CRAWFISH BOTTOM

Recovering a Lost Kentucky Community

Douglas A. Boyd

FOREWORD BY
W. Fitzhugh Brundage

Crawfish Bottom

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For Jennie,
Charlotte,
Kathleen,
and
Eleanor Boyd

Contents

Illustrations

Series Editors' Foreword

In the field of oral history, Kentucky is a national leader. Over the past several decades, tens of thousands of its citizens have been interviewed. The Kentucky Remembered series brings into print the most important of those collections, with each volume focusing on a particular subject.

Oral history is, of course, only one type of source material. Yet by the very personal nature of recollection, hidden aspects of history are often disclosed. Oral sources provide a vital thread in the rich fabric that is Kentucky history.

Crawfish Bottom: Recovering a Lost Kentucky Community, the tenth volume in the series, focuses on the history and culture of a vibrant neighborhood within Kentucky's capital city, Frankfort. Through oral history interviews, Doug Boyd reclaims the stories of Crawfish Bottom and introduces readers to a lost-but-not-forgotten community, whose history has been told and retold by outsiders.

Oral history at its best not only preserves stories but also contextualizes and frames them in a historical context. Boyd brings the skills of an oral history theorist to these essential tasks as he analyzes the crosscurrents of race, class, and community in Crawfish Bottom, while also preserving an important segment of Frankfort's rich history. His work provides a framework for implementing similar studies in communities everywhere.

James C. Klotter
Terry L. Birdwhistell

Foreword

Scholars, writers, and poets have spilt gallons of ink musing about the "sense of place" that pervades the American South. This southern sense of place, alas, is more often asserted than demonstrated. A skeptic might point out that the people of Maine, New Mexico, Wyoming, Oklahoma, and every other region in the United States purportedly also have powerful attachments to place. So when we refer to a southern sense of place, what exactly do we have in mind? What distinguishes southerners' attachment to their place?

For many commentators, a sense of place is virtually innate and seemingly essential, as though it were in the blood at birth of those lucky enough to possess it. Paul Greenberg, a conservative columnist and editorialist in Arkansas, has written that sense of place has to do with "identity, with roots sunk deep not just in the land but in the language and look and feel, and maybe death, of a place. . . . Someone with a sense of place, all-informing and always present, . . . [is] anchored, secure, steady no matter which way the wind blows. In place. He may move, but he will not be moved." But this notion of being rooted, anchored, cemented in a place and in a community drastically simplifies the lived experience of place.

Douglas A. Boyd's *Crawfish Bottom: Recovering a Lost Kentucky Community* offers a much more compelling and sensitive meditation on place and its meaning(s). This book is a quietly ambitious work that, among other things, eloquently traces the ways that the residents of a community define their place and their relationship to it. While the book's subject is an obscure neighborhood in a small Kentucky city, it speaks to much more than local history. It provides a model of how we—historians, folklorists, local activists, geographers, residents—can conscientiously reconstruct and appreciate the meaning of place, even a place that has been physically erased from the landscape.

One of the pleasures of this book is its cumulative creativity. After reading the first few pages, I thought I might be about to settle

into a conventional oral history of urban renewal. (There is a small, poignant, but now familiar body of work that retells the tragic consequences of the wholesale destruction of communities in the name of urban renewal.) But *Crawfish Bottom* offers much more than that. Then I thought it might be a history of a colorful and vanished neighborhood. It is certainly that, but the book does many other things as well. And it does them with verve.

It is the rare multidisciplinary work that is more than a pastiche of ideas and approaches drawn from various fields of scholarship. *Crawfish Bottom* seamlessly weaves together history, folklore, and geography into an engaging, trenchant, and substantive whole. The book's insights will be of interest to anyone who is intrigued by the way a sense of community emerges and evolves over time. While providing a fascinating account of the shifting boundaries of Crawfish Bottom, Boyd makes the abstraction of the "social construction of place" come alive. He explains how the absence of defined boundaries to the neighborhood meant that residents of Frankfort could and did set the boundaries according to their diverse notions of class, race, and community. When they did so, the residents revealed the complex and even contradictory ways in which they fashioned and sustained their sense of place.

In short, Boyd lays bare the sinews of community identity to which many scholars allude, but seldom excavate as fully or with comparable care. It is a testament to Boyd's accomplishment that readers of *Crawfish Bottom*, who are most likely far removed in place and time from this little-known community, will develop a sense of—and an attachment to—a place that is now gone. By making this connection possible, Boyd reminds us of novelist William Faulkner's wise observation that a gifted observer can tease deep and enduring truths from a "little postage stamp of native soil."

W. Fitzhugh Brundage,
author of *The Southern Past:*
A Clash of Race and Memory

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I would like to thank several individuals for their guidance and assistance in creating this book. First and foremost, this book would not have been possible without Jim Wallace and those community members who were willing to be interviewed for the project to share their important stories. Jim Wallace's kindness, humility, and leadership have inspired me, and he is truly the "Luke Skywalker" of this story.

The Kentucky Oral History Commission, a program of the Kentucky Historical Society (KHS), first hired me and taught me much about oral history. The KHS has been an invaluable resource for me, housing the majority of the archival collections used for this book and employing many of the helpful and talented professionals who assisted in its creation. First, I'd like to thank Kim Lady Smith for giving me my start in archives and oral history. For help with the archival collections, many thanks go to Jen Duplaga, Gretchen Haney, Lynne Hollingsworth, Sarah Milligan, Nathan Prichard, Brenda Smith, Charlene Smith, and Mary Winter. Thanks also to Tom Appleton for editorial assistance while this was still a dissertation.

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Finally, I thank my family and friends, who have been so supportive over the years. Specifically, I am grateful to my parents, Joe and Barbara Boyd, who supported me and gave me courage to follow my academic dreams.

Introduction

Reputation as History

Craw was a small neighborhood in North Frankfort, Kentucky, located on fifty acres of swampy land along the Kentucky River. Outsiders traditionally viewed Craw as the "bad" part of town, based on a long list of deeply embedded historical associations: violence, poverty, corruption, dirt, saloons, pool halls, whiskey, cockfights, disease, murders, gambling, bootlegging, prostitution, slums, and crime. This perception emerged in the decades following the Civil War and stigmatized Craw and its residents accordingly, until the neighborhood's destruction at the hand of urban renewal in the late 1960s and the early 1970s. Even following the "slum clearance," Craw's reputation was deeply ingrained in Frankfort's public perception of the neighborhood. In the minds of outsiders, this negative reputation was not only associated with dilapidated buildings or flooded streets but personalized, as it was directly applied to the former residents as well. As former Frankfort policeman G. T. Gill stated in a 1974 newspaper interview, "They were a rough class of people, who didn't mind killing or being killed."[1]

At least four blocks of the Craw neighborhood were originally included in James Wilkinson's initial layout of Frankfort, Kentucky, in 1786. Craw's boundaries were never considered official in that they varied by period and perspective. Lying along the northwestern corner of the city, Craw was informally bordered by the Kentucky River and Wilkinson Avenue to the west, the railroad tracks at Broadway to the south, Washington Street to the east, and Mero Street to the north, with Long Lane, Gashouse, and Catfish alleys and Clinton and Blanton streets making up the interior.[2]

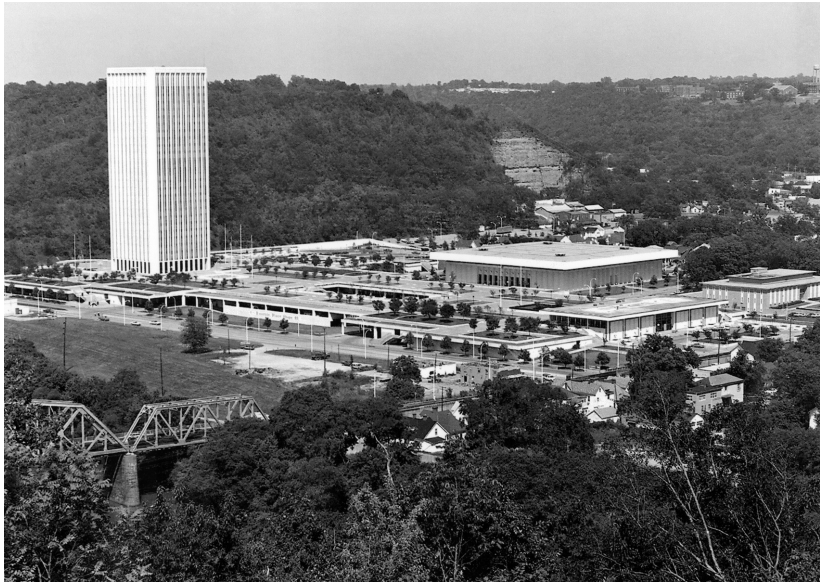
Some called it "the Craw," or just "Craw," while others later called it "the Bottom," or just "Bottom." Each nickname derives from "Crawfish Bottom," an earlier name allegedly recalling the

presence of crayfish along the river. Recurrent flooding left the lowland soggy and unfit for construction, and little development took place in that section of the city before the Civil War. But war's end brought freed men and women seeking inexpensive housing for their families. Increasing waves of immigration brought together poor families who could not afford housing in other parts of Frankfort. In time, Craw also became home to numerous indigent families from around the state whose mothers or fathers, husbands or wives, served sentences in the state penitentiary located just two blocks east of the neighborhood.

Until the 1960s, social boundaries contained Frankfort's black residents to specific areas that included Normal Heights in the vicinity of Kentucky State Normal School (now Kentucky State University), rural communities such as Green Hill and Hickman Hill, various blocks of South Frankfort north of Fourth Street and east of Logan Street, and the portions of North Frankfort informally known as Craw or Bottom. The racial makeup of Craw, in 1956, was 60 percent black and 40 percent white. However, despite the large presence of white residents in the neighborhood, many white outsiders perceived the area as primarily a "black neighborhood."

In many ways, the destructive flood of 1937 marked the beginning of the end of Craw as a neighborhood. Though the residents had experienced the devastations of flooding before, the 1937 flood pushed many beyond their limits. Tired of repeated disasters, some residents simply chose not to return to their homes, leaving many neighborhood buildings abandoned. In the years following, the neighborhood rapidly declined. The closing of the state reformatory in 1937 resulted in a major population decline as 2,273 inmates were relocated, along with their families.[3] Although reform of the neighborhood's perceived deficiencies and imperfections had been publicly solicited by Frankfort residents since the 1870s, the creation of the Frankfort Slum Clearance and Redevelopment Agency in March 1955 marked the official beginning of the end for the neighborhood.

The Frankfort League of Women Voters further provoked slum clearance efforts in 1955, when a study revealed that more than 22 percent of the arrests made in Frankfort in 1954 occurred in a three-block area of the neighborhood, that 14 percent of Franklin County's victims of tuberculosis resided there, that 11 percent of fire alarms originated there, that almost 50 percent of those treated for venereal diseases lived in Craw, and finally, that the neighborhood generated



View of the entire plaza on the location of the neighborhood following urban renewal (prior to the construction of the hotel). Fort Hill in the background. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

only 2 percent of Frankfort's property tax revenue.[4] The 1956 "Structure and Family Survey" conducted by Scruggs and Hammond, a Lexington city-planning firm, compounded the neighborhood's negative image by emphasizing the overall lack of running water, bathing facilities, and furnaces in a large percentage of the neighborhood dwellings. The report concluded that the majority of residents qualified for low-rent public housing.[5] The slum clearance agency wrote dramatic descriptions of its findings: "In the worst part of Craw the houses were mere shacks, built of flimsy scrap material which kept out neither rats . . . mice, nor misery."[6] After a long and painfully bureaucratic process, urban renewal destroyed nearly every building within the fifty acres once known as "Crawfish Bottom."

Folklorist and historian Charles Joyner writes that "all history is local history somewhere. . . . Still, no history, properly understood, is of merely local significance."[7] In many ways, the story of this neighborhood, in the lowlands of Frankfort, Kentucky, fits into a larger, national context of community struggles before, during, and after the social, economic, and psychological devastations of urban renewal.

View of the plaza fountain and the State Office Tower on the location of the neighborhood following urban renewal. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

Labeled "slums" by city officials, countless poor, urban, and usually African American neighborhoods were systematically destroyed, scattering their inhabitants and replacing old dwellings and small businesses with commercial, industrial, and government buildings. Many of these areas were also working-class neighborhoods situated on flood-prone, low-lying land adjacent to a river and often referred to as "bottoms." Kansas City's "West Bottoms," an industrial neighborhood situated along the Missouri, Cincinnati's "Bottoms" district on the Ohio River, Alexandria's "Bottoms" neighborhood on the Potomac, Columbus's Franklinton (otherwise known as "The Bottoms") situated on the Scioto and Olentangey rivers—all were also once working-class communities labeled "slums" by proponents of urban renewal and subsequently cleared between the 1950s and the 1970s.

The North Frankfort Urban Renewal Project's "slum clearance" —originally proposed as a five-year project with a tentative budget

of $2 million—ultimately took fourteen years and more than $10 million to complete. Urban renewal destroyed 345 buildings and displaced 369 families. The Capital Plaza complex, consisting of an office tower, a parking garage, a YMCA, a civic center, and a federal building, rose from Craw's ashes. The public housing once promised to the residents of the neighborhood, on the other hand, fell dramatically short of city leaders' guarantees. Craw residents scattered throughout Frankfort, and the community known as Craw or the Bottom became a memory. However, Craw's reputation did not die when the buildings were knocked down. In fact, following urban renewal, the neighborhood's reputation thrived.

Historical examination of the years between 1870 and 1918 reveals strong evidence that Craw had earned, at least in part, its early reputation for crime, violence, gambling, prostitution, and poverty. The traces of historical data regarding the early perceptions and history of the neighborhood that appeared in Frankfort's newspapers and the few brief, published paragraphs written by academic and local historians primarily document Craw's criminal and impoverished character. The neighborhood's bad reputation did not simply appear prima facie. It evolved through many years of extrinsic and intrinsic perceptions of symbolic events and individuals. Historians and local newspaper articles presented a monolithic and limited viewpoint privileging the perspective of neighborhood outsiders, focusing only on the extraordinary: people and events that rose above the routine performance of everyday life in the neighborhood. The resultant documentation mostly focused on the numerous criminal incidents that occurred, the dreadful poverty of the residents, and the repeated flooding of the neighborhood. The residents of this neighborhood observed the same extraordinary events and individuals presented by these narrowly focused newspaper accounts; they knew the long history of civic and moral sins committed within the neighborhood. However, residents perceived Craw from a perspective different from the view shaped by the reputation imposed upon them. Residents witnessed firsthand the unfolding of everyday life combining in the routine formation of community. They raised and educated children in Craw; went to work to earn their survival in Craw; passed the time with friends and family in Craw; worshipped, laughed, loved, and died and mourned together in Craw. Dominant reputations arise, however, creating the perception of consensus, thus reinforcing the views initially responsible for their existence.

Through time, journalists and historians publicly represented the dominant reputation of Craw in print and, through repetition, created the perception of official truth. Thus, perception became reality as this negative reputation emerged as the neighborhood's central historical narrative and shaped public and historical memory.

The communication of life stories, remembrances, and experiences among community members contributes to a growing body of shared individual memories. When experiences and perceptions move from the mind of the individual to the shared memories of the collective, a bond is forged based on these shared memories. From the repetition and reconstruction of shared memories emerges a sense of collective meaning, interpretation, and identity, which shapes and defines the worldviews of the participants involved. The result is the creation of public or community memories.[8] The concept of community depends on much more than close geographic proximity, yet the physical closeness that a neighborhood provides presents a tangible context wherein the intangible constructs of community have an opportunity to thrive. The community as a construct, in the context of this study, greatly affects not only the ways in which former residents of the neighborhood and the Frankfort general public perceive their present realities, but also how they collectively perceive their past.[9]

Much has been written about the role of collective memory in the study of history. More recently, scholars from numerous disciplines have brought the complicated issue of "social memory studies" to the forefront of historical and social scientific dialogue.[10] The notion of a collectivity, a community, or a nation "remembering" is indeed complex and problematic, for individual memory in itself is an elusive construct. Some scholars contend that only individuals can "remember." Amos Funkenstein states, "Just as a nation cannot eat or dance, neither can it speak or remember."[11] However, from within the complicated structures of community, in this case a neighborhood, there clearly emerges a multitude of identities assigned to this neighborhood—collective identities based on *patterns of memory*—patterns based on both personal experiences and shared social perceptions of past symbolic realities.

Historian John Bodnar writes, "Public memory is shaped . . . by a combination of both official and vernacular expressions."[12] Close examination of the dynamics between dominant historical memory and the subordinated social memories of the former residents of this

neighborhood reveals a power struggle for dominance, a struggle for permanence in the sphere of public memory. For a very long time, public memory in Frankfort heavily emphasized the official expressions that emerged from historical memory and ignored the less vocal, vernacular expressions emanating from social memory. Public memory is malleable and dynamic and subject to conscious and unconscious manipulations. For example, the physical destruction of Craw was not enough for Frankfort's city leaders. White businessman, community leader, and vocal urban renewal advocate Farnham Dudgeon pointedly commented in 1965, "Today there are too many people thinking of the area as 'the Craw.' We have to overcome this stigma. . . . When our kids grow up they will never know 'the Bottoms' were there."[13]

In order for public memory to be replaced, various processes must first be installed that function to induce a social forgetfulness resulting in a state of "collective amnesia."[14] Overemphasis of the more sensationalized historical or official memory in both the academic and the public spheres suppressed the memories of the collectivity that actually experienced life in the neighborhood. Dudgeon hoped that public memory would eventually forget the "stigma" of that neighborhood. And he was not alone: city leaders named the Civic Center eventually built in the heart of what was once Craw the Farnham Dudgeon Center, in commemoration of the businessman's aspirations to eradicate public memories of Craw.

Reclaiming Public Memory

In 1991, historical and public memories of Craw converged when James E. Wallace, working on a master's degree in history at the University of Kentucky, conducted twenty-five oral history interviews primarily with black former residents of the neighborhood. Wallace, a white individual employed in a prominent position at the Kentucky Historical Society, had little ethnographic training. However, he diligently researched the neighborhood and its history prior to conducting interviews. Once in the field, he made his intentions very clear—to use oral history interviews to document the history of this section of Frankfort and its community from the perspective of its residents, to dislodge and overturn negative outsider perceptions of this community in public memory, and to uncover and report the tragic injustices of urban renewal. In his interview with former

resident Maggie Knott, Wallace declared, "I'm trying to get an accurate picture of what life was like and what happened to a people that I feel got used, abused, and pushed out."[15]

Wallace wrote several papers for graduate courses using his research on Craw. Upon completion of his degree, with note cards and a slide projector in tow, Jim Wallace and his stories about Frankfort's old Bottom district became quite popular on Frankfort's local lecture circuit. He spoke dozens of times to local organizations, from civic clubs to genealogical societies, and over time his audiences grew. During this time, Frankfort's local cable television station videotaped two of his presentations and has since frequently rebroadcast the programs.

Due to the constraints of human memory, Wallace's interviews center on people and events associated with the neighborhood between the 1920s and the 1960s, primarily focusing on individuals and their relationship with the surrounding community. Public memory emerges from these interviews, revealing a distinct identity that clearly separated Craw from the rest of Frankfort. In many ways, it was that identity that led to the neighborhood's eventual destruction. Saloons like the Blue Moon, the Peach Tree Inn, the Sky Blue Inn, and the Tiptoe Inn thrived throughout the 1960s. And various individuals—prostitutes like Ida Howard and "Mountain Mary," and notorious "bad men" like Alex Gordon and local legend John Fallis, crowned the "King of Craw"—emerge in the interviews as the main characters in these narrative performances of community reconstruction. In one of Wallace's conversations with former resident Henry Sanders, the neighborhood's separatist reputation came up easily:

> *Sanders:* And many times, if you was visiting somebody out of town, they would always say, "How's Craw?" or "How's the Bottom coming along?" or something like that. They'd been to Frankfort before.
> *Wallace:* It had a reputation that extended beyond Frankfort.
> *Sanders:* Yeah.[16]

But the oral history evidence reveals more than just the reputation of a poor, working-class neighborhood in a small-sized American city. Jim Wallace sought to find an alternate version of history that would reveal Craw as a community of persons—a real place filled with real people, a locale that transcended its own seedy reputation.

For the former residents of Craw, the lingering bitterness of the damage done to them by urban renewal clearly shaped their memories and thus their oral history narratives, both personal and collective, which they had not relinquished despite the availability of more captivating, perhaps more romantic narratives that had been perpetuated in outsider public memory. Margaret Ellis showed great disdain for the buildings that currently occupy the land that used to be her neighborhood:

> *Ellis:* See, we're all very religious, and we're liable yet to still get to live and to see them all washed over that wall down there [laughter—Wallace]. We still believe in our black heritage. . . . We still believe there is a God.
> *Wallace:* And if there is, it will wash that whole thing away.[17]

Mary Helen Berry held a similar view of the buildings that now stand where her home once stood: "And we was so in hopes . . . the state office building . . . would sink. . . . sink on down. And . . . down there on the corner of Wilkinson Street . . . we'd say, 'Look at the building sink because they took it away from us.' It was sad the way we had to go through that."[18]

Frankfort's experience with urban renewal was largely congruent with national efforts toward revitalization, which often fell "far short of expectations."[19] Frankfort city officials urged neighborhood residents to trust the process and "put your faith in your elected officials." The mayor at the time admitted that although some may suffer, "the whole city should not continue to be blighted just because a few will be hurt."[20] During a slum clearance board meeting, Alice Simpson, a black neighborhood resident, clearly articulated that "the people think something is being done to them, not for them."[21]

One major component of Wallace's interviews focuses on the chronology of urban renewal from the neighborhood residents' perspective. Wallace traces the process, from the initial surveys conducted by the slum clearance agencies to the public hearings, the fiscal and political wrangling, and finally the perceived failure of city leaders to provide adequate housing for the neighborhood's former residents, who were eventually displaced. During urban renewal, the city of Frankfort for the most part ignored the point of view of protesting neighborhood residents. Jim Wallace's oral history project encouraged former residents to express their feelings regarding

urban renewal and their subsequent displacement. Wallace, for example, asked Mary Helen Berry about her neighborhood's resistance efforts:

Wallace: Well, did you all fight it, try to fight back?
Berry: A lot of them went there and didn't want to sell their home; but . . . you don't fight the law. The law is it.
Wallace: Well, there were some public hearings, one at Mayo-Underwood, I think. . . . Did you go to any of those?
Berry: No, because I say it was people that owned property. And I said we didn't own no property. There wasn't no use of us going, because we had been told that we were going to have to leave.
Wallace: Yeah. . . . [One] of the things that property owners did [was to hire] some lawyers.
Berry: They did. A lot of them did.
Wallace: But nothing ever came of that? Do you know . . . why?
Berry: Uh-huh. . . .
Wallace: I've read the names J. S. Carroll and a man by the name of Julian Knippenberg, and I've read quotes in the paper. They came in. They went to the fiscal court. They went to the city council. . . . They made all these statements like, "This is wrong and we're going to fight it."
Berry: But they didn't.[22]

In a national context, urban renewal opened up suburban opportunities for whites and left very few options for African Americans. Forced from their homes downtown, black residents had scattered choices in terms of places they could live. Jim Wallace's interviews all eventually emphasize the pain that accompanied the breakdown of community when the residents of the neighborhood relocated throughout the city of Frankfort. Despite the racist undertones of urban renewal in American history, Wallace's oral history project instead focuses on the concept of the lost neighborhood as a community. Each interviewee was asked about prejudice and segregation in Frankfort. Most responded with an anecdote or two recounting an incident of discrimination; however, the issues of race and segregation played a very small part in this project. Since Wallace made clear from the outset of each interview his aim of deepening and rehabilitating the general public's image of Craw—to banish

it from public memory as merely a violent slum—interviewer and informant together constructed a new text, one in which many of the symbols of community life could be remembered and reframed, perhaps nostalgically, into celebratory memories of the neighborhood as a friendly, family-oriented, and cohesive community that paid little attention to race as a construct, at least for this particular articulation of memory.

After Wallace had completed the oral history project, eighteen interviews were transcribed, and the tapes were deposited in the oral history archive at the Kentucky Historical Society. In May 1998, my position as the society's oral history archivist placed me in everyday contact with its collections, including the Craw collection. My interest in Craw heightened after I attended one of Jim Wallace's public presentations on the topic. While closely reading the transcripts of his interviews, I found myself focusing on the unfolding process of a community, led by an interviewer, clearly restructuring and reclaiming public memories pertaining to a neighborhood and its members. Jim Wallace overtly utilized oral history in order to give voice to neighborhood residents and to consciously contest and then counter the dominant versions of public memory of the neighborhood. Because Wallace's interviews all contain a consistent line of questioning, patterns in the structure of the resultant oral history narratives quickly emerge. Individual narratives consistently manifest common elements that together form a larger tradition. Reconstructing the life story of Craw thus organizes community symbols and "sites of memory" that create a sense of reconnection to former residents' own perceived identities—identities once disconnected from dominant public memory—resulting in what linguist Charlotte Linde refers to as "coherence" with regard to interviewees' personal relationships with this remembered community.[23]

Though I conducted a few follow-up interviews for the project, this book is primarily based on the archived oral history interviews conducted by Wallace in 1991. Using an already produced, archived oral history project required the interpretation of interviews conducted by another interviewer. Because of my absence at the original interview events, I lacked much relevant contextual information observable only from physical presence and participation in those events. In addition, it was difficult to interpret accurately subtle nuances of speech and meaning from a silent transcript. Therefore, the original audio recordings, in addition to

interview transcripts, proved invaluable for reconstructing context, albeit in partial form.

Not being a participant-observer "out in the field" with a microphone and recorder in hand meant interpreting interviews conducted by an interviewer who carried his own agenda into the field. Alessandro Portelli writes, "The control of historical discourse remains firmly in the hands of the historian."[24] Jim Wallace selected individuals to be interviewed for his project and developed those questions and discussions that he wished to make salient, strictly managing the flow of information in his interviews. At times, he chose to move the conversation away from sensitive topics, even in interviews in which those topics seem to be otherwise freely discussed. Wallace then, as interviewer, fully participates in the process of the interview and thus emerges as an integral component in the resultant documentation of public memory. In many ways, the versions of public memory expressed in these interviews are significantly impacted by his participation. Interviewers always play a crucial role in framing, structuring, selecting, and ignoring various potential components of an interview, either consciously or unconsciously. Thus, the resultant narrative is always a collaborative construction. Only through careful consideration of the participation of both interviewer and the interviewee can the historic ethnographer effectively navigate realms of meaning and understanding in the oral history interview text.

Within the typical oral history interview, people frequently divulge personal details of their lives, as well as details of the lives of others. Within the context of this particular project, interviewees discussed sensitive subjects including violence, crime, and prostitution, often mentioning personal names in close association with these controversial topics. Working with archived materials necessitates a conscious reminder that these names, which were freely discussed and recorded, signify very real people, with friends, families, and personal legacies. These people must be treated with respect and sensitivity despite the lack of a personal, conventionally ethnographic relationship.

The great Irish cultural geographer E. Estyn Evans once noted, "Nothing less than the whole of the past is needed to explain the present."[25] Evans understood that all historical narratives are fated for incompleteness; the "whole of the past" is unattainable. Yet oral history evidence can greatly supplement and enhance the historical record and, when necessary, stand alone as a credible construction

of the past. Folklorist and oral historian Lynwood Montell's classic work *The Saga of Coe Ridge,* published in 1968, demonstrates the usefulness and credibility of oral history in the reconstruction of an African American community that lacked written records. Montell at the time described oral history as an "untapped reservoir" in American history and referred to the "numberless" communities whose histories would remain unwritten unless historians turned to the "spoken word."[26] Without the alternative perspective generated from oral history narratives, dominant public memory of Craw would have remained a limited, one-sided, and thus incomplete version of the past.

Every person has a story, and every story is different. Various people perceive the same events and experiences through unique lenses of interpretation. In addition, individual memories fade as time passes, and sometimes memories conflict. However, this complexity places a greater sense of purpose and responsibility on the social functioning of a community's collective memory. Memories of the past give groups their identities, and the experience of remembering, together, commemorates that which they remember and reinforces this shared identity through time. Folklorist Henry Glassie writes, "History is the essence of the idea of place."[27] This history is accomplished by understanding how the former residents of Craw, somewhat unified by their memories, reimagined and framed their community's history—and how this process influenced their sense of place—especially when the "place" so crucial to their personal identities was gone.

Public dissemination of Wallace's research has changed the way Frankfort's citizens remember Craw, both inside and outside the former neighborhood. This study examines the process of reconstructing social memories and individual negotiations between official and vernacular memory as they coalesce in the oral history interview as an expression of public memory and community identity. In addition, I examine the dynamic role of the interviewer, in this case Jim Wallace, as he uses an oral history project to consciously counter dominant perceptions of memory. Chapter 1, "The 'Lower' Part of the City," presents the early origins of the neighborhood, as it was depicted in print, and the resultant formation of historical memory. Chapter 2, "Defining Craw," explores the intersection of meaning and neighborhood identity as former residents use the oral history interview to define and frame spatial identities in the narrative

expression of memories of Craw. Chapter 3, "Contesting Public Memory," examines the interplay between dominant and subordinated memories and the role of Wallace's interviews in the ongoing struggle between public memories and historical permanence. Wallace's nostalgic impulse is countered in chapter 4, "The Other Side of the Tracks," as residents themselves celebrate the components of historical memory Jim Wallace was attempting to counter. Finally, chapter 5, "The King of Craw," features narrative recollections about the life of John Fallis, a symbolic outlaw, in the narrative expression of both official and vernacular expressions of public memory.

Underlying this study is a reexamination of the narrative construction of individual and community memories and their roles in shaping the perception of social and symbolic aspects of a once-physical place.[28] For almost one hundred years, dominant, outsider public memory of Craw focused on the neighborhood's negative reputation. James Wallace's oral history interviews consciously reconstitute this community's cultural frame of reference and create a narrative articulation of a reconstructed community in memory that counters dominant, traditional versions of the past. This book explores how Jim Wallace's oral history project commemorates a neighborhood that has now disappeared from maps, but not from memory.

Chapter One

The "Lower" Part of the City

Very few documentary records exist that allow us to interpret the earliest periods of the neighborhood known as "Craw" or "the Bottom," the poorest section of Frankfort. However, existing sources suggest that from its inception Craw captured and sustained the Frankfort public's fascination. Few academic historians have written about Craw, and those who have rarely expand beyond brief, tangential references, and primary sources are rare. The relatively few existing newspaper accounts that reference Craw mostly chronicle crime, violence, flooding, rampant alcohol use, and poverty. Nevertheless, this small corpus of early newspaper references and articles contains crucial sources for setting up the historical context and interpreting Craw's earliest years.

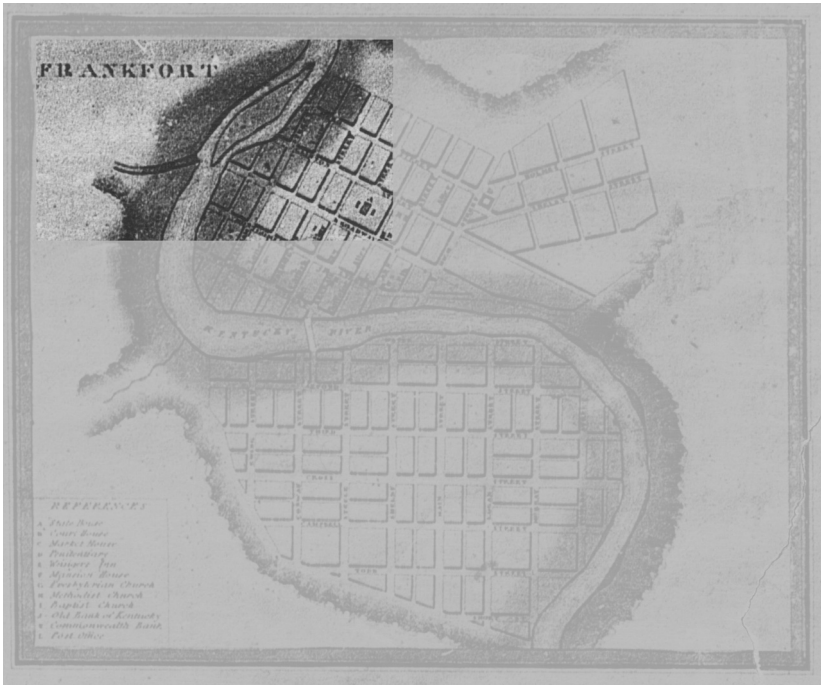
Since the neighborhood is no longer physically available for analysis, this chapter chronologically and thematically examines the trajectory of Craw's life and death by reaching back to a memory embodied no longer in human persons, but in print, exploring this neighborhood between the time of its birth in the early 1870s and the first premature declaration of its demise in the shadows of Prohibition in 1918. In this period, the "lower" part of the city of Frankfort first began to demonstrate the characteristic traits that would eventually define it and serve as rationalizations for its reform and eventual destruction. During the 1870s, Frankfort newspapers provide the earliest historical references to the neighborhood as "Crawfish Bottom," "Craw," or "the Craw."[1] The use of these distinct tags by the city's news organizations demonstrates emerging patterns of meaning inextricably linked to these unofficial, vernacular terms representing this neighborhood.

The Lowlands

The neighborhood occupied fifty acres of low-lying land along the Kentucky River. In 1897, local historian Jennie Chinn Morton described the land that eventually became Craw as having once been a racecourse for training horses and grounds for circus shows.[2] In celebration of Frankfort's centennial in 1886, a local newspaper, the *Capital,* conducted several interviews with longtime local citizens and printed their reminiscences of Frankfort. The eight pages of this special edition present some of those interviews, which offer a few clues about the early days of the land that would later be called "Craw." Residents described this section of town as unsuitable for building, due to the regularity of flooding by the Kentucky River; one noted that when General James Wilkinson was stationed there in 1795–1796, the land was a "pond of stagnant water." Wilkinson reportedly dug ditches to drain the land "so as to very much improve the premises, and destroy the noxious effluvia, thereby preserving the health of the citizens."[3] Captain Sanford Goins narrated his childhood memories of Frankfort during the 1820s: "What today is so well known as 'Craw' was a large lake or pond of water."[4]

Prior to the Civil War, settlement in Craw had remained relatively sparse. In 1851, the legislature voted to move the gas works

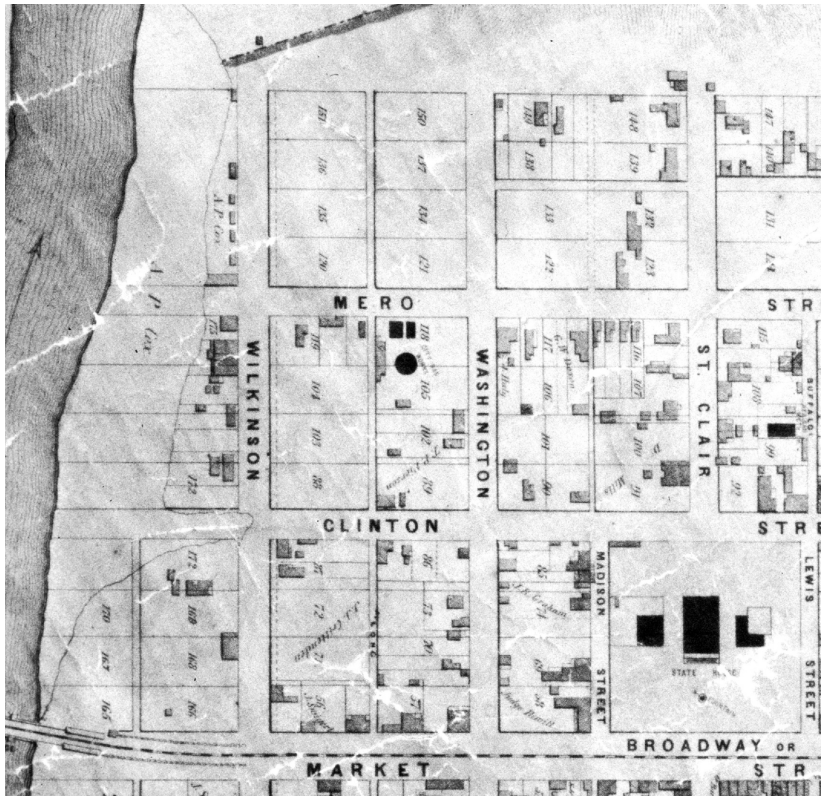
Frankfort in 1796 as depicted on the map "Road from Limestone to Frankfort in the state of Kentucky." Plate #22 from Georges Henri Victor Collot's *Voyages dans l'Amérique septentrionale,* 1826. The map was drawn in 1796 but not published until 1826. Courtesy of W. S. Hoole Special Collections, University of Alabama Libraries.



The neighborhood in 1818 as depicted on the map "Kentucky: Reduced from Doct. Luke Munsell Map 1818 and 1834—Inset of Frankfort" (as indicated by added screening). Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

from the northwest corner of Capitol Square to the corner of Mero and Washington streets. However, the effects of the emissions—"the most villainous compound of foul scents"—proved to be more severe than city officials expected.[5] The legislature subsequently declared the gas works a "nuisance" and moved it to the edge of town, what would later become Craw.

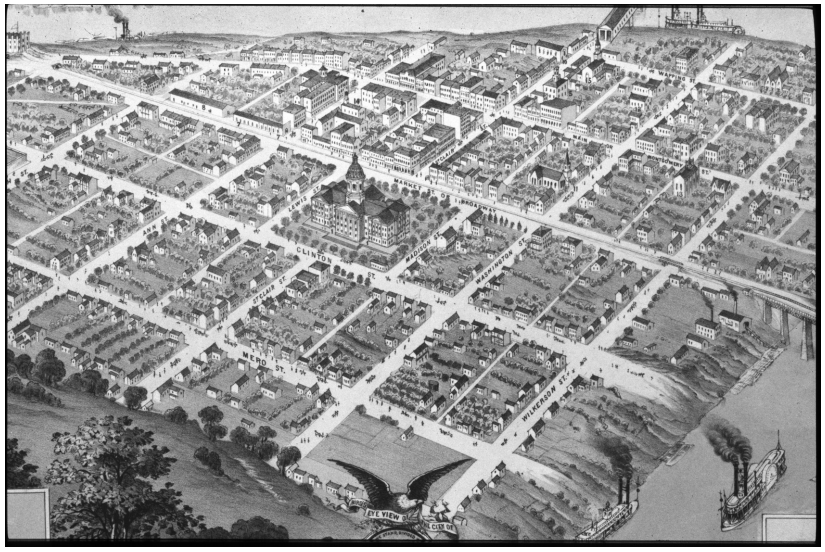
According to available maps and images of Frankfort, the two vacant blocks of the northwestern part of town remained mostly vacant until the 1870s. The 1854 Hart and Mapother map of Frankfort (see page 18) shows the northwestern-most block, then framed by Wilkinson and Mero streets, almost completely vacant, although occupation of the blocks adjacent to Fort Hill increased to the east, away from the river. The Hart and Mapother map does show some settlement along Fort Hill, but Hill Street still lacked municipal sanction. The 1871 Birdseye map of Frankfort (see page 19) visually supports this development pattern, with the viewable city blocks



The neighborhood in 1854 as depicted on the map "The City of Frankfort, Franklin Co. KY: Hart and Mapother Map, 1854." Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

nearest the river in the northwest corner still relatively vacant.[6] In the early 1870s, rapid development of the land to the north of Mero Street formed the Hill Street blocks of Craw on the tracts of land adjacent to the steep wall of Fort Hill on the north, and the 1880 census reveals the civic creation of Hill Street adjacent to Fort Hill.

The 1882 Frankfort atlas visually displays dwellings on each tract of land on the south side of Hill Street between Wilkinson and St. Clair streets. The Frankfort city directory for 1884–1885 demonstrates Hill Street's development, with dwellings appearing mainly on the south side of the street, from the river to the workhouse; by the mid-1890s the development of dwellings had reached capacity



Northwest Frankfort as depicted in "Birdseye View of the City of Frankfort the Capital of Kentucky, 1871." Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

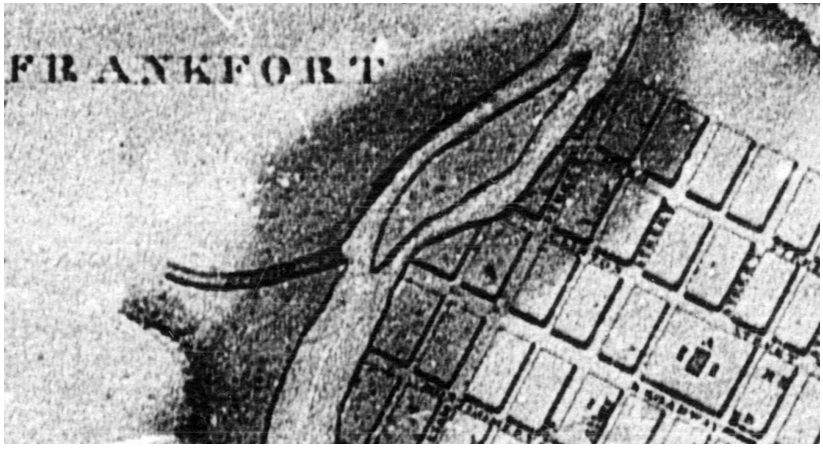
on both sides of the street. The atlas also confirms the rapid settlement of all three east-west blocks north of Mero Street moving away from the river in the early to mid-1870s.

According to historian Carl E. Kramer, the Civil War's end brought the arrival of former slaves to Frankfort, seeking homes for their families. The land in Craw was inexpensive, so between 1865 and 1880 construction commenced on humble dwellings for rental to blacks—always a slight majority—and poor whites.[7] The evidence clearly demonstrates a population explosion in the neighborhood in the years following the Civil War. Frankfort's African American population grew from 1,282 in 1860 to 2,335 in 1870—an 82.1 percent increase. Between 1870 and 1880, the black population rose from 2,335 to 3,199, representing another 39 percent increase.[8] The 1880 census lists 173 "colored" residents and only 18 white residents living on Hill Street. The 1884–1885 Frankfort city directory lists 69 percent of the households in Craw's core boundaries as "colored." Craw also housed a large portion of Frankfort's immigrant population, predominately German and Irish. The 1884–1885 directories list professions among the black population as diverse as teachers, Capitol Hotel waiters, porters, drivers, and general and domestic

(Above) Early photo of the neighborhood from the "Slums of Frankfort" series. Photograph no. 3, 1913, Wilkinson Street. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society. *(Below)* Early photo of the neighborhood from the "Slums of Frankfort" series. Photograph no. 8, 1913. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

laborers. Among the white populace in Craw at the time, occupations included mainly general laborers, those who worked in the nearby river mills, and a few policemen.

At different times in history this neighborhood possessed many labels that conveyed varying sets of meanings and associations to different groups of people. In the years immediately following the Civil War, newspapers still referred to this part of town as the "lower part of the city." "We regret to learn," one newspaper reported in 1876, "that a portion of the inhabitants of the lower part of the city, near the foot of Clinton and Mero street, were in some danger of having the lower stories of their dwellings invaded by the rising freshet."[9] Also during the 1870s, Frankfort newspaper articles began to call for the implementation of municipal improvements for the "lower" part of town. Public requests for improvements focused mostly on the lack of street lighting and the poor condition of the area's sidewalks and roads. One 1877 article complained, "The darkness back of Mero Street, even on moonlit nights is almost impenetrable." In addition to noting the street's bad sidewalks and dangerous crossings, the article suggests that "a few lamps, distributed with good judgment, would help that part of the city very materially."[10] Another article that year stated that in order to fully appreciate darkness, one should travel "beyond Mero Street . . . after nightfall when there is no moon.[11] "Beyond Mero Street" referred to the newly populated



Fish Trap Island in 1818 as depicted on the map "Kentucky: Reduced from Doct. Luke Munsell Map 1818 and 1834 (Inset of Frankfort)." Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

Early photo of the neighborhood from the "Civic League" series. "Exterior of Residences," 1913. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

Hill Street block between Fort Hill and Mero Street, primarily inhabited by African American families in the 1870s and 1880s.

