

POSTER #5

“All That’s Left Are Memories”: Lake Sardis and the Reconstruction of Memories Regarding Water, Wetlands Recreational Space and Ownership

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In 1977, construction commenced on Lake Sardis in southeastern Oklahoma. Only a few years after its completion, Sardis became a contested space at the center of not only two important legal battles, but also regional and national debates over the meaning of wilderness, recreational space, wetlands and the rightful owners and users of water. This poster examines the ways in which residents of Sardis (which was intentionally flooded for the construction of the lake) and nearby towns perceived of and discussed these issues through the use of data gathered from archived newspapers and other materials found in the Oklahoma History Center. It will discuss the methodology used by the research team, which has logged over 70 hours in the archives to date. The poster will also discuss the team’s findings so far and provide specific examples of headlines and editorials from local papers that demonstrate the fluctuating attitudes of locals towards the aforementioned issues over time. Finally, the poster will describe the potential significance of our findings to current and future ethnographic researchers in the region.