

## **Guide to the Blakeley Oral History Project Interviews, 2019**

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### **Descriptive Summary:**

Title: Blakeley Oral History Project Interviews, 2019

Creator: Honors College, University of South Alabama

Quantity: 280 GB digital video, audio, text and still photographs

Abstract: This collection contains 14 video interviews conducted by Honors College students and faculty with selected community members and experts exploring aspects of personal history and the Mobile-Tensaw Delta. The interviews are part of a funded research project of the Honors College of the University of South Alabama sponsored by the Alabama Humanities Foundation and the David Mathews Center for Civic Life.

Accession: 727-2019

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### **Biographical Note:**

Mike Bunn: Bunn is the director of the Historic Blakeley State Park.

Paul A. Sledge: Sledge is a longtime resident of the Delta area with African American and Native American ancestry.

Vincent J. Dooley is a Mobile native who is best known for his 25-year coaching career at the University of Georgia.

Alfred Guarisco is a first generation American with Italian and Alabama heritage. His father settled in an Italian colony in Baldwin County.

Watt Key is an award-winning fiction writer from Point Clear, whose work draws on experiences in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta.

Delmas McCryndle is a retired US Army SFC and JROTC instructor at Murphy High School with an extensive family history in Blakeley, Alabama.

James "Jimbo" Meador is a naturalist who has spent a lifetime building his expertise in the

Mobile-Tensaw Delta.

William "Billy" Mills is a Spanish Fort resident who enjoys learning and sharing background knowledge of the Civil War history of the local area.

Bart Nelson was a local commercial shrimper who grew up exploring the water of Weeks Bay and learning about the land through beachcombing.

Arnetta Sims is a native of Daphne, Alabama, who is working to preserve the history of Daphne with organizations such as the Guardians of Daphne.

John Sledge is an architectural historian for the City of Mobile who has developed both personal and professional connections with the natural landscape during his life.

Thomas Craig Stephens is a parade float sculptor who has worked with his own company, Carnival Artists, to create floats for Mobile and Fairhope parades for 30 years.

Sue Brannan Walker is professor emerita at the University of South Alabama, where she taught literature and creative writing for thirty-five years. She has served as president of the Alabama Writers Forum, the Alabama State Poetry Society, and the Alabama Writers Conclave and is the editor and publisher of Negative Capability Press. From 2003 to 2012, she was Poet Laureate of Alabama.

Greg Waselkov is an emeritus professor at the University of South Alabama who has made a life studying the archeology of the Southeastern United States.

Some interviewees have provided additional written biographical information.

Student interviewers include 4 Honors College Summer Undergraduate Research Fellows (SURF): Nate Carr, Candice Fairchild, Lex McKinnell and Ruby Staten. Faculty mentors include Honors College Dean Kathy J. Cooke, and Dr. Kern Jackson.

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### **Scope and Content:**

Blakeley Bluff, Alabama situated in the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, is an extraordinary nexus of cultures and histories, including archeological evidence of prehistoric and historic

native cultures. It also encompasses the site of the Battle of Fort Blakeley, where U.S. Colored Troops played a pivotal role defeating Confederate forces. These interviews explore oral traditions that reflect these settlements and battles, and the past and present significance of the land and landscape to these peoples immediately after the Civil War, during Reconstruction, with the passing of the Dawes Act, and under the growth of Jim Crow. Individual narrators express their unique connection to, awareness of, and interaction with historical events and the natural environment.

This collection contains digital video files of recorded conversations with multiple narrators discussing their life history and connection to the landscape of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta and Blakeley Bluff area. Some narrators are residents of the area while others have professional connections to the place.

Subjects (LOC):

Blakeley (Ala. : Town)

Daphne (Ala.)

Mobile-Tensaw Delta (Ala.)-- Social life and customs

African American history

Small game hunting

Personal narratives

Biodiversity & ecology

**Provenance:** Original material produced and collected by the Honors College at the University of South Alabama.

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**Arrangement:**

The collection has been organized alphabetically by interviewee name.

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**Access Restrictions:**

The collection is open to researchers.

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**Preferred Citation:**

[Name of Narrator], Blakeley Oral History Project – Honors College, The Doy Leale McCall Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of South Alabama, Mobile, Alabama.

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**Guide prepared by: Deborah Gurt**

**Guide updated by:**

**Guide last updated:** June 8, 2021

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**Content List:**

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Interviewed by</b>
Bunn, Mike	2019/05/29	Ruby Staten, Kathy Cooke
Dooley, Vincent J.	2019/09/06	Ruby Staten
Guarisco, Alfred	2019/10/04	Kern Jackson, Ruby Staten
Key, Watt	2019/06/05	Ruby Staten
McCryndle, Delmas	2019/6/27	Kern Jackson
Meador, Jimbo	2019/10/04	Kern Jackson
Mills, Billy	2019/06/12	Ruby Staten
Nelson, Bart	2019/06/20	Ruby Staten, Kathy Cooke, Lex McKinnell
Sims, Arnetta	2019/10/04	Candice Fairchild, Kathy Cooke
Sledge, John	2019/05/29	Ruby Staten, Kathy Cooke, Lex McKinnell
Sledge, Paul Anthony	2019/06/20	Ruby Staten, Lex McKinnell
Stephens, Thomas Craig	2019/09/06	Ruby Staten, Kern Jackson
Walker, Sue Brannan	2019/05/31	Candice Fairchild, Kathy Cooke
Waselkov, Gregory	2019/06/14	Ruby Staten

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