



OUT OF THE BOX: HOMEGROWN IN GREATER LAFAYETTE

Students from the Honors 299 course, “Homegrown,” researched local Hispanic culture, sound, green spaces, and coffee shops, among other areas of study, as well as the role of each in establishing a sense of place.

Community involves a shared sense of place that dictates our relationships, identities, daily routines, and cultural assumptions; its constituents have a shared history and similar experiences. A community makes a place personal. HONR 299: Homegrown, taught by Clinical Assistant Professor Adam Edward Watkins, provided us opportunities to engage with the identity of Lafayette. Over the course of the fall 2016 semester, we discovered the identity motifs of Lafayette through two facets: our creative writing sessions at the Bauer Community Center and our individual research projects.

At Bauer, we guided local children in storytelling workshops thematically related to the Lafayette area and community. In addition to helping these children develop writing and creative thinking skills, this service project allowed us to see how Lafayette’s youngest citizens expressed their civic identities through free narrative. We also explored these motifs through individual research projects. Our projects incorporated a variety of research methods, including secondary sources from seminal ethnographers, archival research at the Tippecanoe County Historical Association, interviews with Lafayette residents and the youth at Bauer, and other ethnographic research conducted around town. Rather than compose traditional research papers, our projects were presented in the form of creative nonfiction—as textual museums—which promoted a more exploratory approach to our topics and research. Each of us selected a facet of Lafayette and explored these local expressions to their furthest potentials. Our research areas included the study of local Hispanic culture, sound, green spaces, and coffee shops, among others, as well as the role of each in establishing a sense of place. Immersing ourselves in the local culture has allowed

us to value our roles as students of Purdue and residents of Greater Lafayette. Making these inestimable connections to Bauer and the Lafayette community has allowed us to develop our sense of civic identity and define ourselves through expanded networks of diverse people, thoughts, and personalities.

The following are excerpts from projects conducted in the Honors 299 course, “Homegrown.” Read the full papers at docs.lib.purdue.edu/jpur/vol7/iss1.

From “Caffeine and Everyone: Coffee Shops of Lafayette and West Lafayette” *Bridget Curry*

The planning process for opening the coffee shop took many years, Ali told me. One major decision that had to be made was a name appropriate for the space they wanted to create. Ultimately, a two-part name was chosen. “Grey” was chosen because the space was developed to be neutral. Anyone is welcome, and anyone can share. “The people color the space,” as Ali says. “House” was chosen because its creators wanted to build a homelike environment where everyone feels cared for and comfortable. Embracing the romantic idea of an egalitarian space where all are welcome to sit and share, Greyhouse was named and established.

Maddie likes to study in Greyhouse with friends when they are able to find space. She likes the space because it is “atypical and cozy” (personal communication, October 2016). She explained that because there are so many things to look at, whether it is the art on the wall or the little toy soldiers placed on shelves, the environment encourages you to slow down and take a minute, to be more aware of your

surroundings. This idea of slowing down is not limited to the environment; Ali explained that the baristas try to make customers feel cared for as individuals and create a homelike atmosphere. They may do this by asking customers' names and being familiar with their order if they are regulars, or maybe by making many drinks from scratch in-house and serving them in porcelain mugs.

Why does Greyhouse have so many regulars? What brings people back? Individuals return to a place for a variety of reasons, such as design considerations or the social climate of a place. "Themes include the opportunity to linger; ownership and territoriality; trust; respect and anonymity; productivity and personal growth; social beings and familiar strangers; and support," Waxman (2006) says when discussing important social aspects of coffee shops. Greyhouse works to create an environment where people can find trust and respect, and social interaction and productivity. This is in contrast to a larger chain like Starbucks, where, in Ali's opinion, there is little individualization or quality interaction with new people. Greyhouse was conceived and named for the purpose of giving the community a home.

From "The Sound of Greater Lafayette" Teresa Kennelly

In *Space and Place*, Yi-Fu Tuan (2002) explores the ways in which architectural spaces guide our actions, teach us the purpose of a place, and establish our social roles by defining and structuring our sensations. At the Tippecanoe County Courthouse in Lafayette, sound is manipulated in several ways to shape the building's place. Marble floors make footsteps echo, the low ceilings of the lower levels confine the auditory space, and the wooden walls soften the tones of the marble, but the harshness remains. Voices carry in unusual directions, bouncing off curved walls to be heard in surprising places, travelling through unexpected corridors, like the circular light well in the middle of the building, connecting one floor to the next. Near the courtrooms upstairs, chains are bolted to the floor to hold the waiting defendants. When they are brought in, the rattle of the metal resonates, and the large wooden door closes firmly.

This sound environment accomplishes two things. It sets the courthouse apart from the open outdoors and cozy coffee shops, and it integrates a harshness, an immovability, and perhaps even a truth. The sound of justice gives power to the judge and takes it from the prisoner, who hears her chains, the solid door, and the gavel, all of which scrutinize her.

The lower levels are enclosed, but the upper levels have open space overhead, reaching up like a church. They also keep the sounds of the courthouse grounded and earthly, while the upper levels open up to the heavens. The light well carries the upper space to the lower, carrying the sounds of judgement down to mankind and establishing the courthouse as a place of justice.

