



**APPROVED**



my TIME IN THE DELTA  
**Journal**

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July 10, 2023

Day 1

My time in the  
Mississippi Delta ...

Humidity. Fields of Soybeans and  
Cornstalks. Classroom discussions  
on education - poverty - life -  
love - personal experiences -  
PASSIONS - rights - miracles -  
EVERYthing. The river. The  
riverbank full of drift wood,  
Seashells and quartz-y  
sandstone ... and pollution.  
PICTURES - of scenery. of ourselves.  
of each other. of the whole.  
The vacant town of Scott,  
which Miss Lee refers to as  
"Stepford." Eating catfish; I  
don't like catfish up north, but  
I like Mississippi catfish (apparently)  
Live Blues Music ... from Muddy  
Waters' great nephew. WHAT?!

so much in one day. We took a walk around campus after dinner to digest - both our food and the day.

Three hours later, I'm still chewing on remnants and pondering: how will my head and my heart ever survive the next 5.5 days if today has been so full?



# GROW AMBASSADORSHIP & LOVE OF PLACE



**GENERATIONAL TRAUMA =  
NOT TALKING = LOST  
HISTORY & KNOWLEDGE**



*"The people of the Delta fear God and the Mississippi, a saying goes. The river punishes with great destruction and rewards with great wealth." - Fatal Flood*



July 11, 2023  
Day 2

Down in the Delta. Deep, deep down - dig deep to find your roots ... and the Blues.

Divided even in death. Row upon row, name after name. Separated by color, country, or commandment.

And yet - united. Through our stories and strife. Our traditions. Our love of family and our desires to succeed, support, surpass and, often, to suppress.

The clichéd immigrant story rises again and again: divided neighborhoods, oppression, common ground, suppression, peace, truce, love, hate, everything and nothing.

The only true American Dream ... the reality of which is a



nightmare for so many.  
And for some, that  
bleeds out into the music  
played in the homes, the bars,  
the streets, the lives of the  
people living, breathing,  
surviving in the Delta.

But is it truly living  
when the religions, the cultures,  
the music are dying and  
leaving the Delta changed  
irrevocably?

What happens then?

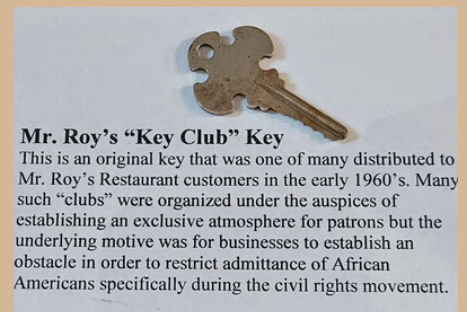


The real blues is  
connection - is powerful -  
is not for entertainment.



Only certain elements are going to  
live and certain elements are going to  
die.

That's the evolution of the culture.  
That's what has to happen.  
- Bill Abel



**Mr. Roy's "Key Club" Key**

This is an original key that was one of many distributed to Mr. Roy's Restaurant customers in the early 1960's. Many such "clubs" were organized under the auspices of establishing an exclusive atmosphere for patrons but the underlying motive was for businesses to establish an obstacle in order to restrict admittance of African Americans specifically during the civil rights movement.

"...that makes about as much  
sense as a sidesaddle on a hog." -  
Benjy Nelkin (on Jews not being  
on the side of Civil Rights)



July 12, 2023  
Day 3

Founders' Day! ... but what, exactly, was lost? And what did we find when we went on the search for it ... and who did we lose along the way?

The price of freedom. The price of fun. The price of a hard day's labor. Is it as simple as a pressed gold coin? Honest people? The devil's music? Can it all be found in the same place? We are definitely at a CROSSROADS on this topic ... among others...

Angel + Devil. Sinner + Saint. Witness + Accuser. One + the same too often. Hero. Activist. Genius. Mother. Daughter. Leader. Musician. Son. King.



Mounds of history and  
Soul heaped on platters of  
strife and desire to do better;  
be better; heal better. Marvel  
in greatness and build one  
another up.





WORKING CAN TO CAN'T  
*Frollickin'*  
HOUSES

*"If you were nobody on the job, you were somebody Sunday morning."*  
- Rev. David Matthews



"We love Mississippi. But Mississippi, years ago, didn't love us."  
- Charles Evers (brother of Medgar Evers)



*Chitlin' Circuit*

**"...the Delta drift..."**



July 13, 2023  
Day 4

Come home to the Delta. Let it sing sweetly to you of pretty things and lullabies... and whisper gently the truths of the night.

