

the Southern Register

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE • SPRING/SUMMER 1999

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

Ownby's New Book Studies Poverty, Shopping, and Race Relations in Mississippi

When it comes to tracing the history of consumer culture, the state of Mississippi—not commonly associated with urban stores, widespread abundance, or cultural interests that are new and modern—may seem an unlikely place to begin.

For the better part of the state's history, well into the 1960s and the civil rights era, its rural self-reliance, poverty, and divisions along class and racial lines appeared to preclude it as a place where modern ideas about shopping as part of American definitions of freedom would flourish.

But a new book by a University of Mississippi professor demonstrates that the same dreams of abundance, choice, and novelty that fueled the growth of modern consumerism in the United States likewise played a significant role in the shaping of class, race, and gender relations in Mississippi from the antebellum period to the present.

In his *American Dreams in Mississippi: Consumers, Poverty, and Culture, 1830-1998* (University of North Carolina Press, \$45.00 cloth, \$18.95 paper), Ted Ownby, associate professor of History and Southern Studies, examines the buying habits of Mississippians from early plantation days to the present.

Many of Ownby's conclusions in this



DAVID WHARTON

Ted Ownby

innovative study are surprising. His analysis of Faulkner's fictional character Montgomery Ward Snopes, who represents the worst aspects of crass consumer culture, reveals the small Southern town as an unexpectedly modern shopping environment. Similarly, using sources as diverse as blues lyrics, plantation and general store ledgers, letters from wealthy plantation and store owners on buying trips, and some of Mississippi's most respected fiction writers, his treatment defies traditional

wisdom about shopping, consumer culture, and the South. In the process, he offers a new way to understand the connections between power and culture in the American South.

For cash-poor farmers, the experience of shopping was widely viewed with a duality that encompassed both fear and excitement. Along with its recognized potential to put people into debt, evidence shows that it also presented an opportunity for escape outside their everyday life.

"It was no coincidence that many Mississippians used the same term to describe both the time needed to pay debts and the expenses they considered frivolous," Ownby writes. "Both were indulgences, and in the language of 19th-century political and religious thinking, indulgence was both economically dangerous and sinful."

A decade in the research and the writing, the book analyzes the changing relationship between shopping and race relations. While postbellum general stores were some of the least segregated settings in the South, African Americans never felt completely free in white-owned stores, out of fear of both debt and potential violence.

Many wealthy whites in the postbellum era believed black Mississippians were wasteful shoppers who spent their money

(continued on page 26)

Ted Ownby signed copies of his new book, *American Dreams in Mississippi*, and discussed the research process for this work during a session at Square Books in early June. Since then, reports store manager Lyn Roberts, the book "has been flying off the shelf here, and the response has been fantastic." To order a signed copy, call 800-648-4001.

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Director's Column

The past year has been an exciting one at the Center. Much of my energy has gone into consulting with faculty, staff, students, administrators, and alumni. Collectively, we have examined the Center's various activities and put forward a new mission statement and five-year plan. We have reviewed the Southern Studies curriculum and made adjustments to it.

I am especially excited about plans made during the last six months for a Center endowment drive, which will be formally announced soon. A new Center Executive Council is coordinating the fundraising effort, led by Jim and Madeleine McMullan, the donors who have already made a dramatic impact on the Center through their previous contributions and encouragement. They are delightful people with whom to work. Their vision and determination reinforce my sense that this is a special time at the Center, as we make plans for the future.

The National Endowment for the Humanities has recently announced guidelines for its long-awaited Regional Humanities Centers initiative that is welcome news for all of us studying American regions. This project proposes to endow regional studies centers in each of ten regions in the United States. The first stage will be planning grants to be awarded to up to two institutions per region. The implementation stage would be next year, offering major endowment funds for one humanities center per region. I have met with Center and faculty and an on-campus planning committee as our Center prepares, with much enthusiasm, our proposal for this dramatic opportunity that will encourage more collaboration among cultural and educational institutions across the nation.

I have learned much about the Center and the University of Mississippi during the past year, working with others on such important activities. I have also learned that being a director gives one a license to talk. The Center has always served as a clearinghouse of information and ideas. We are not a library or information center, but when we receive a call asking for some bit of information on the South, we try to refer the caller to the appropriate authority or research guide. I enjoy working with reporters, and during the past year, I have had inquiries on an astounding range of topics, reflecting current interest in Southern culture.

Sometimes these calls are on serious topics indeed. During our national outrage and puzzlement about the dragging death in Jasper, Texas, I received telephone calls about the state of Southern race relations, as that tragedy evoked the worst traumas of the older South. The same wicked impulse was there as in the past, but of course the perpetrators of this incident were marginal outsiders, not the community gathered, as in earlier racial violence.

Around the same time, though, I talked to a reporter in South Carolina who was doing a very different story, one on sweet iced tea, thankfully not as intense a topic. For anyone who does not know, iced tea has been a ceremonial drink of the South, often served at formal occasions when tee-totaling families gather, and the sweet version of it is a delicacy that restaurants and private homes traditionally have offered.

Having coedited the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, I do know the South, but I confess I did not really have a carefully thought out recipe for making sweet iced tea. I quickly devised one, though, to help meet the reporter's deadline. It turns out she had asked many people for their recipes and mine thankfully was typical.

I remember a rather frantic call from a reporter trying to complete a story on Southerners eating pigs' feet. He was supposed to participate in a pigs' feet eating contest the next day and had to have his story in the paper the next morning providing context. I allowed that I had not actually eaten pigs' feet, but I knew it was an old Southern tradition. I proceeded into my set piece on the importance of King Hog in the region, and he seemed satisfied.

I have developed enough sense in the past year to know when to remain quiet on my end of the phone. During President Bill Clinton's recent unpleasantness, a reporter called me at one point to ask whether oral sex did not really mean sex in the South in which he had grown up. I have never made a better decision than my "no comment."

I trust the next year as director will offer its own lessons. I want to thank all of those affiliated with the Center for their support this past year. I look forward to continuing our collaboration—and to more intriguing phone calls.

CHARLES REAGAN WILSON

Symposium to Examine Ideas in the Civil Rights-Era South

"The Role of Ideas in the Civil Rights-Era South" will be the topic of the 1999 Porter L. Fortune Jr. History Symposium at the University of Mississippi, September 29-October 1. What ideas were part of debate and discussion, who formulated those ideas, who used them, and how did they use them? These are some of the questions the meeting will consider.

Scholars at the symposium will analyze the nature of protest, the meanings of liberalism and conservatism, the local, regional, national, and international contexts for ideas, and religious ideas as inspiration for protest and opposing protest. Among the papers are analyses of the Beloved Community, Fannie Lou Hamer, segregationists in Little Rock, Freedom Songs, interpretations of Reinhold Niebuhr and Gunnar Myrdal, the South

and Foreign Relations, and African American church life.

Participants will include Linda Reed, David Chappell, Charles Payne, Walter Jackson, Richard King, Elizabeth Jacoway, Tony Badger, Thomas Borstelman, Daryl Scott, Keith Miller, Lauren Winner, Charles Marsh, and Gerald Smith.

Sponsored by the History Department and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, the symposium is free of charge and does not require registration. All events will be held at the E. F. Yerby Center Auditorium at the University of Mississippi. For information, contact Ted Ownby, Center for the Study of Southern Culture, 662-915-5993, hownby@olemiss.edu, or the History Department at 662-915-7148. For a complete schedule, see <http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/history/symposium/index.html>.

Second Southern Foodways Symposium Scheduled for October 29-31, 1999

Building upon the success of the inaugural Southern Foodways Symposium held in May 1998, a second gathering, during which conferees will be invited to explore the Creolization of Southern Cuisine, will be held October 29-31, 1999, on the University of Mississippi campus in Oxford. This event will provide an exciting opportunity for cooks, chefs, food writers, and inquisitive eaters alike to come to a better understanding of Southern cuisine and, in turn, Southern culture.

Among the featured speakers will be Jessica Harris, author of *The Africa Cookbook* and an expert on the foodways of the African diaspora; Ronni Lundy, author of *Butter Beans to Blackberries* and an authority on the foodways of the Hillbilly diaspora; Damon Lee Fowler, author of *Classical Southern Cooking*; and John Martin Taylor, Lowcountry foodways scholar and author. Along with speakers from other regions of the South including New Orleans and the Mississippi Delta, they will lead symposium attendees in an examination of the myriad cultures and cuisines that melded to form what we now think of as Southern cuisine.

Lectures, to be held in Barnard Observatory, the restored antebellum



TOM HUDKINS

Ed Scott at 1998 Foodways Symposium

headquarters of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, will be complimented by a series of informal lunches served in the sylvan grove at the heart of the Ole

Miss campus. Featured foods will include retired farmer Ed Scott's sandy-brown fried catfish and bubbling kettles of that fall favorite Brunswick stew. Evening events include a book signing, regional food and drink tastings, and a performance of *NYAM!*, a folk opera performed by author and National Public Radio personality Verta Mae Grosvenor. Festivities will close with a dinner on the grounds, served as a gospel choir performs.

Host for the event is the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. Sponsors include G. P. Putnam's Sons, publishers of *A Gracious Plenty: Recipes and Recollections from the American South*. Supporting sponsors include the American Center for Wine, Food, and the Arts. For details on the program, contact symposium director John T. Edge via phone at 662-236-7803 or e-mail, john.t@olemiss.edu. Registration will be limited to 80 persons. Those planning to attend are advised to register early in order to secure a space. The registration fee is \$250. Contact Molly McGehee by phone (662-915-5993) or email (mgehee@olemiss.edu).

SOUTHERN FOODWAYS GROUP FORMING

Discussions are under way concerning the formation of a nonprofit organization devoted to the perpetuation of the South's unique food culture. Though still tentative at press time, plans are to establish a member organization that will operate under the umbrella of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. For further information, call the Center at 662-915-5993 or e-mail staff@olemiss.edu.



Center for the Study of Southern Culture

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

THE BROWN BAG LUNCH AND LECTURE SERIES

FALL 1999

SEPTEMBER

8 "Black and White All Over:
Natchez Farm Security Administration
Photos of 1930"
Don Simonton, Southern Studies
Graduate Student

15 "The Delta Cooperative Farm
through the Photographs of
Dorothea Lange and the
Memories of Mr. E. L. Wilkinson"
Sarah Alford, Southern Studies
Undergraduate Student

23 "Lyle Saxon and the Southern Renaissance"
Harvey Chance
Department of English

29 "Porter L. Fortune Southern History Symposium:
The Role of Ideas in the Civil Rights
Era South"
Ted Ownby, Associate Professor of History
and Southern Studies

OCTOBER

6 "Walter Anderson Museum of Art"
Clayton Bass, Director,
Walter Anderson Museum of Art
Ocean Springs, Mississippi

13 "Race, Sex, and Beauty Queens: Gender in
the Era of Desegregation"
Joseph Crespino, History Doctoral Student,
Stanford University

20 "Southern Cooking, Southern Culture"
John T. Edge
Oxford, Mississippi

27 "Small Town Center:
Work in Progress"
Shannon Criss, Associate Professor,
Director of the Small Town Center,
School of Architecture
Mississippi State University

NOVEMBER

3 "Babies for Sale:
Tennessee Children's
Home Adoption Scandal"
Linda T. Austin
Memphis, Tennessee

10 "The Mississippi State Legislature
in the year 2000:
A Look Ahead"
Gray Tollison
Oxford, Mississippi

17 "New Eyes:
A Photographer's First Year in Mississippi"
David Wharton
Director of Documentary Projects and
Assistant Professor of Southern Studies

The Brown Bag Luncheon Series takes place each Wednesday at noon in the Barnard Observatory Lecture Hall during the regular academic year.



