

# the Southern Register



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE • WINTER 2004

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

## 2004 OXFORD CONFERENCE FOR THE BOOK


Notable authors, editors, publishers, and others in the trade as well as educators, literacy advocates, readers, and book lovers will gather for the 11th Oxford Conference for the Book, set for April 1-4, 2004. The program will begin on Thursday afternoon with a panel, readings, and a special conference edition of *Thacker Mountain Radio* and continue through Sunday afternoon with addresses, panels, and readings.

The 2004 conference will be dedicated to author Walker Percy (1916-1990) in recognition of his contributions to American letters. Two sessions will examine Percy's life and work through discussions and comments by friends and literary scholars. Author and editor Paul Elie will present a lecture on Percy. A panel with the author's daughter Mary Pratt Percy Lobdell, grandson Robert Livingston Lobdell, and Patricia Sullivan, English professor at the University of Colorado, will discuss Percy's life and work. Dr. Luke Lampton will give a presentation about his extensive collection of Percy's works.

Another special part of the 2004 conference will be the celebration of Mildred D. Taylor Day in Mississippi. The April 2 program will bring young readers, teachers, parents, and others together to recognize the achievements of this outstanding author. (See page 5 for details.)

Participating in the annual session celebrating National Poetry Month will be Jonathan Galassi, author of two poetry volumes, *Morning Run* and *North*; William Jay Smith, poetry consultant to the Library of Congress (the position now

(continued on page 4)



Walker Percy, Portrait by Baxter Knowlton  
Collection of Campbell and Leighann McCool

The Eleventh  
Oxford Conference for the Book  
The University of Mississippi • Oxford, Mississippi  
April 1-4, 2004

Sponsored by the University of Mississippi, Home Archival of Oxford, Lafayette County Library Council, and Square Books  
and partially funded by grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Mississippi Humanities Council, the J. Edgar Tate Contract Book  
the Yokoyama-Arte Arts Council, and the R. H. P. Baker Charitable Foundation for the Home Arts.

Courtesy of Campbell and Leighann McCool

Illustrating 2004 Oxford Conference for the Book materials is Baxter Knowlton's portrait of Walker Percy. The portrait is reproduced on posters and T-shirts available from the Center by calling 800-390-3527.

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## DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

**GARDENERS KNOW** that winter is the time to see the framework of their gardens. With foliage gone and limbs bare, garden trees and shrubs appear in their essential skeletons. I look out my window and see the girth of a sturdy oak, the graceful branches of the spirea, the red bark on my Japanese maple, and the tough tentacles of the spreading wisteria.

The Center's conferences and symposia similarly provide the framework for much of our work. They divide the year into seasons as we bridge the gaps between the academy and the broader public interested in the American South. Autumn is the time for the Southern Foodways Symposia, with weather usually nice enough to eat the marvelous food of the meeting outside in the Grove. This lively gathering every year extends our interest in a newer area of Southern Studies, bringing an eclectic and utterly engaged group of people here. The fall also is time for the Porter L. Fortune Jr. History Symposium, and I can usually count on it as the first time I will wear my tweeds for cooler weather, while listening to the best scholars open up new directions in the study of the South. Far different weather greets the loyal attendees of the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference in July, always among the hottest times of the summer, it seems. That conference similarly brings people who are deeply engaged with the conference topic and enjoying the atmosphere of the small town Mississippi that produced our Nobel laureate.

February saw two symposia that represent new Center initiatives growing out of our long-standing interest in literature and music. Kathryn McKee, one of our two McMullan Southern Studies professors, and Annette Trefzer, assistant professor of English, directed the U.S. South in Global Contexts Symposium, February 13-15. The meeting was part of an on-going dialogue among those of us in Southern Studies about the future direction of the field. Discussions focused on new theories and teaching methods in Southern Studies and on the exciting expansion of "Southern" to include sharper comparisons with Southern places beyond the United States. We are eager to follow up this meeting with other activities to extend our interest in this new direction in Southern Studies.

Another of our Southern Studies professors, Adam Gussow, took the lead in directing the second Blues Today Symposium, February 26-28. Adam works closely with the *Living Blues* magazine staff in planning the symposium, which brings together performers, scholars, journalists, academics, music critics, and leaders in the music industry. The theme was "From Africa to Mississippi," with sessions on Africa and the blues, blues music today, and the history of *Living Blues* itself. A session on hip-hop, spoken word, and contemporary blues poetics linked traditional blues with newer forms of African American music. Paul Oliver, a distinguished blues scholar, came from Britain to deliver the keynote. A highlight of any season is a B. B. King concert, and he rocked the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts.

If these two symposia brightened a dark winter month, the 11th Oxford Conference for the Book promises to bring its usual exuberance to early spring, April 1-4. The conference is dedicated to author Walker Percy, one of the most compelling of recent Southern writers, one who helped take Southern literature out of its obsessive preoccupation with the past and refocus it on the concerns of modern life (albeit still with a Southern twist). One highlight of the conference will surely be Mildred D. Taylor, a native Mississippian who has had a distinguished career writing award-winning books for young readers. Taylor is not often mentioned among the great African American writers coming out of the state who have been major figures in Southern literature, but she surely deserves such attention from scholars. We will honor her and her Mississippi family. In addition to other writers, the conference, as usual, will attract some of the most influential book people in the country, including Ralph Eubanks, director of publishing at the Library of Congress; William Jay Smith, former poetry consultant to the Library of Congress; and Jonathan Galassi, president and publisher of Farrar, Straus, and Giroux (Percy's publisher).

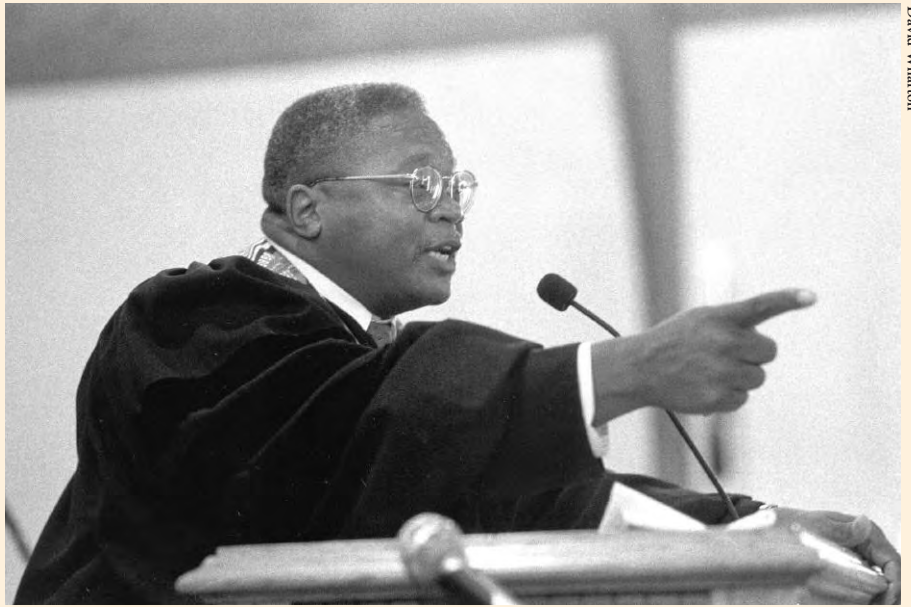
Barnard Observatory may not be a garden, but it is a hothouse of ideas, and our symposia and conferences are forums for all of our friends of the Center to share our enthusiasms.

CHARLES REAGAN WILSON

# Wharton Presentation

David Wharton, the Center's Director of Documentary Projects, will present a slide show entitled "In the 21st Century: Oxford's Second Baptist Church" on Sunday, February 22, at 3:00 p.m. The program will be held at the church, located at 611 Jackson Avenue in Oxford. It is free and open to the public.

Funded by a mini-grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council, Wharton has been photographing activities at the church for the past two years. Founded by freed slaves in 1869, Second Baptist is Oxford's oldest predominantly African American church and has long been one the community's most vital institutions.



David Wharton

(above) Reverend Leroy Wadlington



(left) Sunday School Teacher Belinda Raybon with Students

(below) Making Videos, Easter Sunday

Wharton's photographs are intended as a composite portrait of Second Baptist as it enters the 21st century. "They're a kind of history of the church's present," he says. "Fifty or a hundred years from now, people will be able to look at these pictures and get a pretty good idea of what was going on in the church at the beginning of the 21st century." Wharton will donate to the church archives a portfolio of about 60 black-and-white prints, as well as several hundred images in digital form.



David Wharton



known as the U.S. Poet Laureate) and author of ten collections of poetry; and Graham Lewis, whose poems are collected in *Forever Came Today*. Poets Beth Ann Fennelly, Ann Fisher-Wirth, and Tom House will also read at the conference.

