

the Southern Register

The Newsletter of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture • Summer 2014

The University of Mississippi

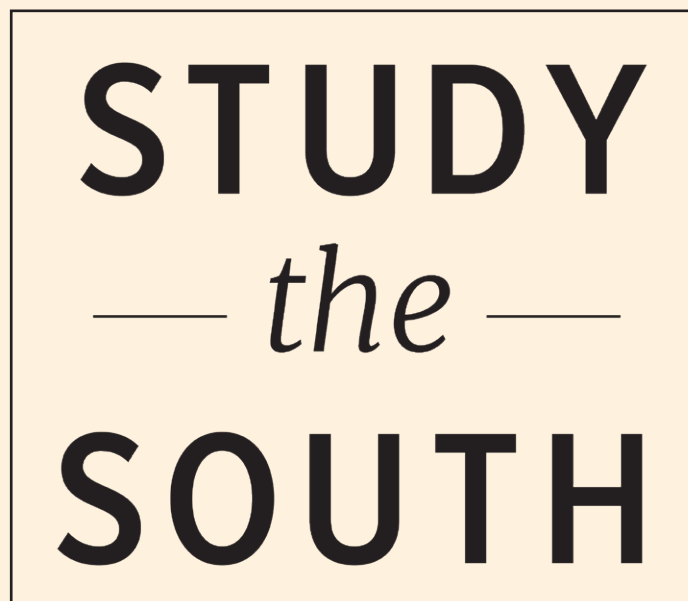
Study the South

New Center Online Journal Examines the Culture of American South

The Center for the Study of Southern Culture has launched *Study the South*, a new peer-reviewed, multimedia, online journal. The open-access journal, which is published by the Center, exists to encourage interdisciplinary academic thought and discourse on the culture of the American South, particularly in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, music, literature, documentary studies, gender studies, religion, geography, media studies, race studies, ethnicity, folklife, and art. James G. Thomas, Jr. and Ted Ownby are the journal's editors.

The title *Study the South* itself is unusual, since it takes the form of a command. "The commands are to take both the subject matter and the methods of study seriously, to conduct the study as part of a community of scholars, and to study in ways that address topics of lasting importance," said Center director Ted Ownby.

Study the South also offers an invitation to join the effort to expand the questions, methods, and topics of Southern Studies. "It encourages innovative approaches or, as Eudora Welty wrote, 'all serious daring,'" Ownby said. "In encouraging interdisciplinary scholarship, it encourages work that not only tells about the South, to paraphrase William Faulkner,



or documents the South, or interprets the South, but work that uses all the tools available to good scholars."

The first article published in the journal is "How to Eat to Live: Black Nationalism and the Post-1964 Culinary Turn," written by Jennifer Jensen Wallach of the University of North Texas. She explores the alternative foodways of various Black Nationalist groups in the wake of the civil rights movement. Wallach's piece coincides with the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which outlawed segregation at spaces of public accommodation such as restaurants.

Wallach's article is available via the Center's new website at southernstudies.olemiss.edu/study-the-south. Future issues of the journal will include calls for papers on topics the Center for the Study of Southern Culture has defined, and others will come from submissions from authors. If you are interested in submitting materials to *Study the South*, please e-mail James G. Thomas, Jr. at jgthomas@olemiss.edu for instructions. See page 5 for the next two *Study the South* calls for papers and see page 14 to read an excerpt from "How to Eat to Live."

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

I've been thinking a lot about travel, at least in part because I have been on the road a great deal the last few months. When I travel, I do one of the things scholars do, which is to imagine scholarly possibilities. So, what might a good, thorough scholarly book on travel and the American South look like?

There are some excellent books—both scholarly and nonacademic, and both monographs and collections of primary sources—that deal with travel and the South. It can be exciting just to think of the range of topics. Great Migrations, re-migrations, and less-famous migrations. Forced movement, the middle passage, sold down the river, trails of tears. Circuit riders. War and travel. Vagrancy laws. Roads, railroads, and airports, and the question of who builds, funds, and controls them. Roads and life along them—stations, saloons, hotels, motels, and food. Travel, technology, and business. Travel and danger. Travel and issues of dignity and respectability. Travel and its possibility for blurring identities. Travel and gender. Travel and tourism, and along with tourism, the construction of identities. (Here in Barnard Observatory, we know that many of the items in Charles Wilson's Southern Tacky collection began as cheap things to sell to tourists.) Travel and nostalgia, and travel and ideas about progress. People traveling through places, people traveling to new destinations, people traveling to get away. Traveling to work or as part of work. Trucks and warehouse culture. Bus boycotts, freedom rides, and Freedom Summer. Boat people. New immigrants, their journeys, and their status as political and legal issues. Mardi Gras parades, NASCAR culture, football fans. Traffic in New South cities and complaining about it. There are many more topics.

And it is easy to think of the importance of travel in visual arts, music, and literature. Ramblin', lonesome highways, crossroads, "Sweet Home Chicago," train songs, Zora Neale Hurston, Huck Finn, the Joads, Fay, and Lena Grove, who came "all the way from Alabama a-walking," and major and minor characters throughout Southern fiction and autobiography. Some genres of music and writing seem to demand references to travel, and it is intriguing that others do not.

Colleagues have taught classes on Southern journeys, many documentarians spend as much time as they can on the road, and, of course, we travel for lots of reasons not connected to studying the South. Part of the allure of this topic is simply its potential for connecting and comparing travel at different times and places. Part likely lies in its opposition to some fairly common ideas that Southern identities have roots in land, home, and claims about tradition. Writing about travel can emphasize adventure or loneliness, force, desperation, or choice, and predictability or the possibility of surprise. The topic requires questions about the meanings of public life, and it also seems attractive because it involves everyone, but in dramatically different ways.

I'm not writing this book, but I like the idea of it, and I welcome suggestions, worries, texts, and cool titles.

Thinking about travel reminds me that this summer, the Center welcomes four new people to Barnard Observatory: Southern Foodways Alliance staff members Afton Thomas and Sara Wood, history and Southern Studies assistant professor Jessica Wilkerson, and anthropology and Southern Studies assistant professor and SFA colleague Catarina Passidomo. Welcome to all—we're glad you have traveled here. And, as always, we'll be welcoming new undergraduates and incoming graduate students, including some from Japan, England, and Germany.

Articles in this *Southern Register* describe that travelers to the Center in the fall semester will include Gilder-Jordan Lecturer Jacquelyn Dowd Hall from the University of North Carolina, Music of the South performers Feufollet from Lafayette, Louisiana, and numerous conference guests at the Southern Foodways Symposium and the Graduate Student Symposium on Redefining the Welcome Table.

This summer, a new website makes the range of Center activities far easier, to use a travel metaphor, to navigate. It includes an exciting new academic journal, *Study*

continued on page 23

Living Blues News

We all make choices in life. We follow a path with no guarantee that it will lead to fame and fortune. Georgia bluesman Roy Lee Johnson followed his path. Johnson has a great voice, he is a fabulous guitar player, and he writes killer songs. So good, in fact, that the Beatles covered his "Mister Moonlight" in 1964 and both Albert Collins and Roy Buchanan recorded his "When a Guitar Plays the Blues." Johnson was a member of Atlanta's hottest band, Dr. Feelgood and the Interns, played briefly with the Ohio Untouchables (who later became the Ohio Players), recorded as a solo artist at the legendary Fame Studios in Muscle Shoals in its heyday, and later for Stax Records in Memphis. But still fame eluded him. He struggled with bandleaders, label owners, and publishing rights. He had all the talent, but stardom just didn't happen.

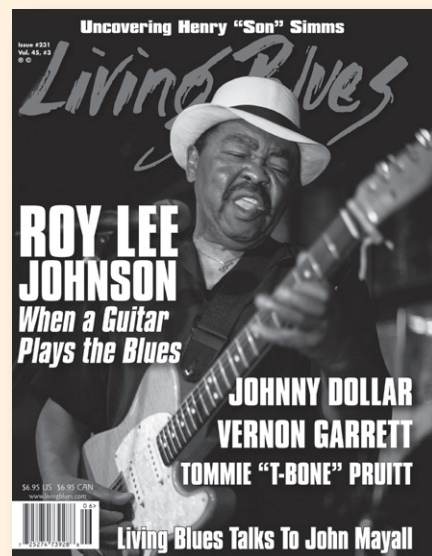
Chicagoan Johnny Drummer chose to be a drummer, at least at first, and in the 1960s very few drummers were stars. His band, the Starlites, included Mac Arnold, Lefty Dizz, Nick Charles, Willie Mabon, and Junior Wells in the mid-1960s and backed big-name front men for years. In 1966 he was even offered a job playing bass with Muddy Waters, but he declined saying, "Well, you know, I got this day job, man, a city job." Another choice. Drummer chose to stay in the city, but he has had an active and prolific musical career nonetheless.

Vernon Garrett has had a musical career full of choices. He started in gospel in the early 1950s with the Faithful Wonders and later the Swan Silvertones. He switched to the booming R&B market in the late 1950s and scored his biggest hits there in the late 1960s. Over the last three decades Garrett has chosen to build a reputation on the chitlin' circuit and overseas.

South Mississippi-based Tommie "T-Bone" Pruitt made his choices too. Though Pruitt has played the blues all his life, he chose to work a day job and raise a family rather than run the roads as a touring bluesman. At 81, Pruitt has never recorded but still plays a regular gig at a local club just as he has for most of the last 60 years. It may seem surprising that in 2014 we are still "discovering" unrecorded blues talent on the back roads of Mississippi, but we are. Pruitt, Leo "Bud" Welch, and L. C. Ulmer are all octogenarian bluesmen who have been playing music their entire lives, flying under the radar, doing their thing in their own communities, unnoticed by blues fans for decades.

We visit (and revisit) three pre-war blues figures in this issue. Dan Beaumont tells of his discovery of 98-year-old Casselha Knox, a woman from Mississippi living in Rochester, New York, who knew both Son House and Willie Brown among others.

Henry "Son" Simms recorded with Charley Patton and Muddy Waters, but



until just recently the whereabouts of his gravesite has remained a mystery. Amazingly, his headstone has been hiding in plain sight all along.

I want to announce a special issue of *Living Blues* coming this fall. In a partnership with the Mississippi Development Authority Division of Creative Economy and Culture we will produce a special issue of the magazine (October/November #233) focusing on the Mississippi Blues Trail and all the exciting places to explore in Mississippi while following the trail. We look forward to bringing you a guide to exploring the birthplace of the blues. The next issue of *Living Blues* (August/September #232) will be a special look at the up-and-coming generation of blues harmonica players.

