

# the Southern Register

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE • FALL 2013

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

## Students Find New Home in Southern Studies Graduate Program

When a UM baseball player, let's say, Preston Overby, steps up to the plate at a home baseball game, Overby's hometown and a few stats might be read, and sometimes the player's 30-second song clip is blasted into the stadium. This grand entrance granted to athletes is not something you would expect to experience in the academic setting of Barnard Observatory, though. When we grad students walk up to a podium to give a presentation or lecture, we do not have our choice of Jay-Z, Bon Jovi, or Metallica playing to pump us up. In light of this, please read the following in the voice of an enthusiastic sports announcer and imagine rousing music in the background, because I am excited to present the newest graduate student additions to UM's Southern Studies program.

We have Amelia Brock coming to us from Auburn, Alabama. Amelia received her bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies with a concentration in cultural studies from the University of Alabama. Her research includes queer studies, gender studies, ways to dismantle the patriarchy, and really bad television shows. Amelia doesn't let Southeastern Conference (SEC) rivalries slow her down; she plans to live in every town in the SEC and hopes to be the second person to successfully domesticate a hippo.

Bianca Zaharescu gets two prizes for greatest distance traveled. First, Bianca is originally from Ploiesti, Romania. Second, Bianca is commuting from Clarksdale, Mississippi, to Oxford for this program. Bianca graduated from the University of Illinois after studying African American studies and history. Bianca cofounded the Spring Initiative, a nonprofit that provides tutoring for underprivileged children in Clarksdale.



David Wharton

Top row (left to right): Elizabeth Trollinger, Purvis Cornish, Kaitlyn Vogt, Maggie Crain; middle row: Shawna Felkins, Amelia Brock, Lindsey Reynolds, Grant LaFever; bottom row: Lauren Holt, Virginia Anderson, Katie King, Micajah Henley

Not pictured is Bianca Zaharescu.

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REGISTER STAFF

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Editor: James G. Thomas Jr.

Graphic Designer: Susan Bauer Stee

Mailing List Manager: Mary Hartwell Howorth

Lithographer: RR Donnelley Magazine Group

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Over the past few months, it has been impressive to watch the events celebrating the completion of *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. As readers of the *Southern Register* no doubt know by now, the 24th volume of that 24-volume project came out in May.

Every event has its own moments. The first *New Encyclopedia* event, a celebration hosted by Ralph Eubanks at the Library of Congress, brought together University of Mississippi people from current students to alumni to Chancellor Dan Jones, along with friends from UNC Press. I made a random remark about how I marked my interests as a child by which volumes of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* I read, starting as a small child with the *D* volume for the well-illustrated "Dogs" entry, and then for years settling in with the *B* volume for the "Baseball" entry. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey, our final speaker at the event, noticed the remark and remembered that as a child she had searched the *R* volume for information on race.

In Louisville for the Filson Society conference on the South and the *New Encyclopedia* series, Charles Reagan Wilson prepared a talk entitled "The Twenty-First Century South: What *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* Tells Us about the Burden of the Southern Future." As a way of thinking about why current scholarship always needs to ask new questions and perhaps in part to challenge people who assume the concept of the South is always about the past and only possibly about the present, his paper analyzed the various ways people in the South have predicted and imagined the future.

The questions people ask show the changing range of interests and, in truth, the continuing excitement about studying the South. Questions range from the very broad to the specific. Some of them—what are the region's geographic boundaries, how has Southern identity changed—are standard questions in the field of Southern Studies, even if they have proven difficult to answer. Many encourage thinking about the relationship between personal stories and broader stories. Questions at the Georgia Center for the Book event asked about the desirability of centers and peripheries, and other questions asked how effective the nature of encyclopedias might be at addressing issues that make us angry. The Filson Society event included talks on art, foodways, music, and ethnicity, so questions ranged from Kentucky restaurants to gospel music. Some people have proven to be fascinated by the process of choosing topics and authors and editing and indexing such a large project.

One question reminds me a bit of a cartoon by academic cartoonist Vivian Scott Hixson, who in her book *He Looks Too Happy to Be an Assistant Professor* portrayed a young artist asking Michelangelo, "So, what's your next project?" In truth, *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* series is not like the Sistine Chapel, but it is 24 volumes long, which in the book world might be something close to chapel size. So, when people ask what comes next or when the next round of revisions might begin, they might expect some degree of polite uncertainty. Hixson's cartoon Michelangelo didn't say, "Oh, give me a break," but you can see him rolling his eyes.

At the Georgia Center for the Book event, about 15 Southern Studies alumni showed up, so it turned into a reunion. The Square Books event in Oxford brought together several volume editors and 30 or more authors of entries. That event also saw the first appearance of a new term, "encyclopunch." Our friends at *Thacker Mountain Radio* and Square Books have helped to keep up interest in the encyclopedia series with weekly short moments from individual volumes, and coming events in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Little Rock will likely bring other surprises.

This is a good time for Center collaborative work, with the publication of two edited collections mentioned in this *Southern Register*, the extraordinary success of the Southern Foodways Symposium, the final stages of the *Mississippi Encyclopedia* project, some ongoing documentary projects, and plans moving ahead for plenty of new projects in winter and spring. As we imagine new ideas, we don't have to think about chapel-sized projects, but we will be thinking about collaborative ways to do scholarship, to organize it, and to communicate with it.

Ted Ownby

# Living Blues News

This is an amazingly active time for the blues in the Mississippi River Valley region.

Recently, the original Mississippi blues festival—the 36th annual Mississippi Delta Blues and Heritage Festival—and the Walnut Street Blues Block Party took place in Greenville. Up next is Bridging the Blues—a three-state coalition that joined forces to promote blues in Arkansas, Tennessee, and Mississippi. Anchored by the Mighty Mississippi Music Festival in Greenville (which includes the Highway 61 Blues Festival) and the King Biscuit Blues Festival in Helena, Arkansas, Bridging the Blues presented a jam-packed two weeks full of blues. The events included the Delta Busking Festival in Clarksdale, the Gateway to the Delta Festival in Charleston, the Vicksburg Blues Society Heritage Music Series, the Sam Chatmon Blues Festival in Hollandale, Po Monkey's Jook Party in Merigold, the Pinetop Perkins Homecoming in Clarksdale, and dozens of other events big and small. On October 16, *LB* #221 cover artist Blind Boy Paxton played at a Center-sponsored event in Oxford, Mississippi. And finally, traveling down to the end of the Mississippi River valley, the Crescent City Blues Festival took place in New Orleans on October 18–20. By the time you read this, some of these events will be over. But they will all happen again next year, so start making your plans now!

This issue's cover artist Roy Gaines

is one of the last active bluesmen from the great Texas-to-California migration of the 1930s, '40s, and '50s. Led by T-Bone Walker, who moved to California in 1935, a string of bluesmen from Texas made the move west. Pee Wee Crayton, Amos Milburn, Charles Brown, Floyd Dixon, Roy Gaines, and others left their home state and settled in the booming Los Angeles and Oakland areas of California. These musicians soon recorded for several of the growing local labels, and the hits began to happen. Roy Gaines, brother of horn player Grady Gaines (*LB* #220), may never have had a huge hit record, but he played as a session musician on many of them and made a string of recordings on his own. Gaines, a disciple of the T-Bone Walker guitar style, carries the torch for this classic era of blues to this day.

It is great fun in the blues when an older musician is “rediscovered” and has a comeback career. Gene “Birdlegg” Pittman was an active performer in California in the 1970s but then fell on hard times. But now, after a move to Austin, Texas, and a chance meeting with Eddie Datel of Dialtone Records, Birdlegg is having a career resurrection and has a brand new release coming out. Watch for this great showman at festivals next year.

In our continuing mission to shine a spotlight on the often-overlooked sidemen in the blues, we feature the aptly named drummer Willie “the Touch” Hayes. Hayes is in the top tier of modern



Chicago drummers. He has drummed behind a who's who of Chicago blues heavyweights. Magic Sam, Koko Taylor, Junior Wells, Buddy Guy, Luther Allison, and now Lurrie Bell have all benefited from Hayes holding down the bottom end. This great story continues to remind us all that it's not just the front men who make blues music so good.

Another mission I have at *LB* is to discover and present young, new blues talent to the national blues audience. We've got two new, hot, 30-something bluesmen in this issue: Arkansas-born Lucious Spiller and Shawn Holt, the son of Magic Slim and the new leader of the Teardrops. Both men are exciting prospects for the future of the blues.

Finally, welcome Leslie Hassel, who will be working with me as an editorial assistant.

Brett J. Bonner, Editor

## IMPORTANT NOTICE! *Southern Register* Subscribers

We're paring down our mailing list to cut down on duplications and bad addresses, so it's possible you might not receive the Winter 2014 issue, which will be mailed in February. If you enjoy receiving the

*Southern Register* and turn to it to keep up with the goings on at the Center but find that you have not received your next issue, please e-mail Jimmy Thomas at [jgthomas@olemiss.edu](mailto:jgthomas@olemiss.edu) with your physical address

and “Southern Register” in the subject box. We will gladly return you to our mailing list. A handwritten note works just fine too. Thanks for reading.

Jimmy Thomas, Editor

# Making Space, Living in Place: Physical, Cultural, and Social Landscapes of North Mississippi

## A Gammill Gallery Exhibition of Photographs from the Spring 2013 Documentary Photography Seminar

The assignment for students in the spring 2013 documentary photography seminar was deceptively simple: use the medium of still photography to conduct a visual inquiry of north Mississippi, especially some of the ways its regional culture reflects the relationship between area residents and the physical environment. More specifically, the six students—Ethan Booker, Leslie Hassel, Mary Kate Keappler, Austin McAfee, Daniel Russell, and Rachael Walker—hoped to compile a photographic record of the region as a physical place, some of the spaces people have created within that place, and some of the human activities that take place there. At the end of the semester, each student assembled a book of 20 to 25 of his or her photographs that explored these themes. In addition, the group as a whole edited the hundreds of pictures they made over the course of the semester into *Making Space, Living in Place: Physical, Cultural, and Social Landscapes of North Mississippi*, the 71-photograph exhibition currently on display at the Center's Gammill Gallery.



Mary Kate Keappler, *Tree and Silo*, Panola County, Mississippi



Leslie Hassel, *Spiral Staircase*, Holly Springs, Mississippi



Ethan Booker, *Where Visitors Come From*, Juke Joint Festival, Clarksdale, Mississippi



Austin McAfee, *Bathtubs*, Panola County, Mississippi



Daniel Russell, *Highway-Scape*, Lafayette County, Mississippi



Rachael Walker, *Lunch*, BTC Grocery, Water Valley, Mississippi

## Mark Your Calendars!

**November 2, 2013**

*The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*  
Louisiana Book Festival  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

**November 11, 2013**

*The Larder*  
Flyleaf Books  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

**November 13, 2013**

*The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*  
Lemuria Books  
Jackson, Mississippi

**December 8, 2013**

SFA Piggy Bank Dinner  
Asheville, North Carolina

**December 11, 2013**

*The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*  
The Historic New Orleans Collection  
New Orleans, Louisiana

**January 9–12, 2014**

Taste of the South 2014  
Blackberry Farm  
Walland, Tennessee

**February 8, 2014**

SFA Piggy Bank Dinner  
Commander's Palace  
New Orleans, Louisiana

**February 27–January 1, 2014**

Transforming New South  
Identities Conference  
University of Mississippi

**March 26–28, 2014**

Oxford Conference for the Book  
University of Mississippi

**April 2, 2014**

Music of the South Symposium  
University of Mississippi

**May 21–24, 2014**

Mississippi Delta Cultural Tour  
Mississippi Delta

# New Book on Civil Rights in Mississippi Edited by Center Director Ted Ownby

A symposium at the University of Mississippi has culminated in a book of essays about the civil rights movement. *The Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi*, edited by Center Director Ted Ownby, is based on new research and combines multiple scholarly approaches. The 12 essays tell new stories about the civil rights movement in the state most resistant to change. An event that combined the Porter Fortune, Jr. History Symposium and the Future of the South Symposium enabled the scholars to come together to share their work.