Earlier in the 1870s, newspaper articles had also begun to associate this part of town with the less-desirable elements of society: "Sabbath Desecration—We are requested to call the attention of the proper officers of the city to the fact that a motley congregation of a hundred or more boys and men, white and black, assemble every Sunday on the sandbar, in the rear of Scott's tenement houses, on [the] Kentucky river, within the city limits, where they shamefully desecrate the Sabbath, and horrify all decent people by shouting, racing, swearing, gaming in many ways, and committing all manner of acts of Satanic deviltry."[12] John L. Scott's tenement houses on Wilkinson Street, between Mero and Clinton, behind which such offenses occurred, backed up to the river just above Fish Trap Island, otherwise known as "the sandbar."[13] In the early years of Frankfort, "an assortment of snags, sandbars, rock shoals, [and] submerged islands" made the Kentucky River very difficult to navigate.[14] Fish Trap Island, a significant obstacle to river navigation at that time, measured nine hundred yards in length and rose sixty inches above

Early photo of the neighborhood from the "Civic League" series. "Views in Poor Settlements/Black Family in Front of Residences," 1913. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

the water.[15] Its size and its relative isolation from the rest of the city made it a semiprotected place in which to violate civic and moral virtues. In addition to civic sins like gambling, and religious sins like "Sabbath desecration," reports of violent crimes within the confines of the "lower" part of Frankfort also became more prevalent. One 1875 article reported three "culled gentamen" who had been placed in the "cooler" for a violent confrontation that had broken out in "the lower part of the city."[16]

In or around 1877, this part of town earned a more specific name, distinguishing it from the rest of Frankfort, as the city's newspapers less frequently used generic, spatially oriented terminology to describe the area. A February 1877 article in the *Weekly Yeoman* reported that "Esquire McDonald investigated a breach of the peace among some colored folk from 'Craw-fish Bottom.'"[17] In August 1877 a piece announced that "the Alcalde of Craw Fish Bottom has recovered from the effects of a splinter, and is now on post."[18] That year the same newspaper also reported that "some of the colored brothers and sisters in the land of 'Craw-Fish' had a masquerade ball

on Saturday night." This article offers insight into early race relations in Craw, revealing that at the time of unmasking, "it was discovered that there was some white sheep in the flock."[19]

Only the *Weekly Yeoman* used the term "Crawfish Bottom" in the public sphere in 1877, and throughout 1878 other Frankfort newspapers still referred to the neighborhood as the "lower part of the city."[20] In June 1878, for example, the *Weekly Roundabout* referred to a fight that had occurred "in the lower part of the city last Saturday night."[21] However, by the end of 1878, newspapers citywide were regularly using some variant of the new title.[22] In November 1878, the *Weekly Roundabout* reported details of an altercation that had taken place the previous Sunday: "There was a considerable row among the colored population on the corner of Washington and Clinton streets. Tom Russell, a gentleman of the galvanized variety, having become enthused with Market street kill-'em-quick, informed Hec. Moulden, a peacably inclined individual that he, Tom, was the best man in 'Craw.'" Following a detailed description of the confrontation, it was announced that Hec. Moulden had triumphed and that Tom Russell "was required to pay $5 into the city treasury and will not tackle the wolf of 'Crawfish' again."[23] By using both "Craw" and "Crawfish" to refer to the location at "the corner of Clinton and Washington streets," the article definitively confirms the emerging link binding place and name. The epithets "best man in 'Craw,'" "wolf of 'Crawfish,'" and "Alcalde of Craw Fish Bottom" indicate the development of a hierarchical system for proclaiming who could be considered the "best man in Craw," a notorious distinction achieved by expressions of strength, intimidation, and violence.

By 1878, the increased frequency of crime and violence in Craw began to disturb members of the larger Frankfort community, prompting regular editorial comments in the newspapers directing the attention of the police to that neighborhood. The following describes a fight that took place between a mother and a daughter: "There was a bad case of wool pulling in Crawfish bottom Tuesday night. . . . The attention of the police is called to some noisy congregations in that quarter."[24] In March 1879 the city's growing discomfort prompted the question, "Wouldn't it be better to have two policemen in 'Craw'?"[25] By 1880, the neighborhood name "Craw" and its citywide reputation had been firmly established, and the newspapers began to make esoteric references to this now well-known reputation: "On Saturday last . . . there was a white woman

trying to out-mum the river. She was beastly drunk, acting in the most disgraceful manner, cursing and swearing at all who came near her. This is a disgrace that even 'Craw' should blush at."[26] Later that year a similar article appeared, celebrating Craw's violent reputation: "Charley Washington was laboring under the impression Saturday afternoon that he was the worst nigger Craw ever produced, and that he could lam any country nigger that ever presumed to set foot on the sacred precincts of Dog Walk."[27]

By the end of the 1870s, references to "Craw," "Crawfish Bottom," or "the land of the Craw-Fish" had replaced all other more generic appellations for the neighborhood. The associations with these referents clearly included violence and crime, as well as drunkenness and indecency. "Craw" or "Crawfish Bottom" replaced the term "lower part of the city" in other public discussions, such as calls for municipal improvements to the neighborhood—"Craw craves more light"[28]—and sarcastic comments—"The thaw, the thaw, the beautiful thaw—it makes such elegant walking in 'Craw'";[29] "The walking yesterday in 'Craw' was not so good as it was last August."[30] By the beginning of 1880, Craw was more than just a voting precinct, a city ward, or a census district. The neighborhood's growing reputation among Frankfort's general population had become unmistakable.

The "Best Man" from Crawfish Bottom

By the end of the nineteenth century the appellation "Crawfish Bottom" had clearly been shortened to "Craw." A 1918 newspaper article printed a historical explanation of the origins of the name: "'Craw' took its name from the low terrain which is in keeping with the moral level of the section." The article describes a particularly intoxicated individual who had "proclaimed himself the 'best man from Crawfish Bottom,'" explaining that the man's nickname had been shortened to "Craw" and that "the name clung to the district, which claimed him." The neighborhood, according to the article, retained the "unsavory distinction when he was forgotten."[31]

It is unclear exactly when this name was first bestowed, or whether Hec. Moulden, Tom Russell, Charley Washington, or some other anonymous street fighter first claimed the title that later became associated with the entire neighborhood. No single identifying incident, moment, or particular individual bears historical responsibility for the naming of the Craw. The nickname may have indeed

emerged from the supposedly common sight of crayfish in the locale. What does materialize with great clarity is the neighborhood's distinctive identity, clearly emerging among the residents of the capital city; by the mid-1880s, Frankfort's Craw had a reputation throughout the state.

In describing incidents of violence and crime in Craw, the opening lines of newspaper articles were often formulaic, typically including the pronouncement and location of the altercation, followed by a detailed description of the conflict: "A difficulty occurred in the pool room of Henry & Dean, on the corner of Clinton and Washington street";[32] "Two colored men engaged in a difficulty in Craw Sunday night";[33] "A difficulty occurred within the unsavory confines of 'Craw.'"[34] In the decades following the Civil War, the neighborhood had earned the status of being considered a "classic," one article noting, for example, that "a difficulty occurred in the classic precincts of Craw."[35] Another article reported on a fight that had occurred between two men named Johnson and Snider. The fight, it reported, had broken out "in Classic 'Craw.' . . . Johnson . . . drew his 'little pop' and blazed away four times."[36] Crime in Craw was often violent: "A cutting scrape occurred in Craw Monday night in which Chas. Gatewood seriously cut his wife."[37] Headlines like these commonly appeared in Frankfort papers: "SCRIMMAGE IN CRAW,"[38] "CUT IN CRAW,"[39] "A CRAW KILLING,"[40] and "THROAT CUTTING AND CRAPS IN CRAW."[41] Much of the violent crime in Craw was linked in one way or another with alcohol: "Craw was crowded with drunken men Saturday night and the police made several arrests";[42] "Phil Price, a gentleman of color, became very drunk Saturday night, and tried to do the city. He first became involved in a difficulty with another negro in Craw, and pulled his pistol and fired."[43] Violent incidents often began in saloons, places like Porter's Saloon, "on the corner of Washington and Clinton streets." One article describes a violent clash occurring in this establishment: "Suter drew a pistol and shot Kelly twice, one ball taking effect in the stomach and the other under the left arm.[44]

Craw residents were not the only visitors to the neighborhood's "lower" establishments in the 1870s and 1880s. The *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* for example, reported on one neighborhood outsider, a "former prominent judge," who was arrested in 1884 "for being drunk and disorderly down in Craw Tuesday afternoon." The article describes the judge as having previously "passed many a sentence

of imprisonment for life and shorter periods" and comments, "How have the mighty fallen."[45] Nor was an experience of the illegal in Craw limited to those who lived in the city. During Kentucky's contested gubernatorial election in 1899, political supporters, protesters, and militia members were called to Frankfort from all over the state. The *Mt. Vernon Signal*, the newspaper for the seat of Rockcastle County, located eighty miles south of Frankfort, reported that Thurman Ferguson of Langford Station and Professor F. S. Phillips of Wildie "got too much tanglefoot and sought the pleasures of that notorious dive known as 'Craw.'" The paper notes that when Ferguson became disorderly and had to be arrested and searched by police, a "45 Colts pistol, a dozen or so cartridges and a pair of brass knuckles were found on him."[46] References in other cities' newspapers similarly describe the neighborhood as "that notorious dive known as Craw," confirming the fact that the neighborhood's reputation was known beyond Frankfort and that this reputation drew individuals to Craw from all over Kentucky.

Craw's reputation in the 1870s and 1880s did not depend exclusively on its being the poor, black part of town. The fact that Craw housed many families of prison inmates incarcerated at the penitentiary on High Street, just outside of the neighborhood, enhanced Craw's violent and criminal reputation. Often, over the course of prison inmates' incarceration, their families established themselves in Frankfort, and reunited families frequently remained in the city. Since many such families could only afford to live in Craw, they settled in and made their homes there. Other ex-convicts had nowhere to go upon their release, a fact that caused great public concern throughout the penitentiary's life on High and Holmes streets and inspired frequent discussion among Frankfort's local citizens.[47]

The Kentucky State Penitentiary, completed and first occupied in 1800, sparked public debate from its beginning. The public frequently demanded prison reform, but the legislature rarely responded. In 1879, 775 of the 1,000 prisoners housed at the penitentiary were treated for scurvy, and 75 prisoners died, yet suggestions for reform continued to be ignored.[48] Plagued by overcrowding, the penitentiary contained 540 inmates on January 1, 1868. On the same date in 1870 it held 653, an increase of 113 inmates. However, 659 convicts had entered the penitentiary during this two-year period, demonstrating a rapid rate of prisoner turnover.[49] On January 27, 1872, the *Daily Kentucky Yeoman* reported the capture of a local

burglar. Following the description of his capture, the article mentions that the burglar had been imprisoned until just a few weeks prior, but that the governor had pardoned him for good behavior while incarcerated. The article asks the legislature to take action on this matter, "sending convicts back to the places where they were convicted" upon the completion of their term: "Frankfort has suffered too much from convicts turned loose in our midst without the means of getting away."[50]

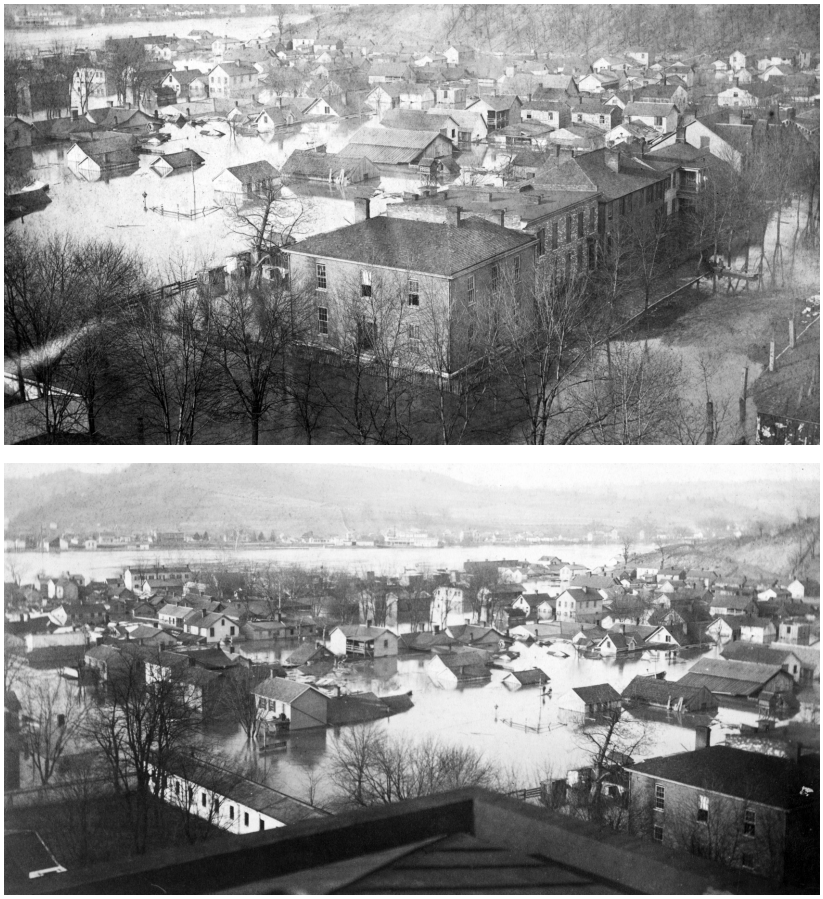
In 1879, the *Tri-Weekly Yeoman* contained an article that also reflects this sentiment: "Sneak thieves and burglars have been operating in some of the private houses of this city." The article casts blame on the recently "discharged convicts . . . trying to make a raise before departing for 'pastures new.'"[51] An 1879 editorial in the *Weekly Roundabout* estimated that 300 convicts were currently living in Frankfort, many of whom continued to steal for a living. The writer advocates that these convicts should leave the community and return to their home counties or leave the state altogether: "Frankfort has already been the penal colony for the thieves of the State too long." State law required the warden to give each convict only five dollars upon departure from prison, but the editorial declares this amount insufficient: "In most cases the convict spends this money in getting drunk in a day or two after he gets out and then finds himself turned loose here in Frankfort, without money and without friends and for relief he goes to robbing our citizens." The editorial proposes that each convict should be sent "back to where he came from" and that each county should "take charge of its own thieves," without placing the full burden on Frankfort simply because it "happens to contain the Penitentiary."[52] This depiction of Frankfort as a "penal colony," estimating the matriculation of nearly 300 former convicts into the city's general population in 1879, conveys Frankfort's growing frustration with increasing criminal activity. By 1897, this frustration had both escalated and developed an explicitly raced target. One paper, for example, advocated a movement "to rid Frankfort of negro thieves that remained here after their term expired in the penitentiary."[53] Such sentiments inspired the citizens of Frankfort to begin their century-long efforts to rehabilitate Craw.

Craw's residents—including many formerly enslaved, very poor people; the families of inmates at the state penitentiary and other recently released ex-convicts; and Frankfort's poor white population—shaped the neighborhood's character. But in addition to Craw's

demographics, its proximity to the Kentucky River also influenced the neighborhood's development, with periodic flooding being one of the most important aspects of Craw's development as a community.

Kentucky River Floods

The Kentucky River wound its way through both South and North Frankfort, and residents of the city noted the daily rise and fall of the river. Flooding had plagued Frankfort since its initial settlement, but the flood of 1880 significantly threatened the residents of Craw for the first time since before the Civil War. One news story printed



Two views of the neighborhood during the 1883 flood, as seen from the Old Capitol Dome. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

on February 14 reported that the river had risen seventeen feet since the night before and continued to rise at the rate of one foot per hour. The article described how the residents of Craw reacted: "Many poor families in the lower part of North Frankfort begun to move their effects to other quarter. . . . Many houses in 'Craw' are almost submerged—only the roofs being visible."[54] After the flood receded, the *Weekly Roundabout* reported that more than two hundred families had been evacuated from Craw.[55]

Just three years later, in February 1883, the waters of the Kentucky River threatened the residents of Craw once more. Announced in the headlines of the *Weekly Roundabout* as a flood "Like Never Seen in this City Before," the rising tide "gradually crept up into North Wilkinson, Clinton, Mero, and Blanton streets until [by] noon the whole of 'Craw' was under water and the inhabitants were moving out rapidly."[56] In his 1912 history of Franklin County, local historian L. F. Johnson portrayed the 1883 flood as more devastating than any other in recent memory, noting that "nearly all the families in the lower part of the city were moved out. All of the section known as 'Craw' was completely covered."[57] The 1883 flood devastated many sections of town, including the more stately homes of both North and South Frankfort. The flood covered half the city, depositing two to ten feet of water in the penitentiary yard, and surrounded Fort Hill completely. More than one hundred dwellings were shattered when they floated downriver and crashed into the St. Clair Street bridge; the submersion of the gas works located at the corner of Mero and Washington in Craw left the city dark, without power.[58]

Floods, a recurring motif in the unfolding story of Craw, took their toll on the neighborhood's humble frame dwellings, as well as on the resiliency of its residents. In 1887, the residents were again evacuated as the river rose to a "greater height than at any time since the great flood of February 1883."[59] More devastating floods occurred in 1913 and 1915, when it was reported that the residents of "Crawfish Bottom" were driven from their homes once more.[60] The repeated physical destruction of the neighborhood reaffirmed the growing citywide perception of Craw as "the slums of Frankfort." While flooding hindered economic progress for many residents in Craw, poverty simultaneously prevented many families from moving out of the lowlands. Finally, the massive devastation yielded by the 1937 flood not only caused the permanent abandonment of the prison but also foreshadowed Craw's ultimate destruction by urban renewal.

Loggers and Other Rowdies

The river had another impact on the neighborhood, closely tying it to the logging industry. Although the industry had grown intermittently since the 1830s, it would reach "major proportions" in the years immediately following the Civil War.[61] Between 1870 and 1880, the number of mills in Frankfort increased from eight to thirteen; with this growth came an upturn in employment and wages, as well as in capital investment.[62] According to historian Thomas D. Clark, log booms and mills were constructed in Craw's vicinity, and men from the mountains, recently home from the war, took advantage of this growing market. These loggers would launch their rafts and ride toward Frankfort, "and five days later they rounded the big bend at Frankfort and boomed their logs before Craw."[63] In March 1872, the *Daily Kentucky Yeoman* reported that between fourteen and fifteen thousand logs had arrived over the course of one week.[64] Greater Frankfort encouraged the increasing success of the logging industry.[65]

As demand for logs grew, Frankfort had to cope with the "mountain men" who delivered them. In 1876 it was reported that the latest

"Log assembly and drift on North Fork of the Kentucky River near Hazard, 1900." Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

shipment of logs had been delivered by "292 hardy mountaineers" hailing from Lee, Breathitt, Owsley, Clay, Estill, Perry, and Knox counties.[66] In 1877, the *Weekly Yeoman* announced, "Logs, Logs, Logs! The river is full of them."[67] In 1878, it was reported that "One Hundred and eight river men ate breakfast at Mrs. J. M. Wakefield's on Tuesday morning and got through before eight o'clock. How many house-keepers in this city could feed as many men."[68] In 1879, writers for the *Tri-Weekly Yeoman* noticed that "quite a number of mountain men have been on our streets during the past week."[69] Although these "mountain men" were delivering the much-desired timber, their influx was somewhat alarming to Frankfort's respectable citizens: "The lumber men are rushing excitedly around the streets with their 'thieving rods' in hand. They are murderous looking instruments."[70] In 1883, the *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout* reported, "There have been two or three hundred Mountaineers in the city at one time, this week."[71]

In 1942, historian Thomas D. Clark published *The Kentucky,* a comprehensive look at some of the cultural elements of the Kentucky River's rich history. During the late 1930s, Clark had conducted several interviews for his chapter on logging with men who, when they were younger, rode the rafts down from the mountains to Frankfort.[72] Although Clark did not record or transcribe these interviews, the data from them informed his detailed description of riding the rafts down the river and his occasional dramatic references to their destination on the banks of Craw. Clark's interviews with raftsmen "Blowey" Jim Bishop, Bill Peters, and Bill "Turkleneck" Eversole, and their descriptions of the logging environment in Frankfort, influenced many later historians who would base their knowledge of Craw on Clark's early writings.[73] Clark described Craw as a place where loggers could "forget their trials and tribulations and give themselves over to at least one night of complete debauchery" before beginning the long journey home. "The logger," Clark elaborated, "wandered deeper into the Craw section, which clung to the famous river cliff like a half-drowned animal. . . . Here, behind the staid and dignified Greek Revival capitol building, was all the wickedness of the biblical twin cities in concentrated form."[74]

Writing a year earlier in Louisville's *Courier-Journal,* Clark had described Craw in even more detail: "Just as there was the Barbary Coast of San Francisco and the Rampart district in New Orleans

where the old-time flatboatmen cavorted, there was the Craw in Frankfort." Clark continues: "Down in the Craw joy was unrestrained. Playful logmen could go as long and as far as they wished so long as liquor and money lasted." As for local reaction to the presence of these loggers, "polite Frankfort gathered its cloak about its shoulders and tilted its nose and looked the other way . . . happily oblivious to the rowdy whoopee which was taking place down on the murky shoulder of the river bank which clings so tenaciously to the foot of the north bluff."[75]

Clark revisited the subject in 1981, describing Craw as a "murky social island" where there were "few moral inhibitions and no physical ones." Clark describes the demographics of those visiting Craw: "Congregated there were saloonkeepers, hospitable women down from the hills, gamblers, and bullies enough to satisfy even the most belligerent hill-country raftsman." He recalls conducting interviews in 1939 with some of the former loggers, "who freely reminisced about having been entertained by the ladies of the Craw," describing "two mountain sisters," a favorite topic during these interviews, who "anticipated the running of spring and fall tides with excitement akin to that of their more discriminating sisters who welcomed Democratic and Republican nominating conventions."[76]

Although Clark's writings contain relatively few descriptions of Craw in the late nineteenth century, they comprise the most complete published writings on the neighborhood. Clark's early references to loggers' role in the development of Craw also influenced later historians' assertions about the place. In his book *Kentucky: Portrait in Paradox*, historian James Klotter mentions that after being paid for their delivery of logs, the men would enjoy the "big city" before heading for home: "In the rough area of the city known as 'The Craw,' the mountaineers found little law, numerous bars, plentiful prostitutes, and abundant gambling houses."[77] Klotter describes the exit of weary loggers from Frankfort; many would take a train to Lexington, where some would take a wagon and then continue on foot for the up-to-eighty-mile journey home.[78]

In 2001, William E. Ellis wrote *The Kentucky River,* based on oral histories conducted with individuals involved with the river in various capacities. In his discussion of this period in the logging industry, Ellis states that "Craw" was synonymous with "lawlessness and immorality," acknowledging throughout the book the profound influence of Thomas Clark on his own research. In fact, Ellis cites an

oral history interview he conducted with Clark in 1994 during which Clark once more reflected on the interviews he conducted with the early loggers in Craw.

In her book *Early Frankfort Kentucky: 1786–1861,* published in 1986, Nettie Henry Glenn, a genealogist and local historian, also describes Craw in accord with Clark's descriptions. Although she cites no sources for her depiction, Glenn dramatically paints Craw as "irresistible to lusty loggers" who sought out the "comforting diversions found only in the 'Bottom.'" Very few of the "bearded, rough-clad mountaineers," Glenn writes, resisted the "bacchanalia of Frankfort's notorious houses of entertainment where moral values crumbled and hard-earned money was frittered away." Glenn finishes her moral sketch of Craw by describing the aftereffects of debauchery: "Days later, bandaged and limping, the men trudged out of town. Those among them who had disdained saloon roughhousing to patronize the ladies in the red-light district seemed relatively unscathed. But venereal diseases were rampant in the old Frankfort brothels, and the ravages of their dissipation were yet to surface."[79] Although much of her book is anecdotal, Glenn's *Early Frankfort Kentucky* clearly demonstrates the public's fascination with the Craw's reputed evils.[80] Newspaper accounts and histories of the logging industry indicate that it exerted its greatest influence on the Craw in the years following the Civil War, but Glenn's descriptions present a point of view supposedly contained to the period prior to the Civil War.

In his book *Kentucky Bluegrass Country,* folklorist Gerald Alvey briefly discusses Craw in the context of folk patterns of settlement, declaring that some scholars attribute the term "wrong side of the tracks" to the "black/white ghetto called Craw in the Bluegrass town of Frankfort . . . the northern section of Frankfort known as Crawdad Country, Crawfish Bottom, or simply the Bottoms or the Craw."[81]Alvey too reflects viewpoints expressed by scholars before him, repeating the sentiments reflected in Carl E. Kramer's *Capital on the Kentucky,* the most definitive historical study of Frankfort, that Craw was populated by indigent whites, recently freed blacks following the Civil War, and the families of penitentiary prisoners. Alvey further states, "In a short time the Craw became a haven for vagrants and other undesirables, who ran bootleg bars and brothels, engaged in cock fights and other modes of gambling, and delighted in a wide range of other unsavory activities."[82]

Frankfort's Sex Trade

The majority of secondary source–based descriptions of the Craw derive their descriptions from Thomas Clark in the early 1940s, and each of these derivative descriptions references prostitution. One major element of Clark's description of Craw in the newspaper article he wrote prior to publication of *The Kentucky* does not appear in the final published version of the book: "The Craw was working alive with drunken reeling logmen and their jubilant girlfriends. Lilla and Loozer Davidson from up in Owsley County were two congenial souls who contributed freely of their charms to make the boys from 'up home' have a good time. These girls had left their home because of a slight social error which placed them in bad repute up the river, but which made of them mighty entertaining girls at Frankfort."[83] Not only does Clark mention prostitution here, but he writes about the taboo topic using specific names, drawing on individual personalities. In my interview with Clark in May 2002, he acknowledged that when he published these names in his article, local law-enforcement officials in Frankfort assured him that all parties involved had either died or left the region. When he later learned the sisters still actually lived in Lexington, Clark pulled the entire paragraph from the book prior to publication.

The de facto quartering of Frankfort's sex-trade activities in Craw established one of the primary definitional components of its reputation, especially in the final years of the nineteenth century. In the decades following the Civil War, houses of "ill-repute" or "bawdy houses" settled comfortably into the neighborhood. Policeman David Kirkpatrick, who also happened to be a resident of Craw in 1880, made news in September 1876 when he arrested "some eight to ten negro women," described in a newspaper article as "inmates of houses of ill-fame" in the "lower part of the city."[84]

The 1880 federal census conducted in Frankfort's Enumeration District 70 lists the occupations of Craw's residents as, among others, "laborer," "blacksmith," "porter," "keeping house," "servant," "retail grocer," and—along with these more reputable occupations—"prostitute." In 1883, Ms. Francis Graham, fifty-eight years of age, resided at 434 and 436 Wilkinson, adjacent to the Kentucky River. In her home lived the following: Sallie Davis, age forty; Annie Edwards, age twenty-seven; Alice Salter, age twenty-one; Lulu Baker, age nineteen; and Mattie Lee, age twenty-six. The census notes that

Gaines' Alley, from the North Frankfort (Craw) Real Estate Appraisals, 1958, Blk310 par38. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

these boarders, all white, all worked as prostitutes. A "mulatto" servant named Kate Ferrell, as well as a twelve-year-old boarder named Edmonia Ferrell—probably the daughter or sister of Kate—also lived in this house. The next listing of a prostitute on Wilkinson Street appears in the subsequent census entry: Annie Henderson, white, age twenty-four, who had three children: Julia, Thomas, and Hattie, ages seven, five, and two. This dwelling also housed Teresa Edwards, white, age twenty-two, and Lulu Smith, white, age fifteen, both listed as boarders, both prostitutes. Sallie Owsley, white, age fifty-five, and also listed as a prostitute, lived across the street, facing the river, at 437 Wilkinson, along with twenty-one-year-old Rebecca Taylor, listed as a boarder and prostitute. Two doors down from them lived Anna Wells, white, age thirty-one, prostitute, with her three children, Charles, Nora, and William, ages fifteen, ten, and one. Eighteen-year-old Ida Hamilton lived as a boarder with the Wells family and also worked as a prostitute.

In Gaines' Alley (also known as Gas House Alley, Center Street, and Long Lane Alley), between Wilkinson and Washington Streets, the 1880 census lists another fairly dense concentration of sex workers. Josie Finn, white, age twenty, a prostitute, lived with her parents, Thomas and Lucinda Finn. Next door another prostitute, Belle Bancroft, white, age twenty-three, lived with her daughter Mattie, age six, and an eighteen-year-old boarder named Alleen Lambert, also listed as a prostitute. Belle Bancroft would move to 419 Wilkinson by 1883. Further down Long Lane Alley north of Clinton Street lived Lizzie Roberts, white, age twenty-four, occupation prostitute. Next door to Lizzie lived Mary Burns, white, age thirty-two, a prostitute and the wife of Norman Burns. Katie Kay, age twenty-one, their boarder, also worked as a prostitute. Nancy Carter, white, age twenty-nine, a prostitute, lived with her twelve-year-old daughter, Sallie. Thirty-eight-year-old Kate Moore lived alone on Washington Street, and twenty-seven-year-old Elizabeth Louden ran a house with twenty-one-year-old Flora Shindlebower as a boarder; all were listed as prostitutes.

Although this particular census district was, in terms of percentages, predominantly black, the 1880 census does not identify a single prostitute in the district as black. However, African Americans certainly worked as prostitutes in Craw. In addition to the "eight to ten negro women" arrested for prostitution by Officer Kirkpatrick in 1876, the *Capital* reported in August of 1885 that "twenty dollars each was the fine imposed upon four colored women Wednesday, for keeping a disorderly house in Craw."[85] But black women did not receive the same latitude afforded to their white sisters and thus may have been afraid to identify their profession to the census taker. In addition, black prostitutes may have needed a more "legitimate" occupation in addition to prostitution in order for them to economically survive, and that may have been the occupation listed by the census taker.

In 1884, Captain H. J. Hyde delivered his first annual report as the chief of police to Frankfort's mayor and city council. The final portion of his report, entitled "A Word about 'Craw,'" specifically noted the problem of prostitution. After distinguishing between Craw's "respectable, worthy citizens" and those prone to "rowdyism and drunkenness," Hyde called on the city council to clean up the neighborhood:

> This part of the precinct has at the present time ten houses of prostitution and about ten or eleven dram shops within a few

squares of each other. Most of the turbulence is confined to this narrow limit, where the dram shops are located. On Saturday night and all day on Sunday there is a continual stream of drunkards from them of every color. Every Saturday night, and other nights, the lowest class of negroes, all under the influence of whisky, have dances where the vile and vicious meet of both sexes, howling like so many Dervishes, making the night hideous with their drunken orgies. On Sunday it is a perfect Babel. None of the neighbors will report these places for keeping a disorderly house, and police can not do it, for if the person living close by will not make complaint to the magistrate no other person can. The rowdyism of Craw is not produced by the houses of prostitution. It is true their avocation is one of sin but there are other houses that produce sin, death, shame and poverty. Look to them. Don't stone the women and let the men go free. Restrict or cut off altogether the sale of liquor in this locality. But if they are allowed to sell, confine its sale to one or two instead of ten bar-rooms and others in process of erection.

Look at South Frankfort on Sunday without a single bar-room. "So quiet is it there it would seem that there was a prayer meeting in heaven;" then go visit Craw with her open doggeries and drunken rowdies, and you will think there is a barbecue in hell. If the council will not heed this, your police force will have to be augmented. It is true the police have kept it in check tolerably well, but nevertheless shooting and fighting would occur, and often I had to center the entire force in the locality, leaving the business portion exposed, to prevent drunken rowdies from committing violence and cutting up dog in Craw.[86]

Although the foregoing condemns Craw more or less wholesale, the authoritative voice of local law enforcement aims his reproach at the black residents of the neighborhood, calling them the "lowest class of negroes" and criticizing their "vile and vicious" behavior. The demonization of blacks by Frankfort's white chief of police is here generalized to the entire neighborhood—largely racially segregated from other neighborhoods in Frankfort—despite disclaimers that he would restrict his accusations to the "disorderly portion" of Craw. Demonstrating oppressive racial antipathy, the

report omits the white community members' involvement in these self-same "vile and vicious" behaviors. Hyde's report appeared just four years after the city directory listed the names and ages of Craw's white sex workers, but named no sex workers of African descent.

In 1888 an article in the *Frankfort Roundabout* criticized the white power structure that permitted such misrepresentations. The article states that "in the unholy precincts of Craw houses of ill fame are permitted to bloom and blossom as a rose" and faults city governments' lack of enforcement: "The police will not report or swear against the proprietor or keeper of any house. They 'stand in' with the inmates, and they will not inform on them."[87] Religious denunciation, in this case, is not leveled upon the neighborhood, although disapproval is clearly stated in the descriptor "unholy precinct." However, this criticism is squarely placed on the systemic abuse of power in Frankfort's white city government regarding its participation in and protection of a corrupt process, reflecting public outrage regarding the city's tolerance of the sex trade in Craw. The accusation that the police "stood in" with the inmates later proved credible.

H. P. Williams Jr., chief of police in Frankfort in 1893, reported to the city's police and fire commissioners that he must suspend Officer George Smith from duty, under the charge of being intoxicated while on duty. Officer Smith was also charged with "entering the premises of one Lottie Brown (who keeps a house of bad repute in the city of Frankfort) on the night of Aug. 22, 1893." Both acts violated police force rules and regulations.[88]

At the time of this incident, Lottie Brown lived at 419 Wilkinson Street, a bordello run by Belle Bancroft in the early 1880s. Lottie Brown had minor significance in the history of prostitution in central Kentucky: between 1882 and 1883, she had had the distinction of being an "inmate" in Lexington, in the employment of Madam Belle Brezing, madam of one of the South's "most orderly of disorderly houses."[89] Brezing's status as a local folk hero was so influential that her death in 1940 merited an obituary alongside those of world celebrities in *Time* magazine.[90] Although Brezing's clientele included numerous socially prominent and wealthy men from all over the world, her strict environment frustrated many of Belle's "girls," and they eventually struck out on their own.[91] The reason for Lottie Brown's departure from Lexington may never be known,

Lottie Brown. Belle Brezing Collection. Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Kentucky Libraries.

because the nature of her profession was transitory and strongly encouraged anonymity. Nevertheless, she indirectly connects the renowned Madam Belle Brezing to Frankfort's Craw.

Moral outrage over prostitution in Craw, and the lack of enforcement of the city's laws, both continued to grow. In 1887, the *Frankfort Roundabout* reported that the grand jury had "found one hundred indictments against gambling, tippling houses and houses of prostitution," commenting, "Now let's see if the officers will execute the law to its full extent."[92] In 1896 the following headline appeared in the *Argus:* "The Bawdy House Again to the Front." Apparently there had been a request to repeal a certain city ordinance that punished owners who knowingly rented their dwellings to individuals for use as a "house of ill fame": "This ordinance was enacted to protect the decent people that were surrounded by bawdy houses in Craw." Stressing that the ordinance should not be repealed, the writer warned that doing so would only "enable owners of property to lease for immoral purposes."[93]

Although evidence demonstrates that prostitution also occurred in other parts of the city, the prevalent rhetoric leaves little doubt that Craw possessed the greatest concentration of sex workers in Frankfort. In 1910 the U.S. Congress passed the Mann Act, which prohibited the interstate traffic of "white slaves," and soon after, in 1912, prostitution in Craw stirred interest from the federal government. Under the *State Journal* headline "WHITE SLAVERS BEING WATCHED," an article declared that the Department of Justice was inspecting Craw as part of its investigation of "white slave traffic."[94] The article announced that Paul C. Gaines, the attorney in charge, was seeking any information on which to base an investigation, especially with regard to "procurers and the movement of these people from city to city."[95]

Like Frankfort, cities throughout the nation struggled to successfully deal with prostitution. Although social purity reformers and moral perfectionists advocated the complete abolition of prostitution, city governments nationwide experimented with containment strategies. Although Frankfort officials never formally segregated the Craw as a "red light district," the *State Journal* reported in April 1913 that "there is no city ordinance segregating these women" and that the Franklin County grand jury had notified prostitutes that they could live in dwellings located in "Gas House alley alone," reporting that "city authorities are carrying out the ruling made by

the grand jury."[96] The Frankfort city directory for that year supports this statement: every dwelling but three within the confines of Gas House Alley was a bordello.[97] In the directory, the residents of ten out of thirteen addresses on the alley are given the official title of "Madam."[98]

Later the same month, following the grand jury's informal establishment of a "red light district," a devastating fire engulfed the neighborhood, consumed most of the houses on Gas House Alley, and raised the question of where the Craw's prostitutes would now reside, having been unofficially relegated to the alley. With the city thrown into a panic, a headline announced that these women "MUST STAY SEGREGATED: Inmates of the Burned Houses Can't Invade Other Streets":

> Six houses and a small stable in Gas House alley, the city's proscribed section, were destroyed by flames early yesterday morning. Failure to get water from the waterworks for three quarters of an hour or more, the firemen say, resulted in the almost unchecked spread of the flames for a time. One effect of the fire is the wiping out of over half of the "redlight," all but three houses having been destroyed. The women who live in the burned places were notified by the city authorities yesterday, that they would not be allowed to locate in any other part of the city, but that the city would pay their transportation if they wished to leave for "other" towns.[99]

The houses that were destroyed were establishments run by the prostitutes Minnie Bell, Gertrude Evans, Dora West, Grace Sherwood, Jewel Taylor, Jessie Morris, and Mary Burns. The fire allegedly began in the one-story frame house of Minnie Bell, which was unoccupied at the time due to the prior week's flooding that had covered Gas House Alley in five to six feet of water. The article mentions that rumors were circulating regarding the origins of the fire, but that the cause had yet to be determined.

"Those Drinking and Gambling Hells"

Craw's reputation among residents of Frankfort had been shaped by several decades of direct observation, rumor, moral perception, stereotypes, and imagination. The Craw's character stirred righteous

emotions throughout Frankfort, especially among those wishing for reform: "The street preacher, said to be one of the Salvation Army, tackled Craw Tuesday and found some rather tough citizens in that locality."[100] Clearly, during this time, what "Craw" represented to the public imagination was not far from actuality. Indeed, many "rather tough citizens" did live in the neighborhood.

From the time of earliest settlement, Kentuckians have debated what to do about liquor. Although the antiliquor lobby has ebbed and flowed, a serious state legislative attempt at regulation first occurred in 1874, giving local communities the right to choose between "wet" and "dry" status.[101] Once associated with moderation, temperance as a concept now became synonymous with the complete prohibition of alcohol. As support for temperance grew, public pressure increased on Frankfort's city officials to deal with the abuses of alcohol in Craw. From the 1870s, the public believed that Frankfort officials tolerated criminal events in Craw and conveniently looked the other way when unsavory incidents took place there; public opinion also often blamed alcohol for such immoral behavior. Citizens both inside and outside Craw often complained, but the city rarely took swift action. The public also expressed frustration regarding enforcement of the "Sunday Laws," which prohibited the sale of alcohol on the Christian Sabbath: "The repeal of the Sunday law means drunkenness, carousing, fighting, horse racing, cock fighting, and the like on Sunday."[102] An 1887 article proclaimed that while the churches were laboring to save souls, "it seems that there is a revival going on in the whisky saloons, especially on Sundays." The authors of the article walked the streets of Craw one Sunday morning "and saw those who ought to have been in Sunday school hanging around and going in and out of those drinking and gambling hells."[103] Most reformers viewed the consumption of alcohol as the source of problems throughout the week. One article reported on "two more cases of drunkenness and disorderly conduct in the north end close to the brothels and low saloons," commenting, "So proceeds the wretched dance of moral ruin and death. How long shall the drunken rod of lawlessness, harlotry, and vice go on?"[104]

Although aggressive rhetoric condemning the behavior of those living and working in Craw commonly appeared in the newspapers, the perceived failure of law-enforcement officials to "suppress and reform" the district sparked the harshest public condemnation: "If the grand jury now in session will but faithfully and resolutely

exhaust its powers in its proceedings against the keepers of the bagnios, and the City Council but do the same against the owners of the houses so used, the good work of suppression and reformation, both of the polluted district and whole city, will undoubtedly be assured."[105] The public not only perceived corruption in the prostitutes and proprietors who ran the bawdy houses and saloons in Craw but also directed their reformist rhetoric toward corrupt politicians and their fraudulent dealings in and electoral exploitation of the neighborhood.[106] One article observed that as elections drew near, "the gentleman from Craw, Battle Alley, or South Africa suddenly become a prominent citizen," stating that while this "gentleman" usually "loaf[s] around the streets, living off what money or whiskey is given him by candidates for weeks," on Election Day, he will "sell himself to the highest bidder, get on a glorious drunk and land in the work-house." Upon his release, he "slinks off to his hovel to get ready for another election."[107] Indeed, around polling time, politicians often distributed "election lightning" in Craw, and during the closing decades of the nineteenth century, public outcry grew into heated and intense expressions of moral frustration. In February 1887, one newspaper editorial articulated this frustration: "The city of Frankfort should inaugurate prompt measures for the suppression of the vice that is running rampant in that disreputable quarter known as 'Craw.' The events of a disgraceful character which have so long outraged the feelings of all decent people should be squelched by the merciless hand of the law. . . . This hot-bed of flagrant immorality should be speedily purged of its immoral infection. . . . Join hands in demanding that the disreputableness of 'Craw' shall cease."[108] The article's characterization of "vice running rampant" in the "disreputable quarter known as Craw" carefully excludes from condemnation the "decent" citizens who were "of necessity obliged to live in that vicinity." Indeed, Craw had a large percentage of poor residents, both white and black, who would be characterized by the authors of such articles as "decent," but the neighborhood as a whole presented a much larger and easier target. The evil influence of Craw on the "moral atmosphere" of Frankfort thus became the rallying point for moral reformers: public outcry toward the city's tolerance of vice would periodically swell, only to soon deflate. However, an event occurred on September 4, 1909, that dramatically changed the city's laissez-faire approach to Craw.

