

“Shouting from the Margins: Black Orange County, 1960 – 1979.”

By Sharon Sekhon, Ariella Horwitz, Victoria Koos, Brenda Valencia, Edith Verduzco, and Joe Zavala in collaboration with Kathy Ayeh, Donna Hatchett, Adleane Hunter, Jerry Hunter, Juel Farquhar, Janine Farquhar, Mustafa Khan, Harlen Lambert, Daniel Michael Lynem Jr., Brig Owens, Shirley MacClanahan-Owens, Zoe and Earl Pedford, and Aidsand Wright-Riggins III.

We hope you enjoy this project and the different research elements it includes. In addition to the essays by our co-authors, illustrated timeline, map, and profiles of individuals and institutions, I urge you to explore the different resources available including a Google map documenting some of the sites, the master timeline with hundreds of entries, the bibliography, and the different multimedia assets we have gathered.

About

In 2018, Disney’s Marvel Studios released one of its biggest blockbuster films to date – “Black Panther.” This film was a critical and popular success – receiving a rare 96% favorable review on the critics’ site “Rotten Tomatoes” and earning \$700 million domestically and \$646 million internationally. The location of the film “Wakanda” became a popular concept: an advanced Black civilization created to support Black people. Yet, in this mega hit, there was no mention of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, nor the thousands of other ways Black people in America have exerted agency in the midst of the Black Lives Matter movement.I.

This omission is how America commodifies political movements, erases history, positions what is “legitimate” behavior for societal reform, and stops real change from continuing. Regardless of how historians and the media choose to represent Orange County in the past, there are major omissions in who is included in our official and popular narratives, despite a very real history of activism and literally shouting at power for recognition in some cases. “Shouting from the Margins” emerged in this vacuum to document what happened in Orange County from existing survivors and extant sources. It aims to document and tell the stories of Black people and their different methods of activism. This project was inspired by my friendship with Harlen Lambert and Daniel Michael Lynem, Jr.

In 2011, I was introduced to Harlen Lambert through the Raitt Street Chronicles, a project that documented youth voices in Santa Ana through the Santa Ana Public Library. I was gathering neighborhood photo essays from students. During this time,

others involved with the library were arranging for interviews with local leaders. The students in charge of the RS Chronicles interviewed amazing people like Gonzalo Mendez, Jr – the son of the one of the parents who worked towards desegregating Orange County school in the 1940s. Students also interviewed Harlen Lambert. I sat in on both interviews.



Harlen Lambert in conversation with Lincoln Heights writer Gabrielle Garcia after his interview as part of the Raitt Street Chronicles in 2011. (author's collection)

Harlen Lambert was the first Black officer hired in Santa Ana in late 1966. This was after the Congress of Racial Equality pointed out the city's force had no people of color. In his interview, I learned he was in the process of publishing his autobiography, and I was excited to read it. When I next saw him five years later, much to my chagrin, he was still in this process. His wife Sharron informed me they had hit a wall and could not find a publisher for his book. So, I tried to help; I attempted to find an academic publisher through my academic colleagues, and I wrote to other contacts and did not receive any support. I realized that many of my colleagues were not interested in his story and this to me, was a problem.

At the same time, I slowly got to know Daniel Michael Lynem, Jr. Although he was the former head of the Santa Ana chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, Lynem was now a pastor whose vocation takes a central role in his self-definition. Lynem was a rare human being – seeking the truth and best path for himself as a man of God and someone who recognized the racism in the US. While Lynem has been featured in the local press many times, few writers include his contemporary spiritual orientation. Again, my colleagues weren't interested in such a figure. Yet, here I was, an historian whose goal is to document where I live. I realized that many of my colleagues were not interested in his story and this, to me, was also a problem.

In the process of knowing these two men, Daniel Michael Lynem, Jr. requested a meeting with Harlen Lambert in order to apologize to him for not understanding who he was in the 1960s. We all met for breakfast at Mimi's Café in Yorba Linda on April 16, 2019. There, I witnessed healing when Lynem extended gratitude to Lambert. The men shook hands and actually smiled. I consider this moment one of my most important events in my career – I witnessed the healing power of history; the leadership of both men in the same ways they endeavored to lead in the 1960s; and I saw firsthand the benefits of my labor. It is a rare day for historians to actually see such moments; they are often so private that they will rarely be shared publicly. It is important for me to document it accurately as a witness and as a human being.