As a group, the essays in *The Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi* introduce numerous new characters and conundrums into civil rights scholarship, advance efforts to study African Americans and whites as interactive agents in the complex stories, and encourage historians to pull civil rights scholarship closer toward the present.

Many symposia lead to collections of essays, so Ownby says it was on his mind at that time. "A number of the younger historians have put out books on the topics they discussed at the symposium, so now the book will serve to bring together a lot of the best recent scholarship on the Mississippi civil rights movement," he says.

The papers more or less organized themselves, Ownby says, with the first three studying the process of civil rights organizing: one discusses the concept itself, another discusses the various ways different groups organized, and a third concentrates on Medgar Evers as an organizer. Then there are six papers that are pairs of essays on similar topics: education, religion, and the issue of violence and self-defense.

"What I hope is interesting is that

## THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN MISSISSIPPI



**Edited by Ted Ownby**

Essays by Chris Myers Asch, Emilye Crosby, David Cunningham, Jelani Favors, Françoise N. Hamlin, Wesley Hogan, Robert Luckett, Carter Dalton Lyon, Byron D'Andra Orey, Joseph T. Reiff, Akinyele Umoja, and Michael Vinson Williams

each of those pairs of essays combines a study concentrating on African Americans with a study analyzing white Mississippians," Ownby says. "So, we see professors at Jackson State and the University of Mississippi facing different pressures, and a kneel-in campaign at Jackson churches revealing a different story from the Born of Conviction statement by white Methodist ministers. Also, we can understand the rise of the Deacons for Defense better because we have a better understanding of the strategies of the Ku Klux Klan. And finally, there are three papers about how people remember and try to implement parts of the civil rights movement, whether in politics, or schools, or oral history."

Two University of Mississippi alumni wrote two of the essays. Carter

Dalton Lyon, chair of the History Department at St. Mary's Episcopal School in Memphis, studies people who confronted the question of how their religion related to their possible involvement in civil rights activism, and Michael Vinson Williams, assistant professor at Mississippi State University, raises questions about how civil rights organizing took place.

Other essays are by Chris Myers Asch, Emilye Crosby, David Cunningham, Jelani Favors, Françoise N. Hamlin, Wesley Hogan, Robert Luckett, Byron D'Andra Orey, Joseph T. Reiff, and Akinyele Umoja.

For the past 20 years, historians have been doing an important job in using local studies to analyze the civil rights movement, to show how its language and tactics and challenges differed by place and time.

"I think the scholars who contributed to this volume

have both learned from and are contributing to that perspective, so we have a fuller history of civil rights activists and what they faced. I hope the book tells some stories not many people know and introduces some new characters," Ownby says.

Ownby is the editor of *The Role of Ideas in the Civil Rights South*, *Manners and Southern History*, and *Black and White: Cultural Interaction in the Antebellum South*, all based on Porter Fortune Symposia and published by the University Press of Mississippi. He is also coeditor of *The Larder: Food Studies and Methods from the American South* and a coeditor of the Gender volume of *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

# Positions Available

The University of Mississippi seeks a tenure-track assistant professor who studies foodways in the American South. The successful candidate will have a joint appointment in the Southern Studies program and either the English, History, or Sociology/Anthropology Department. Tenure will reside in one of those three departments. The teaching load, divided between the Southern Studies program and the relevant department, will be four or five courses per year, one of which will be a Southern Studies course, Foodways and Southern Culture. University service will include frequent collaboration with the Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA), an institute of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. SFA activities, which one can examine at [www.southernfoodways.org](http://www.southernfoodways.org), include documentary work, public outreach, and scholarship. A PhD by the time of appointment and evidence of teaching in a field related to food, culture, and society are required. Candidates must complete an online application at <https://jobs.olemiss.edu>. Supplementary materials, including a letter of interest, vita, three letters of recommendation, description of teaching experience and methods, and a chapter-length writing sample should be attached to the online application or mailed to Dr. Ted Ownby, Chair, Foodways Search Committee, Center for the Study of Southern Culture, Barnard Observatory, University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled or an adequate applicant pool is established. The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA employer and has been rated a "great college to work for" by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

The History Department ([www.olemiss.edu/depts/history](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/history)) and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture ([southernstudies.olemiss.edu](http://southernstudies.olemiss.edu)) of the University of Mississippi seek a tenure-track assistant professor in the history of the United States South to begin in August 2014. Applicants from all specializations will be considered if they can contribute to the interdisciplinary mission of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, which has BA and MA programs in Southern Studies. The teaching load will be two courses per semester. A PhD in history and teaching experience are required by the time of appointment. Candidates must complete an online application at <https://jobs.olemiss.edu>. Supplementary materials, including a letter of interest, vita, three letters of recommendation, teaching portfolio, and a chapter-length writing sample should be attached to the online application or mailed to Chair, Southern History Search Committee, Department of History, 310 Bishop Hall, University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-1848. Open until filled or until an adequate applicant pool has been established. Preliminary interviews will be held at the 2014 American Historical Association meeting in Washington, D.C. The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX /Section 504/ADA/ADEA employer and has been rated a "great college to work for" by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

## Center for the

## Study of Southern Culture

### NOVEMBER

6 "Farish Street, Jackson, Mississippi"  
Turry Flucker, Anna Hamilton, and Kate Hudson  
Southern Studies Graduate Students



### The University of Mississippi

## Brown Bag Lunch and Lecture Series November 2013

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

13 "Jewels in the Delta: Church Mothers"  
Alysia Steele, Journalism Professional in Residence  
Meek School of Journalism

20 "In a New Land: Stories of African Immigrants and Their Children in the United States South"  
Renee Ombaba, Southern Studies Graduate Student

## We would love to keep in closer touch with our friends. Two easy ways include:

1. Facebook users, please "Like" the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. Being a Facebook Friend of the Center brings you news large and small, announcements, job ads, and occasional gossip.



2. Send us your e-mail addresses. The easiest way for us to contact you, and one of the easiest ways for you to contribute as a Friend of the Center, is through an annual e-mail message. Please send your e-mail address to [cssc@olemiss.edu](mailto:cssc@olemiss.edu).

# Taking *Pride and Joy* on the Road

## Joe York's Film Selected for South Arts Grant

Joe York is accustomed to traveling the country making documentary films, but in September he was able to tour six cities in nine days as the recipient of a South Arts grant. His film, *Pride & Joy*, a feature-length documentary about Southern food in all its regional variations—from kolaches in Texas to oysters in Florida—gives an introduction to how foodways offers insights on the region's complex history and bright future.

The South Arts Southern Circuit brings the best of independent film to communities across the South. Audiences have seen more than 200 films and have engaged filmmakers in post-screening discussions in more than 50 communities across the Southern U.S. The tour offers the audience a way to connect with independent filmmakers.

York's circuit included three cities in Georgia (Suwanee, Hapeville, and Madison) and three cities in Louisiana (Lake Charles, Alexandria, and Lafayette). "Whether we had 40 people or we had 150 people, the thing that was impressive was the amount of planning that went into it. It was perfectly coordinated," says York, a senior producer at Southern Documentary Project (SouthDocs), formerly Media and Documentary Projects. "I don't know if I have ever been a part of some-



Joe York

Dori Sanders, peach farmer and writer, Filbert, South Carolina

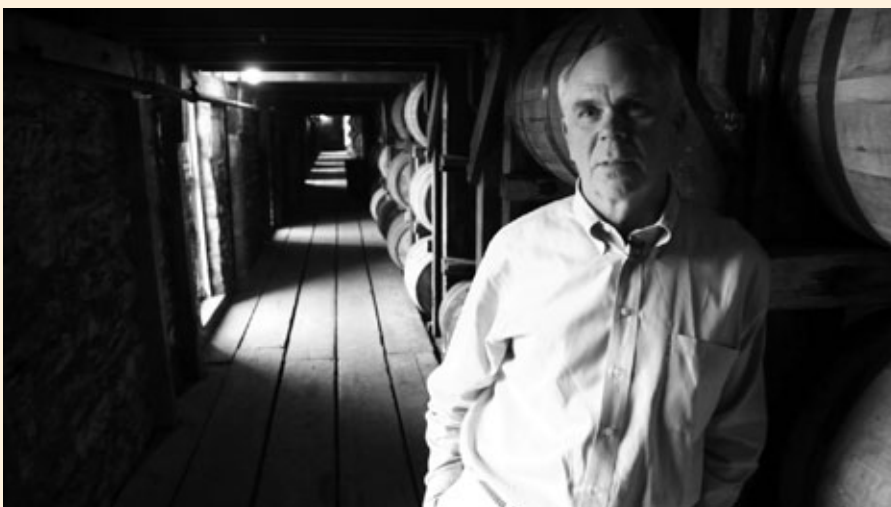
thing that was so unbelievably well organized."

After the film was shown, the audiences enthusiastically participated in the question-and-answer session. "A normal question-and-answer session is maybe 10 or 15 minutes, but we were having question-and-answer sessions for almost an hour," York says. "Really long, good discussions about what was in the film, and what did this mean, and how did we do this. Everything from philosophical questions to technical questions. So as a filmmaker, it's really fun to engage with audiences that are as engaged as the Southern Circuit audiences were."

South Arts has coordinated the circuit since 2006, and more than 100 films and filmmakers have toured the circuit since it became a part of South Arts programming. Previously, it was a program of the South Carolina Arts Commission. "Southern Circuit received hundreds of submissions for the 2013–14 Circuit Tour. *Pride & Joy* was a great fit for circuit audiences," says senior program director Teresa Hollingsworth. "It's incredibly relatable and a wonderful celebration of Southern food traditions."

This season, 18 filmmakers and their films went on tour to 23 communities for a total of 138 screenings, which are funded in part by participation fees and the National Endowment for the Arts. "Colleges and universities, arts centers, indie-film presenters, museums, etc., apply to participate as screening partners," Hollingsworth says. "Organizations are selected based on community interest in independent film and their commitment to developing indie film audiences."

While at first York wasn't exactly sure what to expect, he quickly got the hang of it. Not only was he screening *Pride & Joy*, but he was performing community outreach, and he even spoke to the 4-H club at the high school in Madison, Georgia. "I also spoke to a group of freshmen from the University



Joe York

Julian Van Winkle, owner, Old Rip Van Winkle Distillery, Frankfort, Kentucky





Joe York

Leah Chase, owner-chef, Dooky Chase Restaurant, New Orleans, Louisiana

of Georgia who were doing a class about Southern culture and history. Their professor lived in Madison, and so we had the whole class over to his house before the screening,” York says. “He and his wife put out this incredible spread, and we sat around his antebellum home talking about food for an hour and a half before the screening.”