Shots Fired

"TWO KILLED AND THREE WOUNDED IN RIOT IN CRAW: Battle between Soldiers and Civilians Stirs All Frankfort."[109] The "riot" occurred on September 6, 1909, in "the Tenderloin section of Frankfort," where a serious shooting occurred outside Howser's Saloon on the corner of Mero and Center streets. Sergeant Ingram Tate of Somerset, Kentucky, and a civilian, Jeff Cook of Frankfort, died. Alex McNally, William Nickels, and Ed Miller were wounded. Alex's father told the Lexington paper the *Kentucky Evening Gazette*, "There had been trouble all the week between the boys of the Second Regiment and the boys of the Craw section. There had been several clashes on the streets down here at night, none of them serious, but everybody was expecting trouble of a serious nature."[110] Alex McNally explained:

> He and Joe Nichols [*sic*] were standing just inside the door to the wine room when Sergeant Tate entered. Tate brushed between them jostling Nichols to one side. Nichols said something to him about rubbing against him . . . and the soldier responded in an angry tone. Both jumped back there was an oath or two and each man reached for his hip pocket. I saw Nichols pistol first as the soldier was between Nichols and me. Joe fired just about the time the soldier pulled his weapon. The bullet intended for Tate struck me in the breast. I dodged out the door and started for my home on Wilkinson street. When I reached the home of my aunt about two blocks from the scene of the trouble I fell weak and decided to go in there and have them get a doctor.[111]

Despite conflicting accounts, most reports note that Tate never fired his gun. Joe Conway, the bartender at Howser's Saloon that evening, reported that he had been serving a customer behind the bar when he heard "three shots in the wine room or dance hall, just back of the bar." Conway commented that the shots were fired "as quickly as it is possible for shots to be fired." Although he could not confirm whether or not the shots had been fired from one weapon, he thought that they were. He described the scene immediately following the shooting: "Joe Nickels ran from the dance hall into the bar room coming in behind the counter. . . . Nickels ran from the bar

into the tap room and . . . went on out the back door. I do not know whether the soldier shot or not."[112]

An hour-long chaotic shootout unfolded between the other soldiers accompanying Tate that evening and the civilians in the bar. Bullets riddled Howser's Saloon, breaking the glass out of nearly every window. There was immediate speculation that the soldiers had used their army-issued rifles during the fray; close forensic examination of the bullet holes revealed that "some of the bullets went clear through the building, tearing through the two outer walls and several intervening partitions. Probably fifty bullet holes are to be found in the building."[113] Frankfort historian L. F. Johnson confirmed just three years later that the conflict had originated inside the house and that after the soldiers left the saloon, "about fifty of them congregated on the outside, some had revolvers and others rifles." Johnson added that "the citizens" had taken refuge in the upstairs rooms and that "a great many shots were fired by each side; the building and the furniture were almost completely demolished."[114]

Civilian and military investigators had difficulty determining exactly what happened inside Howser's Saloon that evening. At an examining trial, soldiers and civilian witnesses offered conflicting testimony. The civilians all swore that Tate had threatened Nickels: "Will Kinkead swore that he saw Tate with a pistol in his hand advancing towards Nickels and that Nichols backed up against the wall to get away" and that "Nickels did not fire till he believed Tate was about to shoot him."[115] All three of the soldiers who testified gave conflicting accounts about what happened between Tate and Nickels and just who fired first. In addition, all three swore they saw no one from outside the saloon fire any shots into the building after the initial shots were fired. At the conclusion of the testimony, Judge Polsgrove declared, "The testimony shows that two people were killed and two wounded in this shooting and yet there is no proof that the defendant, Nickels, shot any of them except Tate, and there is no direct testimony that he fired the first shot at Tate. All the others who were concerned in the shooting are free and I will not hold this boy on the kind of testimony that has been produced. He is dismissed." Judge Polsgrove acquitted Nickels on the grounds of self-defense. Craw would not be as fortunate.

The Saloon Ordinance of 1909

Few incidents in the neighborhood's history attracted more attention than the 1909 incident that resulted in the fatal shooting at Howser's Saloon. Although citywide calls for reform in Craw had risen and fallen in cyclic fashion throughout the course of its existence, the 1909 incident drew the most visceral and vocal response yet. Shortly after the incident, a grand jury indicted E. W. Howser, the owner of the saloon in which the riot had originated, for maintaining a nuisance. The indictment of Howser was said to be "the first step taken in an effort to secure better order in the Craw district."[116]

On September 9, 1909, the *Frankfort News* proposed that a special policeman be assigned to concentrate his attention solely on maintaining better order in "the saloon district of Craw." The newspaper suggested that the salary of the private watchman be paid by the district's merchants.[117] However, over the following days, calls for reform escalated in intensity: trying to maintain order within the Craw did not go far enough for many emerging reformers.

In addition to attempts to increase law enforcement, the incident inspired a strong call for moral reformation, stressing the dangers that Craw posed to the city of Frankfort. On September 7, 1909, a *Frankfort News* headline decried "CRAW'S TOLL OF BLOOD," suggesting that the "disorderly dives in Craw" be closed and this "carnival of crime stopped." Craw was "where the vicious and the low congregate" and where violence "clogs" the courts with murder cases. "The Craw," the paper opined, "is a festering sore spot on the body politic of the city and the only way to cure it is to remove it." Craw was compared to "a cancer eating and feeding on the body": a "knife must be used and the cancer must be cut out by the roots and removed." "The Craw dives," the paper went on, "stand yet as a menace to the city, reaching out their slimy tentacles for the young men of Frankfort to squeeze the life blood out of them." The predominant yet usually quiet "good people of the city" must "rise up in their might and wipe out Craw and make it impossible for any similar place to exist in Frankfort again."[118]

Individual churches, the Citizens Improvement Association, and the Business Men's Club also began to rally against the existence of the neighborhood itself. On September 11, 1909, a headline in the *Frankfort News* declared "AN AWAKENING AT LAST," stressing the need for swift action, claiming that the greatest danger was

the "ever-fickle public," who would "too quickly forget about Craw." Although there appeared to be "almost unanimous demand that the Craw saloons be wiped out," it was feared that "in a few days the fight of Saturday night will be forgotten," and nothing would be done. The city council was encouraged to act quickly, the paper stressing that "half-way measures will not avail. . . . The Craw must be wiped out."[119]

Many newspaper articles of the period contained similarly angry rhetoric, referring to the Craw as "that sore spot" and portraying the neighborhood as "a breeding place for crime and criminals . . . [that] should not be permitted to exist." They argued that the "quiescent" and "ever-fickle public will too quickly forget about Craw." In the past, general calls for the reform of Craw had varied in intensity. Public criticism would initially follow incidents in Craw if they were of such magnitude as to rise above the respectable public's level of tolerance. The outcry, however, would typically be quickly forgotten. This article in the *Frankfort News* is one of the earliest instances when public rhetoric followed a call for reform in the district with a call for its eradication.

The Business Men's Club led the charge against the saloons in Craw in September 1909 with a clear agenda. Under the headline "WAR ON CRAW SALOONS PROMISES GOOD RESULTS," the Frankfort newspaper reported on a special meeting of the Business Men's Club, at which its members recommended that no more liquor licenses be assigned to vendors in Craw. City court records, the club noted, demonstrated that more than half of the arrests taking place in the city of Frankfort were from Craw and that in the past few years "no less than eleven men have been killed in the small area down there known as the saloon district, besides a number of cases of cutting and shooting that did not result fatally."[120] The meeting yielded a resolution to petition the city council to consider passing an ordinance prohibiting the granting of licenses to sell alcohol in the territory, which was described quite specifically: "South of Broadway, West of High street, North of the Kentucky river and East of Washington in the City of Frankfort."[121]

By creating a saloon district that excluded the streets of the Craw in the Craw Saloon Ordinance, passed in 1909, the city council indirectly codified the neighborhood's boundaries. The *Frankfort News* reported that in acting on this issue, the city council was answering the demands of Frankfort's population. Presented with petitions,

city leaders were now charged with the task of saving the city from this "festering sore spot." The council meeting was attended by many who "wanted the ordinance restricting saloons to a defined territory passed and the council acceded to the demand."[122] At the time, thirty-two saloons operated in Frankfort, and the new ordinance now established a "saloon zone," wherein saloons would be given legal sanction; saloons would be prohibited outside this zone. Along with the Business Men's Club, others also submitted petitions to the council: Reverend Dr. M. B. Adams, representing the congregation of the Baptist church; Frank Chinn, representing the First Presbyterian church; Reverend Dr. C. R. Hudson, representing members of the Christian church; and Judge Ben Williams, who represented the Citizen's Improvement Association.[123] The actions taken by the Frankfort city council drew attention outside the city as well, Lexington's *Herald-Leader* reporting, "COUNCIL IS AFTER SALOONS IN CRAW: Answer Demand of People to Cut Out Dives in Capital City's Worst District."[124]

Although few citizens dissented when the ordinance was passed, saloon owners accused the council of passing a measure that was by nature "a punishment to the innocent as well as the guilty."[125] The council answered this protest by invoking the "protective organization" of saloon keepers who selectively ignored those in violation of the law. The council firmly chastised these saloon keepers: "Now, having declined to protest themselves they must stand for what they have brought on themselves."[126]

Some also felt the city council's punitive actions would mark the beginning of trouble in the saloon district of Craw, not the end. The *Frankfort News* warned that by prohibiting liquor sales in Craw, the council had opened the door for illegal sales. Others predicted that "the women who keep the houses of Craw" and occupy the "houses of ill fame" would fill the void left in the absence of saloons by illegally selling liquor: "the public may be sure that the women will try to take the place left vacant by the removal of the saloons."[127] Once again, then, the prostitutes of Craw entered the public discussion, the editorial writer reminding the public that the saloons were only a single factor on a long list of evils present in the district. As it turned out, this warning proved prescient: violation of the ordinance persisted in the years following its passage.

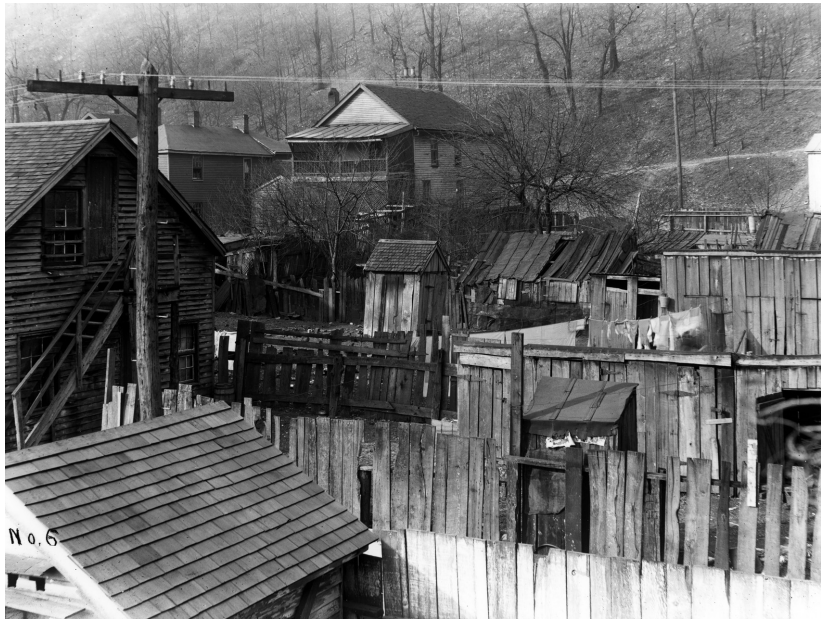
Observing the continuation of illegal activity in Craw despite the 1909 ordinance, city leaders actively condemned the Craw as a

Early photo of the neighborhood from the "Slums of Frankfort" series. Photograph no. 7, 1913. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

"slum" and a "city menace" to larger Frankfort. The Civic League of Frankfort's Civic Improvement Committee, founded in 1903 by the "ladies of this city" to promote city cleanliness, followed up in 1909 by recommending that the "tenement houses" on "lower Wilkinson street" be officially declared a nuisance and cleaned up.[128] The committee adopted a resolution proposing that many of the "unhealthy tenement houses" located in Craw should be taken care of: they were described as having "leaking roofs, open windows and intolerable conditions generally, destroying the health of women and children, and entailing untold suffering to the occupants, who are required to pay rents by indifferent landlords." The Civic Improvement Committee recommended that a health officer and a physician inspect the worst places in Craw and report their owners to the city council, which should "take immediate and vigorous steps to require substantial improvements in said miserable houses."[129]

Three months following this declaration, Allison Fellows Bacon of Evansville, Indiana, spoke at the First Christian Church in Frankfort. Bacon, introduced by Mayor James H. Polsgrove, reflected on

(Above) Early photo of the neighborhood from the "Slums of Frankfort" series. Photograph no. 1, 1913. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society. *(Below)* Early photo of the neighborhood from the "Slums of Frankfort" series. Photograph no. 5, 1913. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.



Early photo of the neighborhood from the "Slums of Frankfort" series. Photograph no. 6, 1913. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

how "the slums revenge themselves upon society for its neglect and abuse." She showed photographs "thrown upon a screen by stereopticon" of the slums of other cities, followed by comparable pictures from Frankfort. The *State Journal* later reported that Bacon's images of Frankfort's slums included "washing floating in the germ-laden atmospheres, [and] consumptives lying on dirty pallets." Bacon went on to describe the children of the neighborhood as "future voters or criminals," striking fear in the audience when she stated that Craw would create a "starting point for summer epidemics." Mayor Polsgrove concluded the evening by paying "tribute to the work women are playing in civic reform."[130] Civic and moral reformers continued to actively work to rid Frankfort of the evil that was Craw. Whether targeting alcohol, gambling, violence, or prostitution, or inspired by their perception of the neighborhood's slumlike conditions as untenable, these reformers strove to improve Frankfort by destroying Craw.

Despite actions like the saloon ordinance of 1909 and the work of the Civic Improvement Committee, the Craw's "evil" elements

persisted. Not until 1918 did the city of Frankfort feel it had definitively scored a victory in its war against Craw. That year, an article in the *State Journal* noted, "Bloodshed gave 'Craw' its fame as much as vice. . . . Murders once were of almost weekly occurrences." The same article now proclaimed that "Frankfort's famous 'Craw' district passed out of existence yesterday as a social factor. The saloons were withdrawn from there into the restricted zone three years ago and yesterday morning Circuit Court Judge Stout had before him all the women indicted at the present term of court."[131] By 1918, then, civic leaders were pronouncing Craw dead. But in a splendid irony, these reports of the Craw's demise were short-lived and premature: the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution breathed new life into Craw.

Chapter Two

Defining Craw

During the mid-1870s, the streets and alleys of the northwest corner of the city of Frankfort began to differentiate into a neighborhood, a community of people with a distinct sense of place. Its emerging identity exceeded its reputation in the minds of local citizens—this place had a name of its own, used by insiders and outsiders alike. What the newspapers had once called "the lower part of the city" had many names during its brief history: "the Craw," "Craw," "Crawfish Bottom," "Crawdad Bottom," "the Bottom," or just "Bottom." Although the neighborhood never had official civic boundaries and was never separate from the municipal entity called "Frankfort," its boundaries were nonetheless palpable. Craw's edges never appeared as borders on maps, and no sign ever appeared saying "You Have Now Entered Craw." Craw's boundaries were "folk boundaries," drawn in the minds of Frankfort's citizens.

The neighborhood's emerging identity derived from a corpus of knowledge that attached meaning to particular city blocks, distinguishing a few streets and alleys from the rest of Frankfort. In his discussion of a district in north County Louth, Ireland, Arthur Gribben writes, "When an individual's experience of life in a particular locality becomes encoded by a combination of meaningful landmarks and memorable human events peculiar to that place, that person has achieved a sense of place."[1] The newspaper articles quoted in the preceding pages provide evidence that this neighborhood assumed a potential for containing meanings and memories that evoked a unique sense of place for its inhabitants. But Craw evoked an equally powerful, yet very different sense of place for Frankfort's citizens who did not live within the confines of the neighborhood.

Folklorist Richard Dorson, in examining the link between folkloric expression and place, states that the folk region "lies in the mind

and spirit as much as in physical boundaries."[2] Folklorists interested in the culture of a particular region often focus their attention on the relationships between a geographic location and the traditional, unmediated expressions of its inhabitants, using geographic location as the "primary basis for a shared identity that is expressed in their lore."[3] Such folklorists attempt to understand "sense of place" as a mental construct and as a profound sentiment, both of which arise from and help to form the worldviews of a place's people. Although Craw was not a region or a city but a neighborhood, the same motives and principles apply to it.

In the context of the oral history interview, perceptions of neighborhood borders intertwine with labels that represent a place contained within a remembered space. An examination of the mental maps of former residents and nonresidents of Craw reveals the intangible concept of "a sense of place" and the perceived boundaries framing meaningful memories of the neighborhood. These narratives also document the transmission of knowledge of Craw and its boundaries over time. These oral histories reveal how certain placenames for the neighborhood evolved, the general patterns of usage for them, and how the use of place names encoded some streets and alleys and houses in Frankfort as a community apart, turning them into locales that afforded not only a place to live but also "a sense of place."

"That's Where the Name Came From"

The study of official place names is called onomastics, and its practitioners produce large volumes explaining collections of etymologies and histories of place names. Ronald Baker, a folklorist and expert in place-name legends, wrote in 1972 that place-name scholarship thus far had represented "exercises in lexicography," focusing mainly on "spelling, pronunciation, origin, and meaning of place names as words."[4] Further, large onomastic studies have tended to concentrate on *official* place names. "Crawfish Bottom," "Craw," and "Bottom" were never official place names, nor did the neighborhood ever have an official place name, just voting- and census-district numbers. The vernacular names for northwest Frankfort that emerged over time were place nicknames. For this reason a folkloristic approach is particularly useful for analysis in this case, closely attending to emergent folk etymologies and etiological narratives to discover

the origins and uses of a neighborhood's word images of itself, here using both previously printed sources and contemporary interviews.

As noted earlier, in the mid-1870s, Frankfort's newspapers began to move away from the label "the lower part of the city" and to adopt "Crawfish Bottom." It is unlikely that the neighborhood label appeared *ex machina* from the mind of some creative newspaper reporter. The nickname very probably circulated locally prior to the newspapers' adoption of it. "Crawfish Bottom" was the earliest vernacular place-name for this particular set of streets and alleys within the confines of greater Frankfort, the logical combination of two phenomena associated with the location. The second part of the nickname, "Bottom," served as both a spatial metaphor and a concrete description of "the lower part of the city," low-lying, flood-prone land along the Kentucky River. This naming convention fits into a larger national pattern of neighborhood names containing the geographical reference "bottom." Several other river-based cities throughout the United States also contain low-lying, flood-prone land adjacent to the river. Originally thought to be less than ideal locales, these areas often emerged as poor neighborhoods made up of immigrant and black residents and were usually considered to be the "bad" parts of town. The first part of the nickname, "Crawfish," probably originated in the common observation of crayfish on the riverbank and along the streets and in the yards of this neighborhood.[5]

At a certain point in the early development of the neighborhood, a general image emerged in the minds of Frankfort residents based on their associations with life in the city's poorest and most precarious sector. General perceptions of the area's alignment with prevailing social norms defined a "personality of place." Civic meaning followed collective perception, but the signified community needed a more explicit signifier. In the absence of a municipally conferred name, "Crawfish Bottom" emerged and, in its various forms, remained firm in day-to-day life and public memory. Whether the invention of a particular individual or of a news organization, or even the product of a single vernacular conversational exchange, this place nickname moved quickly through the traditional oral processes of the local community.

A common progression in the development of place nicknames is the simple apocopic truncation of a word or series of words.[6] Using this logic, both "Craw" and "Bottom" were excellent candidates for nicknames derived from the root "Crawfish Bottom." "Bottom," like

the earlier generic geographic indicator "lower part of the city," vividly describes the physical, tangible context of the neighborhood. Although "Craw" could very well be the product of a further apocopic truncation of "Crawfish," its lexical meaning also introduces a potentially derogatory anatomical reference. In vernacular American English, "craw" refers to the crop, that avian organ wherein digestion commences; it also refers to the stomach of certain animals. The idiomatic expression "sticking in (one's) craw" describes discontentment and irritation. The fact that this epithet seems to have come into use during the late 1870s, when crime and violence escalated in this part of Frankfort, makes it very likely that the dual connotations of the word "craw" made a moral statement in addition to fulfilling other social functions.

Every historian who has written about Craw claims the crawfish etiology for the epithets "Crawfish Bottom" and "Craw." Local historian Margaret Averill wrote a short memoir of the neighborhood in which she repeats this place-name origin theory: "It was so called because the river would rise and cover the streets and houses in the early spring, leaving slimy mud when it went down. It was said that crawfish were left in the low places and that people started calling it 'Crawfish Bottom,' and finally, 'Craw.'"[7] The origin of this theory is unknown, yet people continued to repeat it verbally as well as in print. In an article published in the *Frankfort Ledger* in 1897, local historian Jennie Chinn Morton states that the land in Craw was "always available to the small boy for gathering 'bait': it abounded in crawfish from which it took its historical and euphonious abbreviation 'Craw.'"[8]Another local historian, Nettie Henry Glenn, refers to the land that eventually became Craw as "a basky wilderness of stagnant ponds, cattails, mosquitoes and most of all, crayfish." She continues her dramatic description: "With the exception of the tenacious mosquito, only this tiny crustacean, which so audaciously resembled the kingly lobster, survived the greedy maw of a hungry population. So eventually the area became known as 'Crawdad Country,' or 'the Craw.'"[9]

Although Glenn says little about her sources, the few academic scholars who have considered the neighborhood in their research and writings share her sentiments. Historian Carl Kramer writes, "Frequently subject to flooding, the area apparently drew its name from the hordes of crayfish which would be left stranded by retreating flood waters."[10] Folklorist Gerald Alvey echoes these statements:

"Recurring floods would leave crayfish stranded by the hundreds."[11] The topic of frequent flooding and large numbers of stranded crayfish in relation to the neighborhood's naming appears throughout the scholarly historical references found in printed media.

Unsurprisingly, this place-name narrative also appears in many of the oral history interviews. Margaret Howard Ellis, for example, was not born in Frankfort, but she had lived there since childhood, reared by her mother with the help of her aunt and uncle, who lived at different locations in the neighborhood at various times.

Wallace: Why the name Craw?
Mrs. Ellis: They said years ago, when it was raining hard, the streets down there would be just full of crawfish.

When Wallace further questions Ellis, she attributes this crawfish phenomenon to inferior sewers, explaining, "Uncle Jim and them said they would all come up from the river."[12]

Lifelong Frankfort resident James Calhoun grew up near the penitentiary on High Street. When James married, he moved into the neighborhood at the northeast corner of Mero and Center streets. In 1952 he moved to a house across the street, on Mero, where he lived for many years. Calhoun's recollections also support the crawfish theory:

Wallace: As far as the name of the area being referred to as Craw or Bottom, where did the name come from?
Calhoun: Well, I've heard years ago . . . they said when the water used to back up . . . it backed up the crawfish. You could just get them by the thousands. And they say that's why it was named Craw.[13]

R. T. Brooks likewise grew up in Frankfort and lived in Craw as a student in 1938, on Wilkinson Street. Brooks, who is white, also claimed that the origins of the neighborhood's name derived from frequent flooding and stranded crawfish:

Boyd: So you say that Clinton and Washington were really the center . . .
Brooks: That was the center of Craw. And the reason they called it Craw, that's the lowest point in Frankfort. When

> the river come up . . . the first place it backed up in the sewers was the corner of Washington and Clinton streets, and crawfish would come out. And that's where the name "Craw" came from.[14]

Possibly, such oral history narratives regarding the name's origins were subsequently referenced in print, thereby perpetuating in the present a legend that originated in the folk speech of the past. Whether the neighborhood's earliest residents espoused this theory will never be proven definitively, but contemporary public memory continues to perpetuate this folk etymology.

Only one former resident interviewed by Wallace even partially supported the theory posited by the 1918 article linking the nickname "Craw" to a particular individual (see chapter 1). Mary Helen Berry, a lifelong resident of the neighborhood, told a version of this origins story that supports the 1918 newspaper account, although it is not identical to it:

> *Wallace:* Well, let me ask you about the name Craw. You have a whole different theory on how the name came about than anybody else.
> *Berry:* Yes.
> *Wallace:* Can you tell me your theory on what Craw came from, the name?
> *Berry:* Well, it's like I said that they said, it was a man named Craw that owned . . . a lot of homes in Craw. They say, "Go to Craw and he will find you a house." And that's what they say, that's where it came from. And, then, when these crawfish would come up, that's where he got it.[15]

Berry thus also tangentially maintains that the presence of the crawfish inspired the place name, thus supporting and adding another dimension to the more popular place-name narrative.

"We Used to Call It the Bottom"

Many of the former residents whom Jim Wallace interviewed knew nothing of the origins of the name "Craw." Although most acknowledged the existence of "Craw" as a neighborhood label, many insiders interpreted the label as a derogatory one that was imposed on the

neighborhood by outsiders and chose to use another name for their neighborhood instead. Most members of the neighborhood's final generation (1930–1968) chose to call their section of town "the Bottom" or just "Bottom," another epithet seemingly derived from the root "Crawfish Bottom." "Bottom," however, appears to be more than simply a neutral geographic term. Most probably, "Bottom" emerged in reaction to previous derogatory labels, since no printed evidence demonstrates that the term appeared until well after "Craw" or "Crawfish Bottom" had taken root in local vernacular speech.

Ellsworth Marshall was born in 1926 and raised on Mero Street, between Wilkinson and Washington. In an interview with Marshall, Jim Wallace asked about the difference between the two names.

> *Wallace:* As far as the name Craw or Bottom, did residents really refer to that area as Craw or Bottom?
> *Marshall:* Well, what comes to my mind . . . most of them referred to it as the Bottom.
> *Wallace:* The Bottom.
> *Marshall:* Maybe the older ones, you know, before me, you know, called it Craw. But whenever, you know, asked . . .
> *Wallace:* "Where do you live?"
> *Marshall:* "I live in the Bottom." Well, everybody knew where the Bottom was, or Craw.
> *Wallace:* Yes. Well, the reason I asked, some people, I've used the term Craw and they corrected me very quickly, they consider that a derogatory.
> *Marshall:* Yeah. Well, I guess it was. But I always referred to it as the Bottom. I never used the word Craw.[16]

Marshall thus proposes that the older residents called it "Craw," but that most in his generation called it "Bottom." Despite his statement that he never used the word "Craw," he acknowledges the encoded meaning in the statement, "Everybody knew where the Bottom was, or Craw." In separate interviews, former residents Maggie Knott and Alex Sanders, both African Americans, expressed similar viewpoints about the esoteric and exoteric usage of the two labels. Sanders stated outright, "Most people that didn't live in the neighborhood, they called it Craw." Maggie Knott confirmed this: "I guess that's what we called it then, and they called it Craw. That's what they did. But we used to call it the Bottom."[17]

Knott's statements "they called it Craw" and "we used to call it the Bottom" highlight the difference between neighborhood insiders and outsiders, the negotiation of the meaning of the name. Mary Helen Berry explained to Wallace that she used the term "Bottom" while growing up and "resented the word Craw after we heard so many slander remarks."[18] Despite her resentment at the word "Craw," Berry later clarified that "Craw and Bottom were the same." However, people rarely used the nicknames interchangeably, tending to call the neighborhood one name or the other. When Wallace conducted an interview, he was often uncertain which label the individual being interviewed preferred. The interviewee would politely answer questions about the neighborhood if Wallace used the "wrong" label, but the referent was clearly the same, and Wallace would quickly shift his usage to meet that of the informant. His interview with Evelyn Carroll clearly demonstrates justification for his occasional confusion. Carroll spoke about when she and her friends, as children, collected rags and bottles from the city dump for entertainment in the neighborhood: "And us kids would get the rags in some kind of cloth sack or burlap sack and just cram it as full as we could. Then, we'd tear out to the Bottom with it. Craw. They'd weigh the sacks and give us money for it."[19] The labels "Craw" and "Bottom" invoked similar associations for some, but residents like James Graham clearly distinguished between the two:

> *Wallace:* Did the people that lived down there refer to the area as Bottom or Craw, or would that have been considered derogatory?
>
> *Graham:* Well, actually, you had two: the Craw and the Bottom were one and the same in a sense that some streets, some sections of the streets, wouldn't have been called the Craw. But, you know, usually any people referring to it, they referred to the whole thing as the Bottom.[20]

Graham, a neighborhood native, reveals his perception of a complex system of differentiation between "Craw" and "Bottom." In his conceptual scheme, he associates "Craw" with the bad part of town and, more specifically, the bad part of the neighborhood. That some residents of Craw believed that the epithet referred only to the vicinity of the intersection of Clinton and Washington streets, and that "the Bottom" referred to the rest of the neighborhood, may have

served an important social function—it excused them from identifying themselves as having lived in what was considered the worst part of Frankfort by many neighborhood outsiders. Several residents of the "Bottom" made the distinction that "Craw" was only a few specific blocks of the neighborhood, those harboring the worst of the saloons, gambling, physical violence, and prostitution.

In her 1966 book *Filling the Chinks,* local historian Ermina Jett Darnell does not write about the origins of Craw's name, as other local Frankfort historians do. In the few sentences she devotes to the neighborhood, Darnell chooses to firmly and definitively clarify the proper usage of the vernacular term "Craw": "The lowest point of this area became known as 'Crawfish Bottom,' later shortened to 'Craw.' Outsiders coming to Frankfort almost invariably call it 'The Craw,' as though it were a thing instead of a place, but that is no more correct than to say, 'The Lexington.' It is CRAW (Never THE Craw!), or if you wish to be elegant, 'Crawfish Bottom.'"[21] Darnell's analysis creates a seemingly minor, yet quite significant linguistic distinction between Frankfort insiders and those "outsiders" who came to Frankfort. In her quest for standardization, Darnell reveals, in outsiders' erroneous usage of the vernacular term, the presence of multiple levels of what linguist Dell Hymes refers to as "speech communities."[22] Darnell, a neighborhood "outsider," claims Craw as her own from the perspective of being a Frankfort resident. Her statement implies that the community of Frankfort comprised the outer valence of a common cultural frame of reference: all residents of Frankfort knew of the general connotation of the word "Craw." Most revealing in Darnell's statement is what she chooses to omit. As Ellsworth Marshall suggests, "Craw" may possibly have been more prevalent in the vernacular speech of older residents in the neighborhood, while "Bottom" or "the Bottom" evidenced a newer label that neighborhood insiders chose for their own use. Local newspapers dating to the period 1870 to 1930 support this view. However, Darnell's depiction of outsider speech gives no indication of the presence of an inner valence to the cultural frame of reference she notes.

Usage of the term "Craw bats," a derogatory reference to the residents of Craw, further demonstrates the division between neighborhood insiders and outsiders. Also a lexical derivation from "Crawfish Bottom" and "Craw," the term "Craw bat" was not neutral or complimentary. In an unrelated oral history interview that Margaret Price conducted with Frankfort resident Harold Collins in 1977, Collins

discussed the relationship between what he called "Craw bats" and the rest of the inhabitants of Frankfort:

> Yes, it really has changed tremendously . . . particularly in the Capital Plaza area, which was Craw. "Crawfish Bottom," actually, was the original appellation that they used. But the people who lived there were known, I hate to say this . . . as Craw bats. And they lived in this Craw area, which was a slum, definitely a slum, and a rather criminal slum because it was known to be one of the worst areas in the United States, especially in a small city.
>
> And for many years it was really worth your life to go there, especially at night, which was a very daring thing to do. Some of the boys who would get their nerve up, and go in a group on Saturday night usually regretted it because they ended up if not being chased out, beaten up, and then thrown out because they weren't welcome.
>
> And the "Craw bats" on the other hand, which, I hate to say this, but this is part of Frankfort . . . were not welcome up in town. As long as they stayed in Craw nothing happened to them; as soon as they came across Broadway, they were arrested just for being there. . . . It was just an understanding that they stayed there and the police didn't go down into Craw.[23]

Each time Collins uses the term "Craw bat" he acknowledges its derogatory nature with an apologetic "I hate to say this." R. T. Brooks offered a more whimsical example of the application of the nickname "Craw bat" with reference to the neighborhood's residents: "They called them Craw bats. That was their name. Cecil Powell, see, he lived down there at one time. Now, Cecil Powell . . . would try to get all of the Craw bats together, and anybody that ever lived there. And he said, 'We ought to elect a Craw bat queen.'"[24] On its surface, "Craw bat" appears to be a derogatory term; however, Brooks's reference to Cecil Powell's use of it problematizes the issue since Powell identifies as a former resident himself. Jim Wallace asked former resident James Ellis for his thoughts on the term:

> *Wallace:* Would the residents down there . . . have resented the use of the word Craw? Did they not like to be referred to as "Craw bats"?

Ellis: They resent that a lot. Newshounds picked that up . . . and put that hat on them.[25]

In addition to confirming local resentment of the terms "Craw" and "Craw bat," Ellis directly attributes the terms to outsiders, specifically to Frankfort's news organizations. Regardless of the origins of the term "Craw bat," its use by former residents in these oral history interviews proved a rarity.

In 1903, Dr. E. E. Underwood, a vigorous and well-respected community activist, exemplified the emic and etic dynamics involved in designating the neighborhood by its vernacular place name. Underwood, one of few practicing African American doctors in Frankfort, kept both his residence and his medical practice in the neighborhood. In May 1903, Underwood delivered the keynote address for a gathering celebrating the placement of the cornerstone on the site of the future Odd Fellows Hall, later known as the American Legion building. The *Lexington Leader* described the ceremonies in Frankfort as "attended by city and county officials and other leading white citizens and a vast concourse of colored people." Underwood's address, which appeared in the Sunday-morning edition of the paper, described the proposed building, "a three story brick structure," as a "thing of beauty and a joy forever." According to Underwood, the new building would provide "increased facilities" that would provide for business, set an example for other structures, and instill pride in neighborhood residents. In fact, Underwood offered this advice to city officials: "It is not too much to suggest that notice be at once served upon the honorable Mayor and Council that an ordinance must be forthwith passed making it punishable by life imprisonment, or death, or both for any individual—man, woman or child, white or black, to ever again call this section of our city 'Craw.'"[26] Judging by the comically exaggerated harshness of the proposed penalties, Underwood clearly delivered his statements about usage of the neighborhood's name in jest. However, the underlying point he makes remains clear: he invests great faith in the hope that economic development in his beloved neighborhood would overshadow its long-standing bad reputation.

It is, of course, impossible to conduct a fully exhaustive examination of the perception and meaning of every nickname for Frankfort's most fascinating neighborhood. Too many of its former denizens have moved on or passed on. But careful examination of

the meanings underlying the words chosen to represent this neighborhood can begin to reveal these residents' ideas, their feelings, and their "sense of place." Since the 1940s, neighborhood outsiders—those living in Frankfort as well as those living outside it—predominately used the name "Craw." "Bottom" tended to be the term favored by members of the community in later generations, especially black residents. Almost invariably, when Jim Wallace asked an interviewee how the neighborhood might have acquired a particular name, the conversation turned to delimiting the neighborhood's boundaries.

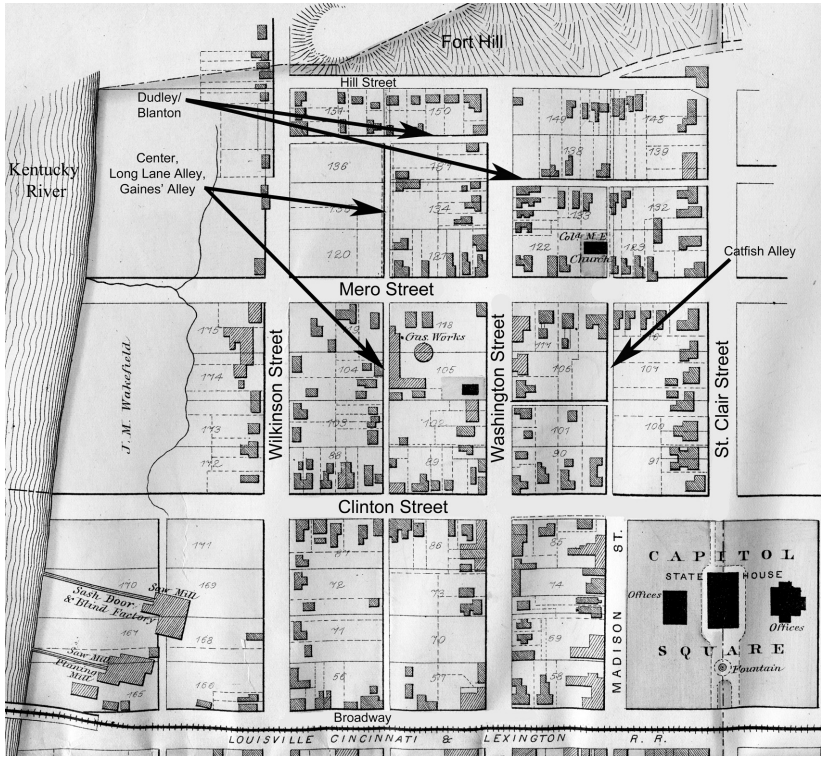
"Nobody Knew Exactly Where Craw Was"

Published sources yield few clues regarding specific neighborhood boundaries, but local newspapers reveal the fact that the intersection of Clinton and Washington streets was the center of Craw. From 1870 to 1930, most of the lifespan of the neighborhood, newspapers vaguely and sporadically identified portions of Wilkinson and the westernmost blocks of Clinton, Blanton, and Mero streets as part of Craw.

Geographical and environmental barriers often create patterns of physical and cultural isolation, significantly influencing the social groups they segregate.[27] Distinct physical landmarks on three sides separated the section of North Frankfort within this neighborhood. To the south, railroad tracks cut Broadway in half. On one side of the tracks has always stood a prominent and affluent part of Frankfort commonly known as the "Corner in Celebrities," referring to the presence there of several nationally prominent residents in Frankfort's earlier years. Somewhere to the north of the tracks was Craw. On the northern side of Craw rises the abrupt natural wall formed by Fort Hill. Acting as another ontic boundary, the Kentucky River to the west separates this section of North Frankfort from the rest of the city.

Wilkinson Street is the westernmost street, running parallel to the river. Three of the four east-west streets running through the northwestern part of downtown, Broadway, Clinton, and Mero, included extensions that reached beyond Wilkinson Street and ended at the river. The fourth east-west street to the north, Hill Street, ends to the west at Wilkinson, without extending to the river. Lumber mills existed between the Broadway and Clinton extensions

to the north and south and between the river and Wilkinson Street. Because of the mills' presence in this block, very few homes occupied that part of Wilkinson. North on Wilkinson, toward the river, the concentration of dwellings increased. The physical boundary to the north—the steep incline of Fort Hill—towered over the houses of Hill Street, creating a natural line of demarcation. Since a large percentage of Craw's early population consisted of recently emancipated black families, many outsiders considered Craw the black section of Frankfort. From the 1870s until Craw's final demise in the early 1970s, Hill Street was primarily populated by black residents who rented their homes from local property owners. Hill Street, just two blocks long, ran from Wilkinson on the west to St. Clair on the east. Because of the steep incline of the hill to the north, the majority of dwellings occupied the south side of the street prior to 1925.[28]



The neighborhood as depicted in 1882. "An Atlas of Franklin County, Kentucky: From actual surveys under the direction of B. N. Griffing," 1882 (street names added). Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Kentucky Libraries.

The railroad tracks that cut Broadway in half separated contrasting parts of town, making them another salient border in any map of the neighborhood. To the east, there is no naturally occurring or constructed boundary. The Old State Capitol grounds lie to the east, making up an entire city block. Extending north from the capitol grounds and contiguous with the eastern end of Hill Street is the continuation of St. Clair, interrupted by the capitol. To the east of St. Clair Street is Buffalo Alley, an extension of Lewis Street. East of Buffalo Alley are Ann Street, Elks Alley, and finally High Street, its main feature the state penitentiary.

Because of the demarcations formed by the hill to the north, the river to the west, and the railroad tracks to the south, one might suppose that the physical borders of the neighborhood coincided with the mental maps in the memories of residents and nonresidents alike. In her brief writings on Craw, Frankfort resident and local historian Margaret Averill reflects on the neighborhood's borders: "Craw was where we did not go." Averill elaborates: "It was always understood that we did not cross Broadway because then, sooner or later, we would be in Craw. Nobody knew exactly where Craw was."[29] Averill identifies the neighborhood as being on the other side of Broadway, across the railroad tracks. But her nonspecific statement that "sooner or later" one would find oneself in Craw suggests that her guardians meant for her to stay close to home. Her admission that "nobody knew exactly" where to draw the boundary lines is telling: Craw was where she was not allowed to go.

The people Wallace interviewed defined the limits and interior of Craw, or Bottom, in various ways, boundaries shifting depending on individual perspectives. Wallace carried with him to most of the interviews an early twentieth-century map for visual reference. In almost every case, he asked questions about physical borders, hoping to obtain the names of specific streets, alleys, and city blocks comprising the neighborhood. He obtained no consensus. With the aim of improving on Wallace's efforts, I conducted a few interviews in 2002, with equally vague results.

In his interview with former resident Henrietta Gill, Jim Wallace expressed the difficulty of determining the neighborhood's precise boundaries:

> *Wallace:* I have a hard time getting any two people to agree on the exact boundaries of Bottom.

Gill: Well, the Bottom is just from, I guess what they'd call the Bottom or the Craw . . . it started at . . . Broadway and went toward Hill Street.
Wallace: All the way up to Fort Hill, really?
Gill: Yes.
Wallace: What, and the river on the west?
Gill: Uh-huh.
Wallace: How far would it go eastward?
Gill: I'd say to the back of the Old Capitol . . . St. Clair.[30]

Jim Wallace often expressed his understandable confusion over the neighborhood's boundaries. Prompted by Wallace, Alex Sanders gave him this description:

Wallace: When you talk about that area, what would you say the boundaries . . . it's sort of fuzzy in my mind as what area specifically does that include?
Sanders: . . . The river to . . . St. Clair Street. And Broadway to Hill Street. They considered that fifty little acres, you know.[31]

Sanders's and Gill's definitions provide the most common map of the space/place: the Kentucky River to the west, Broadway and the railroad tracks to the south, Hill Street and Fort Hill to the north, and the grounds of the Old State Capitol and St. Clair Street to the east.

When asked about his perception of Craw's boundaries, childhood resident John Sykes said, "From the hill to Broadway and from . . . I guess that's Wilkinson Boulevard back up to . . . right behind the old capitol."[32] Harry Goebel McCoy confirmed this description. When he included Hill Street in his definition, Wallace clarified that he meant to include Hill and Blanton streets:

Wallace: As far as the Craw area, what would be the boundaries of it if you had to sort of map out where it was? Would it be Wilkinson on the west?
McCoy: I'd say the whole . . . on the other side of Broadway.
Wallace: Here's Broadway on the south.
McCoy: South. I would say that's south. North . . . north would be the other side of Broadway. . . . Now, from Washington, I'd say Washington Street down across Washington,

Neighborhood boundaries: Gill, McCoy, Sanders. Image derived from "An Atlas of Franklin County, Kentucky: From actual surveys under the direction of B. N. Griffing," 1882 (neighborhood borders and emphasis added). Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Kentucky Libraries.

Wilkinson Street, Mero, Hill, Clinton, and there's supposed to be . . . there's another street in there somewhere.

Wallace: Well, now, there's Center Street or Gaines' Alley.

McCoy: Well, that's one of them too, yeah.

Wallace: Would you say when you get up here into Hill Street and Blanton and all, are you still in the Bottom?

McCoy: I'll say yeah, all in there you was.

Wallace: Okay . . . that's one of the things people don't really agree. Some say, well, Bottom is only just right in around here, Washington and Clinton, where the joints were.

McCoy: Well, actually they was right. But far as you know, on the other side of the tracks, I'd say all of that.[33]

Neighborhood boundaries: Margaret Berry. Image derived from "An Atlas of Franklin County, Kentucky: From actual surveys under the direction of B. N. Griffing," 1882 (neighborhood borders and emphasis added). Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Kentucky Libraries.

Most of Wallace's interviewees addressed his border inquiry by focusing on the streets that enclosed the neighborhood. Their answers correspond with the way Wallace framed the question: he usually asked only about street names. Although McCoy does not limit his description to neighborhood borders and includes internal streets and alleys, his point is clear: McCoy considers Craw to be the entire area inside Hill Street to the north, Broadway to the south, and the Kentucky River/Wilkinson Street to the west. McCoy moves his definition east of Henrietta Gill's: his Craw includes one more block, running from St. Clair to Washington streets. Margaret Berry adds yet another dimension:

Wallace: If you had to talk about the boundaries of Bottom, what area would Bottom encompass?

Berry: To me, all of it.
Wallace: From the river to . . . how far east would you go, St. Clair?
Berry: To the . . . the end of St. Clair.
Wallace: Broadway on the south end of it, the railroad tracks?
Berry: Yes, because it used to be blacks lived down near the river on Broadway.
Wallace: Oh, really? On both sides of the . . . tracks?
Berry: On both sides . . .
Wallace: Did it go all the way up to Hill Street?
Berry: Yes. All the way to the hill.[34]

Berry adds specificity by differentiating sides of the streets that enclosed the neighborhood, including both sides of St. Clair and—surprising Wallace—both sides of the railroad tracks of Broadway. Her reasons confirm the traditional description of Craw as a black neighborhood, since she includes the other side of Broadway in her definition because African Americans once lived there.

