well. I contend that human territoriality is a significant factor in the study of land, identity, and story which is explained later with a discussion on how story can reveal indicators of identity.

Given that landscape and story is relatively new to the discourse in understanding the narratological human experience, the results of this study have the potential to illustrate that land rights have certain political context. Based on these promising results, the conversation can continue with new findings in power struggles, land stories, and identity. For example, the following description by Marsha Darling gives credence to the significance of land, agricultural experience, and the human condition. In studies of class politics and the working class experience, the study of racial climate within rural, southern regions further legitimizes the need for story collection and analysis in this area.

By all estimates and evaluations, the achievement of black people by 1910 in their ownership of just over 15 million acres of land is remarkable. Historians tell a story of the late-nineteenth-century reconstruction as a period of tragedy, betrayal, and disappointment for black people, but it was also a time of aspiration, hope and hard work. (37)

Considering that stories of this time period have the possibility of yielding discoveries in “tragedy, betrayal, and disappointment” or “aspiration, hope and hard work,” the narratives become representations of a thematic landscape. Conceptually, this chapter attempts to foreground the stories into those characterizing themes, yet argues for additional introspection into a tautological meaning of space¹⁸ that differs from those previously discussed in the first chapter. What this means is that space is often considered somewhat of an abstraction, neither being clearly defined by concrete dimensions or parameters, taking a more Kantian¹⁹ philosophical approach. For the purposes of this study, though, the inclusion of the *OED* definition of space is used due to its current usage in the on-going discourse among scholars. What I contend will be particularly helpful is a conceptual extension that sees the sociology of the body and how these bodies occupy geography and landscape through narrative. This is helpful because these bodies become representations of the self that are so much more than just a tangible existence. In a sense, the body that experiences “embodiment” takes on the characteristics of its surroundings. The essence of the body finds its identity through a negotiation of all of its surroundings and social environment. I contend that the bodies that have inhabited this land have consequently been manipulated by it. Furthermore, just as there are arrangements and processes that contribute to story formation, there are also institutional arrangements and cultural processes that correlate to the ownership and development of land. Hence, the need for further investigation into human territoriality, land rights, and power struggle.

¹⁸ It is important to note here that space is defined in this chapter regarding geography by the *OED* as “the dimensions of height, width and depth within which all things exist” (420). Marie-Laure Ryan brings attention to the philosophical meaning in her analysis of space.

¹⁹ Kantian philosophy means that life is based upon both the combination of reason and experience.

Similarly, there are timely discussions that have potential to advance the field by incorporating anthropology and sociology. Both methods have explored how a person maintains life experience over time. Routinization is an important factor when considering the day-to-day life of people who work with land. These two fields have successfully studied how to analyze communities in these contexts. Such methods are useful in this region where the farming land is divided into acres, and, therefore, boundaries become a significant theme within the stories. This is particularly evident where some of the acreages of land in Kemper actually adjoin both white and black inhabitants who may be separated by merely a fence or sometimes nothing at all.

Next, as further rationale on the inclusion of the topic, scholars should consider the larger implications of the relationship of individual, community and “landscape”. A starting point for this consideration may be the definition of geography and human existence by saying that, “In geography, both natural and human or cultural activities are called ‘spatial’ to remind everyone that they occur in space and have spatial properties such as locations, shapes, and orientations. Spatial analysis is the branch of geography interested in the relationships between activities in the landscape and their special properties” (Sack 25). This is an important indication because it supports the notion that geography is a worthwhile endeavor for research. Also, given its definition, geography seems like a natural fit for the study of Narratology. In the last chapter it was established that the relationships that narrators have to others in a story make him or her connected. This connectedness also includes landscape; therefore, moving the conversation forward to a geographical based story analysis makes logical sense. Additionally, this chapter suggests that a discussion on physical place can yield even further results with the acknowledgement that these collected stories were influenced by the routine exchange of commodities during the economic expansion period of 1900-1970. The institutional

arrangements of the region, meaning the cultivation of crops for economic gain, have resulted in cultural processes that are reflected in all aspects of life.

since the cultural processes are rooted in a history of capitalist gain from land usage, inhabitants of this land and their descendants were dependent on land and each other for survival. This dependence combined with narrative study shows location is responsible for the transmittal of shared beliefs among communities. Examinations from regional stories that exhibit location in oral narrative suggest that the results of land dependence made it possible for certain knowledge and moral beliefs to become unquestioned normative practice through the routinization of day-to-day life. What this means is that the farmer depended on the buyer and the buyer depended on him. It was a cyclical system that created a collective unconsciousness. While the first chapter presents similar ideas on connectedness, particularly in its discussion on how application of Ricoeurian theory explains the construction of identity through a reciprocal narrative attachment to other characters in the story, this chapter remains different in its approach and examination. The three main ideas of this chapter are that (1) working the land develops identity and connects the individual to the land, (2) land usage results in issues of human territoriality and land rights, and (3) when land is used for economic enterprise, moral implications can become part of identity.

These ideas are examined with the Narratology theories of Jarmila Mildorf and Labov and Waletzky with the objective of learning more about the identities of these southern, farming communities. To establish the conversation in this chapter within the current debate, two methodologies are used in story analysis. On the one hand Mildorf believes in the socionarratological perspective of narrative identity, while on the other, Labov and Waletzky created a system of analysis that incorporates examination of interviews and pseudo-narratives:

“The L & W framework developed for oral narratives of personal experience proved to be useful in approaching a wide variety of narrative situations and types, including oral memoirs, traditional folktales, avant garde novels, therapeutic interviews and most importantly, the banal narratives of every-day life” (Labov). The model has a broad spectrum with incorporation of non-traditional texts such as “recipes and apartment-house layouts.” Additionally, their work primarily focused on the functions of individual clauses. These clauses include evaluation of events, characters, and setting. The discussion on these methods and issues that remain in dispute take place in the end part of this chapter focusing on capitalism, land tenure, and identity within story worlds.

Although I have given the framework for how the issues will be addressed, I would like to make clear my rationale for informing my audience on this topic. In addition to the examination of oral narrative using the Mildorf method, the role that geography plays in the maintenance of traditional culture and narratives of this region can also benefit from the insight of other scholars in interdisciplinary fields such as Anthony Cohen, a social anthropologist, and Henry Glassie, a folklorist. For instance Cohen states that “The invisible landscape, the feel of a region and its distinctive sense of place is not so much a series of facts as it is accumulated human experience and response translated through the shared sets of values which animate the culture” (10). In this regard, human experiences are what construct the communal identities. What is most significant to this project as a whole is the mention of “the invisible landscape” which here seems to be a climate of extreme racial tension passed down generation to generation. Ultimately, the consideration of the invisible landscape is just as important to this chapter as the consideration of physical landscape when contemplating the role geography plays in the maintenance of traditional culture.

To illustrate Cohen's social anthropological ideas about the influence of invisible landscape and human experience, I have included below a short section from the interview with a former Kemper County resident who recalls the daily struggles she endured in her attempts to receive an education as a child.

Interview with N.M.T. Swain. 80 year old Retired School Teacher

[Interviewer] You said your dad would go into DeKalb for trading and paying property tax.

[Swain] Oh I was not at home when they changed this back, but at this time they had built the new school. My brothers and sisters had to go to DeKalb at Preston to finish high school from there, but that was after I had finished high school. At that time what was so bad (I say it's bad but it was a lesson we learned) is at that time we had to go along with it even though it was not right. It was what was going on. A lot of things were not enforced at that time about that people weren't supposed to violate our rights.

Now there was school above us. I don't know when you came to Mississippi; did your dad ever show you Lynnville that was between Preston and our farm on down further? There was a school there. At that time, when I was growing up and even after it, there were such things as this is a "white school" and there was a "black school." I know you have heard it and read it. But, the reason why I brought it up is because had things been desegregated we could have walked to Lynnville, but we had went all the way to DeKalb to attend high school.

[Interviewer] Because the school in DeKalb was two times the distance of the closer school in Lynnville, how did you get there?

[Swain] Sometimes he might take us in the wagon. There, if it rained real hard and the water rose high, in my grand dad's pasture they might have to meet us there, to keep us from having to wade in the water. Now we *had* to walk to school. And going to high school we went through the pasture or went around the road. It went up to this road where this gentleman's children, (now I was telling you there were some whites of the white race whose children went to Lynnville). We walked up to that house, and caught the bus, and went about ten to twelve miles to DeKalb because the schools were segregated. Now this gentleman's house, the bus would pull in there to his house, pick up his children, and then went right to Lynnville.

[Interviewer] That's terrible.

[Swain] Well at that time schools were still segregated. If it was not forced from Washington, the local people they were able to get away with it. A lot of times the younger people think they don't know how we put up with it. But at that time I imagine you don't want to get hurt, or murdered, or something like that, so whatever was the laws you would follow it.

A closer analysis of this portion of the interview suggests a more provincial identity constructed from material foundations that are rooted in reconstruction-era and Jim Crow cultural dependence. This is a dependence that has led to a homogenous African-American farming identity that mostly had to resort to being self-sufficient because of cultural boundaries in the region. To be clear, they had a nationalistic dependence on their own race out of necessity and not by choice. These socio-cultural boundaries within their community resulted in not just a close relationship with each other but also a similar closeness in their relationship with the land. Essentially, the land was part of their survival. One scholar attempts to explain what develops as the result of living and dwelling in a landscape over time: "The ethnicity associated with a piece of land, a territory, refers to the characteristics of the people who live there" (Saltman 3). This is an interesting idea because if this is true, then we can assume that these communities took on the characteristics of the land. Here the land is divided into set boundaries. Consequently, these boundaries resulted in a system of insider and outsider, with an exclusion of the Other. It must be asked, then, if ethnicity takes on the identity of the land, are the inhabitants restricted just as the land is restricted? The collected stories suggest the answer is yes. Further analysis using geography theory of the body implies that there is a dislocation of the body because of these socio-political elements that controlled the ritualization of daily life. Further investigation of this

spatial hierarchy of oppression is further explained later in this chapter with additional story examples to strengthen this argument.

An issue that needs to be addressed is the question of which factors have the most influence on the transmittal of shared beliefs among communities: the utilization of land for profit, including the routinization of cultivating the land day-to-day or the economic inequalities that occur as a result of land divisions and power relations? Indeed it is plausible that the way communities cultivate land is related to the construction of identity. And, based on previous events, theories on land tenure and territorial behavior also contribute significantly in the understanding of relationships between people, landscape, narrative, and identity. However, in contrast, we should also consider that “economic inequality is inevitable because production under capitalism entails the exploitation of one class by another. Furthermore, the geography of capitalist production is bound up with uneven development and spatial divisions of labor that create geographical inequalities” (Sheppard 13). This is especially true for these areas because the land was used primarily for profiting from crops, and there always has been contention over the conflicting land rights.

The power struggles over land as part of the debate on territoriality and tenure can also give relevant insight into narrative identity through a linguistic lens. This perspective is important as a device that allows introspection into events and reportability as a means to make sense of life and autobiographical experiences. Similarly, methodologies from the field of Folkloristics that base much of their research on field work and the collection of folk life experiences can yield important implications. As an example, interdisciplinary methods can potentially show several aspects, including how space as a geographic strategy is used to control people and also create a land-experience based identity. Labov and Waletzky’s theory on

narrative analysis particularly demonstrates this when applied to the second story in this chapter that was conducted by an interviewer. Their work mainly incorporates sociolinguistic interviews and is appropriate for the particular story chosen because the interviewer is actually telling the story.

