


STOPS
ALONG A
SOUTHERN
ROAD

BY
JIM OAKES



Being a “photographer” and not a writer, I have struggled with the foreword for this book more than I ever did on any of the photos you’re about to see. They were almost effortlessly taken over the last couple of years while I drove around in my little red truck. Some were taken during my lunch break from work, some on lazy Saturday afternoons when I decided to pick a road I’d never been down and follow it until I ran into one I had, some were taken on the way to get supper for the family . . . you get the idea. The one thing they all have in common is that I took the time to take the photo. That would not always have been the case. For years I rode around barely glancing at the countryside that surrounded me. Not to say I didn’t appreciate the beauty of the South, I did, but I just didn’t really take time to *notice* it. When I finally did start noticing things, the world suddenly went from black and white to color TV. How many times have you seen something and said “Man, I wish I had a camera!”? If you’ve said it once, you’ve said it too many times! The photos in this book are just a few of the scenes I have stumbled upon in the last few years, supported by a couple of comments I’ve thrown in for clarity or confusion depending on the photo (ha). I would highly recommend grabbing your keys and a camera and taking a ride this weekend. My hope is that when you’ve finished looking at this book you’ll begin your search for the beauty, comedy, richness, diversity, and personality that your piece of the world offers. And the next time someone yells “Hey buddy, take a picture it’ll last longer!” I hope you’re tempted to yell back “I think I will!”





THE JOURNEY

MARION COUNTY,
MISSISSIPPI

On an overcast and drizzle-filled day
I decided to hit the road to
take some photographs. After a
lengthy search for something picture
“worthy,” I decided, in frustration,
to head home. As I turned the truck
around on the next side road, God
put his two cents in and I took
the picture you’re now looking at.



JIMMIE'S MARKET BASKET

CRYSTAL SPRINGS,
MISSISSIPPI

Colors, textures, shapes . . . we can explain it in the artistic way, or we can go with how great places like Jimmie's, or Frank's Downtown Market, can make you feel when you walk in. You're bombarded with the smell of fresh fruits and vegetables, an overwhelming helping of colors, and a charm that is utterly unique. It's definitely a reminder that food does not really grow in cans, and we shouldn't live like we're in one. Try new things, experience new places, enjoy *all* of the world around you. Oh, and try the oranges, I hear they're fresh.



RED BARN

**COPIAH COUNTY,
MISSISSIPPI**

Set deep in a field, shining like a beacon, this barn seemed to command attention and respect.

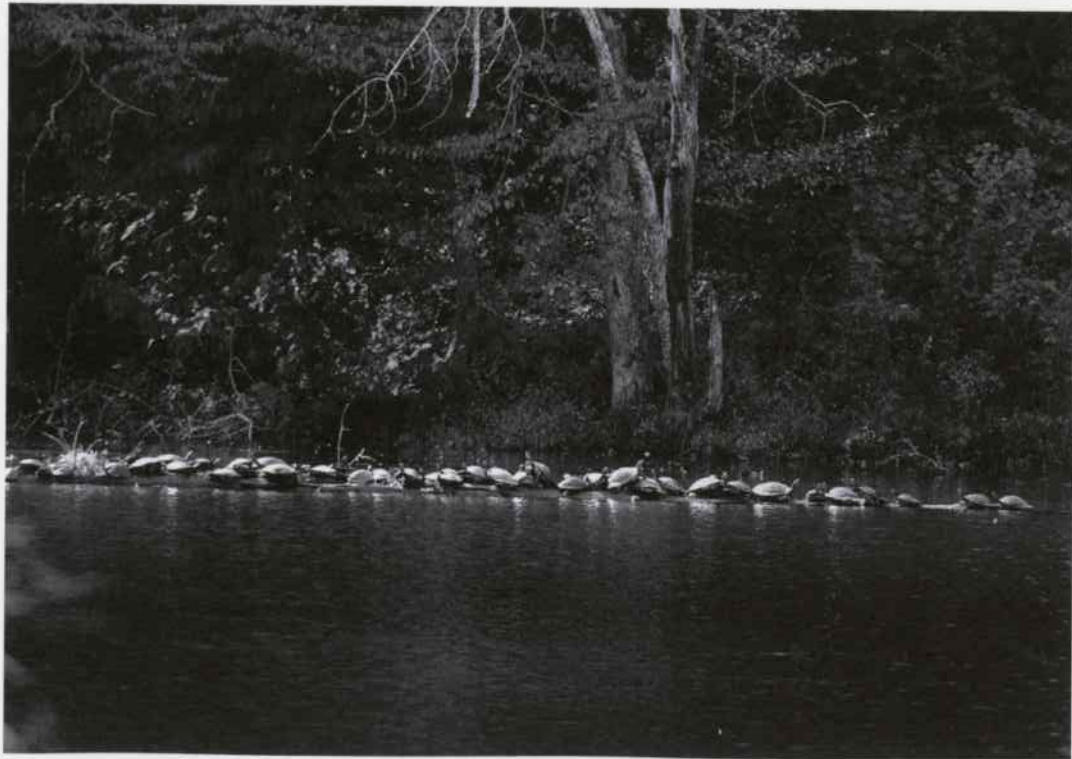
One of my favorite painters, Norman Rockwell, was a master at capturing the heart of America in his paintings. On some small level I hope this photo brings a little bit of the South home to you. It reminded me of hard work, simpler times, and a slower pace. Three things I certainly appreciate as I get older.