When considering the spatial organization within the cognitive mapping scheme of Frankfort's citizens, the majority defaulted to the area encompassed by Hill Street to the north, the Kentucky River and Wilkinson Street to the west, Broadway to the south, and St. Clair Street to the east. However, memories are rarely homogeneous, and variants almost always appear. In fact, former residents' perceptions varied so greatly that the seemingly simple task of defining the neighborhood's boundaries becomes impossible. Much time has passed since urban renewal destroyed the neighborhood, leaving only imprecise memory maps by which to reimagine its area, the interior space of a named place, a place in which one might remember community.

The notion of Hill Street as the northern border of the neighborhood is one of the main variants to emerge from Wallace's interviews. The description given by former resident Jo Beauchamp confirms its place in most definitions of the neighborhood:

Wallace: Does the Bottom just include Broadway to Mero and Wilkerson to Ann, or do you go all the way up to Hill Street when you say Bottom?
Beauchamp: Went to Hill Street.

Neighborhood boundaries: James Calhoun. Image derived from "An Atlas of Franklin County, Kentucky: From actual surveys under the direction of B. N. Griffing," 1882 (neighborhood borders and emphasis added). Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Kentucky Libraries.

> *Wallace:* All the way on up to Hill Street?
> *Beauchamp:* Yeah.[35]

Former resident James Calhoun's definition of the neighborhood is far more limiting than previous ones: "If somebody would say, 'Well, where is Craw?' it's on Clinton Street, or it's on Washington Street. Because, see, that area took in . . . from, Broadway to Mero, from Madison Street to Wilkinson. That was the Bottom."[36] Calhoun's definition breaks with others, focusing on specific blocks in North Frankfort. Accepting Wilkinson Street on the west and Broadway on the south, Calhoun draws in one block of Madison Street facing the Old State Capitol grounds, running from Clinton Street

Neighborhood boundaries: Mary Helen Berry. Image derived from "An Atlas of Franklin County, Kentucky: From actual surveys under the direction of B. N. Griffing," 1882 (neighborhood borders and emphasis added). Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Kentucky Libraries.

to Washington Street, and north on Washington, ending at Mero Street. Mary Helen Berry offered her definition:

> *Wallace:* See, that's another thing. Can you sort of define Craw, [the] boundaries of it?
> *Berry:* Craw was, I would say . . . from Mero up to Washington Street, and a certain area of Clinton Street. That was the Craw. From Wilkinson Street over to Washington. Then, it was . . . Madison Street. That was where Craw ended.[37]

Most informants identified a block of Madison Street adjacent to the capitol grounds as part of the neighborhood. However, Calhoun's

Neighborhood boundaries: Barbara White. Image derived from "An Atlas of Franklin County, Kentucky: From actual surveys under the direction of B. N. Griffing," 1882 (neighborhood borders and emphasis added). Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Kentucky Libraries.

and Berry's descriptions both exclude the two most northwestern blocks of North Frankfort. Calhoun's definition adds slightly more specificity to the common defaults proscribed by physical markers on three sides, but many former residents remembered Craw as having different specific boundaries. James Graham's idea that "Bottom" denoted the larger neighborhood and "Craw" referred only to the intersection of Clinton and Washington streets has a high degree of specificity. Barbara White, born and raised on the 600 block of Wilkinson Street, had a different perspective. Her home was located near the intersection of Wilkinson and Blanton streets, facing the river, in a part of Frankfort considered by most to be wholly in Craw or Bottom:

Boyd: And that was considered "Bottom"?
White: Well, we didn't consider it "Bottom." What we considered "Bottom" was Washington Street. It was Washington Street and a part of Clinton Street where they had all those "joints." Now we considered that "the Bottom."[38]

White's definition is not common, but neither is it unique. Anna Belle Williams's also alludes to a limiting description of the district's physical boundaries.

Wallace: Do you remember when you first went down to Hill Street or first saw that section of Frankfort? Do any early impressions stick in your mind about that area?
Williams: No, because when we moved into it, we moved on Washington Street.
Wallace: Where on Washington were you on? You had mentioned that earlier, and I forgot to ask you.
Williams: Between . . . I'm trying to think of the street . . . Mero and Blanton.
Wallace: You were pretty far up there, then.
Williams: Yeah. See, I didn't . . . I didn't hardly ever go down in the other section of . . . what they called the slum or the Bottom. But it was a nice area up there where we were.[39]

Williams differentiates between the area where she lived (the northern section of the neighborhood) and "the Bottom." She equates "Bottom" with "slum." By referring to the "other section" as a slum, Williams limits "the Bottom" to the corner of Clinton and Washington, where the most notoriously violent drinking establishments were located, thus excluding a densely concentrated residential area of Frankfort north of Mero Street, predominantly inhabited by African American families. In my interview with sisters Margaret Macintosh, Jean Winkfield, and Lillian Barnett, longtime residents of Hill Street, they emphasized the same exclusion. When asked about the boundaries of Bottom and whether or not they included Hill Street, Macintosh and Barnett agreed. Winkfield, however, had a different opinion:

Boyd: So the Bottom really went from Hill Street to Broadway, to the railroad tracks?

Macintosh: No, the Bottom didn't go to Hill Street.
Boyd: Oh, it didn't go to Hill Street?
Macintosh: No, it stopped middle way of . . .
Barnett: Mero.
Macintosh: What street was that, that Miss Samuels lived on?
Barnett: That was Washington, right next door to the ice plant.
Macintosh: Well let me tell you, it would really stop at Frog Wood's Grocery Store. Do you know where that was at? Do you know where Frog Wood Grocery Store was at? It actually stopped there.
Barnett: Well, that's Mero Street.
Winkfield: . . . get my voice on this tape. . . .
Mason: So, you're saying that Mayo-Underwood was not in the Bottom?
Winkfield: Yes, it was.
Barnett: No, it wasn't.
Macintosh: No, it wasn't in the Bottom. . . .
Barnett: It stopped before it got to Mero Street.[40]

Later in my interview with them, Macintosh and Barnett were discussing violence in the neighborhood when Macintosh said, "They had shootings up there in the Bottom. They called it the Bottom. We didn't live up there."[41] In the context of our discussion on crime, two of the three sisters emphasized that they did not consider Hill Street part of the Bottom. Most definitions that pinpoint the corner of Clinton and Washington streets acknowledge this corner's vicinity as Craw. Barbara White limited the boundaries to the corner of Clinton and Washington streets, where lots contained the saloons and the joints—but she also referred to that corner as "Bottom." White primarily used "North Frankfort" to refer to the rest of the general vicinity.

From 1958 until 1984, the neighborhood was progressively destroyed, the victim of another failed experiment in urban renewal, which former residents, not surprisingly, remembered with resentment and bitterness some thirty years later. Given that very little physical evidence of the neighborhood survived the 1970s, oral history interviews have become the best source for a cognitive reconstruction of the neighborhood. Jim Wallace's use of Sanborn insurance maps of the neighborhood as visual cues in his interviews facilitated just such reimagining of the neighborhood, allowing new

spatial expressions of individual versions of neighborhood identity to arise.

The names "Crawfish Bottom," "Craw," "the Craw," "Bottom," and "the Bottom" never appear on official maps of Frankfort, yet personal and collective meanings specific to a distinct place, specific to a community's life and death, infuse that physical space occupied by certain streets and alleys; those meanings construct a sense of place. History creates and perpetuates public memory, that body of shared memories both experienced and learned secondhand, that is such an important aspect of the social construction of identity. Folk neighborhoods like Craw are created and continuously re-created in what Erving Goffman calls the "replaying" of memories that reify the insider and outsider elements of the resultant, narrative-based community.[42] But public memory is infused with multitudes of individual memories and is therefore inherently complex, malleable, and polyvalent.

The concept of a community as a homogeneous human group bound together in time, space, and identity is not helpful and is, in fact, false. No predictable relationship among place, memory, community, identity, and meaning exists. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan tells us that "place is an organized world of meaning."[43] Shared identity based on the organization of meaning draws its nourishment from a single body of traditional knowledge; however, when a variety of spatial identities emerges, contested terrain results.[44] The ethnographic process of encouraging cognitive memory mapping produced a heightened sense of place in Wallace's informants; through it, they again planted their personal and public memories in meaningful ground. By reflecting on the encoded meanings of their old neighborhood's multiple names, they heightened and confirmed their sense of place. By exploring the multiple levels of their experience of Craw/Bottom, they allow us to share in a kind of knowledge, however slight and vicarious, about a sense of place that includes not only multiple spatial boundaries but negotiable potential for social identity.

Chapter Three

Contesting Public Memory

Neighborhood borders are but one component in the complex construction of individual perceptions of community identity. The expression of neighborhood borders within the oral history interview frames distinct spatial identities, but the construction of place includes much more than the act of drawing borders. Following his inquiry into the understanding of neighborhood boundaries and spatial identities, Jim Wallace progressed into the realm of meaning as he investigated various aspects of the genius loci. In the narrative reconstruction of a sense of place, the interviewer poses questions in order to gain insight into the informant's system of encoded signs and symbols and attempts to "decipher or decode space."[1] The neighborhood once known as "Craw" or "Bottom" now exists only in memory, but the act of communicating life stories and remembrances of the neighborhood in the present transforms individual memory into a shared communal entity. When individual experiences and perceptions are absorbed by the shared memory of the collective, combined with predominant versions of historical memory, the result is the formation of a collection of knowledge primarily based on public memory. However, the presence and intervention of the ethnographer somewhat problematize the exploration of public memories by altering and shaping the content, tone, and direction of the constituent narratives.

Wallace chose each individual to interview for the project because of his or her connection to the neighborhood. Interviews often commenced with questions establishing the relationship of the individual with the neighborhood's history: "Now, where in Craw did your family live?" Often interviewees responded to this introductory question with brief narrative descriptions of childhood homes in Craw, leading people to mention details like the lack of electricity and running water, or the use of outdoor privies while they were growing up. This

line of questioning usually yielded some details regarding the individual life histories of the informants. Following his inquiries into the individual's past personal relationship with the neighborhood, Wallace often proceeded down a list of people, places, and events—neighborhood symbols, icons, and personalities assembled from his extensive preliminary research and augmented with each interview. He hoped that his mention of a particular business establishment or individual would trigger relevant memories and find congruence in his informant's cultural frames of reference. If Wallace's question connected with associations with a particular sign or symbol situated within the informant's system of memory, he adjusted the line of questioning accordingly. When that topic had run its course, he would resume listing places, names, and events relating to the neighborhood. Certain symbolic representations from that list consistently emerged as shared components of the community's public memory. Historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage states that "collective memories, like personal memory, are constructed, not simply reproduced."[2] This chapter explores the construction of the symbolic components that served to perpetuate this community's sense of place in memory. Along the way, it examines the interviewer's role in the construction of oral history narratives.

"What Do You Remember?"

Early in each of his 1991 interviews, Jim Wallace would pose some variation of the following question: "What are your earliest remembrances of Craw or Bottom?" In theory, this open-ended question allowed his informant to begin the interview with an initial statement relatively unmediated by the presence of the interviewer. Responses often began with the informant's description of impressions from childhood, which would segue into a nostalgic tribute to the closeness and cohesiveness of the Craw/Bottom community. Mary Helen Berry's response focused directly on her earliest memory of the neighborhood and quickly transitioned into a commentary on strong community ties:

Wallace: What is your earliest remembrance of growing up in Bottom?

Berry: Well, the first thing I remember, there was no automobiles in our area. It was all horse-and-buggies. The

> people there were poor people, but everybody looked after each other. And my mother had to work and I had to stay in homes of other people, but I was a child of the neighborhood.[3]

With some exceptions, the neighborhood remained very poor throughout its existence. Wallace's interviewees frequently referred to the daily struggle against poverty and to the community's role in helping families and individuals to overcome. White former resident Jo Beauchamp, for example, focused on the difficulties his family experienced while living in the neighborhood:

> *Wallace:* When you think about your earliest remembrances of the Bottom, or of that area, what comes to mind?
> *Beauchamp:* When I think of the Bottom, I think of a lot of the hard times and the hardships we had down there.[4]

Indeed, the individual and collective expression of the struggle to survive is one of the preponderant themes in the narratives collected from former residents; it is, in fact, the most salient feature of narrated memories of the neighborhood, and it emerges in both insider and outsider public memory. Economic struggle as a fact of life in the Bottom became clear to Wallace early in his undertaking, and he shaped his interviewing style in such a manner as to illuminate and understand neighborhood cohesion in the face of economic and political hardship and social misrepresentation.

In an interview with Henrietta Gill, Wallace prefaced his question with a statement that alludes to his own developing view of the neighborhood:

> *Wallace:* There's so much that has not been written down that is only in the memories of people. . . . The few things that I've read about Bottom were mostly written by white people who did not live there who maybe heard some anecdotes or stories from friends. . . . And, so, they wrote about it as if the whole place was sort of a hedonistic kind of . . . red-light district.
> *Gill:* No, no, no, no, no, no, no.
> *Wallace:* When you think of it, when you remember Bottom, what comes to mind?[5]

In this particular instance, Wallace's introductory remark sets a particular tone, thus altering the function of the actual question in this case. It is not surprising that Gill's response to his actual question—"When you remember Bottom, what comes to mind?"—is framed in response to his declarative preface to the question; Gill immediately and adamantly refuses Craw's bad reputation and addresses only the closeness and cohesiveness of her community, despite its poverty:

> Well, there's so many things. The first thing that comes to mind is neighborliness, closeness. And this seems strange, but we were black and white together. Next door to me was a white couple. And in the same house with them lived a black couple.
>
> If I lived next door to you and I didn't see you come out and put something on your clothesline or something, the first thing I did was wonder, "What's wrong with them today, I haven't seen them today. . . ." The first thing we did was go and knock on the door, we checked on them. And, then, we shared.
>
> If I had food and my next-door neighbor didn't, I shared what I had because we were all poor together. There were some that had a little more than others, but being black, most of us were poor. . . . But there was a closeness that you don't find. . . . We were mostly all there as a block, all there together.[6]

Still, although the interviewer's question is framed in a leading manner and clearly reveals a bias, certainly influencing Gill's choice of possible answers to the question "What comes to mind?" her response conforms to those given by the overwhelming majority of individuals interviewed about the neighborhood. This is no surprise, since a generally nostalgic, neighbor-centered historical tone commonly pervades community-based oral history projects.

Alex Sanders grew up in Craw on Mero Street. Following a brief description of his family's lack of running water and a furnace, and their use of an outdoor toilet, Sanders said, "In general, it was a nice location for the people. People didn't realize they was living in a ghetto or living in a slum at that time. But the thing about living down in Craw, it was a nice place to live. You didn't have to lock no windows or close no doors or anything like that at night."[7] At the beginning of his interview, former resident James Calhoun

commented on life in the Bottom generally: "It was a good place, you could see everybody. You could go down and sit on the corner. People come into town to see somebody, they would say, 'Well, have you seen so-and-so.' All you had to do was say, 'Go down and sit on the corner of Clinton and Washington. They'll be by.' And they would. Everybody would come down. It was a friendly attitude; blacks and whites lived together. They would have their scrapes, fight. Sometimes there would be shootings. But they were in the neighborhood, and everybody looked out after each other."[8] James Calhoun's declaration of neighborhood cohesion is not presented in reference to the Bottom's poor conditions. Instead of framing his statement in opposition to the struggle with poverty, Calhoun, like Alex Sanders, delivers his portrait of the community in opposition to the neighborhood's violent and criminal reputation.

Calhoun, like Henrietta Gill, also inserted a statement in response to the widely held misperception regarding the neighborhood's monolithic association with African Americans. While parts of the neighborhood were, at different times, predominantly inhabited by African Americans, many interviewees framed their statements about their early memories in opposition to the public perception that only poor blacks lived in Craw. Such responses also appear in other oral history projects. In a 1996 interview conducted by Winona Fletcher for a separate oral history project on the African American community in Frankfort, former resident Archie Surratt stated: "The Craw area . . . a lot of people would make you believe that it was all black, but it wasn't. There were a lot of white people there, and there was a relationship there that you've probably never seen any place else. Even the whites that were down there, they were part of it and they were 'buddy-buddy.' They were with you if you had troubles and so on."[9] Racial separation clearly occurred inside the neighborhood, as was true for most postbellum southern cities. African Americans attended separate schools, churches, restaurants, and hospitals, and they spoke of these community institutions with great reverence. However, when speaking about a larger sense of community in the neighborhood, the residents of Craw repeatedly expressed to Wallace their sense of being more unified with white neighbors by their socioeconomic condition—the struggle of everyday life in this poor community—than they were divided by their race. As James Calhoun stated, "Blacks and whites lived together. . . . Everybody looked out after each other."[10]

Of course, there was racism in Frankfort, Kentucky, and African Americans were segregated to varying degrees. Anecdotes emerge throughout Wallace's interviews describing separate community institutions. However, more dominant is the sentiment that whites and blacks, inside the neighborhood, got along. When the issue of race came up in Wallace's interview with Maggie Knott, a black former resident, she said, "We got along together." Wallace responded, "That's one of the things I've heard about this community, that it wasn't just black. There were whites down there. And racial relations were pretty good." Knott reacted: "We didn't have no problems like blacks and whites fighting among one another and all of that kind of stuff. We just didn't have that problem down there because . . . if I have to tell you the truth about it . . . I didn't know what they mean when they was talking about segregation because I had always got along with the whites . . . just as well as I did the blacks. We always got along just fine."[11] Throughout the project, former residents consistently claimed fairly harmonious race relations. Further investigative research could surely have identified numerous incidents of racial discord and perhaps undermined public memory as expressed by former residents; Wallace could have probably spent more time drawing out memories of racial discord in the community or focusing on the underlying racism of urban renewal. However, his choice was to focus on more unifying forces of community in this particular neighborhood, zeroing in on the effects of urban renewal and how it displaced the entire community, black and white.

The repeated narrative expression of the general cohesiveness of the community despite racial and economic tensions infuses each interview with a subtle, yet consistently nostalgic and rather defensive tone. Long-held opinions surface in opposition to what former residents believe to be misperceptions of the neighborhood maintained by outsiders. The oral history interview gave these individuals a forum in which finally to refute the more dominant opinions of those who had never shared in the life of Craw.

"Deplore Those Who Would Make a Mockery"

The first chapter explored the early beginnings of a general, externally imposed perception of Craw as a crime-ridden slum, especially as represented in and perpetuated by historical memory. Few, if any, items of information ever appeared in the local media that

contradicted the idea of the neighborhood as, in its totality, a morally degenerate and physically dangerous place. Even after the completion of urban renewal in Frankfort in the early 1970s, the idea that Craw had been an unmitigated civic disaster rather than a community of citizens continued to be promulgated by local news media.

On February 9, 1975, journalist Ron Herron published an article in the *Frankfort State Journal* containing his interviews with former members of the Frankfort Police Department—Assistant Chief Paul Rogers, Assistant Chief Doug Clark, and Captain James Smith. The article was intended as a nostalgic look back to a time when crime in Frankfort appeared to be simpler, less frequent, and less serious—excepting those inevitable instances occurring in the Bottom. At the end of the article, the neighborhood itself becomes the topic for Herron's interview with Rogers: "'That's where we had most of our excitement,' Asst. Chief Rogers recalls with a grin. All sorts of misbehavior festered in the Bottom—bootlegging, gambling, fighting, prostitution among them. Even so, Rogers recalls Frankfort as a relatively safer place to live in, overall, because police knew where to expect most of their trouble—in the Bottom. . . . 'I believe we had a better community back then, in a way,' Rogers explains. 'You didn't have crime spread out over town like we do now. It was mostly in one place.' . . . Cuttings and shootings abounded in the Bottom."[12] In the article, Herron explains that "the Capital Plaza had not been built in the early 1950s and Frankfort had the Bottom—Craw—in its place." He continues: "Before Urban Renewal cleaned it up, the Bottom was strictly the wrong side of the tracks for respectable Frankfort. Those who ventured into its dim-lit streets were lured into such colorful spots as the Peach Tree Inn, the Blue Moon, the Sky Blue Inn, the Tip Toe Inn, the Tiger Inn, the Rendezvous. . . . Police kept busy."[13] The city's law enforcement officials appear to be credible sources regarding Frankfort's criminal trends, and the documentary evidence to some degree substantiates Rogers's statements about historic crime rates in the neighborhood.

The officer's grinning fascination with "expected trouble" might have led Herron into further investigation of governmental policies that ensured the "festering" of crime in the Bottom's "dim-lit streets," but Herron did not pursue that line of inquiry. Few print accounts had appeared over the years to oppose commonly held views of the neighborhood's disreputability, and what little attention Craw received only perpetuated such "exciting" characterizations.

After the neighborhood's destruction, these "entertaining" characterizations had the potential to pose a more permanent kind of threat to the community's shared memories of Craw. However, its former residents would not allow public memory to be so swiftly and asymmetrically concretized.

Three weeks after publication of his original article on Frankfort's police force, Herron published a full-page follow-up on March 2. This feature did not follow up on comments he had made about the police force, but instead responded to the few paragraphs he had written about the Craw district. Herron's second article, "The Bottom: Society Branded It as the Wrong Side of Town, but a Former Resident of Craw Has Fond Memories," begins:

> To City Police, it was a den of iniquity, where violent crime could be expected on a regular basis. To much of white Frankfort, it was the wrong side of the tracks—a place protective parents warned their children about. . . . To Urban Renewal, it was a slum, ripe for clearance in the 1950's spirit of let's tear it down and start over. But to hundreds of blacks and poor whites, the bottom—Craw—was home, for better or worse, and some who lived there remember it as better than conservative Frankfort liked to think. There was enough community pride in Craw, in fact, that more than a little resentment was aroused by a recent *State Journal* story that touched on the seamier side of life there, as recalled by some of Frankfort's older policemen.[14]

Herron's article features an interview with James "Papa Jazz" Berry, a former resident whom Herron characterizes as "one of the most articulate defenders of Craw and its residents." James Berry, forty-six when Herron interviewed him in 1975, had been a lifetime resident of the Bottom until urban renewal forced him to move.

In Herron's article, Papa Jazz acknowledges that there is some truth in the neighborhood's criminal reputation but explains:

> It would be needless for me to say that Craw was unblemished, because it wasn't. We fought, yeah. We cut. We shot when it was necessary, and there were some murders. But police records will show that in over 95 per cent of the crime committed in that area, the people were prosecuted. . . . Craw

> was not the work of the people who lived in it. . . . They had no choice. This little corner of the world was created from a sick society. The city fathers needed a place to get rid of what they said was a bunch of disgraceful elements. . . . With all these people out of their hair, high society would not be disturbed.[15]

Berry explicitly states that the neighborhood could not have developed and survived as it did without greater Frankfort's conscious complicity. Herron paraphrases Berry: "Sure there was some prostitution, some gambling and some violence in Craw . . . but some of it resulted from the survival instinct. With regard to prostitution, for instance, Berry remarks, 'With so little money and such bad living conditions, those women sold what they could to meet the bare necessities of life, what little it was.'"[16] When Herron directly asks Berry why Craw had such a criminal reputation, Berry cites selective and discriminatory law enforcement practices and adds, "Those crimes committed outside the Craw section were usually laid over in court until they were forgotten."

The balance of Herron's lengthy article focuses on the closeness of the community. Papa Jazz continues: "From these hardships . . . the people in Craw formed a bond of togetherness that has not been equaled before or since, to my knowledge. We lived together, played together, fought with one another, cried together and all other things that make people close. Some of this was due to lack of money, substandard houses, outside toilets, too few faucets that served 10 or 12 families. . . . Integration, as integration goes, was in progress in the Craw section, because there wasn't any color barrier whatsoever."[17] Berry then proceeds to address and defend particular community symbols. In Herron's earlier article on the Frankfort police force, for example, Assistant Chief Rogers runs down a list of "colorful spots" in Craw frequented by law enforcement officers, including the Tiger Inn. Papa Jazz now defends the Tiger Inn against negative characterizations: "[The Tiger Inn] was opened so that children from the Mayo-Underwood School would have some place to go. The people that opened it were fine, upstanding men, with a good educational background."[18]

Herron's second article notes that while "some nightspots did gain notoriety," other neighborhood landmarks should also be remembered. The "landmarks" that Berry mentions include the Odd Fellows building at Washington and Clinton, the Mayo-Underwood

School, and Robb's Funeral Home, as well as persons such as Professor Mayo and the local educator E. E. Underwood, a community activist and medical doctor. These monuments and icons were well worth highlighting because, according to Herron, "to white Frankfort across the tracks . . . Craw was more often symbolized by such retreats as the Blue Moon, the Tiptoe Inn, or the Peach Tree Inn," all "joints" where the "sordid" behaviors that represented the neighborhood to outside visitors occurred. Of course, it need hardly be mentioned that it was just this sordidness that attracted outsiders to the district after dark in the first place.

In this article, James "Papa Jazz" Berry and Ron Herron together constructed a text that successfully contests many secondhand and inherited notions about the Bottom. In conclusion, Berry states, "Craw was my home most of my life. . . . I have no reason to be ashamed. I do feel sorry for those that caused the Craw. I deplore those that would make a mockery of it and its people. I hope in the coming years, any words written about it will be good; enough bad has been said. Those of us who were born there and lived there should be better citizens because of it."[19] Berry here again directs his listener to appreciate the oppressive context of daily life in the old neighborhood, created and perpetuated by powerful influences beyond its control, but he does not ignore the fact that crime fed the prevalent bad reputation of the Bottom. What seems to bother Papa Jazz most, however, is the possibility that the historically one-sided depiction of his neighborhood prior to 1975 would become a permanent feature in Kentucky history, fixed in public memory as a true and complete account of the place, even in the minds of the community's own members. And in fact, in this second article, Papa Jazz Berry and Ron Herron created a document that would have a much greater impact on the neighborhood's legacy than either of them could have imagined.

Jim Wallace openly focused his 1991 interviews on shared community symbols rather than on the criminal reputation of the neighborhood. In fact, Wallace's interviews echo the basic sentiment, tone, and intention of Herron's follow-up article featuring Papa Jazz. When asked about this article's influence on the formation and actualization of his own oral history work, Wallace stated that "it was the first piece I encountered where an actual resident of the neighborhood presented an 'insider's perspective' of life in the area. That perspective stood in stark contrast to most other secondary works which

presented an unflattering and grim view of life." Wallace recalled using the article in the actual interview as a point of reference when talking with former residents: "I often took it with me to early interviews and used it as a starting point."[20]

Even though Wallace conducted his interviews years after the article appeared, Herron's work with former residents played a significant role in shaping this subsequent oral history research. It sparked Jim Wallace's interest in obtaining better insight into the emic perspective of the community; created a foundation for his preliminary research; and provided him with his initial list of persons, events, and other topics to cover in his interviews. Further, it served as a point of reference within the new interviews: Wallace's overt use of the article as a point of departure for his own work with former residents clearly communicated his benevolent intentions toward public memory of the neighborhood and thus positively contributed to shaping the form and direction of each conversation.

Community members harbored bitterness long after their forced relocation by urban renewal in the mid-1960s. Given Craw's reputation as a criminal slum, and the fact that everything written about it prior to 1975 had been so biased toward sensationalism and censure, Herron's interview with Papa Jazz and their combined defense of the Bottom quickly fostered a sense of relief, and even redemption, among former community members. It offered former residents powerful and enduring signs of their community's cohesive legacy, while simultaneously emphasizing the fragility of that legacy in public memory and the historical record. Having had their personal and collective experience narrated back to them as shameful and deficient for the better part of their lives, and having learned to defend their own histories with silence and defensiveness, narrators now found in Wallace's interviews a psychological-emotional space in which they could finally celebrate their sense of place.

Social Structures

Frequently, Wallace's initial inquiry into his informant's earliest remembrances of Craw prompted nostalgic discussions of what turned out to be the interview's major themes—overcoming economic hardship and experiencing a closer sense of community. When those conversations began to fade, Wallace segued into a rapidly paced person-, place-, and event-based line of inquiry that often

did not include direct questions at all. He aimed to maneuver his informant through a list of items he had generated beforehand, mentioning the name of a person or a business establishment in the hope of triggering a relevant reminiscence. In his interview with Helen Holmes, Wallace explained his approach: "When I started the project, I was very interested in the Bottom area. I took a list of names of businesses and you may not have any knowledge of any of these. . . . If you do, stop me, and maybe you could recount your experiences."[21] If the person, place, or event that Wallace mentioned was familiar to the informant, a dialogue about it may or may not have ensued. If it did not elicit a response, Wallace quickly moved on to his next item. Not surprisingly, the list of items he used eventually included a core group of people, places, and events basic to narrative and symbolic expressions of community life in memory, the same core items and signs that had structured everyday life and thus the early development and functioning of public memory inside the neighborhood.

Participants in Wallace's interviews discussed public buildings, business establishments, and other physical landmarks—the Tiger Inn, the Mayo-Underwood School, the American Legion building, Corinthian Baptist Church, St. John AME, the Sandbar, Fred Sutterlin's Ice House. Former residents also commented on more infamous neighborhood sites—the Peach Tree Inn, the Blue Moon, Kozy Korner, the 99 Club, and the Tiptoe Inn, to name a few. However, several entities emerged from the interviews as crucially salient features of a collective cognitive map.

Because Wallace interviewed more African Americans than whites, many of the shared symbolic resources he discovered may have been primarily meaningful to blacks and of more secondary interest to Craw's white former residents. However, as is revealed in those interviews that Wallace did conduct with whites, many were deeply significant to all of the community's inhabitants. Physical structures housed memorable institutions, businesses, and personalities when Craw existed as a place; in the interview situation, each remembered structure revitalized memories of community in the minds of its old residents. When, for example, Wallace asked Henrietta Gill what she thought was "the heart of Bottom," she responded, "It was probably Clinton and Washington, right in the neighborhood. Most of it was starting at Broadway . . . go down until you got to Clinton Street. Of course, there was further down . . . to Mero,

and that's where the Tiger Inn was, and the church on Mero, the Corinthian Baptist Church. The school was on Mero on the other end . . . and the groceries were on Mero."[22] Much of the discussion regarding significant places in the neighborhood included structural entities infused over the years with meaning and memory, a process that transformed buildings made of wood, brick, and mortar into symbolic representations of a living human community. The district's African American churches and its then-segregated African American schools are repeatedly represented in the oral histories collected by Wallace, and those I have collected, as institutions that meaningfully imprinted themselves in public memory.

Two of Frankfort's three large downtown African American churches were in the neighborhood. St. John AME church was on the corner of Clinton and Lewis streets (Buffalo Alley). Corinthian Baptist was on the north side of Mero, between Washington and St. Clair streets, perpendicular to Catfish Alley. The third was First Baptist Church, located adjacent to the penitentiary at the corner of Clinton and High. Although it sat a few blocks outside the neighborhood, many members of its congregation resided in Craw. Other houses of worship in the neighborhood with significant congregations included the Bethel Temple Apostolic Pentecostal Church on the corner of Clinton and Washington and the Baptist Mission on Wilkinson Street. But St. John AME, Corinthian Baptist, and First Baptist had the largest congregations, and these churches came up with regularity and were described at length in the oral histories.

The centrality of churches to neighborhood life is obvious throughout the interviews. As James Calhoun recalled, "You went to church, you had Sunday school. . . . That was a must. . . . That . . . was a thing that they put into their children, Sunday school and church."[23] In his interview with Henry and Margaret Ellis, Wallace stated, "It seems like to me the church played a large role in the black community." Both Henry and Margaret attended church regularly, Henry at St. John AME and Margaret at Bethel Temple Pentecostal. Margaret responded by saying, "It did, because we went to church or you didn't go nowhere else."[24] Mary Helen Berry made a similar statement regarding the importance of church in her life while she was growing up: "My mother was strictly religious. We had to go to church. Well, I had a boyfriend; if he didn't like church, I didn't keep him, because he had to go to church with me."[25]

Church topics ranged from ideas about leadership, to gossip

about former preachers, to personal-experience narratives about Vacation Bible School, to talk about how the various black churches interrelated. The interviews, however, are especially useful for gaining descriptions of exterior and interior features of buildings that are long gone. Only St. John AME survived the destructive path of urban renewal, although First Baptist Church was outside the Bottom and therefore spared. But the buildings that housed the congregations of Corinthian and Bethel Temple were destroyed, their congregations forced to migrate to other parts of the city in order to worship. Even though two of the three larger congregations found homes in North Frankfort, the oral history interviews tended to focus on those churches that permanently lost their buildings.

James Graham grew up in the Bottom and belonged to Corinthian Baptist Church as a child. Wallace asked Graham about the church's physical building:

> *Graham:* Corinthian was a beautiful church, well kept, maintained inside and out. And it didn't stay. They lost the pipe organ. They went into a tremendous amount of debt . . . gave up a fixed building with all of that space and all of the things they had. As a kid, see, I went to Sunday school there. That fellowship hall that they had in the back of that . . . it was beautiful.
>
> *Wallace:* Describe it to me.
>
> *Graham:* Behind the back of the building, which ran into the back of that building right into my backyard . . . they built . . . what they called the Fellowship Hall. . . . They had Sunday school classes on the top floor. And, then, they had Sunday school rooms where they could have banquets where they had food. They had a kitchen, a full-fledged kitchen. . . . It was really . . . it was a heck of a thing.
>
> *Wallace:* Sounds almost like a community center. . . .
>
> *Graham:* We used it as a community center. It was the original . . . it was one of the original community centers. There was no comparison to what they have over there [now].[26]

When urban renewal forced the church to move in 1966—ninety-eight years after it was first consecrated—the loss of the organ to which Graham referred was a particular blow. It had been purchased by the congregation for $6,000, but it appraised for only $3,360, and

Mayo-Underwood School, 1930. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

the estimated cost to move it to a new location was $10,000. Unable to sell its most beloved instrument of praise, the church had to leave it behind. The loss of that organ was a memorable tragedy to the congregation's members even in 1991, a powerful symbol of the gross injustices perpetrated on poor people by urban renewal.

Wallace was particularly interested in illuminating urban renewal's psychological and emotional consequences, especially for the black members of the community. In addition to the churches, the black community took enormous pride in the segregated black schools of Frankfort. In 1882, Clinton Street School was built just behind the penitentiary, and nineteen-year-old William H. Mayo from Cincinnati began work as its first principal. By 1900, Mayo and eleven other faculty members taught kindergarten, elementary, and high school classes to almost five hundred children, "despite the handicaps imposed by racial segregation and inadequate financial support."[27] Mayo-Underwood, at the corner of Mero and Wilkinson, replaced the Clinton Street School in 1929. Like its predecessor, Mayo-Underwood housed kindergarten through high school classes. The school was named for William H. Mayo and the highly respected black educator E. E. Underwood, who was also a prominent citizen and community activist. Mayo-Underwood was an impressive brick building that occupied half a city block. In an architectural context

dominated by small frame dwellings, it stood out from its surroundings. However, all of those interviewed by Wallace remembered the school more as an impressive social institution than as an imposing physical structure.

Clinton Street School's final year of operation was 1928. Many of the older informants began their schooling at Clinton Street School, transferring to Mayo-Underwood in 1929. The school continues to be an enduring symbol of community in the neighborhood. Every person asked about it remembered the dedication of its teachers, who were role models and community leaders both inside and outside its classrooms. Henrietta Gill recalled her teachers: "There were things they didn't get paid for. . . . Once I wanted to take typing, and Ms. Eperline Hays was our teacher. The typing class was full because I didn't make up my mind till the last minute that I wanted to take it. She would bring her portable typewriter to school every day and teach me typing. And she lived in South Frankfort, now. She walked over there . . . and she brought a little portable typewriter with her to teach me to type. I mean, this is the kind of teachers we had. Yes. They were dedicated."[28]

Wallace's interview transcripts contain numerous references to this group of dedicated, hardworking teachers. Informants regularly listed Alice Samuels, Ms. Caise, Ms. Chase, and Mary C. Holmes, women especially revered in the community's memory. John Sykes related why the teachers at Mayo-Underwood were better for their students than the white teachers they had after integration: "I think we had better teachers, because they didn't teach you what was in the book, they taught you what life was about. . . . They *were* history. They knew from the time . . . when people were slaves . . . almost. Their grandparents and their parents were slaves. And they told us about how things had changed. . . . They taught us about life and a lot of things. They taught us about food and hygiene. . . . They wouldn't dare teach that at Frankfort High. But they wanted you to be clean, solid, healthy citizens later on . . . so they took that extra step. Plus, they knew everybody's grandmama."[29]

Memories of the abandonment of Mayo-Underwood in 1964 and its eventual destruction were especially bitter. Margaret Berry's statement resonates with the tone Wallace heard in many conversations about the school. "They took the school away from us. If they'd let us alone, left our teachers alone, the school would have been there and our children would have learned something. Now, they go

to school . . . these people don't care nothing about them. They don't push them. . . . We got some come out of Mayo-Underwood as lawyers and doctors and everything."[30]

Mayo-Underwood, one of the most celebrated symbols of the community, was a center for both academic and nonacademic social interactions and represented prestige for the community. On several occasions, Wallace's informants mentioned that the high school had produced "lawyers and doctors" and other successful professionals. In their interviews, neighborhood residents took the opportunity to recall and honor the positive aspects of growing up in a segregated society—teachers who were themselves part of the community, who cared about black students' futures, who pushed past misconceived social ideas because they did not believe them in their own hearts.

Papa Jazz defended the Tiger Inn after Herron's first article named it as one of the Craw's drinking establishments likely to be a site for police intervention, and the Tiger Inn likewise found a defender in almost every oral history interview that Jim Wallace conducted. This was a restaurant owned and operated by Ewing Atkins. On his tax return, the establishment was officially listed as the Tiger Inn Café, but those who remembered it well dropped "Café" from the name. The Tiger Inn was the hangout for teenage students from Mayo-Underwood, but also for African American teenagers from all over Frankfort. Atkins ran the Tiger Inn from 1931 to 1963 at 400 Mero Street. During urban renewal in the 1960s and 1970s, he moved the restaurant to 429 Washington Street, where it served the community from 1963 to 1968, after which it closed its doors for good.

During its long tenure on Mero Street, the Tiger Inn was a living symbol for the African American community living in the Bottom, as well as for the rest of black Frankfort. It was, in their direct experience, an establishment in striking contrast to the "joints" that gave their neighborhood a bad reputation. Ellsworth "Tubba" Marshall described the place for Wallace:

> *Marshall:* After the games, we would go to Tiger's Inn. Ewing Atkins owned Tiger's Inn.
> *Wallace:* Can you sort of describe what it looked like?
> *Marshall:* It was just a small restaurant . . . only just a half a block from the school. . . . Well, mostly where all of the school kids hung out was Tiger's Inn. And you wouldn't call

> that a honky-tonk because you couldn't do anything but play the Victrola and eat. That's all because Atkins didn't have anything else except that.[31]

When Jim Wallace asked James "Buddy" Ellis where he would take girls on dates when he was a teenager, Ellis responded definitively: "Tiger Inn." He continued:

> *Ellis:* I'm going to tell you about Tiger Inn. I didn't have any money. I'd go down there, and I'd be sitting down there drinking a Coke, and just laugh out loud. Atkins would [say,] "All right, boys, get on out of here." . . . You just talk a little loud or something, he'd say, "All right, let's go," just like that.
> *Wallace:* He didn't permit a lot of carousing and roughhousing.
> *Ellis:* No, no, no, he sure didn't.[32]

In recounting their fond memories of the Tiger Inn, former residents nearly always mentioned Ewing Atkins along with his business. Helen Holmes described Atkins in her conversation with Wallace:

> *Holmes:* He was a little hunchback. . . . He had a very unique, clean, orderly restaurant.
> *Wallace:* Well, people speak very highly of the Tiger Inn.
> *Holmes:* Oh, yes.[33]

To neighborhood outsiders, the Tiger Inn may have been just another joint, but it was an especially meaningful neighborhood symbol for those who attended Mayo-Underwood and to others who frequented the area. For almost thirty-seven years, the Tiger Inn was *the* hangout for Frankfort's black teenagers, but it never shook its associations with the Bottom in the public memory of white neighborhood outsiders.

Another building that stood out from the rest of the neighborhood was the American Legion building, located in the heart of the neighborhood at the corner of Clinton and Washington. The impressive three-story, cut-stone building owned by the American Legion housed numerous businesses and organizations over the years. Wallace often brought with him to interviews a set of maps and photographs as visual cues. One was an image of the American Legion building.

American Legion building/Lodge/People's Pharmacy, 429 Washington Street, 1917. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

Wallace: These were taken in 1913 by a group called the Civic League. You might remember that building there. That building is a beautiful color.

Knott: Oh, this is the American Legion on the corner of Washington and Clinton.

Wallace: And, see, when they took that photograph . . . that was when there used to be a pharmacist . . . a black drugstore in the basement called the People's Pharmacy. . . . And I think there was a black Mason's group or some kind of a Masonic organization . . . and there's all of the members out there. I don't know who.

Knott: Well, see, now . . . I wasn't born when all these pictures were taken. But I do know this is the . . . well, what did they call it? The American Legion, they named it that. It

had another name at first . . . and then . . . they called it the American Legion in my time.

Wallace: Oh. I didn't realize it had another name to it.[34]

The building was a source of pride. It served local social groups; it housed black institutions such as the People's Pharmacy and Dr. E. E. Underwood's medical practice; it quartered social groups like the Masons, the American Legion, and the Odd Fellows. Like the Mayo-Underwood School, the building itself symbolized cohesion for the black community, but it held deep significance for everyone who lived in the neighborhood. James Graham discussed the building with Jim Wallace at great length:

> In the American Legion over there, you had a building . . . that was put together by blacks. I mean, that was built by, that was a three-story building. . . . They owned that building. They built it. That building was built by a black organization. Black craftsmen and black organization. That was the Odd Fellows . . . at the corner of Clinton and Washington. The white three-story brick . . . creek stone. A beautiful building, a beautiful building, three stories high. It had two businesses in the bottom. . . .
>
> The American Legion was run up in it, and, then, they had living quarters on one side . . . and, then . . . they had a dance floor and the lodge. The Masonic Lodge met up there for years and years on the third floor . . . it was a nice huge-size building. And . . . when you found out what they did to that, just like I say . . . they condemned the building. . . . because they couldn't get at you one way. . . . They couldn't say the building was dilapidated because everything was up to snuff. . . .
>
> They was not going to let it just stand there by itself. . . . We argued several times. I mean, they said they was going to reconstruct the American Legion. "No, no, that building can't stay there," you know.[35]

When urban renewal razed the American Legion building, emotions were charged. James Graham's statements convey deep feeling about this neighborhood symbol. Although on some occasions Wallace brought up the building himself by referring to the picture, interviewees often spontaneously mentioned it

without any prompting from Wallace about the structure's social significance.

Persons and Personalities

The names of the same people appear in interview after interview. Although this resulted in large part from Jim Wallace's painstaking preliminary research and his style of listing the names of people in interviews, the names Wallace mentioned to prompt memories seem to belong to individuals his informants wanted to discuss. Patterns emerge from the oral history texts as the names of the same local personalities come up repeatedly, people who for one reason or another came forward in the light of memory: the "King of Craw" John Fallis; benevolent tough-man Will Castleman; local resident "Squeezer" Brown; "ladies of the evening" like Ida Howard and "Mountain Mary"; neighborhood characters like Eva Cox; restaurant owner "Shineboy" and "Twenty Grand," the owner of the notorious Blue Moon; local Negro League baseball player "Black Cat" Graham; "Frog" Woods, the grocery store owner; ice cream vendor Tony Papa; the beloved pale-skinned, singing-and-dancing undertaker, Jack Robb; landlords John Buckner and Dulin Moss. Wallace's initial research laid the foundation for his list of significant names, and it grew as he acquired more information in each interview.

