THESIS

ALONG THE ROAD HOME

Emma Scott
New Media Photojournalism

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www.alongtheroadhome.com  ♦  www.emmatscott.com
emma.t.scott@gmail.com
WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY EMMA SCOTT ENTITLED "ALONG THE ROAD HOME" BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING, IN PART, REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ART IN NEW MEDIA PHOTOJOURNALISM.

Graduate Thesis Committee:

Emma T. Scott
(Print Name of Student)

(Signature of Advisor)

Gabriela Bulisova and Susan L. Sterner
(Print Name of Advisor)

(Signature of Department Chair)
In August 2005, floodwaters driven by Hurricane Katrina breached the London Avenue Canal and caused widespread damage to the Gentilly neighborhood of New Orleans. In the aftermath, the U.S. Government created and funded Road Home, a program intended to support rebuilding. The program has since been criticized for disparities in distributing aid funds, with low-income residents, primarily African Americans, receiving less overall. Through a multimedia project including photographs, video, and audio as well as a project-driven website and a community art component, this thesis investigates the ongoing struggles of four specific residents to return to their homes and to restore their community on one block of Agriculture Street, just steps from the canal.
**INTRODUCTION**

The residents of New Orleans, especially lower income African Americans, continue to face long-term struggles—physical and emotional—more than seven years after Hurricane Katrina. *Road Home*, a U.S. Government-funded program created to assist families in rebuilding, has been highly criticized for unequally distributing funds, giving less money to African American homeowners than to whites. While the hurricane and its subsequent damage were highlighted in newspapers worldwide, the stories of recovery have long since disappeared from the media, leaving many outsiders to believe that the city has been fully revitalized and has returned to a sense of normalcy. In fact, vast areas of the city remain far from recovery, with a startlingly high percentage of damaged, unoccupied, and abandoned buildings, mostly in neighborhoods inhabited by poor African Americans.

This project aims to provide an in-depth update on post-Katrina recovery by telling the story of four African American residents living in the 1700 block of Agriculture Street in the Gentilly neighborhood of the 7th Ward of the city. Through scenes of daily life, personal interviews and images of the rebuilding process, stories of the cities own residents highlight the larger issues of corruption, incompetence and injustice facing all of New Orleans.

Oliver Harrison, 56, is an African-American, a homeowner on Agriculture Street, and a life-long resident of New Orleans. After his house was severely damaged, he moved around the city for seven years, living with relatives. The details
of what happened to him and where he lived after the storm are unique to his story but share themes of loss, struggle, uncertainty and frustration that many of the cities residents have faced in the years since Hurricane Katrina.

Upon his return, Oliver found himself amidst a disjointed community. Many of his neighbors and long-time friends never returned to their homes, others sold their properties to new families and some who continue to struggle emotionally from the damage, have closed themselves off from friends and family in the years since the storm.

This thesis examines the community through the different perspectives of the neighbors—Oliver who has lived on Agriculture Street since the 1980’s, Mesha who moved to the block in October after losing her home in Katrina and then again in Hurricane Isaac, Viola another long-term resident of the block and advocate against Road Home and finally Alana and her kids—Hannah, Hiren and Akiya.
Prior to Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans was a city plagued by racial division and severe wealth inequality. The damage from the storm impacted the poorer and typically African American population with particular brutality; not only did these people have fewer resources with which to escape the storm, but they also lived in low-lying areas with more severe flooding. Remarkable images from New Orleans immediately after and subsequent to the storm unveiled not only the physical damage, but also shed light on the societal issues that were exacerbated by the storm. Many people, rich and poor left the city, both before and after the storm. But many of the poorer residents could not afford to return. The racial and socioeconomic makeup of the city changed drastically since Katrina; a much richer and whiter city continues to emerge today.

The ongoing displacement of primarily low-income African Americans from New Orleans has been less visible in the media in the years following the storm. These stories are being replaced by coverage of cultural events such as Mardi Gras, the Super Bowl and Jazz Fest; leading outsiders to the city to believe that the issues that the storm stirred up have long since been resolved. As the city nears the 10th anniversary of Katrina, this thesis serves as an outlet for just a few of those African American residents who did not receive the money they deserved through the Road Home program to share stories of their continued struggle. This project is not only a reminder that the recovery effort continues, but also an exploration of the intricate paths each individual person takes in recovering from such large devastation, how
these paths are connected to those around them, and what impact those individual journeys have on reforming communities and reconnecting neighborhoods.