MISSISSIPPI DELTA TENNESSEE WILLIAMS FESTIVAL

The seventh annual Clarksdale's Mississippi Delta Tennessee Williams Festival will take place in Clarksdale on October 15-16, 1999. As in the past, the festival program will include presentations by Williams authorities and friends, several performances, a session with papers by scholars, and tours of the house and neighborhood where the playwright lived as a child. Also scheduled in conjunction with the festival are workshops for teachers and for student actors and a drama competition, with prizes totaling \$4,000 for the winners.

Scholars are invited to submit papers for possible presentation at the festival. Papers on any topic related to Williams and his work are eligible for consideration. Presentations should be 20 minutes maximum. Authors whose papers are selected for presentation will receive free lodging during the festival and a waiver of the registration fee. The deadline for submissions is August 30, 1999. To enter, send a completed paper (7-8 pages) or an abstract (250 words) to Colby H. Kullman, Department of English, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677.

The Tennessee Williams Festival Acting Competition, hosted by Coahoma Community College, is open to high school students in Mississippi. The competition includes two acting categories, monologues and scenes. All material must be drawn from the plays of Tennessee Williams. Each monologue is to be two minutes or less, and each scene is to be between five and ten minutes and involve any number of characters.

Cash prizes are given for winning monologues and scenes, which will be performed for the festival audience. Prize money will go to schools of the winners for use with drama activities or library books related to theater and literature. Students, with their teacher-sponsors, will be given the opportunity to decide how the prize money will be spent.

This year, for the second time, a special program for Elderhostel participants will take place in conjunction with the festival. Scheduled for October 13-16, the Elderhostel program will enable registrants to learn about Tennessee Williams in the playwright's boyhood home and also study cotton culture and blues music. For information about Elderhostel sessions, contact Missie Craig, Carnegie Public Library, 114 Delta Avenue, Clarksdale, MS 38614; telephone 662-624-4461; fax 662-627-4344.

For information on the 1999 festival and drama competition, write Tennessee Williams Festival, P.O. Box 1565, Clarksdale, MS 38614-1565; telephone 662-627-7337.

Columbus Forum to Examine American Classicism

The Columbus Historic Foundation announces the 1999 Decorative Arts and Preservation Forum and Antiques Show and Sale at the Trotter Convention Center in Columbus, Mississippi, October 21-24, 1999. The theme of this eighth annual forum is "American Classicism," featuring lectures by noted experts in the fields of history, architecture, and decorative arts.

Keynote speaker will be Robert Remini of Chicago, the nation's foremost scholar on Andrew Jackson, who will open the forum on Friday evening, October 22, with his presentation "Jacksonian Democracy." Other scholars will include Barbara Bacot of Baton Rouge and the Louisiana Department of Archives and History, speaking on "Greek Revival Architecture in the Gulf South"; Ken P'Pool of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, whose topic will be "Greek Revival Architecture in Columbus"; and Stephen Harrison, Curator of Decorative Arts, Dallas Museum of Art, who will lecture on "Classical Influences in Furniture." John Keefe, Curator of Decorative Arts, New Orleans Museum of Art, will conclude the series with his presentation "Classical Influences in the Decorative Arts." Among the introducers will be John Guice of Hattiesburg and Laurel, Carolyn Vance Smith of Natchez, and

V. A. Patterson of Jackson and the Mississippi Craftsmen's Guild.

In addition to the lectures, which will be free and open to the public, there will be tickets available to the champagne reception opening the Antiques Show and Sale on Thursday evening, October 21. The forum opening will be celebrated with a cocktail reception and dinner on Friday evening, followed on Saturday, October 23, with a luncheon and a cocktail buffet to end the series. There also will be tours of historic sites and exhibits at the Blewett-Harrison-Lee Home and at the Lowndes County Public Library. Historic homes of Columbus and historic buildings on the campus of Mississippi University for Women will be settings for the entertainments.

Antiques Show additions for 1999 will include a browsing lunch hour, when shoppers can stroll through the show with a box lunch, and an afternoon session to which individuals may bring personal antique objects to be described and identified by nationally recognized experts on Friday, October 22.

For information on all events, please contact the Columbus Historic Foundation by telephone (662-329-3533) or by Internet (www.historic-columbus.org).

NATIONAL FILM PRESERVATION FOUNDATION AWARD

The Thomas Collection of 16mm home movie footage, preserved through a grant from the National Film Preservation Foundation, was just returned to the Southern Media Archive from ColorLab in Rockville, Maryland. The grant award provided funds to make a negative from the original camera reversal film, a preservation print, a broadcast quality videotape, and a VHS viewing tape. The 16mm home movie footage was shot in Walls, Mississippi, by James Sims Thomas and his wife, Lucille, in the mid-1950s. The Thomases owned and operated Thomas Gulf Station and Trailer Court in the heart of the small community of Walls from 1943 through 1960. Besides providing for the needs of Walls, the gas station/grocery store picked up a lot of business from people traveling between Memphis and the Delta. Lucille Thomas said that her husband did most of the filming and that he shot "anything that would come and go; he just loved to film."

The Thomas home movie film is historically significant because the couple trained their camera on everyday life as it occurred and passed through the Gulf Station and Trailer Court,



Christmas time at the Thomas Gulf Station and Trailer Court, Walls, Mississippi, 1959

a community place that no longer exists. Included in the collection is footage of a parade and performance by the Delta Center school band in front of the gas station, small children in the store standing next to a larger than life shiny metal robot with blinking red eyes, the large trucks that stopped at the station so the day laborers en route from Memphis to the Delta cotton plantations could buy food for the day, a wild rock and roll party in the "chicken shack," and local residents visiting and shopping during Christmas time.

As always, the Southern Media Archive is interested in collecting and preserving motion picture footage of everyday life in the South. Potential donors should call Karen Glynn at 662-915-7811.

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE GLADIN COLLECTION AT THE SOUTHERN MEDIA ARCHIVE

Sonny Boy Williamson & King Biscuit Time

Photographs made from the original negatives are available as 8 x 10, b/w, glossy prints, or as 11 x 14, b/w, exhibition-quality photographs printed on fiber-based paper and selenium toned for permanence.

SETS AVAILABLE

8 x 10 SET OF THREE ITEM SMASET-8 \$90.00
11 x 14 SET OF THREE ITEM SMASET-11 \$325.00



8 x 10 ITEM SMA1941-8 \$35.00
11 x 14 ITEM SMA1941-11 \$125.00

1941 Sonny Boy Williamson, Sam Anderson (co-owner of KFFA), and Robert Lockwood, Jr. on the King Biscuit Time set.



8 x 10 ITEM SMA1942-8 \$35.00
11 x 14 ITEM SMA1942-11 \$125.00

1942 Joe Willie Wilkins, Dallow Taylor, Sonny Boy Williamson standing with Herb Langston at the microphone, James "Peck" Curtis, and Willie Love on the King Biscuit Time set.



8 x 10 ITEM SMA1944-8 \$35.00
11 x 14 ITEM SMA1944-11 \$125.00

1944 Joe Willie Wilkins, Joe "Piney" Perkins, Sonny Boy Williamson standing with Hugh Smith at the microphone, James "Peck" Curtis, and Houston Stackhouse on the King Biscuit Time set.

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Gladin Studio Photography Collection Exhibition

Its heyday is past. Even some of its original streets have been lost to the Mississippi River. But visitors can catch a glimpse of what life was like in the once thriving port town of Helena, Arkansas, thanks to the Gladin Studio Photography Collection exhibition that opened this summer at the University's Barnard Observatory Gallery.

From the construction of the Helena Bridge to the crowning of beauty queens, promotional shots of the town's numerous musical groups, and scenes of commerce in downtown Helena, the Southern Media Archive's exhibition of vintage prints represents the lifework of Ivey and Morvene Gladin, who operated a photography studio in Helena from 1939 to the mid-1990s.

The Southern Media Archive acquired the Gladin Studio Photography Collection last summer. Approximately 40 prints from the vast collection were selected for display in the Barnard Observatory Gallery and will hang there throughout the summer.

The Gladins photographed thousands of people and events in Helena and Phillips County in their 55-year career, including bluesman Sonny Boy Williamson, well known for his performances on the KFFA King Biscuit Time radio show in the 1940s. Also of special note are portrait photographs painted in oil by Morvene Gladin.

"There is a strong sense of a civic community captured in the Gladins' photographs of dances, church and school gatherings, and weddings," said Southern Studies graduate student Susan

Lloyd McClamroch, curator of the exhibit along with photographer Dan Sherman.

Anyone who has spent time in a small-town Southern setting as recently as the 1950s and '60s will recognize the images in the exhibition. Segregation is exemplified in photographs of the local Bobbie Brooks garment factory, where white women operate sewing machines in one space while their black counterparts iron in another.

The far-reaching influence of Hollywood on American culture can be seen in the highly stylized portraits from the 1940s and the 1950s. "Portraits from the 1940s and '50s reflected Hollywood's pervasive influence on popular culture," said Karen Glynn, visual resources curator of the Southern Media Archive. "Both men and women were often photographed in movie-magazine poses, looking over their shoulders into the camera or smiling broadly in close-ups."

The Gladin Collection Exhibition also presents the unexpected. One memorable photograph depicts a stage full of child accordion players—something that Ivey Gladin jokingly attributes not to the presence of an accordion factory in the town, but, rather, to the fact that Helena had "one hell of an accordion salesman here."

For additional details, consult the Center for the Study of Southern Culture's website (www.olemiss.edu/depts/south) or call the Center at 662-915-5993.

MICHAEL HARRELSON

"There is a strong sense of a civic community captured in the Gladins' photographs..."