Each location provided receptions and food for the audience, and some places even had bands. “I had my birthday in Hapeville, and they made me a cake and had the band sing me ‘Happy Birthday,’ so it was an incredibly cool experience to be in these small towns. Everyone was so welcoming and open, and I would love to do it again.”

York knew it would be an interesting, whirlwind trip, and he enjoyed the cultural outreach aspect, as he represented

the Center, the SFA, and SouthDocs. “We are really interested in sharing these films in communities where people are hungry for this kind of material, even if they aren’t on the beaten path,” York says. “It’s wonderful for us to make films and put on symposia and write encyclopedias and do the wonderful things that we do here, but it’s just as important to make sure that we get out on the road and share it with people, and the Southern Circuit was one of the best venues for doing that that I have ever seen.”

York was named Food Filmmaker of the Year at the New York Food Film Fest in 2009 and has also won awards at the Oxford Film Festival, the Chicago Food Film Fest, and the Crossroads Film Festival in Jackson, Mississippi.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary



Image courtesy of the University of North Texas

Jennifer Jensen Wallach

## Civil Rights Act of 1964 Research Grant Awarded

The Center for the Study of Southern Culture and the Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA) are pleased to announce the recipient of a \$1,000 research grant to support scholarship on the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the desegregation of Southern restaurants. Jennifer Jensen Wallach, an associate professor of history at the University of North Texas, is the recipient of the grant. Wallach received her PhD in African American studies at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Her proposal approached the topic of civil rights and foodways from a fresh, unexpected angle.

“Many alternative eating practices were influenced by the Nation of Islam, whose rejection of the goals of the civil rights movement extended to the culinary realm,” wrote Wallach in her proposal. “My research investigates the alternative of cultural nationalists who answered ‘no’ and advocated for culinary separatism, not by embracing the stereotypical food represented by soul food, but by creating a new dietary practice.”

Wallach is currently researching a paper on the foodways of cultural nationalists in the wake of the civil rights movement. The SFA and the Center look forward to publishing her work in the summer of 2014.



Joe York

Victor “Goat” Lafayette, oysterman, Bowens Island, Charleston, South Carolina

# Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference

## Faulkner and History, July 20–24, 2014

Scholars, teachers, and students from the fields of history and literary studies will join other lovers of William Faulkner's work at the University of Mississippi for the 41st annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference, scheduled for July 20–24, 2014. The conference theme, "Faulkner and History," will explore Faulkner's imaginative vision of historical forces, processes, and events, the shaping role of such events on his literary oeuvre, his significance as a historical figure in his own right, and the impact of his ideas about history, memory, and the past on professional historians and their discipline.

The six keynote speakers for 2014 include three historians and three literary critics. We look forward to welcoming all six to Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha for the first time. Professor James C. Cobb is B. Phinizy Spalding Distinguished Professor in the History of the American South at the University of Georgia, where he has taught since 1997. Among his many books are *The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Southern Identity* (1992), *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (2005), and *The South and America since World War II* (2010). Cobb served as president of the Southern Historical Association in 1999. W. Fitzhugh Brundage is William B. Umstead Professor of History at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where he joined the faculty in 2002. He is author of *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880–1930* (1993), *A Socialist Utopia in the New South: The Ruskin Colonies in Tennessee and Georgia, 1894–1901* (1996), and *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (2005), as well as several edited collections, and in 2011–12 he was the recipient of a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. Natalie J. Ring is Associate Professor of History at the University of Texas at Dallas, where she has taught since 2004. She is author of *The Problem South: Region, Empire, and the New Liberal State, 1880–1930*



Keynote speakers for the 2014 Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference, clockwise from top left: W. Fitzhugh Brundage, James C. Cobb, Natalie J. Ring, Colin (Joan) Dayan, Wai Chee Dimock (Jeremy Wells not pictured)



(2012), coeditor of *The Folly of Jim Crow: Rethinking the Segregated South* (2012), and currently at work on a history of the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola.

Turning from the historians to the literature scholars, Colin (Joan) Dayan is Robert Penn Warren Professor in the Humanities and professor of English at Vanderbilt University, where she has taught since 2004. Her books include



*Fables of Mind: An Inquiry into Poe's Fiction* (1987), *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (1998), *The Story of Cruel and Unusual* (2007), and *The Law Is a White Dog*, named a Choice Outstanding Academic Title for 2011. Wai Chee Dimock is William Lampson Professor of English and American Studies at Yale University, where she joined the faculty in 1997. She is author of *Empire for Liberty: Melville and the Poetics of Individualism* (1991), *Residues of Justice: Literature, Law, Philosophy* (1997), and *Through Other Continents: American Literature across Deep Time* (2008) and regularly teaches a class on

Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Faulkner as part of the Open Yale online education program. Jeremy Wells is assistant professor of English at Indiana University Southeast in New Albany, Indiana. He is author of *Romances of the White Man's Burden: Race, Empire, and the Plantation in American Literature, 1880–1936* (2011) and coeditor of a forthcoming collection of essays that approach the plantation as a key site and force in the emergence of modernity. Additional speakers and panelists will be selected early next year from the conference call for papers, which can be viewed at [www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner](http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner).

Other conference events will include sessions on “Teaching Faulkner,” conducted by James Carothers, University of Kansas; Brian McDonald, J. P. McCaskey High School, Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Charles Peek, emeritus, University of Nebraska at Kearney; Terrell Tebbetts, Lyon College; and Theresa Towner, University of Texas, Dallas. Collaborators on the Digital Yoknapatawpha project, a database and digital mapping project spearheaded by Stephen Railton of the University of Virginia, will preview the site and present updates on its progress at a special session that will become an annual feature of the conference. There will also be a “Collecting Faulkner” presentation led by Seth Berner; an exhibition of Faulkner books, manuscripts, photographs, and memorabilia at the J.D. Williams Library; and an exhibition at University Museums. Optional daylong guided tours for participants will visit Faulkner-related sites in northeast Mississippi and the Mississippi Delta. Other conference events include a buffet supper; an afternoon cocktail party; a picnic on the grounds of Faulkner's home, Rowan Oak; and the legendary open mike evening, “Faulkner on the Fringe,” at Southside Gallery on the Oxford town square.

Discount rates for the conference are available for groups of five or more students. Inexpensive dormitory housing is available for all registrants. Contact Robert Fox at [rfox@olemiss.edu](mailto:rfox@olemiss.edu) for details. For all other inquiries, contact Jay Watson, director, at [jwatson@olemiss.edu](mailto:jwatson@olemiss.edu).

Jay Watson

## 2014 Oxford Conference for the Book to Be Held March 26–28

The March 2014 Oxford Conference for the Book (OCB) will be the 21st annual event to celebrate books, reading, and writing while also examining the practical concerns on which the literary arts and the humanities depend, including literacy, freedom of expression, and the state of publishing. The conference convenes fiction and nonfiction writers, journalists, poets, publishers, teachers, students, and literacy advocates for three days of readings, lectures, panels, workshops, and social events that celebrate the written word.

The 2014 conference theme is “Writing the Southern Landscape.” Programs will include panels on poetry, fiction, memory and Southern history, Southern politics, the Lafayette County Literacy Council Forum on Adult and Family Literacy, and documentary photography. OCB partner Square Books will select fiction writers and will host readings. The conference will happen alongside the Southern Literary Festival, an event for Southern colleges and schools founded in 1937 to promote Southern literature, this year hosted at the University of Mississippi.

The next *Register* will have more information about the programs and guest writers planned for the conference. Later this fall, be sure to check [oxfordconference-forthebook.com](http://oxfordconference-forthebook.com) for updated information.

Becca Walton

## 2014 Mississippi Delta Cultural Tour, May 21–24

In May of 2014 the Mississippi Delta Cultural Tour returns to Greenwood and its environs. The 2014 tour is in the planning stage and has been moved to May to accommodate the schedules of those whose March schedules had previously prevented them from joining the tour—teachers and scholars, we're looking at you. We're also hoping to get some of that perfect springtime-in-Mississippi weather, to witness the pushing of new green shoots through the warm, fertile Delta soil, and to catch some blues out of doors.

The tour will travel to Stoneville for the first time, where we will visit the Delta Research and Extension Center (DREC). The goal of DREC scientists and specialists is to “work cooperatively to solve crop and aquaculture production problems and transfer new information and technology to area producers.” We'll hear from those scientists about the work they do in this region whose economy has long been based on agriculture. We will also visit the new Chinese in the Delta Exhibition at Delta State University, the fascinating Martin & Sue King Railroad Heritage Museum in Cleveland, and, of course, Turnrow Book Company in Greenwood. Numerous additional stops at museums, lectures by local historians, readings by fiction writers, and performances by Delta blues musicians are in the planning.

Look for more information in the next issue of the *Southern Register*. Information on the tour and on the places we'll visit, as well as dozens of photos of past tours, will soon be available on the tour's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/mdct13](http://www.facebook.com/mdct13)) and on the Center's website (<http://southernstudies.olemiss.edu/mdct/>). For up-to-the-minute information, please contact tour organizer Jimmy Thomas via e-mail at [jgthomas@olemiss.edu](mailto:jgthomas@olemiss.edu) or by telephone at 662-915-3374.

The tour will again be based in Greenwood and is \$600 per person for all program activities, meals, and local transportation. The fee does not include lodging. Remember to sign up early. Only 40 spots are available. Group accommodations are offered at the Alluvian, in downtown Greenwood ([www.thealluvian.com](http://www.thealluvian.com)). Rooms at the Alluvian require a separate registration and are priced at a discounted rate of \$185 a night plus tax, which includes a full Southern breakfast. Call 866-600-5201 and ask for the “Delta Tour” rate. Rooms are also available at the Greenwood Best Western, 662-455-5777, or the Hampton Inn, 662-455-7985.

# Providing a Platform for Conversation

## Southern Studies Alums Teach Students of All Ages

Offering students a deeper understanding of the South's cultural patterns is a rewarding experience for instructors who are in the classroom on a daily basis. Four Southern Studies alumni who are able to make an impact on their students' lives are **Heather Freel**, **Velsie Pate**, **Molly McGehee**, and **Nell Knox**.

As a second generation University of Mississippi graduate who grew up in the Grove, **Heather Freel's** first treasured book was *Ghost Stories of Rowan Oak* by Dean Faulkner Wells. Freel was an English major and a Southern Studies minor who teaches junior English (British Literature) and Southern Studies at St. Benedict at Auburndale High School in Memphis. "I read Johnny Vaught's autobiography for a high school book report," Freel says. "My grandmother was a member of the University of Mississippi staff for over 15 years. I cut my teeth on Southern cooking, the Square is where I find peace, and Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi is truly a part of my soul."

Freel says her students inspired her to offer Southern Studies after she attended a 2012 Gilder Lehrman Teacher Seminar hosted by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. "Listening to the topics discussed and the different views presented was inspirational," Freel says, realizing that it would be fun one day to teach a Southern Studies class. "One day, in class, we were discussing dialect, and I commented on how our Southern accent is really a form of the British accent. The students were in awe, so after class we discussed more about the South, and they were excited over the topics."