Land tenure should be looked at for the purposes of Narratology as a process that constructs identity through communities that tell stories. Here land tenure refers to the system in which land is owned; this is a system that includes several kinds of land ownership including individual ownership, landlord and tenant, and sharecropping. However, a more complete analysis does not just include a discussion on the consequences of landscape and territory on human existence (such as economic and materialist gain), but what agricultural communities illustrate as a “socio-historico-geographical environment” that yields the transformation of bodies. Hence, when bodies move between landscapes, metaphorically and physically, there is a physical and cognitive transformation that is significant to stories from regions that defined landscape through marginalization, social struggle, and production of goods. In fact, “Territoriality in humans is best thought of not as biologically motivated, but rather as socially and geographically rooted. Its use depends on who is influencing and controlling whom and on the geographical contexts of place, space, and time” (Sack 2). The ownership of land here shows that there are boundaries that result in an economic division of labor. Because of these divisions, we must ask who ultimately is controlling this land and what can they gain from it. The consequences of these power relations greatly affect how knowledge is constructed inside and outside of those boundaries. The lack of education among the regional African-American farmers or inaccessibility to educational resources is one example of these consequences. It is well known that in farming communities when it is harvest time, children were taken out of

school because the crops were privileged over education. Also it was not uncommon for a young man to only have an eighth grade education. These factors tend to be general knowledge about farming communities. However, when one asks the reason why he or she had dropped out, that is where the distinctions are made between the African-American population who discontinued their studies and the white population who continued. What stems from asking this question is the realization that land not only divided the races, but also divided their opportunity for mobilization.

At the community level, cultural factors such as the meaning of land or land-acquisition goals originating with a group's ethnic origin shape a context for the domestic culture of the family: "Territoriality is intimately related to how people use the land, how they organize themselves in space, and how they give meaning to place" (Sack 2). Finally, the family culture enacts a social relationship that is reproduced within the intergenerational transmission of land. Each cultural layer is affected by internal factors but also by external factors (from the other layers) as well as historical events.

Capitalism and the Geographical Implications of Land Tenure on Identity

Washington's *Atlanta Compromise Speech* represents a response to the question of how African-Americans should progress during reconstruction. His writings and speeches focused on the idea of self-economic progress. The ideals of Washington seemed to be represented by many of the agricultural farming families in Kemper who valued hard work as a means of social responsibility and survival. Their daily practices suggest that "the best way to ensure progress and peace in the south was for whites to respect the blacks' desire for improved economic opportunities and for blacks to respect the whites' desire for social separation of the races" (570). It is not that they were complacent, but instead their work habits suggest a belief that mobility

was achievable through hard work and being a “respectable” member of society. The definition of respectable can of course be debated and will be addressed later in the discussion of morality and land association in this chapter and the conclusion.

Atlanta Compromise Speech

Cast down your bucket where you are— cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded. Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions. And in this connection it is well to bear in mind that whatever other sins the South may be called to bear, when it comes to business, pure and simple, it is in the South that the Negro is given a man’s chance in the commercial world, and in nothing is this Exposition more eloquent than in emphasizing this chance. Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labor, and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life; shall prosper in proportion as we learn to draw the line between the superficial and the substantial, the ornamental gewgaws of life and the useful. No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities. (Washington)

The time period of this study, the period of 1900-1970 after southern reconstruction and during the time of advancements in American industrial expansion, make an inclusion of Washington's speech relevant. He represents the mindset for many at that time, and I believe his views were still present until 1970, which marked the beginning of the post-segregation era. Historically, the hybridity of southern communities has emerged as a product of European colonial settlement. In the case of this study, the town DeKalb was named after its earliest settler a German Patriot. Additionally, the Choctaw Indians also inhabited the land. It is my contention that over time a combination of both people and material goods in this geographic space created a distinctive cultural system that eventually created a realm of appropriate behaviors that stemmed from farm culture and authoritarian colonial expectations.

In brief, as folklorists have found, oral stories often include tales of fieldwork and a meticulous analysis of empirical matters. Distinctive cultural practices such as kinship systems, gender roles, inheritance customs, and attitudes toward land have roots in the original and subsequent people who inhabited this space. What this means is that there were certain symbols and codes of conduct present in regards to behavior in this particular space. A land tenure system, likewise, emerged as apart of the local cultural system in Kemper and Neshoba that primarily relied upon the sale of cotton, corn, livestock and timber. This is an issue that deserves attention because of the interrelationship between land, territoriality and ethnicity that most recently folklorists have called attention to by defining regional self-identification and traditional boundaries that are proud and folk by nature: "The businesses, farms, and cities studied by geographers are not only places or locations in space with multiple meanings, but also occur and remain in place because there exists numerous social rules and regulations allowing some things to be in certain places and not others"(Sack 25). Therefore, these are social customs shaped by

working class culture and imperial impositions that evolved into a moral code for farming families. For instance, a “good” farming family would be known to not work on Sundays and attend church diligently.

As further explanation, one could take into consideration plantation society expectations which distinguished between good and bad planters. In South Carolina, for example, plantation owners who brought the largest crop to market were valued far above other occupations. Throughout the antebellum south it was normative standard practice for the elite class to orient their values associated with the business of successful crop production. A good planter or overseer was admired for his “good judgment” of land, earning a reputation for being a hard worker and giving great care, attention, and activity required to manage estate crops and slaves, while those who were unsuccessful in fulfilling basic planting standards and morals were considered lazy and deficient. It was a criterion that was then passed down to the slaves who also became cemented in a moral standard that later evolved into associating good planting skill with honesty, sensibility, intelligence, and diligence.

By comparison, the makeup of the land was just as important as its social landscape. According to soil surveys of Kemper and Neshoba, cotton and timber were the primary economic resources here for generations. Timber remains Kemper County’s number one crop, valued at \$48.2 million in 2007.²⁰ Although, during and after slavery, cotton growth in the Mississippi Delta region was far more profitable due to its locations on the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers, this region found ways for profit that extended beyond traditional cotton harvesting, which is also exhibited in oral histories. Kemper County soil surveys indicate that the

²⁰ According to data from the USDA NASS Census of Agriculture State and County Profiles 2007.

land is rich for growing and harvesting various crops because the soil lies under limestone. As I suspected, just as the limestone contributed to the varied crops and material growth of the farmers income, likewise the varied crops influenced the experiences of the storyteller. In turn, there was an increased profit margin, but this was at the expense of the storyteller's identity. Furthermore, people became more restricted in their movement. Farming allowed for a controlled and steady supply of crops, perhaps more crops than a single family required. As small family farms became more prevalent, farming communities became more secure in their ability to become self-sufficient.

With this explanation of economic labor, an analysis that includes a demonstration of how to approach an oral story is important to conceptualize narrative identity with capitalist gain. Therefore, to demonstrate the relationship between cultivation of land and economic development, an application of Mildorf's theory of analysis holds promise. The following is an oral narrative from an ex-slave in Kemper County Lewis Brown, who was 83 when the story was collected in 1938:

I was born in 1855, April 14, in Kemper County, Mississippi, close to Meridian. I drove gin wagons in the time of the war in a horse-power gin. I carried matches and candles down to weigh cotton within slavery times.

They had to pick cotton till dark. They had to tote their weight hundred pounds, two pounds, whatever it was down to the weighing place and they had to weigh it. Whatever you lacked of having your weight, you would get a lick for. On down till they called us out for the war, that was the way it was. They were goin' to give my brother fifty lashes but they come and took him to the army, and they didn't git to whip him.

I was ten years old when war was ended. I had to carry matches and candles to the cotton pickers. It would be too dark for them to weigh up. They couldn't see. They had tasks and they would be picking till late to git their tasks done. Matches and candles come from the big house, and I had to bring it down to them. That was two years before the war.

I wasn't big enough to do nothing else, only drive to the gin. I drove horse-power to the gin.---drove mules to the gin. I would drive the cows out to the pasture too.

The milk women would milk them. Lawd, I could not do no milking. I was too small. The milk women would milk then and I would drive the cows one way and the calves another so that they couldn't mix. And at night I would go git them and they would milk them again. The milk women milked them. What would I know bout milkin.

In slavery time, my father worked at the field. Plowed and hoed and made cotton and corn --- what else was he goin' to do. My mother was a cook.

Have cotton picking too sometimes at night, moonshiney nights. That's when they'd give the cotton pickings. Say you didn't have many hands. Then they'd go and send you one hand from this place and one from that place. And so on. Your friends would do all that for you. Between 'em they'd git up a big bunch of hands. Then they'd give the cotton picking, and git your field clared up. They'd give you something to eat and whiskey to drink.

Notice was given to my father that he was free. White people in that country give it to him. I don't know what they said to my father. Then the last gun was fired. I don't know where peace was declared. Notice come how that everybody was free. Told my daddy, 'You're just as free as I am.' Some went back to their daddy's name. Some went back to their master's name. My daddy went back to his old master's name.

First year after the war, they planted a crop. Didn't raise no cotton during the war, from the time the war started till it ended, they didn't raise no cotton.

After the war, they give the colored people corn and cotton, one-third and one-fourth. They would haul a load of it up during the war I mean, during the time before the war, and give it to the colored people.

They had two crops. No cotton in the time of the war, nothing but corn and pass and potatoes and so on. All that went to the white people. But they divided it. They give all so much round. Had a bin for the white and a bin for the colored. The next year they commenced with the third and fourth business---third of the cotton and fourth of the corn. You could have all the peanuts you wanted. You could sell your corn but they would only give you fifty cents for it --- fifty cents a bushel.

My father farmed and sharecropped for a while after the war. He changed from his master's place the second year and went on another place. He farmed all his life. He raised all his children and got wore out and pore. He died in Kemper County, Mississippi. All his children and everything was raised there.”

Narrative Analysis Using Mildorf Method

1. They had to pick cotton till dark. They had to tote their weight hundred pounds,
2. two pounds, whatever it was down to the weighing place and they had to weigh
3. it. Whatever you lacked of having your weight, you would get a lick for. On
4. down till they called us out for the war, that was the way it was. They were
5. goin' to give my brother fifty lashes but they come and took him to the army,
6. and they didn't git to whip him.

7. They had two crops. No cotton in the time of the war, nothing but corn and pass
8. and potatoes and so on. All that went to the white people. But they divided it.
9. They give all so much round. Had a bin for the white and a bin for the colored.
10. The next year they commenced with the third and fourth business---third of the
11. cotton and fourth of the corn. You could have all the peanuts you wanted. You
12. could sell your corn but they would only give you fifty cents for it---fifty cents
13. a bushel.
14. My father farmed and sharecropped for a while after the war. He changed from
15. his master's place the second year and went on another place. He farmed all his
16. life. He raised all his children and got wore out and pore. He died in Kemper
17. County, Mississippi. All his children and everything was raised there.”

