

University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

ScholarWorks @ UTRGV

Criminal Justice Faculty Publications and
Presentations

College of Liberal Arts

2-2014

Legend Tripping: Haunted Fun or Potential Juvenile Delinquency and Death

Gordon A. Crews

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, gordon.crews@utrgv.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/cj_fac



Part of the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Crews, G. A., Heinrich, P. (2014, February). "Legend Tripping: Haunted Fun or Potential Juvenile Delinquency and Death." Presented at the 2014 Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences conference in Philadelphia, PA.

This Conference Proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Liberal Arts at ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. It has been accepted for inclusion in Criminal Justice Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UTRGV. For more information, please contact justin.white@utrgv.edu, william.flores01@utrgv.edu.

LEGEND TRIPPING:

Haunted Fun or Potential Juvenile Delinquency and Death

Gordon Crews, *Marshall University*

Paige Heinrich, *Marshall University*



Abstract

- “Haunted Chimneys” around “Booger Hole”
 - August 7, 2013, Clay County, West Virginia
 - one juvenile was killed and 10 others were seriously injured when their truck crashed
 - These juveniles, after drinking heavily, were investigating the Appalachian legend
- Mark Twain's “The Adventures of Tom Sawyer”
 - the concept of “legend tripping” is at least this old
 - several accounts of adolescents visiting allegedly haunted houses and caves said to be the “lair of criminals”
- Phenomenon, Extent and Dangers
 - this project examines juvenile “legend tripping” across the United States
- Many examples of cases will be given
 - Collections since 1995, over XXX sightings in XX states



Definition: Legend Tripping

(name recently bestowed by folklorists and anthropologists)

An adolescent rite of passage in which a usually secret nocturnal pilgrimage is made to a site which is alleged to have been the scene of something tragic, horrific, and possibly supernatural or haunting

Definition: Satanic Tourism

- Gary Fine and Jeffrey Victor (1994) defined “Satanic Tourism” as:
 - inherently delinquent juvenile activities at geographic sites associated with some tragic event, rumored to be supernatural or related to the occult
 - a type of legend trip characterized by juvenile involvement in pseudo-Satanic/occult behavior such as drawing pentagrams, writing epithets, and burning candles
 - A juvenile may visit a geographic location such as an abandoned church, historic graveyard, or reputedly “haunted” site, and engage in mischievous, destructive, or “ritualistic” behaviors as “rites of passage”
 - These activities, which often are relatively harmless and conducted primarily for juvenile thrills, may be perceived by law enforcement and the larger community as threatening and dangerous

Legend Trip Sites

- Graveyards
- Woods
- Abandoned buildings
- Caves
- Bridges
- Rock Quarries
- Churches
- Open Fields
- Abandoned factories
- Nightclubs
- Playgrounds
- State Parks
- Historical Landmarks
- Warehouses
- Ranger Outlook Stations
- Train Tunnels
- Roads/underpasses

Our “Sample”

- Overall

- XX different states
- 102 sites

Information Collected



- Description of Site
- Location of Site
- Description of Site Phenomena/ Reported Occurrences
- Type(s) of Criminal Activity at Site
- Impact on Community

ISSUES

Public Hysteria/Panic

Juvenile Safety

Cost

Officer Safety

Liability

Relationships/Trust

Juvenile Delinquency

Use of Police Hours

Public Safety

Use of Scarce Resources

Juvenile Sex, Drugs, and etc...

RESULT

FEAR

```
graph TD; FEAR[FEAR] --> RESULT[RESULT]; POLICE_FREEDOM[POLICE FREEDOM] --> RESULT; POLICE_FREEDOM --> INDIVIDUAL_RIGHTS[Individual Rights & Protections]; INDIVIDUAL_RIGHTS --> BUT[BUT, the public accepts it!!!!];
```

POLICE FREEDOM

Individual Rights & Protections

BUT, the public accepts it!!!!