Among the notable fiction writers scheduled to read and talk about their work are Kaye Gibbons, whose seventh novel, *Divining Women*, will be published this spring, and Margaret McMullan, author of two new books, *In My Mother's House* and *How I Found the Strong*. Barry Hannah, David Galef, and Tom Franklin, who teach creative writing at the University, will also be on hand to discuss fiction, as will Amy Stolls, program officer in the literature division of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Ole Miss journalism professor Curtis Wilkie will moderate a session on writing from the world's hot spots with journalists Tom Bissell (*Chasing the Sea*), Alan Huffman (*Mississippi in Africa*), and Sebastian Junger, best-

selling author of *The Perfect Storm*. *Newsweek* managing editor Jon Meacham will discuss his *Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship*, and Gail Collins, editorial page editor of the *New York Times* will talk about her new book, *American Women: 400 Years of Dolls, Drudges, Helpmates, and Heroines*. Other nonfiction authors also scheduled are Roy Blount Jr., one of America's best-known humorists; this year's Grisham writer, Janisse Ray; Ben McClelland, author of the memoir *Soldier's War*; and two Mississippi natives: University alumnus Ralph Eubanks, author of *Ever Is a Long Time: A Journey into Mississippi's Dark Past*; and Julia Reed, home to celebrate the publication of her first book, *Queen of the Turtle Derby and Other Southern Phenomenon*.

The hour-long live *Thacker Mountain Radio Show* will feature a program of music by the house band and visiting musicians as well as readings by visiting authors. Another program of literature and music will be presented by Reckon Crew, who will perform selections from William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, Lee

Smith's *Fair and Tender Ladies*, Connie May Fowler's *Remembering Blue*, and other works of fiction they have translated to the musical stage. Reckon Crew members are Tommy Goldsmith, an editor at the *Raleigh News and Observer*; poet and folk singer Tom House, author of a new poetry collection *The World according to Whiskey*; and Karren Pell, a country music songwriter, producer, performer, and author of *Alabama Troubadour*.

The conference is open to the public without charge. To assure seating space, those interested in attending should preregister through the Center's Web site ([www.olemiss.edu/depts/south](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/south)). Reservations and advance payment are required for three optional events honoring conference speakers: a cocktail buffet at Isom Place (\$50), a cocktail party at Off Square Books (\$25), and a country dinner at Taylor Catfish (\$25).

Detailed information about the program, speakers, and registration is available on the Center's Web site ([www.olemiss.edu/depts/south](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/south)) or the Square Books site ([www.squarebooks.com](http://www.squarebooks.com)).

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## Gussow Wins Award for Book on Violence and the Blues

Adam Gussow, assistant professor of English and Southern Studies, is the latest recipient of the Society for Southern Literature's C. Hugh Holman Award. Named for the late University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill English professor and *Southern Literary Journal* editor, the award recognizes the "best book of literary scholarship or criticism in Southern literature during a given calendar year," according to the society. Gussow received the award for *Seems Like Murder Here: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition* (Chicago, 2002) at the December convention of the Modern Language Association in San Diego.

"*Seems Like Murder Here* is a classic interdisciplinary study," said Center

director Charles Regan Wilson, who won the award with Center founding director Bill Ferris in 1990 for the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (University of North Carolina Press, 1989). "Adam's depth of understanding of the music and community makes his book stand out as one of the most important studies of African American literature," Wilson said.

An expansion of Gussow's dissertation, *Seems Like Murder Here* is his first scholarly work and his second blues-themed book. *Mister Satan's Apprentice: A Blues Memoir*, an account of Gussow's experience playing harmonica alongside Harlem guitarist Sterling Magee, was published by

Pantheon in 1998.

"It's extremely rare for an assistant professor's first scholarly book to win this kind of prize," said Joseph Uργο, chair and professor of English at the University. "This proves the point that Adam Gussow is a rising star in Southern Studies."

Besides the Holman Award, *Seems Like Murder Here* recently received a John G. Cawelti Book Award honorable mention from the American Culture Association, and a section of the book published in *African American Review* won the journal's Darwin T. Turner Award for the best essay of 2003.

JENNIFER SOUTHALL

# Mildred D. Taylor Day in Mississippi

Mildred D. Taylor, one of the foremost writers for young people in the United States for three decades, will return home to Mississippi this spring for a statewide celebration of her work. The formal proclamation of Mildred D. Taylor Day will take place at the Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts at the University of Mississippi on April 2 at 10:30 a.m. during a session of the 11th Oxford Conference for the Book.

Beginning with her first book, *Song of the Trees*, in 1975 and *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, winner of the 1977 Newbery Medal, the most prestigious honor in children's literature, Taylor has written nine celebrated books about African American life in Mississippi, where she was born and where her father's family had lived since the days of slavery. All of Taylor's books are based on stories from her own family and are rooted in Mississippi. *Song of the Trees* won the first Council on Interracial Books for Children Award and was named a *New York Times* Outstanding Book of the Year and a Children's Book Showcase book.

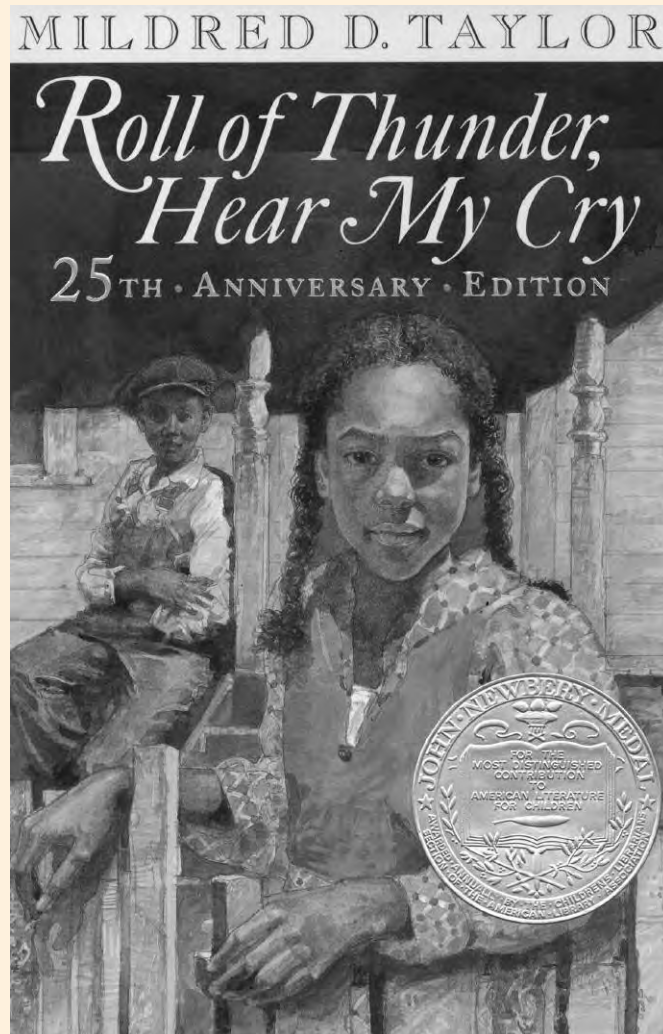
Taylor's writings also have been honored with the Coretta Scott King Author Award (*Let the Circle Be Unbroken*, 1981; *The Road to Friendship*, 1987; *The Road to Memphis*, 1990; *The Land*, 2001), the Christopher Award (*The Gold Cadillac*, 1987; *The Road to Memphis*), and the American Library Association's Best Book for Young Adults (*Let the Circle Be Unbroken*), among others. In October 2003, she was

named laureate of the inaugural \$25,000 NSK Neustadt Prize for Children's Literature, awarded by the University of Oklahoma and its international quarterly *World Literature Today*.

The great-granddaughter of the son of a white plantation owner and a slave, Taylor was born in Jackson, Mississippi, but spent her childhood in Toledo, Ohio, returning to the South each year with her family. She attended Toledo's public schools in the 1950s and graduated from the University of Toledo in 1965, after which she joined the Peace Corps and spent two years in Ethiopia. When she returned to the

to read" in the "hope they brought more understanding."

The author's achievements will be recognized on April 2, 2004, when, as an excerpt of the proclamation of her day states, "Mildred D. Taylor returns to the place her life and work began, to Mississippi, where much of her family remains, to a Mississippi that no longer celebrates prejudice, a Mississippi that embraces Mildred D. Taylor's work, and honors her life and her family and her people, and, indeed, a Mississippi that seeks to reconcile racism and rectify ignorance by honoring all people of Mississippi."



Jacket cover of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

Jacket painting © 2001 by Jerry Pinkney

United States, she enrolled in the University of Colorado, where she earned a master's degree in journalism.

