

GHOSTS OF SEGREGATION

AMERICA'S CONTINUING STRUGGLE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICH FRISHMAN

ALL HUMAN LANDSCAPE has cultural meaning. Because we rarely consider our constructions as evidence of our priorities, beliefs and desires, the testimony our landscape tells is perhaps more honest than anything we might intentionally present. Our built environment is society's autobiography writ large.

Ghosts of Segregation photographically explores the vestiges of America's racism as seen in the vernacular landscape, hidden in plain sight: Schools for "colored" children, theatre entrances and restrooms for "colored people," lynching sites, juke joints, jails, hotels and bus stations. Past is prologue.

Segregation is as much current events as it is history. Fueled by fear and intolerance, these ghosts haunt us because they are very much alive. While this project to date has focused on the Deep South, prejudice has no geographic boundaries. I have all of America to explore.

Ghosts of Segregation seeks to spark an honest conversation about the legacy of racial injustice in America today. Following are 16 images from this ongoing project. As of August 2019, Ghosts of Segregation consists of 57 images and continues to grow. In this brief sample, each image is

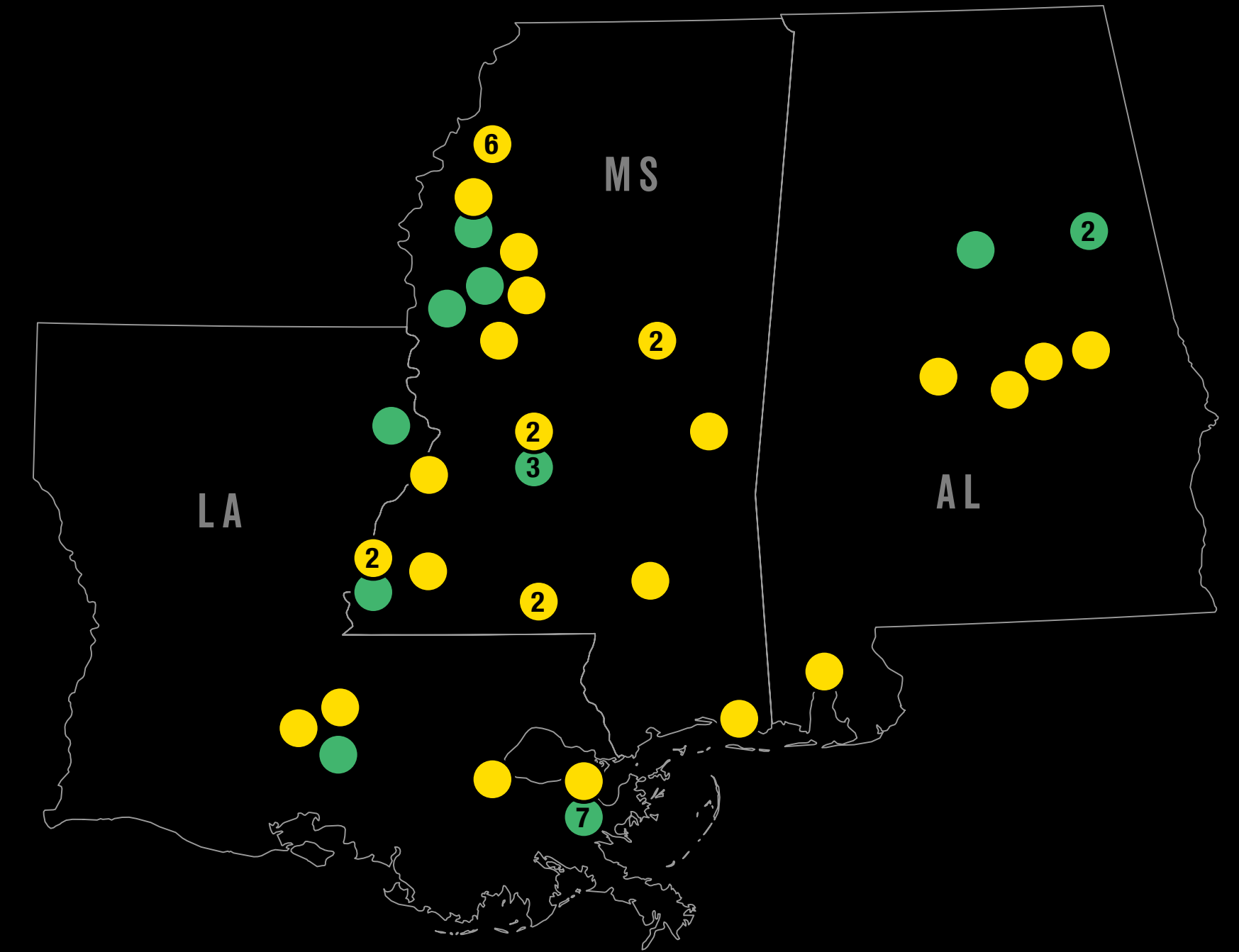
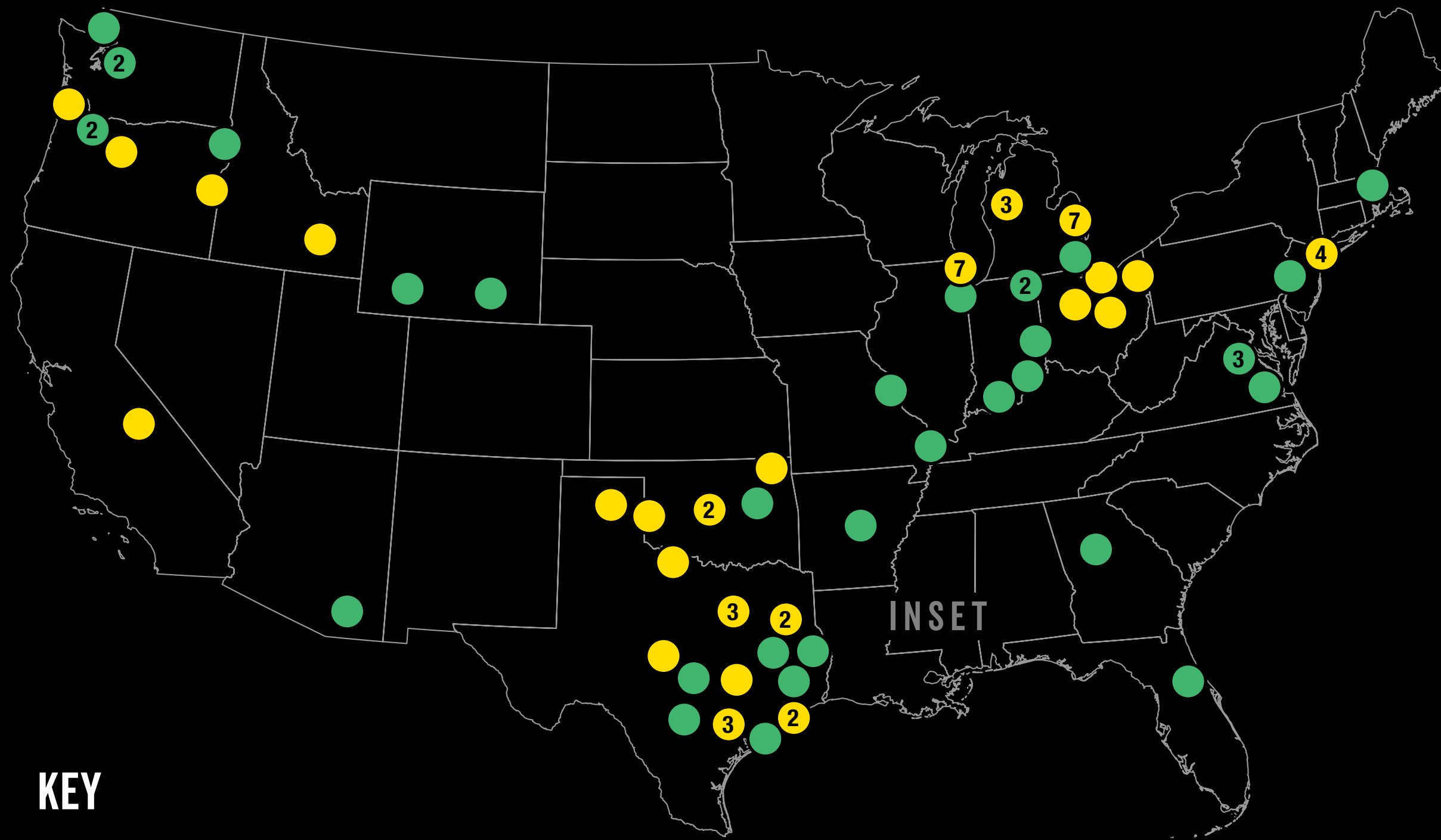
followed by a caption. At the conclusion of the portfolio is a description of some of the judicial consequences, as well as action steps you can take to break this cycle of intolerance.