Because of the means by which funding and recovery efforts were distributed after the storm, specific areas of the city are at drastically different points of recovery. While tourist-filled neighborhoods like the French Quarter, appear to have made a full recovery, an astonishing number of houses in lower income neighborhoods, remain abandoned and boarded up. The devastation, disruption and displacement caused by the storm are still physically very evident; and the social and psychological impacts continue to play themselves out both individually and collectively, weighing heavily on the entire city. The pain and anger are very real and very present.

At first glance, the 1700 block of Agriculture Street is no different than any other in the 7th Ward. Colorful double-shot gun style homes line the street on both sides, cars are parked sometimes in driveways and other times haphazardly on patches of grass, one home remains unrepaired with its spray-painted X still visible from the street marking ‘TFW’ or ‘toxic flood water’ from Katrina, and another lot has been cleared all together. Over the course of eight months, I came to understand the ongoing impact of Katrina through the very different individual stories of four of its residents, and how their stories were shaping the recovery of the block itself.

This story looks at New Orleans on many different levels. First, it sheds light on racial and socioeconomic inequalities that existed in New Orleans prior to the storm and how they were intensified by Katrina. Second, it examines the way that a city-wide trauma affects different people living in close proximity to one another.
and how their interactions with one another are impacted by the effects of that trauma. Finally, on an individual level, it examines how long it takes for these scars even to begin to heal. For so many outsiders, Katrina’s damage is a thing of the past. But for residents of certain New Orleans neighborhoods, the damage is palpable every day, physically and emotionally, ongoing and unrelenting.

By telling this story, I intend to peel back and explore many different layers of the recovery process in New Orleans. I worked to create a sense of the city’s history, the traumatic events of the storm and the ongoing road to recovery as experienced by four New Orleans residents.
My research entailed a multifaceted investigation of the issues facing New Orleans after Katrina. In the Fall of 2012, as I embarked on this project, I was very focused on reading newspaper articles from the insider perspective of The Times Picayune as well as from other cities—the New York Times and The Washington Post had particularly large archives, and academic papers that investigated the effects of Katrina. As my exploration continued, I gravitated more towards documentaries such as Trouble The Water and When The Levees Broke, TV series, (primarily Treme), and books like Zeitoun to investigate how these issues were being addressed in popular culture. I specifically chose to hold off as long as possible in looking at images and multimedia representations in order to craft my own perspective and understanding of these events and issues before oversaturating my brain with images. When I eventually began to immerse myself in the visual storytelling of these topics, I watched Brenda Ann Kenneally’s multimedia series, studied Mario Tama’s still photographs and dissected all of Time Magazine and USA today’s pieces charting Katrina and the recovery efforts from 2005 to present.

I found one book to be particularly informative because of the way in which it wove together personal stories of New Orleans residents with historical facts, statistics about the recovery efforts and analysis of how the government’s response impacted these issues. The Fight for Home, published in 2012, not only informed my understanding of the current state of the city's recovery process, but more
importantly, served as a model for how I worked by investigating larger systematic and citywide issues through the personal stories of specific residents.

When I originally began this project, I was focused more on how non-profit housing organizations were reaching homeowners and helping them to rebuild. Through one of these organizations, The St. Bernard Project, I was connected with Oliver Harrison, a resident on Agriculture Street since the 1980’s. When I met Oliver, he has just moved back into his home after struggling for seven years to rebuild. With the help of St. Bernard Project and United Way, he was able to move back in to his home, but was still working physically to rebuild his garage on his own and emotionally to recover the sense of feeling truly at home.

