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**Contact:** cmccreary@mississippi.edu

**Crooked Snake  
The Life and Crimes of Albert Lepard**

Lovejoy Boteler

University Press of Mississippi

ISBN 978-1-4968-2170-6

Cloth $25.00T

Publication Date:

March 2019



For more information or review copies contact: Courtney McCreary

Publicity and Promotions Manager

cmccreary@mississippi.edu

601-432-6205

http://www.upress.state.ms.us

**THE TRUE STORY OF A KIDNAPPER’S CALAMITOUS CRIMINAL LIFE TOLD BY THE MAN HE ABDUCTED**

“Growing up in Beat 4, Grenada County, the Boteler family of the Riverdale community were some of my closest neighbors. I remember well that steamy Mississippi summer day in 1968 when we learned of the kidnapping (and subsequent release) of eighteen-year-old Lovejoy Boteler, by escaped Parchman penitentiary convicts. In poignant yet captivating style, Lovejoy chronicles his harrowing ordeal on that sweltering afternoon with exquisite detail. *Crooked Snake*—this gripping account of Lovejoy Boteler’s kidnapping and his years-long quest to learn more about his captors—is absolutely riveting. This is a long-awaited publication by this skillful writer and longtime friend.”  
  
—William F. Winter, former governor of Mississippi

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| |  | | --- | | In 1968, during Albert Lepard’s fifth escape from a life sentence at Parchman Penitentiary, he kidnapped Lovejoy Boteler, then eighteen years old, from his family’s farm in Grenada, Mississippi. Three decades later, still beset by half-buried memories of that time, Boteler began researching his kidnapper’s nefarious, sordid life to discover how and why this terrifying abduction occurred.  In *Crooked Snake*, Boteler pieces together the story of this cold-blooded murderer's life using both historical records and personal interviews—over seventy in all—with ex-convicts who gravitated to and ran with Lepard, the family members who fed and sheltered the fugitive during his escapes, the law officers who hunted him, and the regular folks who were victimized in his terrible wake.  Throughout*Crooked Snake*,Botelerreveals his kidnapper’s hardscrabble childhood and tracks his whereabouts before his incarceration and during his jailbreaks. Lepard’s escapes take him to Florida, Michigan, Kansas, California, and Mexico. *Crooked Snake*captures a slice of history and a landscape that is fast disappearing. These vignettes describe Mississippi’s countryside and spirit, ranging from sharecropper family gatherings in Attala County’s Seneasha Valley to the twenty-thousand-acre Parchman farm and its borderlands teeming with alligator, panther, bear, and wild boar. | |
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**LOVEJOY BOTELER**spent his early years on Riverdale Farms in Grenada County. He worked for the Mississippi legislature, as a deck hand on the Mississippi River, and in a rodeo in Colorado. Boteler has also taught construction technology and instrumental music in public schools. He builds custom furniture.