Brett J. Bonner

Center Launches a New Website

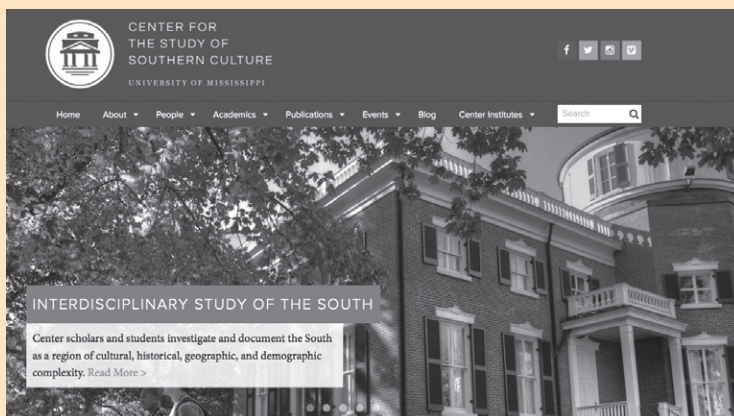
In early July, the Center launched a new website. Visit southernstudies.olemiss.edu to read blog posts of Center happenings, updated every few days, and see the events calendar. The website, designed by James Kelleway of CONFIT Design, highlights key efforts of the Center, including academics, documentary work, publishing, and outreach. The *Southern Register* will be available to read online.

Be sure to follow the Center on social media, too.

Facebook: [facebook.com/SouthernStudies](https://www.facebook.com/SouthernStudies)

Twitter: twitter.com/SouthernStudies

Instagram: [instagram.com/SouthernStudies](https://www.instagram.com/SouthernStudies)



SEPTEMBER

- 3 "Local Music: The Tone Room, Chance Moore, and the Making of *A Country Boy Like Me*."
Adam Gussow, Associate Professor of English and Southern Studies
Chance Moore, Singer, Songwriter
Bryan Ward, Producer, Tone Room



Brown Bag Lunch and Lecture Series Fall Semester 2014

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

- 10 "Making Space, Living in Place: Physical, Cultural, and Social Landscapes from North Mississippi"
Documentary Fieldwork Students

- 17 "Mississippi's Food Paradox"
Chris Aloia
Public Health Consultant for the Winter Institute

- 24 "Experience Life. Make Documentaries. BAREFOOT Workshops"
Chandler Griffin, Filmmaker, Barefoot Workshops

OCTOBER

- 1 "'Genuine Solidarity' and Higher Education in Prison: Building a Prison-to-College Pipeline Program at Parchman"
Otis W. Pickett, Assistant Professor of History
Mississippi College
Patrick Elliot Alexander, Assistant Professor of English and

African American Studies
University of Mississippi

- 8 "Put a Taste of the South in Your Mouth: Carnal Appetites and Intersexuality"
Jaime Cantrell, Visiting Assistant Professor of English
University of Mississippi

- 15 "A Conversation with the Author of *Flying Shoes*"
Lisa Howorth
Oxford, Mississippi

- 22 "Food Movements and the Struggle for Social Justice in New Orleans"
Catarina Passidomo
Assistant Professor Southern Studies and Anthropology

- 23 "*Of the Nation: New Orleans Mardi Gras Indians 2014*"
Pableaux Johnson, Photographer
New Orleans, Louisiana

- 29 "The Making of *The 'Sip*"
Lauchlin Fields, Editor
Vicksburg, Mississippi

NOVEMBER

- 5 "Visit Mississippi: Telling the Mississippi Story through the Tourism Lens"
Mary Margaret White, Bureau Manager, Creative Economy & Culture
Mississippi Development Authority / Tourism Division

- 12 Film Screening and Conversation with SouthDocs
Andy Harper, Producer
Southern Documentary Project

- 19 "White Fright: Slave Revolts in American Memory"
Richard Follett, Professor of History, Art History, Philosophy
Marcus Cunliffe Centre for the Study of the American South
University of Sussex, Brighton, UK

lynn & stewart

Gammill



Gallery

Exhibition Schedule

June 16–August 20, 2014
Homeplace
Michael Ford
Yellow Cat Productions
Washington, D.C.

August 20–September 30, 2014
Making Space, Living in Place: Physical, Cultural, and Social Landscapes from North Mississippi
Documentary Fieldwork Students

October 1–31, 2014
Of the Nation: New Orleans Mardi Gras Indians 2014
Pableaux Johnson, Photographer
New Orleans, Louisiana

The Gammill Gallery, located in Barnard Observatory, is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., except for University holidays. Telephone: 662-915-5993.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Study the South and the Oxford Conference for the Book “Margaret Walker”

Study the South, a peer-reviewed, multimedia, open-access journal published by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, announces a call for papers to advance scholarship on the life and literature of Mississippi writer Margaret Walker. The author of the selected paper will be invited to discuss or present a portion of his or her work at the 2015 Oxford Conference for the Book, which will be dedicated to Walker in recognition of her contributions to American letters.

In the *Literature* volume of *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Ethel Young-Minor writes, “Margaret Walker played an active role in American arts and letters for at least seven decades. She was a distinguished poet, respected essayist, groundbreaking novelist, and award-winning educator. Her final collection of poetry, *This Is My Century*, accurately describes the wide range of themes and issues encompassed in her work. The 20th century became Margaret Walker’s century, as she ‘saw it grow from darkness into dawn.’ Her writings demonstrate vestiges of the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s, traces of the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and markings of what some would deem as the Womanist Renaissance of the 1980s.”

Any scholarly topic related to Walker is welcome. *Study the South* will have first publication rights for the article—planned for publication on March 25, 2015, the commencement of the 2015 Oxford Conference for the Book. Copyright will revert to the author six weeks after date of publication. The Center for the Study of Southern Culture and *Study the South* will retain, however, non-exclusive rights to publication.

To submit an original paper for consideration, please e-mail complete manuscript to James G. Thomas, Jr. at jgthomas@olemiss.edu. **Submissions are due by December 1, 2014, and the successful candidate will be notified by January 15, 2015.** *Study the South* expects that the successful candidate will be an advanced graduate student or professional scholar in a field such as literature, African American studies, American studies, gender studies, or history. Submissions will not be considered if they have been previously published or are concurrently under consideration by another journal or press.

For questions or additional information, please contact: James G. Thomas, Jr., Center for the Study of Southern Culture, jgthomas@olemiss.edu, 662-915-3374. *Study the South* is available via the Center’s website at <http://southernstudies.olemiss.edu/study-the-south>.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Study the South and the Blues Today! Symposium “Blues in the American South”

Study the South, a peer-reviewed, multimedia, open-access journal published by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, announces a call for papers to advance scholarship on blues music in the American South. The author of the selected paper will be invited to discuss or present a portion of his or her work at the 2015 Blues Today! Symposium on the campus of the University of Mississippi. The symposium will concentrate on North Mississippi Hill Country blues.

Topics could include, but are by no means limited to the blues and gender identity; dissemblance in blues lyrics; blues and religion; race, economics, and recording the blues; blues and memory; 21st-century commemoration of blues musicians; historical moments as interpreted through blues; blues as folk culture; the blues and social activism; the blues and contemporary subcultures; blues in literature; and rock and roll influences on North Mississippi Hill Country blues. Any scholarly topic related to the blues is welcome.

Study the South will have first publication rights for the article—planned for publication on April 8, 2015, the commencement of the 2015 Blues Today! Symposium. Copyright will revert to the author six weeks after date of publication. The Center for the Study of Southern Culture and *Study the South* will retain, however, non-exclusive rights to publication.

To submit an original paper for consideration, please e-mail complete manuscript to James G. Thomas, Jr. at jgthomas@olemiss.edu. **Submissions are due by January 5, 2015, and the successful candidate will be notified by February 2, 2015.** *Study the South* expects that the successful candidate will be an advanced graduate student or professional scholar in a field such as music studies, African American studies, American studies, gender studies, or history. Submissions will not be considered if they have been previously published or are concurrently under consideration by another journal or press.

For questions or additional information, please contact: James G. Thomas, Jr., Center for the Study of Southern Culture, jgthomas@olemiss.edu, 662-915-3374. *Study the South* is available via the Center’s website at <http://southernstudies.olemiss.edu/study-the-south>.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha

“Faulkner and Print Culture” • July 19–23, 2015

William Faulkner's first published works were drawings that appeared in his high school and college yearbooks and poems and stories that appeared in newspapers. His first book, *The Marble Faun*, was published in 1924 by a vanity press. His artistic forays into print culture, in other words, began far from the world of highbrow literary publishing with which he is usually associated—the world of New York publishing houses like Boni and Liveright or Random House and little magazines like the *Double-Dealer*—though with time they would come to encompass that world as well. With this in mind, the 42nd annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference will explore Faulkner's multifaceted engagements, as writer *and* reader, producer and consumer, with the print cultures of his era, along with the ways in which these cultures have mediated his relationship with a variety of 20th- and 21st-century readerships.

Topics could include, but are by no means limited to Faulkner as reader and book collector; Faulkner on the periodical market (in the pulps, the “slicks,” little magazines, college literary magazines, and newspapers); Faulkner and his publishers (Boni and Liveright, Cape and Smith, Random House, the Modern Library, Signet, and later reprint ventures, from pulp and mass-market paperback to trade and Book-of-the-Month Club adaptations and scholarly editions); Faulkner in the history of the book (cover art and jacket matter, book design and layout, advertising campaigns, publishing tie-ins, and other marketing strategies); Faulkner's engagement with popular literary trends and genres (detective novels, bootlegger novels, World War I protest novels, novels of the soil, race problem novels, “backwoods” fiction, etc.); Faulkner's relationships with literary tastemakers and cultural arbiters like William Stanley Braithwaite, Charles Henri Ford, Alexander Woolcott, Clifton Fadiman, Malcolm Cowley, Oprah Winfrey, and so on; Faulkner's translations and other transformations in international print cultures; his diverse and changing readerships, during his lifetime and beyond; and the many afterlives of Faulkner in print—at libraries, in book clubs and reading groups, and via ebooks and other digital resources.

We especially encourage full panel proposals for 75-minute conference sessions. Such proposals should include a one-page overview of the session topic or theme, followed by two-page abstracts for each of the panel papers to be included. We also welcome individually submitted two-page abstracts for 20-minute panel papers and individually submitted manuscripts for 40-minute plenary papers. Panel papers consist of approximately 2,500 words and will be considered by the conference program committee for possible inclusion in the conference volume published by the University Press of Mississippi. Plenary papers, which should be prepared using the 16th edition of the University of Chicago *Manual of Style* as a guide, consist of approximately 5,000-6,000 words and will appear in the published volume.

Session proposals, panel paper abstracts, and plenary paper submissions must be submitted by January 31, 2015, preferably through e-mail attachment. Authors whose plenary papers are selected for presentation at the conference will receive a conference registration waiver. All manuscripts, proposals, abstracts, and inquiries should be addressed to Jay Watson, Department of English, The University of Mississippi, P.O. Box 1848, University, MS 38677-1848. E-mail: jwatson@olemiss.edu. Decisions for all submissions will be made by March 15, 2015.

