THE SOUTHERN REGISTER

A Publication of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture • The University of Mississippi

NEWSLETTER OXFORD, MISSISSIPPI, U.S.A. SPRING/SUMMER 2017

Center Professor Receives Prestigious Whiting Fellowship

Fresh off winning this year's Mississippi Humanities Council's Scholar Award, University of Mississippi assistant professor Jodi Skipper has received another accolade, this one a national honor.

Skipper, assistant professor of anthropology and southern studies, has been awarded a prestigious Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship from the Whiting Foundation, a Brooklyn, New York-based organization that has a long history of support for the humanities and literature.

The Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship, in its second year, is designed to celebrate and support faculty who embrace public engagement as part of the scholarly vocation. Seven others were selected for this year's cohort. Each fellow receives a semester of leave to pursue a public-facing project, as well as a $10,000 stipend toward project costs.

Jodi Skipper

Daniel Reid, the Whiting Foundation's executive director, said, "The foundation believes that those who devote their professional lives to the study and teaching of the humanities are in a unique position to contribute to public understanding. This fellowship aims to identify professors with a demonstrated commitment to using their scholarly expertise to reach wider audiences and fund ambitious projects designed to have direct and significant impact on a specific public outside the academy."

"I was ecstatic, and grateful for this opportunity," Skipper said. "I will use this fellowship period to organize and facilitate a series of workshops entitled Beyond the Big House: Interpreting Slavery in Local Communities. These workshops seek to connect a growing population of communities in Mississippi interested in addressing slavery through historic sites."

Skipper was selected for the award in recognition of her involvement with the Behind the Big House program, a slave dwelling interpretation program started by Jenifer Eggleston and Chelius Carter in Holly Springs. "I have been privileged enough to help with their project, which interprets the lives of enslaved persons through the homes in which they once lived," she said.

Behind the Big House, one of the few historic site tours developed with the explicit goal of interpreting the experiences of enslaved people, will serve as a model for Skipper's project. She said her broader goal is to expand the Behind the Big House model from Holly Springs to other parts of the state.

"The program model has successfully spread to the state of Arkansas," Skipper said. "My community partners in north Mississippi and I are optimistic about

continued on page 5

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Whatever else may be happening in 2017, I'll remember these months as the summer of the *Mississippi Encyclopedia*. Charles Reagan Wilson and I have started doing some interviews about the book, book signings started at Oxford's Square Books, and we'll be doing more. For those who don't get to encyclopedia events, here's a kind of interview with myself.

First, how did *The Mississippi Encyclopedia* get started? Seetha Srinivasan, then the director of the University Press of Mississippi, discussed the idea with Charles Reagan Wilson and Ann Abadie. Seetha's successors at the press, Leila Salisbury and current director Craig Gill and their colleagues, have been great supporters of the book, and funding came from several kind and helpful sources.

How long did it take? In truth, that's not my favorite question. First discussions took place in 2001, and work began in 2003. So, it took fourteen years. The fact that the book came out in Mississippi's bicentennial year is a fortunate coincidence, but that was not the goal.

What are the book's vital statistics? 1,451 pages, 1,400 entries, almost 700 authors, five editors and associate editors (Charles Reagan Wilson, Ann Abadie, Odie Lindsey, James G. Thomas, Jr., and me). It weighs 8.8 pounds and costs $70.

How does one start a book this big? Using the model of the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture,* the editors started by asking thirty experts to serve as topic advisors. Those experts wrote overview essays and lists of potential topics and authors. At the Center we kept adding new topics and kept looking for the best scholars to write about them. Governing principles included inclusiveness and diversity in content, authoritative scholarship, and an accessible writing style.

Is the book a celebration of Mississippi? No, it isn't. It studies the state and its people, deepens and complicates our understanding of it, and expands the range of experiences and perspectives. It studies problems, problem-solvers, heroic figures, not-at-all heroic figures, and an impressive array of creative people.

What's the story of the cover art? The cover comes from a work of glass by Mississippi artist Roger Sturdivant. Colorful and eye-catching, with colors and shapes that do not represent any predictable categories or divisions in the state, the cover asks people to open the book not knowing what to expect.

Is it likely that anyone will have serious problems with the book? I hope not, because there's so much material for people with different interests, but we'll see. A lot of people will ask how we could have left out their favorite topic, and many of those people will be right.

Do you have favorite entries? I suppose I should like all of them in equal measure, but I'm a particular fan of topics that exist outside most definitions of Mississippi, so I like the entries on premanufactured buildings, poet and Spanish-language translator Muna Lee, and experimental jazz artist Wadada Leo Smith. There are two entries on kudzu (both the plant and the counter-culture newspaper), two Robert Smiths, two Willie Browns, and Joan Williams, John Alfred Williams, John Bell Williams, and John Sharp Williams. I like the entries on people about whom many readers readers will say, "I didn't know that person was from Mississippi," the entries on environmental topics from sand hill cranes to hunting, fishing, and crop dusting, and entries that explore and complicate issues of race and ethnicity.

When so much material is available online, why do we need a big book like this? I agree that online reference works are essential, but this book has at least two particular strengths. One is the ease and experience of browsing. Readers looking up one topic will find many others they never imagined might be there (or might be interesting). Second is the sense that all people, places, events, and perspectives in Mississippi belong in the same volume, as they are all parts of a big complicated, interconnected story.

Will there be an online version? Yes, the Mississippi Humanities Council and the Center have plans for an online version sometime in 2018. That will allow people to consult the volume from anywhere, and it will allow us to make corrections, updates, and additions.

At its best, what might a big book like this accomplish? I hope it can widen, deepen, and complicate understandings of Mississippi, in part through its inclusive approach. I hope it represents and generates new scholarship and that it will surprise and entertain while educating. The

continued on page 18

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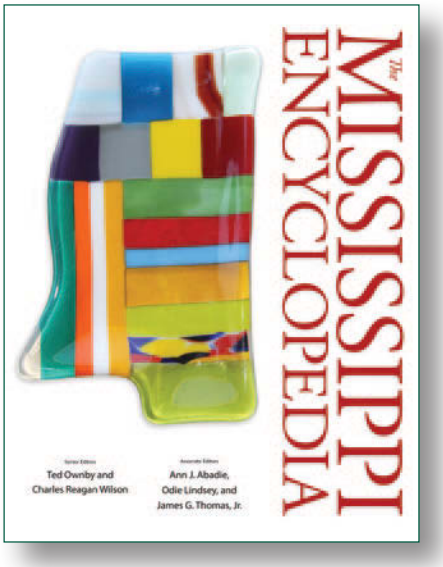
Several *Mississippi Encyclopedia* Events Announced

The *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, a collaboration that includes 1,400 entries and 1,451 pages, is the first encyclopedic treatment of the state since 1907. Published by the University Press of Mississippi as a collaboration between the Press and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, it features nearly 700 scholars who wrote entries on every county and governor, numerous musicians, writers, artists, and activists. Several events have been announced to celebrate *The Mississippi Encyclopedia*, and each event will include talks by speakers such as *Encyclopedia* senior editors Ted Ownby and Charles Reagan Wilson, subject editors, and scholar-contributors to the volume. The first event was held in Oxford on May 20, where contributors each had an opportunity to speak about their contribution to the book at City Hall, followed by a celebration at Off Square Books. Additional events include a celebration reception at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. on June 13 at 6:00 p.m. and the Mississippi Book Festival's kickoff in Jackson on August 17. There will also be events held at independent bookstores and cultural organizations across the state.

Brian Powers



The schedule of bookstore events is as follows:

June 1 at 5:30 p.m.
Turnrow Books Company, Greenwood
Book talk, signing, and reception

June 2 at 6:00 p.m.
Lorelai Books, Vicksburg
Book talk, signing, and reception

June 9 at 6:00 p.m.
A Cappella Books, Atlanta
Book talk, signing, reception

June 10, 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Atlanta's Mississippi in the Park Picnic
Chastain Park, Atlanta

June 13 at 6:00 p.m.
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Reception

June 19 at noon
University of Mississippi, Oxford
Archives and Special Collections
J. D. Williams Library
Panel discussion

June 20 at 5:30 p.m.
Pass Christian Books, Pass Christian
Book talk, signing, and reception

June 21 at 5:30 p.m.
Main Street Books, Hattiesburg
Book talk, signing, and reception

July 22 at 7:00 p.m.
Mary C. O'Keefe Cultural Center, Ocean Springs
Book talk, signing, and reception

August 17, time to be announced
Mississippi Book Festival, Jackson
Cathead Distillery
Encyclopedia Celebration

August 19, time to be announced
Mississippi Book Festival, Jackson
Encyclopedia panel discussion

August 23 at noon
Reed's GumTree Bookstore and the Tupelo Public Library, Tupelo
Book talk, signing, and reception

August 31 at noon
Delta State University, Cleveland
Capps Archives Building
Book talk, signing, and reception

September 7 at 5:00 p.m.
Delta Blues Museum, Clarksdale
Book talk, signing, and reception

September 11 at 5:00 p.m.
Mississippi University for Women, Columbus
Fant Memorial Library
Book talk, signing, and reception

September 29 at 4:00 p.m.
Book Mart and Café, Starkville
Book talk, signing, and reception

November 2 at 3:00 p.m.
Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Natchez
Carolyn Vance Smith Natchez Literary Research Center
Book talk, signing, and reception

November 8 at noon
Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson
MDAH Winter Archives Building
"History is Lunch"

November 8 at 3:00 p.m.
Jackson State University, Jackson
Margaret Walker Center
Scholars discussion

MA and BA Southern Studies Students Graduate

Each year the Center gives several awards for papers and documentary projects, and the announcement is made at the southern studies graduation celebration. Here are the winners for 2017.

Kathryn James won the Gray Prize for one of the two best papers by southern studies undergraduates: "African American Kitchen Workers in a University of Mississippi Greek House," a paper written for Catarina Passidomo's SST 401 class.

Michael George Holman Jr. won the Coterie Award for one of the two best papers by southern studies undergraduates: "'All Things Loved and Unlovable': Discovering Southern Identity in Black Migration Novels," an honors thesis directed by Jay Watson.