In her acceptance speech as the recipient of the 1997 ALAN Award, given by the National Council for Teachers of English to honor those who have made outstanding contributions to the field of adolescent literature, Taylor said that in her books, "I have attempted to present a true picture of life in America as older members of my family remember it, and as I remember it in the days before the civil rights movement. In all of the books I have recounted not only the joy of growing up in a large and supportive family, but my own feelings of being faced with segregation and bigotry. . . . I have tried to present not only a history of my family, but the effects of racism, not only to the victims of racism but also to the racists themselves. I have recounted events that were painful to write and painful

# Mississippi Delta Literary Tour

*Experience the place, the people, the food, and the music that inspired Mississippi writers*

**March 29-April 1, 2004 – Greenwood, Mississippi**

The Center for the Study of Southern Culture and Viking Range Corporation invite you to explore the literary heritage of the Mississippi Delta. This tour is based in Greenwood and offers participants a special opportunity to stay in the Delta town where bluesman Robert Johnson last laid his head and where literary figures such as Endesha Ida Mae Holland found inspiration. Each day we will travel the back roads of the Mississippi Delta, discovering other historic sites along the way. One day is spent in Greenville and is dedicated to the life and work of Walker Percy and other authors from that literary town; another day is dedicated to Tennessee Williams in Clarksdale. Join us.

Experience the landscape, the people, the food, and the music of the Mississippi Delta and you too will be inspired! But remember to sign up early. Only 35 spots are available, and they will go fast.

The Delta tour is \$350 per person for all program activities, five meals, and local transportation. The fee does not include lodging. To register, go to the Center's Web site ([www.olemiss.edu/depts/south](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/south)).

Group accommodations have been arranged at Viking's new boutique hotel, the Alluvian, in downtown Greenwood. [[www.thealluvian.com](http://www.thealluvian.com)] **Rooms at the Alluvian require a separate registration** and are priced at a discounted rate of \$135 and may be reserved by dialing 866-600-

5201 and asking for the special "Literary Tour" rate. In the event that the Alluvian sells out before you get a chance to book a room, we have also reserved a block at the Greenwood Best Western, 662-455-5777.



## Literary Tour Schedule

### MONDAY, MARCH 29

#### A SENSE OF PLACE: Landscape, Blues, and Barbecue

- 1:00 p.m. Registration – Alluvian Lobby
- 2:00 p.m. Alluvian Art Tour led by Duff Dorrough
- 3:30 p.m. Tour of Viking Range Manufacturing Facilities
- 5:00 p.m. Setting the Scene  
"Railroads, Crossroads, and the River: Travel and Permanence in the Mississippi Delta," talk by Ted Ownby  
"Delta Land," talk by Maude Schuyler Clay
- 6:30 p.m. Cocktails – Alluvian Lobby
- 7:30 p.m. Blues & BBQ – Viking Training Center  
Spooney's Bar-Be-Que  
Crystal Grill pies  
Live Delta Blues by Big T of Clarksdale
- 9:30 p.m. Ramble to Robert Johnson's Money Road Gravesite with Big T

- 11:00 a.m. "The Athens of the South: Walker Percy and His Circle," talk given by Kenneth Holditch at the William Alexander Percy Library
- NOON Lunch at the Percys' – Lisa & Billy Percy, hosts  
"The History of Greenville," talk given by Hugh McCormick
- 1:30 p.m. Greenville Tour led by Mary Dayle McCormick
- 3:00 p.m. Greenville Cemetery Tour led by Princella Wilkerson Nowell
- 3:45 p.m. Sweet tea & cheese straws at McCormick Book Inn  
Book signing with Greenville authors & live music
- 5:15 p.m. Depart for Greenwood
- 7:30 p.m. Dinner at Lusco's in Greenwood  
"The Cefalu Connection," talk given by Amy Evans

- 1:30 p.m. "A Deep Dark World You Can Breathe In: Tennessee Williams and Mississippi," talk by Kenneth Holditch at St. George's Episcopal Church
- 2:30 p.m. Tour Tennessee Williams sites and various blues sites, including the Delta Blues Museum
- 4:30 p.m. Depart for Greenwood
- 7:30 p.m. Dinner at Giardina's in Greenwood  
Live music by Duff Dorrough

### TUESDAY, MARCH 30

#### GREENVILLE: Walker Percy

- 8:00 a.m. Alluvian Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. Depart for Greenville  
Jimmy Thomas, tour guide  
Make blues-related stops in Moorhead and Indianola  
Delta Welcome given by Carver Randle in Indianola  
Visit birthplace of Kermit the Frog in Leland

### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31

#### CLARKSDALE: Tennessee Williams

- 8:00 a.m. Alluvian Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. Depart for Delta Tour led by Luther Brown  
From Greenwood, through Money, Ruleville, Drew, Parchman, Rome, Tutwiler, and on to Clarksdale
- NOON Lunch & Live Music – Ground Zero, Clarksdale

### THURSDAY, APRIL 1

#### OXFORD CONFERENCE FOR THE BOOK OR BUST!

- 8:00 a.m. Alluvian Breakfast
- 9:00 a.m. Depart for Oxford (1.5 hours)  
Oxford Conference for the Book, dedicated to Walker Percy  
On the University of Mississippi campus, April 1-4

\*All events subject to change.



## PEOPLE & PLACES TO KNOW

**The Alluvian** is a luxury boutique hotel in Greenwood, Mississippi, set within walking distance of Viking Range, the Yazoo River, and historic Cotton Row. Original art by Delta artists and a lively lobby scene make the Alluvian the epicenter of contemporary Delta culture.

**Luther Brown** is the founding director of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi. He is also one of the organizers of the Blues Highway Association and was named "Humanities Educator of the Year" by the Mississippi Humanities Council in 2003.

**Clarksdale**, Mississippi, is home of the Delta Blues Museum and of Tennessee Williams (1911-1983), widely regarded as the greatest American playwright of the 20th century. For plays like *The Glass Menagerie* (1945), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), *Summer and Smoke* (1948), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), and *The Night of the Iguana* (1962) he earned many honors, including two Pulitzer Prizes and four Drama Critics Awards.

**Maude Schuyler Clay** is a fifth-generation native of the Delta town of Sumner, Mississippi. Her book of photographs, *Delta Land*, is a beautiful homage to her home.

**The Crystal Grill** in Greenwood is famous for its mile-high meringue pies. In business since the 1930s, the restaurant is owned and operated by the Ballas family.

**Delta Blues Museum** in Clarksdale, Mississippi, is celebrating its twenty-fifth year. Housed in the old railroad depot downtown, it features many permanent exhibits that speak to every aspect of the blues, past and present. A highlight is the tiny cabin that Muddy Waters once lived in that has been reassembled inside the museum.

**Duff Dorrough** of Ruleville, Mississippi, is a painter and musician. He is most well-known as a founding member of the Delta R&B band the Tangents. He now leads the gospel group The Revelators and The Duff Dorrough Band.

**Amy Evans** is a special projects consultant for Viking Range and leads the Southern Foodways Alliance's Oral History Initiative. She is also a freelance photographer, painter, and co-founder of PieceWorks, an arts and outreach organization for the Deep South.

**Giardina's**, opened by the Giardina family in 1936, is a local favorite for Italian-inflected Delta dishes like Gulf Pompano. The restaurant's new home as part of the Alluvian hotel is a unique blend of old family recipes and modern elegance.

**Greenville** is known as the home of many Delta bluesmen and as Mississippi's literary center. It has been said that Greenville has produced more authors per capita than any other city its size in the country. Among the more than 100 writers who made this city on the Mississippi River their home during the 20th century are poet and biographer Williams Alexander Percy; novelist, historian, and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Shelby Foote; *Delta Democrat Times* publisher Hodding Carter Jr. and his son, Hodding Carter III; historian and author Bern Keating; memoirist Clifton Taulbert; and novelists Ellen Douglas, Beverly Lowery, and Walker Percy.

**Ground Zero** is a renowned blues club and café in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Owned by Bill Luckett and actor Morgan Freeman, it is one of the best places to get your fix for collard greens and Delta Blues in one fell swoop.

**Kenneth Holditch**, professor emeritus at the University of New Orleans, is the author of numerous short stories, poems, and essays on major Southern writers, including his friends Walker Percy and Tennessee Williams. He is the author of *Tennessee Williams and the South*, has edited the *Tennessee Williams Journal* since 1989, and, with *New York Times* drama critic Mel Gussow, edited the Library of America's recent two-volume edition of the works of Tennessee Williams. His new book, *Galatoires: Biography of a Bistro*, written with Marda Burton, will be published this spring.

**Spooney Kenter** is a native of Greenwood, Mississippi. He owns and operates Spooney's Bar-Be-Que, specializing in chicken and ribs. Don't forget about the sauce!