As evidenced by the preceding list, the tradition of nicknaming was widespread in Craw, producing such memorable epithets as "Black Cat" for Thomas Graham, James "Papa Jazz" Berry, "Shineboy" for Alfred Pollard, "Twenty Grand" for Harvey Sarven, "Frog" for Huston Woods, James "Squeezer" Brown, "Corn Puddin" for local barber Charles William Chiles, local politician John "Doughbelly" or "Uncle Dough" Griffey, and bar owner "Frenchie" LaFontaine. Often the interviewees knew only the nickname of an individual, never having known his or her given name.

After the first few interviews, this tradition became apparent to Wallace, who began to inquire about nicknames. Local white resident Harry Goebel McCoy stated in his interview that "all of the colored guys had nicknames," to which Wallace responded, "That's something I found out. Almost every colored, even the women, had nicknames."[36] James Calhoun offered Wallace his thoughts and theories about some of the neighborhood's nicknaming traditions:

Wallace: When you think of . . . the tough men, the men with a reputation for being good with their fists, who comes to mind from the Bottom as being sort of a rough-and-tumble kind of person?

Calhoun: Well, there were people that would come in here and leave and you'd hear about them, and you didn't get familiar with them, and you just heard of their names . . . but it wasn't that much going on in my time.

But before that, they had old tough men and different things, and some of them I've heard of. . . . Well, anyway, when all these fellows got out of prison, they had nicknames. And, you know, some of them could have died and nobody ever knew what their names were. . . . But we, as being respectable kids, we had to call everybody Mister.

Now, there was a fellow down there . . . all I've ever known, and a lot of people right around here now, his name, they called him "Diamonds." We called him "Mr. Diamonds." "How are you, 'Mr. Diamonds'?" Nobody never knew his name.

There was another fellow they called "Mr. Turtle" because he did look like a turtle. There was another fellow . . . he had a saying, "Honey, hush." And he'd laugh and just talk and touch you and holler, "Ah, Honey, hush." "Hello, Honey," we'd say. "How are you, Mr. Honey? How are you, Mr. Hush?" And people don't know his name. . . . "Shotgun. . . ." We found out his name was Howard Dixon.

Wallace: Are these all white guys?

Calhoun: No, black. . . . They're all black. And most of them, they'd come here, they've come out of prison, or they've come into here . . . that was during the '30s. And one or two of them lived up into the '40s and died . . . and nobody never knew their names. But I sit around and think a lot of times, I just wonder if people are looking for them. Nobody never came to visit them. But they all lived good and worked. . . . But they lived by their nicknames.[37]

In his interview with Henry and Margaret Ellis, Wallace tried to understand the personal significance of nicknames in Craw. He was trying to formulate a question when he said, "It struck me that it's important to have a nickname . . . almost like you're accepted into

the group. . . . Did you have a nickname?" Henry Ellis responded first:

> *Henry Ellis:* No, I didn't have any, but just about everybody else . . . everybody had a nickname really. It's amazing that . . .
> *Margaret Ellis:* That we don't actually know their real name.
> *Henry Ellis:* When they die, if they don't put in parenthesis their nickname . . .
> *Margaret Ellis:* It passes us up.[38]

When asked about nicknames, Mary Helen Berry expressed her strong feelings about the tradition:

> *Berry:* I hated them.
> *Wallace:* You hated them?
> *Berry:* I hate nicknames, because . . .
> *Wallace:* All right, "Corn Pudding," "Doughbelly."
> *Berry:* Yes.
> *Wallace:* "Black Cat."
> *Berry:* Yes.
> *Wallace:* "Shineboy."
> *Berry:* I . . . I didn't like them because . . . a lot of time . . . people die . . . you never did know their real name.[39]

Whether people loved or hated nicknames, the African American traditions of the neighborhood valued them. Despite Wallace's meticulous efforts to discover individuals' official names, many nicknames were familiar while legal names remained unknown. As several informants attested, these individuals would die, and unless the newspaper's obituary identified their nicknames, members of their own community would never have known they had passed on.

Personal nicknames are like place nicknames in the way that intimate meanings originate in them and public memory perpetuates itself in them. Some nicknames have identifiable origins, while the etiology of others remains unknown. Nevertheless, in this particular community, nicknames served as primary signifiers for many of the Bottom's persons and personalities.

One individual appeared in almost every interview, emerging in Wallace's transcripts as an unlikely but treasured community icon. James "Squeezer" Brown was not rich or powerful, not known for

James “Squeezer” Brown. Courtesy of Nell Cox.

outrageous or criminal behavior, and probably never saw his name in the newspaper. Yet almost everybody remembered him vividly. Not much is known about "Squeezer's" life story, making his presence in these oral history narratives vitally important.

Squeezer Brown was an indigent minstrel and "Pied Piper" for the children of Bottom. A World War I veteran, Brown was known for his abilities to sing and play the guitar, mostly for children, and for inventing entertaining and memorable songs. He occasionally spent a large percentage of his fixed monthly income on treats for the children of the neighborhood. Henry Sanders remembered one incident involving Squeezer at the Tiger Inn:

> The first time I ever knowed "Squeezer" Brown, we was living on Clinton Street, and I was going to the Clinton Street High School; [I was] in kindergarten, and "Squeezer" was painting an old house on the corner there. And that sun got hot. He came down off the ladder and looked up at the sun, went home and got his guitar and came back and got to picking on the guitar and said, "I don't bother work and work don't bother me." Of course, I was very young, and it amazed me.
>
> He got his pension from the First World War and . . . he'd get a bunch of kids and he'd march with them, you know. Like they was in the army. They had to march. And he'd march them to Tiger's Inn, and that's where the kids hung out. . . . and he'd have the man lock the door and then get anything they wanted in Tiger's Inn.
>
> Now, if they didn't act right, they couldn't get nothing. But if they acted right, they'd get pop and ice cream and candy, anything they wanted. And they said he spent most of his pension on those kids.[40]

Anna Belle Williams remembered Squeezer traveling around the neighborhood with a banjo. "Brought all of the children to him," she said. "He had always had candy for the kids."[41] Wallace took the information about Squeezer that he had gained from previous interviews and brought it up in his discussion with James Calhoun, who fondly remembered Squeezer:

> *Wallace:* Let's see, who else. "Squeezer" Brown.

Calhoun: "Squeezer." Now, to have met him you would have loved that man. That man could keep you laughing. He could play the piano, could play a guitar, banjo, loved children. He spent his bonus on children.

Wallace: The story I've heard on him, he was painting a house not far from Mayo-Underwood School, and the sun was getting high in the sky, and he came down off the ladder and he went and got his guitar, and he started to sing a song that goes . . . "I don't bother work and work don't bother me."

Calhoun: " . . . bother work and work don't bother me . . . I don't give a doggone . . ." or something. . . . Oh, man, that man was something. He was something. To follow him around, and watch him, and sit around. . . . He was an enjoyable person to be around.

Wallace: They said that he used to line the kids up and march them like he was drilling them.

Calhoun: That's right.

Wallace: In World War I . . . I guess he's a veteran. . . . And he'd take them over to Tiger's Inn and close and lock the door, and if they were good they could get anything they wanted, pop or candy, and if they were bad he would put them out and send them home.

Calhoun: He had so many down there one day, across the street . . . he had them lined up from the little ice house on Washington Street . . . going in the front door, coming out the back, I'll say he had a hundred, a hundred and fifty kids, black and white.

Wallace: Good grief.

Calhoun: "Go in and get anything you want." Candy. Of course, Mr. Atkins, he didn't have too much of it, but he sold out of any candy. . . . He paid for it. "Squeezer" was something else. Yes sir, he was a wonderful, wonderful person.

Wallace: Everyone I've ever talked to has . . . and I've got a picture of him. I didn't bring it with me today, but, uh, sometime I'll bring it by. It shows him sitting on the front porch strumming a guitar.

Calhoun: Uh-huh. Did he have his uniform . . . his hat? Sometimes you'd see him in different outfits. Sometimes

you might see him in a high hat with tails on, and play. . . . Oh, he was something.

Wallace: Everybody speaks highly of "Squeezer" Brown.

Calhoun: James Brown . . . that was his name.[42]

James "Squeezer" Brown is but one example of a person who appears and reappears in these oral histories, thereby gaining a solid foothold in the public memory of his community. The name of James "Squeezer" Brown would certainly otherwise have eventually slipped out of time, forgotten. But Squeezer Brown embodies all that was good about Craw and the community of people who lived there; he emerges from the pages of these interviews as a hero whose name is cherished in the private heart and the public memory of his neighborhood.

Submerged in Memory

When Jim Wallace asked Jo Beauchamp about his earliest remembrance of the Bottom, his first response focused on the hardships faced so often by people in the community. When he continued, Beauchamp said, "There's just so much that happened . . . it's just hard to put your finger on one different thing." A silent moment passed in the interview. Wallace had begun to proceed to his next question when Beauchamp interrupted him, saying, "I guess the worst tragedy I can remember down in there was the 1937 flood. Oh that was terrible. The water come up and got all of our houses."[43] Indeed, the 1937 flooding of the Kentucky River was the worst in Frankfort's history. On January 22, the river reached a record-setting crest of 45 feet; four days later it finally peaked at 47.2 feet. The flood inflicted tremendous damage on Frankfort, driving thousands from their homes.[44] Memories about this devastating flood emerge from the oral history narratives as stories about an important community-binding event, conveying a sense of place that is commonly associated with all of downtown Frankfort, but especially with Craw. The Bottom was usually the first place in Frankfort to flood, and its proximity to the river ensured that it would experience the most frequent devastations.

Among the symbolic events discussed in the interviews, the 1937 flood appears most often and elicited the most vivid and consistent narratives. In an interview with Harry Goebel McCoy, Wallace

Flood scene in Craw, with People's Pharmacy to the right. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

inquired about the flood, and McCoy responded, "Yes, I can remember that '37 flood. Well, we was living on Wilkinson Street. We lived on the hillside, then . . . down there on the other side of the church. . . . We was small kids. I seen houses go down the river, seen dogs on top of houses."[45] With four-fifths of the city covered in water, many residents displaced from the Bottom sought shelter with family members living at higher elevations. Many former residents of the neighborhood described their family's housing situation during the flood. James T. Graham recounted what he remembered about returning to his house by boat during the flood: "The '37 flood. . . . I rode in a boat with my father over the top of my house. Over the top of my house, the house that I lived in, 611 Washington Street, the house next to that was a two-story house. And the boat was up to the window in the second story. I can remember that very well."[46] Another former resident, Henry Ellis, had a similar experience in the flood that year. Ellis remembered his house covered by rising water: "I was living on Center Street during the '37 flood . . . a two-story house . . . and the water got up to the second floor . . . and we came out the second story in a boat."[47]

Throughout the neighborhood's history, each time the Kentucky River flooded and the water receded, neighborhood residents

would flee and then begin the process of moving back in again. James T. Graham described his family's experience moving back to their home: "After the water went down, we went in and cleaned. We washed and soaked and did all of this . . . trying to get the mud out of it."[48] Margaret Ellis described her family's repeated dealings with the aftermath of recurring destructive floods: "But they would clean them out. Everybody would clean out their house, and make a big fire and scrub the floors and things, and move right back in."[49]

Individual families were not on their own as they faced the process of rebuilding their lives. Several of Wallace's informants recollected the community effort that ensued following floods. George Simmons narrated one scene: "In the Bottom, when the water came up and everybody had to move out, it was just almost like having a convention or something. . . . They'd move out . . . have their drinks and everything. It was a celebration in a way. And . . . when the water went down, they'd go back in and start cleaning their houses out, and having the same type of party."[50] When Wallace invoked Simmons's statement in an interview he conducted with Mary Helen Berry later, she told a similar tale:

> *Berry:* You had a good time. Wherever you go, everybody had little money, and you just ate and drank and played cards, and you'd dance, and you told yarns, yes.
> *Wallace:* When the water went down, everybody would . . . help each other?
> *Berry:* Help each other clean up and move back in there and everything. You would never know there'd been a flood.[51]

In short, preparation for floods and the reconstruction process that followed them was a ritual community process, a nearly annual reality well understood by members of this riverside community. The notion that residents could interpret such destruction as a type of "party" or "celebration" would astound many outsiders. Mary Helen Berry's description of the flood evoking the refugee experience, everyone having "a good time" while eating, drinking, playing cards, and telling stories, is difficult for nonparticipants to imagine. The subtext of these narratives is, once again, a subtle commentary on the sometimes nostalgically remembered strength and

cohesiveness of that intangible sense of place that held sway with the residents of Craw.

When the water receded, the residents, weary from the chronic flooding, would move back into their homes. The return process particularly interested Jim Wallace. In his interview with Margaret Ellis, he inquired about the cycle of going and coming home again:

> *Wallace:* Why would they come back?
> *Ellis:* Because you had nowhere else. And then, down in there, a lot of people owned their homes. So they wasn't just going to leave them.[52]

Mary Helen Berry explained to Wallace that most residents of the Bottom did not choose whether or not to return: "It was home. Where were they going? They didn't make enough to go establish themselves other places . . . because the further you got, or the better the location, you had to pay more rent."[53]

When Wallace asked William Isaac Fields about returning to the neighborhood after a flood, he signaled that he knew how hard all that coming and going had been on people:

> *Wallace:* I've heard a lot of people say that the '37 flood was a turning point for that neighborhood. A lot of people didn't come back after they got flooded out. A lot of places got washed away and didn't get rebuilt. Would that be accurate?
> *Fields:* Well, a few people didn't go back; but hey, when you going no place else, you go back in there, and clean it out, and stay there.[54]

It is true that many of the buildings destroyed by the flood were never rebuilt, as it is true that some people chose not to return to the neighborhood after the flood. But the families of most of those interviewed did return. Wallace prompted Anna Belle Williams for her memories of the community in times of flood:

> *Wallace:* I've asked this question of other people that are repeatedly flooded out . . . but they always go back.
> *Williams:* It's home. They don't have any place else to go.

Wallace: Some of them have said the flood even brought them closer together.
Williams: It did, because everybody helped everybody else, that's right.[55]

"It's home." Williams offers this statement as her primary reason for returning to Craw after each inundation, capturing the essence of the reasoning behind repeated returns to the devastated neighborhood following floods. Of course, there were serious practical reasons for return, including property ownership and the general lack of affordable housing outside of Craw. But "home" refers to much more than the simple frame structures in which people live. The concept of "home" includes the familiar network of people with whom individuals interact, the grocery stores where they shop, the churches and schools they attend. The narrative texts generated by Wallace's interviews clearly demonstrate that the flooding of the Kentucky River provided a key component of the neighborhood's identity and thus a major theme in the oral-historical narrative reconstruction of Craw.

Since the completion of his oral history project documenting memories of life in the Bottom, James Wallace has conducted dozens of presentations of his research for the greater Frankfort community. They include slides of prominent places destroyed by urban renewal—Mayo-Underwood School, the Odd Fellows Hall/American Legion building, the Corinthian Baptist Church—accompanied by his reading of excerpts from his interviews. What results is the repeated commemoration of the neighborhood, a public invocation that emphasizes the role of select components in the redevelopment of public memory of a community's reconstructed identity. Wallace does the selecting, as did the individuals he represents in this way; all have selected versions of memories that stand in refutation of the narratives imposed from without. The broadcasting of Wallace's videotaped presentations on Frankfort's local cable television channel has turned Craw's collective memory into a performative artifact of the ubiquitous mass media, making it possible for former residents—and for us—to repeatedly reinforce this new commemorative understanding of the historical legacy left by this neighborhood.

This coherent body of oral history narratives emphasizes once-subordinated memories and provides a more complete understanding

of life in this neighborhood. It once existed only in the mnemonic repertoires of former residents, but when these memories are gathered up and reflected back through an ethnographer's lens, the revived depiction becomes part of a larger narrative tradition, the formation of a new version of public memory. These narrative reconstructions organize memorable community symbols in the mind and create coherence with regard to individuals' personal relationship with this remembered community.

Chapter Four

The Other Side of the Tracks

Although Jim Wallace originally conducted his oral history project to fulfill course requirements in graduate school, the timing of the project, the deposit of his materials into the archives at the Kentucky Historical Society, and the repeated public presentation of his research findings have, over several years, combined to play a significant role in organizing community symbols that counter dominant perceptions, representing a new version of the neighborhood in public memory. Wallace often framed interview questions, even entire interviews, in opposition to the deeply ingrained public perception of Craw as a violent, criminal place.

Several decades prior to Wallace's project, a few archived oral history interviews with neighborhood outsiders discussed the subject of Craw in the larger context of documenting Frankfort history. Colonel George Chinn was the former director of the Kentucky Historical Society and a local historian whose father served as the warden at the penitentiary on High Street in 1907. It was well-known that one of Colonel Chinn's favorite historical topics to discuss was bootlegging, and in an interview Enoch Harned conducted in 1980, Chinn discussed Craw:

> *Chinn:* There is something that is connected directly with the penitentiary that is seldom mentioned, and that is a place in Frankfort called Craw. There was a slum area in Frankfort that was known as Craw. It's now right where the office towers are. . . . See, this penitentiary was built in early 1800, and by the time of 1900, around in there, there had been enough people in prison whose families had moved down here to be close to them. . . . If you got fifteen years in the penitentiary, you got fifteen years in the penitentiary.

> It was quite a common thing for the families to move down to be close to them, and they had a regular establishment here in Frankfort, and it was called Craw. Now if you think that Dodge City was rough, you should have known Craw in its heyday. There was just an unwritten law in Frankfort that as long as you did this on the other side of the railroad tracks and buried your dead, everything was all right. Don't cross over on the other side. . . . You can imagine the lawlessness that went on among the people who settled under those conditions. Well, I mean the families, you can imagine the type of individual that was attracted down here in the beginning; they were the families of the people in the penitentiary. They prided themselves in Craw.
>
> You'd always have known who is "King of Craw." He was supposed to be the Al Capone of that area, and whoever killed the "King of Craw," he automatically became "King of Craw" himself, as long as he lasted. I could name two or three, but I won't.
>
> *Harned:* When people got out of prison, did they stay around in this vicinity?
>
> *Chinn:* Their family had been here so long it was natural that they'd stay. As long as they stayed in Craw everything was fine. But don't cross the railroad tracks.[1]

Chinn's statements regarding the lawlessness of the neighborhood and the penitentiary's influence on its purported culture of crime and violence serve as excellent examples of the view of the neighborhood generally held by Frankfort's white residents and historians. Public perception of the neighborhood was, indeed, generally consistent with Colonel Chinn's dramatic descriptions. Although neighborhood outsiders considered Craw to be a negative entity in a *civic* context, the prevalence of narrative descriptions celebrating these negative elements indicates a sense of historical pride held by Frankfort citizens who appear to eagerly claim ownership of Craw in a *historical* context. Craw's presence in Frankfort's historical narrative gives the city a distinctly unique and "entertaining" quality that emerges from what could be perceived as the city's more mundane, politically dominated historical identity. Thus, dominant public memory in Frankfort tended to overemphasize the seedy elements of

Craw's compelling personality. In defense against one-sided accounts such as these, Wallace and those he interviewed invoked the spirit of the statements made by James "Papa Jazz" Berry in Ron Herron's *State Journal* article about the Bottom and actively sought to change the public's perception of the historic neighborhood.

Remembering Safety

Jim Wallace did not set out to celebrate, or even confirm, the long-held perception of the neighborhood as a criminal and violent place. He focused his interviews on the close-knit, family-oriented community that transcended outsider perceptions. In the process of conducting this project, Wallace demonstrated time and time again the interviewer's impact in determining the general course of the interview, as well as the interviewer's potential impact in determining the resultant course of both insider and outsider public memory. When the subject of prostitution in Craw came up in an interview with Henrietta Gill, she said to Wallace, "Things I could tell you, honey," and he responded, "I wouldn't ask you to tell me anything like that," and shifted the conversation away from the topic.[2] But in almost every interview, he posed the question, "Was Craw a violent place?" Often, Wallace positioned this question in the context of a leading statement, such as the following: "Now, I've heard some debate between people that Bottom was not a violent place; there was violence, but it was mostly in association with people getting liquored up at a joint and causing trouble. But as far as the area itself, there wasn't excessive violence."[3] Constructing his questions by first stating the presence of a "debate" regarding the neighborhood's violent character, followed by a clarification that reorients the association of violence to the presence of alcohol, and finishing with the conclusion that "there wasn't excessive violence" in Craw introduces a narrative and thematic structure for the interviewees to follow in their reply.

In response to Wallace's inquiries about whether or not former residents felt safe living in the neighborhood, most stressed that the criminal element was contained, that they felt completely safe in the neighborhood. Mary Helen Berry stated, "We didn't know what it was to lock your door. . . . Everyone looked out for each other."[4] Henry Goebel McCoy remarked, "I don't remember my dad ever locking the door."[5] Anna Belle Williams confirmed this sentiment and added that the residents' sense of security depended on the fact

that they all experienced the same economic difficulties and were "struggling together."[6] When Wallace asked Alex Sanders about the fact that no one seemed to remember locking his or her door, despite the neighborhood's criminal reputation, Sanders told a story that represents the secure feeling the former residents held in memory:

> *Sanders:* I remember a lady by the name of Ms. Matt Hardin. She's the type of lady that would go visit people late at night, or go help somebody that was sick. And many times, I would hear her talk about she could walk through the Bottom and when she got to the Bottom she was safe. . . . She didn't have to worry about nothing.
> *Wallace:* The reverse of what everybody else says, "Don't go through the Bottom at night."
> *Sanders:* No, she said when she got to the Bottom, everything was all right.[7]

Isaac Fields later corroborated Sanders's story: "I mean, every city's got an area where somebody gets killed, you know, where you've got them joints, and guys get drunk. Somebody is going to get hurt once in a while. But other than that, why, a lady could walk down through the Craw at two o'clock, any time of the night by herself and wouldn't nobody bother her."[8] In fact, when asked directly whether or not they felt safe, most residents said that they felt a sense of security in their former neighborhood that they did not have presently. The story of Ms. Matt Hardin stands in stark contrast to the public misconception of a neighborhood rife with violence and criminal chaos.

Nostalgia is a feeling or expression of longing, in the present, for a more positively associated place or time imagined in the past, a phenomenon that introduces the outside perception of potential distortion into the individual and collective expression of memory in the pursuit of historical truth. On some level, the memories of former residents of Craw are caught in what historian Stephanie Coontz terms the "nostalgia trap," remembering a safer past reality than ever actually existed.[9] Once criticized by scholars as unreliable history, perceived nostalgia has become accepted, critical to understanding embedded meaning in historical interpretation and to overcoming the perception of certain oral histories as merely "substitute memories."[10] Barbara Shircliffe suggests that an examination of nostalgia

"can validate the strengths of the black community and the communal bonds that provided a framework for confronting racism."[11]

For the overwhelming majority of residents interviewed for this project, Craw, or the Bottom, was a safe place for them and their families to live. The neighborhood was a community where people, both whites and blacks, looked out for one another. Wallace's oral history interviews were consciously conducted in such a way as to emphasize the overall sense of community expressed in former residents' statements of safety and well-being, creating a potentially nostalgic frame for both the interview and the project. Although former residents almost always implied that the neighborhood was not as violent a place as its public image would suggest, the question arises whether or not public memory had historically taken an antinostalgic view in overemphasizing the neighborhood's violent and criminal identity.

Remembering Crime

When Henry Goebel McCoy said in his interview that he didn't remember his father ever locking the door and that if you were not looking for trouble you would be safe, his wife spoke up—a rare occurrence over the course of their interview—forcing her husband to clarify his memory:

> *Mrs. McCoy:* Well, there was always stabbings down there.
> *McCoy:* Do what, now?
> *Mrs. McCoy:* In those places where they'd go in and get drunk.
> *McCoy:* Well, yeah, but . . .
> *Wallace:* The joints?
> *McCoy:* Yeah.
> *Mrs. McCoy:* Yeah.
> *McCoy:* Now, we was talking about . . . we was just talking about everyday life. Now, we're not talking about what they do at nighttime.[12]

McCoy, caught-off guard by his wife's interjection, admits that there was a difference between what he terms "everyday life" and "what they do at nighttime." He implies that during the day Craw was safe, but that after dark the "joints" would impose violence on the community with some regularity. His distinction accounts for the primary

association of neighborhood violence with its drinking establishments. When one of Wallace's few white informants, R. T. Brooks, was asked the same question, he startled Wallace with his response:

Wallace: I've heard that Craw was a violent place, a place of gambling and prostitution and . . .
Brooks: Well, it was.
Wallace: Was it really?
Brooks: Yeah.[13]

When Wallace asked Jo Beauchamp, another white informant, about violence in Craw, Beauchamp responded definitively, "Yes, it was. It was a violent place."[14] Ellsworth "Tubba" Marshall and his wife, both black, responded in much the same way as Goebel McCoy and his wife:

Wallace: Well, was it a violent place?
Mrs. Marshall: No, no, it wasn't.
Marshall: Oh, there was violence down there.
Mrs. Marshall: Oh, yeah.
Marshall: Yeah, oh, yeah. There were killings down there, now. Sure, there were killings.[15]

Again, one spouse immediately answers with a definitively reactive response, denying the overall characterization of the neighborhood as a "violent place," only to be contradicted by the other. The interview continued as Wallace specified that the violence and trouble he had been hearing about was associated with outsiders who frequented the drinking establishments:

Wallace: Well, I've heard that a lot of the violence came into the community when people from outside of Bottom came and partied Saturday night. . . . and got a little bit . . .
Mrs. Marshall: Yeah . . .
Marshall: Yeah. You know, that's . . .
Mrs. Marshall: South Frankfort now is worse than the Bottom.
Wallace: Yeah.
Marshall: He wants to know about the Bottom. He doesn't want to know about South Frankfort.
Wallace: Let me ask you all. . . . Somebody told me Saturday

> night, the thing to do was go out and get your best clothes on and be seen in the Bottom. I mean, what would you all . . . when you wanted to go out and go to a nice place or go to a place that was special in the Bottom, where would you go?[16]

Before her husband can address the violence, Mrs. Marshall deflects attention to the current state of South Frankfort. When he redirects the interview to the topic of criminal violence in the Bottom, Wallace, uncomfortable with the disagreement, casually steers the interview to another, more positive, community-oriented topic. When Wallace interviewed James Ellis, Ellis, although Wallace had not yet broached the topic of violence, responded to inquiries about his "earliest remembrances" of the neighborhood by offering this:

> *Ellis:* Well, I can remember [laughing] down there somebody getting killed about every week down there in that Bottom [laughing].
> *Wallace:* Oh, really?
> *Ellis:* Yeah.
> *Wallace:* Was it a violent place?
> *Ellis:* Oh, yeah.[17]

"Nobody Ever Told You That One?"

In Ron Herron's 1975 article about the Frankfort Police Department, several officers recalled the criminal character of the neighborhood. In Herron's follow-up article featuring an interview with James "Papa Jazz" Berry, Berry advocates a more balanced, contextual examination of the neighborhood, one that moves beyond its seamy side, but he does not deny the facts that fed Craw's reputation. Often memory produces logically contradictory narratives, resulting in two positions on the same subject. Goebel McCoy's differentiation between "everyday life" and nighttime activity both illustrates and underlines this fact. Wallace, inspired by Berry's printed appeals, usually guided his interviews in a direction that emphasized the closeness of community in the neighborhood, but his list of names, places, and events did include some of the district's better-known characters, some infamous for their disregard for the law. Despite what many of Craw's former residents claimed, instances of violent crime did indeed occur. Historical evidence, including newspaper

Blue Moon Saloon. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

articles, court documents, and police reports, points to the fact that the neighborhood's reputation was well earned, especially in the earlier decades of its existence.

Most of Frankfort's police reports for the first half of the twentieth century have been destroyed, with only scattered reports from a few years in the late 1950s surviving in the state archives. These few extant reports confirm a high degree of police activity in Craw, and that violence occurred mainly in association with the local drinking establishments. Harvey "Twenty Grand" Sarven, the owner and operator of the Blue Moon, reported many of the incidents. A young woman, for example, confessed to Police Officer Edward Conway following a shooting incident at Sarven's club in 1959:

> About 9:00 P.M. I went to the Blue Moon went to the back booth and drank a beer. . . . I saw Henry Sanford and Francis Barron sitting in the booth next to the rest room with his arm around her. I said I had a notion to beat her up and she said come on if you think you are big enough. Then I went to them and made a grab for Francis and Sanford grabbed me and held me while she grabbed me by the hair. Twenty Grand said if I didn't behave myself he was going to bar me out.

The corner of Clinton and Washington, 1940. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

Then I told him that I was going to get that whore (Francis Barron) then I left and went home (410 Washington Street) and got a gun, my own gun. Calvin Stewart saw me leaving and asked me what I was going to do but I did not answer him. Then I saw rag mop (Florence Cunningham) and Betty Kuhn, they said who are you going to shoot, I didn't answer. By that time I was at the Blue Moon door and told Grace to put that whore out (Francis Barron) they would not put her out. Then I told them that I would get her sometime. Then I looked through the window and saw her with her back to me. I aimed at her and pulled the trigger. I tried to load it again but Twenty Grand and some other man held me. I knew Francis was shot when I saw her grab herself and fall over. I didn't mean to kill her, I just wanted to wound her to let her know that I meant business. The reason I did this is because every time I get a boyfriend she tries to take him away from me. I make this statement of my own free will knowing that it can be used against me in a court of law.[18]

The police report states that the perpetrator's offense was "Shooting and Wounding," that her motive for shooting Ms. Barron was revenge, and that she used a ".22 Cal. Remington Rifle Single Shot." A report that appeared in the next morning's newspaper clarifies that the bullet had not killed Barron; it had "penetrated the skin of her head but did not damage the skull."[19]

Interviews from Wallace's project note recollections of bootlegging, gambling, and political corruption in a less serious manner than exhibited when violent crime was involved. A large repertoire of community narratives emerges from these interviews, stories told with great pride that invoke people, events, and images directly congruent with the neighborhood's criminal reputation, despite denials within the same interview frame that the neighborhood deserved its reputation of violent crime.

The corpus of narratives relating to specific violent historical events steadily grew as Wallace proceeded with his project. George Simmons and Henry Sanders recalled "bad man" Alex Gordon. While Simmons remembered items on Shineboy's restaurant menu, the fact that Shineboy had come from the mountains, and how much the community liked Shineboy, Sanders interjected:

> *Sanders:* But he and Alex Gordon got to shooting at one another down there one time. They were arguing about something, Shineboy was drinking.
> *Simmons:* I didn't know that.
> *Sanders:* Alex, he was, too. And they got to shooting at one another and they were like two cowboys shooting at one another.
> *Simmons:* Yeah.
> *Sanders:* One behind one tree and the other one behind the other one.
> *Simmons:* How about that.
> *Sanders:* They came out shooting guns [laughter]. They shot about eight, ten times one night. Didn't hit nobody.
> *Simmons:* How about that.[20]

Alex Gordon was alleged to be a local bootlegger linked with several of the violent incidents rooted in Craw's public memory. Wallace and James Calhoun discussed an incident that occurred on August 30, 1932: the alleged shooting of neighborhood resident Willie Davis:

Wallace: Do you remember much about Alex Gordon?

Calhoun: Alex Gordon. Yes, I do. I remember the day that he was supposed to have killed . . . Willie Davis. . . . That was in the afternoon.

Wallace: You mean, shot him right out in broad daylight in the street?

Calhoun: Yeah. It was about 5:30. Right out in the street. . . . Oh, heck, this here was in the '40s. . . . And seemed like Willie . . . I don't know whether he got whiskey on credit from him or owed him money, or what, but this happened in the evening about 5:30 out on the corner of Washington beside . . . where Willie lived there.

There's a little house sit right out on the street. And he was sitting in the door, and his wife had gone in the house or done something, and when he got up Alex Gordon come down, and he [Willie Davis] fell right on that manhole cover. I can draw a picture. . . . And that was in the afternoon. Oh, I'll never forget.

Wallace: So, Willie never had a chance to defend himself. He just got shot.

Calhoun: Willie Davis, he fell dead on that . . . on that manhole cover. . . . I've seen three people get shot. . . . But then, you don't want to be no witness. You think about what's going to happen to you, and you started running.[21]

Newspaper accounts of the incident closely parallel Calhoun's memory. According to one article, Alex Gordon surrendered to police shortly after Davis died.[22]

When Wallace asked Jo Beauchamp about incidents of violence that he remembered in the neighborhood, Beauchamp remarked that in 1929 there had been twelve murders. Beauchamp followed this statement by relating the story of a particular crime of passion:

And then, old man Blackwell killed his wife and killed Bill Casey. He lived in a duplex house, and he was a sound sleeper, but he suspicioned that Bill was fooling with his wife.

And there was a duplex, they had a door that connected them together. He set a bucket of water against that door, and he got up the next morning, and that bucket was way out in

> the floor. And he loaded up his shotgun . . . he loaded special shells. And Bill come out going to the privy. It was up in the backyard. And he killed him.
>
> And I understand his wife said, "You killed the onliest man I ever loved." And by God, he turned around and killed her. Oh, there was some terrible tragedies happened on down there.[23]

Goebel McCoy told Wallace that he blamed the violence in Craw on neighborhood outsiders coming in and stirring up trouble in the local bars. McCoy delivered an account of a mysterious killing he remembered having happened when he was a teenager:

> I remember one night when we was kids, I'd say just before I went in service, I'd say I was sixteen years old. We went out one night. A bunch of us got together, and we was going to buy some beers. . . . You know, we could go in this cat house, we called it. This woman come back there and just brought us some beer. We opened it and looked inside. There was not anything but Pepsi Cola in it [laughter]. She said, "You all are too young to buy this."
>
> Now, that night they had a murder in her house. I think his name was . . . Mr. Wilson, they call him. Got his head cut off. She woke up the next morning, and his head is in the . . . his head is over in one corner and his body is in bed. They hadn't never have found that guy that killed him. Hadn't nobody ever told you about that one?[24]

Interviewees often related violence to a few specific individuals, such as notorious bad men like Alex Gordon and John Fallis. These narratives generally feature a fairly consistent list of establishments, including the Blue Moon Saloon, the Sky Blue Inn, the Peach Tree Inn, and the Tiptoe Inn. Together, these people and places combined to produce performances that represent the darker aspects of the neighborhood's identity.

"A Night or Two before the Vote"

The subject of corrupt politicians consistently emerges from the interviews, often focused on white elected officials courting the

black electorate. The neighborhood was in a voting district that had proven influential in local elections:

Wallace: Some people have told me that the politicians would come down and court the vote.
Berry: They would buy your vote. Now that, I do know.
Wallace: What, come and offer you money?
Berry: Umhumm.
Wallace: What . . . how much would they give for a vote?
Berry: I never knowed how much it was, but I've heard them talk . . . this such and such a person is coming down and going to buy my vote for such and such a thing. And then, on election time . . . now I've seen this done . . . of course, I wasn't old enough to vote . . . that they had a man standing outside the polls and you'd go in there, they'd. . . . Whoever would come up . . . they'd give them a half a pint of whiskey to vote for such and such a person.
Wallace: Huh. They'd get your vote with a half a pint of whiskey?
Berry: Umhumm. They'd slip it to you, you know.[25]

Ellsworth Marshall elaborated on the corrupt political activity that went on in the neighborhood:

Marshall: During voting time, you know. They'd all come down. That was the only time they come down.
Wallace: Was to court the vote.
Marshall: Right, that's all. And in that era, you know, they'd bring their booze or something like that and promise you this, that and the other . . . to get that black vote . . . and after the voting was over, you never saw them.
Wallace: I had one person say to me that when the Bottom existed and the blacks were there, they were a political force, and you had to go down there and court the people in the Bottom.
Marshall: Yeah, yeah, that's right.[26]

Henrietta Gill said, "In the Craw, we were mostly a block . . . you had come to us to get our votes because we were all right there together."[27]

Former residents related many nonspecific stories about unnamed politicians, and those who worked for them, who appeared in Craw around election time to influence the way the neighborhood voted and offered "liquid bribes."[28] But the most consistently popular narrative told about political corruption in Craw pertained to former governor A. B. "Happy" Chandler's various appearances in the locality around election time.[29] George Simmons and Henry Sanders related one such story to Wallace:

Sanders: I went on down in the Bottom and was in the liquor store. And there was a pretty good crowd of people in there because some of them had been to the rally, see. In walked Happy, Harry Chandler and two or three more of his henchmen, shaking hands and patting on the back and everything. And my brother-in-law . . . he was in there. And he wasn't for Happy. And when Happy looked out there, he set the house up. . . . I didn't know this, but I had heard this.

Simmons: He'd left the rally. He'd go down in the Bottom to Mike Deakins'.

Sanders: Yeah. Yeah, that's where he went.

Simmons: And he'd go down there, and when he walked in, they were looking for him.

Sanders: Well, George Taylor.

Simmons: Was it George Taylor's then?

Sanders: George Taylor had the whiskey store. . . . But, anyway, he would go in and everybody was looking for him. When they saw him, they knew, "I'm going to get a drink free."

Simmons: And he's telling the bartender to "set them all up" and then "give me the bill."

Sanders: And he walked on out, walking out shaking hands, patting everybody on the back . . .

Simmons: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

Sanders: "Going to vote for me tomorrow. Vote for me tomorrow." And a lot of them, a lot of politicians, that's where they got the black vote.

Simmons: That's right.

Sanders: They'd come down there a night or two before the vote . . . and buy beer and whiskey.

Simmons: Yeah, yeah.[30]

Wallace used the narrative he heard from Simmons and Sanders in his interview with Jo Beauchamp, who corroborated their story about Governor Chandler:

> *Wallace:* They said when Happy was running back in '55, he went down there and went in one of the joints and threw down fifty dollars and set the whole place there up . . . and patting people on the back and shaking hands.
> *Beauchamp:* He done it. I had a cousin voted for him nine times first time he run [laughter]. And he voted for him two or three times in Versailles. He voted nine times for him that day. . . . Hell, they took me and voted me over there in that old Rock Quarry precinct when I wasn't but twelve years old.
> *Wallace:* Good grief.[31]

Many of those interviewed for the project told similar stories about their elected officials appearing in Craw and purchasing liquor as a means to influence the outcome of state and local elections.

"Making Money Selling That Moonshine"

Bootlegging recurs as a common theme in Wallace's interviews. In no way was the practice unique to the neighborhood; other districts in Frankfort and neighboring cities in the region had thriving stills, especially during Prohibition. However, the oral history narratives imply that Craw was, in fact, a center for illegal alcohol production and distribution for central Kentucky, both during Prohibition and after its repeal. Jo Beauchamp described some of the activity in the neighborhood:

> *Wallace:* Did you know any of the bootleggers that were working down there during Prohibition?
> *Beauchamp:* [Laughing] Shit, all of them. In fact, they caught my stepdaddy making whiskey. Yeah. My stepdaddy bootlegged. I knowed them all.

Beauchamp proceeded to relate the specifics of an incident with his stepfather. Then the subject of costs and prices came up:

Wallace: It was no wonder people were bootlegging. You could make good money.
Beauchamp: Well, damn, you had to wear a badge just to keep yourself from one another, there was so many of them. Home-brewed beer, every other door up there, you could buy . . . everybody had home-brew beer.
Wallace: Well, wasn't the police cracking down on these people?
Beauchamp: Oh, yeah. They'd catch one once in a while, when they wanted some beer. They'd take your beer and keep it, the damn rascals.[32]

James Ellis told a story about a technique a local bootlegger used to avoid the attention of local law enforcement:

Ellis: There was a tree up there on Washington Street, and they had a picture of that tree where a guy was bootlegging out of the tree. Selling, out of a tree.
Wallace: You mean, he kept his stash inside?
Ellis: Yeah, in that tree, yes, selling out of the tree. They never did get him.[33]

Margaret Berry playfully shaped a childhood memory into a story about a family member who participated in bootlegging, shedding more light on the bootlegging tree than James Ellis did. Abruptly offering the information about her aunts' participation in bootlegging, she surprised Jim Wallace:

Berry: I had an auntie that bootlegged.
Wallace: Oh, really [laughing].
Berry: Both of them. Both of my aunties on my mother's side did.
Wallace: Did they make their own home brew and sell it?
Berry: No, no. They'd get it on Saturday night before the liquor store closed.
Wallace: Well, who were their customers, local blacks or whites?
Berry: Anybody. One auntie used to make home brew. . . .
Wallace: They tell me some guy used to bootleg out of a tree down there.
Berry: "Wild Bill."

Wallace: "Wild Bill" [laughing].
Berry: Umhumm. Yes, indeed. But he had it in with the police.
Wallace: Oh, really?
Berry: Umhumm.[34]

Following the repeal of Prohibition, bootlegging continued, especially because of the laws prohibiting the sale of alcohol on Sundays. Because of the period during which the interviewees lived, it appears that bootlegging was particularly active in the neighborhood. Most of the individuals interviewed for the project had some memories of the activity, several common narratives surfacing in the interviews. One of the more frequently performed concerns Nannie Oliver and her son "Little Willie." George Simmons and Henry Sanders first introduced it to Jim Wallace:

Sanders: Yeah. You remember . . . what's Little Willie's mamma's name? What was her name?
Simmons: Little Willie Oliver.
Sanders: Anyway, she was bootlegging, you know, years down there. And she had that son . . . making money selling that moonshine. So, after red whiskey came back, she continued to sell that moonshine. Well, they got her, and Judge Jeffers told her, said, "Nannie." . . . Said, "Now, if you come back again," said, "I'm going to give you days, you got to quit fooling with this stuff."

"All right, Judge. All right, Judge." She went right back to the Bottom and started bootlegging again, selling that stuff, and they got her again. Took her back. Judge told her, "Nannie, I told you the last time you was up here if you came back I'm going to give you some days, and that's what I'm going to do. I'm giving you two hundred-and-some-odd days in the workhouse." She hollered, "Judge, what you going to do with Little Willie?"