Over the course of eight months, I made five visits to New Orleans to complete this project. During the first visit, I interviewed Oliver and began to understand that he was entering a new phase of the struggle to return home—he explained to me that despite being back in the physical structure of his house, he was a long way from feeling at home and feeling whole again. The struggle existed not only within the walls of his house, but also outside in his neighborhood. He told me stories about how his kids used to play in the street with all of the other neighborhood kids, but those families all left and now the block is quiet and less connected because half of the families who owned homes on the block before the storm never returned. This new struggle was much harder to visualize than the physical construction of his house and garage, but it was fascinating to me. During the following trips that I took to New Orleans, I began to branch out into the community. I created fliers explaining the project that I was doing and passed them
out to Oliver’s entire block. I began staying on the newly renovated, yet entirely empty other side of Oliver’s double-shotgun home and was able to connect with many members of his block. In the end, I focused this story on four different characters: Oliver, Hannah, Mesha and Viola. Oliver and Viola are older residents who owned properties on the block before the storm while Mesha and Hannah both moved to Agriculture Street after Katrina and rent their homes. The individual stories of recovery from each of these subjects intertwine with one another and work to create a larger understanding of the individual and collective recovery from Hurricane Katrina.
New Orleans has been heavily documented since Katrina. Photojournalists such as Brenda Ann Kenneally, Mario Tama, Chris Usher, Anthony Suau and Dave Anderson have returned over and over again to tell the stories of families and neighborhoods through the recovery process. Documentaries such as Trouble the Water and Spike Lee’s If God Is Willing and da Creek Don’t Rise and When the Levees Broke have brought stories of the storm and its aftermath to HBO and the big screen. Additionally, in more recent years, the television show, Treme and the film Beasts of the Southern Wild have brought the ongoing issues of the New Orleans area into the light of popular culture. Despite the efforts of these storytellers, many of the struggles that their subjects faced in returning to New Orleans immediately after the storm still exist today.

Before traveling to New Orleans, I immersed myself in a cultural orientation. I watched as many documentaries as I could squeeze in, studied online photo galleries and multimedia pieces, and read countless articles written about these issues. The work that I’ve explored has given me a deeper understanding of not only the largest themes and issues that exist in New Orleans but also the presentation solutions that these storytellers have created in dealing with this subject matter. Overall, I’ve found each photographer, photojournalist and filmmaker’s dedication to his or her stories to be incredibly inspiring. Their commitment to the people and the stories that they have been working on is evident in the considerable bodies of

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emma.t.scott@gmail.com
long-term projects they have produced. I was interested in creating a fresh and updated perspective as well as a unique set of tools for the presentation of my story while carrying on the extreme dedication that these storytellers dedicated throughout their work.

*Along the Road Home* tells the story of four different residents living on one block in the seventh ward of New Orleans. I chose to create physical limits to this project by focusing on one block so that I could explore not just the individual stories of residents but also the impact that these stories have on the community they live in. Because of this physical structure within the story, I wanted to find a way to translate that structure to a project-driven website. I created a website that includes a splash page sequence as an introduction to the project. This piece of the project was important to me because it forces viewers to learn specific information and facts about New Orleans, Katrina and the recovery efforts before they begin to learn about the personal stories of my subjects. I wanted to create a guided experience to ensure that viewers understood the context of the story—both the physical space where the project was created and the political climate of the city at the time of the project, before the viewer was introduced to the neighbors on the block. The home page of my website contains four elements: (1) The neighbors: a page containing an illustration of the block with photos indicating who on the block lives in which property, (2) The film: a twelve minute video that serves as the primary visual component to the project, (3) Images & Writing: a long narrative article about the story with still photographs interspersed within the text, and (4)
Community: a gallery of triptych images that resulted from a community art project I created with the members of the block.

Throughout this entire process, community engagement has been hugely important to me. I have always believed in a high level of collaboration as being crucial to the way in which I tell stories. At the beginning of this project, I distributed a flier to publicize the project and to solicit people’s involvement. The highlight of my collaboration with community members was the portraiture project that we completed on my last trip to New Orleans in April 2013. During this project, I photographed each member of the story outside of their house and then had the images enlarged and laminated. Then, together with each resident, we posted the photos on the exterior of their houses in the spot of the spray painted X’s that marked buildings around the city after Katrina and are still visible on many structures today. Despite the fact that these X’s are no longer visible on the homes of my subjects, placing their photographs in this symbolic location allowed them to send a message to their communities and anyone passing through them that they are back.

