

markcranford.com

WARD 4 PEACE (FACEBOOK)

**GENERAL AFFIDAVIT**

Mark E.Cranford

The within named person (Affiant), \_\_\_\_\_, who is a resident of Lee County, State of Florida, personally came and appeared before me, the undersigned Notary Public, and makes this his/her statement, testimony and General Affidavit under oath or affirmation, in good faith, and under penalty of perjury, of sincere belief and personal knowledge that the following matters, facts, and things set forth are true and correct, to the best of his/her knowledge:

FROM: Metaphysician Mark Cranford [mcdesignarts@mac.com](mailto:mcdesignarts@mac.com)

Subject: Old Lee County Courthouse "Free Wood For Artists Giveaway 2011"

DATE: Jan. 1, 2026

**PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE REEASE**

**ADDRESS TO THE CITY OF FORT MYERS FLORIDA  
CITY COUNCIL**

**Ward 4 City Councilman Dr. Liston Bochette asked me in the fall of 2021 to write a set of pamphlets and for the explanation of the forces tearing our City of Fort Myers, Florida and nation apart. This writing is especially difficult as I am challenged by my intellectual disabilities and unique intellectual abilities. I am profoundly honored to do this work and yet I am cast into this role by the natural forces of my life and the government, academic and institutional forces that oppose a natural and citizen inventor in visual art history / painting**



Remnants of the Old Lee County Courthouse “Hanging Tree”

Free Wood For Artists Giveaway 2011 from Lee County Commissioners

August 30, 2011 Alva, Florida Lee County “Depot”.

Guggenheim Fellow Mamie Holst with video camera and Lee County Arborist P. Moore contemplate parts of the Old Lee County Courthouse “Hanging Tree”. After being declared dead the old oak tree had been cut up for transporting to this open lot in Alva Florida where these remains would be processed.

Arborist P. Moore made the art objects for me by cutting cross sections at my direction and In assisting me in retrieving two parts of the woven copper wire lightening arrestor cable and with attached tree spikes. Mamie Holst video recorded as I photographed with a Nikon D700 camera. This was my first conceptual art. Mamie’s assistance and probing mind enriched the documentation and conceptual art with her questions and suggestions. As I understand it the Lee County Commissioners were each given a tree spike from the old oak tree copper lightning arrestor cable.

By chance there is an old paint bucket on the ground between Mamie Holst and Lee County Arborist P. Moore in this 2011 photograph. The next year 2012 I would invent Extracted Found Paint As Painting from such a forgotten paint can and submit the extracted found dry paint as painting to the City of Fort Myers Art and Culture Grant Award sponsored by the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation in 2016. This invention has gone unpublished as new art history because such an affirmation is considered “white man” and deemed necessary to be discriminated against.

The "Hanging Tree" got its name from the documented practice of hanging effigies from the Old Lee County, Florida Courthouse oak tree. Candidates would "Lynch" effigies of political rivals from the limbs of the old oak tree during local political election campaigns. I was told in an off hand manner by County employees assisting in the Wood Giveaway that it was believed actual lynchings occurred at the Old Courthouse oak tree. As lynchings had occurred here in 1924 the effect of "mock" lynchings would none the less have a chilling and controlling effect on the segregated black population. The Old Lee County Courthouse election effigy lynchings also served for conditioning the white populace. No one has gone on record to affirm lynching at the Old Lee County Courthouse. In 2011 the old oak tree was carved by chain saw into a soaring eagle and which was just recently treated for termites. Seeds from the old oak were planted around Lee County.

Fort Myers resident and Guggenheim Fellow Mamie Holst had told me of the local lynchings of two young black boys R.J. Johnson (14) and Milton Williams (15). The boys were accused of rape after going swimming with two white girls, though later reports and the account of one of the girls suggested they were innocent and may have been friends. The Lynchings took place by an angry mob May 25th and 26th 1924. May 26th one body was dragged through the streets of Fort Myers by a Model T Ford. A gas truck was sent to "Safety Hill" (now Dunbar) and parked as a warning to the Black citizens living there.

Mamie was also moved and would tell me about the 1957 book "White Mother" , a story of two young black girls and living in abject poverty here in Fort Myers, Florida. Mamie's consciousness helped move my spirit and into conceptual art - for heart, for healing. I had studied Mamie and with her here for three years at this point.

October 3, 2011 I unconsciously formed a loop with one of the two copper wire lightning arrester cables and with attached spike. I then formed the other cable section in the same fashion. I feel and look at these as innate powerful symbols of anti lynching and as modernist anti art. These are not consumer products.

