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LOCAL FIRST TIME AUTHOR SELF PUBLISHES BOOK

By Bill Shrum, March 22, 2018



Kim Davis, a Sherwood resident and a first-time author, with the book, "Disfarmer: Man Behind the Camera," which is self-published has been agreed to be sold at the Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie at 921 E. Fourth St.

Davis, a native of Ashdown, Ark., was at the Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie, Saturday, March 10 to present copies of his book and to acquaint herself with the museum also near Almyra where Disfarmer was raised as a child.

"The Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie is so pleased to be able to include a comprehensive biography of renown portrait photographer, Mike 'Disfarmer' Meyer," Gena Seidenschwarz, curator of the museum, said. "The book is for sale by Kim Davis and will be in the Gift Shoppe."

Seidenschwarz continued to say in the early years here on the Grand Prairie in Almyra and working the mills in Stuttgart before moving to Heber Springs played a part in his story.

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“It is an extremely important story to tell, especially here where he was influenced by local photographers and his talent as an artist developed,” Seidenschwarz said. “Not recognized in his lifetime, Disfarmer’s work is now appreciated the world over.”

Davis’s book took two years to write and research to complete on an obscure photographer who was born Mike Meyer and upon changing his name to Mike Disfarmer of Heber Springs, Ark. Davis said, in the book, Mike Meyer was his name, maybe not his real name, but he was always an embarrassment to his family and by his name change, he would no longer be an embarrassment to them.

“He chose the name of Disfarmer because ‘Dis’ was German for ‘not,’” Davis said. “He was not a farmer, hence the name Disfarmer.”

“Disfarmer, a very good, if not a great photographer, never really received the kind of recognition he so desperately sought while he was alive,” Davis said.

Disfarmer lived with his mother and brother in Stuttgart and was influenced by two photography studios in Arkansas County, Blush Studio in Stuttgart and Dayton Bowers Studio in DeWitt.

“It was some 20 years after his death that his photography gained recognition for its artistic value,” Davis said. “Led to his timeless three inches by five inches portraits being hung in museums art galleries and in personal collections in the United States, Canada and Europe.”

The book, a non-fiction work, is his first publishing endeavor and credits his wife Judy of 27 years for her support as he researched and wrote this book.

Davis considers himself a history buff and became interested in Disfarmer after attending an exhibit of Disfarmer’s work at the Greg Thompson Gallery in North Little Rock, Ark.

After attending the Disarmer exhibit, Davis conducted research into Disfarmer’s photographs and life, through his efforts, he became acquainted with several descendants of Disfarmer and learned that the family had first accounts and family photographs that could help him with his much-needed biography of the life of Mike Disfarmer.

Davis, his wife of 27 years, who was also a support for his writing this biography, have one daughter, Sydney, a senior in college.

The book is available at Amazon.com for \$24.99.