Will Palmer, English graduate student, won the Peter Aschoff Award for the best paper on southern music: "'Sound'–A Keyword for Southern Studies," a paper written for Katie McKee's English 776.

Chris Colbeck won the Sarah Dixon Pegues Award in Southern Music for his master's thesis documentary film, *Southern Sound and Space*, Andy Harper, thesis director.

Abby Huggins won the Ann Abadie Prize for the best documentary project in southern studies: "Before Me, after Me, through Me: Stories of Food and Community in Eastern Kentucky" (master's thesis), Catarina Passidomo, thesis director.

Lauren Veline won the Sue Hart Prize for best paper in gender studies: "Object of Your Rejection: The Symbolic Annihilation and Recuperation of Queer Identities in Country Music" (master's thesis), Darren Grem, thesis director.

JAMES G. THOMAS, JR.

Bachelor's and master's southern studies grads, 2017. *Left to right: back row,* Josh Green, George McDaniel, Miller Meyers (undergraduate, English), Kathryn James (undergraduate), Michael Holman (undergraduate); *front row,* Lauren Veline, Drew Ford, Abby Huggins, Caity Maddox, and Christina Huff.

Jacqui Sahagian won the Lucille and Motee Daniels Award for the best paper by a first-year master's student in southern studies for two papers on contemporary blues production.

Abby Huggins and Lauren Veline shared Lucille and Motee Daniels Awards for the best master theses, "Before Me, after Me, through Me: Stories of Food and Community in Eastern Kentucky" and "Object of Your Rejection: The Symbolic Annihilation and Recuperation of Queer Identities in Country Music," respectively.

In addition to these end-of-the-year awards, Lauren Veline won second place in the Best Journalism Research Paper division at the 2017 Southeast Journalism, Best of the South contest for her paper "Newspaper Coverage of James Meredith's March Against Fear: A Comparison of the *New York Times*, the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, and the *Jackson Clarion-Ledger*," and Josh Green was one of only six people to receive a Graduate Student Achievement Award from the UM College of Liberal Arts.

Rhonda Williams to Give 2017 Gilder-Jordan Lecture


Williams to lecture September 6

Rhonda Y. Williams of Case Western Reserve University will deliver the 2017 Gilder-Jordan Lecture in Southern Cultural History on Wednesday, September 6, 2017, on the University of Mississippi campus. The time and place will be announced on the Center's website.

Williams is a professor of history, the founder and director of the postdoctoral fellowship in African American studies at Case Western Reserve, and the founder and director of the Social Justice Institute. Starting August 2017, she will be the John L. Siegenthaler Professor in American History in the Department of History at Vanderbilt University.

The author of *Concrete Demands: The Search for Black Power in the Twentieth Century* (2015) and *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles against Urban Inequality* (2005), Williams has been honored by History News Network as a Top Young Historian, the Organization of American Historians as a Distinguished Lecturer, and is listed in the 2009 and 2015 editions of *Who's Who in Black Cleveland.* Williams is a recipient of an American Association of University Women Postdoctoral Fellowship and a former Harvard University W. E. B. Du Bois Institute Fellow. She is the coeditor of the recently launched book series, Justice, Power, and Politics, with the University of North Carolina Press and coeditor of Teaching the American Civil Rights Movement.

Her publications include articles on black power politics, the war on poverty, low-income black women's grassroots organizing, and urban and housing policy. Her research interests include the manifestations of race and gender inequality on urban space and policy, social movements, and illicit narcotics economies in the post-1940s United States.

Williams received her PhD in history from the University of Pennsylvania in 1998 and her undergraduate degree in journalism from the University of Maryland College Park in 1989, where she became that university's first black salutatorian in its then 187-year history.

Williams, also known as "Dr. Rhonda," also has been engaged in local community efforts, including on police and criminal justice reform as a member of the Collaborative for a Safe, Fair, and Just Cleveland, and the "Cleveland 8." She has appeared on MSNBC and *Democracy Now!* Currently, she is serving as a commissioner on the Cleveland Community Police Commission, which was empaneled in September 2015. She is a Baltimore native.

Organized through the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, 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. Contact Becca Walton at rwalton@olemiss.edu if you have any questions about the lecture.

continued from 1 Whiting Fellowship

its potential to take root in other communities around this state."

A public anthropologist who thinks through how to represent difficult pasts in the present, Skipper specifically addresses the underrepresentation of enslaved communities at historic sites across the South. Her research prioritizes collaboration with communities seeking to address these issues at local levels.

Center director Ted Ownby congratulated Skipper upon her honor. "Scholarship that engages the public frequently takes different skills than the scholarship a lot of us do, and it often takes a lot of time," Ownby said. "The Behind of the Big House project has done a great deal to teach about the history of slavery in Mississippi, and I'm delighted this fellowship will allow Jodi Skipper the freedom to develop new parts of that project."

Skipper joined the University of Mississippi faculty in 2011. Besides teaching introductory courses in anthropology and southern studies, she also teaches courses on historical archaeology, African diaspora studies, southern heritage, and tourism. She was honored on February 10 in Jackson with the Mississippi Humanities Council's Scholar Award for her work.

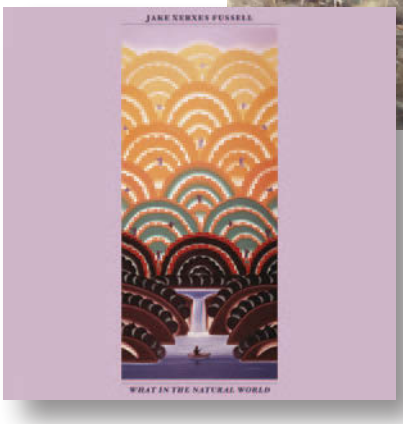
Edwin Smith

Southern Storyteller: Jake Xerxes Fussell Releases New Album

"Come listen, and I'll tell a tale" opens the song "Canyoneers" from Jake Xerxes Fussell's second album, *What in the Natural World*. This simple statement captures the essence of Fussell's record because that is exactly what he does across all of the songs. He is telling us tales, and they are good ones. This should come as no surprise considering Fussell has spent his life dedicated to good storytelling. He has held apprenticeships with master storytellers like Piedmont blues women (Precious Bryant and Etta Baker) and documentary artists (Les Blank and Art Rosenbaum). This commitment to a great story shines through on every song on this record.

BRAD BUNYEA

Fussell grew up in Columbus, Georgia, and is the son of folklorist Fred C. Fussell. As a young boy, Jake would often travel with his father around the Southeast documenting the vernacular culture and recording music from old-time musicians. It was as a teenager that Fussell began studying under musicians in the Chattahoochee Valley and spending time "riding wild with Alabama bluesman, black rodeo rider, rye whiskey distiller, and master dowser George Daniel." After spending some time in Berkeley with the likes of Will Scarlett (Jefferson Airplane, Hot Tuna, and Brownie McGee) and fingerstyle guitarist Steve Mann, Fussell moved to Oxford, Mississippi, in 2005. While in Oxford, Fussell enrolled in the southern studies master's program at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. There he focused his study on the Choctaw fiddlers who he had come across while accompanying his father during fieldwork. It was also while in Oxford that Fussell recorded and toured with Rev. John Wilkins and met fellow musician William Tyler, who began working with Fussell on what would become his self-titled first album. Since releasing this album, Fussell has toured with Wilco, Mt. Moriah, Nathan Bowles, and Daniel Bachman.



On this, his second album, Fussell draws from such sources as Duke Ellington and Helen Cockram along with traditional works to fill out the nine songs here, all of which he has arranged to "elide genres and dissolve the false binaries of tradition and innovation, folk and modern, old and new." He also employs a wellspring of musical talent, including Nathan Bowles (drums, banjo, piano, melodica), Nathan Salsburg (guitar), Nathan Golub (steel guitar), Joan Shelley (vocals), and Casey Toll (bass).

The album opens with the song, "Jump for Joy" (from Duke Ellington's *Sun-Tanned Revu-sical*), which would sound at home with its minimal arrangement alongside anything from Mississippi John Hurt, another master storyteller from the folk-blues tradition. Fussell's subtle fingerpicked guitar adds further layers and musical depth to the vivid imagery, or as he puts it the "technicolor movie" playing out in the plaintive vocals. This combination of subtle, yet complex, instrumentation and deceptively illustrative lyrics and vocals is one of the things that make listening to this album such a joy.

One highlight of this combination is the song "Furniture Man." In this song, Fussell's staccato guitar stabs play out in a striking juxtaposition with Nathan Golub's beautiful pedal steel guitar. All of this provides the backdrop for the story of the cruel Mr. Brown who is described as "a devil without horns" and who the narrator implores to "take your time, Mr. Brown, take your time." Fussell, perhaps heeding this advice, does not rush anything on the record and allows all of his music and stories to breathe.

Interestingly, one of the jauntiest numbers here is also one of the darkest in terms of lyrical content. The song, "Bells of Rhymney,"

comes from Welsh poet Idris Davis and was popularized by Pete Seeger and the Byrds. Its lyrical content containing lines about "sad bells" and posing the question, "Is there hope for the future?" stands in stark contrast to the music that has a lighthearted feel and swing. Here also Fussell appears to make a nod towards Jimmie Rodgers with a "Woo-ooo-hoo-ooo," which while not a full-on yodel certainly seems to have been influenced by the country music legend.

The album concludes with a haunting murder ballad, "Lowe Bonnie." In the song, Lowe Bonnie's lover, a beautiful vocal turned in by Joan Shelley, kills him out of jealousy. The scene plays out in an evocative fashion with Lowe Bonnie sitting on his lover's lap "kissing her so sweet" when she pulls out a "little pen knife so keen and sharp, she wounded him so deep." As she begs him not to die, he responds, "How can I live? You wounded me so deep. I think I feel my own heart's blood dropping on my feet."

The album title, *What in the Natural World*, is a fitting summation for this whole album. The stories travel across all manner of the world, from the canyons and mines in "Canyoneers" and "Bells of Rhymney" to the vast ocean where one encounters dragons and beasts in "St. Brendan's Isle."