After more class discussion, the students ultimately persuaded Freel to present a Southern Studies class as an addition to the St. Benedict at Auburndale curriculum. "I am overwhelmed at the enthusiasm for this class," she says. "Originally, this was designed to be a semester elective, and I was hoping have at least enough students to fill one section per semester. During the summer, I received a call that the numbers exceeded expectation, and they asked if I would

be willing to teach two sections first semester and one section second semester. I jumped at the opportunity."

The high school students are interested in food, culture, history, hospitality, people, food, and traditions. Freel supplements her classes with short stories and a few volumes of *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* as well as *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams and *Pudd'nhead Wilson* by Mark Twain.

"Needless to say it went over pretty well," Freel says. "The passion the stu-



dents had and the desire to know more about their South is the main reason we have a Southern Studies class at SBA."

**Velsie Pate**, who earned her MA in 2009, has the added challenge of teaching Southern Studies to international students at the University of Mississippi. As an instructor of intensive English, she is teaching two sections of the IE 050, American Culture. Tamara Warhol, UM associate professor of modern languages and codirector of the intensive English program, and Jasmine Karlowski, lecturer of intensive English and codirector of the intensive English program, approached Pate about teaching a group of Brazilians who had an interest in the American South. Her two sections are comprised of 37 students from Brazil, China, Colombia, and South Korea. "We are in the process of having that class approved specifically as an intensive English course focusing on the culture of the Southern

U.S.," says Pate, who also earned a BA in music and a BA in English from UM.

Since this is the inaugural semester for the class, Pate is building a foundation she can use in the future. Although it has been difficult for her to find just one Southern Studies textbook, she is using several volumes of *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* and Internet sources such as the History Channel and PBS. She uses resources from the American culture classes she taught for the intensive English pro-



gram and a section from Randee Falk's book *Spotlight on the U.S.A.*

Pate pushes the students to gain knowledge outside the classroom, so they are going on library and museum tours and attending Brown Bag lectures at the Center. "It is a joy to teach the international students because people experience things in different ways in other countries, and they like to talk about that," she says. "Sometimes I'll expect them to know something, and nobody says anything, and I recognize that as a teaching moment. Then there are other times they know so much, such as when a student was talking about the black power movement, and I thought, wow, he knows about that?"

Pate is an accommodating teacher who often stays after class to chat with those students who have questions or want to further discuss a certain topic. Her main goal is to have more international students majoring in Southern Studies. "I loved it when I got my master's in Southern Studies," Pate says.

“So the fact that there is a way that I can encourage other students to go into Southern Studies is great. I was thrilled when my boss asked me to do this.”

**Molly McGehee** was living in Nice, France, on a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship, when she began to think about what she would do with her future. “The longer I spent away from home, the more I began to think critically about the region I called home,” McGehee says. Since she had taken classes in Southern literature for her BA in history from Davidson College, she fueled her desire to know more about the South by earning her MA in Southern Studies from the University of Mississippi in 2000. From there, she went on to earn another



Velsie Pate

er MA and a PhD in American Studies from Emory University in Atlanta, and she eventually joined the faculty of Presbyterian College in South Carolina.

At Presbyterian she is associate professor of English and director of the Southern Studies program. She teaches Southern Women's Writing, African American Literature, American Identities, and Introduction to Southern Studies to an enthusiastic group of students. “They are very popular courses. Most of our students are from the South, especially South Carolina and Georgia, so there is a desire to explore and better understand the culture and history that they claim as their own,” McGehee says. “Much of what we read and study is challenging and may push students out of their comfort zones. But they rise to the occasion and don't shy away from asking hard questions.”

She centers her courses around the development of students' critical thinking and communication skills and by introducing them to challenging ideas or topics that they may not have previously considered in great depth. Most

of McGehee's courses focus heavily on the legacy of slavery and segregation within the present, by way of William Faulkner's famous quotation “The past is never dead. It's not even past.”

“We talk a good bit about gender performance and class structures within Southern society as well,” says McGehee, who was named Professor of the Year in 2013. “I further seek to get students to understand the U.S. South as a diverse section of the U.S. that is connected to broader national and global processes and flows.”

In her Southern Women Writers class, she examines the ways in which Southern women writers from the late 19th century to the present have upheld or challenged



Nell Linton Knox

conventions of Southern society. “We look at a diversity of writers and a diversity of texts, from novels to poetry to memoirs to country music,” she says.

Of course, reading texts is no substitute for getting out into the real world, so in McGehee's Southern Meccas class, students not only read a variety of works, but they then go on a weeklong bus trip around the South, visiting historical, literary, musical, and culinary destinations—including Alice Walker's birthplace in Eatonton, Georgia, the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Charles Vergo's Rendezvous barbecue restaurant in Memphis, and the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville.

**Nell Linton Knox** has a group of non-traditional students in the Community Enrichment Series at Millsaps College. Since 1972 Millsaps College has offered to the Greater Jackson community a variety of opportunities through the series, which offers noncredit courses covering a variety of special interest areas. Knox, who earned her BA in English

from Millsaps and her MA in Southern Studies in 2011, felt that learning about the South was a natural fit. Her class meets four times a semester and was originally titled *An Introduction to Southern Studies: Beyond Sweet Tea and The Help*. “It was right around the time that Kathryn Stockett's book had come out, and I had written the entry about her for the *Mississippi Encyclopedia*,” Knox says.

Knox and her students talk about what it means to study a region, and they focus on different aspects of the South. “We initially talked about what the South is, where is it; then we talked race, history, memory, and travel and tourism. We wrapped up by talking about Southern food, with everybody bringing favorite Southern foods, and we watched Southern Foodways Alliance videos.”

This semester, Knox's class includes six female students, meets three times a week, and is titled *The Future of Southern Studies: What Does It Mean to Be a Southerner Today?* “I think the most interesting conversations we have are about race and memory,” Knox says. “The class I have right now consists of five white women and one African American woman, who has been wonderful about sharing her alternative memories and history, which are often really different from the memories of the white women who are her age.”

Knox, who is also a freelance writer and private tutor, wants her students to explore more deeply on their own, and she always sends a follow-up e-mail to her students the day after class, where she lists ideas for further reading or links to interesting websites or videos.

“I start out with a syllabus in my mind but it may take a different course depending on class discussion,” she says. “I try to tell them that I am not the expert, all I am doing is providing a platform for conversation and a place for us to meet and talk about things that otherwise we would never really get a chance to sit down and talk about, because you are probably not going to bring up your memories of race and Southern history at your coffee shop or book club.”

Through their wide range of classrooms, these professors are all enabling their students to see the South for the diverse, distinct culture that it is.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

# Champions of Racial Equality Create Advocates for a Better Mississippi through Education

The mission of the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation is to work in communities and classrooms, in Mississippi and beyond, to support a movement of racial equity and wholeness as a pathway to ending and transcending all division and discrimination based on difference. Currently, the institute is working on three main initiatives: community relations, youth engagement, and academics.

The driving force behind that mission is Susan Glisson, executive director since 2002. The Evans, Georgia, native earned a BA in religion and in history from Mercer University, a MA in Southern Studies from the University of Mississippi, and a PhD in American studies from the College of William and Mary.

“We’re working in over 20 communities around Mississippi through our Welcome Table initiative, and we’re gearing up for our Summer Youth Initiative next June, as well as for Freedom Schools throughout Mississippi in July,” Glisson says. “Jennifer Stollman, our academic director, is working to create a new minor in civic engagement within the College of Liberal Arts.”

At the Summer Youth Initiative (SYI), rising high school sophomores and juniors learn about civil rights, advocacy, critical thinking, and relationship building from an international staff. SYI educates approximately 30 young Mississippi citizens each year. They learn to exercise their voices and leadership potential and to embrace a commitment to social change, and they become community advocates, inspiring their schools and hometowns. At the end of the nine-day program, the young people critique and analyze the program in order for staff members to perfect it the next year.

So far, more than 100 students have gone through the Summer Youth Institutes.

This summer, the Winter Institute held a Youth Congress in Jackson, which provided the opportunity for 50 students to learn more about the life of civil rights activist Medgar Evers. “The students were very thoughtful about the congress and were inspired by Myrlie Evers-Williams, who spoke to them, and they used that inspiration to make meaningful suggestions about making Mississippi better,” Glisson says.

*Southern Living* magazine recently lauded Glisson’s hard work, as she was named one of the New Heroes of Civil Rights in their August issue. The magazine selected four honorees who represent the next generation of leaders forging a better future without forsaking a bitter past.

A senior editor at *Southern Living* encouraged Glisson to submit an application on behalf of the Winter Institute, and a panel of experts selected her. “It is an honor to be in the midst of other folks doing such great work,” says Glisson, who helped the University of Mississippi organize events to mark the 50th anniversary of the enrollment of James Meredith, among many other efforts. “I am a part of the best team of folks here, and I share the honor with them.”

The student-led initiative One Mississippi also reaps the benefits of Glisson’s thoughts on social justice. The group has hosted several open discussions about the campus climate at the university. One of the changes that occurred is the title of the student body’s elected personality from Colonel Reb to Mr. Ole Miss. The first election for Mr. Ole Miss was held in September, with senior public policy leadership major Rob Pyron winning. “I am proud of the student leadership that transformed that election title; it reflects a new understanding of our complicated relationship with our history,” Glisson says.

Hope Owens-Wilson, a student intern from Jackson, has been involved

with the Winter Institute since she was a freshman in high school. “Having the ability to do for other high school students and community members what Susan and the Winter Institute have done for me has been my greatest achievement thus far,” Owens-Wilson says. “The great thing about being an intern for the Institute is that one can participate in a multitude of aspects of the Institute’s work. Throughout my time there I have been able to do a little bit of everything.”

As a senior African American studies major and theatre minor in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, Owens-Wilson also is a leader in One Mississippi. She says it is one of the most fulfilling things she has been able to do with her life. “I never thought that it would touch as many people as it did when I took it over in 2012, but I’m glad that it seems to have the reach it does,” she says.

Through her time at the Winter Institute and being around Glisson, she has discovered many important lessons. “I’ve learned that in order to get anywhere, one has to know where they came from, and the key to creating lasting change after conflict is open and honest dialogue between the ‘hurt’ parties. I’ve also learned that it is important to try to give back to the universe as much as or more than you’ve gained,” Owens-Wilson says.

It is a sentiment echoed by Glisson in the *Southern Living* article, as she says, “I believe the truth is the foundation for the future,” she says. “Truth-telling [underscores] the whole approach for what we do.”

The *Southern Living* article on Glisson, “The New Heroes of Civil Rights” can be found on the *Southern Living* website.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

# The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture Events Continue into 2014

In the past few months, *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* series editors Charles Reagan Wilson, Jimmy Thomas, and Ann Abadie, and Center Director and *Gender* volume coeditor Ted Ownby have traveled across the South and beyond to discuss the scholarship included in the encyclopedia and the process involved in producing a 24-volume encyclopedia series.

In May editors traveled to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., where the Library's director of publications, Ralph Eubanks, hosted a kickoff celebration in acknowledgement of the Center's achievement. U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey joined Eubanks, Ownby, Wilson, UM Chancellor Dan Jones, and UNC Press editorial director Mark Simpson-Vos in giving remarks.

