

JOSHUA BRANNING

# MISSISSIPPI LIGHT

PHOTOGRAPHS OF MY CULTURE BEFORE IT FADES

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## A Quiet Man

He helps his friends load their instruments onto the stage. Always with a humble smile. He's proud to help.

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## Once the Stage is Set.

He finds a corner. There, he listens to his friends play the blues.





BIG JOHN HORTON BETWEEN SONGS

*John Horton at First Friday Blues  
in Hollandale, MS 2018*

## “RIDE A BULLDOZER ALL DAY & YOU’LL UNDERSTAND THE BLUES”

*Big John Horton*

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John Horton is a good man and great on a bulldozer. He’s played the blues all over Europe, been in magazines, and lived the blues dream.

Today he plays the blues on weekends and rainy days. He can’t bulldoze things in the rain, but he can play the blues all rainy day long.

He models his electric sound after Albert King and Howling Wolf, but his business sense is unique in the blues world... his men get paid. If a bar stiffes the band, John will pay

his friends out of his own pocket. He might play all night for free, sometimes it cost him more than that, but he plays the blues and he does it well.

As I’ve gotten older these things mean more to me. I hope it means more to most of us. Being a good man is important. John Horton is a good man.

To quote John, “It bees that way sometimes.” I’m glad it’s that way sometimes.



*Leonard P McIntosh Jr on  
Saxophone*



*Mickey Rogers, funky bluesman,  
watching his friend John Horton.*



*Mickey Rogers, funky bluesman.  
Performing "Are You Serious"*



*Derek E. Brown at  
First Friday Blues in Hollandale, MS.*



*Sugarman is Nice Folks. They fed me a plate of  
BBQ Shrimp & Pork.*



*Trenton Ayers at  
Sam Chatmon Music Festival*

## JOSHUA BRANNING • PHOTOGRAPHER

*I know what I came to do. I came to tell the story of my culture.*

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*Joshua Branning is Down and Out  
taking pictures in Mississippi*

This is the story of a Mississippi boy who moved away and came back to see my culture with open eyes.

I sold my good lenses. I'm down and out in Mississippi now. I use antique junk lenses. My whole collection of lenses costs less than what I used to spend on a night out.

It's alright if I got junk for tools. The story is what matters. Mississippi folks can do more with less.

Praise Mississippi Light, it's not the heat... it's the humidity that makes it beautiful.



*Leo "Bud" Welch,  
He came to lift him up.*



*Leo "Bud" Welch at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



*Leo "Bud" Welch at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



*Leo's friend, Vencie Varnado came  
to sing along*



*Leo "Bud" Welch at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



STEAM FUMES OFF DWAYNE DOPSIE IN THE COLD OF NIGHT

*Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*

2018

## DWAYNE DOPSIE & THE ZYDECO HELLRAISERS

*Too hot for cold nights*

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**D**wayne Dopsie and the Zydeco Hellraisers are professionals. They play it straight, they play it fun, and every show is a gigantic New Orleans parade.

A parade for people who want a reason to move with the groove.

A song and a story, the show is centered on local tales about the Rolling Stones and other musical legends loving the New Orleans culture.

Hidden in the crowds of a normal Zydeco

Hellraisers show are Grammy winner's and nominees.

They are there for the experience. To take part in the congo lines and umbrella tosses.

This isn't a show, it's a culture on display.



*Dee Fleming, Dwayne Dopsie at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*

2018



*Dion Pierre at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



*Brandon David at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



*Dee Fleming, Dion Pierre at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



*Dwayne Dopsie at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*

## ANTIQUÉ LENSES

*Walter Murch to Caravaggio*

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Soft and warm hand ground glass, the painterly colors aren't accurate. Decades of use shine in the imperfections. These are junk lenses.

New lenses are perfect, consistent like a computer. They are just like the other ones on the production line.

This ain't that.

These antique lenses are temperamental, inconsistent, and require more work. I can deal. I don't need auto-anything.

I came to tell a story.

Walter Murch helped make "The Godfather Trilogy", "Apocalypse Now", and many other great stories. He has 6 rules for editing films.

The most important rule is driving the emotion of the story. Being technically right is the least important. Once I heard him say...

"Emotion is more important than being technically right", I changed.

My photos became more painterly. I've sold lots of paintings. Folks like 'em. I can do that all day long.

The Renaissance painter Caravaggio captures my eye. He is known for his use of light and dark. He was one of the first to let people's imperfections shine. Their character pushed through shadows and light. That's the stories I want to tell.

These broken old lenses have character. Bouncing shadows and light to create photos that are living paintings, a soft and warm moment of time. It's not technically right, but it drives the emotion of the story.

What an enjoyable thing.