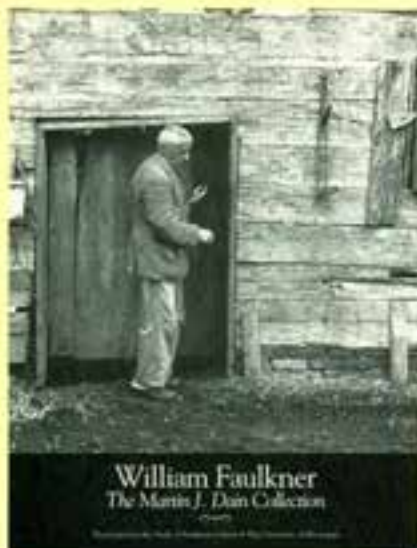
SUSAN LLOYD MCCLAMROCH



Left: This promotional train visited Helena during a big cotton festival. Right: A parade through downtown Helena in the 1940s drew a crowd. PHOTOS COURTESY GLADIN COLLECTION, SOUTHERN MEDIA ARCHIVE, CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE, THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

The Dain & Cofield Collection

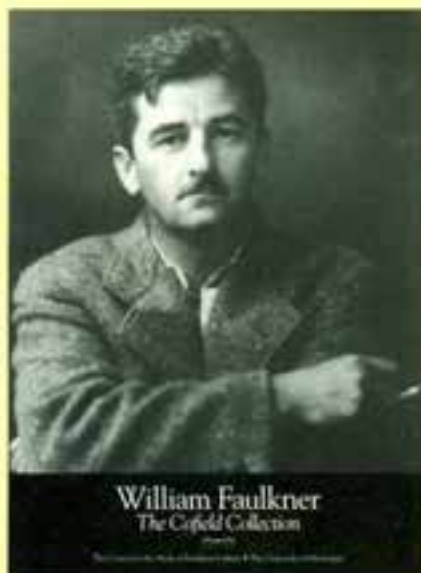
Posters



Dain Poster
M1034
\$18.95

High quality 18" x 24 duotone posters featuring timeless photographs of William Faulkner

Cofield Poster
M1033
\$18.95



Faulkner's World Exhibit Poster
M1789 \$10.00



Limited Edition Prints

Two limited edition prints of photographs of William Faulkner are available from the Southern Media Archive. One is a portrait made by Jack Cofield in 1962 and shows the author sitting in a wicker chair. The other photograph was taken by Martin Dain and shows Faulkner standing with his horse in the corral behind Rowan Oak. The images are printed on 11x14 inch, exhibition grade, double weight, fiber-based paper and are selenium toned for permanence by master printer Dan Sherman. Each numbered print costs \$250.00.



William Faulkner by Martin Dain
Item SMA D-LE



William Faulkner by Jack Cofield, 1962
Item SMA C-LE

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High School Teachers in Five Southern States to Be Awarded Saks Incorporated Fellowships to Attend Faulkner Conference

Thirty high school teachers chosen from applicants in five Southern states will be attending the University's annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference July 25-30 without cost, thanks to a fellowship being awarded for the first time this year.

English and literature instructors in Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee are eligible to apply for the Saks Incorporated Fellowships, newly created on behalf of McRae's, Proffitt's and Parisian department stores. Made possible by a four-year, \$200,000 gift from the Saks Incorporated Foundation, the fellowships are intended to further the study of William Faulkner, the Nobel-Prize-winning Mississippi author, at the secondary school level.

"The Saks Incorporated Fellowships will make an extraordinary contribution to the Faulkner Conference by giving secondary school teachers the opportunity to attend this internationally recognized event, which in turn will enable these educators to introduce Faulkner to their students," said Donald M. Kartiganer, director of the conference and William Howry Professor of Faulkner Studies at

the University. "The result should be very much in keeping with one of the purposes of the conference, which is to bring Faulkner to a larger, more general audience."

"With our corporate headquarters in Birmingham, Alabama, our corporate operations center in Jackson, Mississippi, and the extensive operations of our McRae's, Parisian, and Proffitt's businesses in the Southeast, the associates of Saks Incorporated are deeply connected to Southern culture," said Brad Martin, chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Saks Incorporated. "No element of that culture is more treasured than the literary tradition of our great Southern writers. Our sponsorship of these Faulkner Conference Fellowships is intended to provide high school teachers in our communities with an opportunity to broaden their awareness and understanding of the importance and relevance of these great works."

The Saks Incorporated Fellowships will provide the registration fee for the conference and cover expenses for the week-long conference and teacher workshop, including instructional materials and supplies, dormitory lodging, a travel stipend, and a meal stipend. The

University will award 3.9 Continuing Education Units for the teacher workshops and the conference sessions.

"The University is honored to join Brad Martin and Saks Incorporated in providing this wonderful opportunity for teachers throughout the South," said University Chancellor Robert C. Khayat. "The Faulkner Conference is a unique exploration of literature and its reflection of the human condition."

Requests for fellowship application forms should be submitted to Faulkner Conference-Saks Incorporated Fellowships, The University of Mississippi, P.O. Box 879, University, MS, 38677-0879. For further information regarding the teacher workshops, teachers may contact the University of Mississippi Institute for Continuing Studies by telephone (662-915-7282) or e-mail cstudies@olemiss.edu.

Since its creation in 1974, the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference has drawn scholars from throughout the United States and the world to Oxford, Mississippi, where the author lived and wrote his classic works. The theme of the 1999 conference is "Faulkner and Post-modernism."

MICHAEL HARRELSON

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN LITERATURE *Calls for Papers on Faulkner and Other Topics*

The Society for the Study of Southern Literature (SSSL) will examine the theme "The South in the New Millennium" during its conference on April 6-9, 2000, in Orlando, Florida. Rita Dove, Commonwealth Professor of Poetry at the University of Virginia, will read on Thursday, April 6.

Papers for the conference and for a special session on Faulkner are requested.

A panel on "Faulkner in the New Millennium: Criticism and the Politics of Difference" will explore the relationship between Faulkner's work and its changing cultural context, particularly the complex and ever-evolving politics of difference. Proposals for papers on Faulkner and issues of race, class, gender, and ethnicity are welcome. Send queries or one-page descriptions by September 20, 1999, to Judith Wittenberg, either by mail (146 Allerton Road, Newton, MA 02461) or e-mail (jwittenberg@neasc.org).

Papers on any topic will be considered for other SSSL sessions,

with papers on the following topics of special interest: Southern poetry, drama, nonfiction; New South; any and all kinds of theory and Southern fiction; antecedents of contemporary Southern literature; ethnic literature in the South. Proposals for papers, panels, or discussion groups are welcome. Submit 500-word abstracts for individual papers or for each participant in a panel or discussion group. Deadline for proposals is October 15, 1999. Send all correspondence to Dawn Trouard, Department of English, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL 32751.

Visit the website <http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~sssl2000/> for up-to-date information on conference plans, panels, and speakers.

Membership in the SSSL is \$10 for a calendar year. Checks drawn on U.S. banks or U.S. dollar World Money Orders may be sent to C. Ralph Stephens, Essex Community College, 7201 Rossville Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21237-3899.

SOUTHERN STUDIES TEACHER INSTITUTE

The Center hosted its fifth annual Southern Studies Teacher Institute June 6-11, 1999. Directed by Kathryn McKee and Ted Ownby, the institute took as its theme "Gender in Southern History and Literature." The intensive course, offered for graduate credit hours for the first time, exposed participants both to strategies for rethinking the books and subjects they already teach and introduced other texts they might consider including

in their curriculums. Topics addressed included "Gender and Slavery," "The Southern Lady and Gentleman," "Faulkner and Gender," "Farming and Family Life," and "African American Protest in the 20th Century." On the institute's final morning, participants met to trade ideas for possible lesson plans and classroom activities arising out of the issues discussed throughout the week.



Participants in the teacher institute were, left to right, row 1: Sally McNair, Jackson, Mississippi; Mary Thompson, Clarksdale, Mississippi; Martha Parker, Bruce, Mississippi; Sue Magee, Brookhaven, Mississippi; row 2: Greg Smith, Tupelo, Mississippi; Katie McKee, codirector; Emerson Wickuire, Memphis, Tennessee; row 3: Melanie Yelton, Batesville, Mississippi; Melanie Wood, New Albany, Mississippi; Sara Irby, Oxford, Mississippi; Ted Ownby, codirector; Donna DeDeaux, Ocean Springs, Mississippi.

CALL FOR PAPERS

THE 27TH ANNUAL FAULKNER & YOKNAPATAWPHA CONFERENCE

*"Faulkner and the
21st Century"*



July 23-29, 2000

The aim of the first Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference of the new century is to begin exploration, as Wright Morris put it, of the territory ahead. Encouraging both prophecy and prescription (if remaining wary of the possibility that the past is indeed never dead), the conference will try to propose some of the new directions in which our reading in Faulkner should take us, the new critical and cultural paradigms that will test his endurance and relevance, the new Faulkner that may be out there, waiting for us to catch up with him.

Here are some of the issues that might be raised: What are the likely and/or necessary shifts in our evaluation of the Faulknerian corpus, as well as our placement of it in the various canons—Southern, American world—in which it presently figures so prominently? What forms of criticism seem most fruitful, and how, specifically, should they be practiced? What are the new contexts that need to be examined or reexamined: is it the external culture—Faulkner's and our own—that demands our attention, or the internal, some uniquely Faulknerian energy, that needs to be identified?

Authors whose papers are selected for presentation at the conference will receive (1) a waiver of the conference registration fee, (2) lodging at the University Alumni House from Sunday, July 23, through Friday, July 28, and (3) reimbursement of up to \$500 in travel expenses within the continental United States (\$.31 per mile by automobile or tourist class airfare). Papers presented at the conference will be published by the University Press of Mississippi.

The 14th edition of the University of Chicago *Manual of Style* should be used as a guide in preparing manuscripts (3,000 to 6,000 words). Three copies of the manuscript must be submitted by January 15, 2000. Notification of selection will be made by March 1, 2000. Manuscripts and inquiries about papers should be addressed to Donald Kartiganer, Department of English, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677. Telephone: 662-915-5793. E-mail: dkartiga@olemiss.edu.

"Telling a Southern Story" Is Seminar Theme

The diversity of interests and ideas within the South and the Southern Studies Program were well represented in Southern Studies 402 this spring. Taught by Kathryn McKee, McMullan Assistant Professor of Southern Studies and assistant professor of English, the seminar studied the South and the cultural forms that are found within the region, in conjunction with the theme "Telling a Southern Story." The course culminated with each student preparing an original research paper that told a Southern story and presenting it to the class.

Working with the theme of the course, the class read and discussed a broad range of works that dealt with many different regions and eras of the South. Reading works such as *The Mind of the South*, *Lanterns on the Levee*, *Black Boy*, *Dust Tracks on the Road*, and *Bastard Out of Carolina* provided a solid foundation of Southern stories upon which the students were able to tell their own.

In a class made up entirely of juniors and seniors, a high level of work was expected and the students were up to the challenge. They were able to select the topics for their projects, and they came up with subjects ranging from the evolution of Acadian culture in Louisiana (by Chris Price) to the history of NASCAR (by David Ferris).

McKee was pleased with the way the projects turned out. "I was very impressed with the scope and quality of the projects. The students showed the dedication needed to get through some of the more complicated aspects of their work without getting discouraged," McKee said. "I thought every project in the class was original and dealt with an interesting aspect of Southern culture."