Cutting cross sections of the rotten tree revealed voids from decay.

The internal voids give imaginative character to the old wood.

For me the rotten voids of the cross sections resemble non contrived "gurning" faces, I see anguish frozen in torment in the cross sections. I find them compelling in their physical state, warm old oak, vibrant chain saw marks and screaming voids and misshapen "heads". These shapes witness to terror, murder and oppression. These are subjective assessments but I would not be surprised if they have a similarly perceived resonance when exhibited.

This work is open to interpretation as I have no intention of illustration or dogma or propaganda but intentions of constructive possibilities.

The shapes have subtle and dynamic qualities. Gurning comes from Ireland / England but was practiced in Appalachia and the old south as this is how I know the expression. As children we carved apples during Sunday school at church which I enjoyed greatly. Over time they would dry and age into strange faces - we were told this was called "gurning". To me it suggests extreme expression, extreme emotion.

I created the cross sections for the chance of creating a deliberate expression, a deliberate empowerment. It is chance that the cross sections are compelling, that they have psychological depth, I could not of known this from the start.

Soon after and in the name of recycling I would open forgotten paint cans and extract found paint as painting. Chance informed my operation as each piece of extracted found paint were formed by chance. I would open the artist's scrap paint tube and as painting. BY chance I discovered the "empty" paint tubes had a hidden fractal when cut open, each one was unique. No one could of known by looking at a paint tube or paint can that they contained a new form and new conceptual art in painting waiting to be revealed and invented. It was by chance I invented two new conceptual arts and new forms in painting and of self evident truth - the new axiom and broke Rauschenberg's void. "Rauschenberg's" bureaucracy would be directed to discriminate against these inventions and new axiom as this was and is the policy of what I know know as soft power Antifa, academic occult conceptual communism.

So far I have invented six new conceptual arts and new forms in visual art history / painting.

I realized the value of preserving parts of the Old Courthouse oak tree for posterity. At the time in 2011 conceptual art was not common but I knew keeping such artifacts would be historically and intellectually valuable art in the future. I would keep the artifacts and until when time and opportunity came to share them. I hope to curate and make these Lee County Courthouse "Free Wood For Artists Giveaway 2011" cut wood objects available for possible donation to institutions of local black culture.

I wanted to be a furniture maker at one point in my adolescence and have always loved wood. I knew that cross sections of the old Lee County Courthouse oak tree would be interesting, they contained and would reveal esthetics of history. I felt their revealed history by cross cutting could be powerful art, powerful art for peace, unity.

I have lived with this collection since 2011 and their power is always growing on me. One cross section (#1) has accompanied me in my studio for years now and as witness to my art working. I feel it is a solum responsibility to care for these objects.

As a white male artist and son of the protege of R. E. Lee 4th it occurs to me that some may feel that my ownership of these objects is problematic at best. I feel these objects are for the people. This is in part why I orchestrated with the Lee County Arborist P.Moore and Mamie Holst and collected the cross sections as conceptual art. Hopefully time will come for divestment of the collection to appropriate institution (s). Oddly it will take the end of systemic discrimination against what is considered white man by our academia, culture centers and governance for this to happen any time soon.

At age five my father Henry Lee Cranford Jr. lost his father during the Great Depression. As soon as he was able Dad had to contribute to the household income. Dad was cast out into the fields to work alongside Jim Crow slaves (his description) in the heart of darkness big tobacco Rural Hall, Winston Salem N.C. At Duke Power my father worked under then President of Duke Power John L Lewis and Vice President Carl Horn. John Lewis and Carl Horn would star in the 1976 documentary Harlan County USA.

Wikipedia : **Harlan County USA** (variously written with and without a comma) is a 1976 American [documentary film](#) covering the "Brookside Strike",<sup>[1]</sup> a 1973 effort of 180 [coal miners](#) and their wives against the [Duke Power Company](#)-owned Eastover Coal Company's Brookside Mine and Prep Plant in [Harlan County](#), southeast [Kentucky](#). It won the [Academy Award for Best Documentary](#) at the [49th Academy Awards](#).

It was directed and produced by filmmaker [Barbara Kopple](#), then early in her filmmaking career. A former [VISTA](#) volunteer, she had worked on other documentaries, especially as an advocate of [workers' rights](#).

My Father became the protege of Bill Lee who was R E Lee 4th and who replaced John L. Lewis as president. Dad did not kneel to power and was charged with implementing civil rights for the employees of Duke Power after Duke Power's failed attempt to uphold the Supreme Court ruling that ended segregation. My father set the Public Utility Industry standard for ten years in administering civil rights for five thousand employees. As a result a stable black middle class was able to establish itself in Charlotte, N.C.