William Tyler, Fussell's friend and collaborator, once described him thusly: "The professor you always wished you had, the human jukebox, the guitar player and singer who makes any band that he's in better. He's a southern scholar and gentleman in the tradition of Jim Dickinson, George Mitchell, and Les Blank. He's a Dave Van Ronk for SEC country." Fussell more than lives up to this characterization, aptly demonstrating his gift on this album at one of the oldest of southern traditions: storytelling.

George McDaniel

Two Emerging Filmmakers Join SFA for Summer Internship

This summer the Southern Foodways Alliance has announced a Summer Documentary Film Internship to encourage and nurture emerging documentary filmmakers. For two months this summer, two interns, Pankaj Khadka and Victoria De Leone, will work directly under the guidance and mentorship of SFA's Pihakis Foodways Documentary Filmmaker, Ava Lowrey.

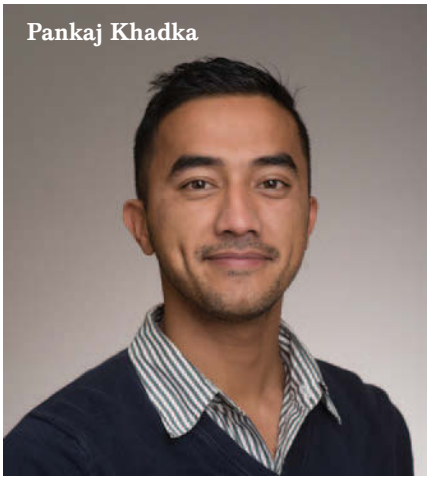
In addition to hands-on learning through pre- and post-production assistance on current SFA projects, the interns will also spend the summer completing a short Mississippi-based documentary film project with producers Lowrey and SFA director, John T. Edge.

Pankaj Khadka, a Nepali native, is a freelance multimedia journalist currently based in New York City. He aspires to tell stories of subjects and issues that engage and challenge his thoughts and beliefs through a combination of text stories, captivating photographs, and incorporation of multimedia.

Khadka's reporting quests have taken him to parades and festivals across the swamps of southwest Louisiana; to rodeos, elections and fire outbreaks in the foothills of southern Colorado and mountain peaks of northern Colorado; to marches, marathons, and protests in the cityscapes of Boston and New York. His work includes in-depth reporting and photo stories on community leaders, regional cultures, and traditions of different American communities.

Victoria De Leone grew up in mountainous Central Oregon. Trading the small community in the woods for a slightly larger one on an island, she studied food cultures and immigration narratives at NYU's Gallatin School of Individualized Study. After completing her undergraduate studies, she served as a community manager for a grocery delivery startup in Brooklyn.

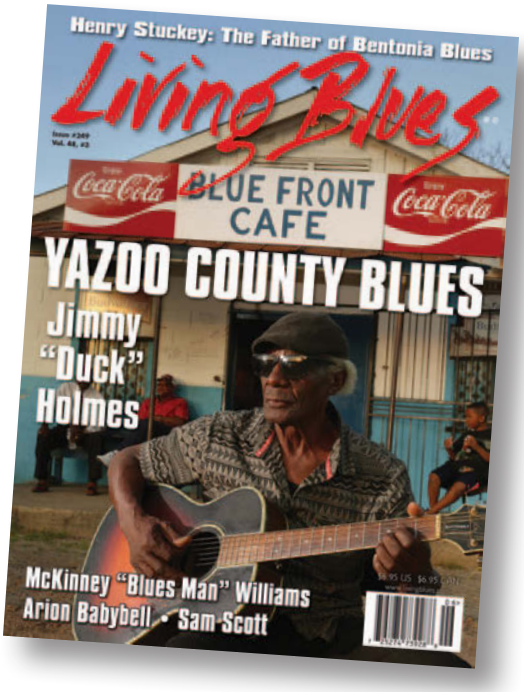

Victoria De Leone


Pankaj Khadka

Currently, De Leone is pursuing a southern studies master's degree at the University of Mississippi, where she focuses her studies on the diverse food stories of the South. After taking part in the Center's Summer Documentary Workshop last year, she found her voice as an aspiring documentary filmmaker.

The Southern Foodways Alliance is excited to have Pankaj and Victoria join their ranks this summer and to see the work they produce. You can follow their progress and watch more SFA films at southernfoodways.org.

Living Blues News



Yazoo County, Mississippi, has always held a surreal mystique for me. I remember being a kid riding in the backseat along the winding roads of the county looking out the window and wondering how this strange place with this strange name had formed. Yazoo County has some flat Delta land in the west, but it also has surprisingly high hills and deep-cut valleys in the east, the remains of the Mississippi River bluffs from long ago. Many of these bluffs have been completely overtaken by the vigorous, invasive kudzu vine. Left untended, the vines have grown to cover entire hillsides–swallowing trees, buildings and telephone poles–creating an eerie shroud of living green that seems to grow in front of your very eyes. Riding through the hills is like cloud watching, where shapes and figures emerge from the massive organic forms.

The word *Yazoo* comes from a tribe of Native American Tunica people historically located in the area. Allied with the Chickasaws and the English, the tribe was virtually wiped out in 1729 during the Natchez War when the Choctaws, allied with the French, battled the Natchez and Yazoo tribes.

The Yazoo River and its flood plain dominate the area. Yazoo County was founded in 1823, just six years after Mississippi became a state.

Over the years the word *Yazoo* has entered popular culture via a Cab Calloway song ("Old Yazoo," 1932), a blues label (Nick Perls's Yazoo Records), and even a lawn mower company that built the first zero turning radius mowers back in the 1960s.

Yazoo County has never had a large blues scene like many other Delta counties, but what it did have was unique. Bentonia bluesman Skip James's 1931 recording session for Paramount Records ranks as one of the high-water marks in blues history. James, who learned from Henry Stuckey (the same man Jimmy "Duck" Holmes learned from), created a unique sound with an open D-minor tuning and an eerie falsetto singing style that, when combined, delivered a musical sound unlike anything before or since. For music that can make the hairs stand up on the back of your neck, there isn't much else as powerful as Skip James.

In this special issue devoted to Yazoo County blues, we explore the history of the county, the music, and the musicians who made it. We then turn our spotlight on the current scene and the man who has committed his life to keeping it alive. Jimmy "Duck" Holmes and his family are central to Yazoo County blues. Not only is he the living embodiment of the Bentonia style of blues, he is also the owner of Mississippi's oldest juke joint, the Blue Front Cafe, and founder of one of the oldest blues festivals in the country, the Bentonia Blues Festival.

There is no separating the Blue Front from Holmes; they are one and the same. Opened in 1948 by his parents, Carey and Mary Holmes, just one year after Holmes's birth, the cafe and Duck (named after the way he walked as a child) grew up together. Duck can't remember life without the Blue Front and neither can most residents of Bentonia. It was the center of the African American community and still is today–even though it and the town are a little sparser than they once were.

We also cover some of the new talent from the area, feature a historical article on the father of the Bentonia style, Henry Stuckey, and include a guide for blues tourists who want to come to the area and explore the scene. We wrap it all up with a photo essay from photographer Bill Steber who has spent nearly twenty-five years photographing in the county.

Also, make sure to vote in the 2017 *Living Blues* Awards. Go to www.livingblues.com and vote for your favorite artists!

Brett J. Bonner

Center Loses Beloved Friend

The Center lost a friend this spring when alumna Yaeko Takada passed away. Known to southern studies friends as Eko, she came to Mississippi from Tokyo, where she had worked as a journalist. Eko Takada earned BA and MA degrees in southern studies, studying and writing papers on the blues whenever possible. A graduate essay on a theme in the history of ragtime was a co-winner of the Peter Aschoff award for the study of southern music, and in 2016 she completed a unique master's thesis on the significance of guitars for early blues performers. Eko had jobs with Center publications, worked a great deal with friends in the Blues Archive, and worked for several months for the Delta Blues Museum. Eko Takada followed her passions, had a fascinating life, and we'll miss her.

SFA Collects New Oral Histories from West Virginia

EMILY HILLIARD


EMILY HILLIARD

Helvetia, West Virginia, population fifty-nine, is nestled in a high mountain valley along the Buckhannon River in the central part of the state. The remote village was settled in 1869 by a group of Swiss families who first immigrated to Brooklyn, New York, during the Civil War. In Brooklyn, these families belonged to a mutual aid society of Swiss and Germans called the Grütliverein and together sought a place where they could live freely and practice their respective art forms. One of their members had done some surveying in West Virginia and spoke of the large tracts of land, beautiful mountains, and plentiful forests of game. The group eventually found affordable acreage for sale in the area and established a village, calling it Helvetia, the Latin name for Switzerland.

In the near 150 years since its founding, the Swiss traditions practiced by Helvetians have evolved in various iterations. During the World Wars when societal anti-German sentiments ran high, the community decided it would be best to downplay their Swiss-German heritage, wanting instead to express the pride they felt as American citizens. Around the time of the town's centennial in the late 1960s, Helvetia native Eleanor Mailloux and her friend Delores Baggerly began an initiative to reinvigorate the community's Swiss traditions, establishing the Hutte Swiss Restaurant, producing a community cookbook *Oppis Guet's vo Helvetia*, and holding public celebrations like Fasnacht, a pre-Lenten "mountain Mardi Gras," intended both to reinforce Swiss customs for locals and bring much-needed tourist dollars to the town in the sparse mid-winter months.

The Southern Foodways Alliance's new collection of oral histories, "Helvetia, West Virginia," conveys the values of this fiercely creative and productive close-knit mountain community where Swiss and Appalachian heritage are uniquely twined and enacted daily in a bite of *sauerbraten*, a sip of homemade wine, and many generations sitting around a Hutte Swiss Restaurant table. The project is a collaboration with the West Virginia Folklife Program. The photographs and oral history interviews were recorded by West Virginia state folklorist, Emily Hilliard. For more about the project, visit www.southernfoodways.org.