LCHS FRIDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

**MONTICELLO,
MISSISSIPPI**

I'm confident the energy created at Friday night high school football games in Mississippi could give the major power companies a run for their money when it comes to electricity. To me, this photo is all about power and potential. The game had yet to begin, and both teams were buzzing with energy and accelerating towards a goal with ever increasing adrenaline levels. The large stadium lights only reflect the power that is mentally and physically on the playing field.



TURTLE CENTRAL
CRYSTAL SPRINGS,
MISSISSIPPI

I've seen turtles sunbathing before, but imagine my surprise when over 40 turtles gathered for a convention on one of the fallen trees in the lake. I'm not sure how the turtles decide who is allowed on the log, and who is not, but I can tell you that it is an ongoing process of decision making. I can attest to this by the repeated "plopping" sound they made as the log experienced turtle turnover.



FLOWERS ON THE FENCE

**CRYSTAL SPRINGS,
MISSISSIPPI**

I took this photo during a lunch break from work. I had been down that street countless times before, never noticing the flowers that were clinging to the white fence.

But on that particular day, the flowers yelled at me when I went by. Their vibrant colors were too vivid to pass up. Sometimes it's like God hits me on the head and says, "Hey stupid, you're moving too fast. Stop and smell the flowers."



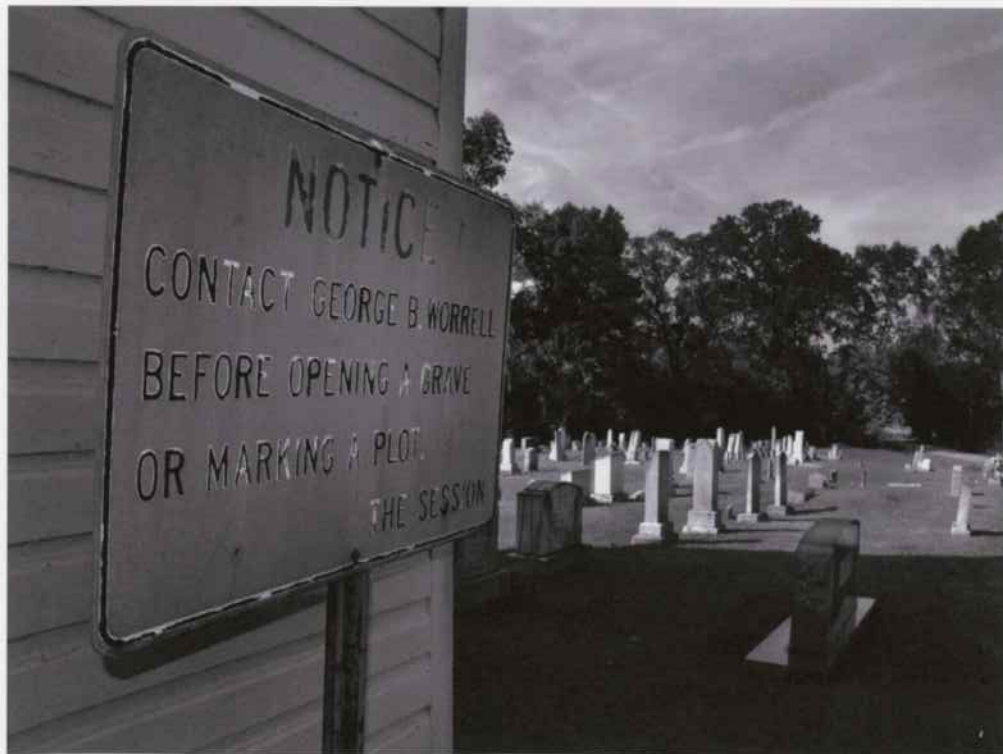
THE BLUE AND WHITE GROCERY

**GEORGETOWN,
MISSISSIPPI**

I can only wonder at the past of such a grand old building. Behind the flaking white paint, boarded up windows, and crumbling brick must lie tales of majesty and hope.

A time when the owner of a brand new building was looking forward to the future it might bring his family and community.