During college our neighbor Mr. Ed Fiss would sometimes give me a ride to work at my summer job at Duke Power Company. I was working in the model shop as an assistant in building scale models of nuclear reactor plants. Mr. Fiss was a genius (dad told me he hired) and the head physicist at Duke Power and world's leading designer and builder of nuclear reactor buildings at that time. One morning Mr Fiss told me my father could be the most dangerous man in the southeast but that he had complete faith in him and for adequately funding the science and quality of building materials for building the nuclear reactor plant. Duke Power would build some of the safest nuclear plants ever built but which are long past their expiration - radioactive waste remains more than problematic economically and environmentally.

After graduation in 1978 my father told me things would be different for the white man in the future. He told me I would not have the same opportunities that he had. Dad was a man of few words and these words were most unique and unbelievable in 1978, however I knew what my father told me would come to be true. What Dad had told me stayed buried in my mind until I saw the fruition of academic deconstruction, academic conceptual Marxism / communism here in Fort Myers. In part I filled my 2016 City of Fort Myers Art and Culture Grant Award in to honor my father and his heritage and by proclaiming and receiving recognition as American Revolutionary and in counter revolution to Lee County academic and civil culture center and governance. My inventions in painting were and are self evident truth, a new axiom and had and have the power for igniting a new Enlightenment and by exposing and working with the US Government academic occult - here in Fort Myers, Florida, with Director Dellinger of the Bob Rauschenberg Gallery. .

When I was attending Charlotte, Mecklenburg Schools became the first large school system to be desegregated. For the first years there were race riots on campus then after a few days followed by a Peace - In in the sports stadium and that were on national news.

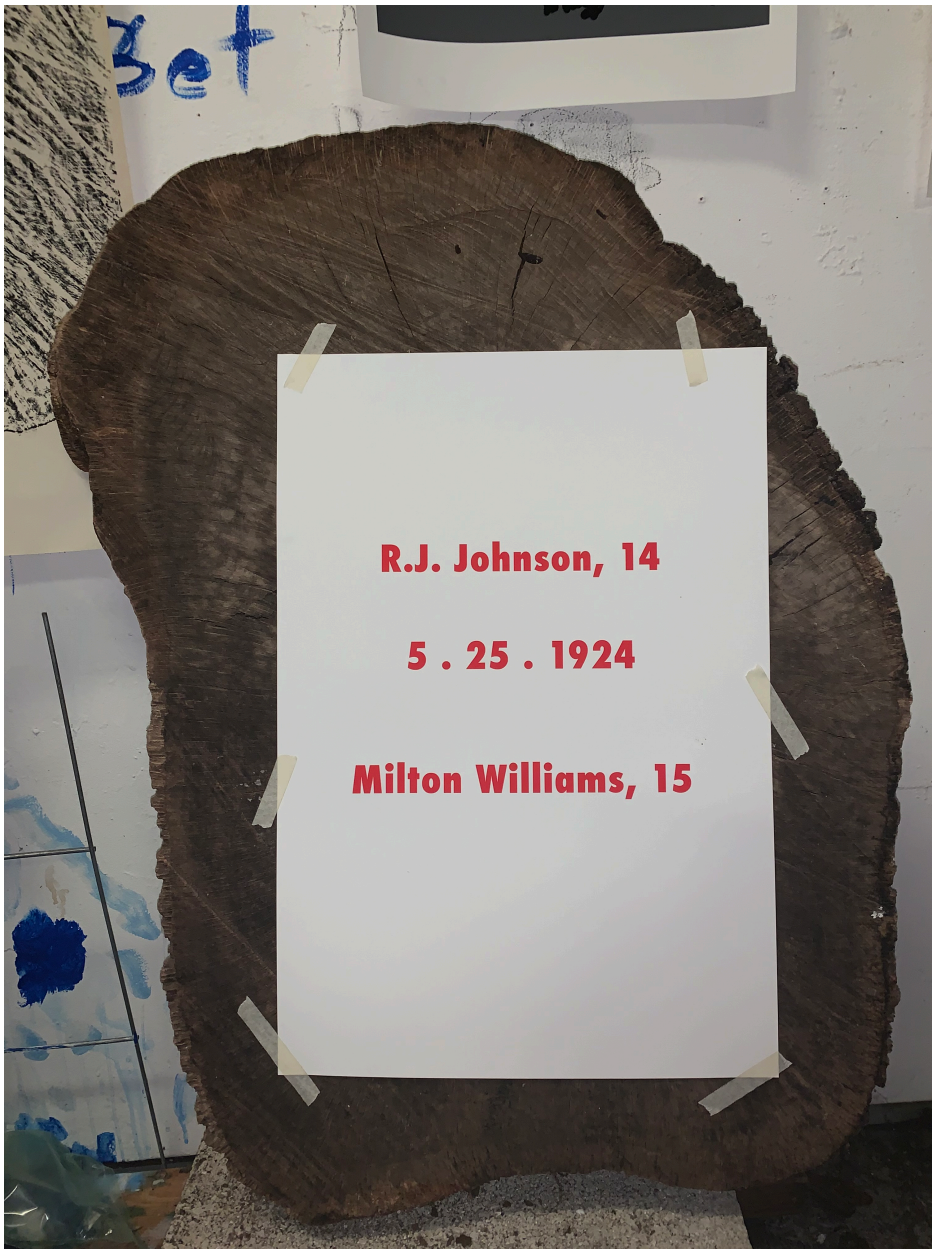
AI: "Fort Myers, Florida (Lee County) schools were not the absolute last in the state to be desegregated, but they were among the last to achieve full federal compliance, known as "unitary status," which was finally declared in 1999. The district had a long history of resisting the Brown v. Board of Education ruling from 1954. "