Documentary Workshop Planned for MA and MFA Students

The Center will host its second Documentary Workshop for southern studies MA students August 14–16. This workshop, which takes place the week before classes begin, is an opportunity for students to learn more about documentary methods, and includes the production of a short film. Last year, students Rachel Childs, Rebecca Lauck Cleary, and Victoria De Leone made a film about Bill Griffith and his work as curator of Rowan Oak. Andy Harper of SouthDocs and Ava Lowrey and Sara Wood of the SFA teach the workshop. Contact Becca Walton, rwalton@olemiss.edu with questions.


BECCA WALTON

Left to right: **Ava Lowrey, Rebecca Cleary, Victoria De Leone, Rachel Childs, and Andy Harper shoot footage at Rowan Oak.**

Birmingham Greeks Subject of Continuing SFA Work

In 2004 the Southern Foodways Alliance published a collection of oral histories featuring the Birmingham, Alabama, Greek restaurant owners that have been feeding the city since the nineteenth century. This year, the SFA revisited that project to collect oral histories, photographs, and film of the newest generation of Greek Birminghamians.

Chef Timothy Hontzas of Johnny's Restaurant continues his own family's tradition with his Greek-inspired take on meat and three:

"They say at one point in the seventies that it weren't for the Greeks, Birmingham would starve. Greeks had a very strong relationship with farmers, because if they weren't in the produce business, they were in the restaurant business. I think that's what lends itself to the meat-and-three aspect as the Greeks influence on that.

Chef Timothy Hontzas of Johnny's Restaurant

"I'm Greek-southern, and I don't think I had a choice but to cook. I was always being dragged in and out of kitchens at restaurants in Jackson: the Mayflower, the Elite, Angelo's. My dad was always asked to come back into the kitchen with him and hear the old men discuss all kinds of crazy things.

"The name [Johnny's Restaurant] comes from my pappous's restaurant in Jackson. I wanted to do it in homage of him. They said that he was way ahead of his time when he opened Johnny's, but was very hardheaded and let time pass him.

"He jumped a cattle boat in 1921 and came to the United States. I'm not exactly sure how many days he was on that boat, but I can imagine it was not a friendly journey. He arrived in New Orleans with seventeen dollars in his pocket. He just walked into a kitchen one day and asked if he could start washing dishes.

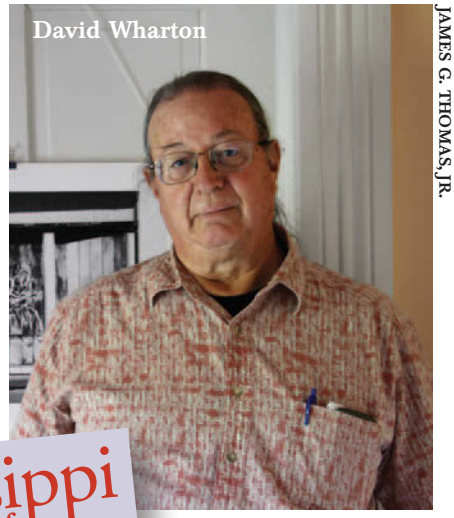
"They gave him a shot, and he just worked his way up. The goal was to take a chance on one kid and to send them over and see if they could make a way for themselves. And he was able to do it, which in turn, goes back to how they were able to help bring other people over and how Johnny's was an outpost.

"Meat-and-threes: To me, it's who we are without forgetting our roots. The Greeks have all kinds of restaurants now. It's not just meat-and-threes and hotdogs. It's seafood, it's barbecue, it's all kinds of stuff. I love it here, my family, all the Greeks–as ornery and temperamental as they can be–I love Birmingham."

– As told to Ava Lowrey in January 2017 and featured in the SFA documentary film Johnny's Greek and Three

More oral histories and this film are now available as part of the updated Greeks in Birmingham oral history collection at southernfoodways.org.

Center's Director of Documentary Studies Wins Second Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Award


David Wharton

JAMES G. THOMAS, JR.

David Wharton, the Center's director of documentary studies, has won his second Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters (MIAL) Award for Photography. His recent book, *The Power of Belief: Spiritual Landscapes from the Rural South*, was selected from a wide field of works of photography. Wharton's photographs have been exhibited throughout the United States and in Europe and Latin America. GTF Publishing states about this winning book, "David Wharton reveals in his remarkable new book of photographs, the South is a place—a land, a region, a culture, a 'way of life'—so heavily invested in religious belief that the spiritual is constantly made manifest in the ordinary."

The Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters has announced all of its award winners for works first published, performed, or shown in the year 2016. The award recipients, chosen by out-of-state judges prominent in their respective fields, will be honored at the MIAL annual awards banquet to be held this year on the campus of Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi, on Saturday, June 3, 2017. In addition to the awards banquet, MIAL is offering a tour of the Hazel and Jimmy Sanders Sculpture Garden on the campus to be followed by the Delta Meat Market food truck picnic, readings, and signings by MIAL award winners, and a pre-banquet reception honoring nominees and winners at the Grammy Museum.

This year's Noel Polk Lifetime Achievement Award is shared by Jere Allen and Samuel Jones. Allen, a painter from Oxford, is professor emeritus of art at the University of Mississippi, and Jones, a native of Inverness, has enjoyed a long and distinguished career as a composer, conductor, and educator. Other award winners include Carlyle Wolfe (Visual Arts), Rick Bass (Fiction), Jason Morgan Ward (Nonfiction), Catherine Pierce (Poetry), James Sclater (Music Composition, Classical), Fish Michie and Kristian Dambrino (Music Composition, Contemporary).

A Citation of Merit is being presented this year to *Thacker Mountain Radio*, a live radio show based in Oxford that features author readings and an array of musical performances. The show began in 1997 and has hosted such musical and literary artists as Natasha Trethewey, Caroline Kennedy, Orhan Pamuk, Willie Morris, Jimbo Mathus, Charlie Musselwhite, Paul Williams, and Elvis Costello. The director-producer is Kate Teague, with host Jim Dees and house band the Yalobushwhackers. *Thacker Mountain Radio* is broadcast by Mississippi Public Broadcasting.

The Institute is awarding a Special Achievement Award to painter and lifelong arts advocate Nan Sanders. She has been instrumental in the founding and continued growth of the Hazel and Jimmy Sanders Sculpture Garden on the campus of Delta State University. Having served on the MIAL Board of Governors for many years, Sanders has also chaired the Mississippi Arts Commission. She is a founding member of the Delta Arts Alliance and a board member of the Mississippi Museum of Art.

For more information about attending the awards banquet and related events, visit the MIAL website at www.ms-arts-letters.org.

Southern Foodways Alliance Director Publishes New Book on Southern Food History

Interview by Becca Walton

Over many years, my fellow southern studies MA alum John T. and I have talked about how food, shelter, and clothing hold the keys to learning about the lives of southern people, many of whom embody the collision of necessity and creativity that is at the root of cultural studies. In this interview about his new book, *The Potlikker Papers: A Food History of the Modern South*, we discuss the tension between the essential and the complex, something he brilliantly struggles with as a founder of the academic discipline of foodways, and something I've thought about in my own research on clothing and fashion in the South, and past work in the building arts.

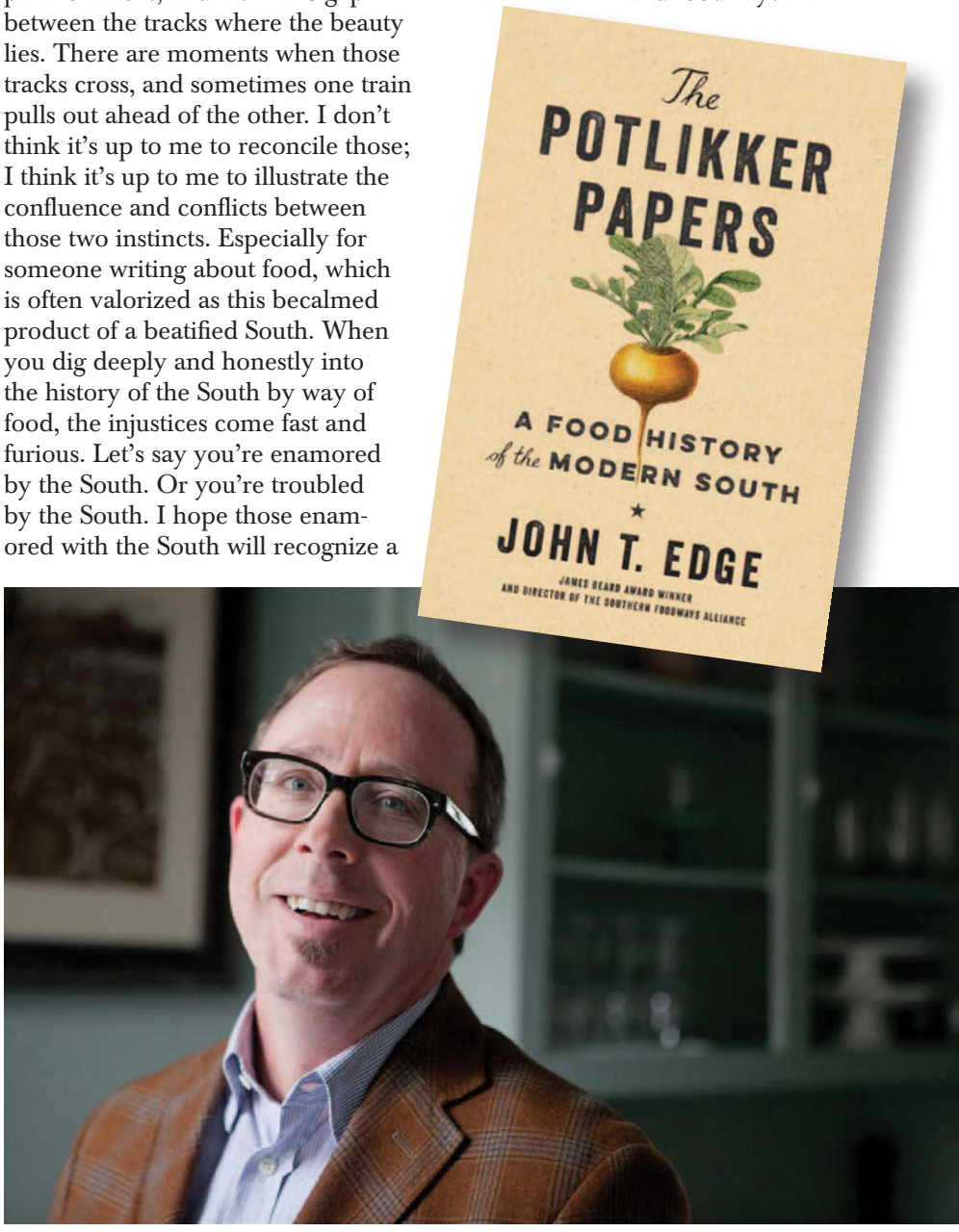
John T. and I sat down at Square Books to talk about the book on May 19, the day before he headed off on a month-long book tour.