The vestiges of segregation so far documented range geographically from New York to Oregon, Michigan to Mississippi. Each of these images is assembled from hundreds of individual detail photographs meticulously blended to create prints of immersive detail over 4 x 8-feet in size. These limited-edition prints are available for exhibition and acquisition. Images from this project are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the New Orleans Museum of Art, and a growing number of institutions. A traveling exhibit and educational material are also being developed, with the goal of engaging communities in this important discussion.

Rich Frishman

AUGUST 2019

PROJECT SITES



KEY

- PHOTOGRAPHED
- TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED

Note: Numbers inside bullets indicate multiple situations in same location



SEGREGATION WALL

TEMPLIN'S SALOON; GONZALES, TEXAS

This segregation wall was constructed in 1906 and is decorated with an original pre-1929 Dr. Pepper logo. During Jim Crow only Caucasian customers were allowed to sit in the front of the saloon. All others had to sit behind the wall. When the saloon was remodeled and re-opened in 2014 the wall, no longer used for its original purpose, was retained as a historical reminder of those dark days.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2016



CHANGE.

Small plaque on the wall to the left of the first door.

NO ENTRY
NO ENTRY
NO ENTRY



SLAVE EXCHANGE

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

The enigmatic inscription “change,” floating above Chartres Street in New Orleans’ French Quarter, largely goes unnoticed. It is the vestige of the sign over the St. Louis Hotel Slave Exchange. The luxurious hotel included a bank, ballroom, shopping arcade and trading exchange. Six days each week from 1838–1862, under the hotel’s domed rotunda, auctioneers sold off land and goods as well as thousands of enslaved people.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2018



HOUSTON NEGRO HOSPITAL
SCHOOL OF NURSING

SEGREGATED NURSING SCHOOL

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Houston Negro Hospital School of Nursing, built in 1931, now stands abandoned along with the hospital with which it once was associated. The hospital was created five years earlier when the black Union-Jeremiah Hospital was no longer capable of accommodating the rapidly growing black population of Houston. It was dedicated on June 19, 1926, a major local holiday in Texas known as “Juneteenth,” which commemorates the day Emancipation occurred in the state.

The medical facility became the first non-profit hospital for black patients in Houston. It also provided work for black physicians, who were not allowed to admit patients in the “black wards” of other Houston hospitals.

The Houston Negro Hospital School of Nursing was established next to the hospital and was the first educational institution created for the training of black nurses in Houston.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2018



THEATRE COLORED ENTRANCE

HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI

Years after the end of Jim Crow segregation, many architectural vestiges remain. This curious palimpsest of bricks covers the entrance for “Colored People” at the Saenger Theatre, a once-grand movie house in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Often these entrances were down an alley away from the glittering lights of the main entrance. Usually they led directly to a set of stairs ascending to a segregated portion of the balcony.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2018



A photograph of a brick wall with a doorway, serving as the background for the text. The wall is made of reddish-brown bricks. To the left, a doorway is visible, leading to a darker interior. A utility pole with wires is on the far left. A concrete step leads up to the doorway. The overall lighting is dim, suggesting dusk or dawn.

