the Southern Register

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE • WINTER 2003 THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

## Tenth

# Oxford Conference for the Book

The Oxford Conference for the Book quietly turns ten this year with another full slate of writers and publishing folk. The annual event will be held April 10-13, 2003, on the campus of the University of Mississippi in Oxford. This year's conference celebrates the career of Stark Young, a novelist and drama critic who spent his formative years in Oxford and often returned throughout his life. In addition to contemplation of his work, the conference will feature panel discussions, readings, book signings, a writing workshop, a poetry and fiction jam, and the always-popular parties and social gatherings.

This year's conference kicks off informally Thursday, April 10, at Thacker Mountain Radio (www.ThackerMountain.com), the hour-long radio show broadcast live from Off Square Books. The popular variety show, sponsored by the Center and Square Books among other community groups, will feature readings by conference authors Robert Stone and Percival Everett, along with live music. Though heard live on Oxford's Bullseye 95.5 FM, Thacker Mountain Radio is now rebroadcast each Sunday afternoon at 5:00 p.m. on Public Radio in Mississippi. Following the radio show will be a "Meet the Speakers" dinner at 7:00 p.m., to be held at Isom Place. Reservations are required, and proceeds go to benefit the conference.

The conference's formal kick-off begins the morning of Friday, April 11, with a welcome by Oxford mayor Richard Howorth at 9:00 a.m. The traditional morning panels for writers and readers, moderated by Barry Hannah, begin immediately thereafter with "Submitting Manuscripts/Working One's Way into Print." Oxford writer Jere Hoar, whose story collection *Body Parts* was a *New York Times* Notable Book, will talk about his new novel, *The Heir*, which is receiving plenty of early praise, along with his publisher, Beau Friedlander of Context Books. Another local novelist, Scott Morris, will be here with his editor, Kathy Pories of Algonquin Books. Rounding out the panel is the always-entertaining South Carolina short story writer George Singleton and current University visiting writer Shay Youngblood. Following at 10:30 a.m. is "Finding a Voice/Reaching an Audience," featuring novelist Percival Everett and his new paperback publisher at

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*Illustrating 2003 Oxford Conference for the Book materials is a caricature of Stark Young by Miguel Covarrubias, drawn in 1934, the year Young's novel So Red the Rose "led the season's fiction." The Covarrubias drawing is reproduced on posters and T-shirts available from the Center by calling 800-390-3527.*

# Southern Register

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## IN THIS ISSUE
*Winter 2003*




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## DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

The Center has enjoyed a memorable 25th anniversary, and we continue to reflect upon our work and to launch new initiatives. A highlight of last fall was our symposium in November, marking the quarter century since the Center's work officially began with a Eudora Welty Symposium.

Many old friends returned, such as John Shelton Reed and Richard King, who have been involved in Center conferences and research as well as being frequent lecturers at conferences. The panel on Welty was altogether charming and joyous, befitting our collective memory of her. Distinguished poet William Jay Smith and Mississippi's own Patti Carr Black were longtime friends of Welty's, and they shared stories and insights about her work and their friendships. We also had a chance to reconnect with some of our Southern Studies alumni. Wesley Loy deserved the "long journey home" award, as the old song would put it, coming as he did from Alaska to be part of the symposium. Wesley was only one of many who came to an extraordinary panel during which our former graduate students shared their thoughts on the Southern Studies Program and their own work since receiving their degrees. The symposium has led to two open forums at the Center, occasions where everyone has shared their concerns about, and hopes for, the Center. Our alumni are a very special group to those of us at the Center, and we need to find ways to continue to involve them in our on-going work. The symposium ended with a Southern Studies Prom, and I brought out my rusty dancing shoes for the occasion—a fitting end to an intense and meaningful gathering.

February saw the latest Center initiative, the *Living Blues* Symposium. Blues music is one of the foundations of Southern culture, and the Center has long promoted its study. We established the Blues Archive, which is now well-ensconced in the University Library, with a new curator, Greg Johnson. *Living Blues* magazine has appeared for more than three decades, with the Center publishing it for 20 years. This symposium represents a landmark in bringing the magazine to a wider audience, drawing on academics, journalists, music critics, and others. Distinguished critic Stanley Crouch gave the keynote talk to the symposium, which was part of Black History Month activities on campus, and panels included both writers on the blues and performers themselves. A benefit performance for *Living Blues* included Bobby Rush, Little Milton, and Willie King, which left a soulful mark on Oxford and we hope brought new fans to the magazine.

Center faculty were central to both these symposia. They participated in a panel at the November meeting, sharing their experiences teaching Southern Studies courses and telling of their own research. Along with former *Living Blues* editor Scott Barretta, Adam Gussow, our newest Southern Studies joint appointment, organized the Living Blues Symposium, bringing to bear his interest in how literature has made use of the blues. Adam's new book, *Seems Like Murder Here: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition*, was published last fall and promises to be a landmark in blues scholarship.

We are highlighting the research of Southern Studies faculty in general with a Southern Studies Faculty Forum this spring, and the schedule appears on page 9. It will give a special occasion for faculty to share their current research projects, emphasizing the central role of scholarship at the Center.

CHARLES REAGAN WILSON

## In Memoriam

**William Madison Whittington, Jr.**
**Greenwood, Mississippi**

**October 21, 1914 - October 9, 2002**

**Attorney, Patron of the Arts,**
**Friend of the Center,**
**Husband of Mary Jayne Whittington,**
**Member, Center Advisory Committee**

# Tenth Oxford Conference for the Book

*continued from page 1*

Beacon Press, Helene Atwan. Also on hand will be Robert Stone, Jackson, Mississippi, bookseller and owner of Lemuria Books John Evans; literary agent Marly Rusoff; and up-and-coming fiction writer Crystal Wilkinson.

After a break for lunch, Friday's panels begin at 2:00 p.m. with a welcome by University Chancellor Robert C. Khayat. Immediately following will be a panel on Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, publishers of such authors as Lee Smith, Lewis Nordan, and Jill McCorkle. Editors Kathy Pories and Shannon Ravenel, who directs her own imprint at Algonquin and edits the popular *New Stories from the South* series, will speak, and a host of Algonquin authors will read from their works, among them Marshall Boswell, the Memphis native whose first story collection, *Trouble with Girls*, is due in May; Scott Morris, author of *Waiting for April*; and George Singleton, whose hilarious story collection *The Half Mammals of Dixie* has sold well beyond the South. "Race and Publishing in America" at 3:30 p.m. will spotlight Percival Everett and his wonderful novel *Erasure*, in which a struggling yet critically acclaimed African American novelist writes a parody of black ghetto lit, only to have it revered as the Next Big Thing by the literary establishment. Everett will be joined by Helene Atwan of Beacon Press, who will publish his novels *Watershed* and *God's Country* in April.

At 5:00 p.m., a panel of author readings will represent the past, present, and future of the University's Southern Writer in Residence program funded by John and Renée Grisham. The readers will be previous visiting writer Tom Franklin, who will join the University's English faculty next fall and whose new novel, *Hell at the Breech*, is due in May, and Shay Youngblood, author of *Black Girl in Paris* and *Soul Kiss* and current visiting writer.

The day's events will culminate with a cocktail party at Off Square Books. Tickets are $25, and proceeds will be invested back into the conference. Finally, any prospective writers are encouraged to attend "How to Get the Most from a Creative Writing Workshop" at 8:30 p.m., a bonus panel moderated by the University English Department's Creative Writing Master of Fine Arts program administrator David Galef, who will be joined by M.F.A. writing students D. Allan Mitchell and Joy Wilson.

Saturday's panels begin at 9:00 a.m. with the annual discussion "The Endangered Species: Readers Today and Tomorrow," moderated by library and literacy advocate Elaine H. Scott. Participants will include Claiborne Barksdale, executive director of the Barksdale Reading Institute at Ole Miss, and George Ella Lyon, a popular writer of Appalachian children's literature. In addition to speaking at the conference, Lyon will visit local schools as part of the Young Authors Fair sponsored by the Junior Auxiliary of Oxford.

At 10:30 a.m., University Southern Studies professor Ted Ownby will moderate a panel on personal memoirs featuring Mississippi native Clifton Taulbert, whose book *Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored* was called "a timeless classic" by National Public Radio; Lauren Winner, a noted religious writer whose recent book *Girl Meets God: Searching for a Spiritual Identity* has

Emily Bingham

Shay Youngblood



## About Stark Young

*Stark Young (1881-1963), a Mississippian who became a versatile figure in the Southern Literary Renaissance, devoted his life entirely to the arts and achieved widespread recognition for his contributions as teacher, poet, playwright, director, drama critic, fiction writer, essayist, translator, and painter. Young was born in Como and lived there until his family moved to Oxford in 1898. After receiving degrees from the University of Mississippi (B.A., 1901) and Columbia University (M.A., 1902), he taught at the University of Mississippi (1905-1907), the University of Texas (1907-1915), and Amherst College (1915-1921). After moving to New York City in 1921 to work as a freelance writer, he became drama critic for the New Republic and a member of its editorial board as well as that of Theatre Arts. Young's essays for the New Republic and Theatre Arts, later collected in five books on the theatre, established him as a leading drama critic in the country. Young also wrote and directed plays, translated Chekhov, and published poetry, an autobiography, and four highly successful novels, including So Red the Rose, which became a bestseller and was made into a popular film. Young painted flowers and landscapes and had two critically acclaimed one-man exhibitions in New York.*





*From left to right: Robert Stone, Percival Everett, George Singleton, Ron Rash, Calvin Baker*

found a following among young Christians; and Michael Mewshaw, whose new LSU Press book *Do I Owe You Something? A Memoir of the Literary Life* depicts an unusual life in letters and remarks upon the author's intriguing friendships with the likes of Robert Penn Warren, Graham Greene, Paul Bowles, and many others.

At noon, the University Museums will sponsor a program at the Walton Young House, where Stark Young lived with his father and stepmother for a number of years. The North Mississippi Storytellers Guild will recreate characters based on Young and other local residents from the past.

After lunch, the conference resumes with sessions dedicated to Stark Young. Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English at Ole Miss John Pilkington, an authority on the life and works of Young, will present a lecture on the author at 2:00 p.m., to be followed at 3:00 p.m. by dramatic readings from Young's works by members of the local Theatre Oxford troupe. A popular movie based on his 1934 novel *So Red the Rose* will be shown on local television during the conference.

At 4:30 p.m., Curtis Wilkie, author of *Dixie* and a veteran foreign correspondent for the Boston Globe, will moderate a panel entitled "Third World Thrillers" with two stars of the genre—Robert Stone, whose new novel *Bay of Souls* uncovers complex psychology and political intrigue in the Caribbean, and Michael Mewshaw, author of the new novel *Shelter from the Storm*, a timely thriller set in a lawless, unnamed-but-easily-recognizable Central Asian country.

A book signing with all the conference authors is set for 6:00 p.m. at Off Square Books. Concluding the day's events will be "Open Mike - Poetry & Fiction Jam" moderated by University M.F.A. creative writing student Lacey Galbraith.

Sunday begins at 8:00 a.m. with a continental breakfast in the Mississippi Hall of Writers in the Williams Library. The breakfast is hosted by Dean of University Libraries John M. Meador. University professor Katie McKee moderates the panel "Appalachian Voices" at 9:00 a.m., featuring discussion and readings by George Ella Lyon, a native of Harlan County, Kentucky, and author of 20 picture books and four novels for young readers; Crystal Wilkinson, whose novel *Water Street* and story collection *Blackberries, Blackberries* reflect her upbringing in rural Kentucky; and Ron Rash, a poet from the southern Appalachian mountains of North Carolina whose first novel, *One Foot in Eden*, has received extraordinary acclaim.

The morning sessions conclude with readings by two well-known writers from the University journalism department, Ace Atkins, whose latest blues-inspired mystery is called *Dark End of the Street*, and Jere Hoar, an emeritus professor of journalism reading from his own new noir thriller, *The Hit*.

After lunch, a panel on books of the civil rights movement will be moderated by University English and Afro-American Studies professor Ethel Young-Minor at 1:30 p.m. Discussing and reading from their latest books will be Constance Curry and Winson Hudson, the subject of Curry's new book *Mississippi Harmony: Memoirs of a Freedom Fighter*; Charles Marsh, author of the autobiographical *God's Long Summer* and *The Last Days*; and Paul Hendrickson, a much-honored writer for the *Washington Post*, whose new book *Sons of Mississippi: A Story of Race and Its Legacy* begins with an infamous photo of sheriffs in gleeful preparation for the Ole Miss riots in 1962 and traces the legacy of racism through the next two generations of these men's families.

One of the conference's most popular panels, the poetry readings and remarks in celebration of National Poetry Month, will be held at 3:00 p.m. Moderated by University English professor Blair Hobbs, this will feature Beth Ann Fennelly, author of *Open House* and a professor of poetry at Ole Miss; Jamaican-born poet Shara McCallum, author of *The Water Between Us* and most recently *Song of Thieves*; and Ron Rash, the celebrated author of three poetry collections.