Visit johntedge.com to see if he's coming to a bookstore near you. An excerpt from our interview follows. You can read the full interview at southernstudies.olemiss.edu.

Becca Walton: You write that you envision *The Potlikker Papers* as a sequel to Egerton's *Southern Food*, which you call a "democratic portrait of the American South and its peoples." Through your lengthening career studying foodways, and through the writing of this book, how do you square hospitality with injustice?

John T. Edge: Egerton asked how you reconcile the gross injustices of our region and the beauty we wrought because of it and despite of it. And he postulated that the tensions between horror and beauty in the South made this region an incubator for creativity. Our region reflects those two trains running on parallel tracks, and it's in the gap between the tracks where the beauty lies. There are moments when those tracks cross, and sometimes one train pulls out ahead of the other. I don't think it's up to me to reconcile those; I think it's up to me to illustrate the confluence and conflicts between those two instincts. Especially for someone writing about food, which is often valorized as this becalmed product of a beatified South. When you dig deeply and honestly into the history of the South by way of food, the injustices come fast and furious. Let's say you're enamored by the South. Or you're troubled by the South. I hope those enamored with the South will recognize a more complicated region, and those troubled by the South will find more beauty and hope.

Literally and metaphorically, you have to get people to the table. I think we're at a moment of reckoning in the spheres of food studies and foodways. I think



Ted Ownby addressed this very well in *The Larder*, wherein he wrote that he hoped that it would be the last collection of essays where one has to argue the validity of foodways as a field. Those of us who think and write about food are still grappling with old prejudices, grounded in dismissals of women and people of color and the cultural processes by which they have long expressed themselves.

I'm publishing this book at a really interesting time, as smart and challenging voices step into the conversation, especially people of color and women. I think this is a signal moment, as numerous books talk to one other. What I've done is synthesize primary source research, secondary source research, and my own reportage, in the hopes my book will serve as a portal to deeper study. My book is a transom book. Here's the transom, now cross it.

BW: Before your book, I had never before heard of Georgia Gilmore. How/where did you find her? She is such a great example of the heart of social activism coming from local, grassroots efforts, and how asking questions about everyday matters like eating can illuminate larger historical stories.

JTE: If you want to write about the subject that I write about, Georgia Gilmore, the cook who rose to influence during the 1955–56 Montgomery Bus Boycott, is the ideal encapsulation of the possibilities of food studies. She is the ultimate foot soldier for democracy, the ultimate welcome table keeper, the ultimate subject of a people's history of the South. She shows this ferocity, and she shows keen social intelligence, she shows indefatigable bravery, and she has this beautiful playfulness too, calling her diners "heifer" and "whores." The heifer and whore details I got from a preacher I interviewed in Shoney's. You want to find a complicated South, talk to a preacher in a Shoney's, drinking lukewarm coffee, listening him talk about a woman who called Martin Luther King Jr. and his compatriots heifers. If you think about restaurants at their best, and they're not always at their best, they are proxy homes for people who gather there. When you dine at home you want to be treated like family. Part of being treated like family is being disarmed. To be needled is to be loved.

BW: I loved how she was just completely unimpressed by the notion of celebrity. And by expressing that, she claimed her place in the movement. You heifer, I'm just as important to this effort.

JTE: By way of Georgia Gilmore, I found the arc of this book. It started out as a post–Civil War book, and I had sketched an outline for that. But I recognized that if I started the book in 1955 with Georgia Gilmore and a hamper of fried chicken sandwiches at Holt Street Baptist Church, I had a sixty-year arch to 2015. I didn't want to open the book with a chef in a kitchen. I wanted to open with a seemingly unremarkable woman doing remarkable things.

BW: Now, a question about food and democracy. In my own past work, I've struggled with the question of how to make skillfully crafted built spaces and products accessible to all, while at the same time honoring the skill of the craftsperson. How does one eat democratically?

JTE: That's one of things I talk to our son, Jess, about. Each economic decision you make, each spending decision you make, is political. The transfer of dollars from you to another person is an investment in that person, the receiving entity. A democratic diner is an aware diner. And that means being aware of human resource impact, and natural resource impact. I think the two are of equal import. There's a cultural impact too. The cultural impact is the most complicated one. I'm often asked about fried chicken cafes or barbecue restaurants– *Where do their pigs come from, where do their chickens come from? Why would you patronize restaurants that use industrial pork and chicken? Aren't those detrimental to the environment and to the people who work in those plants, and ultimately to the health of customer?* And the answer is yes, they are. But that barbecue restaurant or fried chicken cafe owner has an equal if not larger responsibility to their community. Part of what makes barbecue restaurants and fried chicken cafes important is the democracy of a $6 barbecue sandwich or a $7 plate of fried chicken. Working-class folk in that community demand, expect, need, want that food at that price. The models that upper-middle-class-farmers-market-shopping southerners apply to consumer decisions are not necessarily the same models we should apply to a barbecue restaurant or fried chicken cafe.

BW: The book seemed to me to be southern studies at work, in a form that centers activism and change at its core. Our South, as you say, "rejects easy encapsulation." What would you say about the current state of the field of southern studies, and the place of foodways therein?

JTE: I think the field is in the midst of fitful maturation. Defining books are entering the conversation. Marcie Ferris's book *The Edible South* is a great example of that. Organizations like the Appalachian Food Summit and Foodways Texas have joined the SFA. The territory has been defined, the squabbles have begun. Out of this moment, a robust field of study will emerge.

One of most exciting facets of food studies and foodways is the complement across disciplines, and the complement across public programming and primary source scholarship. In this moment, when university administrators challenge their colleagues to think about public service as well as scholarship, foodways offers a range of possible models for the future.

Southern Studies Student Wins Phi Beta Kappa Writing Internship

Kathryn James may not have made a penny on any of the articles she writes for the *Key Reporter*, Phi Beta Kappa's online newsletter, but the recent University of Mississippi graduate is grateful to have been awarded a writing internship from the prestigious academic honor society.

"I was surprised and humbled to be chosen," said James, from Mandeville, Louisiana, who triple majored in public policy leadership, economics, and southern studies.

Phi Beta Kappa's writing internship program is primarily for juniors and seniors majoring in liberal arts or sciences and who attend institutions where chapters are sheltered. Interns must make a five-month commitment to the program and prepare a minimum of six publishable articles for the *Key Reporter*.

Interns write and conduct research from their home campuses. Besides being good writers, interns need to be able to work independently and meet deadlines with a minimum of oversight and supervision. They must accept assigned topics and/or pitch their stories to the editor for approval before a completed article is submitted.

"I submitted my first piece on March 1 and have submitted two more since," James said. "My writing profiled members of Phi Beta Kappa who break barriers in their membership, scholarship, and/or professional lives. My first piece was on Mary Annette Anderson, the first African American woman to gain membership in Phi Beta Kappa."

The organization does not guarantee that every submitted article will be published. But even with no pay or guarantee of publication, it is an honor for James to have been chosen as an intern, said Luanne Buchanan, UM instructional associate professor of Spanish and secretary-treasurer of the campus Phi Beta Kappa chapter.

Kathryn James

KEVIN BAINS

"Kathryn earned the honor," Buchanan said. "Dr. Sandra Spiroff encouraged her to apply for it."

Spiroff, associate professor of mathematics and chapter vice president, was made aware of James's writing talents by John Samonds, associate dean of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

"After she expressed interest in the internship, I solicited writing samples from her, offered some small critiques, and put her name forward to the society," Spiroff said. "I was very impressed with Kathryn's writing ability. I was hopeful that she would receive the internship since I have rarely seen a student write so well, engaging the interest of the reader."

Each intern receives full credit for his or her work. Those who complete the program receive a formal certificate from Phi Beta Kappa and may request a letter of recommendation from the program.

"I saw this opportunity as an extension of the honor that is Phi Beta Kappa," James said. "It speaks to the confidence my university community has in my academic ability."

Edwin Smith

CONTRIBUTORS

Scott Barretta is an instructor of sociology and anthropology at the University of Mississippi, a writer/researcher for the Mississippi Blues Trail, and the former editor of *Living Blues* magazine.

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

Rebecca Lauck Cleary is the Center's senior staff assistant and website administrator.

Jenna Mason is the Southern Foodways Alliance's office manager. She earned her BA and MA in Spanish at the University of Georgia.

George McDaniel is a second year master's student at the Center. He received a BA in history from Davidson College.

Ted Ownby, director of the Center, holds a joint appointment in southern studies and history.

Brian Powers was the Center's public relations intern for the Spring semester and is a May 2017 graduate.

Edwin Smith is a communications specialist at the University of Mississippi.

Christina Steube is a communications specialist at the University of Mississippi.

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

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

Archiving and Promoting Mississippi

Southern Studies Alumni Work in Cultural Institutions across the State

Many southern studies graduates find their way into jobs that combine cultural life and museums, publishing, and tourism. An added bonus is that these alumni continue to make decisions about topics they studied as undergraduate or graduate students. Here are the stories of five graduates, all of whom work in Mississippi institutions in the Jackson area.