As this story continues to evolve, my hope is that it becomes even more of a collaboration between the neighbors on the block and myself. In July 2013, Viola will be coming to Washington, D.C. with 500+ residents of New Orleans to petition for President Obama to reinvestigate the Road Home program. She has asked me to photograph the events that take place during this trip. I will then create an online gallery that combines portraits of the attendees along with their writing or voices.
We aim to construct a resource that shows the sheer mass of people in New Orleans who are still struggling to recover and the diversity of their stories and experiences.

Eventually, I plan to return to New Orleans to show the video created as part of my thesis and to work to extend my engagement with the community beyond Agriculture Street. In asking the neighbors to participate in my project, I was also asking them to participate with one another; I feel as though through this participation they have come to understand one another more. I want to collaborate more with neighbors in the Agriculture community and beyond on projects involving night projections of my video, wheat pasting of their portraits and spray painting of their own words to bring these deep-rooted issues to the visual forefront of communities around the city of New Orleans.
Conclusion

Through this thesis, I hoped to intertwine individual stories in order to create a larger narrative about the struggle to recover from Hurricane Katrina. When I first started to tell this story, I was an outsider and it was a story about a large disaster that had happened in the past. By opening this story up to the community, I was able to include multiple perspectives and voices. The more time that I spent on the block the more I realized that this wasn’t just a story about the past; events relating to Katrina are still unfolding daily in New Orleans. These current events are illustrated in the notification Oliver received from Road Home informing him that the $13,000 he received from them years ago was a clerical error and that they are requesting the money be returned. At another point in the story, during a visit to Viola’s radio show, Reality Check, she interviews the owner of Circle Foods, a local grocery store that served as a landmark for the community before it was flooded. It is expected to reopen in August 2013, a full eight years after the storm. As I continue to document how the long-term effects of Katrina’s damage play out—most immediately during Viola’s trip to D.C. in July 2013, I will keep with me something that Oliver said to me during my very first visit to New Orleans. He asked me, ‘How do we make them whole?’ referring to the residents of New Orleans who have lost so much and continue to struggle with that loss every day. That question marked the beginning of my exploration of this story, it allowed me to understand that despite the fact that more and more people move back to New
Orleans each year, a house doesn’t always mean a home and that it takes much more than a house to make you feel whole.
ALONG THE ROAD HOME
Oliver Harrison, 56, with a graying beard and hunched shoulders, ducks through his front door, glances down the street and shuffles in his pocket for his keys. He locks the door, double-checking the handle, even though he’s only stepping out for a few minutes. He detours around the permanent puddle in his front lawn, hunches over to light a cigarette, and begins his tour of the block, ignoring the sidewalk and choosing instead to walk down the center of the street.

It’s just shy of 6 p.m. on a Thursday in late October of 2012. The sun is setting slowly over New Orleans. The homes on Agriculture Street, where Oliver lives, are warming with the glow of lights as Oliver’s neighbors return home from work. Every few minutes, another car pulls into a parking spot and the owner emerges; some wave quickly while others head directly inside. Oliver doesn’t seem to notice or care; he tells me that the block, quite simply, is quiet.

Holding his cigarette between his thumb and pointer finger, Oliver extends his middle finger and points to the house on the corner—a long and particularly skinny single shotgun house painted light yellow with dark green trim. “Man named Fish lives there. I mean, Fish ain’t his real name, but I don’t know what is.” He goes on to explain that Fish previously lived in the house diagonally across the street, but his family stole it and sold it. The details of the sale are mysterious, even to Fish.

Fig. 1
himself, who I meet a few days later. Fish tells me that he’s lived on Agriculture Street for over 30 years, not including the few months when he had to move away after his family sold his house. Praising the Lord, he tells me how thankful he was when he was able to buy the house across the street and return to the neighborhood. “What made you want to come back here so badly?” I ask. “This is my home. Always has been, and I’m never gonna leave.”

Agriculture Street is located in the seventh ward of New Orleans, near Dillard University and the Fairgrounds. Its proximity to the London Canal led to substantial flooding during Hurricane Katrina when the canal was breached in two places. Most of the houses on the block, despite being raised above the ground on cinderblocks, were inundated with water. Seven years after the storm, only two of the fifteen lots on the block remain unrepaired, but many of the homes, despite being fixed up, are still unoccupied.