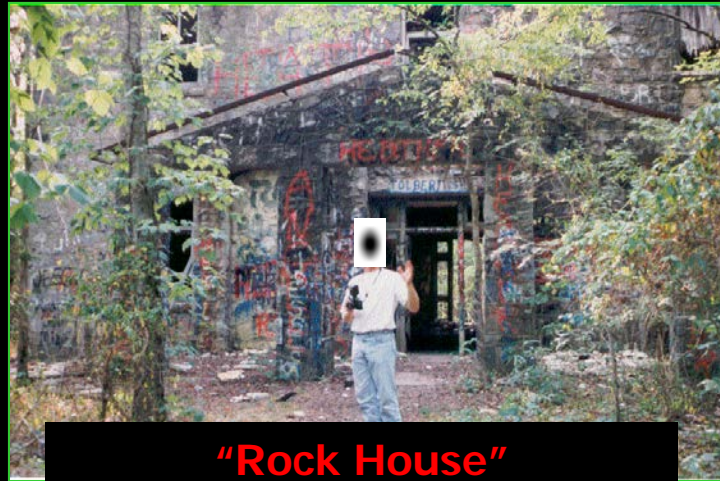
Legend Trip Sights in the United States

EXAMPLES

Abandoned Buildings



"Cooper House"
Bishopville, South Carolina



"Rock House"
Greenwood, South Carolina



"Sloss Furnace"
Birmingham, Alabama



"The Menninger Clinic"
Topeka, Kansas



"Greenleaf House"
Jacksonville, Alabama



"The Warehouse"
Demopolis, Alabama



"Retirement Home"
Gadsden, Alabama

Abandoned Buildings



"Topeka State Hospital and Cemetery"
Topeka, Kansas



"Monitor School"
Coal Grove, Ohio



"Horseblock Tower"