Mark Your Calendars!

September 17, 2014

Music of the South Concert
Feufollet
Gertrude C. Ford Center for the
Performing Arts
University of Mississippi

September 24, 2014

Gilder-Jordan Lecture in
Southern Cultural History
Jacquelyn Dowd Hall
University of Mississippi

September 25–26, 2014

Graduate Student Symposium
Redefining the Welcome Table
University of Mississippi

October 2, 2014

Mississippi Broadcast Premiere of
The Toughest Job:
William Winter's Mississippi

October 23–26, 2014

17th Southern Foodways
Symposium
Inclusion and Exclusion in the
Modern South
University of Mississippi

January 8–10, 2015

Blackberry Farm
Taste of the South
Walland, Tennessee

March 25–27, 2015

Oxford Conference for the Book
University of Mississippi and
Oxford, Mississippi

April 8–10, 2015

Blues Today! Symposium
University of Mississippi



Anna Hamilton Wins Ann Abadie Award

For the last two academic years it has been the Southern Foodways Alliance's pleasure to work with Anna Hamilton, a Nathalie Dupree Graduate Fellow. Among her many other responsibilities, Anna led the volunteer crew at the last two fall symposia, secured permissions for *Combread Nation 7*, researched and cowrote a scholarly essay on the history of Farish Street in Jackson, Mississippi, and produced dozens of "Okracasts" (podcasts) using the SFA oral history archive as source material. Anna successfully defended her thesis and received her MA in Southern Studies in May.

Hamilton's thesis, "Bottling Hell: Myth-making, Cultural Identity, and the Datil Pepper of St. Augustine," was the winner of the Ann Abadie Award for Documentary Media. The annual award goes to the Southern Studies student (undergraduate or graduate) with the best documentary film, photogra-



Anna Hamilton

phy project, audio recording, or website. Winning projects can be theses, or

they can be assignments in individual classes.

SouthDocs director Andy Harper, Hamilton's academic advisor, describes her thesis as "an ambitious look at the ways that communities establish identity within the framework of cultural tourism." In Hamilton's words, "This thesis interrogates the Datil pepper (*Capsicum chinense*) as a potent cultural symbol against a backdrop of heritage tourism in St. Augustine, Florida."

"Anna's project is the best example of applying documentary techniques into a traditional thesis as she incorporates oral history, photography, and scholarly research," said Harper. "Anna also produced a multimedia website to let us see and hear the people who helped tell her story." Anna's website can be found at bottlinghell.wordpress.com.

Sara Camp Arnold

Lindsey Reynolds Receives Summer Internship Grant



Lindsey Reynolds

Lindsey Reynolds, a Southern Studies graduate student and Nathalie Dupree Graduate Fellow with the Southern Foodways Alliance, received a grant from the Julian and Kathryn Wiener Endowment to fund her summer internship at *Garden & Gun* magazine in Charleston, South Carolina.

Center director Ted Ownby said, "Kathryn Wiener, a Center Advisory Committee member and resident of Jackson, established the Julian and Kathryn Wiener Endowment to help Southern Studies students who need to travel as part of their internships. Lindsey Reynolds is the second student to benefit from this fund. Last year's recipient, Jodie Free, worked at the Hub City Writers' Project, a literary nonprofit organization in Spartanburg, South Carolina."

Reynolds is completing a 10-week editorial internship at *Garden & Gun*, a

magazine of Southern culture and lifestyle with a nationwide circulation of 200,000.

"I'm enjoying the blend of old-school print journalism and the new world of digital storytelling," said Reynolds. "My responsibilities include attending weekly staff meetings, brainstorming new theme issues, Southern pop culture quizzes, and research, research, research. I've learned about everything from the region's oldest bookstores to its newest breweries to trends in Southern funerals. No day is ever dull. I couldn't be here in Charleston without the support of the Center and the Wiener grant. I'll be using what I've learned at *Garden & Gun* for my internship thesis as well, examining foodways, pop culture, media, and the Global South."

Sara Camp Arnold

Center Welcomes New Historian

A Q&A with Jessica Wilkerson

This fall, the Center for the Study of Southern Culture and the Department of History will welcome Jessica Wilkerson as a new assistant professor of history and Southern Studies. Wilkerson comes to the university from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she completed her doctoral work in the field of women's and gender history. Prior to entering UNC-Chapel Hill she took a master's degree from Sarah Lawrence and a bachelor's degree from Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tennessee.

In the midst of making the move from Chapel Hill to Oxford, Wilkerson let Jimmy Thomas interrupt her long enough to field a few questions.

You earned your bachelor's degree in English with a minor in music. What eventually drew you to the field of history, specifically to that of Southern history?

When I was an undergraduate I had the good fortune to take a seminar in U.S. women's history. Before that course I had only taken lecture-based history courses. For me, reading the works of the first generation of women's historians in a seminar really changed my understanding of what it meant to study history and who is a part of history. I never looked back. I went on to receive my master's degree in women's history from Sarah Lawrence College before moving on to a PhD program in history. As often happens, after I moved to New York to attend Sarah Lawrence (a totally new and different place to this Tennessean), my interest in the South and Appalachia intensified, and I decided to write about the places and people in my home region. At some point I also came to understand—and I think this is important for many Southern and women's historians—that it often takes people who come from or know a certain place to tell a particular history. I don't believe at all that those are the only people who can research and write that history, but it is true that it is often a person who cares deeply about a com-



Courtesy Jessica Wilkerson

munity, region, or group who first takes the initiative.

What classes are you teaching this fall?

Southern Women in History (History 336). The course will explore the history of women and gender in the American South from the colonial period to the present. Students will examine standard themes in the field, like the history of the plantation household in the South. But I will also be introducing them to recent works on women in the civil rights movement as well as new research on Southern feminism. My goal is for students to come away with an understanding of the major issues and debates in the field of women's history, as well as to gain plenty of practice reading, analyzing, and developing arguments about the ways in which women molded politics, society, and culture in the American South.

I'll also teach Introduction to Southern Studies (SST 101) with Barbara Combs. Barb and I decided early on that we wanted to teach Jesmyn Ward's novel *Salvage the Bones*, which has quickly become one of my favorite works of fiction. The novel revolves around the experiences of an adolescent girl in the days leading up to Hurricane

Katrina in the Mississippi Gulf. We will build up to that novel by examining the South through the lens of youth and childhood, from Jim Crow to Hurricane Katrina.

You've written quite a bit on the topics of gender, class, and labor, often in tandem. Do you gravitate toward one of those fields more than the other?

I think it's fair to say that I came to an interest in all of these areas at once, as my research has always focused on working-class and poor women in the South and Appalachia. I do, however, feel a strong pull toward documenting and analyzing the history of women and gender in the South. Over the course of the 20th century the gender order shifted profoundly in the U.S., as social movements surged, women entered the labor force in unprecedented numbers, and new federal policies pushed for gender equity. Black and white women in the South were often at the forefront of those changes, and they had a specific set of skills and experiences to offer, as well as particular visions of progress. In many ways we are still reeling from these changes, as issues of gender continue to animate current policy and political debates. As a historian and citizen, I think it's important to link these debates to the history in which they are rooted.

Tell me a little bit about your dissertation.

My dissertation, "Where Movements Meet: From the War on Poverty to Grassroots Feminism in the Appalachian South," explored the overlapping, democratic movements in the Appalachian South in the 1960s and 1970s. As I conducted oral history interviews with the people who led and participated in federal War on Poverty programs in Appalachia, I discovered a rich but overlooked history of women's organizing. The women I wrote about were key leaders and foot soldiers in what contemporaries called the Appalachian Movement, which intersected with civil rights organizations

and had its roots in the War on Poverty. Consulting a wide variety of sources, from film archives to manuscript collections and oral history interviews, I showed that women shaped the federal War on Poverty at the grassroots and then used the skills they learned in anti-poverty programs to foster social justice activism, from welfare rights to labor and women's rights.

You've obviously done quite a bit of work using oral history. How will you use that approach in the classroom?

The opportunities for bringing oral history into the classroom are endless! One teaching method that I learned from Della Pollock and Jacquelyn Hall at UNC's Southern Oral History Program is the practice of "listening out loud." After listening to or conducting an oral history interview, I ask students to actively engage the historical voice by retelling the story in their own words. This process reflects what is so powerful about oral history: the transformative act of listening. Once students have listened to and shared a set of stories, we then dig into the analytical work of placing them in historical context and examining the role of narrative and memory in history. I am also eager to teach students oral history methods, working with them to develop fieldwork projects and to follow best practices. In Intro to Southern Studies, students will be working on small oral history projects as one of their assignments, but I hope in the future to teach a semester-long course on the practice of oral history.

I know you're only just now arriving on campus, but do you anticipate any advantages of working with the interdisciplinary Center faculty?

The opportunity to work in an interdisciplinary department was one of the major attractions of the University of Mississippi for me. I have benefited immensely from collaborating with scholars across disciplines during my graduate training, especially as I have worked on oral history and digital history projects that required the skills of scholars from multiple fields. I thrive on that kind of collaboration and I look forward to exploring opportunities at the Center.

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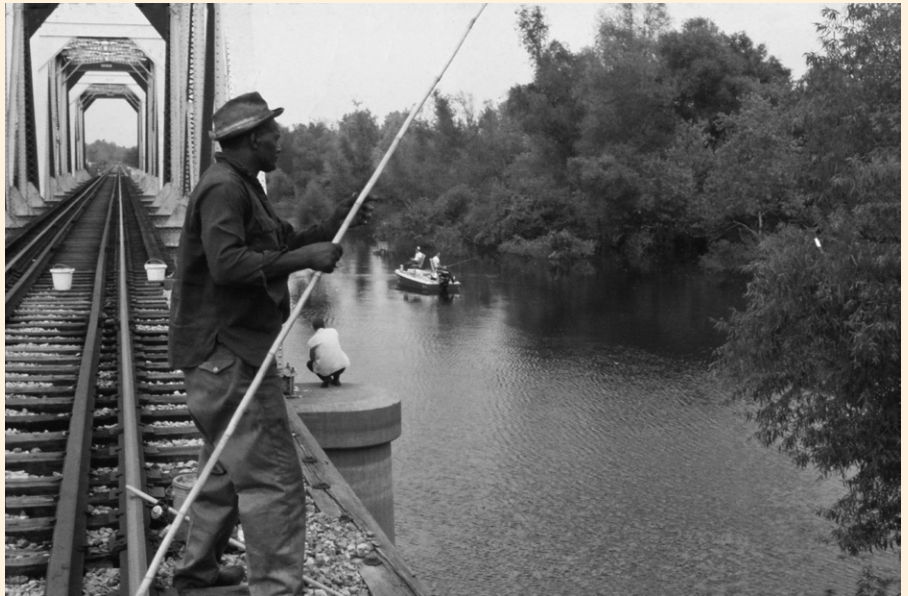
Homeplace: Michael Ford Returns to North Mississippi to Exhibit Photographs

Michael Ford is a documentary photographer-filmmaker with Yellow Cat Productions in Washington, D.C. This July, Ford traveled to Oxford to exhibit his photography in Gammill Gallery, to screen a short film that he shot at the same time as the photography, and to present a special Brown Bag lecture on his work. His film, also titled *Homeplace*, screened in Nutt Auditorium on opening night of the Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference. The following is Ford's statement, which accompanies the exhibition, currently on display through August 20.