On August 20, Wilson, Thomas, and Ownby visited the Georgia Center for the Book, where Wilson gave a lecture entitled "The Twenty-First Century South: What *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* Tells Us about the Burden of the Southern Future" to an audience that included a considerable number of UM Southern Studies program graduates. A panel discussion on the entire series followed Wilson's talk. The following week, *Urbanization* volume editor, Wanda Rushing (University of Memphis); *Art and Architecture* volume coeditor Judith Bonner (The Historic New Orleans Collection); and *Foodways* volume editor John T. Edge (Southern Foodways Alliance) joined Ownby and series editors Wilson and Thomas for an event at Square Books in Oxford dubbed "the New Encycloparty," complete with "encyclopunch."

On September 19–21, *Foodways* volume editor, John T. Edge; *Ethnicity* volume editor, Celeste Ray (University of the South); *Music* volume editor, Bill Malone (University of Wisconsin, emeritus); and *Art and Architecture* volume coeditor Estill Curtis Pennington (Paris, Kentucky) joined Wilson, Thomas, Abadie, and Ownby in



Becca Walton

Left to right, Ted Ownby, Jimmy Thomas, Judith Bonner, and John T. Edge at Square Books in Oxford



Becca Walton

Encyclopunch at Square Books in Oxford

Louisville, Kentucky, for the Filson Historical Society's annual fall conference, "Viewing the South from a 21st-century Perspective: *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*."

This November 2, Thomas will moderate a panel on the series at the Louisiana Book Festival in Baton Rouge. Panelists will include *Media* volume coeditor Sharon Monteith (University of Nottingham), writer and historian Shane K. Bernard (New Iberia, Louisiana); and novelist and writer James Wilcox (Louisiana State



Becca Walton

Diderots of Dixie, Jimmy Thomas, left, and Charles Reagan Wilson

University). On November 13 the series editors will travel to Lemuria Books in Jackson for an in-store discussion.

On December 11 editors will visit The Historic New Orleans Collection for an afternoon presentation and discussion with Judith Bonner and other editors and contributors to the series. In the spring of 2014, date to be determined, editors and contributors will visit the Clinton School of Public Service in Little Rock. Keep an eye on the Center website, southernstudies.olemiss.edu, for more information on these two *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* events.

# Southern Foodways Alliance Award Winners

At its 16th annual Southern Foodways Symposium, focused this year on Women at Work, the Southern Foodways Alliance inducted three women into its hall of fame. Read on to learn more about Cynthia Hayes, the John Egerton Prize winner; Alzina Toups, winner of the Ruth Fertel Keeper of the Flame Award; and Vertamae Grosvenor, the Craig Claiborne Lifetime Achievement Award winner.

This year's John Egerton Prize went to Cynthia Hayes of Savannah, Georgia, on behalf of Southeastern African American Farmers Organic Network (SAAFON), which she founded along with Owusu Bandele, emeritus professor at Southern University in Baton Rouge. Hayes has family roots in Georgia. She spent summers on her family's tobacco farm in Kentucky, where she listened to her uncles chart out the day's chores around the breakfast table.

She grew up, went to California for college, and met and married her husband, Terry. After they raised their two sons and a daughter, they took over a bed and breakfast in Jamaica. That led to the development of an 18-acre farm there. She and Terry still own it, raising plantain, bananas, avocados, and dasheen, an export crop similar to yams.

Her work has taken her throughout the U.S., the Caribbean, and Central and South America. Along the way, she realized that African American farmers lacked the education and training to get into organic farming and that black farmers who were interested in farming organically weren't accepted by larger organic groups dominated by white farmers. As well, black farmers were suspicious of government programs after a history of mistreatment from the federal government, including a long period when the U.S. Department of Agriculture discriminated against them in its loans or subsidies programs. What's more, there was the red tape of organic certification.

Thanks to Hayes and to SAAFON, those barriers are smaller now. The



Brandall Atkinson



Brandall Atkinson

her leadership, and we thank SAAFON for helping stanch black land loss and inspiring a new generation of farmers.



Alzina Toups, the chef and owner of Alzina's Restaurant in Galliano, Louisiana, was the winner of this year's Ruth Fertel Keeper of the Flame Award. The award is given each year with support from the Fertel Foundation of New Orleans to honor an unsung tradition bearer of Southern foodways.

Alzina Toups's paternal ancestors came to Louisiana from Nova Scotia, as did many Cajuns. Her mother's family—"great, great cooks"—was Portuguese, though both of Alzina's parents primarily spoke French at home. Alzina still peppers her conversation with French words and phrases. She describes her late father as a workaholic shrimper—an occupation she also undertook as a young married woman. On a pittance of a salary, her father saved enough money to purchase the land that she and her family still live on in Galliano, just steps from Bayou Lafourche. It is on that land that Alzina, now in her 80s, carries on her father's strong work ethic by operating Alzina's Restaurant

farmers that are a part of SAAFON have taken a giant, historic step to improve the economic and environmental sustainability of their farms while increasing the chance of preserving a vanishing yet important resource—black-owned farmland.

The SFA thanks Cynthia Hayes for



Cynthia Hayes



Rendall Atkinson

National Public Radio producer Sue Goodwin has said, “Not many preceded her using food as a lens. You know the saying, ‘There’s a universe in a grain of sand?’ That’s what she did with food. You saw the entirety of America’s history with race through food.” That achievement alone is remarkable—but it is only an inkling of the breadth and depth, the spirit, soul, and magic of Vertamae’s voice.

Vertamae Grosvenor’s radio documentaries—*Slave Voices: Things Past Telling*; *Daufuskie: Never Enough Too Soon*; *AIDS and Black America: Breaking the Silence*; and *South Africa and the African American Experience*—have won for her numerous honors, including accolades from the National Association of Black Journalists and The Ohio State University. She also received the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award and the Robert F. Kennedy Prize. She has appeared in and has been adviser for two classic films, *Daughters of the Dust* and Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*. Born in the South Carolina Lowcountry, she has also lived in Philadelphia, Paris, Italy, and New York. Grosvenor was an honorary pallbearer for James Baldwin and a eulogist for Nina Simone. She was a poetry-reading, dancing, and singing Space Goddess in the Arkestra of Sun Ra. And for a long weekend this October she was our honored guest.



in a former welding shop. Alzina’s offers a one-of-a-kind dining experience. In the chef’s own words, it is more of “get-together place” than a traditional restaurant. She entertains only one party per mealtime and accepts no walk-ins. Once you reserve the space, and her cooking talents, they are yours for the duration of one relaxing, home-cooked, serve-yourself meal. While she is currently renowned for specialties such as crabmeat lasagna (she boils and picks her own crabs) and fig tart, Alzina has a vast repertoire that spans two cookbooks and numerous composition notebooks stacked in the corner of her kitchen.

Writer, cook, and griot Vertamae Grosvenor, a native of South Carolina, received the Craig Claiborne Lifetime Achievement Award.

Grosvenor’s 1970 autobiographical cookbook, *Vibration Cooking, or the Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl*, gave life to and nurtured a whole new way to come to the table and talk about race. It did so by filling the table with food and telling that food’s story. Vertamae, continuing to speak in a woman’s voice, pushed that conversation on race both deeper and further with her sociological study, *Thursdays and Every Other Sunday Off: A Domestic Rap*.

## SOUTHERN FOODWAYS ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP



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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, VISIT US AT OUR WEBSITE: [www.southernfoodways.org](http://www.southernfoodways.org) or e-mail [info@southernfoodways.org](mailto:info@southernfoodways.org)

# From the Pages of *Living Blues* “Downhome New Orleans Blues”

A recent issue of *Living Blues* highlighted an often-overlooked part of the New Orleans music scene. Issue # 226 took a look at the Big Easy’s downhome blues community through the stories of local musicians, such as Little Freddie King, Guitar Lightnin’ Lee, Brother Tyrone, Benny Turner, and Walter “Wolfman” Washington.

In “Downhome New Orleans Blues,” *Living Blues* contributor Scott Barretta chronicles the development of New Orleans blues culture. “The blues are at the base of the music produced by New Orleans, but the city is not known for the downhome variety of the music so closely associated with Mississippi or Chicago.” Despite its blues background, the Crescent City is best known for its jazz and zydeco music traditions. “The presence of horns—and horn arrangements—is notable throughout New Orleans’s musical history,” writes Barretta. “In terms of musical sophistication one might make comparisons with the historic music scenes in New York City or Los Angeles, where more urbane musicians vastly overshadowed more downhome performers despite the presence of many transplanted Southerners. Blues nevertheless remained popular among many people in New Orleans, and, one imagines, particularly among the many migrants to the city from rural areas.”

The New Orleans blues community boasts several Mississippians, including guitarist Little Freddie King. Barretta’s interview with King focuses on the “history of the downhome blues scene in New Orleans and its strong connections to Mississippi from the perspective of one of its longest active participants.”

King plays a self-described “mix of the sounds of New Orleans, the Delta, and the south Mississippi blues style of his father,” or what he calls “gutbucket” blues, writes Barretta. He moved to New Orleans from nearby McComb at age 14. As a teenager, he bought his first guitar and slowly began playing gigs in and around New Orleans with another Mississippi native, Polka Dot Slim. “We



played at Miss Irons’s club on Conti, the Green Room on Galvez, the Step Down on Broad Street. Used to call them holes in the wall, but most people call them juke joints.”

King gained exposure as a frontman by appearing at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. These performances led to bookings on the West Coast and eventually in Europe. His career slowed in the late 1970s, and he played only occasionally until early 1990s when he formed his current band with drummer “Wacko” Wade Wright and bassist Anthony “Skeets” Anderson. At 73 years old, King is still inspired to write blues songs. “The blues, what it does, is it relieves you while you’re producing it, and it makes you feel good. Still, when you finish, the same burden is right back again. Gutbucket blues is just from the soul and the feelin’, and it’s just as deep down as you can go.”

King’s close friend, Guitar Lightnin’ Lee, is known throughout New Orleans for his colorful dress and rough-hewn playing style. Born and raised in New Orleans, Lee began playing music in New Orleans as a teenager. His current project, the Thunder Band, has appeared multiple times on HBO’s *Treme* and recently received a Big Easy Award for the blues.



Barretta also sits down with singer “Brother Tyrone” Pollard, another native New Orleanian who found a place in the blues. “This voice and this soul been kicking around New Orleans for over 30 years, and this is a dream come true,” says Tyrone.

Issue #226 is illustrated with the photos of artist Bill Steber and also includes a photo essay providing a look at several other downhome blues musicians regularly performing in New Orleans.

The magazine is now available in both print and digital formats. To learn more about the New Orleans downhome blues scene, pick up a copy of *Living Blues* at local retailers, digital newsstands, or subscribe today at [www.livingblues.com](http://www.livingblues.com).

# Mary Warner: A Globetrotting Southern Ambassador

Mary Warner takes her Southern Studies degree across the globe as a consultant who works in the design and building industry. Her key client at the moment is an Italian stone company that is based in Verona, Italy, and Brazil. They are the premier stone company in the world for high-end stone, like marbles, quartzes, and other exotic materials. This enables her to go to Europe a few times a year for meetings and shows, and travel extensively throughout the U.S. from Florida to San Francisco.