Stories. Histories. Herstories.  
OUR stories. Ones that bond. Ones that bind. Ones that burn us apart. They're all here in the pages of our lives; in the makeup of our DNA; on the blueprint of our souls. They are part judge and all jury of how we will live our lives - and whether we will come to regret or rejoice in it.

Sharing our stories with others becomes the connection that we need to survive. It's how we face trauma and how



We celebrate miracles - and how  
we learn to breathe in-between the  
two. Without connecting and  
sharing, we become robots and  
we are unable to maintain our  
humanity or our roots.

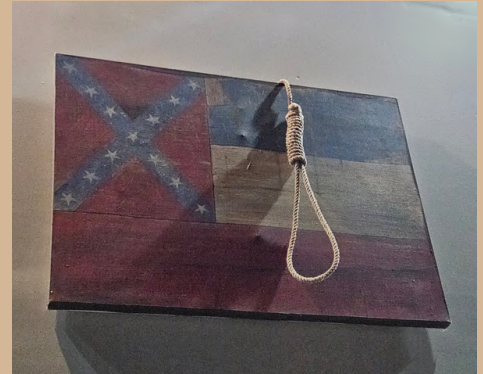
Roots are what we need to  
cultivate a better now as well  
as foster a future of tolerance,  
love, care, pride, and acceptance.

Who will be brave enough  
to plant the first seeds?



"WE CAN BE BITTER OR WE  
CAN BE BETTER."

- REV. WILLIE WILLIAMS



"Bad things happen when  
good people do NOTHING."  
- Maggie Daily Crawford



*"It's important to communicate. It's the  
best thing we can do. If there's a war, we  
can stop it, if we have a seat at the table."  
- Maggie Daily Crawford*



July 14, 2023  
Day 5

Soldiers prepare for battle, bloodshed, and bellowing. Humans are built for hugging, helping, and healing. When one is replaced by the other for too long or too often, the war turns internal instead of remaining external.

Intensity of emotion; exposure; feeling splayed open; raw. All at once, I'm a child overwhelmed by my feelings and am unable to do anything about or with them. I am broken. So I cry... and cry... and cry. How did it get this way? Why has it remained so? And why are others accepting of this way of life? I simply cannot process - so I tell tales of another life...



One with no sadness, no hurt, no  
ignorance, no violence, no differences.

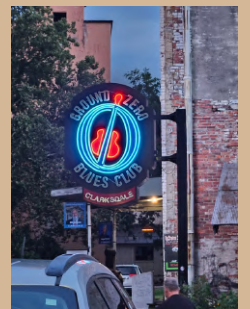
And yet... tears stream down  
my face, as the pain seeps in,  
and reality returns. Because there  
is no such place - and knowing  
all that I know, all that  
I have sought to understand,  
even my subconscious won't  
allow me to avoid the truth.  
Not ever again.

If change is gonna come, it  
must start with me.





"Between me and the other world there is an ever unasked question: "...How does it feel to be a problem?"...Leaving, then, the white world, I have stepped within the veil, raising it that you may view faintly its deeper recesses - the meaning of its religion, the passion of its human sorrow, and the struggle of its greater souls."  
- W.E.B. DuBois



July 15, 2023  
Day 6

Feel the rhythm. Find your groove. Make your mojo. Build the memories and strengthen the bonds - through sadness and hardships . . . and moments that light up the night like a birthday candle. Be a pocket of joy in someone's memory bank that earns infinite interest throughout the years.

Bittersweet. That's the overall mood of the day. As Alice stated, "People come and go so quickly here." The difference being that these people were aware the whole time their lives were being irrevocably changed.



I didn't need a physical representation of the past week of what we'd done to know I would be taking a piece of the Delta home with me - but I am thankful for it nonetheless. What I was more unprepared for was just how much of myself I'd be leaving here in the Delta when I board my plane on Monday.

Some people leave their hearts in San Francisco ... I'm leaving my soul (or a big portion of it) in Mississippi.

'Til next time,

Shauna





*Friendship is the golden thread that ties the heart of all the world.*  
*- John Evelyn*