I was either lucky or blessed to be in North Mississippi at a time of profound change. The agrarian world of Faulkner was disappearing, but it could still be found in special places. The subjects of these photographs were strong, enduring people.

These photographs were made as a study of the land and the people during preproduction for a documentary film. Photography turned into a bridge of trust, allowing me to capture the day-to-day life within a disappearing culture. The film, also titled *Homeplace*, was released in 1975.

Some stories impose themselves on



Fishing off the Tallahatchie River Bridge

the storyteller. West African griots must sing witness to the past. The Irish seanachai's burden is to carry the "old lore." If you're really lucky, a good story has a way of finding you and making you tell it. It happened to me.

For many Southerners, their homeplace—a family home or farm handed down through generations—holds last-

ing significance. My homeplace was not handed down. I found mine by accident, but it holds as much significance for me as if I inherited it. I found my homeplace in North Mississippi in December 1971 on a trip to visit my in-laws. The trip changed my life to its very core. Everything that I've done since has its roots in that experience.

My then-wife's family had moved to Oxford, where her father was on the faculty of the University of Mississippi. It was Christmas. As we drove south from Rochester, New York, in our red VW bus with New York plates and a peace sign, I began to wonder if this was the smartest thing I'd ever done. Then, on an afternoon respite from in-laws, my friend James Forward showed me some eye-opening sights.

We drove north of Oxford and west along the north shore of Sardis Lake. The first frost had just happened early that morning. Next to country shacks, large kettles were sitting over open fires. First frost is hog-killing time.

For months we traveled the roads north of Sardis. The area north of the lake was as remote as we could get. This was the America captured by Walker



Hal Waldrip, Waldrip's General Store

Evans, Gordon Parks, or Dorthea Lange for the Farm Security Administration's photography program in the 1930s and '40s. I was far out of my depth. I knew nothing of the South, or rural America for that matter, of cultural anthropology, ethnography, or folklife. But I learned and was given the luck, or grace perhaps, to find my way to Mr. Hall, and with his guidance I was given entrée to a whole new world. The men and women that I encountered there were strong, dignified, self-respecting people. And the colors and softness of the land, combined with the beauty of the light, were moving beyond description.



Plowing a Team of Mules



Saturday Afternoon, Holly Springs



Mr. Marion Randolph Hall



Sunday Services, Cambridge Methodist Church, Oxford Miss.



Winter Colors with White Dog

Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Subject of Latest SouthDocs Project

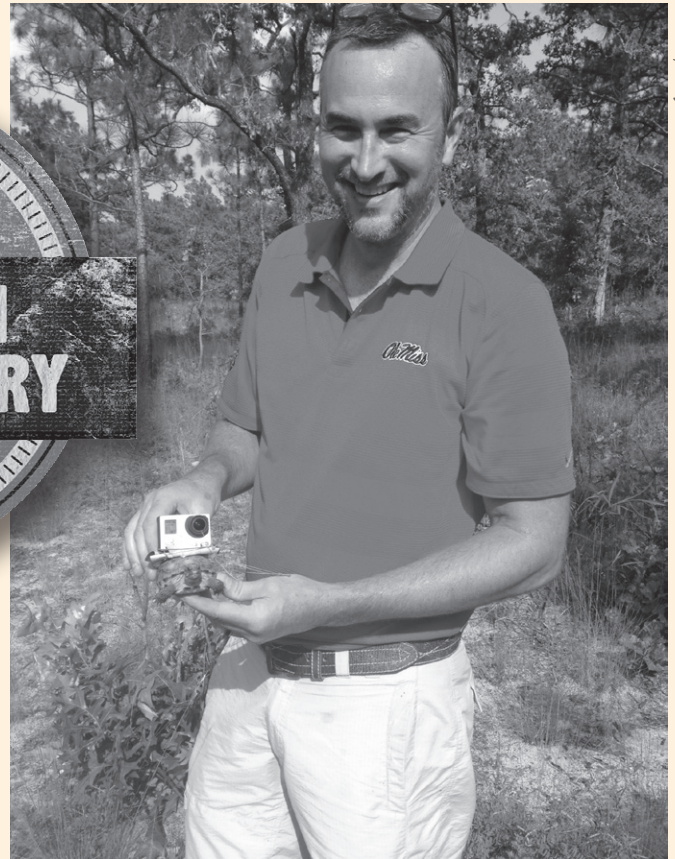
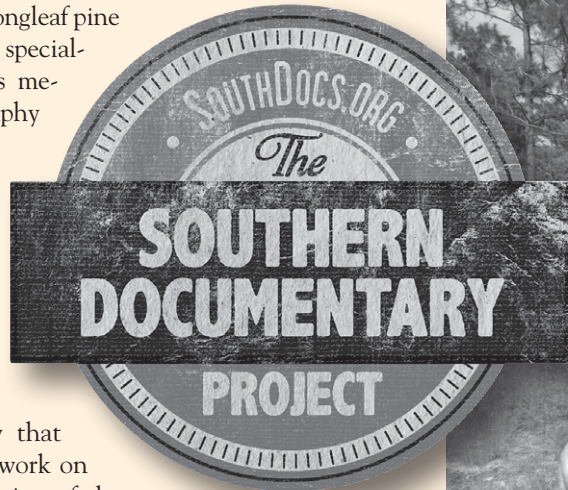
Southern Documentary Project producer Rex Jones is merging a love of nature and storytelling with his latest film about the longleaf pine ecosystem. Jones, who specialized in natural resources media and nature videography while earning an MFA in science and natural-history filmmaking from Montana State University, hopes to incorporate both of his interests in this documentary.

SouthDocs director Andy Harper knew that Jones would eventually work on this project. “As a historian of the Southern environment,” Harper says, “I always hoped that we would get around to making a film about the longleaf. When we hired Rex I knew that he would be the one to eventually make that film.”

Jones recently interviewed Don McAllister, who searches the Suwannee River to find submerged logs to sell to George Goodwin, owner of a heart pine company in Micanopy, Florida. The Goodwin Company has earned a reputation as one of the most highly respected manufacturers of antique heart pine and heart cypress in the world. While interviewing McAllister, the diver pulled up a six-and-a-half-foot-wide and 30-foot-long cypress log.

Originally, the longleaf pine ecosystem stretched across the South from the tip of Virginia to Florida to east Texas. Before the Civil War, there were 90 million acres, which were cut to two million acres by the end of the Great Depression.

“Wood like this isn’t being made anymore, and McAllister’s



Courtesy Rex Jones

Rex Jones used a GoPro camera on the back of a gopher tortoise for footage while he was in Florida. Note: No animals were harmed during filming.

and Goodwin’s work are examples of how you can be environmentally friendly and sustainable,” Jones says. “I’ll also be looking at the fauna associated with longleaf pine, such as gopher tortoises, gopher frogs, sandhill cranes, and red cockaded woodpeckers—animals that are keystone species of the longleaf ecosystem.”

For this vast topic, Jones realizes the length of the documentary may need to be longer than some of his past work. “It might be a three-part feature, with an hour each on history, ecology, and the restoration-preservation aspect,” he says. “It’s important to follow this through the seasons of the year, because different things are happening at different times with the rhythms of nature. It is one of the most biologically diverse ecosystems in the world.”

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

Mississippi Broadcast Premiere of *The Toughest Job*

The Toughest Job: William Winter’s Mississippi, a film by Matthew Graves of the Southern Documentary Project, tells the story of former Mississippi governor William Winter’s career in politics, with an emphasis on his hard-fought battle to reform education in the state. One notable result of his struggle was the establishment of public kindergarten. The next issue of the *Southern Register* will have a story about the making of the film.

The broadcast premiere is Thursday, October 2, on Mississippi Public Broadcasting. Check local listings for time.

Jacquelyn Dowd Hall to Present 2014 Gilder-Jordan Lecture in Southern Cultural History

The 2014 Gilder-Jordan Lecture in Southern Cultural History will take place on Wednesday, September 24, at 7:00 p.m. in Nutt Auditorium on the University of Mississippi campus. This year's lecturer will be Jacquelyn Dowd Hall of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and she will present "How We Tell about the Civil Rights Movement and Why It Matters Today."

Gilder-Jordan lecturers spend the day on the University of Mississippi campus with students and faculty. The Southern Documentary Project will film an interview of Hall by history and Southern Studies faculty member Jessie Wilkerson, and Hall will visit a Southern history class and have lunch with graduate students in history and Southern Studies.

Hall's research interests include U.S. women's history, Southern history, working-class history, oral history, and cultural-intellectual history. She is the founding director of the Southern Oral History Project and has served as a leader or member of the Organization of American Historians, the Southern Historical Association, and the Labor and Working Class History Association. In 1997 she received a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, and she was awarded a National Humanities Medal in 1999 for her efforts to deepen the nation's understanding of and engagement with the humanities.

Hall's *Revolt against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign against Lynching* was a landmark work of Southern gender history. Her coauthored *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* explored labor and community formation in the textile South. Hall is currently work-



Jacquelyn Dowd Hall

ing on a book about women writers and intellectuals and the refashioning of regional identity in the 20th-century South, and another project explores the social movements generated by civil rights activism.

In a 2005 article in the *Journal of American History*, Hall coined the phrase the "long civil rights movement" and advanced an understanding of a dynamic movement not bound by 1954's *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Civil Rights Act of 1965. Hall looked to the rise of the Left in the 1930s as the foundation of the movement and extended its conclusion beyond the landmark legislation of the 1960s to the 1970s and the genesis of other social movements concerned with equality in terms of economics, gender, and sexuality. To further this expanded definition of the movement, Hall also considers the forces resisting civil rights efforts,

a focus that laid the groundwork for scholars in the 2000s studying the conservative response to political activism.

Organized by the Center, the African American studies program, Center for Civil War Research, and the Department of History, the Gilder-Jordan Speaker Series is made possible through the generosity of the Gilder Foundation Inc. The series honors Richard Gilder of New York and his family, as well as his friends, Dan and Lou Jordan of Virginia.

Past Gilder-Jordan lecturers have been Barbara J. Fields of Columbia University, David Blight of Yale University, Grace Elizabeth Hale of the University of Virginia, and Walter Johnson of Harvard University.