He said, "Take Little Willie with you." He fixed it where Willie could go to the workhouse every night and get out of there in the morning and go to school. "What you going to do with Little Willie?" Little Willie wasn't but about five or six or seven years old.
Simmons: They took you and went to the workhouse.
Sanders: He said, "Take him with you."[35]

Many other former residents of the neighborhood whom Jim Wallace interviewed repeated this narrative. After a few interviews, Wallace began to include Nannie Oliver in his list of names that he hoped would prompt elaboration. In the process of incorporating this story into his interviews, Wallace became a more active participant in the narrative performance and thus in the manipulation of public memory. Wallace asked Henry and Margaret Ellis about Nannie Oliver, and Henry began to tell the story. When Mrs. Ellis warned him that the interview was being recorded, Wallace intervened:

Wallace: Nannie Oliver.
Ellis: They have a joke about that.
Mrs. Ellis: Henry, that's on tape.
Wallace: I think I've heard this one. "What are we going to do with Little Willie?"
Ellis: Yeah.
Wallace: "What am I going to do with Little Willie?"
Mrs. Ellis: Yeah [laughter].
Wallace: "Take him to the workhouse" [laughter—Ellis]. Somebody . . . somebody done told me that one [laughter].
Mrs. Ellis: Boy, he'd come from the workhouse ever morning at seven sharp.
Ellis: To go to school, going to school.
Mrs. Ellis: She had him just as clean and dressed up [laughter]. Coming from the workhouse to go to school [laughter]. Come right down by our house.
Wallace: Yeah. She apparently bootlegged a little bit.
Ellis: Yeah.
Mrs. Ellis: Umhumm. . . .
Wallace: You had to get by.
Mrs. Ellis: Yeah. You know, times were hard.
Wallace: Well, I'd heard that story about, uh, Willie Oliver.
Mrs. Ellis: Yeah. "What am I going to do with Little Willie?"[36]

Wallace attempts to overcome Mrs. Ellis's reluctance by letting them know he is aware of the story of "Little Willie." What results is a performance of "Little Willie" by Jim Wallace, confirmed as true by his informants. Jo Beauchamp was unfamiliar with the tale, and again, Wallace proceeded to perform the narrative, hoping to stimulate Beauchamp's memory:

Wallace: Nannie Oliver. She was a bootlegger, black woman. Had a boy, Little Willie, Little Willie Oliver.
Beauchamp: Uh-huh. Yeah, I was trying to think of her husband's name. Oliver. Do you have his name in there?
Wallace: No. I don't have his name.
Beauchamp: I knowed of her.
Wallace: A story on her was they picked her up for bootlegging and she said, "Aw, Judge, what am I going to do with Little Willie?" Said, "We'll fix it to you can take Little Willie to the workhouse with you." They locked him up in the workhouse, too.[37]

Anna Belle Williams was also unfamiliar with the story, so Wallace told it for her:

Wallace: Oh, okay. Nannie Oliver.
Williams: Uh-uh.
Wallace: Nannie was a bootlegger.
Williams: Oh.
Wallace: That's the story on that [laughter].
Williams: No, I don't know anything about her.
Wallace: Okay. She apparently got caught one time, and the story goes that she had a son, Little Willie, and the judge was going to give her time in the workhouse. And she said, "Oh, Judge, oh, Judge, what am I going to do with Little Willie?" [laughter—Williams]. And the judge said . . .
Williams: Take him with you . . .
Wallace: "You can take Little Willie to the workhouse" [laughter]. You heard that story, yeah [laughter].[38]

Toward the end of the story, Williams interrupts with the punch line, acknowledging that she knows about "Little Willie." In his interview with Maggie Knott, Wallace brought up the name Nannie Oliver. Knott responded with some hesitation because of the presence of the tape recorder:

Wallace: Nannie Oliver.
Knott: She's dead [laughing].
Wallace: They said, uh, she was apparently a bootlegger.

Knott: Yeah, yeah. I'm not . . . I'm not telling if you've got that turned on.
Wallace: Yeah, it's on. . . . But they told a story where the judge was going to give her some time [laughing—Knott], and she said, "What I am going to do with Little Willie?"
Knott: Who told you that?
Wallace: I'm not going to squeal on them. Said, "What am I going to do with Little Willie?"
Knott: Now, that sounds like Henrietta.
Wallace: And the judge says, "Well, I'll fix it so you can take Little Willie with you."
Knott: Fix it so you can take Little Willie with you.
Wallace: Little Willie with you.
Knott: Yeah. Well, they did. They took him, and Little Willie went to school.[39]

Within Wallace's interviews, the former residents play a crucial role in actively shaping direction, content, and tone. Each performance they give and their selection of what to divulge and what to leave out guide the interviewer in eliciting as full a reconstructive narrative as possible. The result is that the interviewees partially determine what questions they hear and therefore the overall structure of the interview. However, in the Beauchamp, Williams, and Knott interviews, Wallace actually delivers the story he attempts to collect, playing an active role in the shaping of public memory, inadvertently ensuring the survival of the story of "Little Willie" among neighborhood outsiders, as well as among former residents who did not know the story or had forgotten it. The palpable motivation for such eager participation on the part of the interviewer is the enthusiastic prompting of memory and the opportunity to improve rapport with the interviewee by sharing the more entertaining and informative data collected thus far. The consequence is an overt, yet probably unconscious manipulation of memory. The interviewer is introducing new material into the individual repertoires of the interviewees, thus standardizing the repertoire of the collectivity.

"The Money Men and the Damn Poor Ones"

The women employed as prostitutes who lived and worked in the neighborhood proved to be enduring topics in the performance of

public memory. In an oral history interview conducted for a different project, Ernie Guthrie, an African American resident of Anderson County, noted his childhood memories of visiting Frankfort's Craw: "What I know about the Bottoms in Frankfort, we called that the red-light district." Guthrie gave a detailed description of "ladies standing out of the evening in the night with their red lights out there in the front, and they would be all dressed up and made up." Guthrie called the women "three-two ladies." When prompted for the origins of this name he stated, "They were called three-two ladies because they were paid three dollars for the room and two dollars for the lady. Some of them were seventy-five [cents] or one-dollar ladies, and it just depended on what part of Frankfort and the Bottoms that you went to. Of course, I was sort of a kid and I remember it, going down with some guys, but I wasn't old enough to participate in none of that stuff."[40] Although Wallace intended to elicit the community's memories to construct a document contradicting the neighborhood's reputation as a red-light district, he could not avoid the subject of Craw's sex trade: prostitution took place in the neighborhood. However, James "Papa Jazz" Berry insisted that it was not exclusive to Craw, and he defended the women by adding, "They were not in business. They were trying to live."[41]

Like Papa Jazz, most of the people interviewed for Wallace's project resisted the characterization of the neighborhood as a "red-light district":

> *Wallace:* I've heard or read in some of my references that, uh, the Craw was a red-light district for young ladies.
>
> *Henrietta Gill:* Uh-uh, uh-uh, no more than anywhere else, no. They weren't like you'd think of prostitutes, now. It wasn't that kind of, let's see. How can I say this? You know, like women standing on the corner and all like that.
>
> *Wallace:* Umhumm.
>
> *Gill:* . . . It wasn't that, no, no, no, no. But, uh, there was one house that you could go to, and there were some women in this and that house. . . . Everybody knew who they was. So, you stayed on the other side of the street. They were most of the time nice people. They'd give you everything and do anything for you. . . . But it wasn't on every corner and every two or three houses. It wasn't like that. Everybody

knew it, but it was on the q.t., as we used to call it. But yes, it was there.

Wallace: A community secret?

Gill: Yes.[42]

Mary Helen Berry remembered the chaos of County Court Day, when the streets were flooded with merchants, people, and livestock. In her description of the scene, she initiated a discussion of prostitution in the neighborhood:

Berry: I'm going to say it like it is. Lower end of Clinton Street, that's where they had a lot of assignation houses.

Wallace: You mean red-light?

Berry: Red-light. That's what you call assignation houses. And these men, it's all they would come. I don't know where they come from, the country or where. But they would get drunk, and you could see the people there because they would have the money.

The topic drifts to violence and Berry's early remembrances. Then she remembers something she had left out of her earlier discussion of prostitution:

Berry: Listen to what I forgot to say. My auntie worked in an assignation house . . . she was my mother's oldest sister. And, as a child, I went into a trunk, I never saw such beautiful jewelry. And I said, "Mom, whose beautiful jewelry is this?" She told me . . . we called her "Sis." . . . I said, "Where did Sis get this?" She said, "From where she worked."

Because at that time I didn't know what a assignation house was. I said, "Where she work?" She says, "Well, the people be in a hurry. They leave." She didn't want to come around and tell this child what it was all about. . . . And of course, they had too much to drink. They would be afraid to come back and ask, "Did I leave my watch? Did I leave my pick?" I'm telling you, there was some beautiful jewelry.

Wallace: Yeah. Let me be sure I'm pronoun- . . . assignation?

Berry: Assignation house.[43]

Wallace referenced Mary Helen Berry's description of County Court Day in his interview with Jo Beauchamp, who also seamlessly transitioned from the topic of County Court Day into the subject of prostitution in the neighborhood:

> *Wallace:* She said on Court Day and on certain times, they'd drive these hogs and cattle and get them slaughtered, and the men would get a little money and the place they'd go was corner of Clinton and Washington, to the joints down there, and, uh, find affection and find drink.
> *Beauchamp:* Yeah. There was prostitutes down there.[44]

Wallace did not directly ask Beauchamp whether or not prostitutes worked in the neighborhood. He referenced Mary Helen Berry's description of County Court Day and indirectly mentioned that intoxicated men with money would look for "affection and . . . drink," prompting Beauchamp to speak directly on the topic. Wallace followed up Beauchamp's segue with an inquiry into the extent of prostitution in the neighborhood:

> *Wallace:* Well, was it a red-light district?
> *Beauchamp:* Well, now, there was back years ago, there was a red-light district down there on, they called it the Gas House Alley, which, later on, they changed it to Center Street. And all them houses up and down there were whorehouses.[45]

Beauchamp was one of the only individuals Wallace interviewed who referred to the days when the working prostitutes of the city were unofficially segregated in Gas House Alley, or Gaines' Alley. Following the fire that wiped out much of the alley in 1913, the women had to move to other locations throughout the neighborhood. Later in the interview, Beauchamp enthusiastically offered the following anecdote about an exchange between two prostitutes in a joint down on the corner of Mero and Center streets, where "all the girls hung out." Beauchamp described the scene as one girl approaching the other:

> "I wanted to ask you something." Now, I got this second-handed. I've heard it several times, so I believe it's true. Said,

> "I know damn well I'm a better-looking woman than you, better built and everything. But," said, "I want you to tell me, how is it you always get the money men and I have to take the damn poor ones?"
>
> She said, "The only thing I can tell you, I keep my ass up off that sheet." I've heard that a dozen times. I was too young to remember it.[46]

Beauchamp's comments—"I got this second-handed" and "I've heard it several times, so I believe it's true"—clearly demonstrate that there was an active tradition of storytelling about the prostitutes in the neighborhood. This tradition extended beyond the neighborhood and Frankfort residents. In an interview conducted by Terry Birdwhistell for the University of Kentucky's Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, renowned Kentucky journalist John Ed Pearce recalled a story about a particular Kentucky legislator's prelegislative session ritual:

> *Pearce*: And there was a fellow there named Charlie. . . . I remember. . . . But Charlie didn't bother anybody. Charlie would come down to Frankfort, and he'd get himself a room, and he'd check in with his friends, and then he would go to a whorehouse down in what was then known as "the Craw" . . . down by the river. It was a big, flat area. . . .
>
> *Birdwhistell:* Right.
>
> *Pearce:* . . . Down there. And there were a number of houses down there of questionable virtue, and this one house that he frequented was approached by long steps, oh, maybe twenty of them leading up to this house. And Charlie walked up the steps laboriously and knocked on the door, not knowing that in his absence for two years the house had been bought by sort of a Holiness preacher. And he said, "Yes?" And Charlie greeted him jovially and sort of pushed past him and said, "Well, you've changed things around here." And the man said, "Indeed, we have." "Well, I hope I can see Miss Beatrice" or whatever her name was. And he said, "Sir, you're quite mistaken. This is the home of the Reverend So-and-so." And Charlie said, "Well, that's all right with me. Where's Beatrice?" And this got into sort of a controversy there in the doorway, and the . . .

> preacher shoved Charlie, and he fell down the steps. And picking himself up, he looked up and he said, "Well, I don't know what you are or claim to be, but I'll tell you, with a temper like that, you'll never run a successful whorehouse" [laughter]. There were always a bunch of women hanging around there.[47]

Several of the women and several "houses of ill-repute" appear consistently throughout Wallace's interviews. One legendary establishment was the Eight Mile House that James Calhoun situated "right behind Tiger Inn." Calhoun described the house as "a big long house, sat right on the street that was known as the Eight Mile House."[48] Henry and Margaret Ellis corroborated Calhoun's memory:

> *Ellis:* Yeah, because I was real small . . . was on Washington Street, and they had the Eight Mile House. Well, I didn't know nothing about that too much. In fact, I couldn't go around there anyway, and I just heard about it, you know. It was right in behind Tiger's.
> *Mrs. Ellis:* It was down there. It was behind Tiger's.
> *Ellis:* Right behind Tiger's Inn.
> *Wallace:* On the same side of the street?
> *Mrs. Ellis:* Same side, uh-huh.
> *Ellis:* Right.
> *Wallace:* Sort of a place you'd go to meet, uh . . .
> *Ellis:* Well, there was a little of everything there [laughing].[49]

Henry Ellis brought up the subject of the Eight Mile House, mentioning that as children they were not allowed to go near it. George Simmons and Henry Sanders elaborated on what one might find in front of the house:

> *Sanders:* Ever tell you about the Eight Mile house in Bottom?
> *Wallace:* What now?
> *Sanders:* Eight Mile House.
> *Wallace:* No. I never heard of that. What is . . .
> *Simmons:* [Laughing] I didn't know that.
> *Sanders:* Oh, it was a sporting house.
> *Wallace:* A spo- . . . a sporting? Oh.

Simmons: [Laughing] I didn't know about them houses.
Wallace: Why Eight Mile?
Sanders: I never did know why they named it Eight Mile, but the old person named Lloyd Bell, he was drunk one afternoon. And they had five or six women living in that house. And he passed there one day, and about five or six kids out on the street playing, you know . . . they're young enough. He stopped and looked down and shook his head and says, "All of these kids and none of them got no daddy" [laughter]. They belonged to the women in the house, you see. So, they went on down the street. "That's a shame."[50]

The Eight Mile House was one of several bordellos in the neighborhood, but it is the only one discussed in Wallace's oral history interviews by name. All of the others were known by the names of the women who ran them. George Simmons and Henry Sanders told a humorous story about Eva Cox's house:

Simmons: Eva Cox. I had forgotten her.
Sanders: She . . . she run a sporting house, too.
Simmons: Yeah. Yeah.
Sanders: Well, she tied a rag around her head all the time. And she was one of those places that was integrated way back yonder when there wasn't no integration talked about, see.
Simmons: Oh, yeah. Yeah.
Wallace: She had girls that were white and black working for her.
Simmons: Yeah. Yeah.
Sanders: You'd point out a woman on the street down there and tell her you'd like to have her, and she said, "I'll have her in two or three days, just check with me." So, old Cecil Warren . . . I know, Cecil swore this was the truth here [laughter—Simmons]. He got to Miss Eva. Cecil was a good-looking guy, you know, handsome looking and everything.
Simmons: Oh, yeah. Got that jive. . . .
Sanders: . . . He pointed this white girl out in the Bottom. Miss Eva told him, said, "Well, I'll get her for you." About three or four days later, she say, "You go in the back way, and the girl go in the front," see. She come to Cecil and told him, said, "She'll be around at my house at three o'clock in the

afternoon." Said, "Now, you be there. And it's going to cost you 'X' amount of dollars," she told him.

"I got it, Miss Eva. All right."

"Pay your half now. Give me the money because I don't trust you, Cecil." She made him pay . . . right then.

He went on around, and the girl was there. The girl undressed, rolled the covers back. Cecil said, "The prettiest white sheet on the bed you'd ever laid your eyes on, and there was laid the prettiest black snake, laying up there curled up in the middle of that bed you ever seen." Said, "And I come back and told her," says, "when that girl saw that snake," says, "she left out of there running and screaming. And I went back and told Eva, "Eva, you put that snake in that bed on purpose."

Wallace: Yeah. It sounds like a setup.

Simmons: Yeah.

Sanders: Uh-huh. And Cecil . . . he said her bed was clean, and she kept clean sheets and everything, and she didn't have no snakes in her house. But he was over there, and that snake was curled up right in the middle of that bed.[51]

The houses were usually segregated along racial lines, serving either blacks or whites, but usually not both. Simmons and Sanders clarified the practice of segregating the establishments:

Sanders: But Maggie had women, and Ida had women.

Simmons: Yeah.

Sanders: But Ida catered to the white, and Maggie catered to the ones that had the money. And they claimed that the mayor got caught down there one night. But they claimed police raided it because she was letting both races go in there. It made her money.[52]

The prostitutes of Craw often frequented the local drinking establishments. When Jim Wallace inquired about reasons behind the neighborhood's violent reputation, R. T. Brooks stated, "They would sell beer." Brooks continued:

Brooks: Now . . . there's the Blue Moon, see. That popped up in the '50s.

Wallace: Where was Blue Moon located?
Brooks: Well, see, I'll tell you, John Fallis was on the corner. The next building on Clinton Street towards the river was the Blue Moon. . . . And that was where Peggy Davis and, of course, Mountain Mary and Lucille Downey and . . .
Wallace: A number of individual maidens made their living there. I heard that the mountain men would . . . this is back in the 'teens, and . . .
Brooks: Yeah. Well, see, they'd get to dancing. They had those nickelodeons, you know . . . and, then, of course, they sold beer. Beer was legal.[53]

In the local narrative tradition, interviewees usually named both prostitutes and their customers, often in a spirit of enthusiasm. The most common name to emerge from these expressions of public memory regarding prostitution in Craw, from both the black and the white perspectives, was that of a white madam named Ida Howard. Some individuals, like Goebel McCoy, acknowledged familiarity but chose to avoid the topic:

Wallace: Ida Howard.
McCoy: I remember her, yeah.
Wallace: Do you have any remembrances at all about Ida?
McCoy: Well, she was a go-getter [laughing].
Wallace: Yeah.
McCoy: That's all I can say for her.[54]

In his reticence to discuss the topic, McCoy was definitely in the minority. Most spoke freely and with great respect about Howard. Margaret Macintosh offered her childhood perceptions of Howard, who was her neighbor:

Boyd: How would you characterize Hill Street then?
Barnett: What we had about two white people, we moved from . . .
Macintosh: We moved from 317 to 419.
Barnett: 419.
Macintosh: Hill Street.
Barnett: And it was an old house, w-h-o-r-e-s, right there on the corner. And I've forgot the woman's name that ran it.

Ida Howard. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

Ida Howard's home at 405 Hill Street, Block 316, Parcel 16. From the North Frankfort (Craw) Real Estate Appraisals, 1958. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

Boyd: Would that be Ida Howard?

Macintosh: Yeah [laughter]. How did you know? And you know . . . show you how dumb and naive we were. See, we had to come that way to . . . if we were going down the street. Come around that house. She had a nice pretty house. Had these girls sitting on top of . . .

Barnett: Standing on the balcony.
Macintosh: In pretty negligee and everything. And I'm dumb enough . . . that they must be movie stars . . . come to find out what they was there for.[55]

Many former residents related stories about Ida Howard and her entrepreneurial endeavors, but admitted to knowing little about her biography. Jo Beauchamp, the only one who gave details of Ida's marriage, described her transition from housewife to madam:

Wallace: Well, do you remember Ida Howard?
Beauchamp: Oh, my goodness, yeah.
Wallace: Come out of the mountains?
Beauchamp: Yeah. Come out of the mountains and brought her down here, and she was a lot younger than Henry. And he was so jealous of her, he kept her in the house all time; but my uncle, Johnny Fallis, he worked over there at that rock quarry, and he'd sneak over there. And he went with her a lot of times. And then, when old Henry, he went back up, he killed a man up there in the mountains, and he went back up there for something, and by God, they killed him.
Wallace: They caught up with him up there.
Beauchamp: Yes sir, and . . . and then Ida, she just, well, she just got a big house there and got a couple of girls there and just run a whorehouse for years and years, and she never was busted.
Wallace: Well, why? I guess she had connections with . . .
Beauchamp: She paid off. That's the only thing I could ever figure out why they never did bust her. But she was right there on Hill Street, had that big house, and later on, she moved up on Madison Street. Then, later on, she moved and she was getting old, she moved up on Main Street. . . . Now, she'd do anything in the world for you. I've heared her take in old down-and-outers, rent them a room and, well, they didn't have no money to pay, and she said, "Well, you just don't owe me nothing. I'll give you the night's lodging."[56]

After he had conducted only a few interviews, it became clear to Wallace that Ida Howard could not be defined simply by her profession.

Her name appears repeatedly as another neighbor in the community. Mary Helen Berry, for example, responded to a question about Ida Howard:

Berry: Yeah, she was white.
Wallace: Well, she was a woman of questionable reputation.
Berry: She was one of the ladies of the night. She was a good neighbor.[57]

The phrase "ladies of the night" juxtaposed with "good neighbor" might seem incongruous. But Ida Howard transcended the stereotype of "the Madam," even though her profession did impact people's perceptions of her. Anna Belle Williams spoke about living in close proximity to Ida:

Wallace: Okay. There was a Miss Ida Howard, a white woman. Sort of . . . I guess, a woman of questionable reputation.
Williams: Yeah. She lived right down the street on Hill Street. She had a nice home, called it "Ida's." She lived in the next block on Hill Street because I never will forget some man came to my door early one morning looking for Ida [laughter]. And I was about ready to clobber him.[58]

Community perception of Ida Howard did not emphasize either her profession or her race. Although many of the former residents spoke of her operation in the neighborhood, they usually told stories about her with a high degree of respect. When Wallace inquired about this phenomenon, Mary Helen Berry explained:

Berry: These people were nice. There was two other outstanding prostitutes down there . . . they were nice to colored people.
Wallace: They were white gals?
Berry: They were. They were white. And they would just stop, and they always had something nice to say to you.
Wallace: So, they were pretty much a part of the community.
Berry: They were part of everything.
Wallace: And accepted and not ostracized.
Berry: I tell you, I hate to say this. They brought their stuff down in the black area because they knew they could not

live what they were doing in the better area . . . if they were making money. But we didn't pay no attention because long as they took care of their business, it didn't bother us none. And they were nice to children and everything.

Wallace: Now, that's . . . that's sort of a pleasant thing to me. I don't sense a lot of judgment being passed on people because maybe you were doing something society considered wrong.

Berry: No. That's your business. You have to live with that yourself.[59]

Despite acceptance of prostitutes as neighbors and members of the local community, laughter often accompanied narratives about neighborhood prostitutes. Many of these stories, and the women who appear in them, function as key components of humor and entertainment in the narrative repertoires of the former residents. The historical relegation of Craw's prostitutes into the role of narrative entertainers concurs with the sexual mores and taboo perceptions of the general culture. The subject of sex is introduced for entertainment purposes in a variety of narrative contexts, and the oral history narrative as an expression of public memory is no exception.

The fact that former residents celebrated the more criminal and "immoral" aspects of the neighborhood's character contradicts their attempts to defensively minimize these components of Craw's reputation. However, this contradiction clearly demonstrates a more complex and dialectical relationship between insider and outsider public memory. Within the oral history interview frame, interviewees balanced the need for a comfortable, nostalgic view of their community with their repertoire of compelling, exciting, and entertaining stories about the neighborhood. The stories of crime, violence, and prostitution add dramatic elements to the larger narrative that they themselves may have interpreted as mundane. It was the criminal and "immoral" elements of the neighborhood's reputation that gave Craw its separatist character, and a sense of pride in this distinction most certainly emerges among former residents. Despite the potential negative correlation, the interviews reveal a strong and celebratory association with this particular component of the neighborhood's complex historical identity.

Former residents knew of outsiders' perceptions of Craw, for this reputation was firmly entrenched in public memory. Despite

Wallace's claims about wanting to overturn these perceptions, those he interviewed performed what they perceived as the more entertaining elements of insider public memory, possibly for the benefit of the interviewer, who was clearly an outsider. The oral history interview provided an opportunity for former residents to mediate between insider and outsider public memory, merging components of each in the process of commemoration. At one point in Wallace's interview with George Simmons and Henry Sanders, Simmons suddenly said, "Now, look here, something else . . . I'll just mention the prostitutes." This kind of conscious transition shifted the tone of the interview from the more serious or perceived mundane expression of earliest memories—memories of everyday life, coping with poverty, or anger at urban renewal—to what the neighborhood's former residents clearly considered to be a more balanced expression of the public memory of Craw, which continued to perpetuate the very components of the neighborhood's reputation that Wallace was simultaneously attempting to minimize.

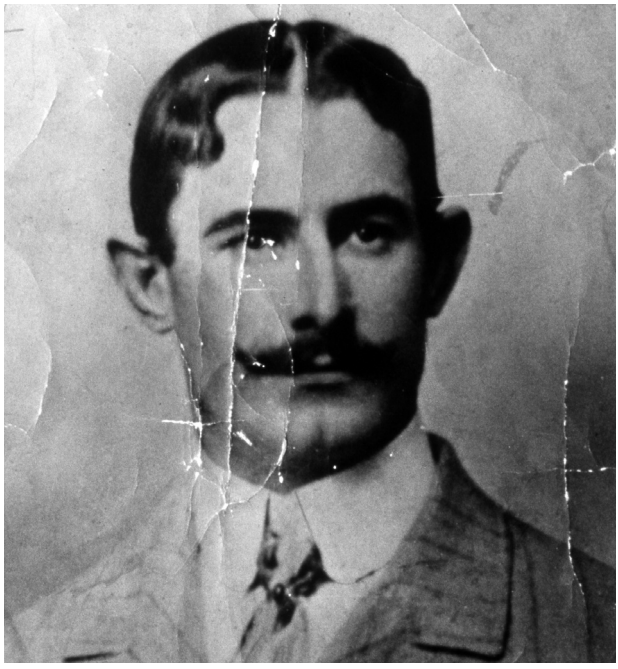
Chapter Five

The King of Craw

Several individuals emerged from the oral history interviews to personify various aspects of the neighborhood's numerous identities. No other individual represented both outsiders' and former residents' memories of the neighborhood more comprehensively than the legendary John Fallis, crowned the "King of Craw." His obituary, appearing in the *Louisville Courier-Journal* two days following his death, describes his alleged killing at the hand of Everett Rigsby and then continues: "That is what Everett Rigsby did to John Fallis, Frankfort's 'bad man,' at a craps game in Gas House Alley, main thoroughfare of the once famous 'Craw.' Over this region, a voting precinct, Fallis ruled unofficially as censor of politics and public morals, and on its outskirts sold liquor."[1]

Fallis, a white man, ran successful bootlegging operations and was a local political boss who gambled, fought, lied, cheated, womanized, and regularly demonstrated a quick temper. According to Fallis's wife, "he had a tirable [*sic*] temper and would do things that he regretted to his dieing [*sic*] day."[2] Fallis often displayed extremely violent tendencies, which, combined with his quick temper, resulted in a lengthy criminal record that included counts of "Cutting in Sudden Heat and Passion," "Malicious Cutting and Wounding," "Shooting and Wounding Another With Intent to Kill," "Shooting and Wounding," "Willful and Malicious Cutting and Wounding With Intent to Kill Without Killing," "Insurance Fraud," "Having in Possession an Illicit Still," and "Selling Intoxicating Liquor." Jo Beauchamp, John Fallis's nephew, discussed him in an interview with Wallace:

> *Beauchamp:* Now, I had a uncle. I guess you've got that in there someplace. John Fallis.
> *Wallace:* Yeah, tell me about John Fallis.



Portrait of John R. Fallis. Courtesy of R. T. Brooks.

Beauchamp: Well, he was a bad man. He was an evil man.
Wallace: In what way, evil?
Beauchamp: Mean. He would beat the piss out of you for nothing. Beat up a many a man. He hit my grandmother with a pair of brass knuckles. . . . He was mean. He was evil.[3]

When Wallace asked neighborhood resident Isaac Fields whether he remembered John Fallis, he responded, "Oh, God. He was the law down there. Police didn't go down there. He was the law down in the Bottom."[4] Fallis also had a reputation as a political force in the voting precinct of Craw, and Wallace asked Beauchamp about this activity:

Wallace: Do you know anything about the part he took in politics?
Beauchamp: Well, like, somebody wanted to go down there and get him and give him a bunch of money. Say, "Go down here and buy me some votes and help get me elected." And

they'd pay him. Well, they'd do that. See, John Fallis can do something to votes. He'd tell you to go up there and vote for so-and-so, see; give them five or ten dollars.

Wallace: So, he'd make sure that they'd get all the votes bought up.[5]

Still, despite his criminal record, his involvement in political corruption, and his violent reputation, many of Craw's former residents remembered Fallis as a local hero. Many perceived him to be an honest, hardworking, kind, charitable, and generous man who gave a tremendous amount back to the community in which he lived. Mary Helen Berry grew up near the Fallis family and remembered playing with John Fallis's children:

Berry: Oh, Fallis was a big bootlegger. But he was good to black people.

Wallace: I've heard so many people say that.

Berry: He was so good.[6]

John Fallis, a complex figure, lived a life beset with contradictions. Blacks and whites living inside and outside of the neighborhood both loved and feared him. His place in public memory remains solid thanks to three primary forms: court records, newspaper accounts, and personal narratives passed on to the neighborhood's final generation of residents. In addition, the Kentucky Historical Society's research collection has in its genealogical surname files an unedited document written by John Fallis's son Benjamin "Bixie" Fallis, including a few paragraphs written by John's wife, Anne, in the mid-1940s. In February 1969, "Bixie" Fallis donated to the society a typewritten copy of the original fourteen-page biography, which contains dramatic descriptions of his father's life story. The intentions of this unedited manuscript become clear on the second page when the writer, referring to himself as "the author of this book," claims that "I know the readers of this book will learn to love Johnie which he was called among his friends." The manuscript in fact begins by strongly asserting the author's perception of John Fallis's rightful place in local public memory: "The true life story of John R. Fallis is true and real in every detail. Every episode of his life was packed with thrills and dare deveil [*sic*] experiences which will be long remembered by his friends and admirers throughout this

part of Kentucky."[7] Although the document begins with this proclamation about Fallis's place in public memory, the subsequent pages strive to solidify that place by putting a particular spin on Fallis's life story. The family narrative, for example, repeatedly refers to John Fallis as a "real modern Robin Hood . . . to whom justice was never given, but thousands of friends of Frankfort and the surrounding counties shall long remember his great deeds of kindness and real friendship. . . . I'm proud his blood runs through my veins today. His name is often brought up and discussed among his friends, how kindness was done to many who were unable to help theirself. As the story goes along it will prove to thousands he wanted to be friends to everyone, but often marked a killer. That's why a rat shot and killed him in the back."[8] The life story of John Fallis—as represented by the documentary sources, "Bixie" Fallis's family narrative, and various performances of John Fallis stories from Jim Wallace's oral history interviews—yields insight into a complex, contradictory figure; close examination of these sources reveals the process of the folklorization of history in the ever-unfolding formation of public memory.

John Fallis was born on April 13, 1879, and his parents moved to Frankfort, Kentucky, when he was young. Little information about John's parents exists in written form, and little appears in Wallace's oral history interviews. Fallis's nephew Jo Beauchamp offered the only oral history testimony that reveals any insight into Fallis's childhood:

> *Beauchamp:* Now, you told about this John Fallis. His mother run a whorehouse and she had her two daughters [laughing]. . . .
> *Wallace:* Had her own daughters working for her in a house of prostitution? Good grief.
> *Beauchamp:* Yeah. Hell, they said take all the damn police in Frankfort to get her in the workhouse when she got drunk. . . . They said she was a mean son-of-a-bitch.[9]

The written family narrative offers two brief anecdotes from Fallis's childhood that function to explain his personality and behavior as an adult. The first focuses on the early manifestation of his "quick temper," which often led "Johnie" into physical confrontations. The narrative claims that "people picked on him" as a child and that "this caused him to pack a knife." Fallis's parents "often scolded" John

and "even gave him whippings and made him go to church, which he learned to love in his early life." The family narrative then states that John was singing in the Salvation Army choir "the night he met the girl of his dreams, which later in life, became his wife."[10] The author of this account often thus balances stories about the origins of John Fallis's violent nature with discussions of the important role of the church in Fallis's life. An article in the *Western Argus* corroborates the story of John's participation in the Salvation Army choir, describing an incident that occurred when Fallis was eighteen years old: "John Fallis was tried yesterday in the police court for disorderly conduct, and fined $2 and costs." The article claims that Fallis "seems to have been singing with the Salvation Army Tuesday night, and on his way home sung 'Mother, take me, take me to thy home,' too loud, and Policeman Robinson took him to the workhouse."[11] The contradictory combination of Fallis's violent and criminal tendencies with his exploration of religion and his personal journey of faith, charity, and goodness appears throughout the family story. "He gave his life to the Lord for sometime, but like many of us today let the Lord slip out of his heart. His high temper often caused him to lose out in going to church."[12]

The second revealing childhood anecdote from the early pages of the family narrative refers to the way John first met his future wife, Anne: "At the age of 11, he met the girl of his dreams, which afterwards became my Mother, the former Anne Thompson Crain. . . . Anne and her mother went to Church one night after moving from Woodford County. This was the first time she saw Johnie and Johnie saw her, because all during the church he kept his dark keen eyes on her, and it wasn't long afterwards he found out where Little Anne lived." The author guesses that this meeting proved to be the beginning of "Johnie's downfall" and describes Fallis following Anne home that night after church. Anne's brother Louis "gave him a spanking and ran him home, but that wasn't in Johnie to hear it done." Fallis came back the next day and "hung around little Anne's house" until "Anne couldn't stand the temptation of knowing whether Johnie was hanging around outside." When she came outside and spotted Fallis, she ran back into the house, Fallis following her: "Under the bed she went, and under the bed Johnie also went, so Anne screamed." Anne's mother came quickly, pulling John out from under the bed. When Anne's mother asked John why he had chased her daughter, John remarked, "I wanted to kiss her and she wouldn't let me, so

I kissed her anyway." Anne's mother began whipping young John. According to the author of the family narrative, Fallis "thought of a little scheme" while being spanked: "After she'd stopped little Johnie told little Annie's mother that he was an orphan and had no mother or father, so little Annie's mother, who was so tender-hearted told Johnie that anytime he could come back and eat at her house."[13]

This narrative foreshadows Fallis's range of personality traits as an adult. His mischievous nature often led him into trouble, yet his charming personality shielded him from the consequences, extricating him from many troublesome circumstances. As the narrative continues, Fallis reveals the truth about his family. When asked why he told the lie, he says, "because he loved Little Annie"—a declaration that "brought the Crain and Fallis families close together."[14] As it would many times, John Fallis's charming personality overcame his flaws in the eyes of Craw and the rest of Frankfort.

"Bixie" Fallis's narrative, the primary source of biographical detail about the life of John Fallis, describes Fallis as "very handsome, with dark eyes and coal black hair." Standing about five feet, eleven inches tall, he weighed approximately 175 pounds and had a "ruddy complexion and muscular build." John and his wife, Anne, married on May 31, 1899. Together, they had thirteen children, only

John Fallis behind the counter in his grocery store. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

five of whom survived infancy. Fallis entered the military on May 6, 1898, and served with the Second Kentucky Infantry in the Spanish-American War. However, he was honorably discharged on October 31 that same year. Although Fallis never fought overseas, he apparently suffered injuries that led to his early discharge. According to the family narrative, he hurt his knee when he was pushed from the train on which he worked as a guard. The reason for the scuffle is not mentioned. Professionally, Fallis then worked at a variety of trades, including, at different times, blacksmith, carpenter, stonemason, and logger. When he was young, he also worked at the Hemp Factory Mill, but he eventually settled down at the George T. Stagg Distillery, where he worked for seventeen years, during which time he served as the head distiller.

After leaving the distillery, Fallis ran a grocery store at the corner of Hill and Wilkinson streets.[15] Between 1908 and 1910, John and Anne moved to 701 Wilkinson Street, where he ran a grocery store. Both their residence and the grocery shifted location among 701, 702, 703, and 704 Wilkinson Street, properties purchased over a period of about fifteen years and eventually sold.

On August 25, 1927, Fallis filed for a divorce from Anne. In the divorce petition, he claimed that he and Anne had been separated

John Fallis in his grocery store with his wife, Anne. Courtesy of Charlene Ellis.

John Fallis's home at 703 Wilkinson, Block 318, Parcel 12. From the North Frankfort (Craw) Real Estate Appraisals, 1958. Courtesy of the Kentucky Historical Society.

with no cohabitation since August 1923, stating that "without like fault on his part the defendant abandoned this plaintiff in this county and state within five years last past." In addition, John claimed that he had already given Anne all of the property that he owned.[16] In fact, in 1924 he had formally transferred the property into Anne's name, "that for and in consideration of one dollar the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, and the natural love and affection which the first party bears to the second part, who is his wife."[17] Earlier that year, Fallis had been incarcerated, serving a sentence that would extend throughout most of the year. During that time, Annie's whereabouts were unknown; the city directory does not list her name. Living in the Fallis residence at 703 Wilkinson that year were J. M. Blackwell and his wife, Anna Mae Blackwell, while Henry and Ida Howard lived across the street. Following her husband's death, Ida Howard became a well-known prostitute, alleged to be romantically linked to Fallis at several different times.

When John was released from the Franklin County Jail, he was briefly listed as living at 701 Wilkinson. In 1925 he purchased property on the west side of Washington Street, and the 1926 Frankfort directory says he ran a restaurant at the corner of Clinton and

Washington streets. The specifics are unclear, but around this time Fallis began an extramarital relationship with Anna Mae Blackwell, the former wife of J. M. Blackwell, who had lived in Fallis's home during his incarceration in 1924. The following year, he lived with Anna Mae Blackwell at 412½ Washington Street, above a restaurant he managed.

A few of those whom Jim Wallace interviewed spoke candidly about Fallis's personal life, specifically his extramarital affairs. In almost every interview, Jim Wallace actively inquired about Anna Mae Blackwell and her relationship to John Fallis. Scrolling through his list of names, hoping to elicit relevant memories, Wallace attempted neutrality by referring to Anna Mae Blackwell as John Fallis's "special friend":

Wallace: Anna Mae Blackwell.
McCoy: Yeah. I remember her.
Wallace: She was John Fallis's special friend . . .
McCoy: Yeah.[18]

Mary Helen Berry, who remembered when Anna Mae moved into the neighborhood, corrected Wallace's usage of the term "special friend" with regard to Ms. Blackwell:

Wallace: Anna Mae Blackwell. They said John Fallis had a special friend.
Berry: That was Anna Mae Blackwell, mistress.
Wallace: Yes.
Berry: Yes, yes. Well, she moved in our area. On Washington Street.[19]

R. T. Brooks identified Anna Mae Blackwell as the former Anna Mae Shearer and described her as "the Sophia Loren of the time, she was that good-looking a woman."[20] Fallis's divorce from Anne Fallis was never legally finalized, and his relationship with Anna Mae Blackwell never formalized. However, John lived with Anna Mae and their son, Paul Douglas Fallis, until John's death in 1929.

The family narrative goes to great lengths to portray John Fallis sympathetically, as a kindhearted man with a weakness for beautiful women and a violent temper. The first documented expression of his temper occurred in early January 1904, when Fallis participated

in a near-fatal fight with Robert Semonis while attending a crowded dance at the home of A. J. Douthitt. During the fray, Fallis cut and stabbed Semonis several times. Fallis was then arrested and charged.

In the context of its discussion of marital tension between John and Anne, the family narrative offers an account of the incident at the dance that includes and excludes certain telling details. The original unedited text includes the omissions indicated below:

> They soon patched things up and was getting along fine until one night Johnie slipped out and went to a big dance. He just couldn't withstand being told what to do. He just had to slip out now and then to have a good time. After this dance was about half over, lots of the men in those days drank pretty heavy, but not Johnie. His strickly weakness was beautiful women. It seemed he always picked the best looking and they seemed to prefer his company, as Johnie was a smooth dancer, besides being handsome, and a smooth talker. These acts made other men mad, so this happened to the biggest and the most dangerous man of the dance. This man was _____, a fellow over six feet tall. He pulled a _____head on Johnie and snapped it into his face. As always Johnie was as _____ as a _____, slipped sideways, and knocked the gun from his hand. Before _____ could pick it up Johnie had pulled a large spring handled knife and started to defend his life, by sticking and cutting the big _____until he dropped to the floor. The big fellow was very good with his fist and was too much man for Johnie, but the knife was the big difference in this fight. _____ didn't die, but came nearly of doing it.[21]

In fact, the trial had to be postponed because Semonis remained in what his physician described as a "precarious" condition. When it was clear that Semonis would not die from his wounds, and that the charges would not be upgraded to murder, Fallis's trial commenced in April. Franklin County Circuit Court records demonstrate that the few witnesses for the defense claimed that Semonis was the aggressor and that John Fallis acted in self-defense. Lannie Rice, a witness for the defense and a resident of Craw, stated that he heard Fallis "telling Semonis that he was his friend and didn't want to fight him." Some witnesses for the prosecution actively avoided making

incriminating statements about Fallis. Ida Griffy, for example, delivered this statement, which she quickly amended as noted: "I was ~~dancing with Mr. Fallis~~ at the dance, hid, did not see any of the difficulty and know nothing about the fight."[22] Other witnesses stated that Fallis was attempting to break up another fight when the scuffle with Semonis began. Witness C. M. Coovert stated that "John Peevler and some body were fighting. I saw Fallis rush across room with a knife like he was trying to cut Peevler. I caught him to stop him and he cut at me—backed me out of the house cutting at me. When I got back in there, Fallis and Semonis were fighting. . . . Fight about over when I got back in the room."[23]

Witness John Peevler gave the most detailed account of the incident. Peevler, who had arrived at the party with Willis Bobbitt, stated that he had been dancing with Ms. Handy when Luke Crane approached and asked her to dance. When Ms. Handy told Crane that she would not dance with him, Crane "raised a fuss." Peevler described Fallis approaching the dancing couple, angrily stating, "Do you know what I'll do with you[?] I'll take you out in the yard and choke you to death." At this point Peevler describes Bob Semonis trying to break up the scuffle, stating, "We don't want to have any trouble here." Fallis retreated and went over to the corner, and Peevler and Handy continued to dance. Peevler stated, "I swung my partner as I danced by the door. Fallis cut at me and . . . Coovert caught Fallis. Then Fallis cut Coovert's clothes. Bob Semonis went after Fallis to keep him from cutting Coovert."[24]

A. J. Douthitt, the owner of the house and the host of the dance party, stated that the fighters were "near the fire quarreling" when he approached the brawlers to break them up. When Douthitt told them he didn't "want any disturbance," John Fallis reacted violently: "John Fallis immediately reached around my shoulders and cut Semonis on the head. They both began to fight. Semonis had no weapon of any kind that I saw. Fallis had a knife. . . . Semonis said 'Why shit John, what are you?' John said, 'I'll show you what I am,' and raised the knife."[25] Testimony like Douthitt's and Peevler's convinced the jury that John Fallis was guilty of "Cutting in Sudden Heat and Passion." Fallis was sentenced to six months in the county jail, in addition to paying a five-hundred-dollar fine.

In November of that year, a petition appeared before Governor J. C. W. Beckham for the pardon of John Fallis. It included letters written by several citizens of Frankfort, including James Buford, the

county attorney; eight of the jurors who had convicted Fallis; and the prosecuting attorney, Robert Franklin. The petition also included a statement from the county jailor: "In the month of July an attempt was made to break jail by some eight or ten prisoners confined on the second floor of the Franklin County Jail. One of these prisoners did escape and but for the promptness and courage of the petitioner John Fallis, who not only stopped some of the prisoners from escaping but gave the alarm so that the jailor could reach the jail in time to prevent the escape of all the prisoners therein, all of them would have escaped."[26]

In addition, a letter written by Fallis's victim, Robert Semonis, claimed that he and Fallis "have always been friends," that the fight between them had been a misunderstanding, and that he had "no feeling against the said Follis [*sic*] but on the contrary entertains toward him a friendly feeling." On December 3, 1904, Governor Beckham granted John Fallis a full pardon.[27]

Over the years, Fallis was convicted several times for bootlegging activities. In the process of examining a picture of Fallis in the store where he and Annie lived, R. T. Brooks chose to segue into the topic of Fallis's bootlegging:

Brooks: He lived over the store. That was part of it. Now, his residence was right over the store. . . . And, of course, like I say, they bootlegged in those days, see. And I remember the old chimney, see. . . . Right there. That was the store, see. The house, residence, is up over that, see. You can see, he kept a neat store. If you look, you can see . . . overhead, particular to this end, right behind this was a storage area where he kept extra groceries. And . . . there was a garage where he could drive in the same building.

Wallace: Umhumm.

Brooks: And, then, there was another building back of that that was storage. But he had a chimney in there where you could put a heater. But the chimney was not a chimney. It was . . . basically because there was another chimney upstairs. But that's where he put his . . .