I had been living in Fort Myers since 1987 and could not believe how resistant to integration Fort Myers had been. Before moving to Fort Myers I had lived in NYC and inner city Atlanta and which were multicultural and which I appreciated.

Besides inventing new conceptual arts and new forms in visual art history painting I invented three new civil rights, they are oppressed by the City of Fort Myers, Florida, CRA, the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation and the Collaboratory and unpublished. One new civil right would recalibrate literacy to the computer and fundamentally empower black communities and all races, creeds and colors nation wide.



As  
a white man modernist inventor in visual art history painting as educated by academic Warlock  
Bill Nolan of photographic memory I symbolize and embody the identity of the white man  
(modernist) to be discriminated against - to be shunned, obscured and forgotten. I retain a  
portion of this collection as my first conceptual art.



Ties That Bind - 1  
10 / 3 / 2011  
Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree"  
Woven Copper Lightning Cable With Tree Spike  
30" X 3/8" cable 4" spike



Ties That Bind - 2  
10 / 3 / 2011  
Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree"  
Woven Copper Lightning Cable With Tree Spike  
34" X 3/8" cable 4" spike



#1. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
29 1/2 X 23 X 4"

Side 1A.



#1. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
29 1/2 X 23 X 4"

Side 1B.



#2. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
28 3/4 X 27 1/2 X 4"

Side 2A.



#2. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
28 3/4 X 27 1/2 X 4"

Side 2B.



#3. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
29 1/2 X 22 1/2 X 7"

Side 3A.



#3. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
29 1/2 X 22 1/2 X 7"

Side 3B



#4. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
33 X 23 X 4 1/2"

Side 4A



#4. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
33 X 23 X 4 1/2"

Side 4B



#5. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
29 X 16 X 5"

Side 5A



#5. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
29 X 16 X 5"

Side 5B



#1. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree"  
Small Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
22 X 19 X 6"

Side 1A.



#1. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree"  
Small Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
22 X 19 X 6"

Side 1B



#2. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree"  
Small Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
18 X 22 X 6 1/2"

Side 2A



#2. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree"  
Small Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
18 X 22 X 6 1/2"

Side 2B



#3. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree"  
Small Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
9 X 19 X 13"

Side 3A.



#3. Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree"  
Small Cross Section  
August 30, 2011  
9 X 19 X 13"

Side 3B.



Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" Limbs  
1A. 66" X 5"DIA  
2B. 50 1/2" X 6" DIA  
3C. 53 X 4 1/2" DIA



Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" pieces

1A. 14 X 7 X 3"



Old Lee County Courthouse “Hanging Tree” pieces

2A. 10 X 21 1/2 X 5 1/2”



Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" pieces

3C. 10 X 18 X 3"



Old Lee County Courthouse “Hanging Tree” pieces

4D. 13 X 12 X 1 1/2”



Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" Bark (SPIRIT)

1A. " 21 X 8 1/2 X 2"



Old Lee County Courthouse "Hanging Tree" Bark (SPIRIT)

2B. " 18 X 9 X 2"

















Found Slice  
Drilled, Cut & Burned 2012

Alva, Florida Lee County Depot Aug 10, 2011

Lee County Arborist cutting Old Lee County Courthouse  
“Hanging Tree” for “Free Wood For Artists Giveaway ‘