“Working with international clients is wonderful because I get to learn aspects about other cultures you can’t just read about in a book,” says Warner. “There is definitely a learning curve to traveling abroad, especially for long periods of time. I try to look at each trip as an adventure and keep my plans loose. Europeans are very friendly, so there is no point trying to book every minute of your time while there. Last year, I had an impromptu birthday party on the Piazza Bra in Verona that rivaled anything I’ve ever planned for myself stateside.”

Although her work is marketing and communication based, she also works on brand strategy. Her Southern Studies degree prepared her for the

business world by teaching her how to listen. “Sitting in a lecture, waiting for your turn to speak, or going out in the field to do interviews for one of my documentary classes really prepared me to be a good listener,” says Warner, who is a former producer for the *Thacker Mountain Radio* program. “You have to understand what your client needs in order to deliver it. Listening is one way to do it. Being a Southern Studies student also requires a lot of self-discipline and creativity. While people often understand the connection between the former, creativity doesn’t immediately register with business. You have to be very creative to make your business work for you.”

A client once told her, “time is a luxury,” a bit of advice she has never forgotten. “I work for my client six months out of the year and the free time I have allows me travel and to work on other projects,” says Warner, who has been everywhere from rural Connecticut to Paris, and heads to Morocco in October. “As for the rest of my time, I’m a contributor to the *Los Angeles Review of Books* and I’m in the process of designing an art project that will take advantage of my time abroad to explore the idea of home,” she says.

While she is abroad, she educates



Courtesy Mary Warner

Mary Warner at work in Italy

people on what it’s really like to be a Southerner. “I’ve been fortunate enough to have spent a lot of time in the region, so I feel like I have a finger on the pulse of what the South is today, and I think that’s important,” she says. “As places like Atlanta—my new hometown—continue to attract people from other parts of the world, we are in the spotlight like never before. And that’s an opportunity.”

Rebecca Lauck Cleary



Brandall Atkinson

The Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA) is pleased to announce the release of *The Larder: Food Studies Methods from the American South*, published by the University of Georgia Press (UGA Press). SFA Director John T. Edge, Center Director Ted Ownby, and Elizabeth Engelhardt, chair of the American Studies Department at the University of Texas-Austin, coedited the academic anthology. It is the first volume in the UGA Press series Southern Foodways Alliance Studies in People, Culture, and Place. *The Larder* is available at bookstores, including Off Square Books in Oxford, and can also be purchased through Amazon.

# Recent Gifts Endow Foodways Professorship

## UM Now Searching for Top Scholar to Fill Position for 2014–15

Thanks to generous contributions from individuals and foundations, the Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA) has, along with the College of Liberal Arts, endowed a professorship in the growing academic study of foodways. UM has launched a search to fill the position for the 2014–15 academic year.

“The University of Mississippi’s academic environment is greatly enriched when we are able to offer classes representing new fields of study taught by experts in those fields,” said Glenn Hopkins, dean of liberal arts. “We are deeply grateful to generous alumni and friends who are providing support to bring a foodways expert to our faculty. The study of foodways offers students a different avenue for gaining a heightened sense of various cultures.”

With the help of a gift from the Chisholm Foundation of Laurel, Mississippi, the Center and SFA have cohosted a postdoctoral fellow in Southern foodways since the fall of 2011. The fellow has taught undergraduate and graduate classes on Southern foodways and its relation to other fields, such as history, literature, African American studies, and environmental studies. With the hiring of a tenure-track professor, the Center and the SFA are able to make a stronger commitment to the teaching of foodways.

“The programs of the Southern Foodways Alliance have helped make the University of Mississippi one of the leading places in America to study the relationship between food and culture,” said Center Director Ted Ownby. “Southern Studies students have benefited for three years now from postdoctoral teaching fellows offering vibrant classes on Southern foodways. Now it’s time to make that situation more permanent with a faculty member who will

teach in Southern Studies and in another area. The new faculty member will teach at least one foodways seminar, team teach with other Southern Studies faculty, and teach courses in another department, while also collaborating with the Southern Foodways Alliance.”

SFA Director John T. Edge notes the growing popularity of undergraduate- and graduate-level food studies programs. “In recent years, we have seen more and more students enroll in the master’s program in Southern Studies with a specific interest in foodways,” he said. “We are able to offer direct experience with the SFA to some of these students through graduate assistantships. A tenure-track foodways professor will telegraph the SFA’s commitment to the academic study of Southern foodways. It will bring to the Center for the Study of Southern Culture talented undergraduate and graduate students who want to study the ways in which food both shapes and reflects their worlds.”

Becky and Ron Feder of Ocean Springs, Mississippi, stepped forward with the initial gift to create the SFA endowment in 2003. “After John T. Edge shared his vision of what Southern Foodways at Ole Miss would encompass, Becky and I were totally astonished by its brilliant appeal,” said Ron Feder. “For the first time, dedicated, enthusiastic academics would undertake a rigorous, scholarly examination of Southern food culture, from farm to table, in diverse contexts like holidays, family traditions, styles of preparation, drink, music, religion, and race.”

Edge expressed his thanks to the Feders and other friends who have built the endowment to its present level. “It’s exciting and gratifying to receive such generous support by people who believe in the mission of the SFA and the Center. We’ve received support

from throughout the nation—including a significant gift from the Cockayne Fund directed by Eliza Brown of San Francisco, California, a longtime supporter of our biannual compendium of great writing, *Cornbread Nation*. We have also attracted support from just down the road in Louisiana, by way of Alan Franco of New Orleans.”

Donors Eliza Kraft Olander and Brian McHenry of Raleigh, North Carolina, also believed in SFA’s vision of a foodways professorship. “We have had the good fortune of being involved in the SFA for almost five years now. Our love of great food, drink, and incredibly talented folks drew us to this valuable organization. More recently, the SFA’s mission to serve a new generation of foodways-focused students inspired us to make a contribution to the professorship fund,” said Olander.

Kristie and Charles Abney of Atlanta, Georgia, made a generous contribution to the foodways professorship endowment, too. “Today’s college students are increasingly interested in food, food cultures, and food systems,” said Kristie Abney. “The foodways professorship will be a lasting asset to Southern Foodways Alliance work, both at the University of Mississippi and throughout the nation.”

Individuals and organizations can make gifts to support the Southern Foodways Alliance or the Center for the Study of Southern Culture by mailing a check with the fund noted to the University of Mississippi Foundation, P.O. Box 249, University, MS 38677; visiting [www.umfoundation.com/makeagift](http://www.umfoundation.com/makeagift); or contacting Nikki Neely, development officer for the Center at 662-915-6678 or [nlneely@olemiss.edu](mailto:nlneely@olemiss.edu).

# Reading the South

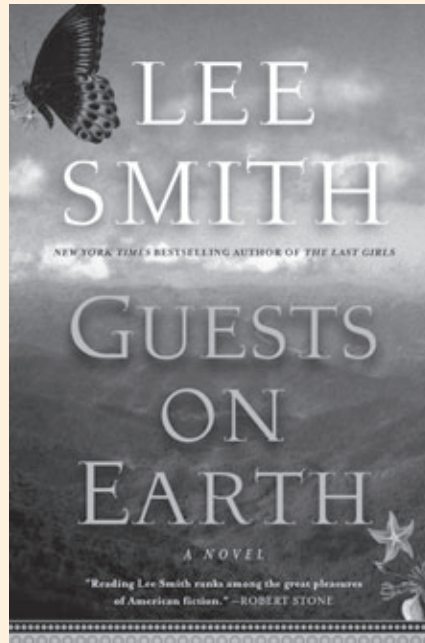
## *Guests on Earth*

By Lee Smith. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books. 368 pages. \$25.95 paper.

Art, creativity, and mental illness are explored with a deft hand in Lee Smith's latest novel, *Guests on Earth*. Smith spins a fictionalized account of lives of the patients at the actual Highland Mental Hospital in Asheville, North Carolina, told from the perspective of Evalina Toussaint. Evalina's life provides the background of the novel, as she grows up with her mother, an exotic dancer in New Orleans. When Evalina is just 13, tragedy strikes. "On January 20, 1937, I came home from school to find that Mamma had slit her wrists with the silver penknife that had the fleur-de-lis handle, which she had used to open billets-doux. Blood was everywhere, soaking her legs and the pretty afghan. It had a certain smell, like copper pennies, I will never forget it. I put down my books and took off my coat and climbed up beside her on the great divan and curled into her back the way we used to sleep sometimes, two girls together, and made believe that we were on a ship indeed, sailing down the narrow streets of the Quarter out into the great Mississippi River and far, far away."

Now orphaned, Evalina winds up in Asheville in the late 1930s through 1948—the year of the actual fire in which author F. Scott Fitzgerald's estranged wife Zelda Fitzgerald—a talented dancer, choreographer, writer, and visual artist in her own right—perished at Highland Mental Hospital, along with eight other female patients in a locked ward on the top floor.

In *Guests on Earth*, Smith gives her own solution to the mystery of the



fire, with a cast of characters of patients, doctors, groundskeepers, and Asheville residents. Several people who actually lived appear in the book as fictional characters, but Smith says in the endnote that she wanted to "depict them as truly as possible." She paints a portrait of life at the hospital, populated by people much like those occupying any small Southern town: a Southern belle sent there by her husband to learn to be a better wife, a boy who was locked in a cage as a child before coming to Highland as a groundskeeper, and a psychiatrist who falls in love with a patient.

Evalina makes friends easily with almost everyone at Highland, but especially with Atlanta belle Dixie Calhoun. "Then she smiled, and I realized how beautiful she was, really beautiful. Even that morning, in a hospital where she was undergoing a course of shock treatments, Dixie looked like a lingerie model who had just stepped from the pages of a fashion magazine, with her jet-black hair

curling naturally all around her heart-shaped face."

Dr. Robert and Mrs. Grace Potter Carroll are in charge, and Dr. Robert believes in the arts and exercise, rather than in Freudian introspection, for his patients, along with shock therapy for some. Mrs. Carroll fosters Evalina's musical talent and teaches her to read music and to play the piano, which leads Evalina to playing accompaniment in many concerts, theatricals, and dances held at Highland Hospital.

Through the arts, Evalina and Zelda connect, and Zelda even believes at some points that Evalina is her daughter Patricia, though their relationship is a jumbled mix of Zelda's lucid moments.

When Evalina first sees Zelda from afar, she is transfixed by her, since the Highland residents all know about this famous woman. "Now I could tell that there was, indeed, something wrong with many of these people. Several spoke to themselves as they came up the path, while others hung their heads, looking neither left nor right. Harsh words of argument came from behind the boxwood hedge; we reached the end of it in time to see an athletic-looking man, whom I took to be a staff member, walk away from a woman seated on a boulder, smoking a cigarette, and swinging her foot disgustingly against the rock. Oddly—for it was still winter—she wore black tights and ballet slippers."

Smith is able to take the reality of a tragic event and fictionalize it in a plausible and interesting way, offering up her version of what could have taken place. She has a personal stake in telling this story, as both her parents suffered from mental illness. Her father was a patient at Highland in the 1950s, and her son spent time

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Book Reviews and Notes by Faculty, Staff, Students, and Friends of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture

there in the 1980s, both as an inpatient and outpatient.