THEATRE COLORED ENTRANCE

TYLERTOWN, MISSISSIPPI

A scar over a deep wound, bricks cover the “colored entrance” to a movie theatre in Tylertown, Mississippi. Such palimpsests abound throughout the South, obscure reminders of Jim Crow-era segregation. Often situated in an alley, these entrances led to a segregated section of the balcony. While Whites sat in upholstered seats, Blacks frequently were relegated to backless benches or rickety wooden seats.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2018



Texas



THEATRE COLORED ENTRANCE

KILGORE, TEXAS

The enigmatic door atop the stairway on the south side of the Texan Theatre, long locked and largely overlooked, is the “colored entrance,” a vestige of Jim Crow-era segregation. In Kilgore, Texas, the term “colored” extended to anyone not Caucasian, including Hispanics and the occasional Asian.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2018



SEGREGATED RESORT

IDLEWILD, MICHIGAN 2019

The small resort town of Idlewild, Michigan was known as the Black Eden, and at its height in the 1950s and '60s, more than 25,000 African Americans would travel from Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and Indianapolis each summer to visit its 2,700 acres of lakes and western Michigan wilderness for intellectual stimulation, partying, and a sense of community.

“If you were a doctor, a lawyer, an entrepreneur, an educator, and you had the income to travel either by train or auto, it was a place that you wanted to be,” says Dr. Ronald Stephens, a professor of 20th-century African American history and culture at Ohio University. Idlewild became a place for intellectual and political interaction among prominent members of the 1920s African American community, including William Pickens and W.E.B. Du Bois.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2019



INTERNMENT CAMP BARRACKS

MINIDOKA, IDAHO

During WWII Americans of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast of the United States were forced into internment camps hastily built in remote inland areas of the West. Minidoka, also known as Hunt Camp, is located in scrubland about 25 miles north of Twin Falls. At its peak it housed over 9,000 Japanese Americans in tarpaper barracks lacking running water. Between 110,000 and 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry were subject to this mass exclusion program, of whom about 80,000 Nisei (second generation) and Sansei (third generation) were U.S. citizens.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2019





AMBUSH SITE

MEDGAR EVERS' HOUSE; JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

The first Mississippi state field secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Medgar Evers was shot in the back in the carport of his humble home in Jackson, Mississippi, shortly after midnight on June 12, 1963. He died less than a hour later at a nearby hospital.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2018



ABDUCTION SITE

MEADVILLE, MISSISSIPPI

On May 2, 1964, Charles Eddie Moore, a college student, and Henry Hezekiah Dee, a millworker, both 19 and from Franklin County, Mississippi, were picked up by KKK members while hitchhiking from this Meadville drive-in, at the time known as Tastee Treat. They were abducted, interrogated and tortured in a nearby forest, locked in a trunk of a car, driven across state lines, chained to a Jeep motor block and train rails, and dropped alive into the Mississippi River to die.

Moore and Dee's mangled torsos were discovered on July 12 and 13, 1964 during the frantic FBI search for James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, the three civil rights workers who disappeared on June 21. When it was discovered that the bodies were those of two black men and not those of the civil rights workers, two of whom were white, media interest evaporated and the press moved on.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2019





HANGING TREE

GOLIAD, TEXAS

The Goliad Hanging Tree is a symbol of justice, Texas-style. For 24 years the court trials of Goliad County were held under this big oak tree. Death sentences were carried out promptly, usually within a few minutes, courtesy of the tree's many handy noose-worthy branches. The tree also served as a gallows for approximately 75 lynchings, many during the 1857 "Cart War" between Texans and Mexicans.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2018



BLACK BAYOU BRIDGE

GLENDORA, MISSISSIPPI

In 1955, when Emmett Till was fourteen, his mother put him on a train from Chicago to spend the summer visiting his cousins in Money, Mississippi. She never saw him alive again. Her son was abducted and brutally murdered on August 28, 1955, after being falsely accused of interacting inappropriately with a white woman. His body was dumped into the muddy waters below Black Bayou bridge.

The following month, Roy Bryant and his half-brother J.W. Milam faced trial for Till's kidnapping and murder but were acquitted by the all-white jury after a five-day trial and a 67-minute deliberation. One juror said, "If we hadn't stopped to drink pop, it wouldn't have taken that long." Only months later, in an interview with Look magazine in 1956, protected against double jeopardy, Bryant and Milam admitted to killing Emmett Till.