Oliver turns to his left and points again, “That lady who lives there, Ms. Washington, she stayed here during Katrina. Then afterwards, she got her house raised so it won’t flood no more.” Ms. Washington is another long-time resident on the block. As a community organizer, she’s been advocating on behalf of low-income people in the

Fig. 2
city for FEMA to pay homeowners who were never reimbursed for damage and repairs from Katrina. She hosts a radio show and a TV show where she invites people to tell their stories, hoping that by raising awareness about individual loss during Katrina, she’ll be able to bring justice to the people of New Orleans. Ms. Washington’s house in early December is decorated from floor to ceiling in Holiday paraphernalia. When I go to visit her, she shows me a giant stack of photos that she took to document the damage her home incurred. A poorly lit 4x6 image of her teal green living room being gutted after the storm, with the chandelier still hanging above the mess, is particularly striking. She cackles as she tells me the story of how she found her dog after the storm—he was picked up by an animal rescue team and she made them put the dog on the phone to talk to her so that she could confirm it was he. She shrugs and sighs as she talks about the looting of the house after the storm, much of which she’s convinced was done by the police themselves. Her voice becomes fiery as she explains her seven-year (and counting) fight with FEMA. “The neighborhood is coming back. Everyday, you can see it now. Someday, I’m gonna put up my photos of what the block used to look like to show the new people the history of this place. I want them to know about where they’re living.” Ms. Washington is also active in a recently formed neighborhood committee that hopes to revitalize the community now that more people have moved in. Her
first project is to turn the one empty lot on the block, which is city-owned, into a community garden. She hopes it will help to bring the block together, providing a space where newer residents can mix with older ones.

Speaking of newer residents, Oliver tells me: “That big double house there, both those ladies have kids. They’re pretty new. I don’t really know ‘um. And then that lady down there, she just moved in real recently too,”

The two ladies with kids are Cynthia and Alana. They each rent one side of a two-story double. Cynthia, a meter maid in the Central Business District of New Orleans for the past thirteen years, lives with her youngest daughter while her eldest is in college. Alana has four kids and a new boyfriend. Her driveway has a leaning basketball hoop that neighborhood kids use most days after school; and, when they’re not playing, they stream constantly from Alana’s house to Cynthia’s. “Me and Alana, we been knowing each other since 2001.” Cynthia tells me as we sit in her kitchen later in the week. Her neon pink shirt is reflected on her granite countertop, but the rest of the room, lit with fluorescent ceiling lights, is stark. “We look out for each other, if I’m at work, she looks out for my daughter. If I’m cooking and I’m cooking a lot, they know they can come over here and eat. Like today, I’m not
cooking and we gonna eat over there,” she chuckles as she points to the wall that divides her side of the building from Alana’s. “Truly, you wouldn’t believe, we never really talked to our neighbors until Hurricane Isaac this fall. Nobody left during that storm, we mainly sat outside and everybody communicated. The Washington’s–across the street—they were charging up the telephones, seeing if we needed to put anything in the refrigerator. We was outside from daylight until night because I mean, what else there was to do? That was the most we’ve ever talked to our neighbors.” Since then, she says, their relationship with their neighbors has changed. Every once and a while, they’ll join each other for barbeques, and her neighbor, Fish, cuts her lawn for her.

The other house on the block with a new tenant is inhabited by Mesha, who uses an orange milk crate as a stool on her front porch most days. Clutching a Sponge Bob cup, claiming to only have one drink a day from it, she tells me when we meet that she moved in a few weeks ago after her home in La Place was destroyed in Hurricane Isaac. Her house is emptier than the others, the living room and dining room are devoid of furniture and her bedroom furniture consists of a small, unplugged TV and a flattened air mattress on the floor. Despite the barren rooms, Mesha says she’s more focused on her community than on her own comfort. She wants to create a place where kids can go
after school to stay out of trouble. Over and over again, she says she just wants to make her neighborhood better in whatever way she can. She volunteers with a shelter for women who were victims of abuse and makes jewelry out of plastic beads to sell at fundraisers for different organizations in the city. She wrote a spoken word poem about her experiences, “I loved my city until the Katrina storm hit it. It was indeed a catastrophic [sic], there was very little clean up after the disaster. Houses destroyed, but the government claimed they fixed it up. To my knowledge, it seems like nothing has been touched—why my city still needs clean up? I finally found a place, my neighborhood looks like it has gone astray, and people are still displaced. The community needs to stand up because if they don’t, nothing will get done. I pray it will be a better community, a better place and most of all, a better state.” Is this how the poem was originally structured? Her verses are shaky and awkward but her passion and commitment to her city, and more specifically, the kids in her neighborhood, are tangible as we stand in her empty living room.