Laura Anne Heller


Laura Anne Heller

For the past year and a half, Laura Anne Heller has been the acquisitions and collections coordinator for the Archives and Records Services Division of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH). The main part of her work is facilitating the acquisition of historic collections from potential and familiar donors. A comprehensive historical agency, the department collects, preserves, and provides access to the archival resources of the state, administers museums and historic sites, and oversees statewide programs for historic preservation, government records management, and publications.

"I visit with donors who have a desire to preserve history and have decided that the Archives is the best home for these old photographs, letters, maps, books, broadsides, business records, ledgers, audio-visual recordings, and other valuable, yet overlooked, historical collections," Heller said. "During these visits I relate how the donor's grandfather's World War I letters will be arranged, described, and made accessible to the general public for research and study. We're always looking for donations concerning Mississippi history and Mississippians, be it Civil War–era documents, Vietnam War materials, personal thoughts of a Winona grandmother, the business ledgers of a lumber mill, or correspondence of families who have lived in the Mississippi Delta for generations."

With fellow archival staff, Heller processes and catalogs collections so that the seasoned professor and the average curious person can have equal access to historic information. Since her work entails acquiring and receiving collections about Mississippi history and Mississippians, a familiarity with those subjects and the knowledge gleaned from her southern studies work are both beneficial and necessary.

"There is much, of course, still to learn, and being a native Mississippian certainly helps, but I often recall things I learned in Dr. Ownby's Old South class, or I will meet someone who is connected to a southern author that I learned about in Dr. Young-Minor's or Dr. McKee's literature classes," said Heller, who graduated from UM in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in English and southern studies.

Heller said she enjoys listening to the stories shared by Mississippians as they donate their family artifacts and make their stories available. Heller said, "MDAH benefits Mississippians by preserving these histories for years to come. I want the public to learn from those personal stories by visiting the archives and viewing collections, by browsing the website's digital archives pages, or by visiting the many historic sites managed by MDAH," she said.

Mary Margaret Miller White

Mary Margaret Miller White (MA 2007) is the bureau manager for Visit Mississippi, which allows her to work with cultural institutions, convention and visitors bureaus, municipalities, and individuals across the state to help build tourism infrastructures in Mississippi, music and cultural


Mary Margaret Miller White

tourism in particular. She started working for the Mississippi Development Authority/Visit Mississippi in August 2013.

"We do this through familiar initiatives like the Mississippi Blues Trail, the Country Music Trail, and the Freedom Trail, as well as through tourism promotions and programs associated with literary heritage, culinary attractions, the Civil War, and civil rights," White said. "Currently, I'm serving as the point person for MDA's Mississippi Bicentennial programming in 2017. I also host *Next Stop Mississippi*, a weekly hour-long program on Mississippi Public Broadcasting Radio."

White said the Center taught her about the importance of integrity and authenticity in storytelling. "Much of what we do here at Visit Mississippi involves branding and marketing, so it is important to me to try and uphold the Center's standards of a full, honest depiction of Mississippi's past and present," she said. "Our team works to move beyond 'moonlight and magnolias' as the singular way to attract visitors to the state. The Mississippi Freedom Trail, which tells the story of the civil rights movement in Mississippi, helps us transcend conventional tourism niches and into candid, cognitive experiences for the traveler."

According to White, out-of-state visitors spent $4.8 billion in Mississippi in 2016, and her role at Visit Mississippi helps to showcase the good that is happening on the local level, and hopefully in turn attract more visitors to the state. "This job has afforded me the great opportunity to travel across the state and get to know the determined people who make magic happen every day in Mississippi. I've been in public service for nearly a decade, and through that time I've seen Main Streets grow and flourish, artists become municipal leaders, and entire towns embrace creativity, culture, and history as the calling-card for community development," said White, who began working at the Mississippi Arts Commission in 2008. "I'm continually impressed and amazed by the people of Mississippi who are working to make their hometowns, and the state as a whole, a great place to live, work and share with the world."

Michelle Jones

Michelle Jones is the local preservation assistance coordinator in the historic preservation division for the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, which means she works with sixty-two communities throughout the state to assist them with local preservation planning. After graduating with her MA in southern studies in 1994, she began working for MDAH and was originally hired to write National Register nominations because of her interdisciplinary background. However, the department also needed a person to work in the field with local governments, so her position shifted.

"Currently, I work with city and county governments to formulate policy that allows them to promote, protect, and preserve their cultural resources," Jones said. "The Certified Local Government Program is a part of the National


Michelle Jones

Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and encourages preservation at the federal, state, and local levels."

Her degree makes her a well-rounded advocate for preservation, and her background helps her understand the myriad pieces that make Mississippi's cultural landscape important. "The cultural, social, political contexts contribute to the importance these small and large landmarks hold for us in our communities," she said. "My background in southern studies also helps me understand how tourism, Main Street, transportation, and the arts are all components that make preservation work in Mississippi."

Jones said that she didn't realize she could get paid to look at historic buildings. "My parents doubted I'd get a decent job with a liberal arts degree. I'm really fortunate that my undergraduate and graduate degrees from the Center for the Study of Southern Culture gave me a firm educational background to work in my dream job my entire career."

Through her work with MDAH, Jones said she not only met her husband at a preservation conference, but has made good friends over the past twenty-three years working with people at the local level to preserve the important historic resources in their communities.

"Although my program has certain regulations, it is a voluntary program, not a mandated one for local governments," said Jones. "I've seen homes, commercial buildings, schools, and courthouses restored to previous grandeur for their original use, but there have been so many other buildings that have been rehabilitated to house museums, offices, restaurants, and a variety of other functions, giving all these historic buildings another lifetime of function. These buildings teach us about ourselves and stimulate the local economy and tax base."

Katie Gill

A 2016 southern studies MA graduate, Katie Gill is the digital documents coordinator at the Mississippi Library Commission (MLC), which means she keeps their digital collection up to date. MLC is the repository for audited financial reports for Mississippi counties, state agencies, and school districts. Part of her job involves digitizing those audited financial reports to proper archival standards and uploading them to the public database. She also catalogues new periodicals, writes social media posts, and answers reference requests.

Katie Gill

The Mississippi Library Commission serves their patrons, as well as helping out other libraries. "We hold workshops and send out consultants to help teach state librarians various tools of the trade to best help their patrons," Gill said. "These can range from workshops about genealogy to helping librarians navigate the government's E-rate program. Of course, we're still a library ourselves (we have a ton of state periodicals), and we help patrons throughout the state with our Talking Books program, our large-print books program, and answering information requests from people."

Gill is most interested in engaging with the public via reference requests and social media. "I do regular social media 'throwback Thursday'-type posts, usually containing material from old library newsletters. It's really amazing to see a post about a librarian from the 1970s or something like that and have people chime in with, 'Oh, I know that person.'"

Nell Linton Knox

Since starting work a year and a half ago as the historic resources specialist in the programs and communication division of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the core of Nell Linton Knox's work has been creating and expanding their many educational programs while also making the public aware of those opportunities through marketing strategies.

While a southern studies student in 2011, Knox worked a semester-long internship with the Public Information office at MDAH, which proved to be an invaluable experience. She said it was exciting to find a career opportunity that combines her interests and skill set.

Knox said the southern studies program prepared her for her position by enabling her to explore the history of tourism in the American South, to take an objective look at why people tour the South, and to foster her interests in literature and history while simultaneously encouraging her to explore education and marketing in the public sector.

"The best part of my job is the interconnectedness of MDAH, which for me means that I have the opportunity to be involved in everything from website management to exhibit programming to training Mississippi's teachers," Knox said. "One of my favorite aspects of my work is developing programs and materials for the public. I love connecting the public with the resources that our department has to offer."

Knox is on the team that develops websites for the Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, and she is creating an exhibit catalog for a temporary display of forty quilts from the state collection. This June, MDAH hosts the third annual Summer Teachers School, a program where educators from across the state spend a week learning how to research at the state archives and use that research in their classrooms.

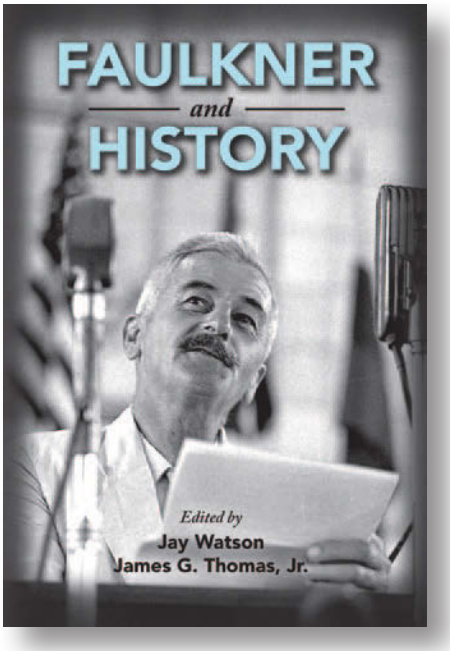
Rebecca Lauck Cleary


Nell Linton Knox

New Volume in Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Series Published

William Faulkner remains a historian's writer. A distinguished roster of historians have referenced Faulkner in their published work. They are drawn to him as a fellow historian, a shaper of narrative reflections on the meaning of the past; as a historiographer, a theorist, and dramatist of the fraught enterprise of doing history; and as a historical figure himself, especially following his midcentury emergence as a public intellectual after winning the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Coedited by Jay Watson and James G. Thomas, Jr., *Faulkner and History* brings together historians and literary scholars to explore the many facets of Faulkner's relationship to history: the historical contexts of his novels and stories; his explorations of the historiographic imagination; his engagement with historical figures from both the regional and national past; his influence on professional historians; his pursuit of alternate modes of temporal awareness; and the histories of print culture that shaped the production, reception, and criticism of Faulkner's work.



Contributors to this volume draw on the history of development in the Mississippi Valley, the construction of Confederate memory, the history and curriculum of Harvard University, twentieth-century debates over police brutality and temperance reform, the history of modern childhood, and the literary histories of antislavery writing and pulp fiction to illuminate Faulkner's work. Others in the collection explore the meaning of Faulkner's fiction for such professional historians as C. Vann Woodward and Albert Bushnell Hart. In these ways and more, *Faulkner and History* offers fresh insights into one of the most persistent and long-recognized elements of the Mississippian's artistic vision.