For questions about the lecture, please contact Becca Walton, Associate Director for Projects, rwalton@olemiss.edu.

First Paper for New Center Journal Published

Last fall, Jennifer Jensen Wallach submitted the winning proposal for a grant from the Southern Foodways Alliance to explore the legacy of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as it related to foodways. Wallach, an associate professor of history at the University of North Texas, focused her research on the foodways of Black Nationalist groups in the wake of the civil rights movement. She found that,

for some African Americans, “passage of the [Civil Rights Act of 1964] prompted questions about the desirability of meaningful integration. Radical African American food reformers did not always consider newly gained access to once-forbidden sites of public consumption a privilege. Instead, they saw integration as a potential liability to the Southern black community.” Wallach’s paper, “How to

Eat to Live: Black Nationalism and the Post-1964 Culinary Turn,” was published on July 2, 2014—the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Civil Rights Act. It is the first paper in *Study the South*, a new online journal published at the Center. What follows is an excerpt from “How to Eat to Live.” We invite you to explore the work in its entirety at southernstudies.olemiss.edu.

The Ascendancy of Soul Food

In the aftermath of the civil rights movement, many activists used food habits to reimagine their relationship to the U.S. nation-state. They embraced what Stephan Palmié has labeled “culinary identity politics” where “black collective selfhood” became rooted in a matrix of particular food practices. Jessica Harris claims that “eating neckbones and chitterlings, turnip greens, and fried chicken became a political statement” in the late 1960s. The origins of this trend stemmed from the transformations many younger civil rights activists underwent as they abandoned integration as a priority, instead emphasizing empowerment and race pride under the vague but seductive mantra of “Black Power.” During this era, proponents of what became known as “soul” endorsed cultural forms that epitomized what William L. Van Deburg has referred to as the “essence of the separate black culture” as exemplified in practices that demonstrated “in-group cultural cachet.” The term “soul” most famously referred to a genre of music. The descriptor was also used as a marker for other forms of cultural expression, such as distinctive hairstyles, clothing, and, of course, cuisine.

Proponents of “soul food” reimagined hybrid Southern cooking—a product of African, European, and Native American ingredients and culinary knowledge—as a distinctly black cultural product, claiming that politically conscious African Americans should consume this cuisine alongside req-

uisite doses of racial pride. By reframing Southern cuisine as soul food, they claimed proprietary ownership of Southern food culture. By transforming a regional style of eating into a racial one, African Americans living outside of the South could—if they wished—enjoy this food while still disassociating themselves from the place where white oppression had assumed its most totalizing form. The celebrated dishes in this style of cooking had direct antecedents in the foodways of enslaved people, and enjoying these foods mindfully could also become a way of celebrating the resilience of Southern black people who fought total subjugation through expressive culture. Their diet had been built upon the cornerstones of corn and fatty pork, augmented with whatever they could grow or scavenge, including collard and turnip greens, black-eyed peas, sweet potatoes, fish, and small game, like opossums or squirrels. With the exception of the small game, which was consumed primarily in the rural South, these other ingredients became foundational elements in the soul food canon.

Many of the most vocal soul food supporters of the era engaged with Southern food culture from vantage points north and west. Collectively, these sons and daughters of Southern migrants who had fled the region seeking better job opportunities and less strident forms of racism maintained ties of culture and kinship to the South. For this group, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 did not dramatically alter the landscape of their daily lives—in contrast to those who remained in the South, where the outward signs of desegregation were dismantled. However, the law did inspire African Americans throughout the country to contemplate what a desegregated nation should look like. By extension, they imagined what members of such a society should eat. Regardless of what region of the country they lived in, during the Black Power era politically conscious African American eaters had to come to terms with their relationship to traditional American food items as well as to those associated more closely with Southern regional cuisine—and thus with slavery.

HOW TO EAT TO LIVE

BLACK NATIONALISM AND THE POST-1964 CULINARY TURN

BY
JENNIFER JENSEN WALLACH
PUBLISHED: JULY 2, 2014

Taking It to the Stacks: Alums in the Library

Southern Studies alums have various jobs with academic library work and research, as well as community libraries. Some help students, while others serve residential neighborhoods. Each of them draws on their Southern Studies degree in one way or another, whether through recommending Southern authors, doing research, or working with various types of people to make resources available.

Franky Abbott, as part of her American Council of Learned Societies fellowship, manages several projects for the Digital Public Library of America related to partnerships, curation, and outreach, including a Gates-funded Public Library Partnerships Project (working with a team to offer digital-skills training to public librarians), the Community Reps outreach program, and the Digital Curation Pilot.

She also works in many Southern states with cultural heritage institutions that collect and digitize materials essential to Southern Studies research. “I use my own knowledge of Southern history and Southern culture to help them organize and select materials, and I curate exhibits for local and national audiences,” Abbott said.

Abbott earned a PhD in American studies from Emory’s Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts, an MA in Southern Studies from the University of Mississippi, and a BA in literature and African American studies from Yale University. Her Southern Studies degree has been useful in her career, and the time spent at UM was an important experience. “One of the best things about the Southern Studies MA program is that it encourages students to learn critical thinking, writing, and project skills, as well as to develop ideas about place, region, the local, and the national, in the service of many potential career paths,” Abbott said. “Students in Southern Studies are given the option to build, curate, document, and create in addition to the traditional analysis activities (papers,

readings, class discussions) offered by most humanities MA programs.”

Katie Blount has worked in communication at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) in Jackson since 1994 and says she loves the variety of the work she does there. “In 1998 we opened the Sovereignty Commission papers, which had been sealed since the state-sponsored spy agency shut down in the 1970s,” she said. “In 2006 we welcomed the public to the Eudora Welty House, the most intact literary house museum in the country. Beginning in 2006 MDAH awarded millions of dollars in federal grant money to people who were restoring historic properties damaged by Hurricane Katrina. And these days we are working to develop exhibits for two new Mississippi Museums—the Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum—which will open in 2017 in celebration of the state bicentennial.”

Blount draws on her Southern Studies background daily, as she explores every aspect of the Mississippi experience, from politics to music to foodways to the civil rights movement. “I enjoy being part of a wide network of Southern Studies graduates across the state, and I’m excited about this summer’s release of an extraordinary novel, *Flying Shoes*, by one of my favorite Southern Studies professors, Lisa Howorth!”

Courtney Chartier is head of Research Services for the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University in Atlanta. “My degree is a great subject specialty for an archivist working in a Southern academic institution. Two of our collecting focuses are African American history and culture, and modern politics and Southern history, which encompass a lot of the broad themes that I read about and discussed in Southern Studies courses. Both as an undergrad and a student at the Center, I focused on the civil rights movement and the LGBT rights movement in the South; particular knowledge

in civil rights helped me to get my first professional position as an archivist, and both help in my current job, especially when I teach,” said Chartier, who has worked at Emory since 2013.

Emory’s vast collection means thousands of people visit each year for serious, long-term research projects. “People cry more than you would think in the archives. Emotions can run very high when an individual in confronting information that impacts their lives,” she said. “Once a colleague of Dr. King, well into his eighties, burst into tears looking at essays he’d written that were with Dr. King when he died. Recently, a high school junior cried over the handwritten manuscript of *The Color Purple*. Archives are about humanity as much as scholarship.”

After graduating with his MLIS from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, **Mark Coltrain** received a promotion as librarian for the Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina. In July 2013 he became the E-Learning Librarian, incorporating Web 2.0 technologies into the classroom to create hands-on learning activities. “We use these to demonstrate and contextualize the im-





Photo courtesy Mark Coltrain

vegetable poke sallet, and one of our ethnobotanists here on campus contributed some commentary to that.”

In her role at the library, Driver considers herself “Troubleshooter-in-Chief,” especially since so much information has gone digital and there are lots of problems related to digital access. “I enjoy getting to show somebody who entered the library thinking it is some kind of Byzantine maze that there is a very simple logic to locating the information they want.” she said. “Libraries have always been magical places to me.”

portance of good research and information literacy skills inside the classroom, in the workplace, and in everyday life,” he said. “In my year as E-Learning Librarian, I’ve done that exclusively for our exploding online population via our Embedded Librarian Program, among other initiatives.

Academic librarians are constantly looking for ways to make information literacy relevant among diverse populations of students and there is no place more diverse than a large, urban community college. “Many people take for granted or are just plain oblivious to how phenomena like Google, social media, and smartphones have changed how we find, access, interact with, use, and conceive of information, from the trivial to the serious. Librarians play a large and ever-increasing role in those aspects of education,” Coltrain said. “Because technology has changed so much of how we do what we do, libraries have had to reinvent ourselves to stay relevant.”

A self-proclaimed current-events hound and bookworm, **Andrea Driver** may have found the perfect job as the senior library assistant at the University of Mississippi’s Thad Cochran Research Center Science Library. Her Southern Studies master’s degree, combined with her undergraduate degrees in biology and English from UM, primed her to search for the connections between areas of study. “Southern Studies opened my mind to how interconnected all schools of study really are,” she said. “The people who patronize the science library are studying or practicing in areas such as ethnobotany and environmental toxicology, which are connected in some very fascinating ways. For instance, I watched a short SFA video recently on the tradition of eating and preparing the

At the Mobile Public Library, **Carly Grace Akers** tackles many roles, which seems to be a common theme for librarians. “I have been a ‘floating’ librarian, which so far has meant that I am generally at the main library but I also float to branch libraries to help with special projects, or whatever they need, a few days a week,” she said. “Up until this past year, I was the floor manager who put in a massive radio frequency identification project. We put tags in our more than 650,000 items for better security and so we could use self-checks at our branches.”

The best part is not knowing what she’ll be doing from day to day, and she says it’s nice to be able to help a diverse group of people with their different needs. Southern Studies was good preparation for working with an assortment of people. After earning her BA in Southern Studies she received a MLIS degree from the University of Southern Mississippi. “In both areas, you have to be open to outcomes and

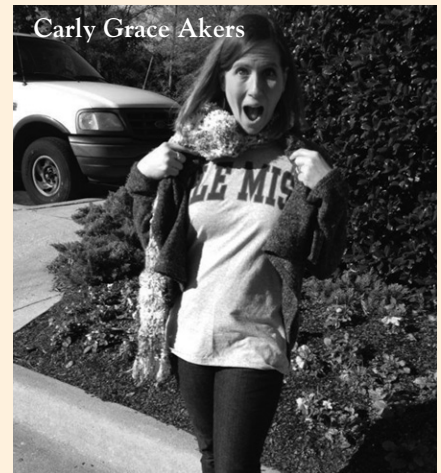


Photo courtesy Carly Grace Akers

not attached to outcomes,” she said. “By coincidence, my office at the main library is located right next to where the Southern Studies-type books are. It’s a nice start and end of the day to see them there.”