Certain interdisciplinary methods from a cognitive science lens show how land tenure correlated with the identity of slaves who cultivated crops for economic gain during this time period. Line one indicates “They had to pick cotton till dark. They had to tote their weight hundred pounds, [...]”. This narrative can be divided into two parts, the initial setting where the

narrator grounds himself in the location of the story and the second part where he gives an evaluation of the story itself. In lines 1-6 is actually what anchors the narrative in the story world. It is evident here that there is an integration of self-positioning as a means to negotiate identity in the narrator's position among interactants. Lines 3 through 6 indicate a third person consciousness which is especially significant considering that it is usually not studied or believed to occur in textual and oral stories. It seems there is a type of deictic shift²¹ when Lewis Brown experiences self in the past by using a distancing "you" as he is also narrating in the present. Ultimately, what can be concluded is that the storyteller renegotiates narrative realities in the present.

The second analysis of importance applies pragmatic linguistic strategies to find speaker meaning. Here, the narrator gives a resolution to the previous complicated action that takes place. What is particularly interesting in the final lines of his story is the shift from deictic transfer to full-identification with a direct connection to his father in his re-enactment. In the lines, "The next year they commenced with the third and fourth business-third of the cotton and fourth of the cotton. You could have all the peanuts you wanted. You could sell your corn but they would only give you fifty cents a bushel," there is a combination of both the personal and the professional identity. But in contrast to the first portion of the narrative, after the critical action there is self-awareness when the narrator identifies with his father through the strategy of focalization. The usage of the ontological verb has more of a correlation to work than its syntactic noun presumption. It is also worth noting that once Lewis Brown receives his land and

²¹ Deictic shift means that there is a second-person "you" and a generic "you" present in the story.

own crops—cotton, corn, and peanuts—he is free to sell them for profit. Even if for only meager monetary results, the impact that selling these crops had on identity in contrast is infinite.

Although his father became “wore out and poor” from farming, it is reasonable given the combination of geographical theory and narrative theory that there was a critical action that took place following the civil war. The acquisition of land resulted in movement that influenced the ex-slave identity through physical tending of agricultural land. Using the Mildorf method, the narratologist can see that narrative self-distancing is evident through re-enactment of an event.

In contrast, the scientific field of human territoriality as a basic geographic expression of influence and power provides an essential link between community, land and time. If it is true that “territories are socially controlled forms of spatial relations and their effects depend on who is controlling whom and for what purposes,” then it can be concluded that after the end of the American Civil War in 1865, the narrator’s identity was mostly constructed by the land he worked and the owners who owned it. The following example of an elderly farmer who was brutally beaten after trying to defend his land illustrates how the generation after reconstruction was affected by capitalism and slave labor. At the time Mr. Welsh’s story was told to the reporter in 1974, African-American farmers had already lost close to nine million acres of land since 1910. They were losing land at such an alarming rate that legal and financial assistance was created including the Emergency Land Fund and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives. There are many versions of this story that have been passed down over the years. For some it even served as a local cautionary tale.

The Story of George Welsh told by Anthony Griggs

George Welsh, a 78-year-old farmer in Kemper County’s DeKalb, Miss. is like many small farmers who have availed themselves of ELF assistance. Since

1971, Welsh has been involved in a land feud with neighboring white farmer Elmer Wilson. The two acreages adjoin at a fence built 65 years ago, but Welsh claims Wilson has been “trying to take over my property for the past three years.” Welsh, dressed as usual in overalls and a straw hat, recalls that Wilson “come in here sneaking around like a dog eating eggs, trying to rent this land, I told him that I wasn’t a goose that was going to let him have it verbal, you see. I told him, ‘Now if I’m going to rent it to you I want it in writing.’”

Welsh says that soon after this confrontation a cross was burned in front of his home and the fence separating their properties torn down. When Welsh brought a lawyer out to look at things, Wilson called the sheriff. Both Welsh and the lawyer were arrested for “trespassing” and a Justice of the Peace fined Welsh \$500.

Welsh takes off his straw hat, wipes his brow, and continues his story. He says that as he and the lawyer were leaving the courthouse, Wilson and other whites began choking the lawyer. When Welsh tried to help, he says the lawyer was held at gunpoint by a deputy and he himself was beaten into unconsciousness. He lost hearing in one ear. Welsh was subsequently indicted by the Kemper County Grand Jury for “assault with intent to kill.” With the help of attorney Thomas Booker, who fought the case in court against Wilson’s lawyer, Ms. Helen Dade, a Mississippi state representative and daughter of a former Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, Welsh was eventually found innocent.

But the land dispute simmers on in court. And Welsh, who only wants to return to his farming insists, “I bought my land straight. My daddy didn’t never

own no land. I tried to get him to buy land, and I told him, ‘Daddy, if I ever get to be a man, I’m going to buy some land.’ I bought my first land at 18 years old.”

In the analysis of this story, Labov and Waletzky are specifically used because of their innovative work in story discourse analysis. They began including unlikely story forms as previously mentioned, and, therefore, it makes sense that a reported story be analyzed using their method. Mostly when they speak of analyzing story interviews they are referencing oral narratives that are guided by the interviewer, a solicited narrative.²² However, with their usage of unconventional stories, it seems that the following story as reported by a journalist to a magazine fits their criteria. In contrast to Labov and Waletzky’s original six-part model of episodic narrative which analyzes the first-person account, the analysis here looks at the event as told through the eyes of the reporter. This is a rather innovative application of their method; however, considering the original intent of their framework involve use of the interviewer, an application using a journalist’s story seems appropriate. In their work they found it important to incorporate all kinds of stories; therefore that is what this next story represents. Below is the six-part model applied to the story with an external evaluation.²³

Six Part Model

Abstract (A): What the story is about

Orientation (O): Who, When, Where, etc.

Complicating Action (CA): What happened then

Evaluation (E): What this means

Result (R): What finally happened

²² Narrative that is not conversational or spontaneous, but guided by the use of an interviewer.

Coda (C): Summary (optional)

Analysis

Abstract (A): This story is about a farmer who is having a land dispute with his neighbor. The story represents a struggle between power, authority, and race within disputed boundaries.

Orientation (O): George Welsh, an African-American farmer, during the time period of 1971-1974 was in a land dispute with a man who owned land adjoining his. This dispute took place in Kemper County, Mississippi on land that was never officially divided in legal terms 65 years prior.

Evaluation (E): Identity seems to achieve its strongest manifestation when there is a dispute about conflicting rights over land.

Result (R): George Welsh and his lawyer were continuously threatened and beaten for defending his right to own land. Ultimately, Mr. Welsh suffered permanent hearing damage as the result of being assaulted while in court. The legal system for this county failed to protect his rights as a citizen in that county.

Coda (C): The meaning of land ownership in this story determines who is the insider and who is the outsider within the boundaries of land division. The protagonist becomes the Other, yet denies his subjugation through resistance against the institutional system. Overall, although the main character attempts to overcome his oppression, he ultimately is still defeated because he must work within the boundaries of the institutionalized legal system which created his Otherness.

²³ External evaluation means that the narrator stands outside the action. This term was used by Labov and Waletzky.

Although this formula is one of the more simplistic methods of Labov and Waletzky, it is still successful in defining identity. The approach seems obvious; however, what is most helpful is the increasing difficulty of reasoning from parts A-C. The completion of the application of the Evaluation (E) and Coda (C) seems to tell the most about the identity of Mr. Welsh. The advantages to using this approach are that it allows the audience to understand the most relevant details through structural comparison. This narrative is sequenced; therefore, using the analysis in a way that gives a temporal order. Furthermore, this approach seems to work particularly well because it is an event story. The limits of this model are its lack of consideration for stories that are not sequenced. But, because it is told by a reporter, it has a beginning, middle, and end, which still makes the method a viable and valuable tool.

Conclusion

Both the Mildorf and Labov and Waletzky methods are useful in evaluating identity. Although I was not able to extrapolate immediately representations of community identity from each story, after the individual identity is identified, notions about community then become clear. This is especially true in the story of George Welsh. It is evident in his story analysis that the community identity is an important factor in understanding the power structure of the county. It is the negotiation of class structure and race that determines if one person can transcend the paradigm of power already in place. Likewise, in the case of the story that used the Mildorf method, the identity of the ex-slave is a representation of the materiality of his living space. The maintenance of culture and identity in community is built within the superstructure that creates an agentless identity. Later, an agency is eventually gained through the telling of his or her story.

In conclusion, given that Narratology has become an interdisciplinary field, with the incorporation of anthropology, psychology, and sociology it is plausible to conclude that

additional fields should be consulted as sources to help further the discussions about the construction of identity. I maintain that geography and physical space has a direct correlation to the formation of identity in addition to or in combination with oral stories. The study of geography and story have broad implications as indicated by Sack: “The businesses, farms, and cities studied by geographers are not only places or locations in space with multiple meanings, but also occur and remain in place because there exist numerous social rules and regulations allowing some things to be in certain places and not others” (25). The things and places subjected to these social rules contribute to a power struggle within the community landscape. What is most interesting is how some of the residents attempt to transcend this oppression of institutionalized place through land ownership. These brave acts of mobilization show how the oppressed can either succeed or fail in their quest to gain agency. It also exemplifies how even despite their best efforts, the paradigm that is already in place in some ways has already determined their outcome before action ever takes place. In addition to examining the relationship between superstructure and landscape, I would also like to return to this topic to answer some of the questions that developed as a result of these outcomes. In the future, I envision the trajectory of these questions leading to discoveries about the association between moral standard, education, and the evolution of agricultural life in relation to its impact upon creation of identity in oral histories. These additions, I maintain, have important consequences for the broader domain of narrative research and identity studies. And, now that there have been assertions made about power structures, too, there may be future discoveries in socio-economic status and education as well.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the collected stories, it is evident that this promising research can benefit Narratology scholars and other fields including English, Geography, Folkloristics, Ethnography, History, and Sociology. Additionally, this research creates a relevant historical record with theoretical considerations in the study of history, memory, and location of the region that can be beneficial to many different disciplines beyond just Narratology. The future implications and influence that these findings present are endless. With the incorporation of history, memory, and location, this study provides an interdisciplinary lens and clear foundation for the research of identity and group consciousness by providing informative insight into cultures that rely on narrative practice to construct individual and community identity. Furthermore, it is evident that the retelling of stories from this location affects many aspects of life in Kemper and Neshoba. What this research does is provide the residents of this region a different method to interpret their memories. What the analysis has done is take the agentless and provide them with a voice. They now have a medium to manipulate the system that already exists in an effort to eliminate the shame associated with their marginalization and then gain authority through the understanding of the experience. This research has the potential to eradicate the cycle of shaming associated with the past by reframing how we look at oral histories and the actual people who are telling the stories. It is evident that when given a “privileged” space the individual can transform his or her identity from invisible to visible. I believe this is what has occurred here. The residents of Kemper and Neshoba who were at one time invisible in landscape are now visible or have the potential to become visible with the incorporation of the analytic lenses which I presented.