The conference's closing event at 4:00 p.m. will be a panel of readings by three talented up-and-coming writers: Calvin Baker, whose new novel *Once Two Heroes* examines the aftermath of World War II in America through the story of a black Frenchman and a white Mississippi gentleman; Emily Bingham, whose first book *Mordecai* explores several generations of a Southern Jewish family; and Lewis Robinson of Maine, whose first collection of fiction, *Officer Friendly and Other Stories*, is one of the season's hottest titles.

As always, the schedule is subject to change as the conference date nears. Aside from a handful of events—the cocktail buffet ($50), the Off Square Books cocktail party ($25), and a dinner at Taylor Catfish on Sunday ($25)—the conference is free and open to the public. All proceeds for the cocktail buffet on Thursday and the cocktail party on Friday will go toward supporting the conference and are tax deductible. Participants are invited to make additional tax-deductible contributions to help support the conference.

Visit www.olemiss.edu/depts/south/och/reg.htm to register electronically or to obtain a registration form. Registration forms may also be requested by telephone. Contact the Center, either by phone (662-915-5993), fax (662-915-5814), or e-mail (ossc@olemiss.edu).

The conference is sponsored by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, Department of English, Department of History, Department of Journalism, John Davis Williams Library, McDonnell-Barksdale Honors College, John and Renée Grisham Visiting Writers Fund, Barksdale Reading Institute, Sarah Isom Center for Women, University Museums, Junior Auxiliary of Oxford, and Square Books. The conference is partially funded by the University of Mississippi and grants from the Mississippi Humanities Council, the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council, and the Tribal-State Compact Fund.

JAMIE KORNEGAY

## THE BROWN BAG LUNCH AND LECTURE SERIES

# Center for the Study *of* Southern Culture

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

**SPRING 2003**

### JANUARY

8 "'That's All Right, Mama, Any Way You Do': Elvis Films in Feminist Text"
Mary Beth Lasseter
Southern Studies M.A. Alumna

15 "The Study of Southern Culture: A Public Forum"
Southern Studies Students, Faculty, Alumni

22 "Jim All Around My Bed: How Blues Songs Signify on the Primal Lynching Scene"
Adam Gussow
Assistant Professor
English and Southern Studies

29 "How Carlos Gheen Rescued Nissan: Mississippi's Role in the Story"
David Magee
Writer, Journalist
Oxford, Mississippi

### FEBRUARY

5 "'Still 'Grazin'...': The Memoirs of South African Trumpeter Hugh Masekela"
Michael Cheers
Assistant Professor of Journalism

12 "The Eaton Claw: The Ballad about a Carnival of Crime in Prentiss County"
Tom Freeland
Attorney and Blues Scholar
Oxford, Mississippi

19 "The Integration of Sports"
Robert Tollison
Robert M. Hearin Chair
Professor of Economics

26 "A Reading"
Shay Youngblood
Grisham Writer in Residence

### MARCH

5 "'A Race from Catastrophe': Alternative Forms of Jewish Education in the Antebellum South"
Jennifer Stollman
Acting Assistant Professor of History and Southern Studies

12 NO BROWN BAG TODAY——SPRING BREAK

19 "The Artistic Passionate Eye of Eudora Welty"
Katherine Wiener
Scholar
Jackson, Mississippi

26 "The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Mississippi during Post-Reconstruction"
Alicia Jackson
Ph.D. Candidate in History

### APRIL

2 "Recuperating Uncle Tom in 1927: Coverage of Charles Gilpin, Noble Johnson, and James Lowe in the Black Press"
Joy Loveland
Adjunct Lecturer at University of Michigan at Dearborn
Film Historian, Ph.D. Candidate in English
Wayne State University

9 "The Life and Times of Admiral John Sidney McCain"
Keith Gilbert
Captain, USNR (retired)
Civil Engineer, Transportation Planning Consultant
San Diego, California

16 "Keeping the Blues: The University of Mississippi's Blues Archive"
Greg Johnson
Blues Archive Curator
Assistant Professor of Library Science

23 "Traditional Music of North Mississippi: A Documentary Project of the Mississippi Arts Commission"
Wiley Prewitt
Project Director
Lodi, Mississippi

30 "Darkness on the Delta: A Black & White History in 8MM from the Pepper Collection of the Southern Media Archive"
Margaret Pepper Grantham
Librarian
Oxford, Mississippi

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

# FAULKNER
## AND THE ECOLOGY OF THE SOUTH

**Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha • July 20-24, 2003**

As we continue to read more deeply in Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha world we become increasingly aware of the fullness of it. Figuratively no larger, he would say, than a "postage stamp," it contains a rich variety of peoples and communities and languages, as well as an equally varied range of environments surrounding them. Central to the fiction are the relationships that exist among these human groups—townspeople and country people, third generation citizens and recent arrivals, Confederate veterans and abolitionists, Euro-Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans—and between them and the built and natural settings within which their individual and collective dramas unfold.

In short, there is a deep and complex organic connection that obtains within the Yoknapatawpha world, surely one of the reasons why that world has so impressed readers with its authenticity and plausibility. If it did not exist, as the saying goes, someone would have had to invent it. The theme of the 30th annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference is "Faulkner and the Ecology of the South." It will be an attempt to deal directly with that "organic connection" of Yoknapatawpha, to explore the significance of the relations between Faulkner's diverse communities and the world in which they exist. It is also an attempt to expand the concept of ecocriticism itself: in Lawrence Buell's terms, "to put 'green' and 'brown' landscapes, the landscapes of exurbia and industrialization, in conversation with each other."

***Oxford on the Hill*, by John McCrady (1911-1968) is used as the illustration for the 2003 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference poster and program courtesy of the City of Oxford, owner of the painting. Flat copies of this poster and another one with a McCrady painting, Political Rally, are available for $10.00 each plus $2.50 postage and handling. Mississippi residents add 7 percent sales tax. Send all orders to the Center for the Study of Southern Culture with a check made payable to the University of Mississippi or with Visa or MasterCard account number and expiration date. Credit card orders also may be made by calling 800-390-3527.**

Four scholars appearing at the conference for the first time are Ann Fisher-Wirth, professor of English at the University Mississippi; Keith Marshall, computer graphics designer, art historian, and classical music critic for the *New Orleans Times-Picayune*; Scott Slovic, professor of literature and environment and director of the Center for Environmental Arts and Humanities at the University of Nevada, Reno; and Cecelia Tichi, William R. Kenan Jr. Professor of English at the Vanderbilt University.

Fisher-Wirth is the author of *William Carlos Williams and Autobiography: The Words of His Own Nature* and over 50 published poems. She is also editor of the biannual newsletter of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment and was coposter of "'Coming Nearer the Ground': An ASLE Symposium on the South" in 2001. She will speak on the interrelations between Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* and Peter Matthiessen's Mr. Watson trilogy, both of which trace the attempt of ambitious men to tame the lawless wilderness, achieving environmental "development" at the cost of nature's degradation.

Marshall curated and wrote the catalog for the John McCrady retrospective exhibition at the New Orleans Museum of Art, was a 1999-2001 Core Fellow at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, and has written extensively about Southern art and exhibitions for several art journals. He will compare Faulkner's verbal creation of Yoknapatawpha County with John McCrady's visual creation of Lafayette County, paying particular attention to the ways in which Faulkner's imagery is powerfully visual and McCrady's essentially narrative.

Slovic was the founding president of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment and is the author of numerous studies of ecocriticism, environmental literature, and American literature. He has written or edited eight volumes, including *Seeking Awareness in American Nature Writing: Henry Thoreau, Annie Dillard, Edward Abbey, Wendell Berry, Barry Lopez* and, most recently, *Getting Over the Color Green: Contemporary Environmental Literature of the Southwest*. His talk will address several Faulkner texts in terms of death and violence: their desire to access a sense of visceral, primal involvement in the more-than-human world and thus reveal the genuine organic nature of the human mind and body.

Tichi is the author of five books, including *New World, New Earth: Environmental Reform in American Literature from the Puritans through Whitman* and, most recently, *Embodiments of a Nation: Human Form in*

American Spaces. She will focus on Faulkner's environmental concerns and his representations of work—of labor—at a moment when industrial processes obscured the fact of physical labor.

Returning to the conference will be François Pitavy, professor emeritus of American literature at the University of Burgundy in Dijon, France. Pitavy is the author of several volumes on Southern literature and Faulkner, including *Faulkner's "Light in August"* and, most recently, *"Le Bruit et la Fureur" de William Faulkner*. He is also the translator of three Faulkner novels and is currently working on *A Fable*. In "Faulkner's Impossible Arcadia" he will discuss two attitudes toward nature, one in which the human is dominant, the other in which an Arcadian, peaceful stance is achieved. Faulkner preferred the second, yet he recognizes that the reality of change invariably leads toward the destruction of nature.

Also returning will be Philip Weinstein, Alexander Griswold Cummins Professor of English at Swarthmore College. He is the author of four books, including *Faulkner's Subject: A Cosmos No One Owns* and *What Else But Love? The Ordeal of Race in Faulkner and Morrison*, and editor of *The Cambridge Companion to William Faulkner*. Weinstein will focus on the various physical sites of *Absalom, Absalom!*—West Virginia, Tidewater, New Orleans, Jefferson, and Cambridge—each with its own somatic and ideological codes, yet each forced by the novel to interact with each other, thus staging what amounts to a conflict of ecologies.

Other program events will include discussions by Faulkner friends and family; sessions on "Teaching Faulkner" directed by James Carothers, University of Kansas, Robert Hamblin, Southeast Missouri State University, Arlie Herron, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and Charles Peek, University of Nebraska at Kearney; and an exhibition of Faulkner books, manuscripts, photographs, and memorabilia at the University's John Davis Williams Library. Seth Bernet, a well-known collector of Faulkneriana, will conduct a special session on collecting Faulkner.

The conference will begin on Sunday, July 20, with a reception at the University Museums and an exhibition of the work of Thomas B. Allen, whose illustrations of Americana have appeared on several record album covers, in numerous children's books, and in *Esquire*, *Life*, and *Sports Illustrated*, to name only a few. The Museums events will be followed by an afternoon program of readings from Faulkner and the announcement of the winners of the 14th Faux Faulkner Contest. The contest, coordinated by the author's niece, Dean Faulkner Wells, is sponsored by *Hemispheres Magazine*/United Airlines, Yoknapatawpha Press, and the University of Mississippi.


Scott Sloan


Cecelia Tichi

Other events will include a Sunday buffet supper served at historic Isom Place, "Faulkner on the Fringe"—an "open-mike" evening at the Southside Gallery, guided day-long tours of Northeast Mississippi, a picnic served at Faulkner's home, Rowan Oak, and a closing party Thursday afternoon at Square Books. Films relating to Faulkner's life and work will be available for viewing during the week. *Red Hills to Gulf Shores: Autographics*, an exhibition of photographs by Todd Bertolaet, will be on display in the Gammill Gallery at Barnard Observatory.

For more information about the conference contact the Office of Professional Development and Non-Credit Education, Post Office Box 879, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-1848; telephone 662-915-7283; fax 662-915-5138; e-mail noncred@olemiss.edu. For online registration, visit us on the Web at www.olemiss.edu/depts/south/faulkner/index.htm or www.outreach.olemiss.edu.

For information about participating in the conference through Elderhostel, call 877-426-8056 and refer to the program number 5760, or contact Carolyn Vance Smith by telephone (601-446- 1208) or e-mail (carolyn.smith@colin.cc.ms.us).

DONALD M. KARTIGANER

Mississippi *Encyclopedia* editors (from left) Charles Wilson, Ted Ownby, and Andrea Finley

# *Mississippi Encyclopedia* Project Begins

The Center is pleased to announce that work on its latest publication, the Mississippi *Encyclopedia*, is off and running. The Mississippi *Encyclopedia*, to be published in 2005, will be a comprehensive, single-volume work based on the historical study of Mississippi's literature, art and architecture, music, folklife, religion, politics, and a wide range of other themes. Planning for the publication began at the suggestion of the University Press of Mississippi, which will publish the volume. Its director, Seetha Srinivasan, proposed that the Center sponsor the project, in large part because of its success in producing the award-winning *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History and the Mississippi Humanities Council joined the project as major partners, and the project has received grant support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The Mississippi *Encyclopedia* will embrace Mississippi's past and present and will include entries on each of the state's regions, on every county in the state, on the state's writers, artists, and musicians, and a full treatment of state and local politics. The volume will illustrate the reality of multiple perspectives on events in the state's history and the relationships that bind all Mississippians together. In an effort to ensure that it will be an encyclopedia of the people, the editors will be attending public meetings around the state to encourage suggestions from citizens, particularly nonacademics. Its A to Z format will facilitate use by a wide cross section of society, from students and scholars to local history buffs and curious coffee table readers.

