

Book Chronicles Oliver Family Saga in the MS Delta

This epic traces the struggles of five generations of Olivers, from the late 1800s to the present, in the Mississippi Delta.

HERNANDO, MS 11.8.19—In the 1870s, James Samuel Oliver arrived in the Mississippi Delta by swimming across the Mississippi River—with a fresh bullet wound in his leg. He later journeyed deep into the swampy wilderness known as the Mississippi Delta. Oliver cleared timber and carved a plantation home near Indianola, Mississippi.

More than 140 years later, his great grandson, James Allen Oliver, traces the Oliver family history from the late 1800s until today in his book, *The Oliver Family, Mississippi Delta Legacy*. Oliver based his book on many years of research in county courthouses, libraries and graveyards, and several generations of oral stories. Oliver explains, “My family members and friends represent many other Mississippi Delta families that helped shape the region for five generations. And the Delta helped shape us.”

Newspaper clippings and courthouse records substantiate many of the hardships the Olivers endured and overcame. “The mortar bonding the bricks are the many family stories that have been passed down orally generation to generation since the late 1800s,” he adds. “I felt I needed to put the family lore on paper before these stories are lost like the wild frontier the Delta once was.”

This unique Delta book also explores the major influence and contributions of immigrants to the region, including the Irish and the Italians, as well as race relations between blacks and whites

through the generations. The Oliver family was intertwined with the Williams family, a black family, since James Samuel first stalked the Delta.

James Allen Oliver, whose mother was a Faulkner, is a life-long Mississippi Delta native, who grew up at Goose Hollow southwest of Indianola. After a successful career in the global crop protection business, he developed and sold several off-patent product companies. He and his wife, Patricia Ruggeri Oliver, now live in Hernando, Mississippi, and own a number of Mississippi Delta farms, including some land that had been cleared by his great grandfather James Samuel almost 150 years ago.

Paintings by Carol Heathman Polasini and original photographs illustrate *The Oliver Family, Mississippi Delta Legacy*, which will be released the first week of December 2019. For more information, contact james@oliveragri.com