One of many challenges that remain, however, is the ability of scholars to strategically discuss the complexities of “life” and the life story itself with all of its ambiguities in a structured manner. In the same way, the field of Narratology is so vast that at times it is difficult to find coherence. Because of this, a comparable challenge presents itself in the emerging debate on the profound interplay between life and narrative. Its interdisciplinary applications at times present a challenge, but these difficulties can certainly be remedied. After considering all of the findings, my suggestion is that scholars continue the conversation by focusing on finding cohesion while exploring this interplay. The previous chapters illustrate what is possible if scholars continue to move the discussion forward on the interplay between life and narrative while considering new areas for introspection. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that based on the research presented, integrative locations of space, memory, and cultural geography should, given their timely relevance, be considered as additional inclusions in this discourse.

In regards to the promising findings of Chapter 1, in Jerome Bruner’s influential article, “Life as Narrative,” he asks his readers to contemplate what relationship remains between life and narrative. His complex inquiry is still relevant in today’s discourse and is even more applicable considering the timely emergence of the new narratologies era in the discipline. Chapter 1 establishes that there is a practical use to Narratology that broadens the scope of analysis beyond theoretical discourse, giving it a meaningful, tangible purpose. Furthermore, it gives the discussion a more practical usage that is accessible for everyday life and existence. This accessibility has the potential to answer many questions regarding contextualist and cognitivist approaches to historical Narratology and identity studies foregrounded in the life and narrative debate. At present, this is where the most immediate need exists for narratologists and where I believe the topic will progress in the future. Therefore, since it has been established that

oral history can be viable as a marker of identity, it follows that the natural progression is to take the interdisciplinary application of cognitive theories in everyday experience and story as a continuation of the discussion.

Along the same lines, it appears at this stage of evaluation that the research from Chapter 1 suggests how the descendants from this area develop hybrid identities with tellability as a representation of history and of identity in those historical spaces. In turn, these results yield findings that demonstrate how autobiography becomes a credible entity when it results from an ideological structure already in place. These findings support my argument by giving new direction to Ricoeur's historical identity theory. Lastly, the new narrative process analysis shows how the narrator gains authority and purpose as the result of creating identity through a system of cognitive frames. Ultimately, historical narratives compose of a larger picture that does not rely on merely the accuracy of micro-detail for meaning, but instead relies on the connectedness of the narrator, story, memory, and characters within the stories themselves.

Chapter 2 establishes that the relationship between geographical place and narrative plays a direct role in the construction of identity. Although this is a relatively new area of discussion and there is still much research that needs to be conducted, the study did provide worthwhile results. My hope is that the findings presented here will enrich exciting future considerations on the topic. For instance, currently, geographers have presented some interesting findings regarding the intersections of gender, race, sexuality and politics in place. This is illustrated in *Social Geography: A Critical Introduction* by Vincent Del Casino, Jr. which explores inequality and difference in spatial relationships, and can be an excellent starting point for narratologists who want to investigate land rights and human experience. Similarly, what is particularly interesting about research on cultural geography is that it introduces the idea of the geopolitical

body that is marked by historical and geographical instances, becoming an important extension to the framework of this discourse.

Additionally, I would like to research other stories of subjectivity that take place within fixed living spaces, like the story of George Welsh, and apply another significant idea from geography that I discovered while writing these chapters: dislocation of the body. Ultimately, application of the dislocated body has the potential to yield even further results due to its insights into understanding how the body becomes dislocated when it resists oppression within spaces that inhabit cultural norms. Furthermore, cultural geography has already been successful in discussions that include research into socio-spatial elements. What remains, however, is the opportunity to address these limitations by bridging the space between narratologists and geographers so that Narratology may benefit from this information as well. In short, considering the success cultural geographers have found, narratologists have several elements to consult and should perhaps consider adding a new hyphenated narratology topic of research in the area of what I propose be named “geo-narratology.”

Overall, the objective of Chapter 2 was to offer considerations for the noticeable void that exists in the field. And, since it has already been indicated that there is a lot to be said on geographical space, it is understandable that the debate will take far more than just the two chapters of this project. Despite the brief conversation in Chapter 2, however, I do think that future considerations are possible. These opportunities are foreseeable by opening the conversation to cultural geographers like Alan Latham and Rashad Shabazz to create a more complex representation of my proposed geo-cultural story analysis. Tim Oaks and Patricia Lynn Price’s comment on Latham in their introduction to *The Cultural Geography Reader*: “Latham turns to the metaphor of performance to suggest ways in which culture should be

reconceptualized and research reframed. Such a reframing will, he argues, enable cultural geographers to better understand the ways people make places and cultures out of the ‘performances’ of their everyday lives” (69). What is interesting about Latham’s work is that he, too, noticed a void in his own field of Geography that was similar to the limitations I found in Narratology. Much in the same way that Latham sought to change the framework of his discipline by incorporating the study of how people conduct their daily lives, I would like to create an extension that finds meaning in the daily routine of narrators. Chapter 2 lays the groundwork and accomplishes the objective of defining identity through landscape and life experience; now the task is to continue to build upon these findings to create a more pluralistic methodology.

Although there are issues that still remain in dispute, I nevertheless do believe that I have fulfilled the objective of my proposed contribution. Based on these promising results, it can be concluded that cultural processes do indeed have a connection to the ownership and development of land. In addition, land usage can result in issues of human territoriality and land rights. The question of which problem has the most impact on the transmittal of shared beliefs—using land for profit or economic disparity caused by land divisions and power relations—has been answered. The analysis suggests that land divisions create barriers to education and opportunities for economic advancement that affect entire communities and future generations.

Still, there is room to expand even further on Sack’s idea that just as farming has occupied physical space, there is unspoken space that is occupied as the result of social norms that are created out of these physical and invisible geographical boundaries. However, to expand on these ideas we should consider the other implications that may result from capitalist gain of working the land. In sum, the addition of moral standard in the application of the Labov and

Waletzky method has the potential to reveal additional findings about race and farming culture. In the future I would like to return to this topic, using these theories in the study of other marginalized populations in the rural south in an attempt to extend the conversation well beyond the results of this thesis.

Moving on from these encouraging results and in regards to future considerations, some scholars such as Shirley Moody are doing interesting work on folk belief and narrative that I expect will have a significant impact on the research being done on folk narrative. An extension of this research could include an examination of the root of commonly practiced folk beliefs and their connection to the routinalization of religion and faith in daily community life. Stories such as these offer interesting insights into how folk belief and race are related and ultimately influence identity.

Lastly, one of the most frustrating limitations I faced during my research occurred while conducting the field work. I naively thought that conducting the interviews would not pose any problems and would most likely be one of the easier tasks of the thesis. I was wrong. The issue I had to overcome was that it was difficult to find people who willingly wanted to speak with me. Eventually, I was able to gather enough informants, but I also needed to supplement information with interviews that were already printed. This was hugely disappointing to me and also extremely frustrating. One informant told me that he wanted to help but because he had not attended college, he did not think anything he had to say would be useful. Another informant politely explained to me when I expressed my concerns about lack of participation that most people would not want to participate because of the lack of education and the traumatic subject matter. Consequently, in my efforts to follow all institutional protocols, in the end some participants were excluded, exactly the opposite result of what I set out to do and by all attempts

wanted to avoid. Although this was a setback, there was much to be learned from the method and process that took place. First, from this experience I questioned how a researcher can adequately interact with human participants when there is a hierarchal system that imposes power over the storytelling process, inhibiting all forms of authenticity. Second, in the institutional structure's efforts to control the interaction with participants a type of authority was enforced, creating a sense of subjectivity. Finally, a rigid barrier is formed between scholar and informant that privileges the scholar and the dislocates the informant as Other.

Also, in Chapter 2 I briefly touched on the consequences that land can have on educational opportunities. That is another topic that deserves revisiting because of my contention that learning more about land and educational opportunity can help storytellers feel empowered. One thing that I encountered was that with some informants their lack of education gave them the notion that their stories were inconsequential. And, although it was not spoken, there could have been the fear of sounding uneducated. This could have stemmed from years of conditioning that made them feel inadequate for not completing society's standard of formal education. And, it must be noted that those who were most willing to speak with me either graduated from college or had some type of postsecondary training. Coming to the realization that there could be a correlation between education level and speaking about a difficult past was upsetting. It appeared in my interactions that those who were most resistant did not feel proud to speak about that landscape or period in history. These interactions made me feel so strongly and even at times hurt that I know this is an area that must be addressed in future research. To overlook this discovery would be a disservice to those who were not able to speak.

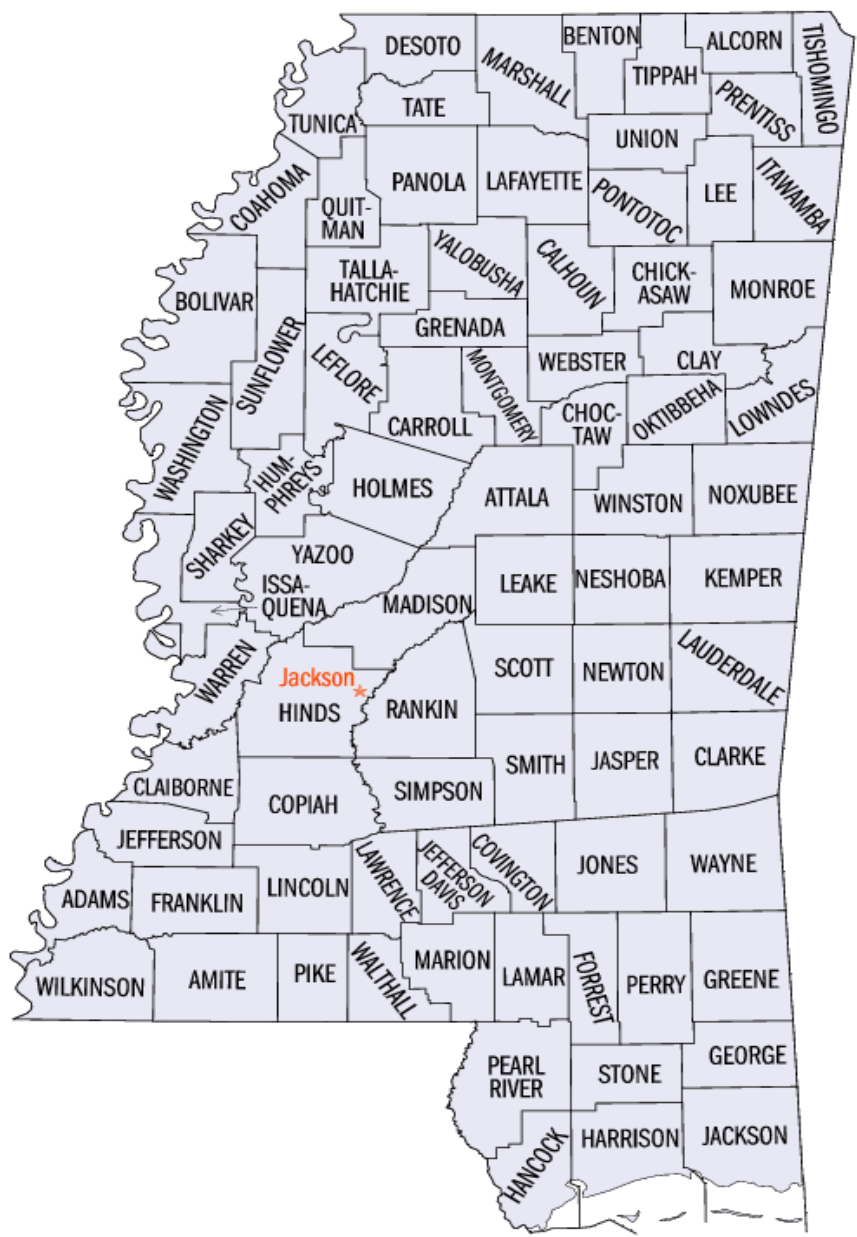
Because these limitations were disconcerting, I believe the issue deserves further inquiry in the future. Thus far scholar Latham has shared these observations in his work, too, contending that the topic

is a worthwhile effort for scholarly research. As I move forward from this project, I plan to begin with a review of his take on the subject matter as a starting point.