Wallace: You could store things in that chimney, couldn't you? [laughing]

Brooks: Yes, sir. That chimney was built with a . . . because I

seen the tank it was built around, see. And that's . . . where he could fill up bottles . . . he needed.[28]

Henry Sanders and George Simmons also remembered Fallis's bootlegging:

Sanders: Back in those days were Prohibition days. And he had a, well, might say a ring, operating in all Frankfort selling moonshine.
Wallace: You mean, bootleggers working for him?
Sanders: Yes.
Simmons: Yes. Stilling all that moonshine. There's a story there.
Sanders: Yeah. Of course, all he did, walk around dressed up, looked like a governor or something, see. You didn't see no work clothes or nothing on him [laughter]. But he was very good.[29]

While interviewees recounted Fallis's reputation for bootlegging, his alleged marital infidelities, and his violent tendencies, much of the discussion also focused on his role as a neighborhood grocer and an active and responsible participant in family and community life. There was much talk of Fallis's assistance to the black community in the Bottom:

Sanders: Now, you talk about people getting along, when I was a kid, they had a fellow named Fallis, John Fallis.
Simmons: Yeah. I remember.
Sanders: And he was more so a kingpin around the Bottom.
Simmons: Now, he was white.
Sanders: Yeah, he was white. . . . But he helped a lot of black people.
Simmons: Yeah.
Wallace: How did he help them?
Sanders: Well, if they needed coal, he'd have some coal sent to them; or, if they needed groceries, he'd give them money to go buy groceries. And if they needed clothes, he'd give them some money to buy clothes. Just different things. Whatever they needed, he'd try to help them with it.
Wallace: Well, did he ask anything in return?
Sanders: Nope. Nope.[30]

Henry Sanders related a specific story about his and his brother's childhood interactions with John Fallis:

Sanders: I mean, one day, we was standing on the corner. I had a twin brother, and we had a little wagon. We always got a little red wagon for Christmas. And we was running up and down the street in it, and he was on the corner, and of course, you never knowed what might flare up any time. He looked at us and told us, said, "Hey, you little fellows don't have a bit of business on this corner in the world." Said, "Here." He gave us a dime or a nickel or something.
Simmons: And that was big money.
Sanders: Yeah, back in those days. Said, "You all take this and go on home now. I don't want to catch you back down here anymore." And of course, that scared us.
Wallace: Yeah, yeah.
Sanders: He told us to not come back anymore. But we obeyed him. We didn't go back anymore.
Simmons: Because they was looking forward to another dime.
Sanders: Yes . . . he was awful good to the blacks down in the Bottom.[31]

When the topic of John Fallis came up in his interview, Goebel McCoy said that "John Fallis, at one time, was a pioneer of down there, you know." At this moment, Mrs. McCoy interjected her thoughts:

Mrs. McCoy: He was a fine man.
Mr. McCoy: In other words, he helped the poor people.
Wallace: How did he help them?
Mr. McCoy: Well, I don't remember John Fallis too much. I remember my dad's telling me he run a grocery store. . . . People that had no money to pay, he helped them make it. Now, that's what I heard. He helped poor people. . . . But you didn't want to cross him.[32]

James Ellis, a small child when he knew John Fallis, remembered him as a "tall fellow," and he "thought he was a very nice fellow, very nice." Ellis continued: "Now, you're talking about somebody out walking down the street, them people wouldn't be out here

gambling when the women come down. No, siree. He'd tell them in a minute. And, see, John, of course, John was a bootlegger. . . . We'd try to give pop bottles, as kids, because he'd give us nickels for them bottles, see. And that's what he'd pour his whiskey in, see, and sell that whiskey." When prompted, Ellis told Wallace a specific story that conveyed his perceptions of John Fallis and his childhood respect for him.

> *Ellis:* Well, what we had done, we was playing on the street, and some guys come down from uptown. They was probably half drunk. "God damn it, get out of the way, boys," and raised that foot to kick, and John Fallis had a pearl-handled pistol. I remember looking right at it, looking at the barrel of it. See, I scooted on out of the way.
>
> He said, "You kick them and you'll be laying there."
>
> "Oh . . . I didn't mean no harm."
>
> He said, "Get on back uptown, don't want to see you down here."
>
> And them guys, I mean, they hauled bunk, right on out of there. He was just like that.[33]

James Calhoun reflected on Fallis's efforts to help his neighbors: "John Fallis . . . he's helped the blacks out. He's bought coal for them, he's done this, he's done different things for a lot of us . . . things you don't forget."[34] The family narrative echoes this sentiment: "John Fallis was one of the best natured fellows you ever met." Then it continues: "He would give you the last cent he had if he thought that you needed it. He would donate to Churches, help hospitals, and all kinds of charity work. It was his delight to help little children, and [he] pitched money on the ground to see them scramble for it. He would play marbles with them for hours. Then when he would beat them, he would divide the marbles and give them back to them. He would enjoy himself with them. Often buy them clothes to get them to go to Sunday school and church. He was so good natured."[35] "Bixie" Fallis's written narrative repeatedly emphasizes his father's charitable side: "He was ready to help those that needed help, was always giving in distress." The author points to a particular moment: "When my little brother died, he gave himself to the Lord, and lived a good life for some time." However, Fallis was allegedly approached one day by an unknown individual who punched him, stating, "I hear

that you are living for the Lord." This, the author states, was "more than he could stand . . . and he hit back and lost out with the Lord." Nevertheless, John "had a good heart in him" and was "always doing something for someone else." The author cites one particular incident involving a poor family who had moved to Frankfort from "the mountains." One child died, and the father had no money to pay for the burial. Being new in town and not knowing anyone, the father was referred to Fallis: "He asked my Father if he would loan him the money so that he could bury his child. My Father paid all the burial expenses and did not charge the man anything but a good meal."[36]

Wallace's interviewees repeatedly stressed the compassionate dimension of John Fallis's personality through many stories of Fallis giving credit at his store, paying for coal and food, and paying for funerals when families could not. The unpublished family narrative written in the 1940s captures the sentiments shared by many of Craw's former residents.

Blown to Kingdom Come

Fallis's biographical and criminal exploits proved legendary, and public memory focused its attention on two primary incidents in his life and career. First, in 1912, Fallis faked his own death by blowing up his boat with dynamite and then fleeing Frankfort, leaving his wife and children behind in mourning. The headlines in the December 10 newspaper read, "ONLY HIS HAT FOUND WHEN HE DISAPPEARED: John Fallis Seemingly Is Totally Obliterated by Explosion." The article contains the following report of the incident:

> John Fallis, the Wilkerson street grocer, is supposed to have stumbled and fallen while carrying a box of dynamite from his store to his boathouse on the river bank about 300 yards back of his house Sunday night. A few minutes after he left the house carrying the dynamite, a terrific explosion shook Frankfort. An immense hole in the river bank showed where the box of dynamite had exploded and Fallis' hat was picked up nearby, but not a shred of flesh, a drop of blood or a scrap of clothing has been discovered near the scene that could be identified as part of Fallis' person. The river has been dragged without revealing anything of the mystery of the man's total obliteration and Mrs. Fallis has offered a reward of $25 for

> the recovery of her husband's remains. The explosion of dynamite shook every building in Frankfort a minute after 8 o'clock Sunday night.[37]

The article explains that Fallis had been using the dynamite to "blast out" a space in the hill behind the family's house on Wilkinson Street. While John was away that Sunday, Mrs. Fallis had found the children playing with the sticks of dynamite. The article continues: "When Mr. Fallis returned home his wife told him he ought to take the dangerous stuff down to his houseboat on the river, which was some three hundred yards from their home, so that the children could not get it. Fallis at once took the box of dynamite and started to the boat with it. A few minutes later a terrific explosion was heard all over the city."[38] The article reports that the neighborhood quickly mobilized upon hearing the explosion, searching the riverbank and dragging the river, "but not a shred of clothing that Fallis wore, nor a fragment of his body could be found." According to the article, "Everybody in Frankfort discussed the explosion yesterday and many different theories were advanced about it, but as not a single piece of clothing or of the body were found, the matter still remains a mystery." The article states that Fallis's body, believed to be in the river, would be discovered in a matter of days. It describes Fallis as a grocer who was "thought to be in a fairly prosperous condition" and who was survived by his wife and five children, ranging in age from one to twelve years old. The article opines that the reward of $250 for the body's recovery would "stimulate a number of people to watch the river for a week or more with the hope that the body will rise to the top of the water."[39]

The following day the local paper reported that the search for Fallis's remains continued, with no success. Interestingly, the last lines of that day's article read: "It is stated that Fallis had several thousand dollars insurance on his life, including some accident insurance."[40] With a reward offered for the discovery of his remains, and his wife about to collect on the insurance, Fallis mysteriously reappeared the evening of December 14, five days following the incident. The headline read: "JOHN R. FALLIS RETURNS HOME AFTER FLIGHT: Finds Administrator in Charge of Estate and Wife Mourning." The article explains that Fallis had not after all perished in the explosion: "John Fallis is alive. While rivermen with lanterns and grappling hooks and stimulated by the reward of $250

offered by his administrator were searching the cold depths of the Kentucky river for fragments of his remains last night, he walked in on his overjoyed wife and four children. The story of Fallis' wanderings since the explosion of dynamite on the river bank in the rear of his store last Sunday night would furnish the plot of a popular romance."[41] The article recaps the incident and the efforts of search parties over the past few days. More important, it recounts Fallis's version of events and presents a logical explanation for his mysterious disappearance:

> He did, indeed, stumble, as surmised, but he threw the box down the bank, and the next thing he knew, according to his statement, he was near the railroad and overheard someone in passing remark how terrible it was "those people being killed with dynamite." The fear seized him that he had killed someone. He walked to Christiansburg and caught a freight train for Louisville. He did not tarry there longer than necessary to board another train for Jacksonville, Fla., and there while waiting for a boat he read a newspaper that he was the only victim of the explosion. He immediately wrote a letter to *The State Journal,* which beat him back to Frankfort only a few hours and in the letter he told the story of his flight. He arrived shortly after 9 o'clock last night on an inter-urban car from Lexington.[42]

Since only the Fallis houseboat suffered harm, the general public accepted John Fallis's explanation for his bizarre disappearance following the explosion. Presumably, everyday life for the Fallis family resumed.

The family narrative attributes the origins of this 1912 incident to marital tension over John's regular infidelities. The author of this narrative describes John as a smooth-talking "Don Juan" who had a "keen eye for pretty women," yet notes that "his good wife stuck to him, even after catching him with other good looking women." The narrator walks the reader through the events of the day of the explosion: "Johnie and his wife Anne had a good stiff argument about the way Johnie was carrying on, so he decided he'd tell his wife he would end everything for good." The narrative states that Fallis went down to where one of his boats had been tied up on the Kentucky River and placed dynamite strategically on the boat. Taking a long

fuse to shore, Fallis lit the fuse and ran up the bank. The narrative continues:

> After the terrific explosion his wife and friends soon gathered at the boat to see what happened to Johnie. After finding part of his clothing, he put around the boat, they said, "Poor Johnie had blown himself to Kingdom Come." But Johnie was sly as a fox. He caught a freight train in the stillness of the night and went off to St. Charles, Louisiana, to work as a carpenter. Poor Anne and his family were grieving their hearts out for Johnie. After several weeks away from home, Johnie wrote to Anne. She was scared to death when she received the letter from him. She was in mourning and was about to receive his death insurance. Johnie only pulled this trick to see if Anne still loved him. Like always, she forgave him for everything.[43]

The family account differs from the newspaper accounts in several ways. One major discrepancy concerns the length of time Fallis was absent from Craw. "Bixie" Fallis's document states that Fallis was gone for "several weeks," while the news accounts have him returning after only five days. The family narrative offers insight on the origins of the argument between John and Anne and admits, even celebrates, Fallis's premeditation. The family account further claims that Fallis, after disappearing, worked as a carpenter in St. Charles, Louisiana, whereas Fallis claimed, in his statements to the newspapers, that he had been in Florida. In an unrelated article about John Fallis that appeared in the *State Journal* in 1921, the reporter revisited the 1912 incident:

> He created a sensation several years ago by disappearing after an explosion of dynamite on the river bank which wrecked his johnboat. He had carried the dynamite down to it and shortly afterwards there was an explosion which shook that part of the city. His hat was found and the river was dragged for remnants of his body. It was so certain he had been killed that application was made to collect his life insurance, but a few weeks later he wrote from Florida saying he had stumbled and dropped the dynamite and the explosion had so stunned him that he didn't know anything until he recovered his senses in Florida.[44]

Nine years after the incident, newspaper accounts also exaggerated the timeline of Fallis's disappearance, extending the five days reported in 1912 to a more dramatic return "a few weeks later." Public memory had already begun to capitalize on the hype surrounding the life of John Fallis during his own lifetime.

The oral history accounts are no less dramatic. Evelyn Carroll remembered the incident best, and with a little coaxing from Linda Anderson, one of Carroll's friends and a local historian present for the interview, she related her tale.[45]

Carroll: So, we thought he'd died. We dug his grave. We put some apples in the grave and covered him up.
Anderson: So he'd have something to eat.
Carroll: Then he come back, so we went out and dug him up. We laid Johnny, but old Johnny come back to haunt us.
Anderson: You never did . . . you never did tell him that tale.
Carroll: Did you want it?
Wallace: Yes, I'd . . . [laughter—Carroll and Anderson].
Anderson: Yeah, tell it. Tell it on the tape recorder about Johnny showing up.
Carroll: It was funny.
Anderson: Yeah, do it. Tell it.
Carroll: Well, it was a tale that you heard. You couldn't swear to it, but you heard it, didn't you?
Anderson: We heard it spoken, yeah [laughter]. And we said, "Oh, our Johnny's dead."
Wallace: Big Johnny Fallis?
Anderson: And everybody down there was running to the riverbank. You tell him about it. Yeah, go ahead.
Carroll: His clothes was just up there in the tree and up on the riverbank. His shoes was up there.
Wallace: What, this tremendous explosion and all this stuff was blown . . .
Carroll: Yeah. We thought they'd blowed Johnny up and his clothes was up there. And I guess he knowed about what time the freight train is going; so he swum the river, and he goes over to the old water tank, gets on that freight, and leaves. Of course, they're dragging the river, and we was all crying and going on.

Well, we didn't see him for several months. And, oh,

here come . . . our Johnny. It was several months later, and up pops John Fallis. My sister must have saw him first. She ran to tell Mom, but Mom didn't believe her, and she said, "You come and see." So she did, and we all saw John Fallis. And the last time they had seen anything about him, his clothes over there in that tree on the riverbank.

Wallace: Everybody thought he'd been blown to kingdom come.

Carroll: And he puts his clothes in the river and got them wet and throwed them up there. So they'd think he was blowed up, you know. And then, he just wanted to leave.

Anderson: But her sister was the little child standing at the door, and she called him "Johnny Foddis." And she went back to the kitchen, turned around, and said, "Mommy," says, "I see 'Johnny Foddis.'" And her mamma says, "Oh, honey," says, "Don't say that." Says, "Johnny's dead."

She says, "No, Mommy, I see 'Johnny Foddis.'" She went to the door and looked out, and there he was, grinning. And she says, "Well, my goodness, Johnny," says, "Where in the world have you been?" And he put his hand up to his elbow and says, "I've been where the bananas grow that long." But of course, they was glad to see him back. . . .

Carroll: Been to South America. He was their good friend, wasn't he? We was glad for him to come back, so we give him some pennies. We couldn't stand to think he was gone.[46]

Carroll's firsthand account of John Fallis's much-touted death and sudden return "several months later" exaggerates both the length of his absence—"several months"—and the location of his destination—decidedly romantic and dramatically far away from Frankfort. Carroll wastes no time reflecting on Fallis's explanations for his actions and assumes that he faked his death. When Wallace asked for her interpretations of John's reasons, she assumed that he was running from the law.

When Wallace mentioned that besides being in the grocery business, Fallis had an interest in boat building and the river, R. T. Brooks laughed:

Brooks: Oh [laughing], yeah. He faked suicide one time. . . .

Wallace: He and his wife sort of got maybe a little crosswise.

Brooks: Well, see, he was going to old Ida Howard [laughing]. That's what Ms. Fallis calls her. And she was a good-looking woman, but she was a lady of the town. And she was very religious. And she'd said . . . she'd call him a "slink." Said, "That 'slink' ain't going to touch me after being with that old Ida Howard," you know. And . . . she was a lady of the town . . . and she was a good-looking woman.[47]

Brooks cites John's infidelity with Ida Howard as the main source for marital tension between John and Anne Fallis. Whether Brooks considers this particular affair as the source of the argument that incited Fallis to fake his own death is unclear. Leaving this topic behind, Brooks quickly moves on to a discussion of Fallis's relationship with Anna Mae Blackwell, but later he returns to it unprompted:

Brooks: But at the time he faked . . . you was talking about boat building. He blowed that thing up, see, with dynamite and put cow bones and everything else in there, and they was dragging for him and looking for him, see. They said, "Well, John Fallis got blowed up down there." Well, he set it up because this was a shanty boat. But a lot of people lived on the river then.

Wallace: But you say . . . because he and his wife had a falling out?

Brooks: They were out . . . and his son and the police was after him, see. . . . Matter of fact . . . he watched them drag for him, and he was up on Fort Hill watching them. . . . They were dragging for him, see. He had blowed that up. . . . I don't think it was for any insurance. That was just to get them off his back.[48]

R. T. Brooks introduces several new elements into the narrative. In addition to marital tension between John and his wife, Brooks, like Evelyn Carroll, implies that John may have been fleeing legal problems. The notion that Fallis had planted cow bones, in addition to his torn clothing, in order to deceive the search teams is unique. Finally, the idea that Fallis watched his neighbors from Fort Hill as they searched for his remains recalls a famous motif in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* in which Tom witnesses the search for his remains and his own funeral.

Fugitive from the Law

Another major incident involving John Fallis occurred on June 15, 1921, when Fallis found himself at the center of Frankfort's most dramatic and violent single event of the decade. By the time the smoke had cleared in the morning, and the fiery embers had cooled, John Fallis had shot three of the eight policemen on the Frankfort police force; two innocent bystanders; and, by accident, his own son. The *State Journal* published a report stating that Officer E. H. Taylor had caught Carlos Fallis climbing on a roof of a building in order to gaze "down on a carnival in the rear of the old Capitol." After Carlos was ordered down, the boy struggled, and an altercation ensued. Taylor was backed up by officers Wainscott and Willhelm, and as the three led Carlos Fallis to the station, John Fallis "intercepted them at Main and Lewis Street." After Fallis verbally warned the officers to set Carlos free, Fallis opened fire: "Two shots in quick succession struck down two of the officers and a third went wild. . . . Policeman Taylor had been disarmed during the struggle of arresting Carlos and quick to act as he was to shoot, Fallis caught his son by the arm and hurried hmi [*sic*] away through the rapidly gathering crowd. On the way to their home, a boy whom they passed heard Fallis say: 'I got you out this time, but don't you ever go out again without a gun.'" The article describes eyewitness accounts claiming that one of Carlos's companions had reported the arrest to John Fallis, who "hurried to the carnival grounds and through the Old Capitol yard, where he fired his revolver in the air." The witness dramatically described Fallis running through the State House yard, firing shots in the air and shouting at the officers to "let his son go." The article cites another eyewitness, L. J. Skiles, identified as "an insurance man," who stated that he saw "some one brush by him and then heard the report of a revolver. He said that he recognized Fallis."[49]

Fallis retreated to his grocery store on Wilkinson with his teenage son Carlos. In response to Fallis's rampage, Sheriff Bain Moore and Chief of Police Y. D. Mangan deputized several citizens at the scene and contacted Governor Edwin P. Morrow for additional assistance. Governor Morrow contacted the head of Kentucky's National Guard, Adjutant General Morris, who supplied the posse with Springfield rifles and ammunition from the state arsenal. With Fallis barricading himself in his store, the posse surrounded the building. At this point, Officer Charles "Slug" Noonan approached the

door. As he approached, Fallis called out for him not to enter. When Noonan continued approaching the door, "Fallis fired point blank with a shotgun terribly wounding him." The article reports that some of the buckshot struck posse members John Foster and Jeff Lynn and Officer Jesse Colston, who was shot in the arm. The posse was ordered to surround the house and "prevent Fallis' escape."

Other positions were taken up along the river and on the hill above Fallis's home. The article states that "neighbors of Fallis declare that his house is a regular arsenal": "They said that he has dynamite in the house, shot guns and many pistols. Fallis is known as a bad man and is said to always carry two Colt Automatics. . . . Because of his reputation for being a 'bad man' Fallis is feared by a lot of his neighbors. His friends say that he is alright as long as things suit him but that if anyone disagrees with him then he is 'some fighter. According to persons who have known Fallis for years he has always said he would kill anybody who interferred [*sic*] with his family in any way." Fallis was reported to have gone home following the initial shootings, telling his wife and children to go to a neighbor's home because he had

WEATHER. Probably showers; little change in temperature.

The State Journal

TEN PEOPLE HURRY TO CATCH UP WHERE ONE HURRIES TO GET AHEAD

TWENTY-SECOND YEAR—No. 255. FRANKFORT, KY., THURSDAY MORNING, JUNE 16, 1921. SINGLE COPY, FIVE CENTS

FOUR POLICEMEN, HIS SON AND TWO CITIZENS ARE SHOT BY JOHN FALLIS

ARMED MEN SURROUND HOME UNTIL DAYLIGHT

RESCUES BOY AND SHOOTS OFFICER AT HIS DOOR STEP

Two Men Badly Wounded Three seriously injured; Two Painfully

ARREST TO BE MADE TODAY

FALLIS' STORE IS BURNED

Shortly before 3 o'clock this morning the armed deputies fired one hundred shots into the Fallis building, setting it on fire. Fallis failed to answer the fire of the deputies and it is not known whether or was in the building which was completely destroyed.

POLICEMAN GUY WAINSCOTT, shot through liver and arm, splintered. Serious.

POLICEMAN C. E. NOONAN, wounded in face, neck, chest and arms with buckshot. Serious.

POLICEMAN WILLIAM WILHELM, shot in shoulder.

POLICEMAN JESSE COLSTON, wounded in arm. Light.

CARLOS FALLIS, wounded in leg.

JOHN FOSTER, slightly wounded.

JEFF LYNN, slightly wounded.

On the way to their home, a boy whom they passed heard Fallis say: "I got you out this time, but don't you ever go out again without a gun." A companion of Carlos is said to have reported his arrest to Fallis, who barricaded to the carnival grounds and through the Old Capitol yard, where he fired his revolver in the air.

Hundreds of people gathered on Main street in a few minutes and at the call of Chief Y. D. Mangus, barricaded home and armed themselves. While the two wounded officers were being rushed to the King's Daughters Hospital, a posse that was rebellion ally augmented through the night, followed Chief Mangus to Fallis' home.

Noonan Is Shot.

Policeman Noonan went to to Fallis' house and as he reached the door Fallis called to him not to enter. He persisted, however, and Fallis fired point blank with a shotgun, terribly wounding him. Some of the buckshot struck John Foster and Jeff Lynn, who were in the posse. About the same time Policeman Jesse Colston received some shot in the arm, but continued on duty.

Meanwhile the posse was being distributed in the most strategic locations to surround the house and prevent Fallis' escape, especially toward the river. Others were stationed on the hill above his home and on both sides, guarding the street.

Neighbors of Fallis declare that his home is a regular arsenal. They said that he has dynamite in the house, shot guns and many pistols. Fallis is known as a bad man and is said to always carry two Colt automatics. Several weeks ago Fallis is said to have had an altercation with a neighbor and people say that they expected Fallis to commit murder then.

Because of his reputation for being a "bad man," Fallis is feared by al lof his neighbors. His friends say that he is alright as long as things suit him, but that if anyone disagrees with him then he is "some

AN IDEAL SCHOOL VACATION

MEXICO

PATRONAGE ROW AT WASHINGTON STARTS FRICTION

Appointments of President Harding Displeases Senate Leaders

GO-GETTERS ARE CONFIDENT THEY WILL REACH GOAL

Take On New Life. Determined To Win. All Must Subscribe To Get Hotel

U. S AND JAPAN TRY TO SETTLE YAP QUESTION

Direct Negotiations Have Begun

CONVICTS FILE SUIT TO TEST BOARD'S RULE

New Order Regarding Counting

RECORDS GOOD AND BAD CAUSE CONVICTS MOVE

Bad And Good Men Sent to Eddyville Prison From

Frankfort State Journal, June 16, 1921. Courtesy of the *Frankfort State Journal*.

(Above) John Fallis's grocery store the day after the fire, June 16, 1921. Courtesy of Charlene Ellis.

(Left) Frankfort State Journal, June 16, 1921. Courtesy of the *Frankfort State Journal.*

an infant who was "seriously ill" and was expected to die. When the police asked his wife if she would approach John while he was barricaded in the store to try to get him to surrender, she was reported as saying, "I wouldn't dare," claiming that her husband "would shoot her."[50] Losing patience with Fallis and fearing more casualties, the men began firing multiple volleys into the store, eventually causing it to catch fire. However, Fallis mysteriously escaped his burning store and eluded the surrounding posse, becoming a fugitive from the law.

The governor offered a $500 reward for his capture, and rumors of Fallis's whereabouts commanded public attention throughout the region. His crimes captured daily headlines in nearby cities, including Lexington and Georgetown, and the next day the *State Journal* reported a series of Fallis sightings and a message from John Fallis himself. The article describes armed men stationed at "every entrance to Frankfort," waiting for Fallis's arrival. Fallis had apparently been seen "coming to Frankfort with two 45 automatics dangling in their holsters from his belt." An eyewitness account from Taylor Carter, an engineer on the Frankfort and Cincinnati railroad, claimed that Fallis "had visited the Duvall station, four miles from Georgetown and had talked with W. A. Richardson, station agent." According to Carter, Richardson claimed that Fallis had sent both a gun and a note for his wife. Richardson had given the gun and the note to Wallace Carter, Taylor Carter's brother, who was the engineer on a freight that had arrived in Frankfort the preceding day. The note allegedly advised Mrs. Fallis to "take


SHOT FOUR POLICEMEN
WANTS SPEEDY TRIAL
By Courtesy of Evening Post.
JOHN FALLIS

Frankfort State Journal, June 21, 1921. Courtesy of the *Frankfort State Journal.*

the gun and murder an officer." It continued, "If you do not I will return tonight and kill him myself."[51]

Fallis finally surrendered to authorities on June 20, seven days after the shootings. The *State Journal* reported that "John Fallis, gunman, now in the Jefferson county jail, will have to face four charges of malicious shooting and wounding with the intent to kill." Fallis waived his examining trial, secured bond, and returned to Frankfort. The same article allowed Fallis to publicly tell his side of the story: "John R. Fallis . . . denied in the Jefferson County Jail he was a desperado, and added that after a bath and rest he would be ready to go back to Frankfort to face trial." The article described Fallis as "unkempt, unshaven and haggard from his five days' hiding while posses scoured the countryside." Fallis apparently "deplored his looks," which he felt gave him a "desperate appearance," and said that he didn't want the public to "consider him a dangerous man." Fallis stated, "I was never more than five miles from Frankfort."

He continued, "When I hear that my 3-month-old baby was at the point of death nothing could keep me from seeing him and my wife." Fallis claimed to have stayed two days in the vicinity of Stamping Ground, just east of Frankfort, where he slept out in the open, and provided his version of the day's events: "He was in his home above his grocery, last Wednesday evening when a youth brought word his son Carlos, 18 years old, was under arrest and being beaten to death by police." Grabbing his .45-caliber automatic pistol, he "rushed up the street, firing two shots into the air." He claimed that when Fallis demanded that Carlos be freed, Officer Wainscott reached for his gun. Subsequently, Fallis shot the officer twice. He then shot Officer Wilhelm, "who held the handcuffs which were on Carlos' wrists." Fallis stated, "I then shot at Patrolman Taylor, but missed, and Taylor ran away." Fallis took his son home, informed, he claimed, that several armed men were pursuing him. He sent his wife and children across the street. When Officer Noonan appeared at the door and demanded Fallis's surrender, Fallis poked his shotgun through a window and "dropped the officer":

> Fallis then ran out of the back door and made his way to the country, taking his shotgun, revolver and some money he says. . . . "I hid near the Kentucky River Distillery after returning to the Frankfort vicinity and saw machine loads of armed men searching for me. I stayed at the distillery until Sunday

night when I learned my baby was sick and went to visit it." Fallis declared his only idea was to save his son when he was told the police were beating young Carlos to death and said he had no desire to harm anyone else though he had many opportunities.[52]

The Making of a Folk Hero

Fallis stood trial for indictment #2976, the first count of "Shooting and Wounding Another With Intent to Kill," for shooting Officer Guy Wainscott and was convicted on April 14, 1922, sentenced to six months in the county jail and ordered to pay a fine of $250. For indictment #2977, the shooting of Officer C. E. Noonan, Fallis was acquitted on January 4, 1923. Charges were dropped for indictment #2975, the shooting of Officer William Wilhelm, at the request of Officer Wilhelm in a letter composed on November 10, 1924. D. Mangan, the chief of police, submitted a letter in support of Officer Wilhelm's request for clemency. While Fallis awaited trial in January 1924, he was arrested again for one charge of "Having in Possession an Illicit Still" and four charges of "Selling Intoxicating Liquor." Fallis pled guilty and was convicted on all five counts. In addition to the six months he would serve for shooting Guy Wainscott, he received four months' additional time for bootlegging.

That Fallis served minimal time for the shootings was a victory in itself. But Fallis took his luck even further—he sued his insurance companies, Rhode Island Insurance Company and British America Assurance Company, for fire damage to his grocery store suffered during his spree. Fallis simply denied that the damages incurred to his store were the direct result of his crimes—and he won. The jury awarded Fallis more than $1,600.

Fallis's nephew Jo Beauchamp told Jim Wallace his version of the events that led to the 1921 shootings:

Wallace: Oh, I've heard a story where . . . John Fallis shot Officer Wilhelm was coming up toward, I guess, his store or something . . . and he thought it was Guy Wainscott.

Beauchamp: No, that's not. It was "Slug" Noonan that he shot with his pump gun. Shot him through the glass. He was sneaking around looking in there. And he told Carlos . . . Carlos had one of his little brothers or a sister in his arms,

said, "You back down here till I can get this pump gun." It was "Slug" Noonan. It wasn't Wilhelm.

Wallace: Ah, okay.

Beauchamp: It was "Slug" Noonan. And they got that pump gun out from under that counter, and boy, he poured it on. Got him right in the damn face, glass and all.

Wallace: Did he live?

Beauchamp: Oh, yeah. All of them officers, he shot . . . I think he shot three that night. He shot Colston, Guy Wainscott, and "Slug" Noonan.

Wallace: Well, what led to the incident? Why . . . why were . . .

Beauchamp: Well, there was a carnival here in town, and Carlos was a young boy, and he wanted to look in that girlie show, and he climbed up on the damn tent, looking down at them girls dancing down there, and nude.

Wallace: Yeah.

Beauchamp: And one of these carnival men called the police, and Guy Wainscott didn't like him no way, so he got him down there, and Carlos put up a battle with him, and somebody went down there and told Uncle Johnny, and it was just a short distance up there from Wilkerson Street. It happened up there on . . . right there on Madison Street. When Uncle Johnny got up there, well, Wainscott was beating on Carlos with this club, and he backed off [and] said, "Don't hit him no more." He hit him again, and then, Johnny shot him. And he had a .45 automatic. And he got Carlos and went on home, and Colston was on the police force, and he was supposed to have been a bad man, and they tried to keep him away from down there and not let him go because they wanted to take Uncle Johnny alive.

Wallace: Yeah.

Beauchamp: But nothing happened. He broke loose from them and went down there and . . . [laughing], shit, here they come hauling his ass back. He shot him.[53]

Beauchamp offers an interesting and rare perspective on Fallis's interaction with his son Carlos during the incident. No other individual offered Jim Wallace any information about Fallis's 1921 shooting spree, and the family narrative makes no mention of the incident. That Fallis served only a total of six months for his crimes

is astonishing. That he successfully sued his insurance company for rebuilding his store was extraordinary. But Fallis's greatest victory must be that his reputation as a violent criminal has never overshadowed his "Robin Hood" status in local public memory.

In August 1929, Fallis found himself, again, in a heated shootout in the street, this time with Officer Richard Glass, on Election Day for the primaries. In the course of the skirmish, a stray bullet from Fallis's weapon struck a bystander in a voting booth, Lewis Brightwell, who later died from his injuries. Fallis was arrested for manslaughter. The *Lexington Herald* reported that Fallis had been released on $1,000 bond pertaining to a manslaughter charge "in connection with the death of Lewis Brightwell." Brightwell had been wounded in the leg when Fallis engaged in "a pistol duel with Patrolman Glass on Election Day. Blood poisoning and lockjaw resulted from the wound and Brightwell died."[54] The family narrative offers the following account of the Election Day shootout:

> It was voting day, and by some reason there was a shot fired and my Father's friend, who was standing near him said to my Father, Johnie that man is shooting at you. My Father jumped behind a gas tank. Then my Father shot at him and the bullet went wild and struck the voting booth, and Mr. Brighwell [*sic*] was hit in the leg, and late on took Lock Jaw and died in great agony at the hospital. He was a good friend of my Fathers and then his people had a warrant for my Father and they placed man slaughter against him. My father mourned a great deal about it for he cared so much for "Old Dad," as we all called him and my Father didn't live but two weeks, from that time until he was laid away.[55]

As the narrative suggests, Fallis was fatally shot at two o'clock in the morning on August 18, 1929, while he was out on bail—struck by Everett Rigsby with five bullets during a craps game in a house at the corner of Clinton and Gashouse Alley. That morning, Fallis's death dramatically made the front page of the *Frankfort State Journal.* The article reported that Fallis had been shot in the head and several times in the side. When struck, Fallis "fell in to the arms of one of the men standing nearby" and died instantly. The article notes that fifteen to twenty men who allegedly witnessed the shooting quickly dispersed, making it "very difficult to get accurate details

The State Journal

TWENTY-EIGHTH YEAR—NO. 183. FRANKFORT, KY., SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 18, 1929. SINGLE COPY FIVE CENTS

JOHN FALLIS KILLED

ANGRY HUSBAND KILLS MAN AND SHOOTS HIS WIFE

Makes Escape; No Trace of Him Has Been Found

TAKES WOMAN TO LEXINGTON

Kisses Her Good Bye After Leaving Her At Hospital

BRIDE'S DROWNING IS MORE OF MYSTERY AS HUSBAND'S BODY FOUND

GRAF ZEPPELIN APPROACHES ITS JAPANESE GOAL

Travels At Rate of Sixty Miles Over Crossing Siberia

TO LAND AT KASUMIGAURA

Will Be Prepared There to Make Flight Across Pacific

Snook's Lawyers Want New Trial For Slayer of University Co-ed

THREE DRIVERS AND EIGHT SPECTATORS INJURED AT DIRT TRACK AUTO RACES

SHOT TO DEATH AT 2:30 A. M. BY EVERETT RIGGSBY

Fatal Shots Fired Following an Argument Between Two Men

SLAYER SURRENDERS AT ONCE

Policeman Glass Placed Man in Workhouse Later in County Jail

FATHER KILLED BY LAD DURING FAMILY QUARREL

Mother Was In Danger Eleven-Year-Old Boy Believed

CANVASS TO BE MADE AUG. 29

State Election Commission In Meet That Day

BRIDE THIRTEEN HATES HUSBAND

Would Rather Die Than Return to Him

STAGES FIRST MAN IN LOUISVILLE TO BUY PLANE TICKET CROSS CONTINENT

COL. FRANK RUPP DIED YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AFTER 2 MONTHS' ILLNESS

SENATOR WATSON APPROVES TARIFF

MANCHURIA IS INVADED

Russians With 10,000 Men Penetrate Western Post

HANGED NEAR CRIME SCENE

Rum Pirate Pays the Supreme Penalty

Rose Bell Team

Heads Railroad

THE WEATHER

(Above) Frankfort State Journal, August 18, 1929. Courtesy of the *Frankfort State Journal.*

(Right) Frankfort State Journal, August 18, 1929. Courtesy of the *Frankfort State Journal.*

of the shooting at such an early hour in the morning." The article continues: "News of the shooting spread rapidly, and in a few minutes a large crowd of curiosity seekers had gathered and it was only with the greatest difficulty that they could be restrained."[56]

The *Lexington Herald* reported that there were possibly thirty men taking part in the craps game that evening. With regard to Fallis's possible complicity in his own death, the newspaper states: "Police said that they were unable to ascertain whether Fallis fired any shots but declared that they found no gun on his body."[57] After shooting Fallis, Rigsby "left the house and walked down the street about fifty yards," where he turned himself in to Officer Richard Glass, the policeman who had engaged in a shootout with Fallis the week before. Rigsby apparently told Glass, "I have just killed John Fallis and want to surrender." The police officer detained Rigsby in the city workhouse and later transferred him to the county jail. Rigsby waived his examining trial; his bond was set at $5,000. The *State Journal* describes the courtroom, "with such a crowd present that every available seat in the room was taken and the halls and stairways were packed solid." Rigsby is described as "dressed in a brown suit and as calm and cool as if nothing had happened. He gazed through the crowds, speaking to friends who were present. During the long wait he smoked several cigarettes and chewed a cake of chewing gum."[58] Despite the circumstances of the killing, the testimony, and the witnesses present, and despite Everett Rigsby's confession to Officer Glass, Rigsby was acquitted of the crime of murder.

Wallace's interviews with R. T. Brooks and Jo Beauchamp describe the context of the killing and candidly raise questions about it.

> *Brooks:* Well, down that, in that alley, see . . . now, when you get on down to the corner of Center and Clinton Street, this is where John Fallis got killed. This was actually the building. I was telling you that he was, he had gone to bed. But he had to walk a half a block down and a half a block up, and they was in Ed Fincels'. See, there was some old meat markets down in there, too.
>
> *Wallace:* Umhumm.
>
> *Brooks:* Yeah. See, Fincels run the meat market. Well, this was Ed Fincels' place. See, John wasn't . . . they didn't go in the Peach Tree where he run. . . . They . . . walked down

the corner, but . . . and the way I understood it . . . in the back of . . . when you go into Fincels', of course, it was like the old saloon. In the back room, there's always a gambling table, see.

Wallace: Sure.

Brooks: That's where they had them. But you sold your beer and liquors out front or . . . well, you wasn't allowed to sell liquors because it was illegal at that time, but they sold "boot-moonshine" liquors, you know [laughter]. . . . But, anyhow, this . . . this Rigsby, I understand, cheated on purpose, and John Fallis reached over and whops him one, but he's got the gun out under here . . . and pulls the trigger. And John Fallis jumps up and reaches for his gun, but he doesn't even have it with him. And then, the guy poured two or three more into him, see, and . . .

Wallace: So he was actually playing cards when he got killed.

Brooks: It was murder. It was murder.

Wallace: He didn't have a gun on him.

Brooks: Yeah. It was murder. It was set up, and, uh . . .

Wallace: Well, did, uh, did the police fear coming down into Craw?

Brooks: Well, they did. They . . . if they'd come, they'd just go through [laughter]. They didn't stop.

Wallace: They really didn't . . .

Brooks: But that's what I was telling you. He had an air about him, you know, that they knew that they better not. . . . They could come down there as long as they stayed in line and didn't try to interfere with anything. But they were the law. And he . . . he respected the law, but he did like [what] he wanted to do, too.

Wallace: It sounds like he was a man of political influence, too.

Brooks: Yeah, he was. And everybody respected John Fallis.

Earlier in the interview, Mrs. Brooks had joined R.T., recalling Fallis's murder:

Brooks: I was probably only two blocks from where he got killed when I was a kid because I remember the headline says "John Fallis Killed" and you can . . .

Mrs. Brooks: What did it call him? He was the czar or . . .

Brooks: The King of Craw is dead.
Mrs. Brooks: King of Craw . . .
Brooks: That's the way they said it.
Mrs. Brooks: Yeah.
Brooks: The King of Craw.[59]

R. T. Brooks's detailed account of Fallis's murder complements the account given by Jo Beauchamp. The theories put forth by Brooks and Beauchamp focus attention on the fact that Fallis's killing was a professional job and Everett Rigsby was a professional gun for hire. Beauchamp specified who he thought ordered the murder.

Wallace: 'Cause Fallis was dead by '29, wasn't he?
Beauchamp: Yeah. They had a hired gun got him.
Wallace: What happened there? I do . . .
Beauchamp: Well, he was . . . Them police was scared of him. And they wanted to get rid of him, and by God, they brought in a professional killer. That's what we always believed. . . . a fellow by the name of Rigsby.
Wallace: Yeah, Everett Rigsby.
Beauchamp: Everett Rigsby, and, uh . . .
Wallace: Do you know the story of the night that he was shot, how that happened?
Beauchamp: Well, now, they was having a crap game down there in one of them joints, and they got in an argument over there, and this guy said he'd made his point, and then Uncle Johnny said, "You're a lying little hooker. You didn't do it," and then, by God, he [Everett Rigsby] just pulled out his gun and shot him.
Wallace: Yeah.
Beauchamp: He fell under the crap table, and he walked around that crap table and took dead aim and hit him right there.
Wallace: Made sure he finished . . .
Beauchamp: Made sure he killed him. He come down there to kill him in the first place. He'd been down there looking for him before because I heared Grant Fallis tell Uncle Johnny, says, "Johnny, watch yourself now. There's a man looking for you." And Uncle Johnny says, "Well, I'll pin a rose in his ass with that pump gun if he comes around

fooling with me." And he carried a .45 automatic in his hip pocket all the time. It was a nickel-plated and pearl-handled. Heck, I've seen it time and time again.

Wallace: He didn't get a chance to draw it, I guess. He got shot before . . .

Beauchamp: No. They tried to say he didn't have his gun on him, but Chester, when he fell under that table, Chester took that gun off of him.

Wallace: Oh.

Beauchamp: Chester Fallis, who was running the joint.

Wallace: Was it the Peach Tree, you think, or what . . .

Beauchamp: No. It was . . . called it the Wide Awake.

Wallace: The Wide Awake.

Beauchamp: Yeah, it was right on the corner of Gaines Alley and Clinton Street.

Wallace: Well, you're the first one who's ever known all the details.[60]

Beauchamp's account of the evening's events includes the sequence of events, the location, conversations Fallis had, and the whereabouts of Fallis's supposed firearm. As Fallis's nephew, Beauchamp may have been privy to information known by family members alleged to have been present at the killing. Since twenty to thirty witnesses supposedly were present at the craps game, yet unavailable to authorities, vernacular accounts of the incident diffused into the community and entered the realm of public memory without much reference to printed sources.

Fallis's funeral, held at the Frankfort Cemetery on Tuesday, August 20, 1929, was well documented in the news media. The family narrative briefly describes his funeral: "He was so kind to the age[d], both white and colored. His funeral was held at home. The old colored Mammies bowed their heads and wept as they gazed on his body. They said he always done for them when they asked him."[61]

The oral history interviews include little information about John Fallis's family after his death, but apparently his wife and children stayed in Frankfort. Anne Fallis still owned their home at 703 Wilkinson Street when urban renewal forced her to sell in the 1960s. Carlos became a Kentucky state representative, and Bixie became a local firefighter. Fallis's daughter Annie died in an automobile accident, and his son John Jr. died at an early age. Anna Mae Blackwell

married again. Upon Anne Fallis's death, John's son Bixie had his father's remains exhumed and reburied beside her at Sunset Cemetery on the outskirts of Frankfort.

John Fallis's life and death profoundly impacted the community of Frankfort, both inside and outside Craw, and his legend continues to resonate in the memories of his former neighbors. Certain aspects of Fallis's life consistently appear in the repertoires of former residents when placed in the narrative context of Wallace's interviews. Although Wallace found varying degrees of familiarity with Fallis's story, the overwhelming majority of those interviewed—neighborhood insiders and outsiders, black and white—knew his name well.