A team of staff from the Center is working to make the Mississippi Encyclopedia a reality. Charles Reagan Wilson, director of the Center and professor of history and Southern Studies at the University, is editor in chief of the volume. Wilson was coeditor of the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* and is the author of two books, the editor or coeditor of several others, and a consultant on several encyclopedias. Two other Center staffers, Ann Abadie and Ted Ownby, are serving as consulting editors. Abadie, associate director of the Center, was associate editor of the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. Ownby is a professor of history and Southern Studies, teaches classes in Mississippi history, and is the author of two books on Southern history. His role is to consult on matters of style and interpretation and to provide guidance on primary and secondary sources in Mississippi history and culture. Both consulting editors are assisting with the suggestion of topics, scholars, resources, and both will help edit text. The editor in chief and consulting editors identified 28 topic areas and asked associate editors with subject expertise in

that area to help organize entries on those topics. The associate editors suggested lists of topics and contributors and will also be writing a long introductory essay on their topics. Andrea Finley was recently hired as managing editor of the volume. (See her comments on this page.)

A list of all entries is now available on the web at www.olemiss.edu/depts/south/index.html. We encourage interested parties to contact the Center to volunteer to write unassigned entries, to suggest topics for inclusion, or to recommend colleagues, graduate students, and others who might be interested in contributing. Dozens of authors have accepted invitations to write entries, and we receive more acceptances almost every day.

# Andrea Finley

## Managing Editor of the *Mississippi Encyclopedia*

In November 2002, I came aboard as managing editor of the Mississippi Encyclopedia. I will manage many of the daily functions of the Encyclopedia, chief of which is corresponding with authors and making sure that all entries are assigned and written within our production deadlines. As a 1995 Southern Studies graduate and Mississippi native, I am delighted to return to the Center in this capacity. I was in the middle of completing a Master of Library and Information Science degree at San Jose State University in California when the opportunity for this position opened up, but the moment I was offered the job, I knew I was going to accept. As managing editor of the project, I look forward to the education I'll be getting about this state. I feel that Mississippi is not so much misunderstood, but rather that it is incompletely understood. The extreme things that people tend to associate with the state—poverty, racism, for example—have been, and to some extent still are, real. But there is much more going on in the state, and there always has been a fascinating list of people, places, and things that richly deserve to have their existence illuminated by a book such as the Mississippi Encyclopedia. It will serve as a valuable resource for those who live, work, and learn in Mississippi, as well as for those in the world beyond who need a much longer list of things to associate with the state of Mississippi.

Those interested in the forthcoming Mississippi Encyclopedia may contact me by e-mail at afinley@olemiss.edu or at 662-915-5993.

## SOUTHERN STUDIES FACULTY FORUM

Spring 2003 • Tupelo Room • Barnard Observatory
Each forum will begin at 4:00 p.m.

March 7
Robbie Ethridge
"Chickasaw Slaving: Responding in the Shatter Zone"

March 21
Ted Ownby
"Would You Want Your Daughter to Marry One? High Schools, Teenage Sex, and Massive Resistance"

March 28
Kathryn McKee
"Writing Region from the Hub: Sherwood Bonner's Travel Letters and Questions of Postbellum Southern Identity"

April 4
Adam Gussow
"'Couldn't Help But Cry': Racial Violence and Racial Healing in Blues Literature"

April 14
David Wharton
"The Southern Landscape: Social and Cultural"

April 25
Jennifer Stollman
"Hidden, Silenced, and Marginalized on Three Fronts: Finding Antebellum Southern Jewish Women in History"

# Mississippi Studies

## A Program for Teachers, June 8-13

This summer, the Center will offer a new version of its summer seminar for teachers. This team-taught interdisciplinary seminar will consider five ways of teaching Mississippi Studies at the secondary school level. Five Southern Studies faculty members will conduct one-day programs on their fields of expertise. Each will assign readings on a topic in Mississippi Studies and will discuss content, potential sources, and teaching strategies related to that topic.

The five units are Native Americans in Mississippi History, taught by Robbie Ethridge, McMullan assistant professor of Southern Studies and assistant professor of anthropology; The Blues, taught by Adam Gussow, assistant professor of English and Southern Studies; Mississippi Writers, taught by Kathryn Burgess McKee, McMullan assistant professor of Southern Studies and assistant professor of English; Mississippi Social History, 1830s-1950s, taught by Ted Ownby, professor of history and Southern Studies; and Visual Approaches to Mississippi Studies, taught by David Wharton, assistant professor of Southern Studies and director of documentary projects at the Center. The seminar will take place in Barnard Observatory.

The seminar should be especially useful for teachers of Mississippi Studies, but all interested teachers are welcome. Participants will do the readings, take part in discussions, and prepare projects about strategies for teaching at least one of the topics. Teachers participating in the program may receive course credit for Southern Studies 598.

For information on enrollment, course credit, and housing, contact Ginger Thurlow, at 662-915-7957 or ginger@olemiss.edu, Outreach and Continuing Education, University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677.

# Film Festival

The first Oxford Film Festival will be held June 19-22, 2003, in the new Gertrude C. Ford Performing Arts Center on the University of Mississippi campus. The theme for the inaugural festival is writer-directors. In addition to screening dozens of new films, the festival will feature panel discussions with filmmakers and writers, workshops for students and adults, and numerous social activities. Details may be obtained Online at www.oxfordfilmfest.com or by contacting the Oxford Film Festival, P.O. Box 544, Oxford, MS 38655; telephone 662-236- 6429; fax: 662-236-6988; e-mail: yac@watervalley.net. The Oxford Film Festival is produced by the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council www.oxfordarts.com, the Oxford Tourism Council www.tourcoxford.ms.com, and the University of Mississippi www.olemiss.edu.

# Center Ventress Order Members

The Ventress Order is a donors group dedicated to strengthening departments and programs in the University's College of Liberal Arts. In recent months, a growing number of friends have joined this Order and committed their donations to the Center. The most recent Ventress Order members to designate a gift of $5,000 to benefit the Center are Mary Lucia and Don Holloway, of Water Valley. Their membership brings to nine the number individuals or couples designated as Center Ventress Order Trustees.

This year, during the continuing celebration of the 25th anniversary, the Center would like to add many more–at least 25—Ventress Order members to its ranks. The program offers various types of contributions: an outright gift of $5,000, a pledge of $1,000 a year for five years, $42 a month for 10 years, or even transfer of property such as stocks, bonds, or art work.

If you or someone you know would be interested in learning more about the Ventress Order, and making the Center your Ventress Order funds' beneficiary, please contact Brandi Tolbert, Liberal Arts Advancement Associate, at 800-340-9542. You may also seek donation information on the University's Web site: www.umf.olemiss.edu.

Members of the Order have their names inscribed on a plaque displayed at the College of Liberal Arts, housed in historic Ventress Hall, named for James Alexander Ventress, a principal figure in the early history of the University. Members also have the opportunity to conduct business of the Order at its annual membership meeting. All Ventress Order gifts are tax deductible.

**Mary Lucia Holloway**

## Center Ventress Order Trustees

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# *Northeast Mississippi Music Documentary Project*

The Center and the Mississippi Arts Commission are working together to gather information about music traditions in an often-overlooked part of the state. The Northeast Mississippi Music Documentary Project, directed by Ole Miss alumnus Wiley Prewitt, is collecting information on the traditional musicians and related musical events found in the northeastern corner of the state.

As part of the project, the Center recently hosted a series of concerts at the Lafayette County and Oxford Public Library. The programs featured musicians documented by the project and included music and interviews. Several of the musicians also performed on *Thacker Mountain Radio Show* sponsored by the Center and Square Books.

This project is supported by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts' Folk and Traditional Arts Initiative program. For more information about the project, contact the Center at 662-915-5993 or the Arts Commission at 601-359-6030 or Wiley Prewitt at 662-310-0541.

**The Spiritual Truelights of Tupelo grew up in the church and have sung together for over 30 years. The Truelights exhibit a power and range that keep them in demand on the active north Mississippi gospel circuit. A family-based group, the Truelights also speak to the sacred music tradition that produces and maintains gospel singers.**

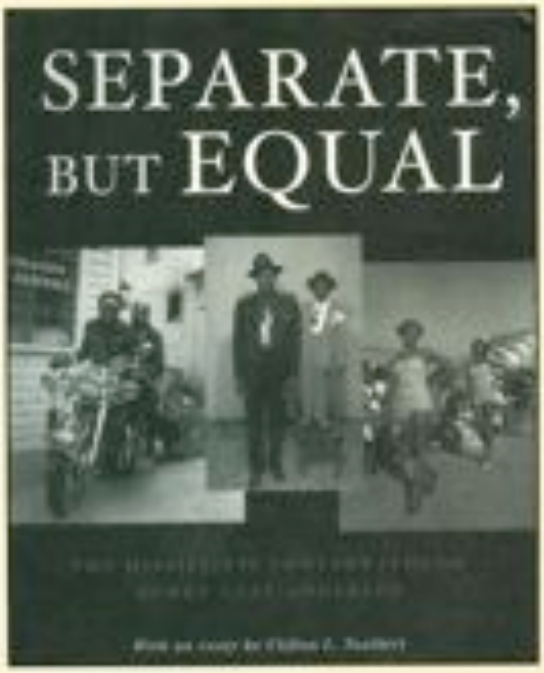
**Bud and Hazel Huddleston, from Whitestown near Ripley, Mississippi, emerged from the country and gospel traditions of the South. Hazel sings and plays the guitar and Bud plays the fiddle, occasionally the instrument crafted by Hazel's father in 1950. Bud and Hazel are familiar local radio personalities, and they told project audiences about the active tradition of live music broadcasts in the northeastern part of the state.**

**For decades the Sparks family has played and sung the old time country and bluegrass music they grew up with in Tishomingo County. They host weekly jam sessions and annual bluegrass festivals on the old Sparks home place. Their lifelong devotion to music and community oriented performance space made them an excellent subject for the traditional music project.**

**Robert Boles constructed his first pedal steel guitar as a young man following his fascination with the unique sound of the instrument. A member of the Church of the Living God at Toccopola, Boles explained the place of the pedal steel in the worship services of his church. The Church of the Living God maintains seven congregations in northeast Mississippi and enjoys strong participation in its music program among its youth, some of whom demonstrated the pedal steel during the Lafayette County and Oxford Public Library and on Thacker Mountain Radio Show.**

# Reading the South

**_Separate, but Equal: The Mississippi Photographs of Henry Clay Anderson._**
Photographs by Henry Clay Anderson. Essays by Shawn Wilson, Clifton L. Taulbert, and Mary Panzer. New York: PublicAffairs Press, 2002. 151 pages, 130 photographs. $35.00.




From 1948 through the early 1970s, Henry Clay Anderson was proprietor of the Anderson Photo Service in Greenville, Mississippi, one of the few towns of any size in the Mississippi Delta. Anderson was African American, as was his clientele. His studio was located on Nelson Street, in the heart of a thriving business district that served Greenville's surprisingly large black middle class. African American lawyers, doctors, educators, merchants, and others of means and influence went to Anderson to have the high points of their families' lives preserved on film. Over time, a remarkable record of such occasions accumulated in Anderson's files, eventually adding up to nearly a quarter-century's worth of in-depth testimony to a way of life largely unknown to the rest of the world.

Anderson's work probably would have remained unseen if New Yorker Shawn Wilson hadn't phoned the 87-year-old photographer in 1998 hoping to locate the negative to a portrait Anderson had made in the 1950s of Wilson's Greenville-raised mother. Anderson told Wilson he had discarded much of his studio work when he retired so doubted he still had the negative, but if Wilson wanted to come to Greenville to look through what remained he'd be welcome to. Wilson made the trip south a few weeks later but failed to find the portrait. (Happily, he came across it a year or so afterward, while going through material for this book.) He was astonished at what he did find, however: an extensive visual record of a lifestyle unique to a specific time and place—"It looked like Mayberry, but with an all-black cast," Wilson writes—that anyone unaware of would never suspect existed. A documentary filmmaker, Wilson recognized the value of what he saw. He purchased Anderson's remaining files on the spot, promising the photographer he'd devote himself to bringing his work to the attention of the world beyond Greenville, Mississippi—hopefully in book form.