**Lusco's** has been in business since 1933 and is owned and operated by a fourth-generation Lusco, Andy Pinkston, and his wife, Karen. This legendary restaurant has long been the haunt of Delta folks who revel in the restaurant's down-at-the-heels gentility. Don't miss this opportunity to dine in one of their infamous private booths.

**Hugh & Mary Dayle McCormick** are natives of Greenville, Mississippi, and founts of local Greenville history. Together they own and operate McCormick Book Inn, the premier Delta bookseller.

**Princella Wilkerson Nowell**, a journalist and local history buff, is the author of *A Closer Look: A History and Guide to the Greenville Cemetery*.

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

**Lisa & Billy Percy** have deep ties to Greenville, Mississippi. Billy is a retired farmer, and his wife, Lisa, is a photographer.

**Carver Randle**, a native of Indianola, Mississippi, is on the board of the B. B. King Foundation, which is bringing a long-awaited B. B. King Museum to the legendary bluesman's hometown. The museum is scheduled to open its doors in 2006.

**St. George's Episcopal Church** is in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Tom "Tennessee" Williams spent a great deal of his impressionable early childhood at St. George's, where his maternal grandfather, the Reverend Walter E. Dakin, was rector for 16 years (1917-1933). Next door lived a woman who kept a collection of glass animals in her window, which became inspiration for Williams's play *The Glass Menagerie*.

**Jimmy Thomas** is originally from the Delta town of Leland, Mississippi. He is the managing editor of *the Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* and lives in Oxford, Mississippi.

**Terry "Big T" Williams** is a blues guitarist and from Clarksdale, Mississippi. He has performed with Big Jack Johnson, the Jelly Roll Kings, and his own group, Big T and the Family Band.

# Eudora Welty Program

## Jackson, Mississippi

Following the Oxford Conference for the Book, on Sunday, April 4, and Monday, April 5, literary enthusiasts are invited to Jackson for programs on Eudora Welty centered around the opening of the garden at her home on Pinehurst Street, where she lived for 76 years and which is now owned by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

The first phase of MDAH's project to develop the Eudora Welty House is the restoration of the garden, where the author worked alongside her mother, Chestina Andrews Welty, and learned about many of the 150 plants and flowers mentioned in her writings. Programs on April 4-5 will include talks on several topics: Welty's life and achievements, historic development and restoration of the garden, public programming for the house, and the Welty Archives. There will also be readings from Welty's work and tours of the garden and of MDAH's Welty Archives.

The Center and MDAH are collaborating on the Welty program. Except for dinner on April 4, the Welty program is open to the public without

To register for the Eudora Welty program and dinner, go to the Oxford Conference for the Book registration form on the Center's web site ([www.olemiss.edu/depts/south](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/south)). To register for a room at the Old Capitol Inn, call 888-359-9001.

### SCHEDULE

#### Sunday, April 4

- 4:00 p.m. Tour of the Welty Garden, led by archival gardener Susan Haltom
- 6:00 p.m. Cocktails and Dinner - Old Capitol Inn
- 8:00 p.m. Eudora Welty - Life and Achievements, talk by Peggy Prenshaw, holder of the Eudora Welty Chair at Millsaps College  
"Petrified Man," reading by actor John Maxwell

#### Monday, April 5

- 9:00 a.m. Welty Archives - William Winter Archives and History Building  
Tour of Research Room - Hank Holmes, Archives and Library Division Director, MDAH  
Discussion of Welty Collection - Suzanne Marrs, Welty Foundation Scholar in Residence at Millsaps College  
Forest Gale, MDAH special projects officer
- 10:30 a.m. Public Programming at the Eudora Welty House, talk by Patti Carr Black, founding director of the Old Capitol Museum, curator of Welty and other exhibitions, author of *Art in Mississippi, 1720-1980* and *Touring Mississippi*

charge The cost of the dinner, including cocktails and gratuity, is \$50 per person.

The Old Capitol Inn, located at 226 North State Street in Jackson, is offering

special rates for participants in the Eudora Welty Program. Rooms are priced at \$99 plus tax and may be reserved by calling 888-359-9001. Reservations must be made by March 22.

## Eudora Welty House Garden Opening April 3

The garden of the Eudora Welty House in Jackson will open to the public Saturday, April 3, with special programs offered through Monday, April 5, 2004. Visitors will walk in the restored garden, and programs will be presented by historical architect Robert Parker Adams, Jackson; Welty scholar Suzanne Marrs, Millsaps College; and Welty historical garden consultant Susan Haltom, Jackson. The three-day opening is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.

After the opening programs, the garden will be open to the public one day a week until the Welty House opens as a museum. The garden will open Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. for public tours beginning April 7, 2004. Garden admission is free, but reservations are required. For information about the opening events or to make a reservation for a garden tour, e-mail [weltytours@mdah.state.ms.us](mailto:weltytours@mdah.state.ms.us) or call 601-353-7762.

Readers of Welty's fiction know that Eudora Welty was an avid and

knowledgeable gardener: the names of flowers and plants, wild and domestic, of Mississippi abound in her fiction. The garden created by her mother, Chestina, and tended by Eudora for years, is being carefully restored to its 1940s splendor, including an extensive perennial border and rose garden, reconstructed trellises and latticework, a woodland garden, and a camellia garden. The Historic Iris Preservation Society provided bulbs for the 50-foot iris bed.



# Susan Lee Talks about Her Dirt-track Auto Racing Photographs

*Dirt-track auto racing was the subject of Thunder and Grace: Racing on American Dirt, a photo exhibition showcasing the work of former Center employee Susan Bauer Lee and displayed at the Center this winter. Lee has attended hundreds of dirt-track races in the past 13 years and, in an interview with journalist Jennifer Southall, talked about her experiences.*

"Some friends invited my husband and me to our first race, at Dixie Speedway in Woodstock, Georgia," said Lee, a native of Mendenhall, Mississippi, who lived in Oxford in early 1990s. Lee said she was "completely hooked" by the noise, the fans, the excitement, and the overall "carnival atmosphere." Lee, who in 1988 earned a bachelor's degree in art from Millsaps College in Jackson, was also taken by the cars themselves. "I'd been photographing a lot of roadside church signs before, so when I saw all these battered hunks of steel covered with religious messages, I was really excited."

According to Lee, of the 900-some racing facilities in the United States, about 700 are short dirt or clay ovals. Besides



the religious messages, local sponsors advertise on the sides of the cars, as well. "Local sponsors advertise on the sides of the cars alongside the religious messages, local preachers pray for everyone's safety, and a local talent sings the national anthem," she said. Lee says that for many rural areas, dirt racing is the equivalent of high school football. "It's where people gather to cheer friends or family and swap stories. Wives keep score in the stands; children play in the dirt; drivers and crew members work on machines in the pits." In addition to the cars, it's this sense of community at the races that Lee has tried to capture in her work.

"This is a really dynamic, energetic set of photographs," said Center Director of Documentary Projects David Wharton, who was largely responsible for bringing the exhibition to the University campus. "I saw some of Susan's photos about three years ago and was struck. There's clearly a personal connection in these pictures."

"I had rarely taken portraits before we started going to the dirt tracks, but the great thing about dirt racing is the access," said Lee. "You can pay extra and get into the pits, and after a few years the drivers and crews got really relaxed around me and just forgot I was there taking pictures."

Lee began taking her racing photos to submit to dirt-track magazines along with articles written by her husband, Tim Lee. She now serves as art director and Tim serves as editor for two Powell, Tennessee-based dirt-racing magazines—*Late Model* and *Sprint Car*. In the early '90s, Lee designed publications for the Center and said she was "very tickled" to return to Ole Miss for the exhibition, her second ever and her first to feature only racing photos.

JENNIFER SOUTHALL



# Student Photography Exhibition

During the fall semester of 2003, members of the Southern Studies Documentary Photography seminar, taught by David Wharton, traveled throughout Mississippi and its bordering states making pictures about the relationships between Southerners and the physical world around them. There were nine students in the course—Richie Caldwell, Christopher Hedglin, Scott Kitchens, Lynn Linnemeier, Marcie Little, Mary Ellen Maples, Nash Molpus, Mayumi Morishita, and Angela Watkins.

At the end of the semester, each student compiled a 20-print portfolio of his/her best images. Collaboratively, the class also selected 71 of the photographs for exhibition at Barnard Observatory's Gammill Gallery. That exhibition, *Southerners and Their World*, will be shown at the gallery from March through May 2004. Here are a few of the pictures. More will soon be available for viewing at the "special projects" link at the Center's Web site ([www.olemiss.edu/depts/south](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/south)).



Richie Caldwell,  
View from  
Junkyard,  
Pontotoc,  
Mississippi.