In closing, it is my hope that the work presented in this thesis offers a contribution to the field of Narratology that allows scholars to consider new approaches in their theoretical work. I hope my findings can offer insight and understanding to those who question the connection between memory, land, and identity.

Appendix 1

Fig. 1.State Map Locating Neshoba and Kemper Counties



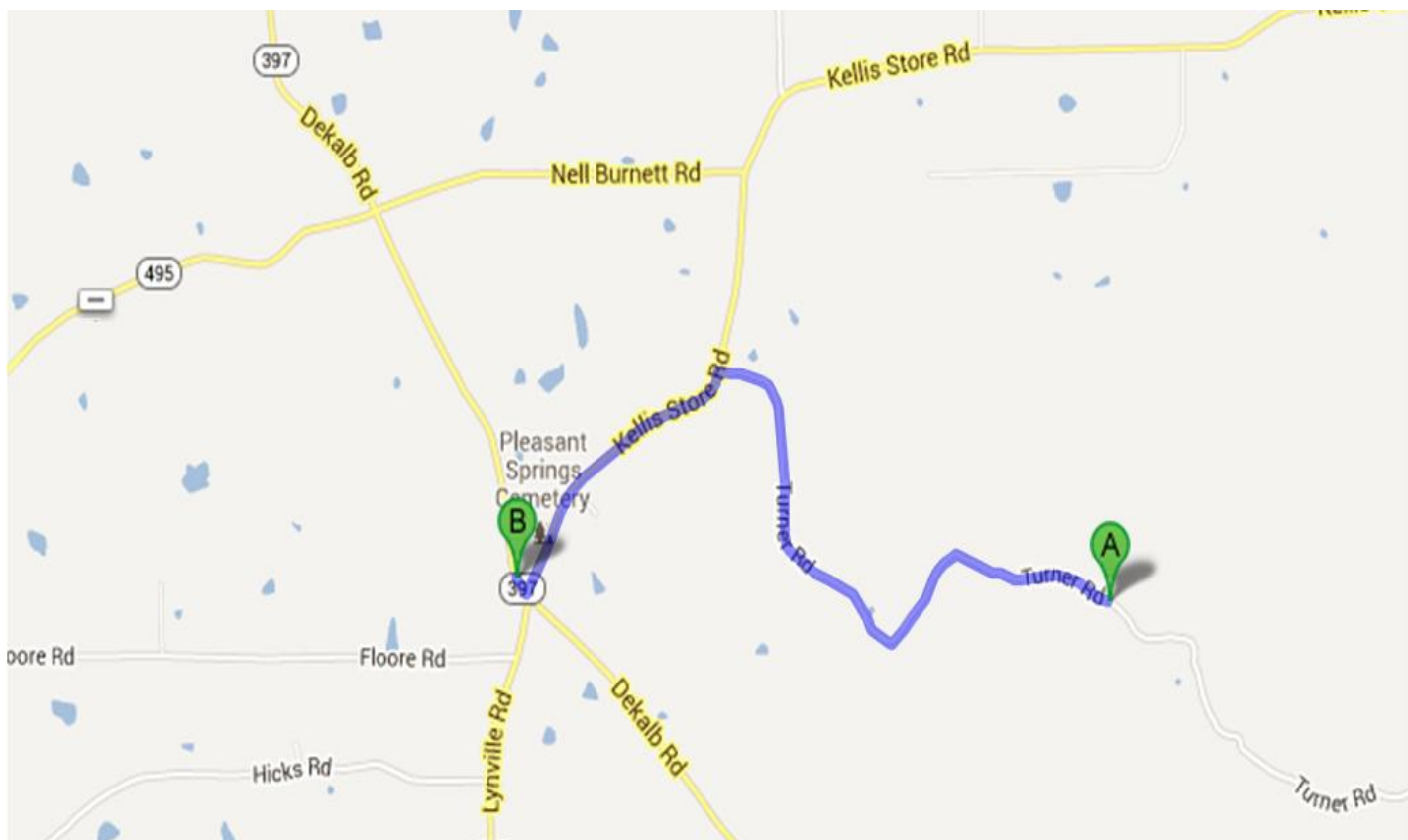


Fig. 2. Map Illustrating the Distance from Preston to Lynnville 2.2 Miles

Point A: Preston (Turner Road)
Point B: Lynnville

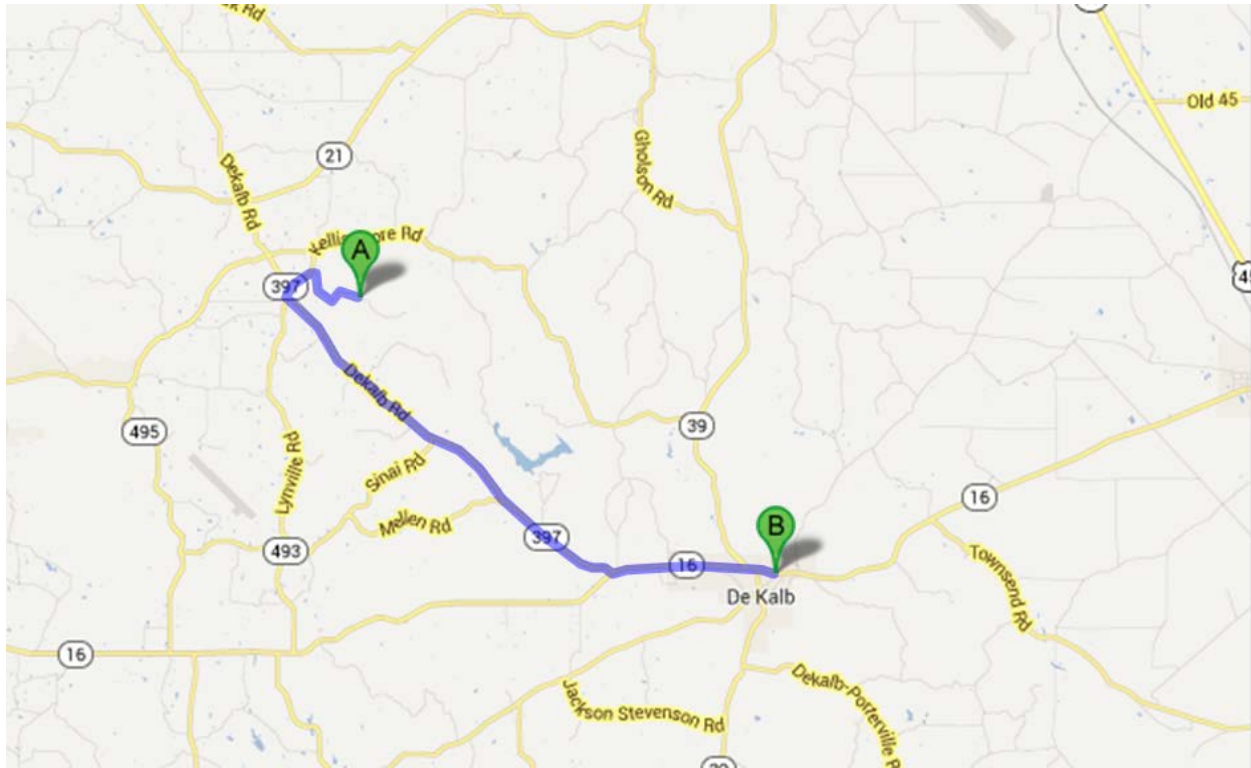


Fig. 3: Map Illustrating the Distance from Preston to DeKalb 14.2 Miles

Point A: Preston

Point B: De Kalb (Location of Whisenton High School)

Appendix 2

Interview with Mrs. Swain**Please tell me your name.**

I am N. M. T. Swain I was born 1930. My last birthday I was 80 years old.

You sound very good for 80 years old.**What is your relationship to Kemper and Neshoba Counties?**

Do I need to tell who my parents are? I was born in Kemper County. There was a joining between Kemper and Neshoba. At one time we received our mail which was more like in the Neshoba area. But we always lived at the same place where we always lived at. Then it changed and went to Preston which was a little bit closer to my momma and daddy's home. I grew up there as a child. My dad had a farm; we lived on the farm and we went to school. This was my dad and mother who owned their own farm and it joined my grandad and grandmother Jim and Lucy; our farmed joined theirs and I believe it was 600 or more acres. We grew up there as children and attended school. I started school at five years old. That was the normal age at that time. You didn't have to be 6 years old at that time. We did not attend the kindergarten or any of the childhood programs. Those were not available at that time for us. We started at the first grade. One of my sisters, Harweda, I believe she went to school at three years old. It wasn't really hard pressed you know that they could not go if you wanted to go or wanted to send them.

Were you home schooled at all by your mother?

Yes. She always would teach us to count and to learn our alphabet. She would take card board and cut alphabets from a newspaper or catalogue and put them in order just like the alphabet. You know a-b-c- d-e-? And, I imagine that when we started school we could already count to 100 and our abc's. And, I was eager if it were books with small reading and if someone told me one time I could remember. I was a good rememberer. And with school we would walk. I thought it was a long way to walk. But maybe it wasn't. I know today you might think it was a long way. It was about 2 ½ miles to our school; it was Bluff Springs School. (elementary)

We would even go through, make short cuts instead of going all the way around the ward, maybe go through one or two pasture. Then you would come out to the public road then turn and go down to the school. We would do that daily. We had a time that you would arrive and a time we would get out. Just similar to the school hours we have now. At that time we didn't have electric and heat. We a had iron wood burning stove. I remember my parents and the community that would send their children to the school would furnish wood to make a fire and some of the children at the school, the larger boys and girls, would help keep the fire going to heat the building. And this was not a brick building this was a wooden building. And just across the little ward that came between the school and the church was the Bluff Spring Baptist church. We would attend Sunday school at this church on Sunday morning at this church , and then we had 11 o'clock service and worship one Sunday out of the month and that was usually second Sunday. But there might be other Sundays when they would have something some kind of program or meeting going on at church, but that was the regular service. At the elementary school it would begin in the first grade at age five. It was a two-room school. We had two teachers there. One teacher taught grades one through third or fourth grade. The other teacher

would teach fifth through eighth. What we call elementary school today they say the eighth grade. And once we finished there we didn't have a high school close by, at least the black families didn't. We had to go (if we wanted to go to high school) to DeKalb Mississippi. DeKalb was the county. We were living in Kemper County. And Kemper County was at DeKalb. That's where the county and where the court house was. There, it was a nice little town where you could trade, and have drug stores, and things like that, and a doctor's office. Mom and dad paid their property taxes there and attended to such things as that. The high school was just above the town in DeKalb, Whisenton High. The gentleman who was principal of the school it was named after; I don't know if he contributed to it financially or whether he was just the first principal there but that was who the school was named after. At that school I finished from I always made good grades. I always liked to study, that was from the time of elementary and high school. In high school, I finished as the salutatorian and number two in the class. And then I was named who's who and I was said to be the smartest girl in the class.