From "Hispanic Community in Greater Lafayette" Sara King

For the time I am there (half an hour or so), there are maybe ten other customers, and only two speak in English. Several are accompanied by their young children, and a little girl of maybe five years carries her sleeping baby sister. She gives me an innocent grin, and I smile in return. Many of the labels are only in Spanish, and a few bear Spanish and English text. I purchase *pan de anoche*, for which the English translation reads "last night bread," for two dollars.

Rosa Montoya is the founder of Mamá Inés. She opened the bakery, named after her mother, in 1999 after acknowledging the growing Hispanic community in Lafayette. She wanted to bring Mexican products the community cherished and were accustomed to in attempt to make Lafayette feel more like home. Rosa immigrated to the Lafayette area at the age of 16 in 1983 from the small village of Salazares Tlaltenango in Zacatecas, Mexico. Her mother, a single mom of ten children and Rosa's biggest role model, stayed behind. Penniless and without the emotional support of her mother, she fell into a deep depression that lasted nearly five years. No one spoke her language, and no one ate her food. Rosa began to feel isolated: "If you don't speak the language, and you don't have the money . . . you don't feel loved. It was actually probably one of the hardest things I've done. But in the long run, it was a great thing, those five years."

Fast forward, and the bakery is a popular hub for the Latino community of Lafayette. "Living in Lafayette is the best thing that has happened to me," Rosa says. The bakery has truly helped Rosa integrate herself into Lafayette's Hispanic community, and in the process, find a new place to call home.

From "Green Spaces in Greater Lafayette" Connor D. Rose

Columbian Park is unique in its origin, as the land was never intended to be a park. In 1875, the city of Lafayette bought a plot of land from Elisha Gunn and his wife and dug a reservoir to meet the water needs

of the expanding city (“Out of the Past,” 1971). There were no trees or attractions to it, and its function was purely civil. This began to change when the city planted a handful of trees around the reservoir. After that, the locals began to gather there, making an informal park for themselves. The citizens dubbed it “Reservoir Park,” and it remained so for nearly two decades (Kriebel, 2005). The city originally resisted the park, discouraging potential visitors by placing “KEEP OFF THE GRASS” signs every couple of spaces. Likewise, they maintained only one small entrance for the locals to use (“Park Beginning a Modest One,” 1943). Despite the discouragement, the park became popular. The area was very close to resident neighborhoods, and visitors enjoyed the greenery and water view immensely; the manifested park satisfied the desires of the community.

In time, the city slowly acknowledged the park, removing the KEEP OFF signs in 1891 and allowing visitors to roam freely. The city initiated a three-cent tax toward the park and quickly began to develop it, adding boating elements, the zoo, and a community pool. Soon, the baseball diamond, waterpark, and playgrounds were added. The new variety appealed greatly to the community, and it still does today. Columbian’s wide variety also made it a staple of community life. The park hosts innumerable community events and provides dozens of opportunities for entertainment or leisure.

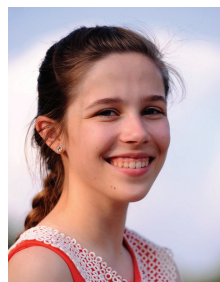
As I’ve quickly come to understand, parks are a necessity of community, not an aesthetic luxury. Parks provide a context for a community that cannot exist in an urban environment. While privacy is a necessity, Lafayette shows a desire for a public lifestyle as well. The citizens value their community, and they have a desire to interact with it in an appropriate space. Despite obstacles to the park’s creation, the community adapted it to their needs, overwhelming obstacles with numbers and decades of persistence.

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Students



Bridget Curry is a junior studying anthropology with a minor in political science and a certificate in public policy, and she is interested in studying education policy, school choice, and equity issues. During her senior year, she will be continuing her research

on charter schools and the impacts of choice on educational meaning making in the Departments of Anthropology and Sociology. She hopes to continue her education by attending graduate school to study education policy and anthropology.



Teresa Kennelly is a junior majoring in chemistry and minoring in mathematics, statistics, global studies, and dance. She has researched in computational chemistry, organic chemistry, drug discovery, and ethnography. She currently is studying the

role of dance in American and Tanzanian culture and will choreograph a dance piece inspired by the study. After graduation, she may pursue a degree in nursing or join the Peace Corps. On campus, she can be found working at the Chemistry Help Desk or promoting science with the professional chemistry fraternity, Alpha Chi Sigma.



Sara King is a freshman at Purdue majoring in brain and behavioral sciences and minoring in Spanish. Her interests include neurobiology, psychology, Spanish language and culture, wildlife and environmental conservation, animal behavior, writing, and

travel. King will be working as a student research assistant this summer with Purdue’s Developmental Studies Laboratory. After graduating in 2020, she plans to continue her education and become involved with neurobiology research.



Connor D. Rose is a junior majoring in biochemistry, and studying organic chemistry and genetics. Rose enjoys conducting research on cellular chemistry and biology, including his work in Dr. Kavita Shah's lab studying kinase pathways in neurodegenerative diseases.

Likewise, he enjoys engaging in foreign cultures, and plans to perform summer research at Leibniz University in Hannover, Germany. Rose plans on graduating in spring 2018 and hopes to continue his education pursuing a master's degree in biochemistry.

Mentor



Adam Edward Watkins is a clinical assistant professor in the Purdue University Honors College. He holds a PhD in literary studies from Purdue and an MFA in creative writing from Saint Mary's College of California.

Like his scholarship and creative work—including the collection of poems *Dear, Companion*—his courses take an interdisciplinary approach to the cross-influences of mind, culture, and environment.