Talladega, Alabama



"Old Meat Packing Plant"
Topeka, Kansas

Churches



"White Gap Baptist Church"
Jacksonville, Alabama



"Forest Hill Church"
Mobile, Alabama



"Trinity Episcopal Church"
Topeka, Kansas



"Craigmiles Mausoleum"
Cleveland, Tennessee

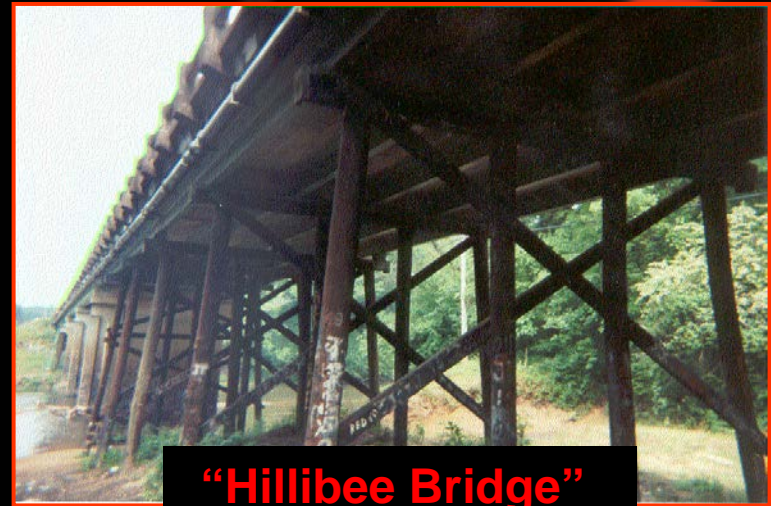


"St. John's Baptist Church"
Lexington, South Carolina

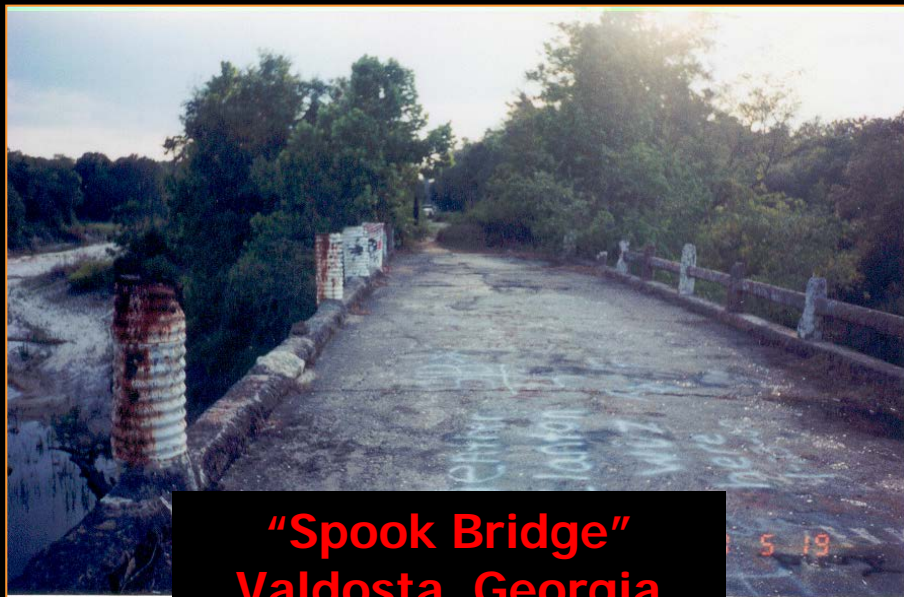
Bridges



"Green Hand Bridge"
Lancaster, South Carolina



"Hillabee Bridge"
Gadsden, Alabama



"Spook Bridge"
Valdosta, Georgia