TUSKEGEE SYPHILIS STUDY

SHILO MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH; NOTASULGA, ALABAMA

The Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the African American was an infamous and unethical clinical study conducted between 1932 and 1972 by the U.S. Public Health Service. The Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church was the first recruitment site for the experiment. On these benches, African American volunteers in the Tuskegee Syphilis Study would wait to have their blood samples drawn by Nurse Eunice Rivers outside Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church in Notasulga, Alabama.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2019



FIREBOMBED CHURCH

OPELOUSAS, LOUISIANA

Mount Pleasant Baptist Church was one of 3 black churches firebombed in St. Landry Parrish, Louisiana in April 2019. The greatest loss was the church's heritage, said Earnest Hines, 66, a member for close to 40 years. "All those memories of that building, and that place has been burned," he said. "I was born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1956. I remember the 1960's and all the violence. 16th Street Baptist Church bombing, Bloody Sunday... I was just 8 or 9, but I remember. When this tragedy occurred, it was hard not to think of those troubled times. Looking at these burned pews and fallen walls, I know our church is going to rise again, but my heart aches. I layed every one of these bricks by hand, and each one is like a part of me."

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2019



CHURCH BOMBING

16TH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH; BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

On September 15, 1963, the congregation of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama greeted each other before the start of Sunday service. In the basement of the church, five young girls, two of them sisters, gathered in the ladies room in their best dresses, happily chatting about the first days of the new school year. It was Youth Day and excitement filled the air, they were going to take part in the Sunday adult service.

Just before 11 o'clock, instead of rising to begin prayers the congregation was knocked to the ground. As a bomb exploded under the steps of the church, they sought safety under the pews and shielded each other from falling debris. In the basement, four little girls, 14-year-olds Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson, and 11-year-old Cynthia Wesley, were killed. Addie's sister Susan survived, but was permanently blinded.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2018



LYNCHING SITE

NEAR PHILADELPHIA, MISSISSIPPI

During the Freedom Summer of 1964 three civil rights activists were jailed briefly in the small Neshoba County jail on trumped up driving violations. When Mickey Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James Chaney were released that night, they were followed by Ku Klux Klan members tipped off by the sheriff's office. They were forced off the road en route to their office in Meridian, taken to this remote backroads location and bludgeoned to death. Their bodies were later found in an earthen dam.

PHOTOGRAPHED: 2018

AFTERWORD

The past is never dead. It's not even past. Thus observed the brilliant writer William Faulkner of Oxford, Mississippi. This troubling truth, so evident in the rising racial rhetoric of today, is my motivation to document this story. I am not photographing places so much as commemorating the people who struggled. This is why I am passionate about these spaces: because they are sanctified by the courage of others. My purpose is to elevate awareness and open hearts, to spark an honest conversation about racism today.

Please take action. Speak up, model tolerance and compassion, and support the cause of equality. There are many worthy groups that would benefit from your generosity. Here are links to a few:

- *Equal Justice Initiative*
- *American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)*
- *Immigrant Legal Resource Center*
- *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)*
- *National Women's Law Center*
- *Southern Poverty Law Center*