Oliver and I continue down his street. He points out more homes, mentioning people who used to live in them, or the repairs that they had to make after Katrina.

There’s Mertle, whose mother died months before Katrina and made her promise that they’d get out of town before the next storm because she had a feeling it was going to be a

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Fig. 6
big one. Mertle now works at a local bank that she proudly tells me has helped the city to recover by donating lots of money to charities and rebuilding efforts. Mertle herself spent her retirement fund to fix her house up so that she could comfortably raise her two grandsons on Agriculture Street. Then, there’s Michelle and Amos next to the Washington’s. Amos is hanging out with two friends on his porch. One sits in a chair on his cell phone as Amos shaves his head. The other holds a Budweiser tallboy and dances sporadically to the song playing from his phone. Oliver shakes his head at them but a small smile escapes as he does.

We pause on our tour in front of Oliver’s own house and stand in silence. He looks physically and mentally exhausted. “I think I’m gonna go lie down for a bit, feeling pretty low, might watch the game later if you want to come over,” he says as he clutches his railing. He pulls the key from his pocket, unlocks the door and disappears. Still outside on the street, I hear him double-locking his door and checking the handle once more.

Oliver has been on the block since the 1980’s. He raised all four of his children, two boys and two girls, in the four-room shotgun where he lives alone today. He worked as a mailman for twenty-eight years before retiring a few years after Katrina due to a back injury. He struggled financially and physically to rebuild his house and was finally able to move back in August 2012,
almost exactly seven years after the storm. From day to day, his moods shift dramatically. One day, he’s up by 5 a.m. and working by 7 a.m. with his friend, a 76-year-old contractor named Jerome, to rebuild his garage while the next week, he lays in bed until noon, burning incense with the lights off. “Ya know, it’s day to day. Now that I got my house back, I’m just tryin’ to get the rest of my life back together, but it’s hard…it’s real, real hard.” This particular sentiment seems true in varying degrees for every member of the block. There is struggle, there is hope; there are times of loneliness and times of community togetherness. For the people on the block, new and old, Katrina is a shared experience. Everyone lost, and seven years later, the recovery is still bumpy and irregular from neighbor to neighbor.

Over a steaming plate of shrimp and vegetable stir-fry, Oliver posed the question: “How do we make them whole?” He is referring to the residents of New Orleans, who underwent the collective experience of Katrina, but for whom individually the answer to that question is quite specific and unique. As the neighbors on Agriculture Street work to rebuild individually and collectively, they seem to be searching for the answer to that question, for themselves and their community.
APPENDICES

A. ANNOTATED PRECEDENTS BIBLIOGRAPHY


   An HBO-produced documentary by Spike Lee, this film is a follow-up to a four part series that Lee produced in 2006 about Katrina. Both of these documentaries have been immensely helpful in understanding what happened during Katrina from the perspective of the New Orleans residents.


   A documentary created in collaboration with two residents from the lower-ninth ward in New Orleans, this documentary is an insiders perspective that begins with filming during the storm and carries us through the residents journey back to New Orleans after the storm. This raw and first-hand account is incredibly honest and was a really valuable perspective.


   This 4-part series highlights what happened during the storm and immediately afterwards. Lee interviews a variety of different residents of the city and therefore is able to explore different perspectives and experiences.


   This site is a host to a collection of photo essays created by many different photojournalists in the five years since Katrina. Contributors include Brenda Ann Kenneally, Chris Usher, Mario Tama and many more.


   Brenda Ann Kenneally returns to her subjects many times in the years following the storm. She is a fantastic storyteller and photographer, but the more powerful part in this particular story is the way she invests in her subjects and returns to them over and over again to show the way that their lives are changing.