Of course I may never know the story that unfolded those many years ago, but like the bricked-in archways on either side of the Blue & White Grocery, it will remain a part of the building long after we are gone and forgotten.



LEBANON CHURCH

HINDS / COPIAH COUNTY,
MISSISSIPPI

At first the sign seems reasonable . . .
that is until you walk a few feet over
and notice that George B. Worrell lies
underneath one of the grave markers,
and has for some time.



QUEEN ROSE FLOUR

ROCKPORT,
MISSISSIPPI

In an effort to let traffic pass me by on Highway 27, I detoured onto a small two lane road near Rockport. I hadn't gone more than 10 feet when I saw the blue and rust colored building you see in the photo. I'm sure it's another building destined to fade into the past without note or significance.

And once again I'm sure the history of the building would deny that observation, if only it could speak.



“U. S. MAIL”

OAKVALE,
MISSISSIPPI

The only thing I can figure is that he had a northern friend that had never tried fresh deer. I hope he had the correct postage.



THE COWS OF HIGHWAY 27

GEORGETOWN,
MISSISSIPPI

My wife calls this picture "the radioactive cows." I'm not sure I agree with that title, but it's not entirely inaccurate. The reason I noticed them was the incredible way the sinking sun radiated off their silhouettes. It was as if they were on fire. Throw in the fact that such an unassuming animal was suddenly the "star of the show" and I had to stop my truck and take the picture. No matter how they wanted to blend into the landscape, they were the center of attention for a few fleeting minutes that evening.



THE LAKE

**CRYSTAL SPRINGS,
MISSISSIPPI**

Sunny day, gentle breeze,
crystal clear water,
beautiful fowl . . .
what else do you
need to know?