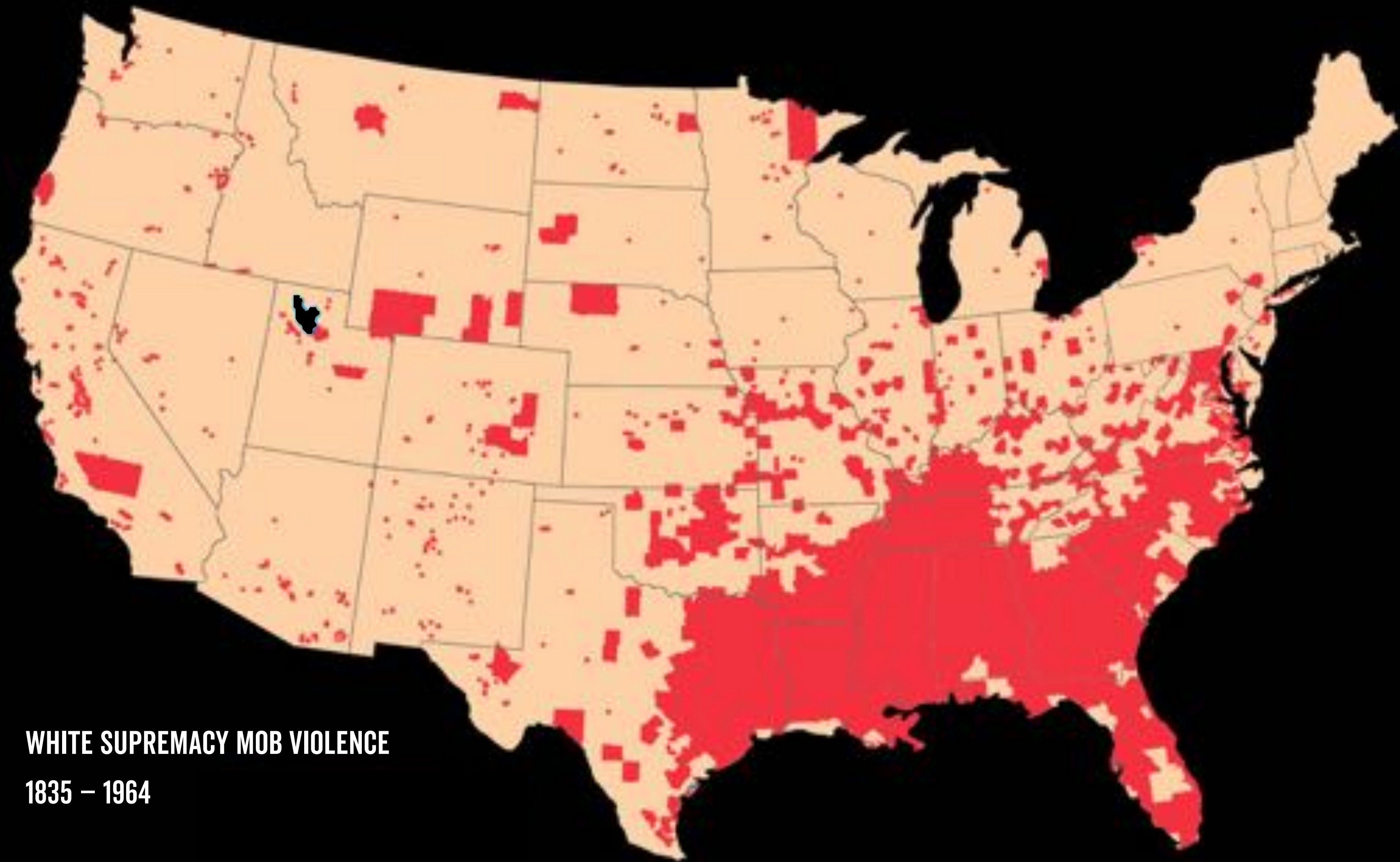
In researching this project, I am struck by how justice is elusive, at best, and often denied.

SHORTLY AFTER the 16th Street Church bombing that left four girls dead and one maimed, three of the suspected murderers were convicted of illegally transporting dynamite. Each was fined \$100 and given a suspended 180-day sentence. The next year, the US Department of Justice blocked any impending federal prosecutions against the suspects, and refused to disclose FBI evidence with state or federal prosecutors. J. Edgar Hoover ordered the files sealed. It was not until 1976 that the Alabama Attorney General, William Baxley, gained access to some of the evidence in the FBI files. In 1977 one of the perpetrators, Robert Chambliss, was indicted and convicted. He died in prison in 1985.

In 1995 the FBI reopened their investigation, which ultimately led to the conviction in 2001 of Thomas Blanton, who is currently serving a life sentence in Springville, Alabama. He is eligible for parole in 2021.

In May of 2002 Bobby Frank Cherry was tried on four counts of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. He died of cancer in 2004 while incarcerated at the Kilby Correctional Facility.