Laura Heller is the Raymond Public Library Branch Manager, and she is one of 15 managers in the Jackson-Hinds Library System. She assists patrons with their library inquiries about books, magazines, computer access, or any other inquiry. “I also schedule and promote programs that enrich the public and, hopefully, I inspire a continued interest in libraries and reading overall. Events range between summer reading programs for children and teens to encouraging reading and learning to special-interest programs for adults, such as a biographical introduction of the life of Raymond-born poet Muna Lee,” Heller said.

Heller is also looking forward to American Archives Month in October so she can educate the public about simple tools they can use to better care for their



Photo courtesy Andrea Driver



Photo courtesy Laura Heller

old photographs and papers. “My sense of organization and ease of access have always drawn me to the library and archival sciences, because the public can pursue self-education with the right tools and research available to them,” she said.

As library technician for monographs and acquisitions at Tulane University for the past two years, **Andrew Mullins III**’s responsibilities include ordering and receiving books by request of bibliographers. He also helped plan and execute the library’s Banned Book Week celebration.



Andrew Mullins III

Photo courtesy Andrew Mullins III

After earning a BA in English and Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi and an MA in American Studies from the University of Massachusetts in Boston, Mullins moved to New Orleans. “The long hours spent in the library researching Southern Studies projects helped educate me to all that an academic library can offer. I love research and libraries, so I’m happy to be in one. Tulane has the Louisiana Research Collection and the Hogan Jazz Archives, and it’s very nice having access to those archives,” Mullins said.

As a book lover, Mullins is interested in all aspects of publishing, research, and archival work, and stays current on academic publishing. “I love teaching, but if I can’t teach I’ll work with books. I also work in a comic book store, so I guess you could say I’m saturated by both the high and the low on the cultural scale,” he said.

As with her fellow librarians, **Renna Tuten Redd** wears a variety of hats as information technology librarian at Anderson University in South Carolina. Her biggest job is to make sure students have access to the electronic resources they need, whether it is journal articles or finding books in the online catalog. Another duty is working with different departments—including history, English, and interior design—to show students how to use library resources for research. “My favorite part of the job is learning something new every single day,” she said. “Someone at some point—be it a student, a professor, or a fellow librarian—will ask you a question, and your mission is to find the answer. My initial attraction to libraries was through archives and history, but the longer I’m in the field, the more I just love helping people connect to information. *Schoolhouse Rock!* used to say, ‘Knowledge is power!’ and it’s completely true.”

Redd earned a BA in art history from the University of Georgia, followed by an MA in Southern Studies and an MLIS from the University of South Carolina at Columbia. Although people may believe that working in libraries means that one gets to spend quality time with books and read all the time, Redd says that working in the library doesn’t mean luxuriating with books all day long. “I get to show people how to find books; I get to physically move heavy books; I get to shop for books, but I don’t get to just ‘be with the books,’ as a student once said to me.”

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

It All Began Here...

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Baptized at St. Paul's Church, June 1911

Parsonage - First Home

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Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Presents Center with Special Achievement Award

The Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters (MIAL) held its 35th Awards Banquet on June 7, 2014, at the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson. In addition to the banquet, the weekend included readings and performances by MIAL winners at Lemuria Books in Jackson and the annual membership meeting. At the membership meeting, Donzell Lee of Alcorn State was elected president; Swan Yerger of Jackson, vice president; Margaret Robbins of Pontotoc, secretary; Jan Taylor of Jackson, treasurer; and Nancy Guice of Laurel, archivist.

Receiving the Noel Polk Lifetime Achievement Award was William Beckwith of Taylor, Mississippi. Beckwith, a sculptor and teacher at the University



Courtesy Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters

Left to right, MIAL president George Bassi, Charles Reagan Wilson, William Beckwith, Ann Abadie, and James G. Thomas, Jr. at the awards ceremony



of Mississippi, has produced public and private bronzes for over 40 years.

A Special Achievement Award was presented to the Center for the Study of Southern Culture for *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, a work in 24 volumes. Receiving the award on behalf of the Center were general editor Charles Reagan Wilson; managing editor James G. Thomas, Jr.; and associate editor Ann Abadie.

Steve Yarbrough accepted the Fiction Award for his novel *The Realm of Last Chances*. The Nonfiction Award went to Jesmyn Ward for *Men We Reaped: A Memoir*. Derrick Harriell won the Poetry Award for *Ropes*.

Quincy C. Hilliard was awarded the Music Composition Award (Classical) for his work *Kojiki*. Claire Holley received the Music Composition Award (Contemporary) for *Powdercoat*.

Milly West won the Photography Award for her collection of photographs in *Cuba for Keeps*. JJ Foley was given the Visual Arts Award for *Altering the View*.

All award recipients have significant ties to Mississippi and are nominated in their respective fields by members of MIAL. Please visit the MIAL website at www.ms-arts-letters.org for information on membership.

Mary M. Thompson



Music of the South Concert Series Continues This Fall

Cajun French Band Feufollet to Perform

The Music of the South Concert Series, which highlights intimate evenings with Southern performers, continues Wednesday, September 17, with Feufollet. The concert is set for 7:00 p.m. in the Studio Theater in the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts.

Feufollet is a Cajun French band deeply rooted in the francophone soil of their hometown of Lafayette, Louisiana.

Though famous for their renditions of heartbreaking songs and rollicking tunes, the group features original songs that draw on deep roots tempered by a cutting edge of contemporary life.

“Three members of Feufollet came to the Music of the South Symposium in 2013,” said Center director Ted Ownby. “The topic that year was experimentation and innovation, and the band members told some intriguing stories

about how, as children, they played music considered traditionally Cajun and how they have experimented with those traditions while listening to and feeling the influence of all sorts of music. We’re excited to have them performing at the Ford Center.”

The name Feufollet translates to “swamp fire.” They sing and even compose in French, and their music is a blend of modern sounds and ancient styles, mixing zydeco, rock, rhythm and blues, and country. Recently, they won the 2014 *Gambit Weekly’s* Big Easy Music Award for “Best Cajun Artist.”

Tickets for the concert are available for \$10 through the University of Mississippi box office, 662-915-7411, and at the door.

The Music of the South Concert Series is a partnership between the Center for the Study of Southern Culture and the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts. The series began in 2012.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

Feufollet



Feufollet

Save the date!

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for the Book

The 2015 Oxford Conference for the Book will be dedicated to Margaret Walker (1915–1998) in recognition of her contributions to American letters.



Betty St. Grocery

“You Can Almost Feel Jackson in the Walls” Betty Street Grocery, Jackson, Mississippi As told to Rien Fertel by Mary Harden

In June the Southern Foodways Alliance held its annual Summer Foodways Symposium in Jackson, Mississippi. In advance of the symposium, SFA oral historians collected the stories of more than a dozen of Jackson's oldest and most culturally important restaurants—from soul-food cafés to bakeries to hybrid institutions of Greek-Southern cuisine. What follows is an excerpt from the SFA's interview with Mary Harden, third-generation owner of the Betty Street Grocery. You can explore the rest of the Jackson oral histories at southernfoodways.org.

My grandpa was a Colonial Bread man, and he delivered bread to the store that was sitting here. It was an old corner grocery store before Kroger's and all the supermarkets. And he decided to buy the place, and he turned it into the sandwich shop that it is today. That happened over about a fifty-year period of time.

My grandfather was born in 1905, and my grandmother was born in 1911.

I know he purchased the store with the fixtures that were in it for \$250 in July 1940. In 2015 it'll be seventy-five years. This neighborhood was a part of Jackson from the get-go, but in 1940 it was much more removed. It was on the outskirts of town.

There were gravel roads all around at that time, and there were only houses, because people were living here rather than being industries around it. The checkout, the railings where you check out, all of that is a part of the original building. My grandfather expanded it in 1948 and put in the countertops that are here today. Back in the 1960s the area started industrializing, and that's about the time that we started selling sandwiches.

It stayed a grocery store probably until the early 1960s. My grandfather had cans of Rick's Sausage, and he sold smoked sausage. He would open the cans of Rick's Sausage, and the guys down at Jackson Iron and Metal, the metal processors, they would come

down and they would be hungry and he would just make a few sandwiches along. And then he would slice some bologna, and he would sell thin cold bologna sandwiches for a dime apiece.

They would come down and they would buy these dime sandwiches, and they would eat their sandwiches outside, or they'd sit along the same counters that are here today. They had groceries on them, and they would just sit on the edges of the counters. I have vivid memories of there being fifty, sixty men in here at the same time, eating their sandwiches inside of the store. Or if they had a truck, they'd just park in the parking lot. And they would sit on the tailgates of their trucks and eat them.

I have never remembered it being anything but integrated. My grandparents delivered groceries to white and black alike. I don't have any memories of anything but black and white being here together—working, eating, living.

My parents worked for my maternal grandparents. Dad started working



Ryan Ferrel

Betty Street Grocery Kitchen Crew

when he was about in the seventh or eighth grade. He had to quit school to support his family, so my grandparents hired him, and he and my mother fell in love. He took over when my grandparents became too old to work—they kind of cut back, and then they passed away in 1978 and 1980. So my parents had it, and now I'm running it after Dad. I'm the third generation.

In the 1960s my parents were trying to make a transition from being a grocery store to a sandwich shop. Neither my parents nor my grandparents were college-educated people. They were just hard workers. It was a question of, are you going to market to the blue-collar workers

or to the upscale people? I mean you're selling a dime sandwich, you know? How many do you have to sell to make ends meet? It evolved into what it is.

When my parents decided this was going to be a viable option, they put in a stove back behind the meat market. They would fry the burgers or fry the bologna, and they would make them in what was the storage room behind the meat market. They cut a hole through the wall of the meat market—still there today—and would put the sandwiches through the hole and sell them over the meat market.

About three years ago I decided that it would be kind of cool for people to be

able to eat on the original counters. So I had a carpenter come in and he took the shelves off the bottom parts and he maintained the integrity of the top parts of the counters so that people can eat off of them. Then we bought stools so that we could kind of make it into a sit-down-and-eat restaurant rather than just takeout only.

We have everyone from the sanitation workers to former governors that eat with us—side by side. They're all eating on the same countertops and enjoying the same ambiance and atmosphere.

My grandparents would be extremely proud. They would be gratified not only that it's still here but that there are some changes, yet it's kind of the same, too. You walk in and you can still see the same fixtures and same countertops, but yet it has done some changing. They could still recognize it for what it is. I think they would appreciate that.

It's distinctly Mississippi and distinctly Jackson because of what we serve—fried bologna, smoked-link sausage sandwiches, burgers. It's just basic, inexpensive, easy, fast, cheap country cooking that's still good. It's reflective of Jackson and the years that it soaked up in here in the same location with the same countertops. You can almost feel Jackson in the walls. Whatever has happened in your life has made you who you are. By that same token, Jackson has made Betty Street what it is.