Anderson died later that year, but Wilson kept his promise. The result is _Separate, but Equal: The Mississippi Photographs of Henry Clay Anderson_. It's a fascinating volume, essential for anyone who hopes to understand the breadth and variety of the African American experience in the Jim Crow South. With few exceptions, the Greenville Anderson's photographs show is not the Mississippi of back-breaking field labor, dilapidated shacks, enforced segregation, or violently racist whites (all staples among the most widely disseminated images of the South during the 1950s and 1960s). Instead, we see African Americans living happy, prosperous lives—lives that provide them with enough disposable income to hire a photographer to record their happiness and prosperity for others to see. Page after page, the images reveal confidence, sophistication, and stability: a uniformed majorette practices her baton work on the sidewalk of a tree-lined residential neighborhood; three tuxedoed young men await their dates on a porch swing; a little girl in a party dress perches on the arm of a sofa, the receiver of a shiny new telephone to her ear and a copy of _Ebony_ in the magazine rack beside her; a brother and sister pose by a console television taller than they are; teenage girls in bathing suits parade for the camera during a poolside beauty pageant; families large and small pose by new cars, at birthday parties, in front of homes. In nearly every picture, there is little to differentiate the lives of the people Anderson photographed from those of middle class white Americans of the time other than skin color. Their dreams, their achievements, and the ways they've chosen to live their lives seem indistinguishable from the prevailing middle-class ideal of the 1950s as lived and expressed in neighborhoods throughout America— north or south, east or west, black or white.

A word of caution: one can imagine potential readers of *Separate, but Equal*—people already so inclined—who will view Anderson's Greenville photographs as evidence that racial segregation wasn't so bad after all. A hard look at the pictures, though, refutes this. The kind of strength and determination to succeed that radiates from these pages does not result from knuckling under to an oppressive racial caste system. Instead, these qualities derive from the realization that one's accomplishments have been doubly difficult, attained despite—in defiance of—the rules and regulations of the Jim Crow South. They also come from knowing one has been blessed, at least in comparison to many of one's peers, and being properly grateful for that good fortune. Add to the mix the quiet confidence of the abiding religious faith we sense in so many of the people Anderson photographed, and the pictures start to help us understand what supported and sustained them. These were people for whom racial segregation was a profound burden they carried with them every day but who succeeded anyway. No one should have to work so hard just to live a normal life.

DAVID WHARTON

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**Cornbread Nation 1: The Best of Southern Food Writing.** Edited by John Egerton for the Southern Foodways Alliance. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002. 260 pages. $16.95.


I told Ann Abadie I wanted to review this volume the moment it showed up at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, in part because I've long taken pride in my family's cornbread recipe—passed down from my Iowa-born grandmother to my California-born mother to me—and in part because, as a longtime Manhattanite recently relocated to Oxford, Mississippi, and deliriously in love with down-home cooking (cornmeal-fried catfish, pulled pork barbecue, overcooked green beans, etc.), I figured I'd learn a few things that needed learning. Indeed I did. I learned, among other things, that my mother, a self-described "foodie" whose SUV tags read "BROCCOLI" and whose fingernails are rimmed with dirt most summer mornings, deserves to be classed as an honorary Southerner. Sort of.

A renegade professor of nutrition education at Columbia University's Teacher's College, a member of the Chef's Collaborative and the so-called Slow Food movement, a fierce advocate for regionally grown organic produce and an unreconstructed foe of agribusiness, a woman who makes most of her meals off the onions, tomatoes, potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots,

broccoli, green beans, zucchini, summer squash, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries that she grows in her cherished plot fronting the Hudson River, a woman who chortles every time we speak by phone about the vacuum-packed Mason jars she's either just "put up" in her larder or just made a no-cost feast out of, my mother is part upcountry Rebel and part gourmandizing sensualist—qualities that place her smack in the middle of the Cornbread Nation inventoried by John Egerton. Of course, she likes her green beans steamed and crisp, not ham-flavored and mushy, and that is a big disqualifier, as I've also learned.

My mama would certainly like this book, although I suspect she'd find the parts about back-country distilleries less compelling than I do; she's a beer drinker, not a bourbon drinker. "A collection of great food stories from the South" is the apocryphal phrase, uttered at a Southern Foodways Symposium in Oxford several years ago, that led Egerton to pull together this memorable, moving, and occasionally hilarious assortment of character studies, travelogues, elegies to all-but-forgotten culinary arts and endangered modes of agrarian life, and epic catalogues of cherished meals. Although agribusiness occasionally rears its head here, most notably in Amanda Hesser's sympathetic portrait of South Carolina's Coosaw Farms cartel entitled "The Watermelon Market," most of these food stories are odes not to processes but to personalities—quirky, stubborn, resourceful personalities, inflected by regional predilection (and sometimes inflamed by regional prejudice) but rooted in the irreplaceably local.

In "The Legendary Coe Dupuis, Moonshiner," Craig LaBan makes a convincing claim for his 96-year-old, cigar-chomping Cajun subject as "a wizard of whiskey, a Stravinsky at the still, a maestro of the mash. He has done for outlaw liquor what Robert Johnson did for the Delta blues, instinctively elevating a folk tradition into golden, liquid art." LaBan is wonderfully attuned to both the distant history that helped produce Dupuis—Prohibition evaded via Louisiana's "swampy maze of a coastline"—and the microenvironment that inspires and reflects his alchemist's art, an art to which LaBan is also deliciously responsive. "My tour of Coe's empire is over, and we are back where we began, sitting in the beautiful heat of his dark kitchen, savoring a last cup of moonshine. It is just barely on the sweet side of a man's drink. Dark with wild cherry, charred with a bourbony oak that makes my gums tingle. 'I will miss this taste. You can't be in too much of a hurry to make something like that,' he tells me."

There is a fair bit of nostalgia in these pages for a character-driven Southern pastoral being progressively displaced by the fast-food rhythms of the New South, a region now defined in the national mind by "its Wal-Marts, nationally televised golf classics, and gated communities." Slow food is the rule here: planted, harvested, and prepared by hand, often by Mama, with quiet pride, no pretensions, and enough saturated fat to fell a small elephant. Roast turkey swimming in butter, corn simmered with butter, green beans cooked with pork, mashed potatoes creamed with butter and a teaspoon of mayonnaise, macaroni and cheese, a big pot of pinto beans with a massive ham bone swimming in the middle, cole slaw, cranberry sauce, and of course dessert: pumpkin pies, pecan pies, coconut cakes, strawberry shortcake. "This is not magazine-cover food," writes Rick Bragg of his family's Alabama Thanksgiving in "Dinner Rites," making up for his mama's modesty with his own bluntly lyrical boosterism. "It is the food of my youth, my life. I guess I would live longer if I didn't eat it, but the life would be so bland. I would rather eat the pages of the magazines."

It is surely true, as Lolis Eric Elie argues in his paean to Dooky Chase, a legendary black-run all-night eatery in New Orleans, that "food in the South has always built bridges across political and social chasms virtually impassable by any other medium," although one might also argue that jazz and blues music have functioned in much the same way. ("You're really cooking now" remains a term of high praise, intriguingly, for any group of musicians in performance.) But this volume also offers a scattering of provocative counterexamples, places in which Southern foodways have bred familial bickering, regional chauvinism, and racial divisiveness. One of these stories, exemplifying all three dynamics, is a low-comic masterpiece by South Carolina native Jack Hitt. "A Confederacy of Sauces," first published in the *New York Times Magazine*, details the rise, apotheosis, and fall of Maurice Bessinger, elder of a feuding quartet of Bessinger brothers, whose mustard-based sauce (which comes in four slightly different sibling variations) has gotten them all embroiled in a big fat racial mess.

What happens is this: in the aftermath of the South Carolina State Legislature's lowering of the Confederate flag from the capitol dome in Columbia on July 1, 2000, Maurice decides to hoist counterattacking Confederate flags over each of his nine barbecue joints in and around the capital. Hollywood's idea of an unreconstructed Rebel, head of the largest commercial barbecue operation in the country, Maurice looks "like a cross between Colonel Sanders and the rich guy on the Community Chest cards in Monopoly: a bantam rooster of a man with snowy hair and mustache." Local black leaders, alarmed, lead a boycott against Bessinger's "Carolina Gold" sauce, prompting Wal-Mart, Kroger, Food Lion, and virtually every other supermarket chain in town to yank the stuff from their shelves. Maurice rapidly loses, by his own estimation, 98 percent of his bottled-sauce trade. Enter younger brother Melvin. Sensing an unexploited business opportunity, declaring his own moderate racial views considerably at variance from his brother's, he quickly bottles and debuts his own varietal mustard sauce, only to find a black community convinced that Maurice is trying to scam them by serving his same old racist sauce in Melvin's new bottles. North Charleston minister James Johnson, leader of the boycott, comes to Melvin's rescue, declaring that he has been shown "convincing evidence that Melvin's bottling operation [is] different from Maurice's," and publicly endorsing Melvin's sauce. Johnson doesn't even eat barbecue, it turns out ("I try to avoid pork and the red meats"), but his political instincts are sound. A third

brother, Robert, devoid of his siblings' ambitions and exasperated with their political involvements, is content merely to serve his uninspired version of yellow-sauce barbecue out of his two pits in North Charleston. "If we make politics out of barbecue, then what's next?" he asks Hirr. "Political hamburgers? Political French fries?"

At the farthest remove from this sort of low comedy is Honorée Fanonne Jeffers's sparse, trenchant, brilliant poem, "The Gospel of Barbecue." Jeffers archives barbecue's slave-era origins in the voice of her Uncle Vess, who takes pride in a black culinary artistry that transforms low-on-the-hog offal into falling-off-the-bone sustenance: "Perfectly good food / Can't be no sin. / Maybe the little / bit of meat on ribs / makes for lean eating. / Maybe the pink flesh / is tasteless until you add / onions garlic black / pepper tomatoes / soured apple cider / but survival ain't never been / no crime against nature / or Maker. See, stay alive / in the meantime, laugh / a little harder. Go on / and gnaw that bone clean." Along with several more overtly polemical selections, including Jessica B. Harris's "Your Greens Ain't Like Mine—Or Are They!," such words tempt us to read the history of Southern foodways as a black-and-white thing, a struggle for bodily survival transformed, in these post-Roots years, into a struggle to define cultural legacies. Yet Cornbread Nation, to its credit, takes pains to complicate the picture, offering engaging portraits of Jewish women trading Old World recipes in Arkansas, Spanish-speaking Isleños of St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, reestablishing links with their Canary Island ancestors, and Kim Wong transforming himself, through sheer chance, into the pork-rind king of Clarksdale, Mississippi. "You compare Mississippi to where I came from in China," enthuses Wong, "and Mississippi is good!"

I couldn't agree more, but of course I'm a newcomer from the cold heartless Isle of Manhattan and still learning about my adopted home. When I recently told Southern Foodways Alliance director John T. Edge that I'd grown addicted to B's Hickory Smoke BBQ, sold out of a Sunoco "convenience mart" about a mile from the Ole Miss campus, he grimaced

continued on page 16

and said, "They do a decent job, but, in my opinion, barbecue cooked in a metal smoke box is not the real thing." Thanks, John T.! I suppose I could call my mother and tell her about my Yankee faux pas, but I know how she feels about barbecue: that it's nothing but a waste of animal protein and saturated fat laced with cancer-causing nitrosamines. That's just how she'd say it, too. You need to meet my mama sometime. She's a great lady, but she undercooks her green beans. Puts too much sugar in her cornbread, too, I've recently learned.

ADAM GUSSOW

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**One Writer's Imagination: The Fiction of Eudora Welty.** By Suzanne Marrs. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002. 280 pages. $59.95.


The night-blooming cereus—a "naked, luminous, complicated flower"—suddenly appears in the final story of *The Golden Apples* (1949), a book that Suzanne Marrs calls "a triumph of the imagination, perhaps the greatest triumph of Eudora Welty's distinguished career" (136). Hours after Katie Rainey's funeral in fictitious Morgana, Mississippi, an elderly friend crosses the Raineys' deserted porch to bring Katie's grown daughter Virgie a white cereus, along with an admonition to "Look at it enduring the night." As Marrs observes, the old woman's rare and fragile gift is "an emblem of Virgie herself, vulnerable to the power of time"; and Virgie's overnight decision to leave Morgana is an action "in the face of time's urgency" (134).

The theme of transience, a frequent motif in Welty's work, is as haunting as the reader's glimpse of a flower that withers after one short night of splendor. Marrs traces this image to a surprising source: the comical Night-Blooming Cereus Club that Welty helped to organize in Jackson, Mississippi, in the early 1930s. The club motto, says Marrs, was "Don't take it 'cereus,' life's too mysterious"—an echo of a popular Rudy Vallee song and just the sort of prank that led Welty's friend Lehman Engel to describe her as "the unwitting inventor of camp" (9-10). The transformative force of the imagination is among Marrs's central concerns; and the case of the cereus, which blossoms again in Welty's novel *Losing Battles* (1970), vividly illustrates the fiction writer's command over the material of her life.