Jay Watson is Howry Professor of Faulkner Studies and professor of English at the University of Mississippi. He is the editor of *Conversations with Larry Brown*, *Faulkner and Whiteness*, and coeditor of *Faulkner's Geographies* and *Fifty Years after Faulkner*. James G. Thomas, Jr. is the Center's associate director for publications. He is editor of *Conversations with Barry Hannah*, coeditor of *Faulkner and the Black Literatures of the Americas*, and an editor for the twenty-four-volume *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*.

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Director's Column

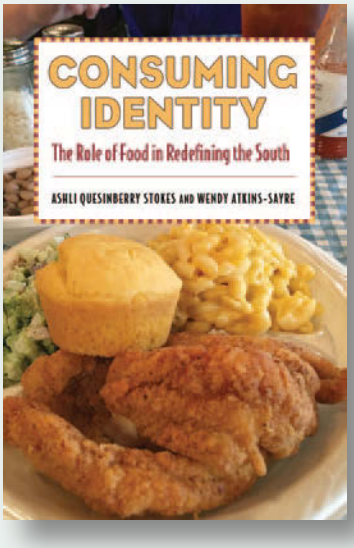
other idealistic goal goes back to the origins of encyclopedia making. In the eighteenth century, French organizers of their *Encyclopedie* hoped to spread knowledge beyond the control of elites, especially those in the church and government, and put it into the hands of ordinary folks. I don't know that the goals of *The Mississippi Encyclopedia* are quite that grand, but maybe the book helps people take their own routes to understanding Mississippi.

Finally, why the Center for the Study of Southern Culture? First, the Center showed its ability to identify, organize, and edit scholarly work in the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* and *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. Second, the southern studies emphases on cultural expression and creativity, on seeing musicians and activists as being at least as interesting as scholars and political figures, and on a wide and broad approach to what and how to study seem well suited for encyclopedia work. And finally, while authors from all over the state, the country, and, in fact, the world contributed to *The Mississippi Encyclopedia*, southern studies students, alumni, faculty, and staff did research, contributed photographs, read and proofread, suggested and wrote a good number of entries, and made the process more of an adventure than most fourteen-year book projects tend to be.

Ted Ownby

Consuming Identity: The Role of Food in Redefining the South

By Ashli Quesinberry Stokes and Wendy Atkins-Sayre. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016. 231 pages, $39.49 cloth.



Long before the recent southern food revival, southerners reveled in the traditions and nostalgia of their region's foodways: grandmothers measuring in pinches and handfuls, neighbors shelling peas on porches, communities gathering for fish fries and pig pickings and crawfish boils. As food writers deservedly gain credibility as serious journalists and food studies as serious scholarship, the idea of a "welcome table"–where diverse individuals bridge divides as they gather over a meal–has gained both traction and ardent detractors in modern discourses on southern foodways.

John T. Edge, director of the Southern Foodways Alliance, recounts that, in his experience, direct discussions of controversial issues facing the South alienate audiences, yet "at tables piled high with country ham, buttermilk biscuits, and redeye gravy, I've marveled as all have leaned in close to eat, to talk, to listen." If food in general, and southern food in particular, does indeed wield this power to unite individuals who espouse opposing worldviews, *Consuming Identity: The Role of Food in Redefining the South* seeks to explain why.

Analyzing the region's cuisine from a rhetorical perspective, Ashli Quesinberry Stokes and Wendy Atkins-Sayre argue that southern food "invite[s] individuals to identify with others and to embrace particular identities" that supersede their differences, perhaps even long enough that meaningful dialogue may occur.

Two important rhetorical approaches underpin their analysis. While rhetorical criticism has traditionally examined textual artifacts as symbols with persuasive potential, Stokes and Atkins-Sayre embrace a broader definition, with which they also analyze tools and objects associated with southern cooking, as well as the smells, sounds, and visual and tactile elements that constitute an eating experience at a given place and time in the South. Secondly, the authors leverage their study as a case for constitutive rhetorical theory, a tradition that "moves beyond causality, where communication scholars look at how a message causes someone to act in some specific way, to understanding how discourse 'makes something possible or creates conditions of possibility.'"

That the authors explicitly use their case study to defend these more expansive rhetorical approaches results in moments of dense theoretical scaffolding; however, they flesh out their argument with concrete examples from various restaurants in the ten southern states they traveled to to gather research as participant observers. They note the unpretentious decor of Weaver D's in Athens, Georgia, and the iconic country music that plays in the background at Sean Brock's Husk in Charleston, South Carolina. They describe the aroma of barbecue that wafts down airport terminals in Memphis, Charlotte, and Birmingham. They consider the visual impact of entering Doe's Eat Place in Greenville, Mississippi, directly through the kitchen. That a dining experience, whether at home or in public, can stimulate so many senses simultaneously enhances its potential to elicit identification with the region, and consequently, with its diverse array of inhabitants.

Perhaps the most compelling analysis Stokes and Atkins-Sayre offer is their consideration of southern hospitality as it relates to a southern obsession with order. Arguably, this obsession buttressed the institution of slavery, Jim Crow politics, oppressive gender norms, and an array of economic injustices. Yet, citing Kenneth Burke, the authors assert that this same craving for order may also drive hospitality: "We are drawn to look for ways to use symbols to join together," to diminish discomfort between divided individuals. Southern food, despite its regional variety, often provides the symbols needed to identify with people we otherwise would not. Stokes and Atkins-Sayre observed this phenomenon repeatedly, though not exclusively, as they visited restaurants and gatherings around the region.

Consuming Identity is unquestionably optimistic in its view of southern food's potential to inject new, more inclusive narratives into the stories that constitute southern identity on the individual and collective level. However, Stokes and Atkins-Sayre are quick to qualify this potential at every turn. While our symbol-laden cuisine may create opportunities for engagement and reconciliation, this is by no means a foregone conclusion.

In effect, then, the book may be read as a call-to-action

for those who orchestrate moments in which people gather together over food. From white tablecloth restaurants to no-frills barbecue joints, curators of eating experiences have ample tools to animate guests to embrace a common southern identity that unifies rather than divides. At a moment when southern food is in the national spotlight, the symbolic welcome table could help redefine the region as inclusive and truly hospitable.

Jenna Mason

The Original Blues: The Emergence of the Blues in African American Vaudeville

By Lynn Abbott and Doug Seroff. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2017. 480 pages, $85.00 cloth.

Popular narratives about the founding and growth of the blues usually hinge on moments of discovery, most notably W. C. Handy's famous encounter with a lone guitar player at the Tutwiler, Mississippi, train station who was playing the "weirdest music I ever heard." Likewise, the rise of the blues recording industry is often framed as a result of happenstance–the 1920 recordings by Mamie Smith took place after the white performer Sophie Tucker couldn't appear in the studio, and the subsequent hit "Crazy Blues" took the music business by surprise.

The Original Blues doesn't deliver an "aha!" moment of discovery, but instead examines "the appearance and popularization of the blues on the black professional stage." It does, however, provide a general date: 1909 was the first year that both a song was published that referenced blues as a style and that the African American entertainment press began using the term.

The book completes Abbott and Seroff's trilogy of books on African American entertainment, preceded by *Out of Sight: The Rise of African American Popular Music, 1889–1895* (2009) and *Ragged but Right: Black Traveling Shows, "Coon Songs," and the Dark Pathway to Blues and Jazz* (2012), and like these, the vast amount of content here is derived from contemporary accounts in African American newspapers. There's relatively little theorizing here, though the authors' relative terse statements about the cultural, political, and social significance of the emergence of the blues are amply backed by evidence.

The authors suggest that black vaudeville "served as a filtering agent through which the residue of 'Ethiopian minstrelsy' was eventually expunged," although the process of displacing popular "coon songs" or the organizational template of the minstrel show was relatively slow. The blues' emergent aesthetic of "truth," they argue, reflected a "righteous compact between the performer and the black community audience, an entente that personified that triumph of the real over the false."

To demonstrate this transition, the authors carefully examine the institutional changes associated with the growth of black vaudeville, as well as the career development of key entertainers. Minstrelsy provided the first avenue in professional entertainment for many African Americans in the wake of the Civil War, and around the turn of the century, as the authors demonstrate in the first chapter, many minstrel show veterans found work in variety shows held in saloon theaters and park pavilions across the South.

The proliferation of such venues provided a "proper platform for the concrete formulation and emergence of the blues," and in the second chapter the authors trace the career on this circuit of Butler "String Beans" May, the biggest star of the blues during the 1910s, whose repertoire of blues and ribald humor shocked the vaudeville establishment. String Beans is largely unknown to blues aficionados–Blind Lemon Jefferson, who first achieved fame in 1926 is usually thought of as the first male star–largely because he never recorded before his death in 1917, and, more broadly, because blues historiography has been so heavily anchored in discography. (In addition to Abbott and Seroff's other works, the recent books *Staging the Blues: From Tent Shows to Tourism* [Duke University Press, 2014] by Paige A. McGinley and *Long Lost Blues: Popular Blues in America, 1850–1920* [University of Illinois Press, 2010] by Peter C. Muir are notable exceptions to the discographic focus.) Chapter 3 examines other popular male blues singers during the teens, and their popularity is vividly demonstrated by the fact that Baby Seals, who died in 1916, rented the five hundred–seat Bijou Theater in Greenwood, Mississippi, in late 1910 for a five-month or longer engagement.

Chapter 4 addresses the rise of the "blues queen" in southern vaudeville, and here the authors address the emergence and spread of the regal appellation and the social significance of its replacement of the term "coon shooter," a term still applied by the African American press to Ma Rainey in 1909. They also move away from the popular notion of branding Rainey and Bessie Smith as instigators of the new form, placing them instead in the broader context of a field where many female performers were gradually working blues into their repertoires over the course of the 1910s.

The rise of the "blues queens" was closely tied to the establishment in 1921 of the Theater Owners Booking Association (TOBA), a circuit of African American–oriented theaters. Abbott and Seroff's contributions here

are in framing the emergence of the TOBA (known among performers as "tough on black asses") in terms of prior attempts at establishing circuits and associated turf wars.