Frank Ridgway, a senior from Shreveport, Louisiana, examined Southern poets and their place within Southern literature. Ridgway looked at how Southern poets were treated by critics and anthologists, making a case for Southern poets to be given a more prominent position within the canon of Southern literature. He compiled and gave to the class a small collection of poetry, featuring some of his favorite Southern authors.

The story behind the mint julep was the subject for John Frierson's project. Frierson, a senior from Athens, Georgia, looked at the history behind the drink and how its place within Southern culture has changed over the years. Using a variety of sources spanning almost two hundred years, Frierson illustrated how the drink has changed in content as well as in status.

Justin Showah prepared one of the most interesting projects with his look at Southern community through the lens of Paul McLeod, owner and operator of Graceland Too. Showah, a junior from Jackson, looked at how an Elvis fanatic like McLeod fits in with the small community of Holly Springs, where he has constructed his shrine to the king of rock and roll. Much had previously been written about McLeod and his obsession, but through numerous interviews, Showah worked to get behind the Elvis persona and see how the man functions within a small Southern community.

Sarah Alford, a junior from Madison, combined fieldwork with photography to document the Delta Cooperative Farm, a cooperative operating during the 1930s in the Mississippi Delta and housing both black and white workers. Alford gained

valuable information for the Southern Media Archive by obtaining more detailed identifications for photographs originally taken by Dorothea Lange. Alford also snapped her own pictures of the cooperative's few still-standing buildings.

Several students turned to projects close to home. Roblynn Curtis, a senior from Hattiesburg, studied the practice of quilting by white women during the Depression era, using her own grandmother as one of her primary sources. As part of her presentation, Curtis used real quilts to familiarize the class with various patterns and techniques.

Laura Heller compiled an oral history of her maternal family's hometown, Rolling Fork, Mississippi. As part of her project, Laura created a webpage. It is available for viewing at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/8772>.

Casey Reed tackled what proved to be a challenging topic and a delicate issue when he set out to research the troubled path to integrating high school athletics in his native Alabama. Casey took integration in one county as his case study, but placed that situation within a broader statewide and national context.

Of local interest was the research of Kristi Robinson, a junior from Hamilton, Alabama, who wrote a history of the relationship between the antebellum home Lochnivar and the community of Pontotoc. And Oxford native Sommer Sneed compiled ghost stories from Oxford and Lafayette County.

For additional information about any of these projects or about the course in general, please contact Kathryn McKee at kmckee@olemiss.edu.

JOHN FRIERSON

Southern Studies Students Honored

Southern Studies undergraduate student Franklin Ridgway is the recipient of the Gray Award for his paper "Factories in Fields: Plantation Life in the Old Southwest," written for Nancy Bercaw's History of the Old South class. The Gray award, established by Colonel and Mrs. Homer Gray of Oxford, includes a \$100 prize and is designated for a paper that analyzes aspects of the Southern experience. Ridgway set a record, becoming the first student to receive two Gray Awards. Last year he won for his paper "Outward and Visible Signs: The Sacred Symbolism of Walker Percy's Fiction."

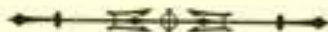
Tiffany Kilpatrick's paper on a Mennonite community in Mississippi garnered her the Coterie Award for an outstanding research paper on Southern culture. Kilpatrick, an undergraduate in Southern Studies, also received a \$100 prize with her award. Her paper was prepared for Southern Studies 402, taught by Kathryn McKee.

The Center congratulates these outstanding students, who were recognized during the University's Honors Day ceremonies on April 8.

In Memoriam

MAE BERTHA CARTER
January 13, 1923 - April 28, 1999

VIRGINIA FOSTER DURR
August 6, 1903-February 24, 1999



WILLIAM PHOTOS

LILLIAN SHEDD McMURRY
December 30, 1921-March 18, 1999

Lillian Shedd McMurry, the founder and owner of the legendary Trumpet Records label and the Globe Music Corporation, died in Jackson, Mississippi, after suffering a heart attack, on March 18, 1999. She was 78.

McMurry's Jackson-based label, which released blues, spirituals, country, pop, and rockabilly records, was one of the first independent labels in the South. But it was blues that Trumpet became best known for in the early 1950s. Commercially, the label didn't rival Chess, RPM, King, Imperial, or Specialty, but Trumpet's recordings were innovative and the label introduced several important artists to the public. Under McMurry's supervision, Trumpet recorded Sonny Boy Williamson [Rice Miller], Elmore James, Tiny Kennedy, Big Joe Williams, Willie Love, Percy and Luther Huff, and Jerry McCain.

McMurry became involved in the

record business by chance. In the late 1940s she was working as a bookkeeper in her husband's furniture shop. Willard McMurry bought a hardware store on North Farish Street in the black part of Jackson and sent his wife there to supervise the liquidation of the remaining inventory. The shop still had some "race records," which she enjoyed listening to and which sold very quickly. McMurry found out that such records were supplied by distributors in New Orleans and were not easy to obtain in Jackson. She visited these distributors on a trip to New Orleans and returned with a trunk full of blues and spiritual 78s. Those records also sold quickly, and before long McMurry was phoning in record orders to New Orleans and Memphis.

The McMurrays kept the North Farish location open as a combination record shop and furniture store called Record Mart-Furniture Bargains. The store attracted a lot of walk-in traffic and it also became a busy mail-order outlet through advertisements over radio station WRBC. "We had listening booths in the shop with the record player on the counter," said McMurry in a 1984 interview. "Groups of black men would crowd into the booths and I found out they were singing spirituals along with the records. Some of them were really good. By the middle of 1950 I started thinking, 'Why can't I make a record?' Gads, I didn't know what I was getting into."

Trumpet's initial releases by the Andrews Gospels and the Southern Sons were recorded at WRBC and aimed at the spiritual market. However, McMurry wanted to record blues and auditioned Joe Hill Louis, Bo Carter, and Tommy Johnson—but she didn't think they were good enough to record. She had heard about an entertaining harmonica player in the Delta and went looking for him to see if he was worth recording. In December of 1950 McMurry found Sonny Boy Williamson in a Belzoni juke joint and signed him to a Trumpet Records contract. Sonny Boy would be the label's key artist over the next five years.

"Sometimes Sonny Boy would be in

the studio until two a.m., until he recorded a song right," said McMurry. "If he said, 'Let's get out of here,' or made a few boo boos while recording, that was all right as long as the feeling was in it. That's what sold records.... I had an advantage over some producers being so close to the record shop and hearing what sold. Back then if you had the No. 1 *Billboard* hit, you'd be lucky to sell 50,000. We never did that but we did well with Sonny Boy's *Nine Below Zero*, *Mighty Long Time*, *Cat Hop*, and *Too Close Blues*."

Sonny Boy also served as a talent scout and was responsible for bringing Elmore James to the label. James's lone Trumpet release and recording debut, *Dust My Broom*, would be the label's only R&B chart entry. Sonny Boy also recruited pianist Willie Love, whose *Nelson Street Blues* was a best seller in the Delta. Other artists gravitated to Jackson once they heard there was a lady there who made blues records. McMurry went as far as building a studio in the back of the record shop, in which many of the sessions were conducted.

Unfortunately, poor sales and escalating debts forced McMurry to shut Trumpet down in 1955. She sold Sonny Boy Williamson's contract to her pressing plant and worked for several years to pay off bills the label had incurred. During the 1960s and '70s, she worked with her husband at their store on Gallatin Street. For years she sold Trumpet 45s and 78s to visiting blues collectors for a dollar each. In 1974 she liquidated the remaining stock at a nickel a disc to a New England collector.

In the early 1980s, McMurry used reissue royalties to purchase an impressive granite marker that was placed over Williamson's previously unmarked grave in Tutwiler, Mississippi. In 1985, she donated her written records, files, and remaining masters and rights to the University of Mississippi Music Library's Blues Archive. McMurry is survived by a daughter, Vitrice (Willard McMurry died in 1996). She is buried at Lakewood Cemetery in Jackson.

JEFF HANNUSCH

McClamroch Attends MHT Meeting

At this spring's Mississippi Historic Preservation Conference, Southern Studies graduate student Susan Lloyd McClamroch was awarded Mississippi Heritage Trust's first conference scholarship. The conference, which was held on the Mississippi Gulf Coast April 8-10, 1999, was hosted by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and the Mississippi Heritage Trust (MHT).

The conference was held at the Saenger Theater in downtown Biloxi, where speakers addressed the topic "Protecting the Irreplaceable!" with talks on Mississippi's 10 Most Endangered Historic Places listing, local history museums, heritage education, landscape and community design, disaster preparedness, preservation advocacy, and other topics. The conference's opening session and the MHT Board of Trustees meeting were held in Ocean Springs. A special dinner tour of Bay St. Louis took place the second evening, and MHT's Heritage Awards luncheon was held on the final day, in Pascagoula.

Each year the MHT Conference moves to a new location in Mississippi, giving Mississippians the opportunity to visit people and places across the state and to learn about preserving their communities and the historic places that make Mississippi special.



ARTHUR KENNARD

Pictured at the Walter Anderson Museum in Ocean Springs are, from left, Susan Lloyd McClamroch; John Anderson, youngest son of artist Walter Anderson; Stella Gray Bryant, executive director, Mississippi Heritage Trust; Nancy Tinker, field representative, National Trust for Historic Preservation.

For information about membership and activities, write MHT, P.O. Box 577, Jackson, MS 39205-0577.



Thomas Somerville Howorth

HOWORTH INDUCTED TO AIA COLLEGE OF FELLOWS

Oxford architect Thomas Somerville Howorth was recently invested in the American Institute of Architects' prestigious College of Fellows. The honor is given to AIA members who have made significant contributions to the profession. The association has more than 63,000 members, and fewer than 2,300 have received the honor of fellow. Howorth is the only Mississippian among this year's 97 honorees.

Howorth was the principal architect for the restoration of Barnard Observatory for

the Center, Ventress Hall for the College of Liberal Arts, and Barksdale-Isom House (1830s), one of Oxford's earliest structures and now designated as one of the top ten bed and breakfast establishments in the nation. In addition to his restoration work, which has won numerous awards, Howorth has been recognized for his design of the Thad Cochran Center for the Development of Natural Projects and the Jamie Whitten National Center for Physical Acoustics, both at the University, and other new buildings in the state.

International Country Music Conference Call for Proposals

The 17th annual International Country Music Conference (ICMC) will be held June 1-3, 2000, at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. ICMC solicits proposals in all disciplines related to all aspects of the history and contemporary status of country music. For details, check ICMC's website (<http://plato.ess.tntech.edu/www/ci/icmc.html>).

All presenters will be expected to pay the \$60.00 (U.S.) registration fee. Proposals should include title of paper, a 75-100 word abstract, name of presenter(s), institutional affiliation(s), complete address(es), phone and fax numbers, e-mail address(es). Proposals may be submitted by e-mail to JAkenson@tntech.edu or sent by conventional mail to James E. Akenson, Box 5042, Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, TN 38505, U.S.A. Deadline for receipt of proposals is Friday, October 29, 1999.