Daniel Michael Lynem, Jr. expressing an apology to Harlen Lambert for not understanding what Lambert's goals were when he served on the Santa Ana Police Department in the late 1960s. Harlen Lambert is graciously accepting this overture. Photograph taken in 2019 and shows the healing power of history and conversation. Both actions required strength, and some would argue that forgiving someone is much harder than offering an apology. (author's collection)

All history is source-driven and when those living in your community and in charge of “scholarship” decide one’s source material isn’t relevant, it is a way to oppress and gaslight people who have suffered and fought for this nation. Neither men are “Uncle Toms,” nor are they any less political in their stances. In some cases, their politics have not changed from the 1960s; rather, the national discourse around struggle has privileged only a few people, and their histories are often so diluted to appeal to mainstream audiences that their representations no longer accurately reflect the people in question.

In between these two sets of lives were hundreds of other Black people’s experiences that would never make the record in our contemporary paradigms. As an historian seeking to understand how we make our nation more responsive to all of its people, their experiences are of the utmost importance.

While I am not a Black person, I know everyone needs to contribute to our history and help build a more equitable nation. Accurately gathering the representative histories of everyday people goes a long way to understanding how change over time actually occurs. Old models may invite contemporary readers to also engage in their communities. These histories give us permission to do similar work in our own neighborhoods.

I am grateful to a community of people in making this research project happen and first and foremost, I must thank the interviewees who shared their often painful pasts with us. All are co-authors of this project, and I want to single out Donna Hatchett for her work writing the profile on her husband and finetuning the profiles on her dear friends the Hunters. I would also like to especially thank Shirley Owens-MacClanahan for connecting me with her brother Brig and Juel Farquhar, her former teacher. Thank you to Sharron Lambert for connecting me with Mustafa Khan and helping me when I published my own book *Because My History Matters: Case Studies from the Studio for Southern California History* (2019).

I thank in the order in which we interviewed people or gathered their history: Harlen Lambert, Daniel Michael Lynem, Jr, Aidsand Wright-Riggins, Wyatt Frieson, Daljit Singh, Adleane Hunter, Jerry Hunter, Mustafa Khan, Gordon Strauss, Earl and Zoe Pedford, Juel and her daughters Janine Farquhar and Kathy Ayeh, and Brig Owens. I also thank Shirley Owens-MacClanahan for connecting me to Mrs. Farquhar and her brother Brig Owens.

Several institutions helped us gather research and are important collaborators. At the Santa Ana Public Library, I was assisted by Cheryl Andrea in the History Room; at CSUF I was aided by Patricia Prestinary in Special Collections, and my amazing boss and supervisor Dr. Sandra Perez. I found “Black Cop” on the Internet Archive. The 1972 Angela Davis speech at CSUF through Calisphere at Pollak Library, and “Ebony Kaleidoscope” is hosted by Special Collections libraries at UC Irvine. Thank you to Derek Quezada from UC Irvine. The Fullerton Public Library's Cheri Pape helped me search newsletters of Hunt-Wesson to seek out coverage of the horrible event Adleane Hunter shared with me.

Special thanks go to Dr. Ariella Horwitz whose hard work made this project possible and is the co-director of this project. She worked on article summaries, interviewed Daljit Singh, conducted research, helped to map site, and conducted multiple smaller tasks to build a grander picture of this history. Horwitz provided insight on political issues and her own personal friendships with related people. Her work ethic shamed me and inspired me to work harder, and she approached every task with a singlemindedness that I wish I had. She is the partner for this project that

I needed and am forever in her debt.