*Paul "Washboard Speedy" LaFleur, Dwayne Dopsie at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival in Greenville, MS*

*2018*



*Charlie "Guitar" Rickard at  
Hot Tamale Fest, Greenville, MS*



*I can't describe what you don't see  
in Mixed Company.*



*He drank, danced, insisted I take  
his picture, and refused to smile.*



*Jaquetia "Songbird" Davis,  
Leonard P McIntosh Jr on  
Saxophone*



*He is a Retired School Teacher and  
we ate pork skins together.*



*Tank Tankersley, actor, electrician, and professional Festus impersonator from Gunsmoke*



*The stage isn't the only show in  
Leland, MS*



*Sean "Bad" Apple at  
Clarksdale Film Festival*



*Leland, MS  
Crawfish Festival  
2018*



*Jeffrey Tonos at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



*Deak Harp  
The Harmonica Man*



*Mr. Sipp at  
Mighty Mississippi Blues Festival*



*Zach Day at  
Great Bear Affair in Rolling Fork, MS*



*Reverend Rob Mortimer, Jeffrey Tonos at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



*Hand Rolled Tobacco*



*Charles Ross at  
Sam Chatmon Music Festival*



*Vencie Varnado at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



*First Friday Blues at  
Hollandale, MS*



*Bill Abel at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



*Charles Ross at Sam Chatmon Music  
Festival in Hollandale, MS.*



*Reverend Rob Mortimer at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



*Libby Rae Watson at  
Sam Chatmon Music Festival*



*Wes Lee at  
Sam Chatmon Music Festival*



*Jaquetia Songbird Davis at  
Sam Chatmon Music Festival*



*Cool Kids at  
Sam Chatmon Music Festival*



*Stud Ford, Joyce "SheWolf" Jones at  
Juke Joint Festival in Clarksdale, MS*



*Stud Ford at  
Juke Joint Festival in Clarksdale, MS*



*Cam Kimbrough, Joyce "SheWolf" Jones at  
Juke Joint Festival in Clarksdale, MS*



*Joshua "Razorblade" Stewart at  
Juke Joint Festival in Clarksdale, MS*



*Southern Halo at  
Juke Joint Festival in Clarksdale, MS*



*Terry "Harmonica" Bean at  
Crawfish Festival in Leland, MS 2018*



*Jimmy "Duck" Holmes at  
Crawfish Festival in Leland, MS 2018*



*Jimmy "Duck" Holmes  
is cool*



*Zach Day at  
Great Bear Affair in Rolling Fork, MS  
2018*



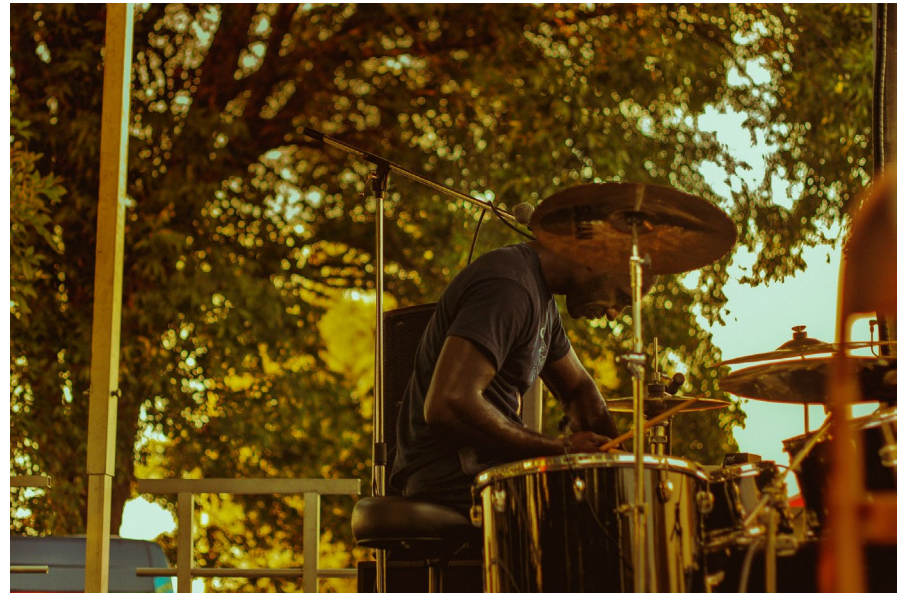
*Terry "Harmonica" Bean at  
Crawfish Festival in Leland, MS 2018*



*Cedric Burnside  
with an antique Japanese 100mm lense*



*Cedric Burnside in  
Greenville, MS*



*Cedric Burnside at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



*Brian Jay, Cedric Burnside at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



*Cedric Burnside and  
dancing little girl.*



*Cedric Burnside at  
Juke Joint Festival in Clarksdale, MS*



*Trenton Ayers, Cedric Burnside at  
Juke Joint Festival in Clarksdale, MS*



*Lil Joe Ayers and son Trenton Ayers at  
Juke Joint Festival in Clarksdale, MS*



*Trenton Ayers, Sarah Rochis at  
Mighty Mississippi Music Festival*



*Trenton Ayers at Sam Chatmon Music  
Festival in Hollandale, MS.*

Mississippi Light started out as me taking pictures of my friends. Each photo was practice for making documentary films. I'd shoot this angle, grab a single here, a wide shot there, but I'm impatient. Quickly it grew into something new, a snapshot of my Mississippi culture. .

A silhouette of America that isn't built around strip malls. This is a collection of

Mississippi smiles.

There's enough sad Mississippi stories to fill a thousand libraries, but this ain't that.

Thank you to everyone who was nice enough to invite me to concerts and cook-outs. Because Mississippi, right now, is a smiling place. I hope you can see it.

*If you like these photos... I can do them all day long.  
For business purposes please contact me at [JBcamera@gmail.com](mailto:JBcamera@gmail.com) or  
662-807-1133 (voicemail)  
and let me know how I can help.*



*All Photographs by Joshua Branning*

JOSHUA BRANNING

# MISSISSIPPI LIGHT

PHOTOGRAPHS OF MY CULTURE BEFORE IT FADES



*Christone "Kingfish" Ingram with  
an antique Japanese 100mm lens*