Adapting her title from that of Welty's brief memoir, *One Writer's Beginnings* (1984), Marrs probably knows more about Welty's literary beginnings and development than any other scholar. The Millsaps College professor served a sort of apprenticeship with her two earlier volumes: *The Welty Collection: A Guide to the Eudora Welty Manuscripts and Documents at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History* (1988) and *Eudora Welty and Politics: Did the Writer Crusade?* (2001), an essay collection that she coedited with Harriet Pollack. Marrs's meticulous study of archival holdings for the first book is evident in each chapter of *One Writer's Imagination*; from personal correspondence to photographs, book reviews, and manuscript drafts, the state's Eudora Welty Collection is a storehouse whose treasures greatly enrich any discussion of the author's life and fiction.

Similarly, the emphasis on contemporary social contexts in *Eudora Welty and Politics* informs Marrs's approach in this new book. For example, her chapter on *Delta Wedding* (1946), which Welty sets in rural Mississippi in 1923, makes several references to the World War II era of the novel's composition. Though occasionally strained, Marrs's emphasis on a theme of redemption unites the past world of the novel with the years when Welty's brothers and some of her best friends from Jackson were serving overseas. Marrs suggests that Welty's reworking and expansion of an earlier story, "The Delta Cousins," into *Delta Wedding* reveals a "growing emphasis upon the very values that she hoped would survive and triumph over the world Hitler envisioned" (85).

In *One Writer's Beginnings*, Welty speaks of "the wonderful word *confluence*," a term she applies to unusual conjunctions both in her family history and in the plots she created. Confluence is also the ideal word for the merging of many strands in *One Writer's Imagination*. These include Marrs's long friendship with Eudora Welty, which enables her to quote from personal conversations and from the restricted papers in the Welty Collection; her perception of the author in various cultural contexts (regional, national, and international), with special attention to the civil rights movement; her comprehensive knowledge of the large body of Welty scholarship; and—perhaps most important of all—her sensitive readings of the story collections and novels, from *A Curtain of Green* (1941) through *The Optimist's Daughter* (1972).

Among the few missing threads in this outstanding volume is Welty's *The Ponder Heart* (1954), a novel Marrs barely mentions, even though Sharon Deykin Barta (in Marrs's *Eudora Welty and Politics*) suggests several ties between Uncle Daniel Ponder's trial and actual legal cases of the 1950s. This is the type of politically grounded approach that Marrs herself takes more than once in *One Writer's Imagination*, so the omission is puzzling, as is the neglect of certain well-known Welty stories. Because Marrs's discussions of many short works ("Powerhouse," "June Recital," and "The Winds," for example) are so detailed and insightful, readers might also wish for equal attention to the frequently anthologized stories "Petrified Man," "A Worn Path," and "Why I Live at the P.O." Moreover, her comments on the sexual violence in the stories and novels, most notably in *The Ponder*

Heart and *The Robber Bridegroom* (1942), are unexpectedly brief. One final desideratum might be a more direct engagement with such speculative treatments of Welty as Ann Waldron's *Eudora: A Writer's Life* (1998) and Patricia Yaeger's *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women's Writing, 1930-1990* (2000), two highly publicized studies that Marrs's book far surpasses, both as biography and as literary criticism.

Marrs does challenge some misreadings of Welty's life and fiction, including Carolyn Heilbrun's assumption that mothers of Chestina Welty's generation were apt to burden their daughters with "patriarchal" expectations of marriage and motherhood. As Marrs explains, neither Mrs. Welty nor her daughter had much interest in women's clubs, churchgoing, or the activities of the stereotypical Southern belle. Instead, both valued higher education for women and "cherished liberal sentiments that were held by a rather small minority in the overwhelmingly conservative South" (5). Yet, the citizens of Jackson actually made allowances for such unconventionality. Marrs's balanced discussion of intricate domestic and social relationships is also a hallmark of her approach to literary matters. Attuned to the fiction's complexities, Marrs speaks of Welty's ambivalence toward traditional small towns in *The Golden Apples*, her emphasis on both freedom and danger in *The Bride of the Innisfallen*'s stories of travel, and her alertness to continuity as well as change in *Losing Battles*. The critic concludes that "Welty's imagination thrived upon polarities that characterized her personal life and her perceptions of the society at large" (256).

In *One Writer's Imagination*, Marrs offers a volume of thoughtful commentary on most of Welty's major concerns: storytelling, families, mortality and transcendence, love and separateness, journeys and homeplaces. No earlier critic has done as much as she has to affirm (possibly overaffirming) that Welty was politically engaged, not aesthetically removed. News of the Night-Blooming Cereus Club, comments on Welty's early romance and lifelong friendship with the writer John Robinson, praise for Welty from civil rights activist Anne Moody, snapshots of Welty at 34 (with cropped pants, sandals, and the period's equivalent of a laptop computer on her paper-strewn bed) and Welty at 41 (on a stone bench in Italy, with three American friends) all make the reader impatient for Marrs's authorized biography, now in progress for Harcourt Publishers. Meanwhile, *One Writer's Imagination* warns us that much remains "unknown and unknowable" because "the source of creativity remains a wonderful mystery" (256, 254). With Marrs as a guide, however, we move much closer to the mysterious center.

JOAN WYLIE HALL

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**William Faulkner, Self-Presentation and Performance.** By James G. Watson. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001. 271 pages, 11 B&W photographs, 9 line drawings. $40.00.

Our pal Jim Watson's new book is a first-rate, important piece of scholarship, necessary to Faulkner studies. It is the work of a mature Faulkner scholar in full command of the entire range of Faulkner studies, past and present, and seems to me a major step forward in Faulkner studies.

Watson's particpris is the presumption, long held sacred in American literature, that Faulkner's work is heavily autobiographical: the first wave of scholarship and commentary noted how heavily he drew on his own family background and on both Southern history in general and his own region of North Mississippi specifically for the materials of his fiction. The second wave, fairly recent, has been intensely interested in the psycho-autobiographical undergirdings of the work, especially that relating to family relationships and dynamics, and has paid particular attention to Faulkner's relationship with the women in his life; this work has often been heavily Freudian and, latterly, Lacanian in its approaches. Cumulatively the work has taught us that Faulkner may well be the most autobiographical novelist of the 20th century, and that he clearly, demonstratively, has drawn not just on that family background, that part of it that was so public in Mississippi history, but also on that part of it that is most private, most intimate.

Comes now James Watson to take studies of the autobiographical in Faulkner's work a considerable step farther. Like others, he undertakes to explore the relationship between Faulkner's life and his works, their reciprocities as it were. But he approaches the enterprise from a fresh and relevant viewpoint. "From the beginning," he writes in the preface, "Faulkner's was a self-presenting art. . . . He created in his work a world of controlled chaos, aggressively unconventional in its forms and disruptive of pragmatic thinking in its effect, which was deeply, personally his own. Self-presentation and performance are manifested both in Faulkner's life, in the gestures and disguises he assumed, and in his art, where those figures and others of his emotional biography are separate but interlocking modes of representation. Self-presentation, as I mean the term, is a narrative strategy that capitalizes upon the experience of the man and the artist, including of course the performative experience; by performance I mean the heightened mode of written expression that reassembles familiar experience in the forms and language of spectacle. By means of such self-affirming performances, the self and the word became one in the writing."

In *William Faulkner, Self-Presentation and Performance*, Watson works his way convincingly, incisively, through a large portion of the Faulkner canon, playing plenty of attention to the short stories, which critics surveying the fiction still too often overlook. (I am a little disappointed that he pays shorter shrift to the later fiction, dealing with everything from *Go Down, Moses* on in a final survey chapter, which seems more "summary" than the other chapters' deliberation, though I have to admit that even this chapter is full of original insight, and does not cripple the book. I just want more of it.) The result is a completely new reading of Faulkner's work, a new understanding of the way that he "performed" his life both in his

fiction and in his relationships to the world outside his imagination.

I do not say that Watson's book overthrows any of the major "readings" that we now have of Faulkner's fiction; his task is quite otherwise, to add biographical dimension to what we already know. Even so, one of the many pleasures in reading this manuscript is in encountering the hundreds of places where his commentary illuminates familiar Faulknerian passages in unexpected, delightful and instructive ways. The book brims over with unexpected pleasures and treasures; it will be a major pleasure for oldline Faulknerians to read, since it will cause us to rethink much of what we have written and taught about Faulkner and about "Faulkner." Uninitiated readers will also find it useful and instructive, even if they won't know completely why.

Nor does Watson forget Faulkner's intellectual life, his engagement with the literary tradition that he inherited and had, somehow, to come to terms with. Watson brings his own considerable erudition and reading in American literature to this discussion to demonstrate how specifically Faulkner read and borrowed from Thoreau, Melville, Hawthorne, Emerson, and other American literary figures. The book is alive with Faulkner's, and with him his reader's, constant struggle for wholeness as man and artist, and Watson brings the two together in surprising and subtle ways. We thus have a more complete picture of Faulkner's intellectual life—not just his reading but the way he absorbed and rewrote, remade, used to his own purposes, what he read—than we have had before. Since writing was his life, come hell or high water, Watson's new book gives us, in some important ways, a more complete picture of Faulkner himself than we have had before.

NOEL POLK

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**The Last Girls.** By Lee Smith. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Algonquin Books, 2002. 384 pages. $24.95.

In the midst of America's accelerating involvement in Vietnam, the escalation of racial tensions that would result in assassinations the nation still mourns, and the reexamination of traditional gender roles that Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* demanded, the "last girls" of Lee Smith's latest novel ("they'd call us women in the newspaper if it happened now," one of them remarks [71]), set off on an improbable and fantastic journey in imitation of the paradigmatic hero of American literature: they float down the Mississippi River on a raft, just like Huck Finn. But this isn't really a novel about that trip. When the story opens, more than 30 years after that college lark, four of the original crew find themselves reunited on a highly commercialized version of their earlier craft. This time they have met with the express purpose, not of celebrating youth, but of honoring the dead, of scattering over the water the ashes of their college companion and fellow rathswoman, Baby Ballou.

But this isn't really a novel about that second trip, either. Smith unobtrusively announces her purpose on the "Acknowledgements" page: "the idea of river journey as a metaphor for the course of women's lives has intrigued me for years" (383). The last girls, classmates at Mary Scott College, are an eclectic group; combined, they have faced the range of experiences that may come to women because they are women: childbirth, hysterectomy, hot flashes. Courtney, a North Carolina socialite, leads a perfect life charmed by money, from which she seeks solace in a long-standing extramarital affair with an eccentric florist whom she ignored in high school. Anna, a West Virginia mountain girl, has fled her roots to become the author of bestselling romance novels; she pens one for her Confederacy series while on the trip. Catherine, a sculptor, brings along her quirky third husband, her own memories of other loves, and a lump in her breast, discovered one morning while taking a shower aboard ship.

The character who forges the closest relationship with the reader is Harriet. As college roommates, Harriet and Baby Ballou could not have been more different. From her passably good, Sylvia Plath-like poetry, we can piece together the elements of Baby's indifferent decadence, born of white Southern privilege. Harriet, on the other hand, has modest beginnings as the daughter of an eccentric but skilled dressmaker with a flair for attracting men. Never married, the adult Harriet has nevertheless known love; in her quiet adult life as a writing teacher at a community college, she has nurtured memories with the care of a devoted gardener and from them spins with unforgiving clarity the doomed romance of Jefferson Carr and Baby Ballou. Yet the reader may be startled to realize at the novel's end that we are no closer to Baby, the enigma at the book's center, than we were at the beginning. Baby's husband, in an explanatory letter to the reunited friends, offers a picture of the adult Baby's life; in this blurred version of a highly domesticated adult woman, the reader recognizes few traces of the Alabama wild child who flits through the memories of her friends as college-age Baby, flashing her "slow but reckless toothy grin that no one could ever resist" (118).

But Smith is not writing about the cult of Southern female friendship. For Smith's last girls, the illusion of really knowing other people is lost with girlhood, and womanhood can be a lonely place. That fact doesn't minimize the need for companionship and the consolation of memory, though. *The Last Girls*, finally, is about the winding uncertainty that is the lives of women, about how women respond when the water is deeper or shallower than they expected, about how they find the strength to swim when it might be easier to drift. Smith's characters left home believing that the markers of successful adulthood would include marriage and children, houses to attend to and vacations to plan; they believed that love would make them happy and last forever and that their lives would steadily progress toward a positive endpoint they could select. This is a novel about what happens to people when they suddenly realize they are already living the lives they had been waiting to begin, and nothing so far has gone according to plan. Harriet's recollection of their stop at a deserted mansion 30 years ago—"Baby pirouetted the length of the verandah in the dusk, her hair swinging out on the turns" (323)—is more than nostalgia for lost youth; it's as close as truth comes in the journey that is the lives of these and other women.

KATIE MCKEE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTHERN FOODWAYS ALLIANCE

# Symposium and Field Trip Programming Announced

For 2003, SFA turns its attention to Appalachia. With this year's programming we seek to more closely tie the Field Trip to the Southern Foodways Symposium. Both the August 1-3 Field Trip to Asheville, North Carolina, and the October 2-5 symposium here in Oxford will highlight the people, the places, the larder of the mountain South. So mark your calendars for 2003 and keep in mind that our programming for 2004 will explore foodways and race relations, beginning with a Homecoming Field Trip to Birmingham, Alabama.