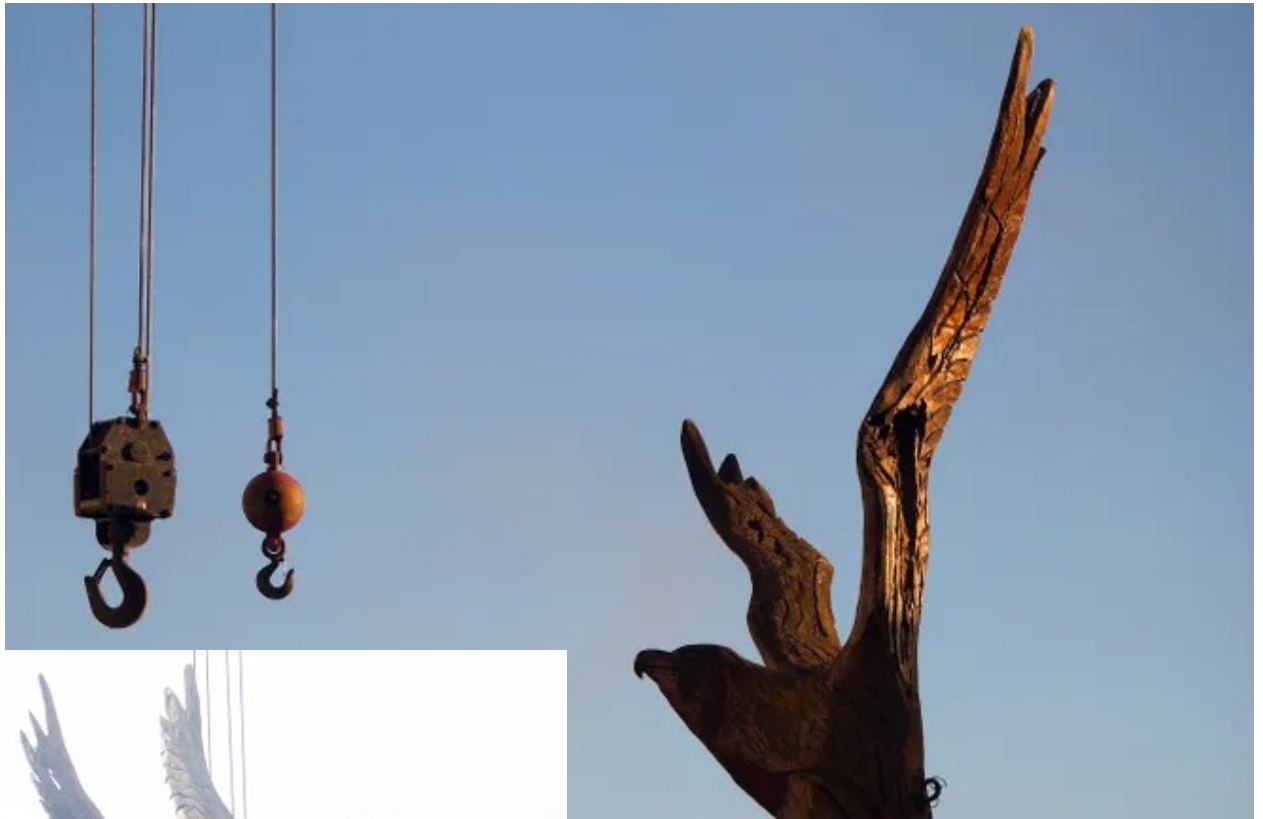




The Lee County Eagle Tree located in front of the Old Lee County Courthouse on Main Street in downtown Fort Myers was removed on Saturday. Lee County's Department of Facilities, Construction & Management is renovating the Eagle Tree to preserve and protect it from environmental impacts. The renovations will be completed off site at a Lee County facility. Project completion is expected within about six months. The tree, which dates back to around 1900, has been a sculpture since 2011.

Kinfay Moroti / The News-Press USA TODAY

NETWORK - FLORIDA



FROM: Metaphysician Mark Cranford [mcdesignarts@mac.com](mailto:mcdesignarts@mac.com)  
Subject: Old Lee County Courthouse "Free Wood For Artists Giveaway 2011"  
DATE: Jan. 1, 2026

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

**STATE OF FLORIDA**  
**COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_**

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me by means of

physical presence or

online notarization

this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_, by \_\_\_\_\_ who

is personally known to me or

produced \_\_\_\_\_ as identification.

(SEAL)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Notary Public

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Notary Public