Christopher  
Hedglin, Antique  
Car and Ghosts,  
Pontotoc County,  
Mississippi.



(left) Scott Kitchens,  
Kudzu Dog and  
Highway, Lafayette  
County, Mississippi.



(right) Lynn  
Linnemeier, Three  
Generations on  
Highway 61, Mound  
Bayou, Mississippi.



Mary Ellen  
Maples, Cotton  
Module, Panola  
County,  
Mississippi.







Mayumi Morishita, Railroad Bridge over the Tallahatchie, Lafayette County, Mississippi.



Nash Molpus, Chairs on Porch, Philadelphia, Mississippi.

Angela Watkins, Tracks in the Clay, Indianola, Mississippi.



Marci Little, Indian Bayou, Mississippi Delta.

l y n n   &   s t e w a r t



Gammill
Gallery

### Exhibition Schedule

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>January 15 - March 15<br/><i>The Search for Bottle Trees</i><br/>Kendall Messick</p> <p>March 17 - May 31, 2004<br/><i>Southerners and Their World, 2003</i><br/>Southern Studies Documentary<br/>Photography Students</p> | <p>June 1 - August 31<br/><i>Portraits from the Delta</i><br/>Jane Rule Burdine</p> <p>September 1 - October 31<br/><i>Photographs from the Nashville Sit-ins</i><br/>Rachel Lawson, curator</p> |
|---|--|

November 1 - January 14, 2005  
*Game and Fish through the Lens*  
Wiley Prewitt

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.



# Internship Endowment to Benefit Southern Studies Graduate Students

Since the inception of the Southern Studies graduate program at the Center in 1986, internships have been an integral part of the graduate student experience. They enrich a program of classroom-based coursework by providing students with opportunities to gain marketable work experience as well as professional contacts. Even more, internships allow students to have the gratifying experience of becoming intellectually engaged in the professional world by testing their newly-acquired knowledge in a practical setting. They are springboards for fulfilling careers.

In January, Kathryn Wiener, a resident of Jackson and a longtime member of the Center Advisory Committee, established the Julian and Kathryn Wiener Southern Studies Internship Endowment. A graduate of Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, Kathryn Wiener became motivated to fund such an

endowment while reading an article from her alma mater's quarterly magazine. "The college president had advocated an internship program of which all undergraduates could avail themselves. I never had the opportunity to be an intern, because internships were not available when I was a college student. I wish that I could have had the experience that enables students to work in the 'real world.' Anything that allows a student to experience and work through a project is greater instruction than just hearing about it." The endowment is named for Wiener and her late husband, Dr. Julian Wiener, who shared her interest in providing for students' professional engagement.

Thanks to the Wieners' generous endowment, one Southern Studies graduate student each year will receive support to undertake an internship in his or her area of interest. Past students have interned for organizations such as the Southern Cultural Heritage Foundation, Vicksburg, Mississippi; Viking Range Corporation, Greenwood, Mississippi; the Southern Arts Federation, Atlanta; the Hampton Roads Naval Museum, Norfolk, Virginia; and the National Archives in Washington, D.C. They have specialized in areas ranging from cultural resources management, to archival and museum work, to documentary work.

Center director Charles Reagan Wilson commented, "The Julian and Kathryn Wiener Southern Studies Internship Endowment is an investment in the future of Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi. Funding opportunities like this draw top-notch students from all over the country to our graduate program. The annual proceeds from this endowment will enable students to engage in valuable professional development that will lead them to become innovators in their fields."

ANGLINA ALTOBELLIS



## Eudora Welty Print Series

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# A Day in the Country

Nestled in the piney woods of Pinola, Mississippi, Strong River Farm provided an ideal setting for the "Day in the Country" that took place on the afternoon of November 2, 2003. Hosted by Center Advisory Committee chair Sarah Dabney Gillespie, the day featured strolls through the surrounding woods, bike rides around the farm, and best of all, croquet, played on Dr. Guy Gillespie's carefully constructed and meticulously maintained croquet court.



Dr. Guy and Tay Gillespie

"Day in the Country" was organized to raise funds and awareness for the Center's campaign for an Endowment for the Future of the South. The event was a great success, resulting in over \$12,000 in donations and pledges. Donors were rewarded with a choice of books on Southern Studies-related topics, and as the afternoon drew to a close and night fell, all who attended were rewarded with a quietly grand finale: Dr. Gillespie had set up a telescope behind which people lined up to have a look at the clear night's full moon.

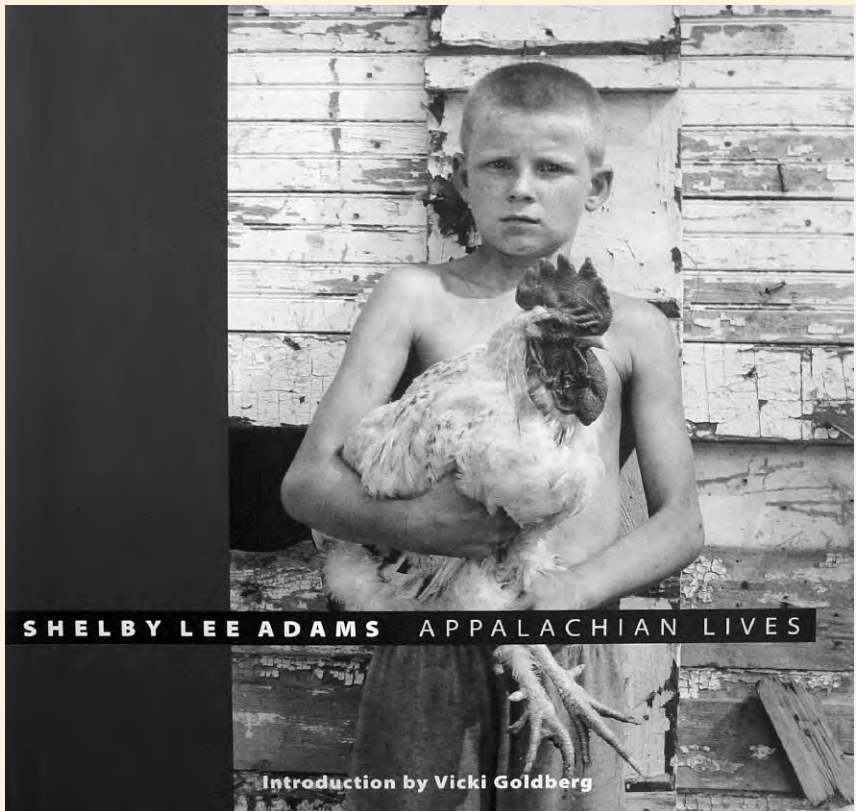
ANGELINA ALTOBELLIS

# Reading the South

***Appalachian Lives.*** Photographs and Text by Shelby Lee Adams. Introduction by Vicki Goldberg. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003. 120 pages. 80 photographs. \$50.00.

*Appalachian Lives* is Shelby Lee Adams's third book of photographs, following upon *Appalachian Portraits* (1993) and *Appalachian Legacy* (1998), both also published by the University Press of Mississippi. As with those earlier volumes, the photographs in *Appalachian Lives* are from eastern Kentucky—where Adams was born and raised but no longer lives—and almost all are portraits. The subjects in *Appalachian Lives* tend to be a bit younger than in the earlier books. They are more likely to live in mobile homes than cabins and to wear T-shirts proclaiming allegiance to a professional wrestler than work clothes. Adams has posed them less frequently with signs of an older, more traditional (and more stereotypical) Appalachia than in surroundings that suggest change—there are more satellite dishes in evidence on the pages of *Appalachian Lives* than bibles.

Adams's photographs are environmental portraits. They are as much concerned with showing the physical spaces eastern Kentuckians have created for themselves to live in as with faithfully rendering physical likeness and character. One of the things this means is that his pictures are anything but spontaneous. They are elaborately previsualized, meticulously set up (often requiring the intricate balancing of several different light sources, both natural and artificial), and painstakingly



achieved through trial and error, using multiple sheets of Polaroid film before arriving at a satisfactory end result. Adams takes considerable time arranging his subjects, sometimes large groups of them—family members, drinking buddies, boyfriends, neighbor kids, dogs, whoever happens to be around that day—in places of his choosing (usually outdoors but not always) around the family home. Sometimes people get bored and wander off before he can make the final exposure. Most seem happy enough to pose for him, however; many of his portraits bespeak an easy, good-natured collaboration between photographer and subject.