For those of you chomping at the proverbial bit in advance of our August gathering, here are a few details on *A Taste of Appalachia: SFA Field Trip to Asheville and Environs.*

Our host will be Biltmore Estate. Probable highlights include day trips to Sunburst Trout Farm and Hickory Nut Farm, dinner and dancing at the Orange Peel Social Aid and Pleasure Club, and wine tastings. Did we mention the game dinner that Elizabeth Sims and crew will stage! Or the screening of the cult classic film *Thunder Road*! Here's hoping you can join us. Look for details in the next newsletter.

### Call for Entries for *Cornbread Nation 2*

Our first compilation of the best Southern food writing is selling well. We've received kudos from sources as varied as *Kirkus Review* and *Southern Living*. If you have not yet snagged a copy, we suggest you do so very soon. Looking ahead to *Cornbread Nation 2*—to be edited by Lois Eric Elie—SFA seeks unpublished and previously published contemporary fiction, nonfiction, and a wee bit of poetry. If you have a suggestion or a submission (especially if it has to do with barbecue, which will be central to the text), please email us at sfamail@olemiss.edu.

# NEW SFA BOARD PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Last month, I stepped into a pair of shoes that will be a challenge to wear, hoping to master a little of the style and grace with which Tore Tipton Martin has worn them for the last two years. Happily, Tore will remain close at hand to offer wise counsel when needed.

We also recently welcomed a fantastic new board of directors. Three of our guiding lights, Nathalie Dupree, John Egerton, and Marlene Osteen, retired this year, and Donna Pierce has regretfully resigned because her new work at the *Chicago Tribune* conflicts with her board responsibilities, but I'm happy to report that Hoover Alexander, Carol Daily, Fred Sauceman, and Elizabeth Sims have joined our ranks. We'll be introducing these new members to you all in more detail, but know that they are already making their presence felt in a dynamic way.

As this new board leads SFA into its fourth year, I have two main goals. The first is to build a solid and diverse financial foundation of endowments by way of continuing corporate support and the generosity of our growing membership. The second is to build and enrich our programs, especially our ongoing work with oral histories.

My long-term vision goes beyond oral histories. Someday—and let's hope sooner than we think—SFA will truly be the keeper of the flame, the national clearinghouse for all things connected with Southern food, not only as a keeper of cookbooks, journals, household diaries, letters, and oral histories (both audio and video), but as the source for information about other resources throughout our region and beyond.

Keep those skillets hot!

*Damon Lee Fowler*


## New Editorial Team for *Gravy*

Beginning with the next issue, *Gravy* will benefit from the experience of a new editorial team headed by Tom Head of Washington, D.C. Sharing editorial duties with Tom will be Krista Reese of Atlanta, Georgia, and Jeff Siegel of Dallas, Texas. They have been charged with rethinking our quarterly letter. Look for articles on Southern food books, restaurants, people, markets, and the like. Look for *Gravy* to function as an insider's take on the best of the South. Look for your copy of the new, improved *Gravy* in March.

Meet the Editorial Team:

• Tom Head is the *Washingtonian* magazine's executive wine and food editor, one of its restaurant reviewers, and writes regularly for the *Washingtonian* and other publications on food, drink, and travel. A native of West Monroe, Louisiana, Head is a graduate of Centenary College of Louisiana and holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in English literature from Stanford University.

• Krista Reese, a former editor with both *Atlanta* magazine and the *Atlanta Journal/Constitution*, is a widely published freelance writer who has contributed articles to *People*, *Bon Appétit*, *Southern Living*, and *George*. She holds an M.A. degree in English from the University of Georgia.

• Jeff Siegel, a graduate of the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, brings a unique perspective to SFA. He grew up in Chicago, married a woman from south Louisiana, and has lived in Texas for two decades. Siegel has authored six books, and his writing has appeared in *Sports Illustrated*, *Gourmet*, and *Travel & Leisure*.

## Atlanta Exhibit Debuts: *Ice Cream: The Whole Scoop*

A little nip in the air can't quench a Southerner's craving for all things cool and creamy. From December 26, 2002-May 26, 2003, the Atlanta History Center will feature the exhibit *Ice Cream: The Whole Scoop*.

Last summer, the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, Ohio, created the exhibit to bring to light the history, art, and technology of American ice cream. Noting that smooth, sweet ice cream is so common and convenient as the grocery store that carries it, this exhibition takes a look at ice cream's past. In fact, this dish was once so costly and laborious that it was only set before Renaissance kings and courtiers. All aspects of ice cream's history are explored— from those early beginnings to the secrets of the great soda jerks, the origins of the cone, and the art of proper dipping.

According to the USDA, the total U.S. production of ice cream and related frozen desserts in 2000 amounted to more than 1.6 billion gallons, translating to 23 quarts per person. But this isn't a recent phenomenon. Our nation's affection for ice cream has been a long love affair. It is said that George Washington served ice cream, still a labor-intensive treat, at state affairs. In 1812, Dolly Madison served a strawberry ice cream creation at President Madison's second inaugural banquet at the White House.

As the industrial age took hold in America, ice cream production was facilitated by technological innovations. Restaurateurs of the late 19th century introduced new creations, the ice cream soda and ice cream sundae. And ice cream became a symbol of celebration when WWII ended and the dairy ban was lifted. In 1946 alone, Americans consumed over 20 quarts of ice cream per person. Today, ice cream still reigns as one of the South's desserts of choice. For more information, visit www.AtlantaHistoryCenter.com.

### Exhibit Debuts: What's Cookin' in Cape Fear

Experience a taste of North Carolina's past at the Cape Fear Museum in Wilmington. Explore the development of the region's foodways during the 19th century by way of this interactive exhibit focusing on the role of the Cape Fear River and Wilmington's port. Visitors can track the import and export of food over time, from rice and sweet potatoes through molasses and muscadine grapes to peanuts and oysters. Learn about the original waterfront market, investigate the rise of mercantilism and agriculture, trace the changes in technology and transportation, and ponder the impact of the Civil War all from the perspective of the palate. For more information from previous issues call 910-341-4340.

Southern Foodways Alliance

MEMBERSHIP

Please make checks payable to the Southern Foodways Alliance and mail them to the University of Mississippi, Center for the Study of Southern Culture, University, MS 38677.

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# Center for the Study of Southern Culture

## Silver Anniversary for the Center: 25 Years of Studying the South

**September 27, 2002**
Jackson, Mississippi

Faculty, students, staff, and friends enjoyed a variety of activities celebrating the Center's 25th anniversary, as sample photographs reveal.

Lewis Grauber (left) and Clarke Reed (right) talk with after-dinner speaker Julia Reed, a Greenville, Mississippi, native who is a senior editor at Vogue and writes about food for the New York Times magazine.

From left: Former Mississippi Governor William Winter and his wife, Elise, with Sarah Dabney Gillespie, new chair of the Center Advisory Committee

Southern Studies students Katy Vincent (left) and Amy Evans chatting with a flamingo during dinner

The Old Capitol Inn, site of a celebration dinner hosted by Center Advisory Committee members and organized by an energetic and creative group of volunteers, was decorated in a festive manner evocative of Southern culture: Elvis Presley—in the form of Bill Dunlap's huge *Shroud of Memphis* painting (insert)—was on center stage, with life-size cutouts of Elvis and Faulkner standing by. Cloths in bright colors, stripes, and polka dots covered the dining tables, where centerpieces were pink flamingoes standing in "a tuft of real plastic grass" and surrounded by RC Colas, Moon Pies, and Pork Rinds. Chef Bruce Case prepared a delicious Southern dinner for nearly 200 guests who gathered for the celebration.

The Center Celebration in Jackson began with a tour of the Remembering Wills exhibition at Old Capitol Museum, with remarks by Patti Carr Black. For details, see page 24.

Southern Studies alumna Caroline Herring, who grew up in Canton, Mississippi, entertained the group with her music, which has captured the hearts of listeners everywhere and won critical acclaim and major awards.

## September 28, 2002
### Yazoo City, Mississippi

Stephen Washburn (left) tells Carlotte McMullan how computers track the ginning process.

Visiting on the porch of the Seward home in Yazoo City

The day began with a drive to Holly Bluff for a tour the new Silver Creek Cotton Gin, after which Center Advisory Committee members Byron and Cameron Seward hosted a lunch at their home. Afterwards, Sam Olden conducted a tour of Yazoo City.

Byron Seward (center, with back to camera) tells group about the operation of Silver Creek Cotton Gin, the largest east of the Mississippi River.

Sam Olden points to grave of Willie Morris

## November 8-9, 2002
### Oxford, Mississippi

Southern Studies professors (from left) Ted Ownby, Kathryn McKee, and David Wharton discuss the Center's academic program.

The Center hosted "The State of the South and Southern Studies," a symposium that opened with an address by former Center Director William Ferris and a panel discussion by Southern Studies alumni. The program included a session on the Center's inaugural event, a 1972 symposium on Eudora Welty; panel presentations by Center consultants and faculty; and a closing address by Center Director Charles Reagan Wilson. The weekend was also celebrated with a dinner at Isom Place on Friday and a picnic at Off Square Books on Saturday.

Discussing the Center's achievements and challenges are (from left) Lisa Howorth, former Southern Studies teacher and Center staff member, who compiled and edited *The South: A Treasury of Art and Literature*; Center Director Charles Wilson; historian Richard King, keynote Center consultant and visiting professor in 1989-1990; and sociologist John Shelton Reed, Center consultant and author or editor of more than a dozen books about the South.

Recalling that Welty's work was the subject of the Center's inaugural event in November 1972, the author's long-time friends Patti Carr Black (left) and poet William Jay Smith reflected on that 1977 gathering and on her life and art.

# November 8-9, 2002
## Oxford, Mississippi

Talking about their experiences while earning their Southern Studies degrees, their subsequent activities, and recommendations for the program are (from left) Susan Glisson, Aimée Schmidt, John T. Edge, and Andrea Finley.

Mary Beth Lasseter (left) and Kendra Myers posing as prom queens

Dancers at the prom stopped a minute to pose with Elvis


The Center and its 25th anniversary inspired the cover of the January 2003 issue of the *Ole Miss Alumni Review*; inside, an eight-page article with numerous photographs captures the range and excitement of Center activities. If you want to see the article, written by Deidra Jackson and Jim Urbanek, we'll be glad to send you a copy. Look for Robert Jordan's enticing cover photograph on a Friends of the Center mailing this spring.

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**Celebration Planning Committee**

Sandy Black
Katie Blount
Janet H. Clark
Carol Daily
Dot-t Dehmer
Lynn Murray Evans
Sarah Dabney Gillespie
Mary Hartwell Howorth
Elta Johnston
Shelley Ritter
Pat Ross
Cameron Seward
Ward Sumner
Carla Wall
Kathryn Wiener

# Black Remembers Welty

*Patti Carr Black, curator of the* Remembering Welty *exhibition at the Old Capitol Museum last fall, spoke to friends who gathered in Jackson on September 28, 2002, to tour the exhibition before attending a dinner celebrating the Center's 25th anniversary. The comments, printed here, cover the exhibition as well as plans for the Welty House and the Welty Collection.*

When Eudora died in July 2001, there was an outpouring of assessments, nationally and internationally, of her achievements: the power of her fiction, her influence on the development of the American short story, her broad understanding of—and contributions to—literary modernism, and the formative effect she had on other writers. Here in Mississippi we grieved over the loss of a warm, perceptive, witty, and invariably kind friend. Our two major museums in Jackson—the Mississippi Museum of Art and the Old Capitol—quickly began planning for exhibits honoring Eudora Welty. I hope some of you got to see the exhibit at the art museum.

Eudora's nieces, Mary Alice Welty White and Elizabeth Welty Thompson, made this exhibit possible through their generosity in making these items available. The exhibit is a brief look at Eudora's life through objects that she cherished. Our space here was extremely limited, but we chose things concerned with her lifelong interests: gardening, travel, theatre, books, and of course her writing. Most of the objects in the exhibit have never been on public display. They range from Eudora's baby doll to her presidential medals. They also show an element so dominant in her life—laughter. We have on display a whimsical book she created as a child to amuse her little brother when he was sick. We also have caricatures that she created as a young adult to amuse a friend, Frank Lyell, off at Princeton.

There are also objects she specifically mentioned in her beautiful autobiographical work, *One Writer's Beginning*: her childhood books, her father's pocket watch, his telescope, an early camera. We have the desk where she worked and the typewriter she used during one period of her life. We believe she had at least four typewriters during her long career, adamantly stopping at the idea of acquiring a Word Processor. She could process her own words.