In an essay in *The Algonquin Reader*, Smith says she knew she was going to write the novel—and finish the story of her idol Zelda Fitzgerald in her own way—when she was walking toward the hospital with her son during a “particular brilliant winter sunset.” “The entire arc of the sky shone red behind the crenellated battlements of castlelike Homewood, one of Highland’s most interesting older buildings. Of course I was reminded of the fire, perhaps the most horrendous hospital fire ever to occur in this country,” she writes. “Okay, I thought, I’m going to write that novel—when ever I can stand it. So here it is, finally, ten years after my son’s death, and sixty-five years after Zelda’s.”

Although the conclusion is inevitable, Smith takes the reader on a memorable, mythical journey to arrive there. For those who become curious about the real Zelda, a long list of sources is available at the end of the novel for readers to investigate, including biographies, archived collections, essays, and newspaper and magazine articles.

Lee Smith is the author of 16 previous books of fiction, including the bestselling novels *Fair and Tender Ladies* and *The Last Girls*, winner of the Southern Book Critics Circles Award. Also the recipient of the 1999 Academy Award in Fiction from the Academy of Arts and Letters, she lives in Hillsborough, North Carolina.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

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***Inside the Wire: Photographs from Texas and Arkansas Prisons***

Photographs and text by Bruce Jackson. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013. 200 pages. 111 duotone photographs. \$50.00 cloth.

Bruce Jackson has been one of America’s leading documentary workers for decades. Starting in the 1960s as a folklorist, he quickly embraced photography and, somewhat later, film as essential tools with which to perform his fieldwork. In the years since, he has edited or authored 33 books (several of them consisting primarily of photographs) and directed five documentary films. One of his recurring subjects has been the American justice system, ranging from criminality to imprisonment.

His latest book, published by the University of Texas Press, is *Inside the Wire: Photographs from Texas and Arkansas Prisons*. It is a collection of black-and-white images Jackson made in prisons in those states between 1964 and 1979. Also included are 17 prisoner identification photographs from the Arkansas penal system that appear to date from the early 20th century.

*Inside the Wire* presents a powerful set of pictures—grim photographs of grim subject matter made even grimmer (despite a light-hearted moment here and there or the occasional hint of a smile) by Jackson’s unrelenting eye. There’s no romantic elevation of the unfortunate here; it’s a bleak life, day in and day out, with little prospect of change anytime soon. Jackson likens the late-20th century Texas prisons to antebellum plantations where a captive, unpaid workforce labored in the fields to produce a cash crop (usually cotton) in quantities large enough to be profitable. (Indeed, several of the east Texas prisons are on the actual sites of pre-Civil War plantations, and some take their names from the plantations they supplanted.)

The first set of photographs in the book shows convicts, most wearing white uniforms that stand out against the dark earth, working in the fields. This makes for some striking black-and-white images. Jackson had unrestricted access to the prisons during

this time, and he made the most of it, riding on tractor-drawn carts out to the fields with the prisoners in the morning, photographing the armed guards on horseback and the convicts at work all day long, the end-of-day ride back, and the required strip-search before being admitted back “inside the wire.” Occasionally he would ride out on horseback himself in order to replicate the guards’ point of view in his photographs.

Other images come from inside the prison buildings. These include photos of prisoners passing time in dayrooms over cards, dominoes, or television; portraits of individuals in their cells (with special attention paid to each cell’s décor); various physical environments (cafeteria, kitchen, dormitory rooms filled to maximum capacity with bunk beds, offices, etc.); and the dingy solitude of death row. The overriding visual motif is of bars—bars intruding upon and crossing the picture plain at abrupt, unexpected angles, row upon row of them reflecting and refracting light, all the while confining people to spaces too small for them.

Jackson made many of his prison photographs, both indoors and in the fields, with a Widelux camera, an unusual piece of equipment that yields an extraordinarily wide field of view (about 140°) and a negative almost twice as long (though the width remains the same) as a standard 35 millimeter negative. This camera allowed him to take advantage of the extreme horizontality of the Texas and Arkansas field environments as well as to include details in his indoor images that a standard camera would exclude. As Jackson writes in the introduction, his Widelux images “provide some of the information documentary photographers and ethnographers want most but can almost never get: what the people you’re not looking at are up to.”

Sprinkled throughout *Inside the Wire* are images from a set of head-and-shoulder prisoner identification

photographs from the early 20th century, given to Jackson by a convict who worked in one of the prison's offices. They are of men and of women. The men have identifying numbers around their necks and wear shirts that show variations on the standard striped prison uniform. The women have no such numbers and for the most part wear plain, light-colored blouses. The men stare into the camera without expression, as though acquiescing to their assigned roles as specimens of criminality. The women, however, all seem to show the camera something of themselves, whether it be disdain, puzzlement, or a mild form of flirtatiousness. Jackson notes this in his introduction but makes no attempt at explanation. The photographs in this group are among the most unsettling in the book, perhaps because of their lack of context and, as a result, their extreme muteness.

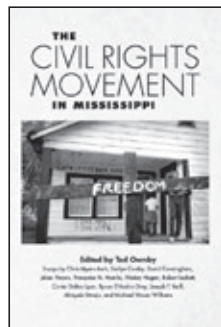
Bruce Jackson's prison photographs from the 1960s and 1970s are anything but mute and possess power of a different sort. Sometimes loud, sometimes terrifying, sometimes chilling, they amount to tragedy, no matter how you cut it. That society produces people who do terrible things that cause them to be imprisoned is tragic. That society imprisons, and sometimes executes, many of the people it produces is also tragic. That while in prison people must live in places like those Bruce Jackson photographed is especially tragic.

David Wharton

### Southern Soul-Blues

By David Whiteis. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2013. 344 pages. \$90.00 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

For decades, a genre of contemporary blues music has flourished among African Americans outside of mainstream America, in those deeply impoverished places that include the Mississippi Delta, the Alabama Black Belt, and inner-city Chicago, where the blues has always been most popular. This music (which is usually referred to as "soul-blues" by its few external critics and "the blues," unadorned by any modifiers, by most of its fans) maintains the lyrical sensibilities of traditional blues but has largely abandoned the 12-bar musical structure for a groove derived from 1960s soul and more recent R&B. Although blues critics and scholars were put on notice that there is still a substantial black audience for the blues following the early 1980s successes of Z. Z. Hill (whose album *Down Home* spent 93 weeks on the Billboard charts), critical attention for the genre has, until recently, been limited to



### **The Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi**

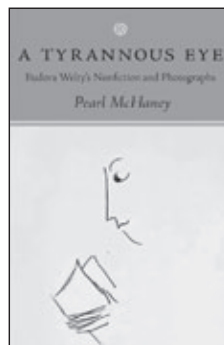
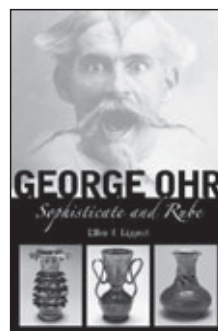
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occasional articles in *Living Blues* and similar magazines, the writings of a few Internet commentators, and a handful of chapters in David Whiteis's first book, *Chicago Blues: Portraits and Stories* (2006). The first book-length treatment of this music, Whiteis's *Southern Soul-Blues*, published three decades after Hill hit the charts, is sorely overdue.

Whiteis gives soul-blues the attention and care that it deserves. The book is well documented, and one can feel the author's respect and passion for the musicians and their work on every page. As one can imagine, there is much ground to be covered on this topic, and the beauty of *Southern Soul-Blues* is that it makes an excellent starting point for further scholarship. In addition to giving the lie to the widespread notion that the blues is "dead" for black audiences, Whiteis has crafted what is, for now, the indispensable place to begin research on contemporary blues as it is created and performed for black audiences. Whiteis's writing is erudite but always accessible and very readable and will appeal to both scholarly and lay readers.

The core of the book consists of eight chapters based on extensive interviews with musicians in the genre, four seasoned performers (such as Latimore and Denise LaSalle) and four younger stars, including Willie Clayton and Ms. Jody. Whiteis gives us a life story and musical history for each artist as well as descriptions of their most important recordings and a discussion of unique contributions they have made to the blues. He quotes liberally from his interviews with these singers, deftly managing to let their voices shine while also maintaining his own critical stance, a balancing act that he pulls off well and something that makes these chapters particularly worthwhile. With a few exceptions, Whiteis gives these artists the most extensive attention they have yet to receive in

print. His chapter on Sir Charles Jones—a hugely popular artist in the African American blues world who has received next to nothing in the way of print attention—is particularly welcome, given that Jones is also one of the key innovators in the blues today.

This section on the artists is buttressed by chapters that give a brief history of soul-blues and address some of the issues that surround it, including the struggles of the genre to attain mainstream success and radio airplay, as well as its tendency, following in the footsteps of early blues, to focus on the erotic. These chapters are in large part based on additional interviews Whiteis conducted with industry insiders, such as songwriters George Jackson and Bob Jones and record label executives John Ward and Tommy Couch Jr.—interviews that enable Whiteis to provide invaluable insights. He also serves his audience well by including brief paragraphs on dozens of veteran and up-and-coming artists in the final section of the book, something that will give readers some idea of the scope of the genre (although this sampling is not exhaustive, by any means) and provide a springboard for additional listening and research.

Whiteis should be lauded for underlining the connections between traditional blues and soul-blues, and he takes brave positions that may earn him some critics among those proponents of "authenticity" who are troubled by contemporary blues' embrace of modern musical styles and instruments such as synthesizers and drum machines. "Like earlier blues," Whiteis convincingly argues, "soul-blues is both a popular music and a living vernacular art form," and he often demonstrates ways in which performers in the genre balance their roles as both commercial entertainers who are ever aware of the demands of the marketplace and folk artists who,

like their blues forebears, are focused on good stories and truth-telling.

Despite the many strengths of Whiteis's approach, this reader was somewhat dismayed at the manner in which he approached contemporary blues' treatment of the erotic. While he gives performers who focus on the erotic the attention they deserve and allows them abundant space to speak for themselves (particularly in his chapter on Sweet Angel), his own language often casts the erotic songs as less "serious" or "substantial" than other songs. He argues, for instance, that O. B. Buchana, a fan favorite who is known for his sexy lyrics and showmanship, is "selling himself (or, perhaps, being sold) short," suggesting that if Buchana were to emphasize the more directly romantic material he also records, he would be able "to elevate himself and his art to a new, more satisfying level." Denise LaSalle, in language cited by Whiteis, adamantly insists that many fans enjoy the erotic music, and one wonders whether the audience for these songs doesn't find something more substantive in them than Whiteis does. Furthermore, by shunning the male-centered machismo of traditional blues and hip-hop for a sex-positive emphasis on female pleasure, these songs often promote a progressive sexual politics that Whiteis seems to miss.

This issue should not deter anyone from reading this book, however, which deserves a place on the shelf of every serious student of the blues, Southern culture, and African American culture. *Southern Soul-Blues* is an excellent introduction to a field in which much work, a good deal of it catch-up, remains to be done. Let's hope that it becomes the catalyst for the additional scholarship that the music deserves.

Nicholas N. Gorrell



Her research at UM is geared towards continuing to do activist work in Mississippi education.