"Cry Baby Bridge"
Anniston, Alabama

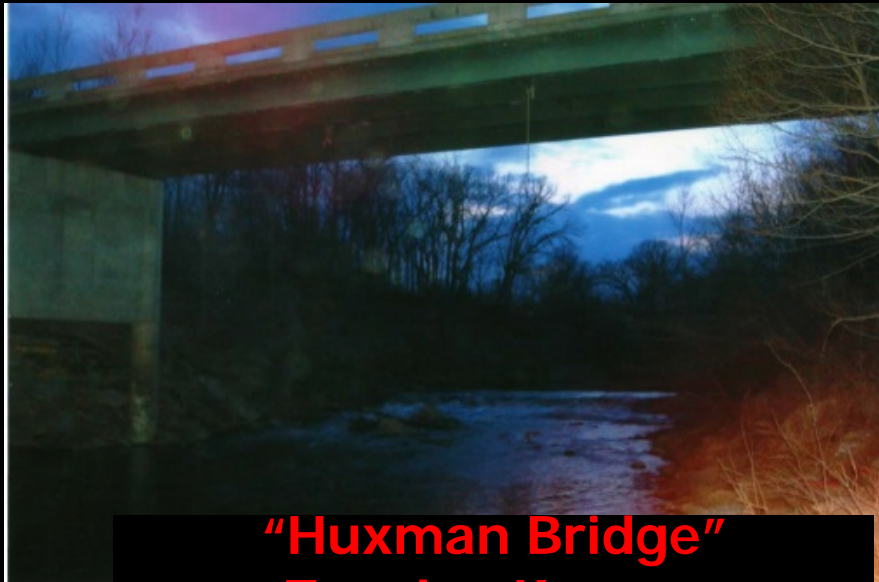
Bridges



"Cold Spring Bridge"
Irmo, South Carolina

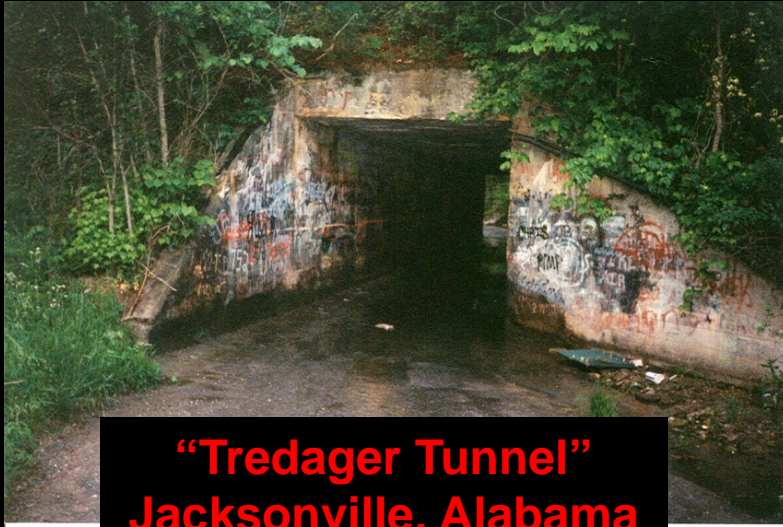


"Old State Road"
Lexington, South Carolina

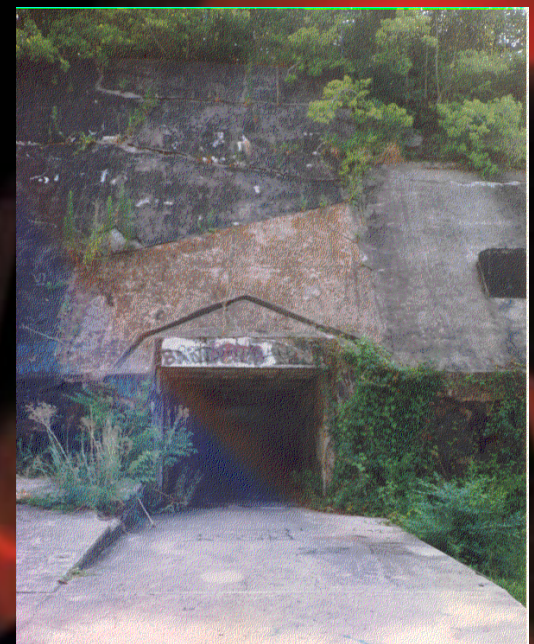


"Huxman Bridge"
Topeka, Kansas

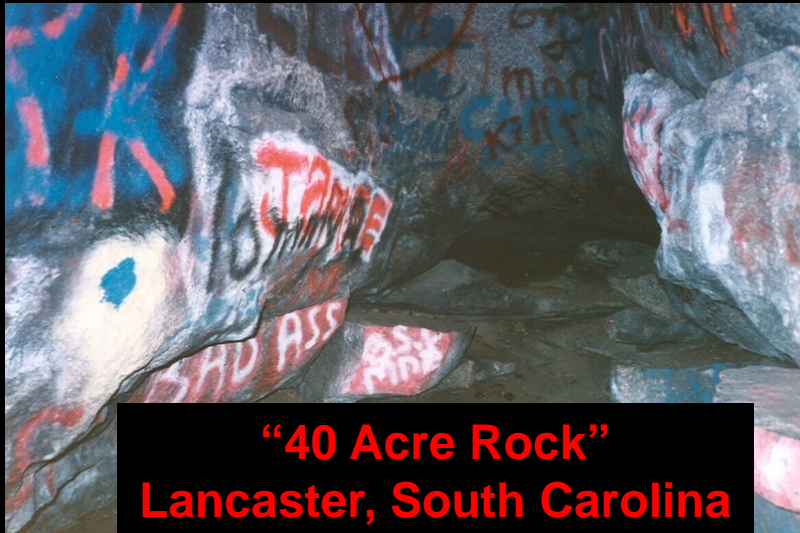
Tunnels and Caves



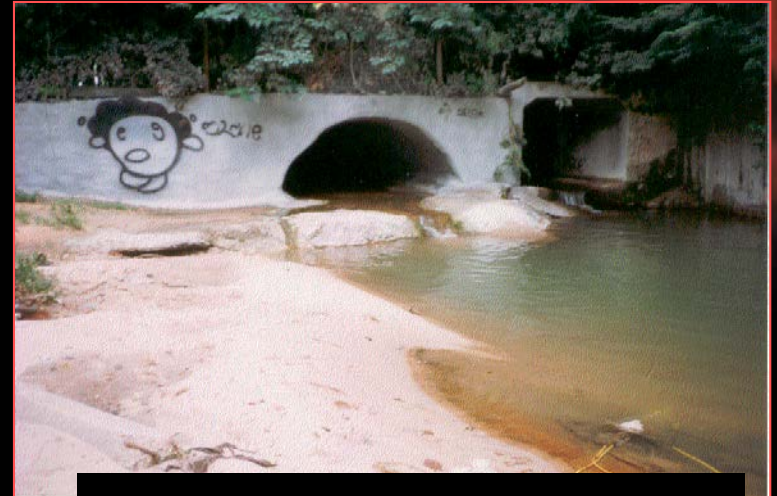
"Tredager Tunnel"
Jacksonville, Alabama



"The Cave"
Sullivan's Island, South Carolina



"40 Acre Rock"
Lancaster, South Carolina