Her literary career, of course, brought her virtually every honor and prize possible in the literary world. She was the first living writer to be published by the Library of America series, joining our great immortals, like Mark Twain. We have a side exhibition of some of her photographs juxtaposed to her writing. And, by the way, the medals and awards that you see on exhibit represent only a small fraction of those she received. I want to give you a chance to walk leisurely through the exhibit, read the text, and experience the objects themselves.

Before we break up I want to tell you a bit about the plans for the Eudora Welty House. The house, as you know, was left to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, which will open it as an interpretive literary site. Because of the generosity of her nieces, it will be one of the most substantive literary houses in American in terms of authenticity of furnishings, books, paintings, furniture, rugs, draperies. Virtually everything will remain intact. The fabric of the house itself will be as it is with the addition of those mechanisms necessary to operate a first-class museum house: air conditioning, humidity control, smoke detection, and fire suppression equipment. Unobtrusively added, we hope.

The house, as you know, is surrounded by the grounds and gardens where Eudora and her mother worked side by side for some 50 years and which figures prominently in Eudora's writing. Restoration of the garden is already under way to take it back to the decade of the 1930s. The diagrams, sketches, lists-of-plantings, and photographs, left by Mrs. Welty, and new scientific computer analysis will enable us to accurately recreate the garden and grounds. Did you know that Eudora alludes to more than 150 plants in her work? Many of those flowers, trees, and shrubs are still in her garden.

The major thrust of the Welty house will be educational programming. The mission and intention will be to use Welty's work to convey the potency of the written word in our culture, the writer in our society, and the great themes of human life found in Welty's writing. The scholarship which undergirds this effort will be provided by Suzanne Marrs, one of our leading Welty scholars, and the actual transformation of the house into a public institution will be supervised by Mary Alice Welty White.

Programming will include interpretive tours of the house and garden, symposia, readings, lectures, publications, films, Elderhostel sessions, a revival of the annual Mississippi Writers' Day, and eventually a biennial International Welty Conference. The house is scheduled to open in 2005.

One other thing that will be of interest to this group, and indeed to the nation, is the wealth of archival material that Eudora left in the House. As you know, Eudora began donating her papers and photographs to the Archives in 1957, and the Welty Collection there is already extensive. At her death, she bequeathed all of the papers in the house to the Archives. The scope and depth of this new material is staggering. It includes personal correspondence from such friends as Katherine Anne Porter, E. M. Forster, Elizabeth Bowen, William Maxwell, Reynolds Price, Ross McDonald, Bernard Berenson, Robert Penn Warren, and others. It includes unpublished manuscripts and additional photographs. It is yet another treasure trove.

In Eudora we lost a person of deep understanding, not only of the place we shared with her, the South, the State of Mississippi, but an understanding of the world. Her words of 1954, almost a half century ago, seem current. She said, "Mutual understanding in the world being nearly always, as now, at low ebb, it is comforting to remember that it is through art that one country can nearly always speak reliably to another. Art, though, is never the voice of a country; it is an even more precious thing, the voice of the individual, doing its best to speak, not comfort of any sort, indeed, but truth. And the art that speaks it most unmistakably, most directly, most variously, most fully, is fiction." She believed in her medium; so do we.

## Eudora Welty Foundation

The Eudora Welty Foundation, Inc., held its organizational meeting in Jackson on April 13, 1999, Eudora Welty's 90th birthday. The Foundation was established to assist the Mississippi Department of Archives and History with the conservation of Welty archival material and with the preservation, maintenance, interpretation, and operation of the Welty house on Pinehurst Street in Jackson. From 1957 until her death in 2001, Welty regularly donated manuscripts, correspondence, and photographs to the Department of Archives and History. At her death, her home also became the property of the Department.

The Foundation's goal is make visits to the home a experience that will enhance the understanding of Welty's life and work for visitors from across America and around the world.

The first project, started two years ago, is the restoration of the property's garden, created and carefully maintained by the author's mother during her lifetime. Work on the house that Welty called home for 76 years and in which she wrote almost all of her fiction has now also begun and will culminate in a literary house museum that helps to illuminate the creative process of one of the nation's finest writers.

Contributions may be sent to the Eudora Welty Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205-0571. For more details, visit www.eudorawelty.org/.

# Walton Interviews Wilson about the Center

Gerald W. Walton

*Charles Reagan Wilson took his baccalaureate and master's degrees at the University of Texas at El Paso and his Ph.D. at the University of Texas at Austin. Before coming to the University of Mississippi in 1981 as a professor of history and Southern Studies, he taught at the University of Texas at El Paso, the University of Wuerzburg in Germany, and Texas Tech University. For a number of years he was the director of the Southern Studies academic program in the Center. He has published widely and has given numerous papers at scholarly conferences. He was coeditor (with William Ferris) of the* Encyclopedia of Southern Culture *and has edited a number of books. He is the author of* Judgment and Grace in Dixie: Southern Faiths from Faulkner to Elvis *and* Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920. *Wilson has been director of the Center since 1998. Gerald W. Walton, provost emeritus, interviewed Wilson at the University of Mississippi on January 7, 2003.*

**Gerald W. Walton:** Charles, tell me when you first heard of something called the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi.

**Charles Reagan Wilson:** I first heard about the Center when I was in graduate school at the University of Texas at Austin. My dissertation supervisor, William Goetzman, knew about the Center. He was the president of the American Studies Association in 1977, the year that I finished my doctorate. He mentioned the Center to me, and that was my first time to hear about it. Later, when I was teaching at Texas Tech University in 1981, I saw an ad for a joint appointment in history and Southern Studies. I applied for that position and was one of the two on-campus finalists. Jim Cobb got that position. That was the early summer of 1981, and so, I guess, May they must have gotten the grant for the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, and they sent me a letter, so I applied for that.

**GWW:** When you came here for an interview, what was your thinking about what the Center might be and how you might play a part in that?

**CRW:** I thought it was very exciting, and with my interests, it seemed like a wonderful match. I had been trained in Southern history. I was in Texas, and I always felt too far West to be studying Southern history in effect; and I wanted to go to Mississippi, which I knew would be an ideal spot from which to contemplate Southern history. I was interested in interdisciplinary studies, with Goetzman my mentor in American Studies. I had taken a lot of courses in interdisciplinary studies. I had worked during the summer of 1980 in an NEH summer institute with John Shelton Reed of Chapel Hill. That was a very formative experience, which really got me thinking about Southern Studies as an interdisciplinary field. And so I found here a Center that is dedicated to all of these things in a sense. I liked the idea that it had a curriculum, and I thought that was important, and there were many opportunities for research projects. I applied for the academic position, and then I heard of the encyclopedia. Those are the two things that I, in particular, was focused on. I saw great potential for the Center.

Charles Reagan Wilson

**GWW:** Now, you were in Texas, but you had some early Tennessee connections?

**CRW:** Yes, I was born in Nashville, and my family on both sides were from little towns north of Nashville; so we were the pioneers who had gone out West as far as the rest of the family was concerned. We would go back every summer to visit my grandparents and aunts and uncles in this little town called Greenbrier and in Nashville too. We moved to El Paso when I was nine years old. I was growing up in this very bicultural Hispanic area, very cosmopolitan. There was a suburban high school. I very much grew up thinking of myself as a Southerner because my parents were very much Southern—the kinds of food we ate, the church we went to, all of that strong sense of family. I discovered I was a Southerner playing with kids named Juan and Jesus on playgrounds, knowing I was different from them. I have

always thought the experience made me interested in culture and different kinds of cultures.

**GWW:** What was your dissertation topic?

**CRW:** My dissertation was on religious attitudes toward the Civil War, toward the Confederacy after the war was over. It was called "Baptisms of Blood."

**GWW:** And did that develop into your first book?

**CRW:** Yes, it did. I cut out a hundred pages of precious prose and reorganized it, shortened it, and tightened it up. That became my first book, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause*.

**GWW:** For readers who may not be familiar with it, what kind of reception did your book receive?

**CRW:** It received a very good reception—in two areas. One was among Southern historians. I think it opened a new way of thinking about the impact of the Civil War, the religious aspect of this sense of memory. The second area of influence was in religious studies because it grew on the idea of civil religion, public religion. There has been a lot growth in that area during the 20 years since the book came out.

**GWW:** We know something of the success of the encyclopedia. Tell me some of the day-to-day frustrations you faced as you were trying to put that thing together.

**CRW:** Dealing with contributors. I like to remember it as a great lesson in human psychology. There was the problem of getting people, first of all, to agree to do the articles. When I first started, I thought "Well, this is simple. There are people who have written on these topics. They will be the logical ones to do them. They will turn them in on time. The articles will all be well written. The authors have published books and articles." There was frustration in things not turning out that way. Dealing with contributors was then often a frustration, but often rewarding. Sometimes the authors would send their articles in right on time, and they would be beautiful. At other times the articles would be messy and sloppy. Keeping up with the paper work was difficult—a massive amount of letters to be written, phone calls reminding people, just the sheer flow of materials to keep up with.

**GWW:** While you were in the middle of that, did you ever dream the encyclopedia would become as highly acclaimed as it did?

**CRW:** Never. No, never. I really felt good about it all along. When I came here, I spent a lot of that first semester studying reference books. I spent a lot of time in the reference room of the library. I learned about classic encyclopedias, about what was happening, new ways of doing encyclopedias, and all of that. I therefore felt like we were doing a solid, respectable job, but I had no idea of—could not anticipate—the impact across disciplines and the kind of public appeal as well.

**GWW:** What is the status of beyond that encyclopedia now?

**CRW:** Well, we are doing a second edition of the encyclopedia. We are doing it in a different format. It will be a series of paperback volumes, so we will be updating. We are well into this process; we have about five volumes that I hope to send to the University of North Carolina Press in the fall. We have added some new subject areas. Originally we had 24 subject areas, and now we have added a couple of new ones—like folk art and foodways, reflecting new interests. We have retitled some, reflecting the way scholarship has gone. What was "Black Life" we are now entitling "Race," and we are adding articles things related to race relations as well as just black life. The section having to do with women's life we are retitling "Gender," to reflect what has been going on in terms of gender as a whole system of men and women. Then we are adding, of course, a lot of new articles to reflect changes in religion. For example, we are adding articles on Latino religion, on Islam and Buddhism and Hinduism that were not in the original work.

**GWW:** Charles, when you were giving thought to being considered for the director position, what kinds of things entered your mind—things you would be giving up if you became director, and that sort of thing?

**CRW:** Well, first of all I knew there would be more administrative work (more meetings, more memos), which I don't particularly like to do. I knew I would be taking on a lot of new responsibility. I like to teach. I have always worked closely with students. I work with a lot of graduate students in terms of dissertations and theses. When Bill Ferris left and I became director, his parting advice was that the job was too big; there is too much going on—academic work along with the administrative work of managing projects and fund raising, and all this. I have grown to see that he is correct. There is a lot going on, and I knew balancing and juggling everything would be a challenge; and it's actually gotten more challenging the longer time has gone on, partly because we have been doing more fund raising, more systematic fund raising over the last two years. Of course, this 25th anniversary makes it a prime opportunity.

**GWW:** How has being director affected your scholarship? Have you been able to do the kinds of things you wanted to do, or have you had to substitute administrative work—encyclopedia work, for example—for what you might have done?

**CRW:** Yes, I am substituting encyclopedia work and other projects for a lot of my own work. That is probably my biggest frustration: I have several books that I am well into, and I have not finished those; I spend time on managing projects. Work with the encyclopedia is such a big job that I am required to write a lot.

**GWW:** You mentioned working with graduate students. When we started the program, we had questions about whether we should even have a major for undergraduates. And there were a lot of questions about whether we could ever make a master's-level program go. How is the master's program doing now?

**CRW:** It is doing great. Every year it seems to me the quality of the students gets better and better—the undergraduate programs they are coming from, their interests, and so forth. When we started, we had the first two students who were graduates of the undergraduate Southern Studies Program. I didn't think the program would ever get very big, but within a few years, because it is a unique program, we began attracting a lot of very diverse students. Especially back then, we had a real range of ages, older people who came back to school because they saw this as an opportunity to do oral history work or do projects they had wanted to do. There was a real range of interests, and now the academic qualifications have become better and better.

**GWW:** Have you been surprised at where these students have come from, their undergraduate degree programs?

**CRW:** I have. We attract students from a variety of places—some from small liberal arts schools like Millsaps, especially schools across the South. And we get students from big public institutions like the University of Georgia, the University of North Carolina, the University of Virginia. We have had students from Berkeley and Stanford and places like that. When you scratch very deep, you

find out that even though they went to school there, they grew up in the South or their parents grew up in the South or they visited grandparents in the South, which made a huge impression. They come from a good variety of programs and from a good variety of disciplines. Mostly they come from history and English, but we always have some from art or music, sociology, anthropology, and other areas.

**GWW:** When we began the programs, both the B.A. and the M.A., some people asked questions like "What in the world is somebody going to do after he or she graduates from such a program?" And you have probably heard the same kinds of questions about American Studies programs. How has that turned out for our graduates? Have they been able to gain employment if that is what they want to do?