The final chapter addresses the "commercialization of the blues" between 1920 and 1926, the peak era of the "blues queens" recordings. African American entrepreneurs became entrenched on Tin Pan Alley and, as a popular Ziegfeld Follies song from 1922 observed, "It's Getting Dark on Old Broadway." These developments, the authors argue, were largely tied to the crossover appeal of blues and jazz in the 1920s, though point out that the underlying institutional racism of the music industry remained relatively unchanged.

The conclusion to this remarkable and groundbreaking book consists of a few pages at the end of this chapter that address the rise of "country blues" guitarists to the forefront of the blues recording industry in the mid-'20s. These (almost exclusively) men, even stars such as Jefferson and Charley Patton, worked almost completely outside the African American entertainment business addressed here, and when they did appear it was usually under the category of "novelty."

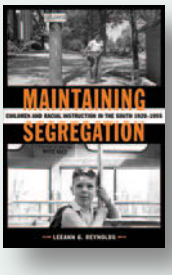
While *The Original Blues* doesn't attempt to address complementary stylistic or institutional developments associated with vaudeville blues' rural counterpart, Abbott and Seroff do note the considerable presence in that field of "songs, metaphors, and melodies" derived from the stage, and conclude the book by simply noting, "Country blues came of age in the shadow of popular vaudeville blues."

Scott Barretta

BOOKS IN BRIEF

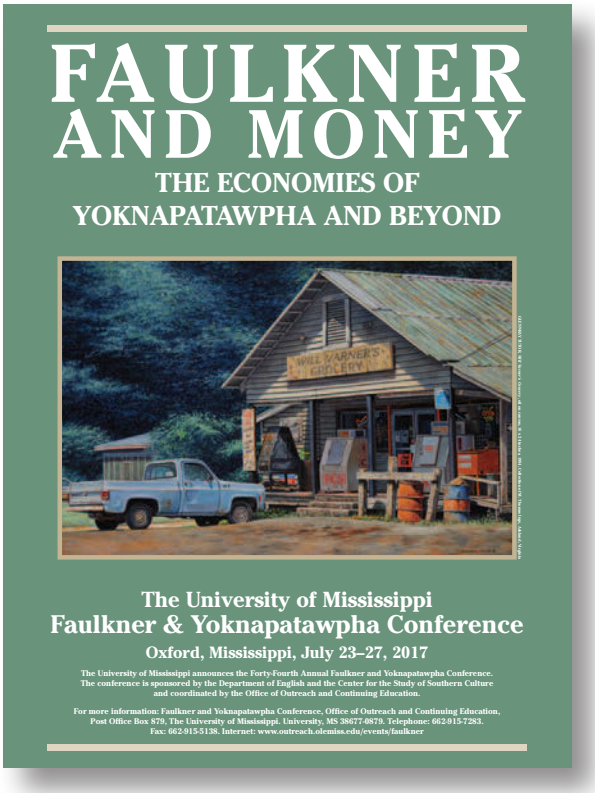
Maintaining Segregation: Children and Racial Instruction in the South, 1920–1955

By LeeAnn G. Reynolds (LSU Press)



In *Maintaining Segregation*, LeeAnn G. Reynolds explores how black and white children in the early twentieth-century South learned about segregation in their homes, schools, and churches. As public lynchings and other displays of racial violence declined in the 1920s, a culture of silence developed around segregation, serving to forestall, absorb, and deflect individual challenges to the racial hierarchy. Reynolds argues that the cumulative effect of the racial instruction southern children received, prior to highly publicized news such as the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the Montgomery bus boycott, perpetuated segregation by discouraging discussion or critical examination.

Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha 2017
"Faulkner and Money"
July 23–27, 2017



William Faulkner enthusiasts will gather in Oxford for "Faulkner and Money: The Economies of Yoknapatawpha," July 23–27, 2017, at the University of Mississippi. In addition to this year's keynote presentations, January's call for papers has yielded twenty-four additional panel speakers.

Presenting for the first time at the annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference will be Daniel Anderson (Dominican University, River Forest, Illinois), Matthew Bolton (Seven Hills School, Cincinnati), James Deutsch (Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution), Sarah Harsh (Emory University), Zoran Kuzmanovich (Davidson College), Caroline Miles (University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley), and Han Qiqun (Nanjing Forestry University, China).

Returning to the conference this summer are Ted Atkinson (Mississippi State University), John Michael Corrigan (National Chengchi University, Taiwan), David A. Davis (Mercer University), John Duvall (Purdue University), Sarah E. Gardner (Mercer University), Ryan Heryford (California State University, East Bay), Robert Jackson (University of Tulsa), Mary A. Knighton (Aoyama Gakuin University, Japan), Peter Lurie (University of Richmond), John T. Matthews (Boston University), Stephen Railton (University of Virginia), D. Matthew Ramsey (Salve Regina University, Newport, Rhode Island), Christopher Rieger (Southeast Missouri State University), Terrell Tebbetts (Lyon College), Michael Wainwright (Royal Holloway, University of London), Lorie Watkins (William Carey University), and Michael Zeitlin (University of British Columbia).

A special evening session on Sunday, July 23, will feature presentations about two area families with personal financial ties to William Faulkner. Gloria Burgess, professor of transformational leadership at the University of Seattle, will speak about the financial assistance from Faulkner that allowed her father, Earnest McEwen Jr., to attend college. Brothers Ike and Cham Trotter of, respectively, Greenville and Belzoni, Mississippi, will discuss Faulkner's relationship with their great-grandparents, Will and Sallie Bryant of Coffeeville, Mississippi, from whom Faulkner arranged in 1930 to purchase the Bailey place in Oxford, which he subsequently rechristened Rowan Oak. The presentation by the Trotters will include excerpts from their collection of eighty never-before-published letters from Faulkner to the Bryants.

On Wednesday, July 26, the Department of Archives and Special Collections of the J. D. Williams library will present a lunchtime talk by Kathleen Woodruff Wickham, associate professor at the Meek School of Journalism and New Media at the University of Mississippi. Professor Wickham will speak about the experiences of *Newsday* reporter Michael Dorman, who turned both to the writings of William Faulkner and to the novelist's brother John Faulkner for insight into the local response to the integration of the university in 1962. The October 1 story Dorman filed from Oxford for the magazine bore the headline, "Oxford, 1962, Faulkner Novel Comes True," evidence of how powerfully the Nobel laureate had shaped Dorman's imagination of the South and the community of Oxford.

For registration and other conference information, visit the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha website at www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner or contact Jay Watson, director, at jwatson@olemiss.edu. Discount rates for the conference are available for groups of five or more students. Inexpensive dormitory housing is available for interested registrants. Contact Justin Murphree at jcmurphr@olemiss.edu for details.

Jay Watson

CALLS FOR PAPERS

Study the South
A Center for the Study of Southern Culture Publication

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 general call for papers.

Study the South exists to encourage interdisciplinary academic thought and discourse on the culture of the American South. Editors welcome submissions by faculty members, advanced graduate students, and professional scholars doing work in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, music, literature, documentary studies, gender studies, religion, geography, media studies, race studies, ethnicity, folklife, and art to submit article abstracts or complete manuscripts. Final manuscripts and projects should attempt to build upon and expand the understanding of the American South in order to be considered for publication.

To submit an original paper for consideration, please e-mail James G. Thomas, Jr. at jgthomas@olemiss.edu. Submissions must be previously unpublished.

Study the South is available via the Center's website at www.studythesouth.org.

Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha 2018
"Faulkner and Slavery" • July 22–26, 2018

During his apprenticeship and early years as a published writer, William Faulkner evinced little serious interest in the issue of slavery or in the lives of the enslaved–their experiences, words, deeds, interiority, personal relationships, or historical legacies. This is perhaps surprising, given the fact of slaveholding, and the likelihood of sexual liaisons between enslavers and the enslaved, in Faulkner's family history. After 1930, however, the year he moved his family into an antebellum mansion built by a slaveholding Mississippi planter, Faulkner turned repeatedly to the subject of slavery over the next two decades or so of his writing career. The forty-fifth annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha conference will take up as its guiding concern the question, "What did slavery mean in the life, ancestry, environment, imagination, and career of William Faulkner?" Facets of this question worth exploring may include but are no means limited to:

- histories of slavery in/and the Falkner and/or Butler families of Mississippi
- Mississippi slavery and the history of the Robert Sheegog home in Oxford (later Rowan Oak)
- other histories of slavery in Oxford, Lafayette County, and north Mississippi, or at the University of Mississippi, as contexts for Faulkner's writings or as depicted in his work
- the figure of the enslaved in Faulkner's writings
- the "world the slaves made" in Faulkner's work
- Faulkner's accounts of the master-slave relationship
- the figure of the enslaver in Faulkner
- institutions of slavery: representations or historical legacies of the Atlantic slave trade, the Middle Passage, the slave market, the slave plantation, *plaçage*, slave discipline/punishment
- the political economy of slavery in Faulkner
- Faulkner's fiction in/against the history of slavery as traced by leading scholars of the subject
- comparative histories or geographies of slavery in Faulkner
- Faulkner's relationship to slave narrative or other genres from the literary history of New World slavery
- comparative analyses of slavery/the enslaved in Faulkner and other writers or artists
- cultural legacies of slavery in Faulkner's fictions of postslavery
- the racial politics of white-authored representations of African American enslavement

The program committee especially encourages full panel proposals for seventy-five-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 one- to two-page abstracts for fifteen- to twenty-minute panel papers. Panel papers consist of approximately 2,500 words and will be considered by the conference program committee for possible expansion and inclusion in the conference volume published by the University Press of Mississippi.

Session proposals and panel paper abstracts must be submitted by January 31, 2018, preferably through e-mail attachment. All manuscripts, proposals, abstracts, and inquiries should be addressed to Jay Watson, Department of English, University of Mississippi, PO Box 1848, University, MS 38677-1848. E-mail: jwatson@olemiss.edu. Decisions for all submissions will be made by March 15, 2018. Additional information can be found at www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/Faulkner.

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