Regional

Upcoming Events of Interest

Roundup

The inaugural Eatonton Literary Festival and Book Fair in Putnam County, Georgia, is scheduled for August 7, 1999. The daylong program will open with a storyteller interpreting the African folk tales that inspired Joel Chandler Harris. Tours will introduce visitors to the significant places in the lives of natives Joel Chandler Harris and Alice Walker. After lunch, served in a historic building, public lectures will consider the contributions of Harris and Walker to American letters and look at other Georgia Piedmont writers, including Flannery O'Connor of Milledgeville and Augustus Baldwin Longstreet of Greensboro. Dealers in rare books will be selling their best Georgia collectables, and current books by regional presses will also be available. A registration fee of \$10 includes the cost of lunch and tours. For details, call Glenn T. Eskew at 706-485-0388; visit the event's website (www.arches.uga.edu/~stevew/elf/); or write the Eatonton Literary Festival and Book Fair, P.O. Box 4595, Eatonton, GA 31024.

The National Lighthouse Conference 1999, scheduled for October 12-16 in Key West, Florida, aims to promote historic preservation of lighthouses and light station properties. The program exploring the theme "Lighting the New Millennium" will bring together important decision makers to develop an agenda to preserve America's lighthouse facilities through the next decade. Participants will also evaluate the progress made in the preservation field over the past several years and hear of new problems. For details, check the web site (www.keywest.com/lighthouse) or contact National Lighthouse Conference 1999, 3501 South Roosevelt Boulevard, Key West, FL 33040; telephone 305-296-1702; fax 305-296-6202; e-mail maine1898@aol.com.

President Jimmy Carter and Ambassador Andrew Young will be the keynote speakers at an interdisciplinary conference, "Religion in the American South: Towards a Renewed Scholarship," October 21-23, 1999, at Emory University in Atlanta. Sponsored by the online *Journal of Southern Religion* (<http://jsr.as.wvu.edu>), the conference will feature leading scholars in working sessions on religion and politics, Christian theology, electronic media, non-Protestants, and violence, capital punishment, and religion in the South. Registration will be limited. For more information and reservations, contact the *Journal* (<http://jsr.as.wvu.edu>).

The Pilgrimage Garden Club's 26th annual Antiques Forum will be held November 3-5, 1999, in Natchez, Mississippi, at the historic Radisson Eola Hotel. Among those scheduled to lecture on aspects of the 1999 theme "Old World, New World: Cross Currents of Taste in the Arts" will be William C. Allen, architectural historian, United States Capitol, and Peter M. Kenney, associate curator of American Decorative Arts, Metropolitan Museum of Art. For information, check the web (www.bkbank.com/nvby/antiques) or contact The Antiques Forum, P.O. Box 1776, Natchez, MS 39121-1776; telephone 877-442-9796 or 601-445-2072.

The Crosby Arboretum, a regional arboretum representing the native flora of the Pearl River drainage basin in Mississippi and Louisiana, will sponsor the Piney Woods Heritage Festival on Saturday and Sunday, November 13 and 14. The program, scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily, will include demonstrations by local crafts-

men, storytelling, gospel and bluegrass music, and Native American exhibitions. Admission for members is free; for nonmembers pay \$4 for adults, \$2 for children. For details, contact Robert F. Bruseck, Senior Curator, The Crosby Arboretum, Mississippi State University, P.O. Box 1639, Poycune, MS 39466; telephone 601-799-2311; fax 601-799-2372.

The Historic Chattahoochee Commission has published *The Very Worst Road: Travellers' Accounts of Crossing Alabama's Old Creek Indian Territory, 1820-1847*. Compiled by Jeffrey C. Benton, this collection of 16 antebellum accounts of travelling the Federal Road from Columbus, Georgia, to Montgomery, Alabama, provides insight into the frontier nature of early Alabama; European and Northern attitudes toward Southern whites and Native Americans; and the relationships of whites, Native Americans, and African Americans. Order copies of the 176-page, paperback book from Historic Chattahoochee Commission, P.O. Box 33, Eufaula, AL 36072-0033; by telephone (334-687-9755); or online (www.hcc-al-ga.org). Send \$12.95 plus \$3 postage for the first copy ordered; add \$1 for each additional book.

Vision Press of Northport, Alabama, recently published *A Guide to Literary Sites of the South* (17.95), a travel guide by Ella Robinson. The book that contains 113 brief biographies of Southern writers and provides information about 26 authors' homes that are open to the public. Also included are details about 19 festivals; 106 markers, monuments, and burial sites; and 135 special library collections. Inquiries should be addressed to Joanne Sloan, Vision Press, P.O. Box 1106, Northport, AL 35476; telephone 205-339-4528; e-mail Visionslo@aol.com.

Reading the South

Time Flowing Through: A History of the Lower Chattahoochee River.

By Lynn Willoughby. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999. 264 pages, maps, illustrations. \$29.95.

This is Lynn Willoughby's second book about the Chattahoochee River. The first, *Fair to Middlin'* (1993), is an economic study of the Chattahoochee River area from Columbus, Georgia, southward to Apalachicola, Florida, during the antebellum years. The present book emphasizes the cultural and social history of the river, or as Willoughby indicates, it is an attempt to chronicle "humankind's relationship with the Chattahoochee River" (xi) to the present. This is an admirable study of the river's use and misuse by those who lived along its banks and who depended on its largesse for their welfare.

Willoughby, as with as any good storyteller, starts at the beginning with the early native American inhabitants of the region. Two chapters chronicle the known sociological and cultural connections between these early inhabitants, the land, and the river. She is at her best when writing about the intriguing political relations between the Indians and the interlopers from England, Spain, and the United States during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. That history is indeed complex, but Willoughby sorts through the various interests and presents a readable and informative version. She does not present as strong a statement of Negro Fort, or of the Indian removal as both topics deserve.

While the author emphasizes the economic and financial history of the area's cotton culture in her first book, she develops a broader story of the cotton kingdom by expanding on the textile interests along the rapids and falls of the Chattahoochee River. She pays due attention to the growing steamboat traffic and indicates Apalachicola's importance in supplying manufactured goods and providing markets for the distant hinterlands in Alabama and Georgia before the Civil War. Her discussion of the war years portrays Columbus's transition from a sleepy commercial village to a busy industrial center. One may wonder why she did not

concentrate more on the last Civil War battle east of the Mississippi River and subsequent Union occupation of Columbus and the river basin, or on slaves who made the transition from slavery to freedom.

While the first one hundred pages provide a good, albeit general, explanation of the antebellum events in the Chattahoochee basin, the remaining 89 pages add a new understanding of the river's history. Her study of late 19th-century steamboats, river boat culture, steamboat companies and their management, and the competition between the river and the railroads offers a new view of steamboats on a small river. Many readers may wish that she had done more with railroads that owned steamboat lines. The steamboat chapters (pp. 101-149) would benefit from a brief comparison with other rivers and for successive time periods on the Chattahoochee. Perhaps a table listing the boats on the river each year or a table showing annual shipments by river between significant river ports would provide a better perspective on the steamboat era.

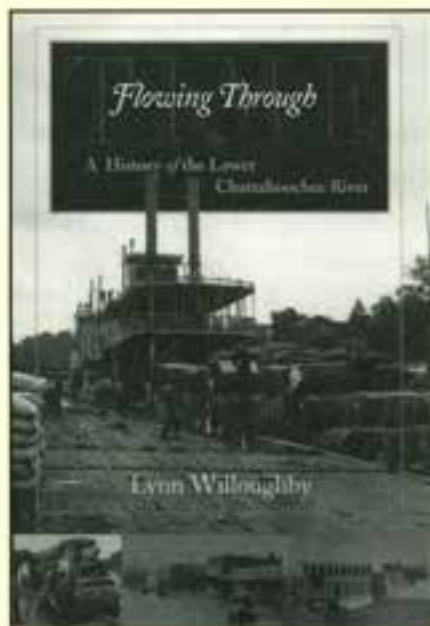
The last three chapters, all too short, deal with more recent developments along the river including the industrial uses of the water, the growing pollution of the Chattahoochee River, and the efforts to create a navigable waterway with locks and dams. The Historic Chattahoochee Commission and the Columbus Museum, which commissioned this book, have been well served. Lynn Willoughby, now with two books on the Chattahoochee River, is to be congratulated for her scholarship.

HARRY P. OWENS

The History of Southern Drama.

By Charles S. Watson. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997. 259 pages. \$29.95.

What identifies a play as "Southern," and what does the term "Southern drama" connote? Why is Robert Munford considered the first Southern dramatist? When was Southern drama proclaimed as such, and what did the Civil War have to do with this? As the first theorist of American drama of the South, Paul Green formulated what kinds of proposals for



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Reading the South *continued*

a composition of a drama in the South? What claims can Charleston, New Orleans, Atlanta, Memphis, and Houston make as the foremost theatre cities in the South? How successful was DuBose Heyward in portraying urban blacks with honest realism in the 1927 play *Porgy*? How did the Southern Literary Renaissance of 1920 to 1960 encourage artistically superior plays that analyzed the South critically? Who are the leading Southern civil rights playwrights who advocated Martin Luther King Jr.'s doctrine of nonviolence? What are and how strong are Lillian Hellman's Southern roots? In his *Texas Trilogy*, how does Preston Jones parody Southern traits? What new interests has Southern drama taken since 1970, and how is this change reflected in the plays of Beth Henley and Romulus Linney? Why is Anton Chekhov a recurring influence on Southern dramatists? Will the current upsurge of regional activity produce better Southern drama? The answers to these questions and hundreds of others are to be found in Charles S. Watson's encyclopedic *History of Southern Drama*.

Watson begins with an important prologue that discusses preliminaries and establishes definitions. Using T. S. Eliot's definition of culture as "all the characteristics and interests of a people," he concludes that culture, then, "embraces the attitudes, customs, and traditions of a particular people living in a particular place." He applies Eliot's idea of culture as "a way of life" to Southern drama ("drama that combines Southern authorship and subject matter") and Southern dramatists ("only those individuals who were born in the South and/or have lived a substantial part of their productive years in the South"). Using Paul Green's *In Abraham's Bosom* (1926) and Tennessee Williams's *Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) as examples of what he means by "a Southern play," Watson singles out eight characteristics for discussion and analysis: (1) the presence of one or more distinctive social types (for

example, the poor white, the Southern belle, the plantation mistress, and the loyal black); (2) representations of Southern violence (such as the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and its repeated revivals); (3) the dependence on Southern legendry with heroes such as Andrew Jackson, Thomas Jefferson, and Robert E. Lee; (4) the palpable force of fundamentalist religion, which is, as Reynolds Price has observed, capable of assuming either a comical or a "transcendental" form; (5) a highly recognizable form of speech in which rhythms and idioms mark the language as Southern; (6) a spirited injection of local color; (7) a love-hate attitude toward to South; and (8) a revisionist spirit that sought to correct false representations of the South.