Adams's images from eastern Kentucky have received a good deal of

criticism from those who see his work as violating certain standards of documentary truth they expect from photography, especially pictures that depict out-of-the-mainstream people from out-of-the-mainstream places. These critics claim that Adams's calculated way of making photographs takes his subjects so far out of their everyday lives as to render them fictional. Some charge him with victimizing his subjects through repeated visual reference to various "hillbilly" or "white trash" stereotypes—rundown mobile homes, missing teeth, junked cars, physical deformities, etc. Adams has equally passionate defenders, however: those from the fine art end of the photocritical spectrum who perceive his work as having transcended

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photography's seeming responsibility to documentary truth (long an anchor weighing the medium down, they would claim) and risen to the level of high visual art, one of the few examples of "straight," documentary-style photography to have achieved such rarefied status.

This is not the place to attempt to resolve this issue. There's no denying that Shelby Lee Adams's environmental portraits from eastern Kentucky are beautiful, sophisticated, and fueled by a high degree of creative intelligence. At the same time, one can't help but wonder what, if anything, has been sacrificed to achieve such elegance. Even so, there's little doubt that the photographs are full of important information; one senses fundamental truths about people's lives on every page of Adams's books, even if those truths are sometimes more poetic than literal. Suffice it to say that *Appalachian Lives*, as well as Adams's earlier books, walks that fine, but all too blurry, line between documentary and art. Sometimes his imagery seems more at home in one camp, sometimes the other. Much of the time, however, it seems pretty comfortable in both, which is high praise.

DAVID WHARTON

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***Prisoners of War.*** By Steve Yarbrough. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004. 288 pages. \$35.00.

In July 1943, Germany and Italy's Afrika Korps, Axis troops fighting in Northern Africa, fell to United States and British forces. As a result, 275,000 German and Italian troops became prisoners of war (POWs) under Ally rule. But Northern Africa was a place ill-suited to contain such a large number of prisoners. Food, water, and other essentials had to be transported into the desert, and compounds were constructed of tents surrounded by barbed wire. The

shipping of necessary goods to this remote area was inefficient, especially when every ship was needed to bring troops and equipment to supply American forces for the impending Normandy invasion.

After unloading their cargo in Great Britain, ships had previously been returning empty to the U.S. The decision was made to ship the POWs back to America where they could be more easily fed and sheltered, and at a much-reduced cost. In addition, the prisoners could be put to work in nonmilitary jobs in a time where manpower back home was in short supply. In September of 1943 the first of these POWs began arriving in Virginia.

Once landed, a great number of the German POWs were shipped to the preindustrial agrarian South where cotton was still picked, ditches were still dug, and crops were still planted primarily by hand. Four major POW base camps were located in Mississippi: Camp McLain near Grenada, Camp Como in the northern Delta, Camp Shelby in Hattiesburg, and Camp Clinton, just outside Jackson. In addition to these four base camps, 15 branch camps were developed, 10 of which were in the Delta. They were located in Greenville, Belzoni, Leland, Indianola, Clarksdale, Drew, Greenwood, Lake Washington, Merigold, and Rosedale. For these POWs the war was all but over. But for some Deltans laboring beneath the hot Mississippi sun, the war was either yet to begin or was still raging within them.

Steve Yarbrough's third novel, *Prisoners of War*, is set in the time and place of these POW camps scattered about the Delta. Yarbrough's fictionalized camp is Camp Loring, and the locale is Loring, Mississippi, the same small town located somewhere just outside Indianola, which is also the setting

of his previous critically acclaimed second novel, *Visible Spirits*.

In *Prisoners of War*, 17-year-old Dan Timms is employed by his uncle Alvin to drive a "rolling store" (an old school bus stocked with everyday items from sugar and Popsicles to coal-oil lamps and radios) and is not as eager to see what lies outside his rural community as he is to be shed of it: "He didn't like where he was, and he didn't like what he'd most likely become if he managed to survive the war that was waiting for him a few months down the road. But he didn't know what else, or where else, he'd rather be. His imagination, he guessed, was a lot like an acre of buckshot. Nothing much grew there." The war seems to be an inevitable destination to Dan, although his being the sole man of the house with a farm to run would permit him an exemption from serving. But the knowledge of his mother's infidelity and the lingering effects of his father's recent suicide are enough to make dodging Nazi bullets seem attractive.

But everyone knows war is hell, no one more so than Dan's best friend, Marty Stark, who has just returned from the war damaged, affected in no small way by the horrors he witnessed in the German theater. "Ever since he'd been home, he'd been feeling like the whole world was in a state of rot and decay, and he kept smelling odors that reminded him of rancid meat. He'd lie on his cot every night, doing his best not to think about smells, or trying to think of nice ones—the scent of honeysuckle, say, or perfume. But when he finally got all the stink out of his nostrils and fell asleep, the dreams would start." Now home, Marty is assigned to guard duty in the local POW camp, unnerved and ever suspicious of those under his watch.

Also feeling the effect of war, but in a somewhat different sense, is L. C. Stevens, the black friend of Dan's who drives another of Uncle Alvin's



rolling stores and struggles daily to explain to Dan the differences between the “polar universes” in which they each reside. L.C.’s life has been spent in war, but in one where he is not permitted to return fire, and he is loath to go off to fight for a place that would just as soon see him dead than treat him like a man.

The intricate plot revolves around these richly drawn characters and eventually shifts when a Polish prisoner informs Marty that a group of prisoners are planning an escape, setting in motion a series of events leading to inevitable tragedy. The three principal characters’ interaction with POWs, with each other, and with various other secondary characters serves to illustrate not just the tragedy of war on the front, but the war that can rage within when what is truly desired is far from reach or forever lost.

Yarbrough’s Loring County is often compared to Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha County, but his setting, as well as his characters and narrative style, would be more aptly compared to that of his other neighbor to the north, Larry Brown. Nevertheless, while Brown’s work is the epitome of the “rough South,” Yarbrough effectively utilizes sentiment, without lapsing into sentimentalism. The tightly woven and tense plot in *Prisoners of War* remains taut throughout, and his historical portrayal the POW camp makes the Delta during WWII especially fascinating. Yarbrough is, like Brown, such an effective, skilled, and talented writer that he can make a hot beer in August sound good and a sinner woman seem saintly.

JIMMY THOMAS

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***The Life and Selected Letters of Lyle Saxon.*** By Chance Harvey. Gretna, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, 2003. 336 pages. \$24.95.

In the fall of 1999, when Chance Harvey was teaching in the University of Mississippi’s English Department, she gave a dynamic lecture on “Lyle Saxon and the Southern Renaissance” at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. Her insights into the man of many masks, along with her photographic slides of this generous friend of Faulkner and Sherwood Anderson, were a tantalizing preview of *The Life and Selected Letters of Lyle Saxon*.

Fortunately, Harvey began her research in the late 1970s, when several of Saxon’s associates and relatives were alive and glad to talk about the author known as “Mr. Louisiana” and “Mr. New Orleans.” Harvey’s hundreds of endnotes document the interviews, as well as her frequent citations from Saxon’s diaries, his journalistic columns, his published and unpublished manuscripts, and a great variety of other resources. Several notes include fascinating sidelights, such as Harvey’s comment that photography intrigued the boy Lyle, who published three pictures in *St. Nicholas* magazine in 1908: “One was awarded a gold badge; the other a cash prize” (282, n. 3). A note identifying Saxon’s friend Caroline Dormon explains that “Dormon is recognized as the first female forester in the U.S. for her work with the Louisiana Department of Conservation” (293, n. 121). Harvey even lists two of Dormon’s books about Louisiana flora, adding details on a recent reprint edition by a Baton Rouge publisher.

Further enhancing the biography are several illustrations of Saxon and his circle—including Lyle’s sweet baby picture from July 1892 and a startling view of the writer as a burly werewolf at Mardi Gras 1941—from the New Orleans Public Library, the Cammie G. Henry Research Center at Louisiana’s Northwestern State University, and other collections. An especially fruitful repository of photographic images, letters, and additional material was Tulane University’s Special Collections in the Howard-Tilton Library. There, Harvey came across the unusual Lyle Saxon-Rachel Field correspondence and decided to write her doctoral dissertation about the historian who helped to launch the restoration of the French Quarter in the early 1920s and whose house at 536 Royal Street “was known as the place to meet” (10). The dissertation was the basis

## *The Life and Selected Letters of Lyle Saxon*

*By Chance Harvey*



for Chance Harvey's book, which she prefaces with an amusing account of her own visit to 536 Royal in April 2002. Carriageway Gallery had set up an art print business with bright pegboards and little Christmas lights, and Harvey looked in vain for traces of the former resident: "They tore the vine down. Saxon's palm tree died one winter in a hard freeze" (11).