I have been blessed by brilliant undergraduate students who answered the call when I asked if they were interested in working on this project: “thank yous” go to Victoria Koos, Brenda Valencia, Edith Verduzco, and Joe Zavala. Each student has provided insight and hard work on what to include in the final exhibit as well as tracking the building blocks of research for the entire research project. I urge you to read their work. While the world we see in the media does not bode well for our nation, the students I meet in my CSUF classes and those four souls who co-authored this project challenge every negative image of our nation.

Victoria Koos is dedicating her honors thesis to this project and the role student-centered projects play in their evolution as students and teachers. She was part of the original cohort of students who honored Harlen Lambert in 2019 and found the experience to me more profound than she anticipated.

Similarly, Brenda Valencia who was part of the original cohort proofread and helped index the oral interviews. Valencia suggested items to highlight from these experiences for the exhibit. This work is often painstaking and painful. She even assisted Harlen Lambert in proofreading his autobiography prior to its publication.

Edith Verduzco immediately took on the hard challenge of documenting all of sources and providing links whenever possible so others may follow up, revise, and challenge our work – the goal of historiography. Edith’s focus was something I did not have in the middle of organizing and conducting this research. This detail driven work is important to all history projects and you will see the results of her labor in the resources section of the project.

Finally, Joe Zavala found us. He wrote an excellent paper on housing discrimination in Orange County and wanted to build on his research. He helped with follow up interviews, timelines that dealt with legislation, and a review of the Black Panther Party’s newspaper. Each co-author contributed a short reflection on the research; I encourage you to read them. Zavala’s reflection, in particular, sums up a lot of my experience growing up in Orange County and I share his surprise and joy at the new history we learned together.

We discovered our profiles after doing our initial research and finding these individuals required some creativity. For future researchers, I found interviewees by upgrading my LinkedIn account to send requests and immediately canceled it because I could not afford a membership that cost several hundred dollars. I searched the White pages, Facebook, and found my second to last set of

interviewees through Instagram. In the past, I have used classmates.com to find individuals but few people still use it. Ancestry.com was a portal to many yearbooks and tracking specific addresses. I used newspapers.com to do newspaper sweeps, the California Digital Newspaper Collection for more local press, and the Internet Archive for obscure media. Calisphere was a great source for media from different universities.

This work is indebted to Charlene Riggins and Robert A. Johnson for compiling and publishing *A Different Shade of Orange*. Charlene was a colleague in Ethnic Studies at CSUF and immediately welcomed me when I joined their cohort in 2012. Charlene was warm and inviting and it was a stark contrast to what I had experienced in other departments. I needed her just then in my career, and I was devastated to learn she died in 2018 to cancer. Because of her vast contributions to Orange County history and because she started her career in 1975 at CSUF, I found a way to include this important person in our project. As an historian, I am always taken by other scholars and their motivations to do the work. Riggins' motivations were noble and her work is meticulous. I hope that Center for Public and Oral History will consider re-issuing this out of print book and making the contents available to scholars worldwide. I was lucky to find a very rare used copy for \$100 online – because of COVID19, our traditional venues for research were closed and I had to find sources wherever I could.

Future researchers would benefit from closer examinations of school newspapers of every level; we relied heavily on CSUF's newspaper archives for items that never made it to the *Register* or *The Los Angeles Times*. Moreover, students expressed opinions and relayed outraged over events in school papers that other presses refrained from covering. Moreover, I believe a close read of *La Opinion* would augment any research on Orange County in profound ways and I hope someone takes on this challenge. Until all of California's state universities have a full run of this important newspaper (which began in Santa Ana in 1920) and not just the last ten years, I fear that most of our histories remain woefully incomplete. Further, a closer examination of CSUF's oral history collection would make this a better study. However, COVID 19 thwarted much of our ambitions, and I hope that these recommendations are heeded in future examinations.

All of our text was proofread by Tiffany Bowman, of Bowman Advising, one of my former students whose expertise I rely on for most public projects. Any errors in the text are my fault and happened after her careful vetting.

I hope you enjoy this research and you recognize the contributions of Black people

to the building of a more equitable nation for all of us – especially in Orange County. I also hope future historians challenge and augment this beginning.

I. My brilliant students tell me the Black Panther Party is part of the original Marvel comic book storyline, but it is missing in the big screen version.