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Grad Students Work with SFA and SouthDocs on Farish Street Project

More than a year ago, Southern Studies grad students Turry Flucker, Anna Hamilton, and Kate Hudson set out to investigate and document Jackson, Mississippi's Farish Street as part of a Southern Foodways Alliance and Southern Documentary Project effort to study the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Through oral histories, photography, and film, the students asked questions about what the legislation meant and means for public spaces and how people inhabit them. Farish Street, once described as the "black Mecca" of Mississippi but now largely deserted, illustrates the complexity of community formation, survival, and revitalization.



Visit www.olemiss.edu/projects/sfa/farish-street-project/ to read the essay that resulted from Flucker, Hamilton, and Hudson's fieldwork and to watch clips from their interviews.

2014 Eudora Welty Awards

Each year the Center for the Study of Southern Culture presents the Eudora Welty Awards for Creative Writing to two Mississippi high school students during the Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference. Established and endowed by the late Francis Patterson of Tupelo, the awards are given for creative writing in either prose or poem form. The prize for first place is \$500, and the prize for second place is \$250. In addition, each winner also receives a copy of the *Literature* volume of *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*.

Schools may submit one entry in each category. Faculty and staff of the Center judge the entries.

This year's first-place winner is Jessica Garner of St. Andrew's School in Ridgeland for her story "Momma Says." The judges were impressed by her use of language to tell the story of a daughter coming to terms with her mother's death: "When the sun comes up in the morning we pull our coats close



around us, and as I step into the morning mist that glows with sunlight, I see every detail of Momma's stories come to life. The sun's sleepy rays illuminate the mist and make it dance and shim-

mer in the stout sea breeze, which carries the scent of crackling brick ovens and baking bread mingled with algae and exhaust."

This year's second-place winner is Rachel Jones, a McComb native who attends the Mississippi School for Math and Science in Columbus, for her poem "Sunday Symphony." The judges were particularly struck by her use of imagery in the poem about a grandmother, including the lines, "She gives us our stained plastic bowls / And we eat our rations in the yard / Where the grass licks our ankles / and the mosquitoes kiss our skin."

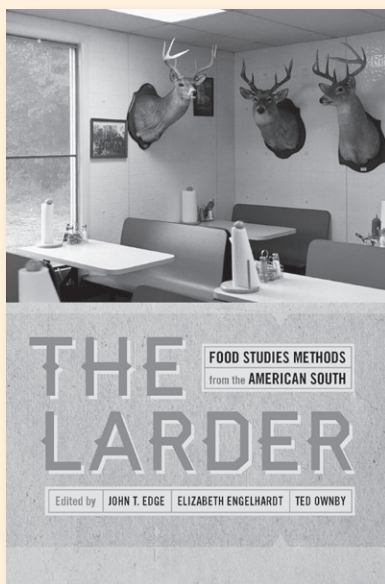
To see a list of past winners of the Eudora Welty Awards, visit the Center's website: <http://southernstudies.olemiss.edu/academics/previous-winners-eudora-welty-awards/>.

The Center congratulates the winners of this year's awards.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

The Larder Selected for Publication Design Exhibition

Judging for the 2014 Association of American University Presses (AAUP) Book, Jacket, and Journal Show took place January 23 and 24, 2014, at the AAUP Central Office in New York City. Approximately 263 books, 330 jacket and cover designs, and 4 journals were entered. Thirty-nine books and 22



jackets and covers, and 1 journal were chosen by the jurors as the very best examples from this pool of excellent design. Out of these entries, the AAUP judges chose the University of Georgia Press's *The Larder*, edited by SFA director John T. Edge, Center director Ted Ownby, and Elizabeth Engelhardt from the University of Texas at Austin, for inclusion in the scholarly typographic category. *The Larder* is the first in the Southern Foodways Alliance Studies in Culture, People, and Place series.

The 2014 Book, Jacket, and Journal Show premiered at the AAUP Annual Meeting in New Orleans, June 22–24. Member presses around the country will exhibit the show from September 2014 through May 2015.

Center to Visit the Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center

The Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center for Arts and Education in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, has invited Charles Reagan Wilson and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture to present a program on *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* this fall. This special event will be the first in a programming partnership between the Mary C. and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. Check the Centers' websites and future issues of the *Southern Register* for upcoming events.

CONTRIBUTORS

Sara Camp Arnold is the publications editor for the Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA), which includes the editorship of *Gravy*, the SFA's quarterly food letter.

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Jodie Free is a recent graduate of the Southern Studies master's program.

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continued from 2

the South, with its first article. Both immediately become important parts of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture.

I'll be on the road again this fall, but this time I will be on sabbatical for a semester, traveling to finish an overdue book manuscript. While traveling over the past several months has taken me to familiar places with lots of friends, this fall I'll be going farther away as a ramblin' writer-editor. Multiple songs tell us that the road goes on forever, but book projects should not.

Reading the South

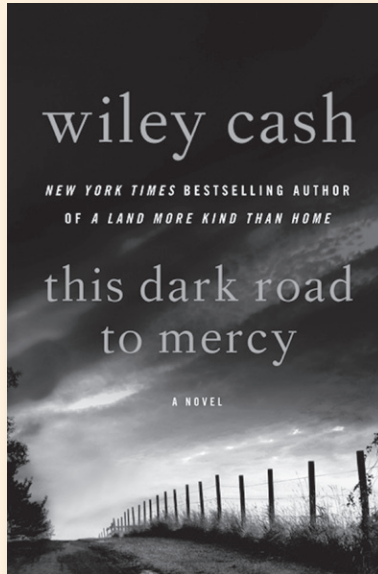
This Dark Road to Mercy

By Wiley Cash. New York: HarperCollins, 2014. 240 pages. \$25.99 cloth, \$14.99 paper.

This Dark Road to Mercy is Wiley Cash's second novel. With its fast-paced thriller plot, touching characters, and evocative language, the novel would appeal to fans of Cormac McCarthy and Ron Rash.

This Dark Road to Mercy is told through the eyes of three narrators: Easter Quillby, a 12-year-old girl who disappears from her foster home with her younger sister, Ruby, to go on the run with their estranged father, ex-baseball player Wade Chesterfield; Brady Weller, their court-appointed guardian and a dismissed police officer who gets involved with the search despite being warned by his former colleagues to stay away; and Robert Pruitt, a hit man and former baseball player who is after Wade, both to recover stolen money and to seek revenge for an injury during their minor league days.

The novel begins in Cash's native Gastonia, North Carolina. Easter and Ruby disappear during the 1998 baseball season while Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa are on track to break Roger Maris's home-run record. While most children are watching baseball, Easter is moving from place to place with her father and sister, trying to decide whether to trust Wade and reflecting back on her mother's drug overdose. Easter's discovery of her dead mother is told through a flashback, and it is perhaps the most heartbreaking scene of the whole novel: "She was lying sideways on top of the bed like maybe she'd stood up sometime during the night and had fallen back across the bed and just stayed that way. I knew she was dead right when I opened the door. She was on her side with her knees bent up close to her and her hands on her chin.



Her dark hair was covering her face, so I couldn't tell whether her eyes were open or not, but I didn't move it out of her face to check because I knew I didn't want to see. I didn't even touch her, which seems strange to think about now because I'd give anything in this world to curl up in bed beside her, be able to smell her hair on the pillowcase, feel her scratch my back through my nightgown. But instead I just stood there looking down at her and went ahead and decided that I wasn't going to cry, not then anyway. I knew it was more important to decide what me and Ruby were going to do next."

Cash excels at making readers think about adult mistakes and their consequences for children. The fate of Easter and Ruby is at the heart of the novel, but attention on their case wavers as Gastonia police try to solve a multi-million-dollar robbery. Brady Weller almost gives up on them, too, but is challenged to take responsibility for them by his own teenage daughter: "Why do you say it like that: that you *were* their guardian? Do you stop just because they got kidnapped?" Weller wants the girls

to be found, but he is at a loss for what is truly best for them: to be with their father, to be in a foster home, or potentially to be adopted by their maternal grandparents and moved to Alaska. The repercussions for childhood trauma are shown most sinisterly with the novel's villain, Robert Pruitt, whose flashbacks suggest an early life of violence and cruelty.

This Dark Road to Mercy keeps race on the periphery of the story. Easter and Ruby are in a mostly black foster institution, and it is suggested that they will be first in line for adoption because they are white. Easter has a relationship with a black boy, and she bristles when Wade buys them a beach raft with a Confederate flag: "I'm not playing with that. It means you hate black people." Wade tells her that she's wrong, and she gives in and gets on the raft. Interestingly, Wade changed his name to Chesterfield from Chessman in order to hide his Jewish roots, which Easter and Ruby apparently know nothing about. These tensions are in the background of the novel, but they are never confronted head-on; Cash writes so intelligently about class that it would be interesting to see him explore racial disparities more provocatively in future novels.

Jodie Free

George Ohr: Sophisticate and Rube

By Ellen J. Lippert. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013. 195 pages, 62 b&w and color plates. \$40.00 cloth.

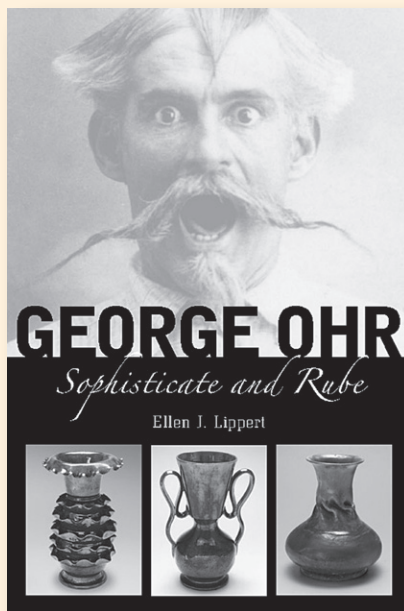
One of the most well-known stories surrounding Mississippi potter George Ohr takes place some 50 years after his death. In 1968, antiques

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

dealer James Carpenter discovered a cache of Ohr's work in the garage of the potter's two surviving children. Recognizing its value, Carpenter purchased somewhere between six and ten thousand pieces. Since Carpenter's fortuitous discovery, Ohr has emerged from obscurity to become a major figure in American art, with many of his pieces now in the collections of important modern artists, such as Jasper Johns and Andy Warhol, and in the permanent collections of major museums.

In 2013, three books on the now-famous "Mad Potter of Biloxi" found publication, with Ellen J. Lippert's *George Ohr: Sophisticate and Rube* being the most scholarly. Unsurprisingly, the book is a continuation of Lippert's 2008 dissertation, "George Ohr in His Nineteenth-Century Context: The Mad Potter Reconsidered," a title that might best describe the approach she uses in this new study of the artist. The book is primarily social biography, a contextual analysis of the society in which Ohr lived and the influences that this society had on him and his artistic vision. In the introduction the author claims, "Ohr's creations are cultural expressions that probe the tensions within Gilded Age society and contradict the romanticized and fabled caricature that currently dominates Ohr scholarship. Far from the isolated genius with inborn talent, Ohr was a sophisticated, aware, and paradoxical artist firmly entrenched within his late nineteenth-century milieu."