**CRW:** They have. Not everyone gets the ideal job, of course, but it is a program that prepares you for two different things. Some of our students are on a track to do further graduate work, and often in American Studies that is the next step toward entering a doctoral program. We have had our students go on to the University of Texas in American Studies (we have had several students go there), to Emory University, the University of North Carolina, the University of Georgia, the University of Florida, Brown University, and others. The second track has been students who go out and do cultural work, whether it is working in museums or galleries or research centers like the Southern Regional Council or the Southern Poverty Law Center. We have three students working for *Southern Living* magazine as writers. We have one who is at CNN in Atlanta. We have several who have gone into high school teaching, some who have started businesses.

**GWW:** You mentioned the kinds of things you have to do as director. During a given year, what percentage of your time is devoted to fund raising?

**CRW:** Not enough! It seems like we always need funds. Probably 20 percent.

**GWW:** What are some of the things you do that you could not do if you had no outside funding?

**CRW:** A lot of the conferences—for example, the Oxford Conference for the Book. We raise all of the money, basically now, from grants we get or Friends of the Center donations. Our newsletter, the *Southern Register*, which goes to more than 30,000 people, is basically supported by outside funds. A lot of our graduate stipends require external funding; last year we spent $30,000 of donated funds or grants on those.

**GWW:** It has been frustrating, I know, but through the years once or twice we have been able to pick up with hard money some of the things the Center is doing with soft money. If you were to get additional state money, what would you do with it? Would it be to support the things you just mentioned—the conference, the newsletter, graduate students?

**CRW:** Yes, it might be in terms of outreach position we work with raising funds. The biggest problem with outside funding is being able to predict when you are going to get it and do good planning. Our goal is to secure some of those projects.

**GWW:** We were very fortunate in having a really big donation that allowed us to hire two new people. Do you still need more faculty?

**CRW:** We do need more faculty. The addition of those two McMillan professors was terrific, very important in our curriculum. We don't have anyone now who really teaches in Southern music or anyone who teaches in Southern art, key areas of Southern culture. We do need more faculty to make sure we can offer a curriculum that really covers Southern culture the way we want to.

**GWW:** I know you have to run take care of one of those administrative chores in a minute [talking with prospective students], but let me ask you, though, what you see for both short- and long-range plans for the Center.

**CRW:** As for short range, we are still in the middle of our 25th anniversary; so I want to use this year to take care of some immediate kinds of things like working on our endowments and getting money to secure some of the projects. We are also trying to do more in a planning process. We are to have a series of meetings with faculty and staff and students and alumni and others to get a sense of where the center should go in the next 25 years. I think there is one project that we are trying to raise matching funds for that is going to become a very important focus for the Center in the long range, and that is an Endowment for the Future of the South that the Hardin Foundation has given a $500,000 grant for which we have to raise a two-to-one match. That will enable us to bring in, when it is fully endowed, every year a visiting authority on a topic. We will define a topic that brings together public policy issues and the humanities perspectives. We will have a big conference every year. We will have funds for on-campus faculty to host workshops and colloquia. Over the years I think that will be a really defining project for the center.

**GWW:** Do you foresee the continuation of such programs as the Book Conference, the History Symposium, and the Faulkner Conference?

**CRW:** I foresee that, yes. I think the History Symposium certainly is in good shape, with a good endowment and interest from the department in maintaining it. The Faulkner Conference is secure in the English Department and the Center; they have embraced that in the last few years more than ever. Of course, there are still funding problems with that conference. The Oxford Conference for the Book is less secure in some ways. Projects like the book conference need to be institutionalized more so as not to be annually dependant on raising outside funds. That raises a question of whether it can continue, but certainly our desire and goal are to continue them all.

**GWW:** Wrapping it all up, what kinds of things have been most gratifying to you since you have been director?

**CRW:** Working with students is always gratifying to me. There have been lots of theses and dissertations. In terms of the Center's work, more general, I have valued working with the advisory board and developing some deep relations there. We have defined an executive council that is a smaller group (we have over 60 people on the board itself) consisting of 10 or 15 who are very directly involved, and that has been very satisfying. The projects that we have launched have been very important. In addition to the revision of the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, we are also producing the *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, a one-volume authoritative reference guide to the state. Also, there was something I wanted to do when I came in; the Center is sponsoring, with the University of North Carolina Press, a book series called New Directions in Southern Studies. This, I think, provides a very important part of the Cnenter's research agenda. I hope this series, which will be interdisciplinary, will help to define what Southern Studies is in terms of scholarship. We do this in terms of teaching now, but to have this book series with a prestigious press is something I of which I am very proud.

**GWW:** Thank you very much.

# Regional Roundup

*Upcoming Events of Interest*

The Holly Springs Garden Club will host its 65th annual pilgrimage April 11-13, 2003. Six historic antebellum homes will be open for tours, including Walter Place (1858-59), a blend of Gothic and Greek Revival styles, home of General and Mrs. U. S. Grant during the planning of the Vicksburg campaign, and Strawberry Plains (1853), a two-story Greek Revival home now, with its surrounding 2,000 acres, the Southeastern Headquarters of the National Audubon Society. Three antebellum churches, the Marshall County Historical Museum, the Ida B. Wells Art Gallery, and the Kate Freeman Clark Art Gallery will also be open for tours. On Saturday, April 12, a special evening tour of Athenia, one of the finest examples of Classic Greek Revival architecture in the South. For additional information, see www.visithollyspring.org or call 662- 252-2515, 662-252-2943, 662-252-4550, or 662-252-3260.

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Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama, will host a Summer Institute of Christian Spirituality comprised of biblical, historical, pastoral, and moral courses led by faculty from its division of philosophy and theology as well as visiting faculty. Session 1 will be held June1-7, and session 2 will be June 8-14. For more information contact the Office of Graduate Studies at 334-380-4672 or visit the Web site at www.shc.edu/Academics/Graduate.

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The New Orleans International Ballet Conference will be held June 4-8, 2003, in honor of the Bicentennial of the Louisiana Purchase. The conference is being staged under the auspices of the International Dance Council/UNESCO/USA and is organized by Olga Stezuk, who has organized dance-related events in New Orleans for 25 years. The Honorable Lindy Boggs, former Ambassador to the Vatican, is honorary chair of the event.

The conference features six components, all of which are open to the public. Beginning June 1, events include an opening reception, a symposium and reunion dinner featuring former Ballets Russes dancers, master classes at the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, an exhibition at the New Orleans Museum of Art (on display until August), films of Ballets Russes dancers, and a gala performance at the Orpheum Theatre.

Package tickets and individual event passes are available. For information about the New Orleans International Ballet Conference, write NOIBC, 1302 General Taylor Street, New Orleans, LA 70115; call 504-891-4720; or visit the Web site www.noibc.org.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**Patti Carr Black**, founding director of the Old Capitol Museum, has curated numerous exhibitions, the most recent being *Remembering Welty*. Among her publications are *The Southern Writers Quiz Book*, *Art in Mississippi, 1720-1980*, and *Touring Literary Mississippi*.

**John T. Edge**, director of the Southern Foodways Alliance, writes about Southern food and travel. He is the author of *A Gracious Plenty: Recipes and Recollections from the American South* and *Southern Belly*. His articles have appeared in *Food & Wine*, *Gourmet*, and other publications.

**Andrea Finley** worked and studied in California for several years after receiving her M.A. in Southern Studies in 1995. She recently returned to her home state as managing editor of the *Mississippi Encyclopedia*.

**Adam Gussow** is assistant professor of English and Southern Studies. He is the author of *Mister Satan's Apprentice: A Blues Memoir*, *Seems Like Murder Here: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition*, and articles in *Georgia Review*, *Literary Review*, *Village Voice*, and many other publications.

**Joan Wylie Hall** teaches in the English Department at the University of Mississippi. She is the author of *Shirley Jackson: A Study of the Short Fiction* and articles on Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner, Grace King, Frances Newman, and other authors.

**Donald M. Kartiganer** holds the William Howry Chair in Faulkner Studies at the University of Mississippi and is director of the Faulkner Conference. He is the author of *The Fragile Thread: The Meaning of Form in Faulkner's Novels*.

**Jamie Kornegay** is a bookseller at Square Books, editor of the store's *Dear Reader* newsletter, and a freelance writer. He lives in Water Valley, Mississippi.

**Kathryn McKee** is McMullan assistant professor of Southern Studies and assistant professor of English. She has published essays and lectured on Ellen Glasgow, Kaye Gibbons, Bobbie Ann Mason, and other authors.

**Ted Ownby** holds a joint appointment in Southern Studies and history. He is the author of *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920* and *American Dreams in Mississippi: Consumers, Poverty, and Culture, 1830-1998*.

**Noel Polk**, professor of English at the University of Southern Mississippi, is the author or editor of over a dozen volumes, including, most recently, *Outside the Southern Myth*, *Children of the Dark House*, and *Reading Faulkner: "The Sound and the Fury."*

**Gerald W. Walton** came to the University of Mississippi as a graduate student in 1956 and remained until his retirement at the end of June 1999, serving as professor of English, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, vice chancellor, and provost. He has supported the Center for the Study of Southern Culture since its founding and currently serves as a member of its advisory committee.

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

**Charles Reagan Wilson** is director of the Center and professor of History and Southern Studies. Among his publications are *Baptized in Blood: the Religion of the Lost Cause* and *Judgment and Grace in Dixie: Southern Faiths from Faulkner to Elvis*.

# Become a Friend of the Center

The Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi has gained an international reputation for innovative education and scholarship on the American South. The Center administers B.A. and M.A. programs in Southern Studies, sponsors research and documentary projects on all aspects of Southern culture, and encourages understanding of the South through publications, media productions, lectures, performances, and exhibitions. This year the Center celebrates 25 years of excellence. **By contributing annually to Friends of the Center, you ensure that this valuable work will continue to grow.**

## ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

***Leadership in Southern Studies***

- Developed the nation's first degree program in Southern Studies, beginning with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1979
- Added an M.A. program in Southern Studies in 1986
- Sponsored the three-year (1986-89) Ford Foundation Project, aimed at broadening the study of the South, especially encouraging the redefinition of Southern culture to incorporate the experiences of blacks, ethnic groups, and women

***Publications***

- *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*
- Mississippi Writers: *Reflections of Childhood and Youth*
- *The South: A Treasury of Art and Literature*
- *The Blues: A Bibliographic Guide*
- *A Gracious Plenty: Recipes and Recollections from the American South*
- *Faulkner's World: The Photographs of Marvin J. Dain*
- *Lower Pearl River's Piney Woods: Its Land and People*
- *Mississippi Folklife: The Magazine of the Mississippi Folklore Society*
- *Living Blues®: The Magazine of the African American Blues Tradition* (bimonthly)
- New projects include the *Mississippi Encyclopedia* and a new edition of the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*

***Conferences, Symposia, and Lectures***

- Thirtieth Faulkner Conference, July 20-24, 2003
- Fifth Southern Foodways Symposium, October 2-5, 2003
- Tenth Oxford Conference for the Book, April, 10-13, 2003
- Weekly Brown Bag lecture series on Southern topics during the academic year
- Symposia on The Media and the Civil Rights Movement, 1987, Civil Rights and the Law, 1989, and Southern Landscapes: Past, Present, Future, 1996

***Documentary and Media Projects***

- A cultural inventory of Vicksburg and Warren County, Mississippi
- A cultural and historical documentary project at Ichauway, a 28,000-acre plantation in Georgia
- An oral history of the Mississippi timber industry, concentrating on Pearl River County
- First Monday, a photographic and oral history of North Mississippi's oldest ongoing trade day
- Old Ways: Church and Family, an ongoing project using photographs and oral histories to document two rural churches in North Mississippi
- Ongoing studies of Lafayette County
- Photography Exhibitions in the Center's Lynn and Stewart Gammill Gallery
- *Mississippi Portrait: The Farm Security Administration Photographs, 1935-1940*, a CD-Rom distributed to libraries and schools throughout the state
- *One Hundred Years at Perthshire*, online multimedia project: www.olemiss.edu/depts/south/100
- *Voices from Perthshire*, video
- *Red Tops: A Recording Commemorating the Rosedale Courthouse Red Tops Dancers*, *Songs of Faith: African American Shape Note Singing from the Deep South*, and other CDs

***Educational Outreach Programs***

- Summer institutes in Southern Studies for teachers
- Community photography project for children in Tatwiler, Mississippi
- Sponsorship of the Southern Media Archive
- Partnerships with the Rowan Oak Society and the Charles Overby Center for Southern Politics at the University of Mississippi and with the Southern Cultural Heritage Complex in Vicksburg, Mississippi
- Web site at www.olemiss.edu/depts/south details upcoming events and offers photographs, online exhibits, and links to Southern culture

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