John Fallis has played a major part in Jim Wallace's research presentations to local groups. In the mid-1990s, Wallace presented "The Life and Times of John Fallis" to a local group called Historic Frankfort, and the local cable television station videotaped it. Wallace concludes his public presentations on Fallis with these words: "This is a death that is wrapped in a lot of mystery. Wrapped in a lot of mystery that will probably never ever be determined. There is an air of the deliberate about the death of John Fallis that has me curious."[62] John Fallis's extraordinary ascent to folk-hero status became clear to Jim Wallace as he conducted his project. Numerous and entertaining stories about him, full of plenty of details and facts, depending on the speaker's perspective, give John Fallis a clear place in the formation of Craw's identity. Folklorist Roger Abrahams writes that heroes of his type "reflect something of the cultural values and situations around them. . . . Examination of their deeds in relation to other aspects of the life of the group will be helpful in understanding the culture of the group."[63]

In his article "The Making of the Popular Legendary Hero," Horace Beck articulates the basic criteria for a legendary hero: "First, it is not necessary—indeed it may well be detrimental—to be endowed with the . . . moral virtues to achieve heroic stature. . . . Second, it is imperative that the times be fortuitous to make the special flair a man has shine out. . . . Third, personal flamboyance and the ability to talk a good game far overshadows the ability to 'cut the mustard.' . . . Fourth, and perhaps most important, is the power of the written word and the publicity agent."[64] John Fallis fits nicely into this model. His moral character as represented in public memory is contradictory. Some believe that at his core Fallis was a "good man" who selflessly assisted the less fortunate of his community at a time

before social welfare legislation had been enacted. Others believe that Fallis was essentially a violent criminal who manipulated his community to achieve his own ends. In addition to the opportunities that bootlegging offered during Prohibition, Fallis benefited from a culture that celebrated the gangster and political-boss models. The fact that he was called the "King of Craw," along with the prominence of his name on the local front pages, demonstrates the successful construction of Fallis's powerful image. A combination of sources—including newspaper articles documenting his deeds and misdeeds, court records, oral history narratives, and photographs, as well as the written family narrative—has shaped public memories of John Fallis. Wallace's oral history project captures the expression of public memory, while the repetition of his public presentations perpetuates and further concretizes Fallis's status as an outlaw-hero. Indeed, this retelling will also further negotiate the heroic memory of John Fallis in the public sphere.

The 1940s family narrative consistently refers to Fallis as a "real modern Robin Hood" to whom "justice was never given" and emphasizes his charitable nature. In some ways, Fallis does fit the classic "Robin Hood stereotype." In his book *Bandits,* historian Eric Hobsbawm writes that both social and criminal bandits "tend to exist surrounded by clouds of myth and fiction."[65] Hobsbawm describes social bandits as "peasant outlaws whom the lord and state regard as criminals, but who remain within society and are considered by their people as heroes . . . to be admired, helped and supported."[66] For Fallis to be considered a "social bandit," his legend must involve interactions with his community. Long after his death, stories of his exploits thrive in the context of public memory. Contemporaneous media coverage of his crimes and adventures demonstrates a fairly high level of local celebration and support. Whether Fallis consciously recognized his "constituency" will never be known.[67] However, glimpses of particular aspects of the collective tradition of his legend emerge. That Fallis enacted the "social bandit" tradition is evidenced by his behavior as expressed in news accounts, in court records, in the commentary found in the family narrative, as well as in the expression of Fallis's life in the performance of oral history. The "social bandit" tradition itself may have shaped the direction in which Jim Wallace directed his interviews as his fascination with John Fallis grew.

Folklorist Américo Paredes discusses the "folklorization of actual

events" in his research on the Mexican ballads known as *corridos.* Paredes follows the trajectory of stories as they become "folklorized," that is, as they move between genres and groups, beginning with actual, historical events and moving on to artistic expressions recounting a given story in a "more or less factual way."[68] The story of John Fallis clearly underwent the folklorization process, moving away from the telling of actual events and being transformed in the narrative process into the range of legends that exist in present memory. Accounts from newspapers, the written family narrative, and the performance of oral histories combine to commemorate the life of this outlaw-hero. The traditional bandit is often positioned in opposition to injustice, and urban renewal was arguably the greatest injustice to befall Craw. Most accounts recall John Fallis as a contradictory folk hero—a neighborhood boss who fed the poor and helped the sick and grieving, including African Americans. Yet, Fallis's violent and criminal tendencies proved so dramatic that retellings of his exploits continue. As a result, John Fallis has become a powerful symbolic representation of subversion of and rebellion against authority for both black and white members of the Craw community. John Fallis, the most recognizable narrative figure emerging from Wallace's interviews, is white—and he symbolically represents many black residents. Once more, the neighborhood's residents demonstrate a tendency to unite around common symbols and common experiences rather than to choose division based upon race, in both legend and memory. In many ways, the expression of Fallis's life story follows the traditional narrative patterns of typical literary and folk heroes, outlaws, and bandits. The life story of John Fallis as articulated in Wallace's interviews with the former residents of Craw once more effectively demonstrates the powerful impact of tradition in the shaping and development of public memory.

Conclusion

Remembering Craw

The Craw is gone, as are most of its longtime residents. Surface assumptions would suggest that individuals "remember" only the span of their own lives, a common perception of the nature and constraints of human memory and thus of oral history. However, this vague perception ignores the crucial role of traditional, or public, memory in the process of constructing individual and collective historical identities. The subjects of many of the narratives of Craw existing in contemporary historical consciousness extend well beyond the temporal limits of the tellers' own lifetimes. John Fallis, the legendary "King of Craw," was killed in 1929. Most of the individuals interviewed in this collection were young children when this event occurred. Although they did not necessarily recollect personal experiences with Fallis, they knew a core set of narrative details that they freely offered regarding Fallis's life. Stories about Fallis are just one example of the many components of esoteric knowledge necessary for ongoing participation in this particular community. Stories are passed on through generations and woven into the fabric of collective identity. In fact, the transmission of knowledge through space and time is integral to cultural experience. The act of transmitting this traditional knowledge in communicative events, including oral history interviews, frames contemporary worldviews, informing, defining, and redefining shared identities and thus simultaneously creating and perpetuating community, even in memory.

From the neighborhood's beginnings, public perception of Craw selectively focused on the criminal aspects of the neighborhood's reputation. Crime remained prominent in the ongoing reformulation of the public memory of Craw as expressed by neighborhood outsiders and, to a surprising degree, by many of those former residents whom Wallace interviewed in the early 1990s. Even though Wallace's

The neighborhood's destruction as urban renewal begins. Courtesy of Nell Cox.

interviews were consciously and intentionally framed to elicit countermemories, both interviewees and interviewer found themselves collaboratively recalling narratives reflecting both extremes of the neighborhood's remembered past. They talked nostalgically about the closeness of the community but concurrently celebrated historical reputations that made the neighborhood extraordinary from a historical perspective. Nostalgia in these oral history interviews is consistently balanced by the real and the sensational in individual memories. The newly expressed countermemories deconstruct historical memory of the neighborhood and bring a reconstituted public memory into balance.

The physical destruction of this particular neighborhood did not suffice for local urban renewal advocates, who wanted to dispose of the memory of Craw along with the physical neighborhood. Farnham Dudgeon told the press in 1965 that there were "too many people thinking of the area as 'the Craw.'" He predicted that public memory would soon forget the neighborhood and hoped that "when our kids grow up they will never know 'the Bottoms' were there."[1] Dudgeon was wrong. It has been thirty years since urban renewal erased the physical presence of the neighborhood, and Craw is not forgotten. The former residents of the neighborhood, Ron Herron,

James "Papa Jazz" Berry, Jim Wallace, and I have all attempted to insure otherwise.

The narrative reconstruction of Craw creates a community in memory. Shared identity in this community originally emerged from the experience of growing up together in the Bottom; that experience resulted in the formation of a shared cultural frame of reference, a shared sense of place, a shared repertoire of community symbols and stories. Jim Wallace's oral history project empowered former residents to challenge dominant public memory and reclaim their community-based identity. Historian Michael Kammen writes that communities reconstruct their past according to the needs of the present.[2] In the spirit of James "Papa Jazz" Berry's printed defense of the neighborhood, Wallace's project enabled former residents to gain some sense of control over historical meaning and articulate a more relevant and "usable" past.[3] For former residents, this past gave meaning to their present and provided an ongoing connection to a long-cherished place.

Jim Wallace's oral history project reframed the neighborhood narrative in the public sphere. As John R. Gillis notes, "Commemorative activity is by definition social and political, for it involves the coordination of individual and group memories."[4] Commemoration occurs on three levels of Jim Wallace's oral history project. First, remembrance occurs between the interviewer and the informant; as the interviewer, Jim Wallace became an active participant in the commemorative event. Commemoration also occurs at the community level as isolated individuals come together—although not physically in this case—to create both a community in memory and an archival memorial out of an oral history project. The third level emerges as the city of Frankfort adopts the newly emergent narrative as the dominant one. Jim Wallace's speeches live on, repeatedly broadcast on Frankfort's local cable channel. The Kentucky Historical Society has hosted an exhibit of photographs and maps of the neighborhood in conjunction with Wallace's lectures. The Frankfort City Museum has understandably embraced the more sensational and seemingly entertaining aspects of public memory and has repeatedly featured the folk-hero aspects of John Fallis: in its 2009 fund-raising campaign, twenty-five dollars bought the donor membership in the "John Fallis Gang." Craw has also played a defining role in the museum's annual "Murder and Mayhem Tour" of Frankfort, which invites participants to "join our stroll of the streets

in downtown Frankfort and experience the town's 'dark side.' . . . Because of the graphic content of Frankfort's sordid past, the tours are only open to those 19 and over."[5]

Since Craw's destruction, however, the members of this community no longer experience face-to-face interaction on a regular basis. "Community" in the physical sense is gone. Henrietta Gill's remarks stand in here for similar ones made throughout many of the oral history interviews:

Gill: It's a closeness that I'll never know again.
Wallace: That's one of the things that Papa Jazz said in his article and other people have said to me, that once everybody was scattered, a lot of friendships got lost, you lost contact.
Gill: I think that's what hurts most. And now here I am, I'm at sixty-eight and a half, I'm one little black woman living out here in a white neighborhood with no friends. I don't even have anyone that I can say, "Come over and have a cup of coffee with me."

Now, when we in the Bottom, all I'd have to go to the fence and say, "Have you had your coffee yet?"

"No, I haven't."

"Come on over and let's have a cup of coffee. . . ."

Wallace: Yeah.
Gill: See, that's that sharing I told you about.
Wallace: That social interaction, yeah.
Gill: Yes. And, then, you'd talk about everybody and that's how you knew all of the news because . . . now, I'm sitting out here. . . .
Wallace: Isolated maybe?
Gill: Yeah, isolated. And we're all just like that. You'll see one here and one there.[6]

Through oral history research conducted for this volume and others, and the stories' eventual publication, the former residents of the neighborhood, physically separated for decades, are forever united in narratives conveying their common history and shared experience. And through this process, these stories invite neighborhood outsiders to share a bond as we consider new memories of Craw, memories long pooled in a sense of place; carried from a near-extinguished and

largely alien past; and shaped into memorable symbols, icons, and narratives in the often nostalgic mind's eye of the present.

Narrative expression of the past exists in the spoken present and in the memories of the moment. Shared identities and a sense of belonging to history resonate from the expression of these memories in the performance of oral histories. The dynamics of public memories of this neighborhood flow between the individual and the dispersed community, between tradition and innovation, between a sense of belonging and a sense of loss, between archival, documentary, and vernacular histories, and coalesce to reconstruct a sense of meaning and connection, a sense of place, and now, thanks to an oral history project, a remembered and therefore vital community.

Notes

Introduction

1. Anthony Pearce-Batten, "Old 'Craw' Area of Frankfort Revitalized by Capital Plaza," press release, Kentucky Department of Public Information, Nov. 22, 1974, copy in "Franklin County History," Kentucky Historical Society Library Vertical Files.

2. In later times, certain definitions of Craw would incorporate more addresses on Madison Street adjacent to the Old State Capitol, St. Clair Street, and Buffalo Alley, and out as far as Anne Street. "Long Lane Alley" was also known at different times as Petticoat Alley, Center Street, Gaines' Alley, and Gashouse Alley.

3. Carl E. Kramer, *Capital on the Kentucky: A Two Hundred Year History of Frankfort and Franklin County* (Frankfort: Historic Frankfort, 1986), 342.

4. "Dark Rows of Shanties to White Tower," *Frankfort State Journal,* Feb. 1, 1970; James E. Wallace, "This 'Sodom Land': Urban Renewal and Frankfort's Craw" (master's thesis, University of Kentucky, 1991). See also Scruggs and Hammond, "Structure and Family Survey," Frankfort Slum and Redevelopment Agency, Family Survey Files, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Frankfort, KY, Sept. 8, 1956.

5. Scruggs and Hammond, "Structure and Family Survey."

6. "Games Children Played," *Frankfort State Journal,* Dec. 28, 1975.

7. Charles W. Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), xvi–xvii.

8. [Douglas A. Boyd], "Introduction," in *Community Memories: A Glimpse of African American Life in Frankfort, Kentucky,* ed. Winona L. Fletcher et al. (Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 2003), xvi.

9. Eviatar Zerubavel, *Social Mindscapes: An Invitation to Cognitive Sociology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 81.

10. Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices,'" *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105–40.

11. Amos Funkenstein, "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness," *History and Memory* 1, no. 1 (1989): 6.

12. John Bodnar, "Public Memory in an American City: Commemoration

in Cleveland," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity,* ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 75.

13. "Urban Renewal Project Will Be Finished in Two Years," *Frankfort State Journal,* Jan. 17, 1965.

14. Benedict Anderson, "Memory and Forgetting," in *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 1991), chap. 11.

15. Maggie Knott, interview with James E. Wallace, July 1, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort.

16. Henry Sanders and George Simmons, interview with James E. Wallace, May 29, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

17. Henry Ellis and Margaret Ellis, interview with James E. Wallace, Aug. 1, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

18. Mary Helen Berry, interview with James E. Wallace, July 2, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

19. Jon C. Teaford, *The Rough Road to Renaissance: Urban Revitalization in America, 1940–1985* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 8.

20. "Overflow Crowd Hears Facts and Arguments . . . ," *Frankfort State Journal,* Jan. 30, 1958; Wallace, "This 'Sodom Land.'"

21. "Negro Delegation Says Many Opposed to Bottom Development," *Frankfort State Journal,* Feb. 9, 1958; Wallace, "This 'Sodom Land.'"

22. M. H. Berry, interview, July 2, 1991.

23. Charlotte Linde, *Life Stories: The Creation of Coherence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 12.

24. Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History,* Series in Oral and Public History (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 56.

25. E. Estyn Evans, *Irish Folk Ways* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1957), xiv.

26. William Lynwood Montell, *The Saga of Coe Ridge: A Study in Oral History,* 1st ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970).

27. Henry H. Glassie, *Passing the Time in Ballymenone: Culture and History of an Ulster Community,* Publications of the American Folklore Society, n.s., 4 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 664.

28. [Boyd], "Introduction," xvii.

1. The "Lower" Part of the City

1. "Crawfish Bottom," "Craw," or "the Craw" was also called "the Bottom," or just "Bottom." However, my investigation demonstrates that "the Bottom" seems to emerge after the 1920s and is an esoteric label bestowed by inside members of that particular community.

2. Jennie Chinn Morton, *Frankfort Ledger,* May 3, 1897.

3. *Frankfort Capital,* centennial edition, Oct. 9, 1886; Mary Verhoeff,

The Kentucky River Navigation (Louisville: John P. Morton and Company, 1917), 78.

4. Sara Prewitt Olcott and T. E. Adams, *Historical Jottings of Kentucky's Capital* (Frankfort: n.p., 1951), 78.

5. Kramer, *Capital on the Kentucky.*

6. The 1871 bird's-eye view of Frankfort is an artist's rendering. The artist painted the capitol building as it could have possibly appeared after being rebuilt, which as it turned out was not the architectural choice eventually made.

7. Kramer, *Capital on the Kentucky,* 179.

8. Ibid.

9. *Frankfort Daily Kentucky Yeoman,* Jan. 25, 1876.

10. *Frankfort Weekly Yeoman,* Mar. 6, 1877.

11. *Frankfort Weekly Yeoman,* Feb. 13, 1877.

12. *Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman,* June 5, 1873.

13. Colonel John L. Scott was a Frankfort attorney who, in 1862, was elected commonwealth's attorney for the district including Franklin and several surrounding counties.

14. Kramer, *Capital on the Kentucky,* 50. Kramer states that Fish Trap Island was a "large drift pile about nine hundred yards long which split the river's main channel just below the mouth of Benson Creek. During low water, the channel dropped to about fifteen inches on either side of the island." Kramer claims that Native American tribes used the island to capture large quantities of fish by setting V-shaped fish traps—a technique, he claims, was later copied by the white settlers. In 1803 legislation was passed to clean the western channel at Fish Trap Island, making it more accessible for navigation.

15. L. F. Johnson, *The History of Franklin County, Ky.* (Frankfort: Roberts Printing, 1912), 35.

16. *Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman,* Sept. 28, 1875.

17. *Frankfort Weekly Yeoman,* Feb. 6, 1877.

18. *Frankfort Weekly Yeoman,* Aug. 21, 1877.

19. *Frankfort Weekly Yeoman,* Mar. 6, 1877.

20. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* June 1, 1878.

21. Ibid.

22. I suspect that the term "Crawfish Bottom" was present in vernacular circulation prior to its use in the newspapers.

23. *Frankfort Tri-Weekly Roundabout,* Nov. 23, 1878.

24. *Frankfort Weekly Yeoman,* Nov. 19, 1878.

25. *Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman,* Mar. 22, 1879.

26. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* Feb. 21, 1880.

27. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* June 5, 1880.

28. *Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman,* Jan. 14, 1879.

29. *Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman,* Jan. 16, 1879.
30. *Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman,* Mar. 18, 1879.
31. *Frankfort State Journal,* May 2, 1918.
32. *Frankfort Roundabout,* July 11, 1891.
33. *Frankfort Capital,* Aug. 28, 1886.
34. *Frankfort Capital,* Sept. 27, 1884.
35. *Frankfort Roundabout,* Mar. 3, 1888.
36. *Frankfort Roundabout,* Oct. 28, 1886.
37. *Frankfort Capital,* Sept. 18, 1886.
38. *Frankfort Roundabout,* Mar. 21, 1891.
39. *Frankfort Roundabout,* July 11, 1891.
40. *Frankfort Roundabout,* Aug. 10, 1895.
41. *Frankfort Courier,* July 28, 1915.
42. *Frankfort Western Argus,* Mar. 7, 1889.
43. *Frankfort Capital,* Apr. 2, 1887.
44. *Frankfort Roundabout,* Aug. 10, 1895.
45. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* July 26, 1884.
46. *Mt. Vernon Signal,* Dec. 8, 1899.
47. Colonel George Chinn, interview with Enoch Harned, Sept. 18, 1980, Kentucky Oral History Commission. Colonel Chinn's father was the warden of the penitentiary in 1907.
48. Hambleton Tapp and James C. Klotter, *Kentucky: Decades of Discord, 1865–1900* (Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 1977), 182.
49. Robert Gunn Crawford, "A History of the Kentucky Penitentiary System 1865–1937" (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 1955), 141.
50. *Frankfort Daily Kentucky Yeoman,* Jan. 27, 1872.
51. *Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman,* May 8, 1879.
52. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* Mar. 15, 1879.
53. *Frankfort Western Argus,* Nov. 11, 1897.
54. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* Feb. 14, 1880.
55. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* Feb. 21, 1880.
56. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* Feb. 17, 1883.
57. Johnson, *History of Franklin County,* 202.
58. Kramer, *Capital on the Kentucky,* 251.
59. *Frankfort Roundabout,* Mar. 5, 1887.
60. *Frankfort Courier,* Dec. 24, 1915.
61. Thomas D. Clark, *The Kentucky* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1942), 324.
62. Kramer, *Capital on the Kentucky,* 194.
63. Clark, *Kentucky,* 324.
64. *Frankfort Daily Kentucky Yeoman,* Mar. 26, 1872.
65. In the early 1880s, Rodman and Sneed's Steam Saw and Planing Mill was located at 404–28 Wilkinson on the west side of the street, just north

of the railroad bridge and between Clinton and Broadway, with a sash, door, and blinds factory on the adjacent property. By 1889 these mills were owned by J. M. Wakefield, then later by Kenney Bros. Lumber Co. Both were situated on the bank of the Kentucky River, making up Craw's western border.

66. *Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman,* May 4, 1875.

67. *Frankfort Weekly Yeoman,* Apr. 10, 1877.

68. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* May 18, 1878.

69. *Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman,* Jan. 28, 1879.

70. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* Mar. 16, 1878.

71. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* Apr. 14, 1883.

72. Dr. Clark acknowledged that he did the research in 1939 and that the men he was interviewing were in their late fifties and sixties. This would put them logging the Kentucky River as young men in the mid-1890s. Dr. Clark's research methods demonstrate a very early application of oral history methodology and reliance on oral historical sources for reliable and credible accounts of the past.

73. William E. Ellis interviewed Dr. Clark for his book *The Kentucky River* and revisits Dr. Clark's experiences during these interviews. Ellis makes reference to Clark's early quotations in *The Kentucky River.* See William E. Ellis, *The Kentucky River* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 9, 58–59.

74. Clark, *Kentucky,* 335.

75. Thomas D. Clark, "History Flows Down the Kentucky River in a Turbulent Tide," *Louisville Courier-Journal,* Sept. 28, 1941.

76. Thomas D. Clark, "Kentucky Logmen," *Journal of Forest History* 25 (July 1981): 154.

77. James C. Klotter, *Kentucky: Portrait in Paradox, 1900–1950* (Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 1996), 25.

78. Samuel W. Thomas, ed., *Dawn Comes to the Mountains* (Louisville: George Rogers Clark Press, 1981), 109; Klotter, *Kentucky,* 25.

79. Nettie Henry Glenn, *Early Frankfort, Kentucky, 1786–1861* (Frankfort: N. H. Glenn, 1986), 187.

80. Glenn refers to the neighborhood as "the Bottom." I found no public reference to usage of that nickname during the time she describes.

81. R. Gerald Alvey, *Kentucky Bluegrass Country,* Folklife in the South Series (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1992), 80.

82. Ibid., 80.

83. Clark, "History Flows Down the Kentucky River."

84. *Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman,* Sept. 7, 1876.

85. *Frankfort Capital,* Aug. 22, 1885.

86. *Frankfort Capital,* Dec. 20, 1884.

87. *Frankfort State Journal,* bicentennial edition, Oct. 1986, 16. Originally published in the *Frankfort Roundabout*, Sept. 30, 1888.

88. *Report of Police Chief H. P. Williams Jr. to the Police and Fire Commissioners* (Frankfort: Frankfort Police Department, Sept. 1893), Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives.

89. Buddy Thompson, *Madam Belle Brezing* (Lexington: Buggy Whip Press, 1983), 47, 154, 192.

90. *Time,* Aug. 26, 1940. It is widely believed that Belle Brezing was the model for the character Belle Watling in Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind,* published in 1936. Brezing biographer Buddy Thompson points out much of the evidence, including the fact that Mitchell's husband, John Marsh, attended the University of Kentucky in Lexington from 1926 to 1929, during which time he worked as a reporter for the *Lexington Leader.*

91. Thompson, *Madam Belle Brezing,* 80.

92. *Frankfort Roundabout,* Feb. 26, 1887.

93. *Frankfort Argus,* Feb. 10, 1896.

94. *Frankfort State Journal,* Sept. 27, 1912.

95. Ibid.

96. *Frankfort State Journal,* Apr. 3, 1913.

97. Gas House Alley was formerly Long Lane Alley between Wilkinson and Washington, connecting Clinton and Mero from the north and south. Gas House Alley was also known as Gaines' Alley.

98. Addresses were listed in the 1913 Frankfort City Directory at the Center Street block (from Clinton Street north to Dudley Avenue, west of Washington St.) as follows: 510–11, Sherwood, Grace Mad.; 511, Evans, Gertrude Mad.; 513, Williams, Bertha Mad.; 514, Smith, Kate; 515, Vacant; 516, Miller, Dot Mad.; 518, Smith, Mabel Mad.; 520, Byrne, Mary Mad.; 522, Vincent, Ruby Mad.; 524, Williamson, Kealla Mad.; 526, Duvall, Anna Mad.; 528, Gardner, Besie Mad.; 532, Scarbro, Henry. That year, prostitutes were indicated in the directory by their occupation being listed as "Mad."

99. *Frankfort State Journal,* Apr. 3, 1913.

100. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* Dec. 8, 1883.

101. Thomas H. Appleton Jr., "'Like Banquo's Ghost': The Emergence of the Prohibition Issue in Kentucky Politics" (PhD diss., University of Kentucky, 1981), 38–39.

102. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* Mar. 20, 1880.

103. *Frankfort Roundabout,* Mar. 19, 1887.

104. *Frankfort Witness,* Nov. 1, 1885.

105. Ibid.

106. For an excellent discussion of electoral corruption, see Tracy Campbell, *Deliver the Vote: A History of Election Fraud, an American Political Tradition—1742–2004* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2005).

107. *Frankfort Weekly Roundabout,* Apr. 21, 1882.

108. *Frankfort Capital,* Feb. 26, 1887.

109. *Frankfort News,* Sept. 6, 1909.
110. *Frankfort Kentucky Evening Gazette,* Sept. 6, 1909.
111. Ibid.
112. Ibid.
113. *Frankfort News,* Sept. 6, 1909.
114. Johnson, *History of Franklin County,* 263.
115. *Frankfort News,* Sept. 11, 1909.
116. Ibid.
117. *Frankfort News,* Sept. 9, 1909.
118. *Frankfort News,* Sept. 7, 1909.
119. *Frankfort News,* Sept. 11, 1909.
120. *Frankfort News,* Sept. 10, 1909.
121. Ibid.
122. *Frankfort News,* Sept. 14, 1909.
123. Ibid.
124. *Lexington Herald-Leader,* Sept. 14, 1909.
125. *Frankfort News,* Sept. 19, 1909.
126. Ibid.
127. *Frankfort News,* Sept. 22, 1909.
128. *Frankfort State Journal,* Dec. 17, 1912.
129. Ibid.
130. *Frankfort State Journal,* Mar. 27, 1913.
131. *Frankfort State Journal,* May 2, 1918.

2. Defining Craw

1. Arthur Gribben, "Táin Bó Cuailnge: A Place on the Map, a Place in the Mind," *Western Folklore* 49, no. 3 (1990).

2. Richard Mercer Dorson, *Land of the Millrats* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).

3. Suzi Jones, "Regionalization: A Rhetorical Strategy," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 13 (1976).

4. Ronald L. Baker, "The Role of Folk Legends in Place-Name Research," *Journal of American Folklore* 85, no. 338 (1972): 367.

5. According to astacologists, the crayfish in this locale were most likely "primary burrowers" of the genus *Cambarus* (*C. decapoda*). These burrowers live connected to the groundwater in burrows up to twenty feet deep. Following rains and floods, the crayfish emerge onto the surface to feed, mate, and disperse. It is unlikely that the crayfish were "stranded," as oral tradition claims.

6. Audrey R. Duckert, "Place Nicknames," *Names* 21, no. 3 (1973): 155.

7. Margaret Allen Averill, *The Uncelebrated of the Early 1900's in the Corner in Celebrities* (Frankfort: n.p., 1975).

8. Jennie Chinn Morton, "Washington Street," *Frankfort Ledger,* 1897, Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society Vertical Files.

9. Glenn, *Early Frankfort, Kentucky,* 27.

10. Kramer, *Capital on the Kentucky,* 179.

11. Alvey, *Kentucky Bluegrass Country,* 80.

12. H. Ellis and M. Ellis, interview, Aug. 1, 1991.

13. James Calhoun, interview with James E. Wallace, July 16, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

14. R. T. Brooks, interview with Douglas Boyd, Mar. 10, 2002, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

15. M. H. Berry, interview, July 2, 1991.

16. Ellsworth Marshall Jr., interview with James E. Wallace, May 17, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

17. Knott, interview, July 1, 1991.

18. M. H. Berry, interview, July 2, 1991.

19. Evelyn Carroll, Emma O'Nan, and Linda Anderson, interview with James E. Wallace, Apr. 5, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

20. James T. Graham, interview with James E. Wallace, May 21, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

21. Ermina Jett Darnell, *Filling the Chinks* (Frankfort: Roberts Print Co., 1966), 15–16.

22. John Joseph Gumperz and Dell H. Hymes, *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication* (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1972), 53.

23. Harold Collins, interview with Margaret Price, June 15, 1977, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

24. R. T. Brooks, interview with James E. Wallace, Mar. 25, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

25. James B. Ellis, interview with James E. Wallace, Aug. 7, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

26. "Colored Odd Fellows," *Lexington Leader,* May 17, 1903.

27. Jones, "Regionalization."

28. The year 1925 was a date chosen based upon visual representation of the neighborhood in the Sanborn Insurance Map published that year. See "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Frankfort, KY," 1925, University of Kentucky Libraries.

29. Averill, *Uncelebrated of the Early 1900's.*

30. Henrietta Gill, interview with James E. Wallace, May 8, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

31. Alex Sanders, interview with James E. Wallace, Mar. 27, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

32. John Sykes, interview with Douglas Boyd, June 13, 2002, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

33. Harry Goebel McCoy, interview with James E. Wallace, July 24, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

34. Margaret Berry, interview with James E. Wallace, Aug. 12, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

35. Jo Beauchamp, interview with James E. Wallace, July 17, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

36. Calhoun, interview, July 16, 1991.

37. M. H. Berry, interview, July 2, 1991.

38. Barbara White, interview with Douglas Boyd, June 6, 2002, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

39. Anna Belle Williams, interview with James E. Wallace, July 18, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

40. Lillian Barnett, Margaret Macintosh, and Jean Winkfield, interview with Douglas Boyd, June 27, 2002, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

41. Ibid.

42. Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 504–6.

43. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 179.

44. John A. Agnew and James S. Duncan, *The Power of Place: Bringing Together Geographical and Sociological Imaginations* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

3. Contesting Public Memory

1. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991).

2. W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 5.

3. M. H. Berry, interview, July 2, 1991.

4. Beauchamp, interview, July 17, 1991.

5. Gill, interview, May 8, 1991.

6. Ibid.

7. A. Sanders, interview, Mar. 27, 1991.

8. Calhoun, interview, July 16, 1991.

9. Archie Surratt, interview with Winona Fletcher, Mar. 19, 1996, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

10. Calhoun, interview, July 16, 1991.

11. Knott, interview, July 1, 1991.

12. Ron Herron, "Memories of Safer Time," *Frankfort State Journal*, Feb. 9, 1975.

13. Ibid.

14. Ron Herron, "The Bottom: Society Branded It as the Wrong Side

of Town, but a Former Resident of Craw Has Fond Memories," *Frankfort State Journal,* Mar. 2, 1975.

15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. James E. Wallace to author, email, Dec. 8, 2002.
21. Helen Holmes, interview with James E. Wallace, July 25, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.
22. Gill, interview, May 8, 1991.
23. Calhoun, interview, July 16, 1991.
24. H. Ellis and M. Ellis, interview, Aug. 1, 1991.
25. M. H. Berry, interview, July 2, 1991.
26. Graham, interview, May 21, 1991.
27. Kramer, *Capital on the Kentucky.*
28. Gill, interview, May 8, 1991.
29. Sykes, interview, June 13, 2002.
30. M. Berry, interview, Aug. 12, 1991.
31. Marshall, interview, May 17, 1991.
32. J. B. Ellis, interview, Aug. 7, 1991.
33. Holmes, interview, July 25, 1991.
34. Knott, interview, July 1, 1991.
35. Graham, interview, May 21, 1991.
36. McCoy, interview, July 24, 1991.
37. Calhoun, interview, July 16, 1991.
38. H. Ellis and M. Ellis, interview, Aug. 1, 1991.
39. M. H. Berry, interview, July 2, 1991.
40. H. Sanders and G. Simmons, interview, May 29, 1991.
41. Williams, interview, July 18, 1991.
42. Calhoun, interview, July 16, 1991.
43. Beauchamp, interview, July 17, 1991.
44. Kramer, *Capital on the Kentucky,* 340–41.
45. McCoy, interview, July 24, 1991.
46. Graham, interview, May 21, 1991.
47. H. Ellis and M. Ellis, interview, Aug. 1, 1991.
48. Graham, interview, May 21, 1991.
49. H. Ellis and M. Ellis, interview, Aug. 1, 1991.
50. H. Sanders and G. Simmons, interview, May 29, 1991.
51. M. H. Berry, interview, July 2, 1991.
52. H. Ellis and M. Ellis, interview, Aug. 1, 1991.
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54. William Isaac Fields, interview with James E. Wallace, May 15, 1991, Kentucky Oral History Commission.

55. Williams, interview, July 18, 1991.

4. The Other Side of the Tracks

1. Chinn, interview, Sept. 18, 1980.

2. Gill, interview, May 8, 1991.

3. Knott, interview, July 1, 1991.

4. M. H. Berry, interview, July 2, 1991.

5. McCoy, interview, July 24, 1991.

6. Williams, interview, July 18, 1991.

7. A. Sanders, interview, Mar. 27, 1991.

8. Fields, interview, May 15, 1991.

9. Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

10. Selma Leydesdorff, "The Screen of Nostalgia: Oral History and the Ordeal of Working-Class Jews in Amsterdam," *International Journal of Oral History* (June 1986): 109–15.

11. Barbara Shircliffe, "'We Got the Best of That World': A Case for the Study of Nostalgia in the Oral History of School Segregation," *Oral History Review* 28, no. 2 (2001): 84.

12. McCoy, interview, July 24, 1991.

13. Brooks, interview with Wallace, Mar. 25, 1991.

14. Beauchamp, interview, July 17, 1991.

15. Marshall, interview, May 17, 1991.

16. Ibid.

17. J. B. Ellis, interview, Aug. 7, 1991.

18. Edward Conway, *Police Report* (Frankfort: Frankfort Police Department, 1959), Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives.

19. *Frankfort State Journal,* Sept. 8, 1959.

20. H. Sanders and G. Simmons, interview, May 29, 1991.

21. Calhoun, interview, July 16, 1991.

22. *Frankfort State Journal,* Aug. 31, 1932.

23. Beauchamp, interview, July 17, 1991.

24. McCoy, interview, July 24, 1991.

25. M. Berry, interview, Aug. 12, 1991.

26. Marshall, interview, May 17, 1991.

27. Gill, interview, May 8, 1991.

28. Campbell, *Deliver the Vote,* 209.

29. Albert Benjamin Chandler served two terms as governor of Kentucky, 1935–1939 and 1955–1959, and served as a U.S. senator from 1939 to 1945.

30. H. Sanders and G. Simmons, interview, May 29, 1991.

31. Beauchamp, interview, July 17, 1991.
32. Ibid.
33. J. B. Ellis, interview, Aug. 7, 1991.
34. M. Berry, interview, Aug. 12, 1991.
35. H. Sanders and G. Simmons, interview, May 29, 1991.
36. H. Ellis and M. Ellis, interview, Aug. 1, 1991.
37. Beauchamp, interview, July 17, 1991.
38. Williams, interview, July 18, 1991.
39. Knott, interview, July 1, 1991.
40. Ernie Guthrie, interview with Suzanne Kauffman, Jan. 7, 2002, Kentucky Oral History Commission.
41. Herron, "The Bottom."
42. Gill, interview, May 8, 1991.
43. M. H. Berry, interview, July 2, 1991.
44. Beauchamp, interview, July 17, 1991.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. John Ed Pearce, interview with Terry Birdwhistell, Jan. 17, 1996, Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, Lexington.
48. Calhoun, interview, July 16, 1991.
49. H. Ellis and M. Ellis, interview, Aug. 1, 1991.
50. H. Sanders and G. Simmons, interview, May 29, 1991.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Brooks, interview with Wallace, Mar. 25, 1991.
54. McCoy, interview, July 24, 1991.
55. Barnett, Macintosh, and Winkfield, interview, June 27, 2002.
56. Beauchamp, interview, July 17, 1991.
57. M. H. Berry, interview, July 2, 1991.
58. Williams, interview, July 18, 1991.
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5. The King of Craw

1. "An Error in Judgment," *Louisville Courier-Journal,* Aug. 20, 1929.
2. Benjamin Fallis and Anne Fallis, "Biography: Life of John Fallis," 1947, Kentucky Historical Society Vertical File.
3. Beauchamp, interview, July 17, 1991.
4. Fields, interview, May 15, 1991.
5. Beauchamp, interview, July 17, 1991.
6. M. H. Berry, interview, July 2, 1991.
7. Fallis and Fallis, "Biography: Life of John Fallis."
8. Ibid.

9. Beauchamp, interview, July 17, 1991.
10. Fallis and Fallis, "Biography: Life of John Fallis."
11. "John Fallis Was Tried Yesterday," *Frankfort Western Argus,* Dec. 2, 1897.
12. Fallis and Fallis, "Biography: Life of John Fallis."
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. *John R. Fallis v. Mrs. Annie Fallis,* 2539 Petition in Equity (Franklin Circuit Court, Aug. 25, 1927).
17. *John R. Fallis to Deed Anna F. Fallis,* 11725 Property Transfer (Franklin County Clerk's Office, July 2, 1924).
18. McCoy, interview, July 24, 1991.
19. M. H. Berry, interview, July 2, 1991.
20. Brooks, interview with Wallace, Mar. 25, 1991.
21. Fallis and Fallis, "Biography: Life of John Fallis."
22. *Commonwealth of Kentucky v. John Fallis,* 2090 Wilful and Malicious Cutting and Wounding with Intent to Kill without Killing (Franklin County Circuit Court, Apr. 1904).
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Brooks, interview with Wallace, Mar. 25, 1991.
29. H. Sanders and G. Simmons, interview, May 29, 1991.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. McCoy, interview, July 24, 1991.
33. J. B. Ellis, interview, Aug. 7, 1991.
34. Calhoun, interview, July 16, 1991.
35. Fallis and Fallis, "Biography: Life of John Fallis."
36. Ibid.
37. "Only His Hat Found When He Disappeared: John Fallis Seemingly Is Totally Obliterated by Explosion," *Frankfort State Journal,* Dec. 10, 1912.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. "Fallis' Body Undiscovered: Watch Being Kept on River Water," *Frankfort State Journal,* Dec. 11, 1912.
41. "John R. Fallis Returns Home after Flight: Finds Administrator in Charge of Estate and Wife Mourning," *Frankfort State Journal,* Dec. 15, 1912.

42. Ibid.

43. Fallis and Fallis, "Biography: Life of John Fallis."

44. "Four Policemen, His Son and Two Citizens Are Shot by John Fallis," *Frankfort State Journal,* June 16, 1921.

45. Linda Anderson was a local historian who had extensively collected stories about Frankfort and Craw and written a paper on her findings for an independent study in the 1980s. The paper is a collection of stories that had not been published. Anderson was reluctant to give permissions for publication of any of the stories that she collected, despite the fact that a few of the narratives pertained to John Fallis. Nevertheless, she participated in Wallace's interview in 1991, helping to coax stories from the other participants.

46. Carroll, O'Nan, and Anderson, interview, Apr. 5, 1991.

47. Brooks, interview with Wallace, Mar. 25, 1991.

48. Ibid.

49. "Four Policemen."

50. Ibid.

51. "John Fallis on Way Back to Frankfort: Sent Shot Gun Home with Note in the Muzzle," *Frankfort State Journal,* June 17, 1921.

52. "John Fallis Surrenders and Taken to Louisville," *Frankfort State Journal,* June 21, 1921.

53. Beauchamp, interview, July 17, 1991.

54. "John Fallis Is Fatally Shot at Frankfort," *Lexington Herald,* Aug. 19, 1929.

55. Fallis and Fallis, "Biography: Life of John Fallis."

56. "John Fallis Killed," *Frankfort State Journal,* Aug. 18, 1929.

57. "John Fallis Is Fatally Shot at Frankfort."

58. "Rigsby's Bond Set at $5,000," *Frankfort State Journal,* Aug. 23, 1929.

59. Brooks, interview with Wallace, Mar. 25, 1991.

60. Beauchamp, interview, July 17, 1991.

61. Fallis and Fallis, "Biography: Life of John Fallis."

62. James E. Wallace, "The Life and Times of John R. Fallis" (paper presented at a meeting of Historic Frankfort, Frankfort, Oct. 20, 1994).

63. Roger D. Abrahams, "Some Varieties of Heroes in America," *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 3 (1966): 362.

64. Horace Beck, "The Making of the Popular Legendary Hero," in *American Folk Legend: A Symposium,* ed. Wayland D. Hand (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 130; Richard Carl Sweterlitsch, "Kinnie Wagner: A Popular Legendary Hero and His 'Constituency'" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1976), 193.

65. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Bandits,* 4th rev. ed. (New York: New Press, 2000), 150.

66. Ibid., 17.

67. Sweterlitsch, "Kinnie Wagner."

68. Américo Paredes, "Jose Mosqueda and the Folklorization of Actual Events," in *Folklore and Culture on the Texas-Mexican Border,* ed. Richard Bauman (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).

Conclusion

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2. Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 3.

3. Paul A. Shackel, *Memory in Black and White: Race Commemoration, and the Post-Bellum Landscape* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2003), 173, 208.

4. John R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 5.

5. "Getting Bigger All the Time," *Frankfort State Journal,* Jan. 16, 2009.

6. Gill, interview, May 8, 1991.

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Interview Subjects

Linda Anderson

Oral history interview (with Evelyn Carroll and Emma O'Nan), April 5, 1991. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. James E. Wallace, interviewer.

Lillian Barnett

Oral history interview (with Jean Winkfield and Margaret Macintosh), June 27, 2002. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. Douglas Boyd, interviewer.

Jo Beauchamp

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Margaret Berry

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Mary Helen Berry

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R. T. Brooks

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James Calhoun
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Evelyn Carroll
Oral history interview (with Emma O'Nan and Linda Anderson), April 5, 1991. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. James E. Wallace, interviewer.
Colonel George Chinn
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Harold Collins
Oral history interview, June 15, 1977. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. Margaret Price, interviewer.
Henry Ellis
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Margaret Ellis
Oral history interview (with Henry Ellis), August 1, 1991. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. James E. Wallace, interviewer.
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James T. Graham
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Oral history interview, January 7, 2002. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. Suzanne Kauffman, interviewer.
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Oral history interview, July 25, 1991. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. James E. Wallace, interviewer.
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Oral history interview, July 1, 1991. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. James E. Wallace, interviewer.

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Oral history interview (with Lillian Barnett and Jean Winkfield), June 27, 2002. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. Douglas Boyd, interviewer.

Ellsworth Marshall Jr.
Oral history interview, May 17, 1991. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. James E. Wallace, interviewer.

Harry Goebel McCoy
Oral history interview, July 24, 1991. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. James E. Wallace, interviewer.

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Oral history interview (with Evelyn Carroll and Linda Anderson), April 5, 1991. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. James E. Wallace, interviewer.

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Oral history interview, January 17, 1996. Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, Lexington. Terry Birdwhistell, interviewer.

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Oral history interview, March 27, 1991. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. James E. Wallace, interviewer.

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Oral history interview, March 19, 1996. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. Winona Fletcher, interviewer.

John Sykes
Oral history interview, June 13, 2002. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. Douglas Boyd, interviewer.

Barbara White
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Anna Belle Williams
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Jean Winkfield

Oral history interview (with Lillian Barnett and Margaret Macintosh), June 27, 2002. Kentucky Oral History Commission, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. Douglas Boyd, interviewer.

Index

Page numbers in italics refer to illustrations.