Lippert begins her study with an overview of the uneven critical reception of Ohr's work in his time. A shrewd self-promoter, oftentimes his eccentric personality overshadowed his art, and many reviews concentrate on that aspect of a visit to his studio rather than on the art found there. For example, in 1909 journalist Della McLeod referred to Ohr himself as a tourist attraction, a "queer genius" and "freakish fool." Other reviewers merely found Ohr's pots of little aesthetic value, branding them



"ugly," "grotesque," and "bizarre." Yet, others lauded his work. One reviewer in 1902 claimed, "the principal beauty of the ware consists in the richness of the glazes, which are wonderfully varied, the reds, greens, and metallic luster effects being particularly good." Both forms of publicity brought attention to his work.

A central aspect of Lippert's book extends from this notion of "no such thing as bad publicity." Ohr was indeed a marketer, cultivating an eccentric personality in order to bring attention to himself and to his work. He never showed his pottery in galleries; rather, he exhibited in a number of well-attended major fairs, including the 1884 World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition in New Orleans, the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, and the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. Lippert describes Ohr at the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta as someone who attempts to set himself apart from those mass-producers of wares that were becoming so ubiquitous in the consumer-driven Gilded Age: "Once in front of his booth, visitors were treated to a performance. Mustache tucked behind his ears, beard tied in a bow on top

of his head, dark eyes flashing, Ohr would throw a lump of clay on the wheel and dazzle the audience with a myriad of forms."

The major fairs Ohr attended also exposed him to a wide range of stylistic examples, including French and Asian styles, Impressionism, and Symbolism. Traveling north to participate in the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 and in the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, Ohr played upon the local color stereotype many Northerners imposed upon Southerners. Lippert convincingly describes an artist who was selling more than pottery; he was peddling the clichéd local flavor of Southern "otherness."

As indicated, Lippert makes connections between Ohr and the wider world from which he drew inspiration. For example, while Lippert admits that there is no known direct connection between Ohr and American socialism, she does devote a chapter to the hypothesis that Ohr was a sympathizer of the political and economic theory, claiming that he was "a political radical, a socialist supporter, and advocate of the rights of the common man." His closest connections to socialism are articulated, Lippert argues, in his condemnation of mass production by his competitors and through "his own approach of making each object entirely with his own hands," a socialist hallmark based on the intrinsic value of each individual. One ultimately wonders, though, if this alliance was merely a result of his attempt to stand out in a field of indistinguishable products rather than a statement of social significance.

Lippert's book later again cites numerous contemporaneous reviews of Ohr's pottery. In one instance, Ohr's work is unfavorably compared to Robert Browning's "grotesque and rugged poems . . . which even his most ardent admirers cannot defend." Lippert compares Ohr's belief that the grotesque can be beautiful to the thought of 19th-century thinkers

Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, suggesting that Ohr's works were tacit extensions of those writers' influential works. Again, Lippert suggests that "it cannot be firmly established that Ohr was aware" of the work of a number of his contemporaries, such as that of Oscar Wilde and French novelist J. K. Huysmans, two writers who challenged Victorian standards of beauty and propriety, but she does make the claim that "the circumstantial evidence is compelling." If these connections in Part I of the book offer no concrete evidence for Ohr's appreciation of the intellectual world, they do suggest that he drew inspiration from the prevailing influences of high culture. Further, these chapters offer new ways in which to understand Ohr as artist and citizen.

Chapter seven, the first chapter in Part II: Ohr the Potter, details Ohr's shift from craftsman to artist—a result of his having spent time in the late 1880s in New Orleans working at the New Orleans Art Pottery (a forerunner of Newcomb Pottery) and with Joseph Meyer, a respected Gulf Coast potter. Lippert also gives credit to two of the founders of Newcomb Pottery, William and Ellsworth Woodward, particularly Ellsworth, for instilling Ohr with a "no two alike" approach to pottery. Not only does Lippert give credit to the institutions and artists of New Orleans for inspiring Ohr's casting off of the "constraints of traditional folk art" but she also acknowledges that the diversity of people that made New Orleans a "major artistic and cultural hub" provided additional catalyst for this transition.

The final chapter of Lippert's study is a critical assessment of Ohr's oeuvre. While the chapter is not entirely out of place in this social biography of the artist, the information included therein is somewhat repetitious and rather superfluous considering much of this analysis has been covered in the preceding chapters. The overarching point of the chapter, it seems, is to highlight Ohr's influ-

ences while illustrating how he transcended them, taking notions from the worlds of folk, industrial, and art pottery, and fashioning his own "brand" of modern conceptual art.

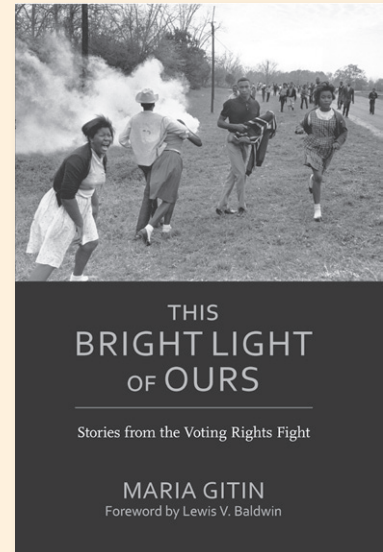
Lippert's well-researched book testifies to Ohr's singular talent, and she ultimately shows that his work was the product of an age where mass production served to homogenize wares. *George Ohr: Sophisticate and Rube* proves that Ohr was more than an eccentric artist of exceptional talent. His desire for fame and recognition in a field consisting of mass-produced industrial pottery, functional folk pottery, and rigidly defined art pottery stimulated originality not out of eccentricity but as a shrewd response to the marketplace.

James G. Thomas, Jr.

This Bright Light of Ours: Stories from the Voting Rights Fight

By Maria Gitin. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2014. 328 pages. \$34.95 cloth, \$34.95 ebook.

Maria Gitin, author of the recently released *This Bright Light of Ours: Stories from the Voting Rights Fight*, has lived a reflective life, and we, as readers, benefit from the journey. By Gitin's own admission, her book is a "memoir and work of creative nonfiction." Memoirs can be problematic, but her keen ability to reflect and even self-deprecate guard against the inherent dangers from which memoirs often suffer. Gitin writes a collective story of a moment in time, but not frozen in time, and she tells it through multiple lenses. She is more successful at some of those lenses than others, but as a female, white, "outside agitator" who answered King's call for people of good will to come assist in the fight for civil rights for blacks, she stands virtually alone in her attempt. Further, very few ac-



counts of the experiences of volunteers for the 1965 Summer Community Organization and Political Education (SCOPE) Freedom Summer project exist. *This Bright Light of Ours* is an admirable work and an important contribution to our continuing understanding of that time.

This coming-of-age story is decades in the making. It is, however, her young naïveté that comes through most poignantly. In excerpts from letters written decades earlier and in present day reflections, Gitin exposes her own unawareness of the depth of the struggle faced by blacks in the U.S. Regarding this ignorance, her tone is almost confessional, but always endearing. Outlining how, amid all her enthusiasm, she feared sexual assault at the hands of white Southerners who opposed her politics, she writes, "I did not consider the extra layer of oppression that black women labored under as targets of both sexual and racial violence." Gitin's consciousness of white privilege occurs much later in life, but it comes, and we are left hopeful that meaningful connections can be made across vast divides. After all, her early naïveté is multifaceted. Gitin (then known as Joyce Brians) was from California, only 19 years old, from a relatively poor family, and was untraveled. Despite a change in those conditions, some of this na-

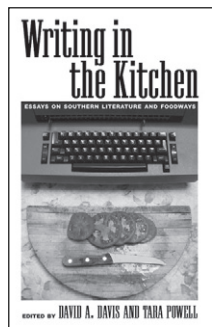
iveté is maintained into the present. Dr. Maddox offers one such example. It is through this lens that Gitin falls short—then and now. Dr. Maddox was, “a black doctor in Selma who [in contravention of the segregation laws] treated white civil rights workers.” Exhausted from the mentally and physically grueling civil rights work she undertook, Gitin came down with pneumonia. Dr. Maddox hospitalized her. The white hospital would not treat civil rights workers, so she was kept in the black hospital. An anomaly, many people came to see her. Gitin admonished the string of black patients and visitors who come to gawk at her saying, “I wouldn’t be here if you would register to vote. If you got people in office who would give you streetlights & running water & decent jobs & new homes & edible food—I wouldn’t be here.” She fails to acknowledge the great task she was asking of the black residents, or the fact that she would not need to be there if whites in the area treated blacks with respect and allowed them to freely exercise the franchise. Other than a passing sentence many pages later, Gitin fails to appreciate the risk she posed to Dr. Maddox and other black men in the struggle. Yet despite these flaws, what comes through most is her humanity. She is a young, idealistic, woman in love, who wants to change the world. The reader is at once forgiving and reminded that we are all flawed.

To be certain, *This Bright Light of Ours* makes an invaluable contribution to the growing body of civil rights literature. Most importantly, this work shows that coming of age is a lifetime pursuit. We root for the young love that develops between her and another volunteer. As she is led away with the jailer’s gun in her back, we are struck by the fact that while she’s young, she’s quite clever. She disarms the jailer with the simple words: “you remind me of my father.”

This book offers an honest expression of the ongoing cost paid by black and white civil rights volunteers alike. Gitin’s description of the depression, rejection, medical issues, and PTSD suffered by her and other SCOPE volunteers (many of whom were white) is only matched by the economic intimidation, loss of jobs, loss of liberty, and death suffered by the black residents of Wilcox County who stayed to continue the fight. This is an important piece of the civil rights story that has not been told. Gitin and her closest allies in the struggle left Wilcox soon after their six-week summer experience, but neither those who remained nor those who left were totally free. Despite this reality, *This Bright Light* ends on a rather optimistic note. I am encouraged by Gitin’s hope, but I am also reminded of an earlier point she makes: “white guilt has never done any good for people of color.” Like Gitin, I too “still *do* believe” this bright light of ours will shine . . . someday.

Barbara Harris Combs

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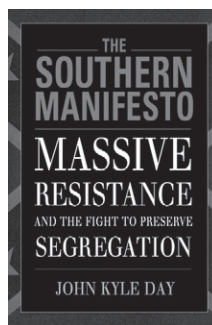
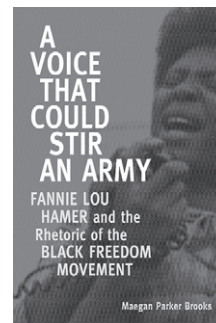


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