Not only does Watson carefully define his terms in the prologue, but he also skillfully sets Southern theatrical events against a clearly drawn backdrop of American and world history. Robert Munford's 1770s Southern plays are performed at the same time as Shakespeare's plays and Richard Cumberland's *The West Indian* are touring in Washington and Annapolis. Northern dramatic versions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* are compared with Southern rebuttals of the play. Paul Green's proposals for the composition of drama in the South are examined beside the theories of Cooper, Poe, and Howells, who considered the question of creating a distinctive American drama. DuBose Heyward takes the lead in encouraging Southern literary artists in Charleston while at the same time H. L. Mencken indicts the cultural barrenness of the South in his infamous essay "The Sahara of the Bozart." The realism of Henrik Ibsen helped bring about a revolution in world drama that was paralleled in Southern drama in the plays of Espy Williams, who incorporated the principles of realism and took stands on issues such as religious tolerance, political corruption, and moral infidelity. The chopping down of the cherry tree in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and the declines of the old order of Russia

have influenced a number of Southern dramatists who have seen the same decay in their vision of a vanishing old South.

Our world appears to be shrinking as families scatter and leave the home town behind, as local dialects give way to a common CNN "newspeak," as town squares are abandoned for shopping malls, and country stores are replaced by brand-name outlets. How endangered is the culture and drama of the American South? Comfort may be taken in Charles S. Watson's convincing thesis in *The History of Southern Drama* that "as Southern drama matures, it remains recognizably Southern." A wealth of Southern drama has brightened the stage since the 1970s—Preston Jones's *Texas Trilogy*, Beth Henley's *Crimes of the Heart*, Marsha Norman's *Night Mother*, Romulus Linney's *Holy Ghosts*, and Horton Foote's *The Young Man from Atlanta*. As such creative plays testify, Southern drama is alive and well as it continues to profit from the wealth of the South as the millennium approaches.

Watson's approach to Southern drama is historically and critically adept. He is careful to point out that every featured work is not a major American classic, however important it may be to the history of the drama in the South. The depth of his research, the diversity of his approach, and the

wealth of the material he presents make this an invaluable resource for anyone interested in dramatic history and Southern culture.

COLBY H. KULLMAN

Clear Springs: A Memo.

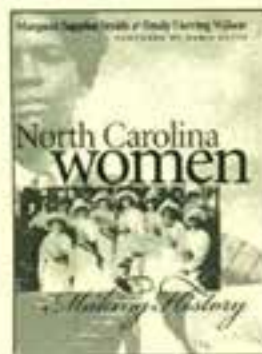
By Bobbie Ann Mason. New York: Random House, 1999. 298 pages. Illustrated. \$25.00.

In *Clear Springs*, Bobbie Ann Mason tells many stories. Only one of them is her own. In making sense of her life's pattern, Mason seeks connections and finds herself inextricably bound up in the lives of the people who have come before her, particularly the women. *Clear Springs* is not, finally, so much about Bobbie Ann Mason the writer as about the forces that made Bobbie Ann Mason a writer—a childhood in rural Kentucky, an abiding esteem for her mother, and a persistent sense of difference that both led her away from home and compelled her to return. A sense that the place where she finds herself is a good one, and that her journey to it has been well worth the effort, combines with shimmering, powerful language to make *Clear Springs* both Mason's best and her most important book.

The framework that anchors Mason's storytelling is the daily routine of life on the family farm where she grew up. Too far north to be part of the cotton

economy, Kentucky is the upper South, the land of burley tobacco and independent farmers who work relatively small tracts of land when compared with the sprawling cotton operations of the Mississippi Delta or the large-scale agribusinesses of the Midwest. Consequently the relationship between the farmer and his or her land is an intimate one, and Mason expertly captures the rhythms of such a life. She recalls bountiful vegetable gardens, sumptuous meals, and long days spent outside in both work and play: "I look back at bursts of joy over daisy chains and bird feathers and butterflies and cats. These were the textures of bliss" (89). But if she idealizes childhood, Mason is careful to depict farm life in realistic terms. "Food was the center of our lives," she recalls. "We planted it, grew it, harvested it, peeled it, cooked it, served it, consumed it—endlessly, day after day, season after season. This was life on a farm—as it had been time out of mind" (81). Behind all of this rote industry looms the power of nature that unpredictably sends rain or withholds it, batters down fields of corn or leaves them to suffocate in stifling and merciless heat. "I hated the constant sense of helplessness before vast forces, the continuous threat of failure," Mason recalls (83).

Mason engineers her escape to the cities of the Northeast. But as she ages,



North Carolina Women

Making History
MARGARET SUPPLEE SMITH
AND EMILY HERRING WILSON
Foreword by Doris Betts

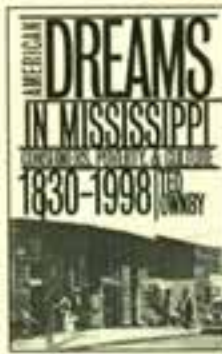
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her impatience to leave home transforms itself into a desire for familiar trees and dirt and a dawning realization that her "move to the North meant an abdication of responsibility" (166). Like so many Southerners, Mason has had to leave home to see what was always around her; like so many country people she has had to be a part of the city in order to turn her back on it and embrace the mud she used to scrub from her shoes. Debating the merits of staying close to your roots versus wandering freely, Mason concludes: "The way I see it, a clever cat prowls but calls home occasionally" (280).

Cleaning out an old trunk in preparation for her mother's move to town, Mason unearths letters that she has saved, but that are now physically disintegrating. She finds herself angry at her inability "to save what is of real value. What endures is peripheral and empty" (247). But unlike fragile correspondence, *Clear Springs* is a thing of real value that will endure. It is Bobbie Ann Mason, the farm girl and storyteller, at her best.

KATHRYN MCKEE

Faulkner and the Natural World.

Edited by Donald M. Kartiganer and Ann J. Abadie. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1999. 237 pages. \$50.00 cloth, \$18.00 paper.

William Faulkner once spun out a yarn about how an opossum was treed on his farm by several yelping dogs, two yowling cats, and a silent horse. "It just isn't in the nature of a horse," Faulkner said, "to whinny when he trees a possum." In a new book, *Faulkner and the Natural World*, scholars from across the United States explore the Mississippi writer's connections to nature, both the whimsical and the mythical.

"Faulkner's identity as a writer of the natural world is, as in most things, a complex one," says literary scholar Donald M. Kartiganer, coeditor of the volume. "There is a clear sensitivity to nature in Faulkner, including not only the big woods, but the body, animals—especially horses—the life of farming people, that invites us to examine his

work with the natural world paramount in mind."

Although Faulkner belonged to an American generation of writers deeply influenced by the high modernist revolt "against nature," he reveals throughout his work an abiding sensitivity to the natural world. He writes of the big woods, of animals, and of the human body as a ground of being that art and culture can neither transcend nor completely control.

The 11 essays that make up this volume, including a paper written by the acclaimed novelist William Kennedy, explore the place of "the unbuild world" in Faulkner's fiction. They give particular attention to the social, mythic, and economic significance of nature, to the complexity of racial identity, and to the inevitable clash of gender and sexuality.

These essays were presented in 1996 as papers at the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference, held annually at the University of Mississippi. Included are essays from Lawrence Buell, Thomas L. McHaney, Theresa M. Towner, Jay Watson, Mary Joanne Dondlinger, Louise Westling, Myra Jehlen, Diane Roberts, David H. Evans, Wiley C. Prewitt Jr., and William Kennedy.

STEVEN B. YATES

Butter Beans to Blackberries: Recipes from the Southern Garden.

By Ronni Lundy. New York: North Point Press, 1999. 347 pages. \$27.50.

Score one for the Southern side dish. With Ronni Lundy's new cookbook, *Butter Beans to Blackberries*, vegetables and fruits finally get their due. Simply put, this is a paean to the pleasures of the Southern garden, a book beautiful in both conception and execution.

"Growing up in a city, I nevertheless marked my calendar by the rituals of the garden," writes Lundy, a native of Kentucky. "In my family we have a ritual dinner served in the heart

of every summer. The foods are as specific and their preparation as prescribed as those for Passover: fresh corn is cut, then 'milked' from the cob with the edge of a spoon and simmered in a cast-iron skillet with butter, cream, salt, and pepper; white half-runner beans and small, creamy white potatoes in their jackets are braised slowly all day on the back of the stove; deep-red and warm-yellow tomatoes are laid out in thick slabs on a china plate turning translucent with age; cucumbers not bigger than a grown man's thumb are sliced, salted, and chilled in a glass dish with ice cubes on top; coleslaw is made the painstaking way my mother always made it, with hand-slivered cabbage; trimmed green onions are served standing tall in a water glass or mug; a jar of chow-chow or some other hot homemade relish is passed on the side; something from the garden is dredged in seasoned cornmeal and fried in a black cast-iron skillet—green tomatoes or okra, maybe; and always there is a pan of hot cornbread and a pitcher of iced tea with sugar melted in it and lemon on the side."

As satisfying and salivating as Lundy's prose may be, her recipes are as good or better, her historical and cultural asides, inspiring and informative. With Lundy as their guide, readers learn how to prepare



fried green tomatoes napped in a bacon-perfumed cream gravy, not to mention sweet potatoes glazed with Blenheim's, a super-spicy ginger ale from South Carolina. What's more they learn the difference between butter beans and rattlesnake beans, shuckies and sivvies. Reports from the road—institutions like Bryce's Cafeteria in Texarkana, Texas, and King Cotton Produce in Montgomery, Alabama—will set stomachs to rumbling. And practical information on farmer's markets and mail order sources put the bounty of our Southern gardens within easy reach.

JOHN T. EDGE

**Fried Chicken:
The World's Best Recipes
from Memphis to Milan,
from Buffalo to Bangkok.**

By Damon Lee Fowler. New York: Broadway Books, 1999. 196 pages. \$15.00.

The opening salvo of Damon Lee Fowler's new cookbook, *Fried Chicken: The World's Best Recipes from Memphis to Milan, from Buffalo to Bangkok*, is likely to raise the hackles of many a chauvinistic Southerner: "Dearly as we love and prize it, and like to think we have perfected it," the author confesses, "we Southerners don't have a gridlock on fried chicken. I have discovered that wherever in the world there are chickens and fat, cooks are, and probably always have been, frying the bird in one form or another."

In Fowler's able hands, fried chicken is not merely the skillet-fried Sunday dinner staple of the South. Instead, Fowler embraces myriad countries and cuisines, not to mention an astonishing variety of ingredients and techniques. From Cuba comes a twice-fried chicken laced with bitter Seville oranges, from Armenia a butter-fried chicken with eggplant. In a chapter entitled "The Shallow End: Sauts and Stir-Fries," he extols the virtues of hot curried chicken livers from Nepal and French-inspired chicken breasts in brown butter.