Next, we have Elizabeth Trollinger, from Danville, Kentucky. After graduating with a BA degree in English and history from Centre College, she stayed there and worked as a communications fellow. This included working in the media hall for the 2012 vice presidential debate. A prolific writer, she not only wrote over 300 articles for the Centre College website. She also has a particular creative talent for writing haiku and is happy to add cheer to your day by writing a new one. Now that she has come to the Southern Studies program, Elizabeth wants to explore doing documentary work, while directing her research toward popular culture and the Appalachian South.

Grant LeFever is from South Carolina and is a graduate of the English and History departments at Presbyterian College. Her favorite author is Pat Conroy. Grant loves travel, adventure, and the beach, which inspired her semester abroad on the Sunshine Coast in Australia. Grant is very close to her only sibling, a goldendoodle (a golden retriever bred with a poodle) named Edisto (Eddie for short) and the pair Skype weekly.

Kaitlyn Vogt, in addition to being a graduate of the American Studies Department at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, is on a personal quest to obtain a BA in biscuit making. This new culinary challenge may be inspired from Kaitlyn's change in research topics with her move to UM. Although her senior thesis, under the direction of Bill Ferris, focused on bluegrass and folk music, here she is shifting her gaze to women's roles in creating and disseminating Southern food culture.

Katie King originally comes from Marietta, Georgia, but she previously attended Boston University, where she received a BA in journalism and American studies. In the past Katie has worked in music and entertainment journalism for both the *Boston Phoenix* and *Paste* magazine, as well as writing

for *Thought Catalog*. Katie moved to Oxford with her cat, Capone, and wants to use her background in American music and journalism to research the collision of music and social history, religious extremism, and the creation of the teenager in the 20th century.

Lauren Holt experienced two different Souths growing up, living in both South Carolina and Georgia. She went on to study art history and visual culture at Whitman College, work she is continuing here in Southern Studies.

Lindsey Kate Reynolds is a sixth-generation Texan, born and raised around Austin. She mandatorily attended the University of Texas at Austin, earning a BS in advertising. When Lindsey was a child, her father christened her with the nicknames "Biscuit" and "Chunky Tomato Sauce," thereby instilling a serious relationship with food. She is pleased to begin the MA program in Southern Studies this fall and to work with the Southern Foodways Alliance. She prefers pie over cake (buttermilk or strawberry-rhubarb), and in her spare time she likes "to play around with cocktails."

Maggie Crain also hails from Texas. Maggie moved from Dallas to Oxford and graduated from UM in 2011 with a history major and a minor in Southern Studies. Maggie moved back to Dallas and interned for Cornerstone Heritage Preservation and the Denton County Courthouse Museum. After her internship, Maggie went to work for Communities Foundation of Texas as an administrator to the historic Caruth Homeplace of Dallas (built in 1875) where she conducted all tours, installed new plaques in the home, and planned and hosted events. Her research interests as a Southern Studies graduate student include the civil rights movement, film, music, and media portrayals of the South. When she isn't being the "fun" aunt to her one-and-a-half-year-old niece, Rosie, Maggie is often people watching on the City Grocery balcony.

From Florida, we have Micajah Lee Henley. Micajah studied philosophy, religion, history, and English while at Flagler College in St. Augustine. Micajah continues to have many in-

terests, and here at UM he is researching the civil rights movement, Flannery O'Connor, and the South in film. When he isn't studying, Micajah enjoys a little television, including *Bewitched*, and he stands by his preference for Dick Sargent to Dick York.

If academics had theme music to blast when gearing up for giving a lecture, Purvis Cornish would probably choose either Michael Jackson or Whitney Houston. Purvis grew up in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and comes to us from Presbyterian College where he graduated cum laude. Purvis considers Toni Morrison the "literary momma" to his interests in literature and cultural studies, and his enthusiasm warrants theme music.

Shawna Felkins grew up in Glasgow, Kentucky, and graduated summa cum laude from Western Kentucky University, having majored in English and minored in gender and women's studies. As an undergrad her thesis was "Bones, Frogs, and Killers: The Corporeal Oppression of Women in the Patriarchal, Christian South." Shawna continues this line of inquiry here at UM, researching corporeal feminism in Southern literature and women in food. Shawna finds inspiration in the Kentucky kitchens where she learned to make biscuits, dumplings, and chocolate gravy, as well as in the occasional Disney movie.

Virginia Anderson grew up Staunton, Virginia, a town abundant in churches and surrounded by the farms of the Shenandoah Valley. She moved to Oxford to pursue an undergraduate degree in English literature and religious studies and fell in love with the Magnolia State. She received a master's degree at the University of Colorado, Boulder, in religious studies, concentrating on "faith and foodways" in the American South.

As these new students step out into the field, I hope your voices are as raw as mine from "Hotty Toddy's" and other cheers for our Southern Studies Graduate Program. Here they are, presenting, the lucky 13.

Virginia Anderson

# Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters

The Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters is accepting nominations for juried awards in the categories of visual arts, photography, fiction, nonfiction, poetry, classical music composition, and contemporary music composition for works first published, performed, or publicly exhibited in the calendar year January–December 2013. Only members of MIAL may nominate artists for these awards. Membership information may be found on the institute’s website at [www.ms-arts-letters.org](http://www.ms-arts-letters.org). Members may nominate more than one individual in any category and may nominate in as many categories as wished. One page of comments may be included in the nomination. These awards honor living Mississippians who are either current or former residents with significant and continuing ties to the state. The deadline for nominating is January 15, 2014. Attached to the nomination form should be the artist’s representative work (slides, CDs, photographs, books, etc.). Nominations should be mailed with supporting attachments to the appropriate category chair. Awards will be presented at MIAL’s annual awards banquet on June 7, 2014, at the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson, Mississippi.

Mary M. Thompson



MIAL Board of Governors are (seated, left to right) Donzell Lee, Margaret Robbins, George Bassi, Sandra Shellnut, Jan Taylor; (second row) Peter Halverson, Marion Barnwell, Dorothy Shawhan, Mary Thompson, Jennifer Long, Nancy LaForge, Bridget Pieschel, Beth Kander, Jean Medley; (third row) Aubrey Lucas, Robin Dietrick, Marjorie Selvidge, Lawrence Deas, JoAnne Morris, Mark Wigg. Other members, not pictured, are Ann Abadie, David Beckley, Scott Naugle, Peggy Prenshaw, James G. Thomas, Jr., Leila Wynn, Swan Yerger, Cora Norman, and Nancy Guice.

## MIAL Award Nominating Form—Please print clearly.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of MIAL member making nomination

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nominator’s address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone:                      Home                      Work

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail

\_\_\_\_\_  
Award Category    Medium

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title of work

\_\_\_\_\_  
First shown/published/performed

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Name of nominee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nominee’s address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nominee’s telephone:      Home                      Work

\_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nominee’s date and place of birth

## CATEGORY CHAIRS

### Visual Arts

Marjorie Selvidge  
405 Lakeview Drive  
Oxford, MS 38655

### Photography

Robin Dietrick  
401 Mallory Street  
Clinton, MS 39056

### Fiction

Scott Naugle  
1302 East Second Street  
Pass Christian, MS 39571

### Nonfiction

James G. Thomas, Jr.  
310 Dogwood Drive  
Oxford, MS 38655

### Poetry

Jenny Long  
991 County Road 188  
Greenwood, MS 39056

### Music Composition: Classical

Ann Abadie  
2238 Lee Loop  
Oxford, MS 38655

### Music Composition: Contemporary

Mark Wiggs  
917 Arlington Street  
Jackson, MS 30202

## AWARD CATEGORIES

**VISUAL ARTS** (painting, sculpture, drawing, print, graphic arts, etc.) Eligible are up to 15 pieces first publicly shown or published in 2013. Submit CD, slides, prints, or published work.

**PHOTOGRAPHY** (color, black and white, combination) Eligible are up to 15 photographs first publicly shown or published in 2013. Submit CD, slides, prints, or published work.

**FICTION** (novel, short story collection, etc.) Eligible is work first published in 2013. Submit author's name, publisher, title of publication, and date of publication.

**NONFICTION** (any literature that is not fictional) Eligible is work first published in 2013. Submit author's name, publisher, title of publication, and date of publication.

**POETRY** Eligible are up to 15 poems published individually for the first time in 2013 or a collection of at least 15 poems published in book form for the first time in 2013. (Poems in the collection may have been first published earlier than 2013.) Submit tear sheets or publication.

### MUSIC COMPOSTION:

**CONCERT** (song, opera, composition, instrumental music, etc.) This award is for works first published or performed publicly in 2013. Submit evidence of initial performance or publication (book, CD, tape, score) in 2013.

### MUSIC COMPOSITION:

**POPULAR** (blues, country music, jazz, rock, etc.) Submit published scores or the commercial recording first released in 2013. (Songs in a collection may have been first published earlier than 2013.)

# Colby Kullman Wins the 2013 Tennessee Williams Distinguished Scholar Award

Friend of the Center and UM Professor Colby Kullman won the Tennessee Williams Distinguished Scholar's Medal during this past September's 12th Annual Tennessee Williams Tribute and Tour of Victorian Homes in Columbus, Mississippi. This was only the second time the medal has been awarded. The first medal, granted last year, went to distinguished scholar Kenneth Holditch.

At the festival, Kullman delivered the lecture "Pouring New Wine into Old Bottles." He recently retired from the UM English Department after having taught a class titled *The World of Tennessee Williams* for more than 30 years, and he has been a longtime contributor to the *Southern Register*. The Center congratulates Colby Kullman on the recognition of his contributions to Williams scholarship at this year's Williams tribute.



Christopher Blank

Kullman is pictured here with Angela Jones, art instructor at the Mississippi School of Mathematics and Science and creator of the Williams medal, on the Mississippi University for Women campus in Columbus.

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Virginia Anderson** is a first-year graduate student in the Southern Studies program.

**Brett J. Bonner** is the editor of *Living Blues* magazine.

**Rebecca Lauck Cleary** is the Center's senior staff assistant and website administrator. She received a BA in journalism from the University in 1997 and has written for the *Southern Register* since 2005.

**Nicholas N. Gorrell** is a doctoral candidate in the Department of English at the University of Mississippi. He is writing a dissertation that examines contemporary blues culture in the post-plantation South.

**Ted Ownby**, director of the Center, holds a joint appointment in Southern Studies and history.

**Jimmy Thomas** is the Center's associate director for publications.

**Mary M. Thompson** is a board member of the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters. She lives in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

**Becca Walton** is the Center's associate director for projects.

**Jay Watson** is a professor of English at the University of Mississippi and director of the Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference. His publications include *Forensic Fictions: The Lawyer Figure in Faulkner, Faulkner and Whiteness*, and *Reading for the Body: The Recalcitrant Materiality of Southern Fiction, 1893–1985*.

**David Wharton** is assistant professor and director of documentary projects at the Center, where he teaches courses in Southern Studies, fieldwork, and photography. He is the author of *Small Town South* and *The Soul of a Small Texas Town: Photographs, Memories, and History from McDade*.



The University of Mississippi  
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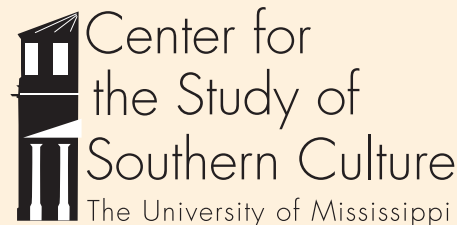
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