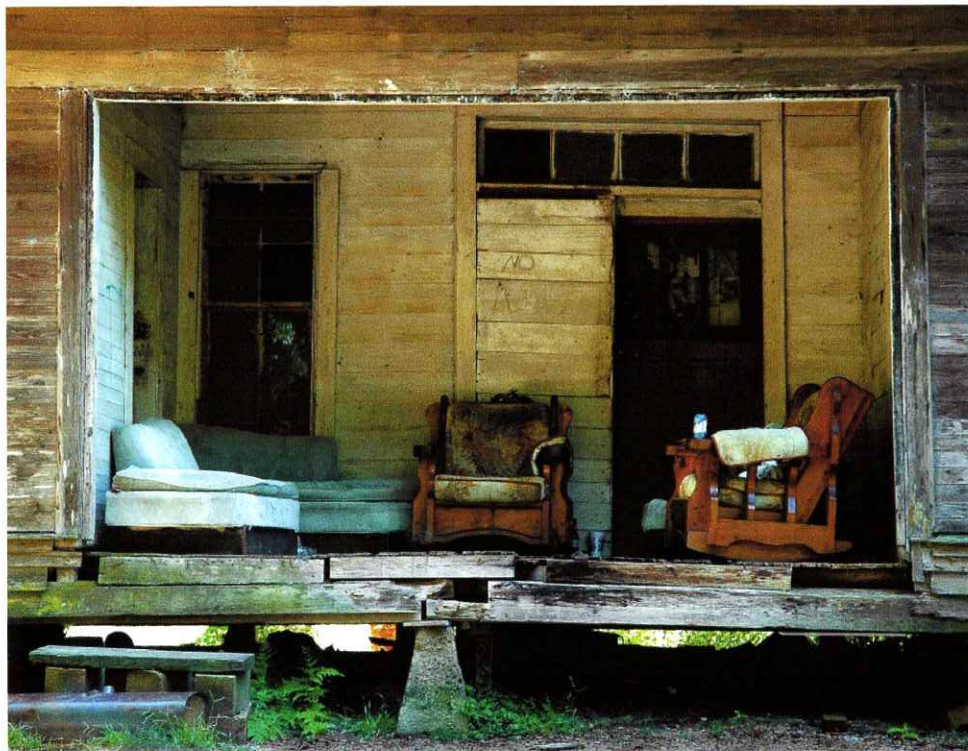


REFLECTING WATERS

CRYSTAL SPRINGS,
MISSISSIPPI

I've probably taken thirty photos of this small stump (for lack of a better word).

I can't quite put my finger on why it fascinates me, but it does. On this particular day the sky was filled with large rolling white clouds, and gentle breezes were sweeping across the water. As I approached the stump, the surface of the water appeared to turn into liquid chrome, mercury, or some other metal. I stood amazed. Like a kid looking at 50 foot tall lava lamp, I was in awe.



THE PORCH

LAWRENCE COUNTY,
MISSISSIPPI

I'm sure you've heard the expression "if these walls could talk." Well, I have to think this porch could fill the pages of an audio novel. I have no doubt that good times, bad times, and plenty of inbetweens filled the air around this old porch. And from the looks of the fresh beer bottles and cans, the conversation may not be over.



DUCKS IN A ROW

CRYSTAL SPRINGS,
MISSISSIPPI

I've often heard the expression,
"Have your ducks in a row,"
I just never expected them to be
that end up.



“IT JUST FEELS LIKE HOME”

MONTICELLO,
MISSISSIPPI

Apparently the buzzards agree.



MORNING FOG

POINTS IN BETWEEN,
MISSISSIPPI

With the moon hanging large in the morning sky and blankets of fog covering the ground, this scene could have been taken in any number of common or uncommon locations.

Telling where this scene was photographed might chip away some of the mystery it now holds.

I think it's better to leave that mystery to the imagination.

As for me, I'm going to pretend I was walking with Ansel Adams on his way to photograph one of his favorite locations in Mexico (and if you don't know who Ansel Adams is, you're missing out.)




RUST AND WOOD

LAWRENCE COUNTY,
MISSISSIPPI

If you've lived in the South for more than two minutes you've seen this type of weathered building, or a similar barn, in nearly every county and/or state. Rusted tin and grayed wood abound in our landscape.


I didn't have a profound reason for taking this shot other than I thought the textures were interesting, and the single surviving window pane seemed to need someone to record its fortitude. Perhaps the commonality of the scene made it all that more noteworthy. Time will tell.



Thanks for looking through the book (whether you bought it or not)!

P. S. The photos in this book were reduced, obviously, to make the book more “buyable.”

The actual photographic prints range from 8 x 10 to 12 x 16 inches
and can be bought in the store you currently stand in,
or by emailing me at joakes@telapex.com.





OTHER PRINTS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE:

Limited Edition Prints
50 per photo