You said your dad would go into DeKalb for trading and paying property tax.

In fact there was a large store on the corner. I believe he bought some of his farming things from there he had to use. No I think he had to buy some of his fertilizer from Preston going west from where we lived. It was closer to us than DeKalb. That was where the cotton gin was. Have you ever seen bales of cotton? Well he would gather the cotton and take it to the gin in Preston, and then when I finished my last year of high school in DeKalb they had just built a [new] high school there. [It was] elementary and grades high school part two in Preston where my dad would gin and things like that. My younger sisters and brothers would attend this school. I think your dad attended this school in DeKalb. Oh I was not at home when they changed this back, but at this time they had built the new school. Your uncles and aunt had to go to DeKalb at Preston to finish high school from there. But that was after I had finished high school. At that time what was so bad (I say it's bad but it was a lesson we learned) is at that time we had to go along with it even though it was not right. It was what was going on. A lot of things were not enforced at that time about that you weren't supposed to violate our rights and anything.

Now there was school above us. I don't know when you came to Mississippi, did your dad ever show you Lynville that was between Preston and our farm on down further? There was a school there. At that time, when I was growing up and even after it, there were such things as this is a "white school" and there was a "black school". I know you have heard it and read it. But, the reason why I brought it up, is because had things been desegregated we could have walked to Lynnville, but we had went all the way to DeKalb to attend high school.

How did you get there since it was so far away?

Sometimes he might take us in the wagon. There, if it rained real hard and the water rose high, in my grandad's pasture they might have to meet us there to keep us from having to wade in the water. Now we *had* to walk to school. And going to high school we went through the pasture or went around the road. It went up to this road where this gentleman's children, now I was telling you there were some whites of the white race whose children went to Lynnville, we walked up to that house (the white gentleman's house), and caught the bus, and went about ten to twelve miles to DeKalb because the schools were segregated. Now this gentleman's house, the bus would pull in there to his house pick up his children and then went right to Lynnville.

That's terrible.

Well at that time schools were still segregated. If it was not forced from Washington, the local people they were able to get away with it. A lot of times the younger people think they don't know how we put up with it. But at that time I imagine you don't want to get hurt, or murdered, or something like that, so what ever was the laws you would follow it.

Do you remember any incidents of what would happen when people would not follow the rules?

I know you probably have studied that in the south schools desegregated and went about with the Freedom Riders. There were, when people were trying to break down some of this segregation, some people who would come to town. Do you remember Dr. Martin Luther King, when he led the marches? And there were some things that happened here in Alabama and the city of Anniston here. We had five or ten cent stores. Now they might call them dollar stores or department stores, and they would have lunch counters you could go in and buy things. There were some who did not want blacks to go and sit at those places and I believe there were some incidents pertaining to that. And on highway 202 not too far from here there was a bus I recall one Sunday evening. There was a bus of freedom riders coming through Anniston.

Now to clarify you were married by this time and had moved to Alabama?

Yes, I was in Alabama at that time. And when I was talking about these (freedom rider) stories, that was there. So highway 202 was not far from us. There were some gas stations there. Maybe this bus stopped at the gas station, and they beat these people, and set the bus on fire. Now, I was living in Anniston when that started.

What about Bull Connor in Birmingham?

Now that was in Birmingham about 65 miles going west of us. But we have gone through there a lot. We have gone there to trade. My husband, that's a pretty good size city; that's where my husband bought my wedding ring, and where I took my wedding picture. But there was some segregated things, even since I've been here in Anniston. My husband as a young person, my husband was working at AOD.

Your husband was in the military?

Well he was not in the military when we got married. There is a military installation where they do a lot of the equipment and keep it there. I imagine when it comes back from overseas, and fix it up, [they] send it back over there. I don't know if you heard of the nerve agents? They had quite a bit of that stored over there at the depot. I think they just about finished up burning it when before they had it stored under the ground. And, see, they thought they would need the stuff and was burying it. But there was some kind of treaty or policy and they started burning it so it wouldn't escape or come out in the area.

What segregation do you remember before and after leaving home?

Now this was true before I got married. For instance, if you were riding a bus, if you were riding from one city to another [...] For instance, if you went from DeKalb to Meridian, you didn't sit in the front seat you went and sat at the back; that was just their law. But now you know, I imagine it has been stopped.

How did you travel on family trips if you couldn't stay in hotels?

Just like when we went from here to Mississippi when we would go to visit our parents or things like that, we would leave early in the morning, and not stop at a hotel, and stay however long, and then leave, and come back. When did we start traveling? When did we first? (thinking) I believe when we were in our early days when the children were small we would leave real early in the morning before the sun was up. When we would travel we would try to get to where we were going in the same day. When Brenda finished in high school we went to Washington but things were better by then. My children attended public school and it was desegregated, and when they became old enough went college in Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama. You probably heard about George Wallace who would stand in the door trying to prevent black students from going in. But that was before my children. But when they went down there they had no problem. They always made good grades as a kid and then they made good grades in college. That was when President Kennedy was president at that time when George Wallace stood in the door. Have you read about Arthurine Lucy? I believe she was the first student who went to Alabama. At that time we read these things. But they had no problems. They went to Alabama. Now there are many more students around here, and Alabama has a large enrollment, and has added on quite a bit. Did you hear about the large tornado that came through that was right there at the campus of Alabama? It was terrible just looking at it. I have not been there since then.

I want to ask you some questions about your day-to-day life in Kemper? You said the combined acres were about 600 acres of your grandparents and your parents?

That was my dad and grandparents; see the farms joined. My dad and mother had deeds to there land, but I was just telling you about how much it was together.

Was that unusual?

Well, now my dad and granddad where we grew up in the community most of those people around there owned their own homes and things. A lot of people when they find out if you were from Mississippi, they question if you would own your own land, but I always knew my parents to own their own place and a lot of people who lived in that community went to school with us [did]. Most of those people from Bluff Springs owned their land.

Are you familiar with the sharecropper's family who slipped off in the middle of the night because of being cheated out of his money? Also, why do you think in that particular part of the region so many people were able to own their land?

I don't know. I think I know who my brother is talking about with this story. Some of these girls, we attended the same school but these older people were their parents. I just don't know if their parents couldn't do any better or if they just got in this kind of way, but this man's property made a whole lot of cotton. Ask your daddy if this was like how, you know, how we would grow corn and cane? You know you would make your syrup out of it? This gentleman, the white guy, this was the same guy who we would go to the DeKalb school, and walk up there, and catch the bus. But the bus would go and pick his children up. These people lived there on his land and it seemed like to me, now I did not live there with them, but it seemed to me that he would use them like they were his servants or children, whatever he would tell them to do. I don't know if he would not take a pencil and paper or something and keep up with it if he would let them have money or what they charged them for it, but, like for instance, with me if I borrowed a piece of money I would write it down or keep up with it. And, then, if he come up with that you owe me such and such, or you can't move until you [pay your dept], or stuff like that. But if you keep up with what you have gotten from this gentleman, you can dispute what he say you owe him. If

you don't owe him, it won't be like he is just using you like a little child that doesn't know any better. So, I would see those things. I remember he would make my dad's molasses, maybe we would walk where my dad was to take him his dinner. And this gentleman, someone came to move him off from this man's place. There was some kind of fuss between the gentleman who was making our molasses. He was not ready for the guy to go. I don't think he got to move that day. I don't know what all went on. There were some people who got entangled like that. Some of these people I don't think they grew up in the community from where we were. The adjoining communities weren't too far away from where these people came from. So I don't know. But it seems unreasonable. I just can't see how a grown person could allow that to happen.

Is it because they didn't know how to read or write? You said your parents went to school? Did that contribute to the difference?

Yes. Now I remember my dad and mother always would tell us, they would tell us they didn't want us to come up like that. They wanted us to go to school and study so we would not be to a place where we couldn't count and have someone beat us out of something we didn't owe them and be able to do for yourself as much as possible. I know you might get to the place where you may need to borrow money, but be able to count, and keep up with that, and don't let somebody charge you for something you didn't get. Just like I say now, I believe there is a difference in the way some people were brought up. And maybe some of them didn't have the same opportunity. I know from teaching and talking to people, this can be in church or even in school. I had these young boys in Anniston High School; I would hate them to start acting silly or like they didn't want to get their lesson. I would have them stay after class and I would talk to them and let them know, in a few years you are going to be grown up and you will want money just like everybody else. I tried to talk to them. It seems like some you are not getting the message across. But now every time they never forget me, every time they see me. I had one I would have to talk to him about his behavior, you know in homeroom? And now if he sees me in the yard he has to stop by to see me (laugh). I think that they remember that now. And maybe sometime it can happen that if a person does not listen when you get them to listen, in later years they regret it. That was my point. And, too, schools were integrated and you could go wherever you wanted to without people having to put you out because of your race. That is one reason why I did not want my [black] students to behave in front of other children or to act out in front of other teachers because then they say "see that is why we didn't want to have them here". You understand what I'm saying? Well see now this can happen what we are talking about; it may not be somebody who has a corn field or cotton field, but it can happen wherever you are and have it hard in the world where ever they are, and maybe can't find jobs because they did not accept opportunity when it presented itself.

As far as values that were passed down, would you say that all of your cousins and relatives lived by that as well? What was passed down from your grandparents?

Yes, I think so. And then, too, my mothers parents. Now, my mother's parents living in that same community, Grandma Laura and Grandpa Andrew [...] now, I don't remember my mother's dad I think he passed when my sister Laura was a baby, but my Grandmother Laura passed when Earlis was a baby. Andrew Coleman, that was my mother's father. Andrew and Laura.

Do you know her maiden name?

I don't know if you knew that our mother's middle name was Agnes. We never knew that Agnes was her middle name. I guess she didn't like it; she would never use it. She would just say Mabel. Dad's name was Norman and his parents were Jim and Lucy. Mom's parents were Andrew and Laura. Now, when you say Gully you are talking about some of our people, but I would have to go a long ways to tell you how. I am wondering here now, Grandma Laura I'm thinking was her last name Lampley? Now that's on momma's side. Laura Lampley. And my dad's parents Lucy Welch.

I have heard that some of the Welch's looked fairly white. Is that true?

Yes, it is. My grandmother, Grandma Lucy, she had long black hair before the gray started and my mother's mother, Grandma Laura she had long, sandy brown hair but she looked more Indian because of her cheekbones. I know when I was teaching school they (students) see you and think you are mixed with different races, and they ask you who in your family were Indian. I had a lot of fun with that. They can ask some silly questions (laugh). I remember one time we were in the room and sometimes they act like you are not married. I would try to tell them some things, what I tell my daughters to do. Some of them didn't know I had any children saying, "How many children you have?", and maybe you tell them how many children you have, "And are you married?" And then say "I know I wouldn't want that many", and then laugh when they say it. They were high school children.