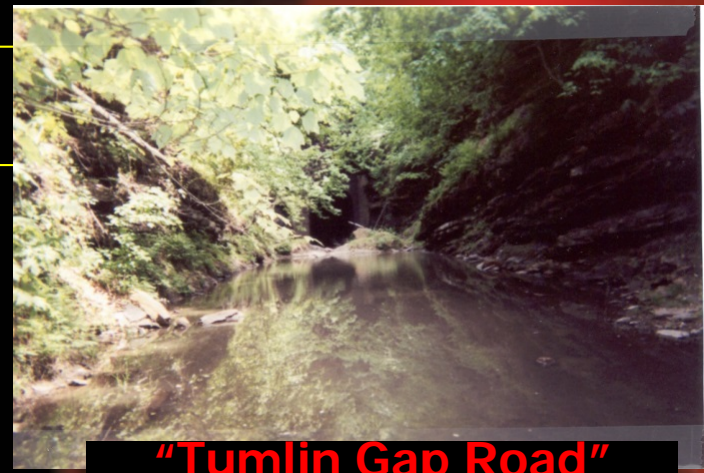


"Five Points Water Ducts"
Columbia, South Carolina

Tunnels and Caves



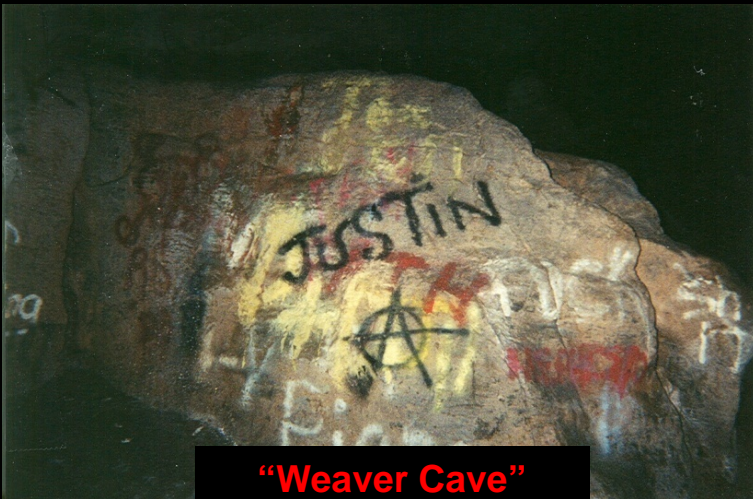
"Haunted Tunnel"
Ironton, Ohio



"Tumlin Gap Road"
Altoona, Alabama



"Train Tunnel"
Greenwood, South Carolina



"Weaver Cave"

Acade Huntsville, Alabama Sciences, February 2014, Philade



"The Fort"
Lands End, South Carolina

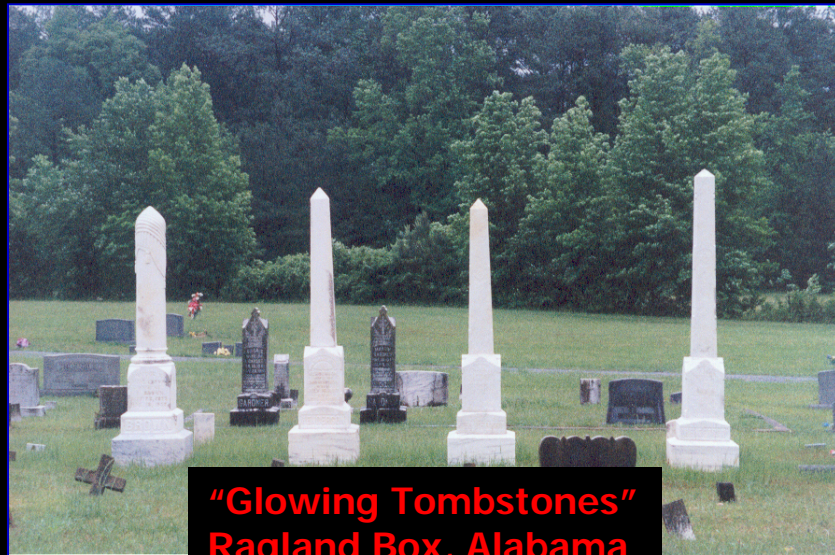
Grave Yards and Cemeteries



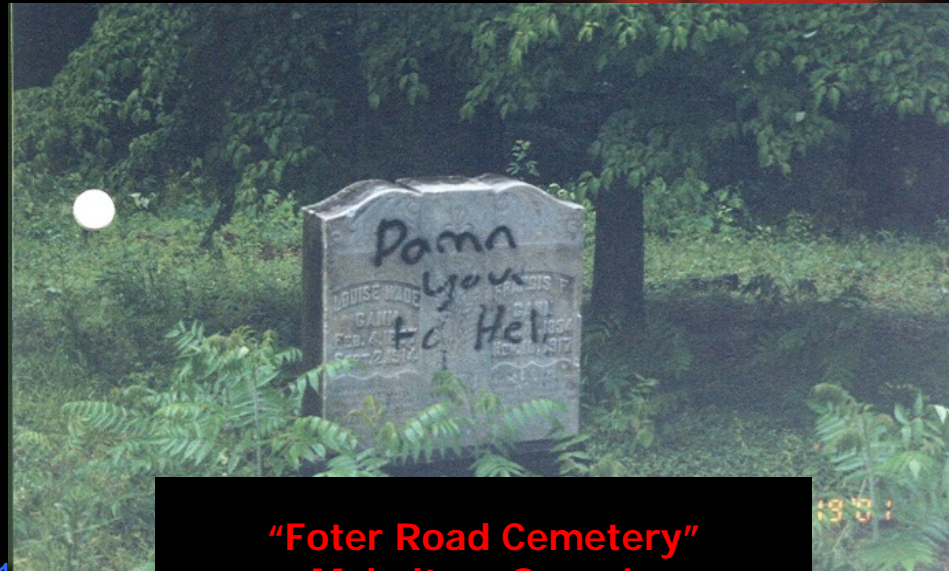
"Bleeding Tombstone"
Concord, North Carolina