But that is not to say that Fowler gives short shrift to the dishes of his native Southland. Far from it. "The core ingredients are pretty static: chicken, flour, salt, pepper, and frying fat," writes Fowler of what he argues might well be the South's national dish. "Yet you could give those same ingredients to a roomful of Southern cooks, and you will have as many variations, each tasting completely different from the others, as you will have cooks."

Twelve variations on that theme follow, a wide-ranging sampling of chicken dishes—all Southern, all distinct—from Jewish Georgia-style chicken coated in matzoh meal and fried in vegetable oil rather than lard, herb-and-spice coated chicken, batter-fried chicken, buttermilk-marinated chicken, chicken fried with the cover on the skillet, chicken fried with the cover off; chicken smothered in cream gravy, chicken enveloped in a bourbon and mushroom ragout.

Fowler's examination of fried chicken is complete, indeed exhaustive. You will turn the last page, impressed by the breadth of his research and recipes and inspired to fry up a batch of your own.

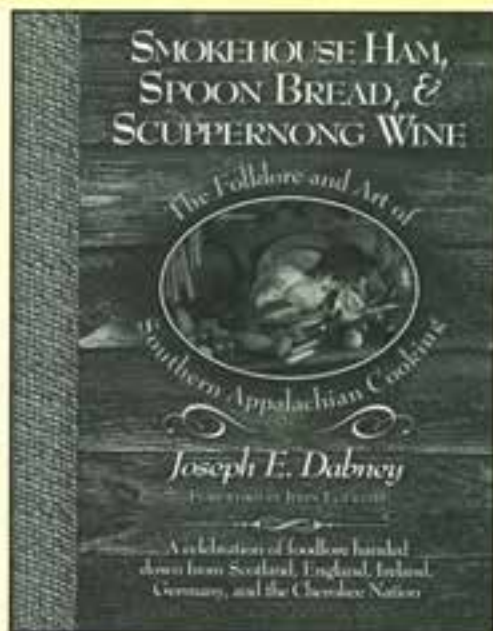
JOHN T. EDGE

**Smokehouse Ham, Spoon Bread, & Scuppernong Wine:
The Folklore and Art of
Appalachian Cooking.**

By Joseph E. Dabney. Foreword by John Egerton. Nashville: Cumberland House, 1998. 57 photographs. 493 pages. \$27.95 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

In the tradition of the *Foxfire Book of Appalachian Cookery*, Joseph E. Dabney's *Smokehouse Ham, Spoonbread, & Scuppernong Wine: The Folklore and Art of Southern Appalachian Cooking* is an evocative portrait of the fast-vanishing food habits of the mountain South.

Though Dabney is credited as the author, and his prose sings with a love



of Appalachia, it is the chorus of mountain voices included herein that give this book life. Readers meet Amos Owens of Rutherford County, North Carolina, a moonshiner known for his cheery bounce liquor, and Granny Tipton, a native of the north Georgia mountains who fermented cabbage in old castor-oil barrels and loved to drink kraut juice. Along the way, varied mountain folk wax poetic about the joys of eating rabbits and raccoons, possums and persimmons.

Vignettes, based upon interviews Dabney conducted over the years, give insights to food events like hog killings: "I always had to stay out of school on hog-killing day to help out, of course," recalls Sam Gates of Gilmer County, Georgia. "What I enjoyed most was getting the hog's bladder, inflating it with a homemade reed, and turning it into a kickball. You had to blow it up before it dried. It was like a leather ball almost."

At nearly 500 pages, this is a big book, suffused with the smells of country-cured ham, buoyed by the sweet rhythms of the mountain vernacular in which many of the cooks speak. Sure, it is a book of recipes—dozens and dozens of them, in fact—but years from now it will be remembered as a proud testament to a way of life long gone.

JOHN T. EDGE

Songs Adapted from Welty Works Available on CD

The Southern Culture Catalog is pleased to offer a new CD, *The Memory Is a Living Thing*, as part of the celebration of Eudora Welty's 90th birthday on April 13, 1999. In this recording, internationally known mezzo-soprano Lester Senter of Jackson, Mississippi, sings the lyrics of her friend Eudora Welty.

Senter and Janet Kopec, theatre and opera director/producer from Dallas, Texas, selected texts from Welty's works and commissioned their favorite composers to write music for the eight songs on the CD. The lyrics of "Love," "Tea Time," and "Washing Machine" are adapted from *The Ponder Heart*; the ballad "Rosamund's Dream" is based on *The Robber Bridegroom*; and other selections present passages from Welty stories and her autobiography, *One Writer's Beginnings*.

Information about ordering the CD is on page 25 of this issue of the *Register*.



Eudora Welty with Lester Senter

James D. Korman

EUDORA WELTY BOOKS AND NEWSLETTER

The Library of America recently published a two-volume set of Eudora Welty's work. These volumes, edited by Richard Ford and Michael Kreyling, are the first collection in the series devoted to a living writer's literary career. In one volume, *Welty: Complete Novels*, are *The Robber Bridegroom*, *Delta Wedding*, *The Ponder Heart*, *Losing Battles*, and *The Optimist's Daughter*. *Welty: Stories, Essays, & Memoir* collects *A Curtain of Green*, *The Wide Net*, *The Golden Apples*, *The Bride of the Innisfallen*, *Selected Essays*, and *One Writer's Beginnings*.

Hill Street Press of Athens, Georgia, published *Eudora Welty: Writer's Reflections upon First Reading Welty* on the occasion of the author's 90th birthday on April 13, 1999. This rich

collection of original tributes to Welty's genius includes writings by 22 contributors, among them Ellen Douglas, George Garrett, Barry Hannah, Reynolds Price, Louis D. Rubin Jr., William Jay Smith, and Elizabeth Spencer. The editor of the collection is Pearl Amelia McHaney, assistant professor of English at Georgia State University and also editor of the *Eudora Welty Newsletter*.

The University Press of Mississippi reissued Eudora Welty's first published story, "Death of a Traveling Salesman," from 1936. The volume, limited to 500 copies, also contains a 1979 essay in which the author reflects on her career and her first story.

The University of South Carolina Press recently published *The Late Novels*

of Eudora Welty, a collection of 14 new essays on the writer's last two novels, *Losing Battles* (1970) and *The Optimist's Daughter* (1972). The volume, edited by Jan Nordby Gretlund and Karl-Heinz Westarp, contains a foreword by Reynolds Price. Contributors include Richard Gray, Michael Kreyling, Bridget Smith Pieschel, Peggy Whitman Preshaw, Mary Ann Wimsatt, and Sally Wolfe.

Detailed information about the author and her work is available in the semi-annual *Eudora Welty Newsletter*, available online (<http://www.gsu.edu/~wweng/ew>) and through Thomas McHaney, Managing Editor, Georgia State University, Department of English, University Plaza, Atlanta, GA 30303-3083. E-mail: tmchaney@gsu.edu.

1999 Oxford Conference for the Book

The 1999 Oxford Conference for the Book attracted a large and appreciative audience, both on campus and on television. It was the sixth program in a series that celebrates books, writing, and reading, as well as practical concerns on which the literary arts depend, including literacy, freedom of expression, and the book trade itself. The conference took place April 9-11 and, for the first time, was open to the public without charge. Also for the first time, the program was televised over the cable network. Funding was provided by the University of Mississippi and grants from the City of Oxford, the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council, and—another conference first—the National Endowment for the Humanities through the Mississippi Humanities Council.

The 1999 Oxford Conference for the Book was dedicated to Eudora Welty in celebration of her 90th birthday and her lifetime achievements as Mississippi's First Lady of Letters. In recognition of the occasion and continuing the conference tradition of a lecture on the history of the book in the South, literary scholar Noel Polk discussed Welty and her writing. "Living Near a Mountain: Welty, Faulkner, and the Mississippi Literary Landscape" was the title of his lecture, presented on Friday, the opening day of the conference.

The program on Friday morning consisted of three panels. Barry Hannah,



DANIEL SHERMAN

Wendell Berry speaks with admirers after his reading at the conference. To his right are Susan Millar Williams and Mary Wheeling, panelists for Kathryn McKee's session on "Writing Women Writers' Lives."

writer in residence at the University of Mississippi and author of acclaimed novels and story collections, led two sessions on writing, being published, and reaching an audience. David Gernert, formerly an editor at Doubleday and now an agent who represents John Grisham, Peter Guralnick, Stewart O'Nan, among others, joined authors Kevin Baker, Tristan Egolf, and Darcey Steinke for one panel. Elisabeth Sifton, senior vice president of Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, and publisher of Hill and Wang, was on the second, along with authors Philip

Gourevitch, Peter Guralnick, and Randall Kenan.

Next came a discussion on "Charting New Paths with Publishing" moderated by John McLeod, publicity manager for Counterpoint Press in Washington, D.C. Stella Connell, who worked for three publishing houses in New York City before returning home to Oxford to establish Southeast Media and Literary Associates, a public relations firm and literary agency, talked about her experiences and predicted future trends. Also contributing to the discussion was



The Sixth
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DANIEL SHERMAN

Barry Hannah (left) tells a joke during the panel discussion "Finding a Voice/Reaching an Audience." Pictured with him are author Randall Kenan (center) and Elisabeth Sifton, senior vice president of Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, and publisher of Hill and Wang.



DANIEL SHERMAN

From left: Poet Wendell Berry, publisher Jack Shoemaker, author Patty Friedmann, and Square Books owner and conference organizer Richard Howorth enjoy their discussion during the panel "Counterpoint: Publishing and the Book Business."

Oxford resident Don Stanford, the owner and developer of Author's Interface (www.authorsinterface.com), the first online site devoted to providing an authors' manuscript database for publishers and agents.

The program on Friday afternoon, in addition to the Polk lecture, offered a session on poetry, readings by three novelists, and a presentation on "Reckoning with Extremity: A Writer's Journey" by Philip Gourevitch, staff writer for the *New Yorker*. Gourevitch's talk focused on his book *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*, an analysis of the genocide in Rwanda and the international community's response to this modern tragedy. It won the 1998 National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction.

Poets T. R. Hummer, Robert Morgan, and James Seay discussed the state of poetry in America and read selections from their work. Morgan, a native of North Carolina, is the author of nine volumes of poetry and four books of fiction. He teaches at Cornell University. Seay, the author of four books of poetry, most recently *Open Field, Understory: New and Selected Poems*, grew up in Panola County, Mississippi, and teaches in the Creative Writing Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Hummer, also a Mississippian, is the author of five collections of poetry. He teaches creative writing at Virginia

Commonwealth University in Richmond.

Stewart O'Nan was the first of three novelists who read from their work on Friday afternoon. O'Nan's six volumes of fiction have earned him praise as "not merely one of the best young novelists in America, but one of the finest novelists of our time." Other readers were Tristan Egolf and Jane Mullen, authors of recently published first books. Egolf received 76 rejections before his *Lord of the Barnyard: Killing the Fatted Calf and Arming the Aware in the Corn Belt was*



DANIEL SHERMAN

Noel Polk talks to a member of the audience after his presentation in celebration of Eudora Welty's 90th birthday on April 13.

published last year in France to great acclaim. Also published in England, Holland, and Spain, the novel made its American debut in March. Mullen, who has lived in Oxford for more than a decade, read from a novel in progress. Her stories have appeared in numerous literary magazines and in a highly praised debut collection, *A Complicated*

Situation, published in the fall of 1998.