Now I'm going to ask you about some of the beliefs and folklore that have been passed down. I am going to mention some and then you tell me what you remember. For example, "it is bad luck to use scissors on a Sunday".

Yes, at that time I believe older people believed more in that. But sometimes you would hear your mother, or dad, or grandparents, other people in the community. Sometimes I look back and think I don't know if it is true, but I wouldn't want to try it to know if it is true. Other young people say it's nothing to that; its just superstition. But they used to have quite of few of them. Have you heard, "don't turn around once you start some place and you got to go back"? You always keep going. And, "don't sweep out the door after sun down"?

Why is that?

I guess they thought it would bring bad luck.

I mean the reasoning behind it. For instance, one should not wash on New Year's because you will bring bad luck into the New Year or wash someone away. Or, there is also the belief that you aren't supposed to work at all on a holiday.

Well I don't know maybe it was something you were sweeping and you would be sweeping luck away. I'm not really sure or what exactly some of them meant. "Don't bring eggs in the house after sun down" [is another one].

I've heard that was more for practical reasons because there could be a snake inside of there.

I believe momma, and her parents, and people around there just believed in that for some reason like it was bad luck. "Don't cut your fingernails off on Sunday". "Don't sew on Sunday". "Don't wash your clothes on Sunday, and if you had anything to iron make sure you had it done before Sunday". "Don't wear two hats on your head at the same time". Momma used to say you'll get a whipping before the day was over with. [for wearing two hats]

Have you heard that it is bad luck to have two people braiding your hair at the same time?

Yes, I have heard that like it is bad luck to have two people combing in your head at one time. Now I don't know why.

If you cut your hair and it touches the floor, you are supposed to pick it up and keep it. My mother would never let us throw it away in the trash.

I haven't heard it exactly like that. But certain things that belong to you and personal, like you are talking about your hair or certain hygiene, just don't throw it out anywhere; you don't want anyone to get their hands on it. I don't think S.W.. [my daughter] is as careful with it as I am. Just like with your hair like if you have hair in your comb, I won't throw it in the trash can, I will wrap it up in paper or plastic bag, and go out back in the backyard, and then if you have receipts that you don't want anyone to get a hold to, S.W. will give me her receipts and we will burn it. I get lots of catalogues and books. One thing I won't do, if it has a number on there for ordering or personal information, I will tear that off. I would rather do that then have them take it to the dump. You would be surprised with what people can do with a little bit of information.

Regarding all of the sayings you had growing up, do you believe that because it was a farming community and because farming was so unpredictable that these hardships made their beliefs stronger and necessary?

When it comes to farming there were some things about farming that if I had to start another way of making a living, I would. To make cotton you might have some good years and some bad years, just talking about when I grew up on the farm. A lot of times it would depend on the weather and so forth. But there are some things when it comes to growing your vegetables and foods. I love that you know. When I got married we had a good garden for a long time. You know plant fresh vegetables out back? I like fresh vegetables and my husband did too. See his parents did, and now I have some fruit trees. I like that. I have to get some more. We have pecan trees, but I want a pear tree. My husband when we lived with his parents when we first got married, they had some pear trees. He has a brother there and they have a pear tree. The other day, his brother brought us some and they are good. I can say this about what I lived to see as I grew up as a child: farming helped us. Daddy and mother taught us to do a lot of things and we learned to do a lot of things, and when it came to foods we grew most of our foods and the meat. We had cows and hogs and stuff like that. That helped us. I don't forget that. We learn a lesson from these things they taught us and saw them do. Like I say, I'll tell anyone this, as far as cotton I don't think I'd like to grow cotton again, if I had to be on a farm again, even though I like picking it.

Regarding the Freedom Summer of 1964 and the murders in Neshoba, were you concerned for your family who was left or how did you view those events?

Anytime you hear things like that near by where my family lived you hope that there won't be anyone who will take it out on innocent people like my dad and mother, and the others who were still there. Even though they were not involved, they were still there. We didn't know what could happen. And I know what you were talking about because you were talking about the Freedom Riders who were going to Philadelphia one Sunday evening and they were killed.

Aunt T. and J. were in high school at the time. They would go to Neshoba to the store, but during that summer stopped going there and went somewhere else.

Even though I was away from there, I remember. And, often you think about things because sometimes people can do ugly things to you and hurt you even if you are not involved in what they're upset about.

Did you personally experience racism as a child? What experiences did you have?

I don't recall anyone disrespecting or doing anything to us, but I think it was just with a lot of people even though they might be the same age I think they just took it as a way of life. You say "yes mam" or "no mam" to the white people. Then you have some white children who will up and call your dad by his first name like he was not [a man]. So naturally when you see something like that I wouldn't intervene or say anything concerning it. Like I say, back then when segregation was going on people were going on even though we knew it wasn't right; but, if you didn't want to get in a fight or lose your life, if that was your home and you know you were living there, you wanted peace. Maybe you took a lot of the things that should not have happened. You understand what I'm saying? If you have not heard, a lot of younger people, even maybe along with my children, say I don't know how you would take that. I wouldn't have taken that. If you were working on a job and that was your way of living, bringing home your check and making a living, you didn't want to come home with no job. You understand what I'm saying?

Can you address why many of the family members and relatives were so fair and light skinned in the community? Are you aware of any who tried to pass for white?

There were some I know who could pass for white. I don't know how many people if they mistaken them, why they did. I remember my dad, he and a darker skinned gentleman were going to town in the wagon. This white guy for some reason they stopped and were talking, and he told my dad he could ride on with them and let this other man go on. He had mistaken dad for a white guy and dad told him, "we both are colored" and he went on. This guy who asked to ride with him, he thought my dad was white. I'm almost sure it was a mistake because there were quite a few of the real light-skinned people where we grew up.

What about the 16 section?

I'm almost sure some of the others could have passed for white. See most of the people in 16 section and Bluff Springs around there knew each other. Most of the people around there were related one way or the other. Just like my mother and dad were in the same community. Some of dad's cousins married someone in the community. Momma's brother married daddy's first cousin Aunt Annie. It's a lot of them.

Do you think that is why a lot the community looked the same?

I think it has something to do with it.

Did your grandparents talk about their parents?

I don't recall them talking a lot about it.

Did anyone ever talk about the possibility of having white ancestors or cousins?

No not really.

How has the location and land shaped your identity as an African-American woman? Specifically, I am wondering how as an educator and college graduate how your life in Kemper shaped who you are today?

I think it shaped me. I'm glad I came up and grew up the way I did that my parents brought me up and taught me the way that they did. I learned manners and I learned how to get along with other people and how to make it in life. A lot of things they taught me with out them I could not have done as well as I did in life. Education was one thing that I always loved and always wanted to do and taught me I was doing the right thing with encouragement. I always wanted to go on to college when I finished high school but at that time opportunities were not as great as they are now. I tell my children that and tried to encourage them. That was the main reason why I've done a lot of things was because of my upbringing and encouragement. I never gave up on furthering my education. I remember a teacher in high school told me that I was the type of person that needed to teach school; that I should be a teacher, and I never forgot that. I always loved to teach; whether it was Sunday school or wherever I got the chance to teach. When I entered a junior college it was the same year my oldest daughter, Sharon went off to college. My family helped me and I was able to go on to college and finish. When I came out I didn't even know if I would teach, I just wanted the opportunity to go to college. I had the opportunity to do so. When I came out I was given a job teaching where I did my practice teaching. I think I had a fruitful life. I think where I grew up, we were talking about the things instilled in me, I think that you might say it had *all to do* with being encouraged, and all that I've achieved in life.

Email Interview with Former Kemper County Resident. E. Turner Age 64

One of the best things in my life growing up was visiting my grandparents on the farm in Kemper County, Mississippi almost every year with my parents. I not only got to see family members, I also got involved in a lot of other activities. My sister and I would have so much fun playing with my cousins, feeding the animals, etc. We also returned to get together with my grandparents and other relatives and friends to celebrate special occasions. It was a chance to catch up on old times, what was happening then, and say goodbye until we saw each other again. I will always cherish fond memories of the sights and sounds of smiling faces, friendly places, children playing, dogs chasing, and the other events I participated in during my visits over the years.

My grandmother was a splendid cook and prepared a variety of delicious food for each meal. I don't know which I liked best: Grandma's biscuits with butter from milk churned by my aunts, cheese and macaroni, or candied sweet potatoes. My grandfather loved savory fried chicken or steak and gravy occasionally for breakfast, especially on Sundays. A maganation cake and ambrosia were among the delicacies she prepared each year at Christmastime. My father remembers that the teacakes and blackberries my grandmother baked and canned were both favorite dishes for dinner after returning home from school during the winter months.

My grandmother canned, froze, and preserved a variety of fruits, meats, and vegetables. She made several types of wine from fresh fruit, some of which were grape, blackberry, and muscadine. She made fresh blackberry, dewberry, citron, and many other cobblers and pies. Pork sausage links were canned after being smoked in the smokehouse. She made and canned ribs and hog head cheese [souse] after each hog was slaughtered. Her pickled pig feet were always served warm for breakfast. Fresh hash was always cooked and served for dinner on the day a hog was

killed. Pork loin was canned and was often fried and served to unexpected guests as it was considered a delicacy and was quick to prepare. The next day fatback was cooked into lard and was routinely used to fry food. Crackling [an end product from cooking the lard] bread was prepared and served for a meal occasionally. Bar soap for the purpose of washing clothes and the hands was made from lye [water dripped over ashes from the fireplace], devil lye, and cracklings.

Some of the things I remember from visits on the farm are cold water being drawn from the well, fresh eggs just collected from the hen nest, fields of fluffy white cotton as far as the eyes could see, tall towering yellow heads of sunflowers, riding in the horse drawn wagon, and horseback riding. I can visualize what the life of my grandparents was like raising crops and vegetables, building a house and a playhouse, and traveling to church and town on a horse or in a wagon.

Some of the vivid childhood experiences my father recalls are catching butterflies and bumblebees on flowers and shrubs in a jar or a leaf, trips with my grandfather to the cotton gin, the annual Kemper County Fair, the molasses mill where blue ribbon and sorghum cane syrup was made every year, horseback riding through the fields and pastures to the store or to pick up mail, taking a nap on the wooden floor at noon or after supper, jumping from the barn into a wagon loaded with white cotton, gathering/scraping straw to make brooms to clean wooden floors, breaking limbs of huckleberry or dogwood bushes to make brooms to sweep the yard, hanging gourds for bird nests, putting up scarecrows to keep prey away from the field, picking and extracting dry peas from the hull for seed, humming birds flying backwards, forward, up, and down searching for nectar while he was swinging on the front porch. Both the splendor and fright of seeing a hummingbird up close, as a child, is one of those moments he never forgot.