BYRON DE LA BECKWITH, a fertilizer salesman and Ku Klux Klan member widely known to be the assassin, was prosecuted for the 1963 murder of Medgar Evers in 1964. Two all-white, all-male juries deadlocked and refused to convict him. The matter was dropped when it appeared that a conviction would be impossible. In 1989, documents came to light showing that jurors in the case were illegally screened. Thirty years after killing Medgar Evers, Beckwith was convicted and given a life sentence by a racially diverse jury. He died in prison in 2001 at the age of 80.



WHITE SUPREMACY MOB VIOLENCE

1835 – 1964

CONTINUED ↓

43 YEARS AFTER the kidnapping and murder of Charles Moore and Henry Dee, James Ford Seale was finally arrested and sentenced to three life sentences. He had been living openly next to his brother in Roxie, Mississippi, about 10 miles from the abduction site. Seale died in prison in 2011. Seale was “brought to justice” largely by the relentless efforts of Charles Moore’s brother Thomas and a small group of journalists.

The saga of this kidnapping and murder is a case study in institutional racism. Dee and Moore were largely forgotten by law enforcement. Their bodies were only found because more than 400 sailors had joined the FBI in searching southeast Mississippi for the bodies of two white Civil Rights workers along with a black colleague. On July 12, when they discovered the brutalized corpse of a man in a tributary of the Mississippi River in Louisiana, it was thought to be one of the civil rights workers. When the mangled body of a second black man was found a few miles south, it became apparent these were different victims and that a search of any southern swamp might reveal the extremes to which racists would go to preserve white supremacy.

SIX MONTHS AFTER the murder of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Mickey Schwerner, the FBI accused 21 Mississippi men of involvement in the crime. Because state officials refused to prosecute the killers for murder, the federal government moved to charge 18 of the suspects with civil rights violations. Cecil Price, Klan Imperial Wizard Samuel Bowers, Alton Wayne Roberts, Jimmy Snowden, Billy Wayne Posey, Horace Barnette, and Jimmy Arledge were convicted. None served over six years.

Forty-one years after the murder, only one perpetrator, Edgar Ray Killen, was charged in Mississippi for his part in the crimes. In 2005 he was convicted of three counts of manslaughter and sentenced to 60 years. Killen died in prison in January 2018.

EMMETT TILL'S MOTHER Mamie insisted his mutilated body be displayed in an open casket at a public funeral in Chicago. "I wanted the world to see what they did to my baby." Tens of thousands of people viewed Emmett's body; magazines and newspapers around the country carried the photographs. The NAACP asked Mamie Till to tour the country relating the events of her son's life, death, and the trial of his murderers. It was one of the most successful fundraising campaigns the NAACP had ever known. Till's murder was seen as a catalyst for the next phase of the Civil Rights Movement.

Roy Bryant and his half-brother J.W. Milam, the murderers of Emmett Till, were acquitted by an all-white jury. They proudly admitted their guilt shortly after the trial. Emmett's accuser, Roy's wife Carolyn Bryant, admitted in 2008 that she had lied.

MOUNT PLEASANT BAPTIST Church was one of three predominantly black churches firebombed in April 2019 in St Landry Parrish, Louisiana. The alleged arsonist, Holden Matthews, the 21-year-old son of a deputy sheriff, is still awaiting trial. He has been charged with committing hate crimes, as well as arson.

AS A FINAL NOTE, the current controversy over voting rights and voter registration is reminiscent of one of the central issues in the struggle for Civil Rights. In 1955, fourteen Mississippi counties had no black voters. Three counties where blacks were in the majority had a total of 90 black voters. The Mississippi Freedom Summer Project of 1964 registered 63,000 black voters.



INSTALLATIONS

MAY 2019. At the New Orleans Museum of Art's opening of the "You Are Here: A Brief History of Photography and Place" exhibition curator Brian Piper discusses two large prints acquired for the museum's permanent collection from the *Ghosts of Segregation* project.



INSTALLATIONS

DECEMBER 2019. At the opening of the solo exhibition of *Ghosts of Segregation* at the New Orleans Photo Alliance Gallery, Rich was interviewed by Jennifer Williams, educational programming director for the New Orleans Museum of Art.