"Tomato Cemetery"
St. Augustine, Florida

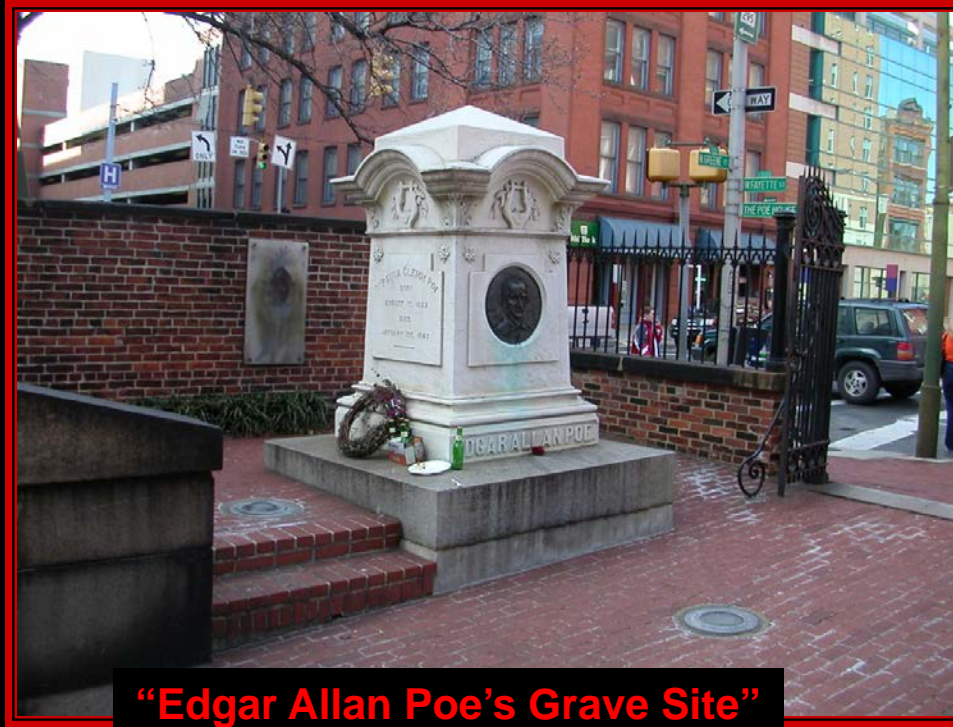


"Glowing Tombstones"
Ragland Box, Alabama



"Foter Road Cemetery"
Mebelton, Georgia

Grave Yards and Cemeteries



**“Edgar Allan Poe’s Grave Site”
Baltimore, Maryland**



**“Rochester Cemetery”
Topeka, Kansas**

Parks and Public Places



"Peach Tree Rock"
Lancaster, South Carolina



"Burnett's Mound"
Topeka, Kansas



"Bethel at Westwood"
Ashland, Kentucky



"Deason House"
Jackson, Mississippi

Parks and Public Places



"Rock Quarry"
Gadsden, Alabama



"Jed Johnson Lake"
Wichita Falls, Texas



"Mountain Wildlife Refuge"
Lawton, Oklahoma



"Etowah Indian Mounds"
Catersville, Georgia



"5 Points"
Birmingham, Alabama



Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, February 2014, Philadelphia, PA

Any Questions?

Contact Information for Authors

Gordon A. Crews, Ph.D.

Professor of Criminal Justice & Criminology

Criminal Justice & Criminology

Marshall University

Huntington, West Virginia 25755

crewsg@marshall.edu/304.696.3083