   This is a visual map that allows viewers to drag the mouse around the screen to see how the flooding impacted different areas of New Orleans. It's been the most helpful map that I've found in order to understand the flooding and where the water that impacted the community I’m working in came from.


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This article served as a written counterpart to much of Kenneally’s visual work based on the recovery from Katrina. This essay contributes first hand accounts of what life was like in New Orleans before the storm which helps to inform the way that viewers look at Kenneally’s multimedia work.


Usher has worked extensively in New Orleans since Katrina. His still life’s and detail shots exemplify quiet moments that allude to long stories. While these images strike me as being more in the vein of documentary fine art than photojournalism, they absolutely work together to tell an abstract story about the larger themes of loss and devastation that ran through New Orleans after Katrina.


This is a brief photo essay on Time Magazine that was made immediately after the storm. It documents the evacuation process for many families through images that feel less chaotic and dramatic. It’s clear that the Stolarik was looking for quieter moments during the evacuation process, which makes these images more approachable for viewers.


Tama is a photographer who is deeply invested in New Orleans. Not only is he photographing there, but he’s also selling his books and donating the money to schools in New Orleans. Much of his work has to do with housing, particularly public and low-income housing, so he was working with fairly similar populations of people. Tama is another photographer who has returned repeatedly to New Orleans to tell the stories of his subjects as the struggle continues. He is an inspiration to me, not only because of his still image making but also because of the other ways in which he has rooted and invested himself into helping these communities to come back together.

**B. ANNOTATED RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY**


This article served as a helpful introduction to the public and affordable housing climate in New Orleans after Katrina. While it didn’t touch on many of the affordable housing issues that I am focused on, it was helpful in understanding the approach that the city took when addressing the issue of public housing in New Orleans after Katrina.


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emma.t.scott@gmail.com
This article was published during the time that I was working on my story and served as an update on the hoops that many homeowners continue to be forced to jump through as they try to rebuild their homes. It was published in the midst of the national hype around Mardi Gras and the Super Bowl, and aimed to provide another perspective on what is happening in the city currently.


Because this article is more current, it definitely addresses issues that are more relevant to my thesis. I particularly appreciated the specific details about women and children—so many of these articles discuss the low-income population as a whole, but it’s really helpful when it’s broken down further.


This article outlines the struggle and culture of poverty in New Orleans and the effects that natural disaster had on the cities poorest population. This article created a comparison between the city prior to Katrina and the demographics of the city currently.


There were huge racial tensions in New Orleans prior to Katrina that were exacerbated by the storm—many in New Orleans felt that the government was purposefully reshaping public housing so that they could prevent low-income, primarily black families from moving back to the city. This article highlights that struggle with many helpful statistics and facts.


This multimedia piece deals with the destruction that occurred in New Orleans and the problems that low-income, primarily black people faced in their efforts to return to the city. While not much of the information was new to me, the photos were incredibly powerful to view.


This article highlights particular issues of social justice involved in New Orleans and it’s rebuilding process after Katrina. It looks at what New Orleans was like prior to Katrina and afterwards—something that many articles don’t do, so I think it will end up being quite useful in understanding the transformation that has occurred over time.


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emma.t.scott@gmail.com
This book was published in 2012 and focuses on the ongoing fight to move home in New Orleans. The first few chapters are based in the 7th ward, which is where my thesis took place. This book is a model for the way I worked during my thesis, combining the overarching issues in the city of New Orleans and illustrating them through personal stories of my subjects.

C. ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Oliver Harrison outside of his newly refinished home.
Figure 2: Viola Washington receives a phone call from a member of the neighborhoods community association.
Figure 3: Viola Washington sorts through photos she took of her home after it was damaged during Hurricane Katrina.
Figure 4: Hannah Howard and her brother, Hiren, play outside their family home on Agriculture Street.
Figure 5: Tamisha (Mesha) Bickham greets neighbors as they pass the home she rents on Agriculture Street.
Figure 6: Amos and his friends get haircuts and dance on their front porch.
Figure 7: Oliver Harrison and his friend Jerome work to repair his garage.
Figure 8: Agriculture Street at night.