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Picture emerges of overlooked south Jackson

Timothy T. Isbell
Special to Mississippi Clarion Ledger
USA TODAY NETWORK

"One Direction Home: A History of South Jackson" (Alpha Graphics) reads like a ride down memory lane or in this instance, Terry Road. The book, written by Vincent J. Venturini and Doug Shanks, chronicles the history of South Jackson through its people, schools, churches and historic events. As a self-described history nerd, I enjoyed "One Direction Home" as easy

Jackson

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Road.

One story I wasn't familiar with but enjoyed reading was the Carmelite Order purchasing a home in south Jackson for a monastery. The notion of local sixth grade boys from Alta Woods climbing a fence to play with the nun's dogs is refreshing. It harkens back to a simpler era.

The story about Shadow Lawn was

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to read and informative. Whether you grew up in Jackson or have never been there, Venturini and Shanks paint a picture of the area. Terry Road is a central character as the growth of south Jackson was tied to that well-traveled thoroughfare.

According to the authors, south Jackson was looked upon as an area for lower-class residents of the capital city. While north Jackson was looked upon as the place to live, south Jackson had a reputation as a less progressive place. Venturini and Shanks give an apt ac-

counting of the area and its people. Like any local history, some parts aren't pretty and Venturini and Shanks aren't afraid to give an honest recounting of that history, both good and bad. This only adds to the character of south Jackson.

Of particular note, I was enthralled with the south Jackson connection to U.S. Naval hero John Paul Jones through the Mayrant family. Equally interesting, was the 130-year history of the Lester family, whose property was off Terry

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was also a preferred place for acclaimed Mississippi author Eudora Welty.

One particularly appealing chapter addressed the local personalities who called south Jackson home. This list includes Farmer Jim Neal, Woodie Assaf, Augie File, Skipper Dick Miller, William "Slew" Hester, as well as Alon and Anna Bee.

"One Direction Home" rang true to me, a boy born and bred in west Jackson. The book fulfills the first order of a published work: through its pages, it touches the reader.

My parents started each morning with Farmer Jim Neal and his feist doe on the

children that Skipper Dick Miller tried to interview at WJTV-TV between Popeye cartoons.

I remember my mother driving my sister and me past the destruction left in the wake of the Candlestick Park tornado in March 1966. Some of my west Jackson haunts and schools (Westland Plaza and Provine High School) receive mention in the book. I also married a girl from south Jackson.

All of these memories came to mind as I read "One Direction Home: A History of South Jackson." For this reason, I thank Venturini and Shanks for their book. Reading it truly brought me home



Timothy T. Isbell is the author of four books published by University Press of Mississippi. He was a member of the 2006 Pulitzer Prize-winning newsroom at the Sun Herald in Biloxi and the pho-

MISSISSIPPI READS

1. "Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir," Natasha Trethewey, Ecco Press
2. "Private Cathedral," James Lee Burke, Ecco
3. "The Vapors," David Hill, Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux
4. "Camino Winds," John Grisham, Doubleday
5. "The Vapors," David Hill, Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux
6. "It Was All a Lie," Stuart Stevens, Knopf
7. "One Direction Home" Vincent Venturini and Doug Shanks, Alpha Graphics
8. "The Revelators," Ace Atkin, Putnam
9. "Fistfuls of Starlight: A Selection of Poems," Laurie Parker, Laurie Parker
10. "Life Between the Levers," Melody Golding, University Press of Mississippi

Children and Young

Adults

1. "Midnight Sun," Stephenie Meyers, Little Brown
2. "Little Blue Cottage," Kelly Jordan, Page Street Kids
3. "Dozens of Doughnuts," Carlie Finlson, Penguin USA
4. "Rowley Jefferson's Awesome Friendly Adventure," Jeff Kinney, Amulet
5. "The Hate U Give" Angie Thomas, Balzer + Bray

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