Julie Smith, the author of more than a dozen novels, including the popular Skip Langdon series set in New Orleans, presented a reading on Friday evening and took part in the "Southern Mystery Writing" panel on Saturday morning. Joining her on the panel were Tony Dunbar, a practicing New Orleans attorney who has written five books, four of which comprise the popular Tubby Dubonnet series, and John Armistead, a Baptist minister, journalist, and author of four mystery novels dealing with Sheriff Glover Bramlett. Dan Williams, professor of English at the University of Mississippi, organized and chaired the panel.

Two other panels took place on Saturday. Ted Ownby, who teaches History and Southern Studies at the University, organized and moderated "Writing, Race, and the South." Panelists for this session were Eddy L. Harris, the author of several personal narratives, including *Mississippi Solo* and *South of Haunted Dreams: A Ride through Slavery's Old Backyard*; William Heath, whose works include *The Children Bob Moses Led*, a novel about the civil rights movement in Mississippi; Randall Kenan, whose new book is *Walking on Water: Black America on the Eve of the Twenty-First Century*; and Henry Wienczek, author of *The Hairstons: An American Family in Black and White*.

Saturday's second panel, organized by visiting assistant professor of History and



From left: Carrie Brown; Philip Gourevitch, photo by Jacqueline Gourevitch; Jane Mullen; Janice W. Murray; Stewart O'Nan, photo by Jerry Bauer; Darcey Steinke, photo by Marion Ettlinger; and George F. Walker.

Southern Studies Michael Bertrand, brought together scholars who have written on the music of the South: Bill Malone, author of *Country Music U.S.A.*, *Southern Music/American Music*, and *Singing Cowboys and Musical Mountaineers*; Cecelia Tichi, whose books include *High Lonesome: The American Culture of Country Music*; Stephen Tucker, a specialist on the history of Louisiana country music; and Charles Wolfe, author of *The Life and Legend of Leadbelly* and two books on folk and country music. Also on the panel was Judith McCulloh, assistant director and executive editor of the University of Illinois Press, where she serves as general editor of the Music in American Life series.

Before the lunch break, during which authors signed books at Square Books in downtown Oxford, Jill Conner Browne entertained the audience with her "Advice from the Sweet Potato Queen" presentation. Browne lives in Jackson, Mississippi, where she writes a weekly humorous fitness column for the *Clarion-Ledger*. Her first book, published this spring, is *The Sweet Potato Queens' Book of Love*.

Melissa Scott's presentation "Conceiving the Heavens: Writing and Reading Science Fiction" made a great impact, providing a special treat to fans of the genre and enlightening those

unfamiliar with it. Winner of the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Science Fiction Writer in 1986, Scott has published 17 novels and a nonfiction book about writing science fiction. While in Mississippi, she also spoke to students throughout the Delta. Scott's school visits were arranged by Ron

published by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill. Friedmann is the author of three books, including the novel *Eleanor Rushing*, recently published by Counterpoint Press.

Saturday's program ended with comments about publishing and the book business by Jack Shoemaker and readings and remarks by essayist, novelist, and poet Wendell Berry. Shoemaker, founder and editor in chief of Counterpoint Press, began his literary career as a bookseller in 1963 in Santa Barbara, California. Since then he has owned or managed several important bookshops and headed up several small presses. In 1979 he founded North Point Press, which published nearly 400 titles and garnered nearly every literary and design award available in this country. In 1995, after several years as West Coast editor of Pantheon Books, Shoemaker founded Counterpoint Press. One of Counterpoint's recent publications is *The Selected Poems of Wendell*

Berry, which gathers 100 of Berry's poems selected from nine previous collections. Berry is the author of more than 30 books and has received numerous awards.

Sunday began with a tour of the Mississippi Hall of Writers at the John Davis Williams Library and a continental breakfast hosted by John Meador, Dean of University Libraries. Afterwards, Kathryn McKee, who



DANIEL SHERMAN

Talking after the session on "The Endangered Species: Readers Today and Tomorrow" are Ron Nurnberg, executive director of Teach for America/Mississippi Delta, Square Books proprietor Richard Howorth, and Carol Hampton Rasco, senior advisor the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education, and director of the America Reads Challenge.

Nurnberg, executive director of Teach for America/Mississippi Delta.

Established authors Eddy L. Harris and Robert Morgan presented readings from their works on Saturday afternoon, as did relative newcomers Carrie Brown and Patty Friedmann. A former journalist and newspaper editor who now teaches fiction writing at Sweet Briar College, Brown is the author of *Rose's Garden* and *Lamb in Love*, novels



Signing books are Randall Kenan (left) and Tony Dunbar.



Authors at the book signing are, from left, James Wilcox, Darcey Steinke, Melissa Scott, John Armistead. Talking with them is Judy Hottenson of Grove Atlantic Press.



At the book signing are, from left, authors Wendell Berry and Kevin Baker with Square Books bookseller Kathryn Clark.

teaches English and Southern Studies at the University, moderated a session focusing on recent biographies of women writers of the South. Panelists were Lucinda MacKethan, editor of *Recollections of a Southern Daughter* and author of two books on Southern literature; Mary Wheeling, author of *Fighting the Current: The Life and Work of Evelyn Scott*; Susan Millar Williams, author of *A Devil and a Good Woman, Too: The Lives of Julia Peterkin*.

A panel titled "The Endangered Species: Readers Today and Tomorrow" provided comments by Janice W. Murray, chair of the University's Art Department and a member of the Lafayette County Literary Council; Carol Hampton Rasco, senior advisor of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education, and director of the America Reads Challenge; and Jennifer Westbrook, director of chapter programs for the two-year college honor society Phi Theta Kappa and coordinator of the organization's participation in the America Reads Challenge. Businessman and community leader George F. Walker of Clarksdale, Mississippi, also served on the panel, which was moderated by Elaine H. Scott. Scott is former chair of the Arkansas State Board of Education, a member of the Education Commission of the States 1987-1997, and a leader in several organizations concerned with education, teacher training, libraries, and literacy.

"Literally Inspired: Writing with Religion" featured comments and readings by Darcey Steinke, visiting

writer at the University of Mississippi, and James Wilcox, visiting writer at Mississippi State University. Steinke is the author of three novels, *Suicide Blonde*, *Up Through the Water*, and *Jesus Saves*. Wilcox is the author of *Modern Baptists* and other novels, the most recent being *Plain and Normal*.

The conference ended with "Fiction, History, and Truth" as the topic for commentaries by Kevin Baker, author of *Dreamland*, a historical novel set on Coney Island; Peter Guralnick, author of *Last Train to Memphis* and *Careless Love*, the highly acclaimed two-volume biography of Elvis Presley; and Stewart O'Nan, whose novels *The Names of the Dead* and *A Prayer for the Dying* are based on extensive historical research. Ellen Douglas, who published six novels and two story collections over four decades before the appearance of her new book *Truth: Four Stories I Am Finally Old Enough to Tell*, also served on the panel.

Following the discussion about the connections between fiction and historical fact, Douglas concluded the panel and the conference, to overwhelming applause, by reading selections from *Truth*.



Enjoying the conference are, from left, Isaac Scott, Dorothy Lee Tatum, Vasser Bishop, and Elaine Scott.

From beginning to end, the 1999 Oxford Conference for the Book was a great success. The next conference is scheduled for April 7-9, 2000. Details about the program, when available, will appear on the Center's web site (<http://www.cssc.olemiss.edu>).

Mark Your Calendars!

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APRIL 7-9, 2000

Eudora Welty

in celebration of her 90th birthday

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Eudora Welty (1909-2008) by Mildred Nungester Wolfe
Collection of National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

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POSTER

The Sixth Oxford Conference for the Book Poster (1999)

Poster features Eudora Welty portrait by Mildred Nungester Wolfe from the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Full color, 17.5 x 23.5"

M9901

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The Sixth Oxford Conference for the Book T-Shirt (1999)

T-Shirt features Eudora Welty portrait by Mildred Nungester Wolfe from the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Full color, please specify XL, XXL only. Quantities limited.

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AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES FROM THE CONFERENCE

See page 26 for a complete listing of conference programs and order information.

VIDEOS

William Faulkner and Eudora Welty

This film features Eudora Welty at the opening session of the 1987 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference. Welty reads from her story "Why I Live at the P.O." and answers questions about her work and Faulkner's.

Color, 34 minutes.

V1230

...\$50.00

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Four Women Artists

"I wonder if a man would confess all the visions that I have had?" asks Theora Hamblett. An intimate look at the memories, traditions, and visions guiding the art and lives of four Southern women, this film features novelist Eudora Welty, quilter Pecolia Warner, embroiderer Ethel Mohamed, and painter Theora Hamblett. In related interviews, these women discuss the creative life and their personal motivations, Welty's strong sense of place, Warner's keen eye for color and detail, Mohamed's family memories, and Hamblett's dreams and visions. This film is not only about these four women and their art, but about the creative spirit that drives all artists. Awards and screenings: Ann Arbor Film Festival, American Film Festival, Margaret Mead Film Festival, American Film Institute. Produced by Judy Pelsler and Bill Ferris/Center for Southern Folklore, 1978.

Color, 25 minutes.

V1072

...\$120.00

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BOOKS

The Mississippi Writers Directory and Literary Guide

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Readings/Remarks
Ellen Douglas

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

JOHN T. EDGE, a graduate student in Southern Studies, writes about Southern food and travel.

JOHN FRIERSON just graduated from the University of Mississippi with a degree in Southern Studies and Journalism and is currently seeking employment as a newspaper writer.

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HARRY P. OWENS taught history for many years at the University of Mississippi and is now professor emeritus.

STEVEN B. YATES is promotions manager for the University Press of Mississippi.

Ownby's New Book (continued)

on useless novelties and were thus better off as sharecroppers who had little cash for most of the year. As the book relates, African Americans tried to economize but also used shopping and goods as ways to rebel against the expectations of white landowners to look the part of the poor in their dress and other forms of self expression.

Along with the arrival of department stores and five-and-dime stores and the effects these more egalitarian shopping opportunities had on women, class, and race relations, the book looks at the ways different groups interpreted the changing nature of goods and shopping as segregation came to an end. It examines the way four of Mississippi's greatest writers—William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, Richard Wright and William Alexander Percy—treat the subject of goods and shopping. It also discusses the role of consumer boycotts in the civil rights movement and closes with an epilogue that details the rise of retail operations like Wal-Marts and antique stores.

In addition to *American Dreams in Mississippi*, Ownby is the author of *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920*. He is also editor of the journal *Mississippi Folklife*.

MICHAEL HARRELSON

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