My father grew up in Bluff Springs Missionary Baptist Church where everyone knew each other. The males usually sat on one side of the church and females on the opposite side. Any variance was certain to arouse suspicion and was a topic of discussion among members in regular attendance. The deacons and trustees were all male and might “turn” a member out of the church for his/her perceived transgressions from time-to-time. When dinner was prepared by women congregants at home and served on the church grounds during revivals, associations, conventions, or other events, it was an exciting and festive occasion. No kitchen facilities, indoor toilets, or similar accommodations were available at the time. Oil lamps were the source of lighting and wood was used for heating. The majority of the congregation was related by blood or marriage. The minister and any of his guests ate dinner in the home of the member who invited him after preaching the sermon monthly. Sunday school was conducted each Sunday and was an integral part of the childhood development experience. The speeches my father, aunts, and uncles were taught at home and presented verbatim at church during various programs promoted good communication skills. There was no speech or drama course in the curricular of any elementary or high school that they attended.

As soon as a child was old enough each was responsible for performing certain chores in and around the home. Females were to cook [start the fire in the oven prior to purchase of a gas stove], churn milk, wash the dishes and clothes, iron, clean inside and outside the home, quilt, sew, hoe and harvest cotton, corn, etc., plant and weed the garden and flowers, gather and prepare fruits and vegetables for cooking, canning, freezing, or preserving, and perform most tasks in the field except heavy lifting and plowing, grind and stuff sausage, feed and prepare chickens for cooking, and prune hedges. Males were to care for the cattle and other livestock [horses/mules], dogs, hogs, milk cows, cut and haul wood, plow row crops, hoe and harvest

cotton, corn, etc., shuck and shell corn for grinding meal, cut, bale, and haul hay, make and maintain fire, build fences and bridges, gear/remove gear from livestock, poison cotton, and drive the truck/wagon.

It was common practice to walk barefoot on hot summer days when growing up on the farm. When the sun was on your back and a slight breeze was against your face, it was a challenge to walk in sand that was over a half foot deep at times, sometimes carrying a hoe or a gallon jug of water to the field. Playing in mud and water to cool off after a quick rain shower were considered fun things to do on a hot summer day. Simply standing on a maypop to burst it or crushing a mushroom [considered poisonous] was a fun treat for a bit of idle time in the field. Children were innovative and learned to create and make many of their toys [i.e., a slingshot, a bee-bee gun, a truck, a wagon, etc.] as their parents could not afford to buy them. Almost any free time for entertainment [sports, etc.] was precious due to the arduous nature of many tasks on the farm in the absence of electrical or automated equipment, such as a tractor. My father and uncles would swim sometimes in the dirty pond as no facility of this type was available in Kemper County at the time. None of my aunts ever learned to swim.

It's always refreshing to hear my father, aunts, and uncles reminisce about the blackberries and plums they picked on the farm for my grandfather to sell. They were glad each year when there was an abundant crop of these to get money to buy some of their sandals for the summer and other shoes and clothes to return to school. Cotton and corn were the main crops grown by my grandparents. In addition, my grandfather peddled butter, eggs, chickens, watermelons, cantaloupes, figs, peas, and other fruits and vegetables. He sold milk to a dairy company for a few years to supplement income from the cotton and corn crops. My grandfather, my father, and uncles cut logs and pulpwood on the family farm to sell from time-to-time.

Timber was also sold to companies to cut and haul several times. The property was leased for a limited period of time to one or more oil companies for exploration purposes.

There was a limited amount of interaction with neighbors because of the distance my grandparents lived from anyone else. The home of my great grandparents was the closest, which was about a mile away. Transportation was limited as my grandfather, my father, and uncles used rocks and sand to keep the very narrow dirt road passable until as late as the 1970's. The condition of the road after rains often required men pushing or mules/horses pulling the bogged car or truck out of the mud to get to/from school, church, shopping, etc. Sometimes the best alternative was to walk the rest of the way home and return the next day in the mule/horse drawn wagon. The wagon was also used to pick up my aunts and uncles from school on occasions when the road was such that an auto could not be used due to these conditions. Communication was primarily face-to-face. The *Kemper County Messenger* [the local newspaper] and the *Commercial Appeal* were purchased when my grandparents went to town about once week. There was no telephone or electricity and quite often the battery radio was dysfunctional. Lack of a museum, public recreation facility, a gym, public or school library, elective or extracurricular activities [typing, foreign language, speech, industrial arts, etc.] for most of my father's siblings during both elementary and secondary education was a significant barrier.

My grandfather would purchase a block of ice in DeKalb or Philadelphia and wrap it in newspaper to prevent it from thawing to the extent possible. My grandmother cooked the milk and set up the hand cranked ice cream freezer most Saturday nights during the summer. As children, my father, aunts, and uncles looked forward to turning the freezer until the ice cream was frozen in the back yard. This was a special treat and they didn't mind shivering from the

chill in the air. Hide-and-go-seek, hopscotch, and tag were some of the favorite games the children almost always played.

The first school my father, aunts, and uncles attended had one to two teachers and was located across the road in front of Bluff Springs Missionary Baptist Church. The members of the church played a vital role in providing financial support. For example, they would cut a load of wood from their land and donate it to the school to heat the two room building during the winter. They prepared and donated food and supplies to sell plate lunches at the school at night to assure sufficient funding to meet operational needs. Male students walked to the home of a member of the church who lived nearby to obtain a daily supply of free drinking water. Students took lunch with them when they left home to go to school as there were no restaurants in this rural area. My father, aunts, and uncles walked several miles to get to this particular school, climbing over wire pasture fences along the way. Over the hills and valleys they went, across the sparkling white frosty landscape on some cold winter days. The school was closed in about 1956, as the state's entire school system was reorganized during the 1950s and early 1960s to improve education through consolidation of small districts.

Some of my aunts and uncles attended the old Whisenton High School for elementary/secondary education. They walked several miles to get to and from home to the bus stop. Quite often they were cold or wet from walking and waiting for the bus which did not have any heat and would break down sometimes. This resulted in a significant number of days of absences from school due to colds or other related illnesses. Unfortunately, the end result was a tendency to fall behind the rest of the class, and ultimately two of my uncles and an aunt stopped prior to completion of high school. Absences at the beginning and near the end of the school year to assist in harvesting/planting crops were also a major factor.

My father and the majority of my aunts and uncles attended Preston High School after it opened in about 1952. Several of my uncles and one of my aunts received a high school diploma from Preston High before it was changed to a junior high school, and the new Whisenton High School opened. At some point and time, the Kemper County Superintendent began paying my grandfather to use his vehicle for transportation to Preston as the condition of the road was still inaccessible by a school bus.

About the latter part of the 1950s the school year was adjusted to start earlier, closed a month or more to give students time to assist in harvesting crops, and opened again for the remainder of the session. This modification, along with the fact that it was no longer necessary to walk several miles/wait outside for a bus, made it considerably easier to get a high school education. Students in all grades continued to travel to Preston together via school bus, with high school students continuing the trip to the new Whisenton High via school buses.

The spring of each year was the time to begin to raise baby chicks, cultivate the fields, plant the garden, prepare flowerbeds, and fertilize shrubs. The season was a unique time for sitting and relaxing under the old oak tree, taking long walks, observing the return of leaves, blooming flowers such as white and yellow narcissus, rabbits, squirrels, birds and a green coat of grass. The aroma of the honeysuckle, fragrant sweet shrubs, petunias, and violets, white dogwoods covering the hillsides on a warm spring day, the blossoms on the crepe myrtles and fruit trees, kudzu in bloom, daffodils and wisteria cascading over trees, and huckleberries in the woods were breathtaking .

It has been said that on the farm the rooster crows at the crack of dawn and the lazy hound dog howls telling you its time to get up. Many begin the day early to feel a breeze of fresh air, listen to the birds singing, and experience the beauty of the sun rising through the trees. A

cool breeze now and then while swinging on the front porch offers a respite and a beautiful view of the clay hills of cotton and corn and flat bottoms of other crops. There were green trees and fields like you've never seen before. The beautiful red-orange sunrises were renewing each day and the awesome sunsets gave a chance to end the day with a sense of serenity.

Somehow my aunts and uncles found time to fish in small gentle streams when leaving the field in the middle of the day to go home for dinner. All that was required was a pole and a handful of crickets or grasshoppers. A favorite pastime of my aunts and uncles was fishing in the brooks and streams in my grandparents' cow pasture. Earthworms were the primary type of bait and were dug up around the house under rocks and in other areas that retain moisture for extended periods of time. A ready source of bait was also the grasshoppers and crickets darting here and there in the pasture and any crawfish and minnows that were caught while fishing that day. The fish caught were catfish, bass, perch, and trout, along with a few turtles. Fish that were caught were cleaned and fried for supper that night or for breakfast the next morning. Plain corn meal was the only type of batter used. The final task during the fishing trip was to see that the herd of cattle leave the far reaches of the pasture and return to the barn for milking.

Christmas was always a time of great anticipation, excitement, and preparation on the farm. A lot of time and effort were exerted over the Thanksgiving weekend to clean leaves and trash from the yard to ensure it was as tidy as possible for the upcoming holiday. One of the tasks was to pry loose autumn's first pecans from their thick, green husks getting stained fingers that no amount of soap seemingly would remove. My grandmother would always make the fruit cake in advance to assure necessary time to soak it in brandy or rum to heighten the flavor. My father, aunts, and uncles could hardly wait for a chance to go out in the woods to cut a live Christmas

tree. There were always fireworks at Christmas time. This was a time when my grandmother cracked pecans and other nuts, shelled peanuts, and made homemade peanut candy.

My grandmother and grandfather relied heavily on the Farmers' Almanac and the Progressive Farmer Magazine to determine the best time to plant most of the garden and some row crops. A variety of colorful blooming flowers adorned the front and sides of the fences of the garden during the spring and summer seasons. My aunts would gather sage from the plant near the edge of the garden once a year. Garlic, carrots, and lettuce were grown every year, although they were seldom, if ever used. My grandparents followed a tradition most of their lifetime to wait until after a frost to eat the collard greens. Gladiola and other bulbs, as well as bachelor's button, etc. were collected from the garden/yard and stored inside the home to avoid exposure to colder temperatures. Dried corn stalks were used to build several bins in the garden to store sweet potatoes in pine straw during the winter. There was enough room in the bin for one or more children to sit on the straw to get some of the potatoes out as needed.

My father and uncles planted peanuts, plowed them up after they matured, shook the dirt off each plant, and left them turned upside down to dry. After the peanuts were dried in the sun, they picked them off the vine in the field or carried them in the wagon and stored them in the loft of the barn. My father, aunts, and uncles picked the peanuts off the vine during the winter. While most of the peanuts were dry roasted and consumed at home, my grandfather sold a small quantity without roasting them.

My grandfather, my father, and uncles hunted rabbits and squirrels with the changing colors of the trees and crispy leaves falling, padding the way. Sometimes they hunted at night and one of the dogs would refuse to return home with them. When they had to leave there was no choice in this case but to leave the dog. Believe it or not, you can trust dogs as they had returned

by the next morning. Whether used as a hunting companion or a pal in the back yard, the dogs added a great deal to life. An interesting and true phenomenon is that dogs can provide a source of comfort by gently licking your hand. Wearing a ragged coat and felt hat made this a time to reflect on the past and hope for the future. It was not so much the number of these killed as it was the hope, possibility, and anticipation of doing so.

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