Several letters by Saxon, dated 1917 to 1946 and found in libraries from North Carolina and Virginia to New Orleans, complement Harvey's biographical text in many ways and form a separate section of the volume (219-70). *The Life and Selected Letters of Lyle Saxon* is an outstanding addition to Pelican Publishing Company's catalog. Over the past several years, Pelican has reprinted many of Lyle Saxon's books, from the 1927 *Father Mississippi* to *The Friends of Joe Gilmore*, published in 1948, soon after his death. The press exaggerates, however, in claiming on the dust cover that Saxon's "life story" is told "for the first time" in this book. As Harvey makes clear, James W. Thomas's *Lyle Saxon: A Critical Biography* appeared over a decade ago (Birmingham: Summa, 1991). So many myths and mysteries surround Lyle Saxon, however, that Thomas did not even begin to exhaust the rich subject; and Harvey surpasses the earlier biographer in her indefatigable search for elusive facts. For example, Harvey traveled to the Washington State Archives in Bellingham to solve "the mystery of his birthplace" (24). Because Saxon called himself a native Louisianian, and because of his maternal family's long associations with Baton Rouge, most scholars had assumed he was born in that city. Harvey's meticulous assembling of "bits and pieces of information" (24)—interviews, Saxon's mother's notebook, a California physician's business card, and a 1938 letter in the Tulane archives—hints at the prodigious

labor that went into the writing of this volume. The result of Harvey's quest appears on the seventh line of a page she reproduces from the 1891 register of births in Whatcom County, Washington: a September 4 entry for Lyle Saxon (25).

Apparently, Hugh Saxon remained on the West Coast when Kittie Chambers Saxon returned to her Baton Rouge home with their baby. A correspondent and then city editor for the *Los Angeles Herald*, the elder Saxon abandoned his young family, later remarried, and, between 1919 and 1934, "played bit parts in twenty-four movies, including the Charlie Chaplin classic *The Circus* (1928)" (27). Harvey's note on Hugh Saxon's film career leads the reader to the Internet Movie Database; but this entertaining citation is preceded by a note on Lyle Saxon's cousin, Muriel Saxon Lambert, who told the biographer that Saxon never spoke about his father and refused to see him on Hugh Saxon's visits to New Orleans. In fact, Harvey suggests that Lyle Saxon's deep sense of rejection was an early source of the loneliness that forms a major theme of *The Life and Selected Letters of Lyle Saxon*.

Beginning with chapter 1, "The Solitary Spirit and the Comic Mask," Harvey emphasizes the "thread of intense despair, the leitmotif of his diaries and letters" (56), countering the much more typical image of Lyle Saxon as bon vivant and mentor to a generation of artists and authors. Harvey does not underestimate Saxon's impact on the literary world in New Orleans and, during the later 1920s, in Greenwich Village. Commenting on his support for William Faulkner, both in Louisiana and New York, Harvey suggests that *Children of Strangers*, Saxon's only novel, might have influenced the plot and characterization of *The Sound and the Fury*. Less famous authors also benefitted from Saxon's generosity. As state director of the

Louisiana Writers' Project from 1935 to 1942, he provided employment for many Depression-era contributors to the *New Orleans City Guide* and *Louisiana: A Guide to the State*. After the state writers' projects ended, the Louisiana Library Commission asked him to supervise the collection of folklore for *Gumbo Ya-Ya*. His coeditor, Robert Tallant, wrote to their mutual friend Cammie Garrett Henry: "As a writer, I owe him everything" (217).

Owner of the restored Melrose Plantation, south of Natchitoches, Louisiana, Cammie Henry often welcomed Saxon to Yucca House cabin, where he could escape the steady social and professional demands of life in New Orleans. Harvey underscores the stressfulness of journalistic and historical writing for an aesthetically sensitive man who believed fiction was a superior genre. "In his repeated statements in his letters about the writer's art," says Harvey, "Saxon reveals the kind of 'anguish and travail' that Faulkner would later note" (14). The biographer also describes the ongoing financial difficulties that distracted Saxon from writing fiction, and she states that "a failed romantic relationship" in 1928 disturbed him so seriously that "his creative ambition" was ruined (47). Arts patron Muriel Moore, photographer Doris Ulmann, and author Rachel Field are possible identifications of "the mystery lady" (148), and Harvey carefully documents the relationships each woman had with Saxon.

Another likely influence on Saxon's recurring depression and lifelong sense of loneliness is the complex sexuality that Harvey hints at rather obliquely. Saxon never married and never lived with a woman, but he did live with his childhood and college friend George Favrot, who fought in World War I and whom Saxon had planned to

join in Europe in the 1920s. Favrot died in 1925; and in 1946, shortly before his own death, Saxon told his journalist friend François Mignon: "Baton Rouge always depresses me, and I think continually of George Favrot" (269). Saxon also developed a close relationship with the music critic Noel Straus, with whom he lived in Chicago, New Orleans, and New York. And Harvey's scrupulous avoidance of a pronoun suggests that the visitor who sometimes spent "drunken nights" with Saxon for "purely monetary" reasons—despite Saxon's sense of "self-abasement" and his fears of a painful recurrence of syphilis—was probably a male (170). Saxon's library, she says, contains many studies of "social and sexual aberration" (53).

Future biographers of Lyle Saxon will probably place greater emphasis on such mysteries than Harvey does. Equally complicated and deserving of further discussion are Saxon's attitudes on race. Langston Hughes asked him to support the Scottsboro Nine in 1933, citing "the great sympathy which you have shown for the Negro peoples and the beauty you have given them in your writing" (34). And Saxon was an early promoter of folk artist Clementine Hunter, whose Cane River scenes he collected and compared to the "primitive paintings" of Europe in the Middle Ages (107). He called his valet, Joe Gilmore, "Black Saxon" and titled his own literary reminiscences *The Friends of Joe Gilmore*. (Gilmore is pictured "mixing an absinthe frappé" on page 186.) Yet, Saxon's letters and diaries are surprising for the number of patronizing and disrespectful references to African Americans.

*The Life and Selected Letters of Lyle Saxon* is not the last word on the author. For those who cannot make the pilgrimage to 536 Royal Street, however, the book is without parallel as an introduction to "Mr. New Orleans," who, ironically, claimed to hate crowded parties, his Louisiana history books, and even Mardi Gras. Surely not Mardi Gras. Chance Harvey quotes from Saxon's enthusiastic description of his all-day, all-night party for the 1940 festivities (198). Even better, she includes a photo of a six-foot, two-inch rabbit: Lyle Saxon in yet another mask.

JOAN WYLIE HALL

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# Southern Studies Graduate Student Assists with Local Research Project

*Nash Molpus, a second-year graduate student in Southern Studies, reports on the research project with local teacher and historian Susie Marshall.*

Mrs. Susie Marshall is a 90-year-old, African American woman who has lived in Oxford, Mississippi, since 1923. She was a teacher for 41 years and a Jeans supervisor for 10 years. As a Jeans supervisor, Mrs. Marshall oversaw 36 one-room schools in Lafayette County. She is known around town as the local historian. In 2002 the Skipworth Genealogy group of Oxford asked Mrs. Marshall, as part their mission to record the local cemeteries, to identify all of the African American cemeteries in Lafayette County. There are 34.

I began helping Mrs. Marshall as a field work and photography project last spring and continued it into the fall as an independent study. Mrs. Marshall and I visited cemeteries from March of 2003 until December of 2003. Once a week we went out into rural Lafayette County to photograph and record the markers of each African American cemetery. The first visits were about accuracy and taking the perfect photographs. As time went on they became little adventures out in the county. This is an excerpt from my journal on April 16, 2003:

It is a hot, sunny day and Mrs. Marshall sports a straw hat to keep the sun off her face. The first cemetery we visit is Springdale. It is 14 miles south of Oxford on an old gravel road. The only markers we see are a trailer decorated with fake deer and Christmas lights, and a mailbox. Mrs. Marshall has a hunch that this is the right road. We travel down this dusty, one lane road for a while and see nothing. She tells me to keep going. I think it is looking very doubtful, and begin to worry that we might get shot. After about 10 minutes we come across a tiny



Susie Marshall and Nash Molpus out in the field

cemetery on the right side of the road. There is no church or even a sign; it is just a cemetery. Mrs. Marshall says they still bury people here. We get out of the car, and as usual I begin recording names on the stones as Mrs. Marshall walks around calling out the names of people she knows. She has a stick to scrape away the dirt and a can of shaving cream to clean off the markers so I am able to read them.

Each trip I would want to understand and learn more about why we were going to these cemeteries. I was also curious about the people Mrs. Marshall knew out in the county. The obvious answer is that she is involved in different history projects and as a Jeans supervisor she traveled these roads many times throughout the years to visit teachers and families. This answer came to me after a couple of trips out in the cemeteries, but the real answer did not come until some of our final adventures. It hit me as I walked away from Mrs. Marshall's home: Mrs. Marshall is doing this because she cares. She cares about

these communities outside of Oxford; she cares about the people she knows who live near the cemeteries; she cares about the people in the cemeteries; and she cares enough to make sure their names are a part of history. Mrs. Marshall's love for people is the reason she still makes it a priority to write down 100 names in a cemetery on a hot day, to spend four hours on back country roads each week, and to teach me through her words and actions the ways to remember and keep history alive.

The final product of our trips together is a booklet that consists of: two photographs, directions, and names of all 34 cemeteries. Copies will be given to Mrs. Marshall, Reverend Wadlington, and the University of Mississippi library. This project has been the most rewarding one I have ever completed. I will greatly miss my cemetery adventures with Mrs. Marshall. This is my final journal entry on December 19, 2003:

I walked around to the front of the church to take one last photograph, and when I returned, Mrs. Marshall's back was to me and she was hobbling over to the left side of the cemetery. Everything was still, and the sun was brightly shining. It was the third cemetery we had been to that day. Mrs. Marshall slowly reached down to pick up a rose that had blown off one of the gravestones. She walked back over to a handcrafted white stone and placed it in the vase. Mrs. Marshall stood and looked at it, and then delicately brushed some of the dirt off of the gravestone. It seemed like time was standing still and finally she turned and walked back towards me. We silently climbed back in the truck and drove away. I realized I had just witnessed the reason we were here.



June 17-20

Oxford Film Festival.  
Oxford, MS. <http://www.oxfordfilmfest.com>

# Southern Foodways Alliance Director Featured on Food Network

To find the country's best fried chicken, a visit with John T. Edge of the University of Mississippi is a must. At least according to Tyler Florence, founding executive chef of Manhattan's critically acclaimed Cafeteria restaurant and host of the Food Network program *Tyler's Ultimate*. Edge, food writer and director of the Southern Foodways Alliance at the Center, appears on a *Tyler's Ultimate* episode being aired this winter. A segment of the program was taped in Edge's Oxford backyard, where he demonstrated his chicken-frying know-how for the camera. Edge and Florence also visited Pontotoc County chicken farmer Ron Brandon at his Zion farms and sampled the fried chicken at Oxford's Yocona River Inn.

According to Florence, Edge is the foremost authority on all foods Southern. "John T. is the voice of contemporary Southern food," Florence said while taking a break from taping. "I've been a big fan of his for a long time, and I wanted to get his point of view, especially since he's been all over searching for the best fried chicken." Edge conducted his search for the country's best bird while writing his third book, *Fried Chicken: An American Story*. The first of a four-part series on iconic American foods, the book will be released by Putnam in the fall of 2004.



Blair Hobbs

Tyler Florence (left) and John T. Edge, cooking chicken

Florence, who travels the world in search of the "ultimate" recipes featured on his show, chose a fried chicken recipe Edge obtained from John Fler, chef at Tennessee's Blackberry Farm Hotel. The recipe involves brining pieces of dark meat in a sweet-tea mixture for 48 hours before battering them and carefully placing them in a cauldron of hot oil. The result: "The most beautiful chicken I've ever seen," Florence said.

But it was not just Edge's knowledge of great fried chicken recipes that earned him an appearance on Florence's program. Edge's dedication to preserving Southern food traditions also drew attention from Florence, who grew up in Greenville, South Carolina.

"I really loved John T.'s book *Southern Belly*," Florence said. Edge describes the book, published in 2000 by Hill Street, as a "mosaic-like portrait of Southern food told through profiles of people and places."

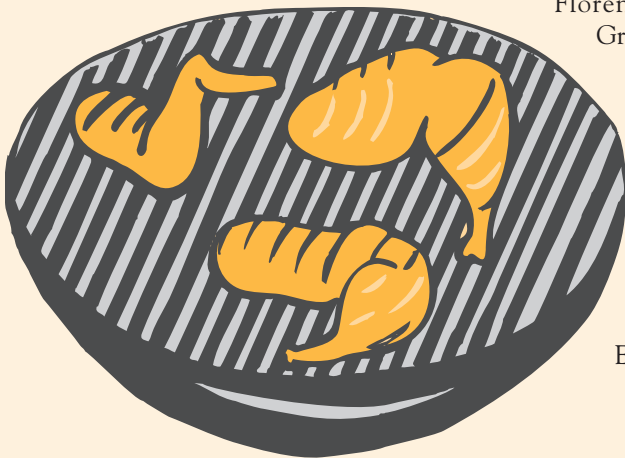
Edge's writing is just one

avenue through which he works to keep Southern food traditions alive, though. As director of SFA, Edge has the responsibility for ensuring those traditions don't die. "Traditional cooking techniques are getting sucked up by corporations catering to people too busy to cook," Florence said. "It's up to people who care to protect and preserve the art of Southern cooking. John T.'s work with SFA is like Ken Burns's efforts to preserve the tradition of baseball through his documentaries, or Steven Spielberg's efforts to remember the Holocaust through his movies."

"Tyler was looking to explore the South by way of fried chicken," Edge said. "For him to come to me, to come to SFA, looking for credible fried chicken gives SFA a great deal of credibility in return."

The episode of *Tyler's Ultimate* featuring Edge is scheduled to air several times this winter and spring. For the schedule, check the Web [www.foodnetwork.com/food/show\\_tu/episode/0,1976,FOOD\\_10228\\_30601,0.html](http://www.foodnetwork.com/food/show_tu/episode/0,1976,FOOD_10228_30601,0.html)

JENNIFER SOUTHALL







## SFA Launches Endowment Campaign

Ole Miss alumni Ron and Becky Feder, principals of the R&B Feder Charitable Foundation for the Beaux Arts of Ocean Springs, Mississippi, helped launch the Southern Foodways Alliance's endowment fund during this October's Southern Foodways Symposium with a \$5,000 challenge grant to members. The grant is the first installment of a ten-year pledge totaling \$50,000. SFA members attending the symposium met and bested that challenge, raising over \$11,000 in additional funds during the weekend.

One of SFA's most critical and pressing needs is an endowment that serves as a permanent and reliable source of funding for the events and programs that support its mission. Today, almost all operating expenses—nearly \$100,00 annually—must be raised through the efforts of SFA staff. As the organization grows, however, demands on staff resources grow. This endowment will relieve some of the pressure to raise funds. Staff can then dedicate more of their expertise to assuring the same high quality of scholarship and service that members and the public have come to expect.

Interest earned on the endowment's

premium will provide funds for operational expenses such as supplies, printing, and postage, as well as for salaries, special events, and scholarships. Further, it will provide seed money for some of our biggest aspirations. Chief among those is a thorough compilation of oral histories about current, historic, and endangered foodways of the American South. A close second is planning for a public museum, library, and archives.

Projects such as these were once only dreams. Now, they are becoming reality. An initial collection of SFA archival materials, for instance, is on deposit at the University of Mississippi Department of Archives and Special Collections. Likewise, the oral history campaign has already produced histories on barbecue and baking. To manage that project, the board recently hired Amy Evans as a part-time facilitator. Amy, a graduate of the Southern Studies master's program, was the lead researcher on our Tennessee barbecue project.

Both the University of Mississippi and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture are working closely with the SFA to develop the endowment campaign. The University

of Mississippi Foundation will administer the endowment. All funds raised will be dedicated exclusively to the Southern Foodways Alliance.

The initial round of donations to the endowment came from SFA members, the board, the staff of the Center, even symposium speakers. A case in point: Jim 'N Nick's Bar-B-Q of Birmingham, Alabama, responded to the challenge with a pledge of \$3,000. Others may choose to contribute anonymously or make donations in another's name. All contributions are fully tax-deductible and can be made by check, credit card, or pledge.

The Southern Foodways Alliance has always been a member-driven organization. I urge each member with a development or philanthropic background to continue that tradition by contacting me at [sfaendowment@olemiss.edu](mailto:sfaendowment@olemiss.edu) or 215-432-4348 to offer advice and leadership on the endowment campaign. I am eager to discuss fundraising strategy, leads, and developing promotional materials.

MATTHEW ROWLEY

## 2004 Field Trip and Symposium Dates Set

This summer's SFA Field Trip will be the first weekend in June in Birmingham, Alabama. Our agenda will be to explore Southern foodways in

black and white. The Seventh Annual Southern Foodways Symposium will focus upon the same topic. Dates are set for the second weekend in October.

And, of course, we will gather here on campus. Please point your Web browser to [www.southernfoodways.com](http://www.southernfoodways.com) for more information.

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

***The Best of Virginia Farms Cookbook and Tour Book: Recipes, People, Places.*** By CiCi Williamson. Atlanta, Georgia: CI Publishing; Birmingham, Alabama: Menasha Ridge Press, 2003. 320 pages. \$24.95.

Many people say if you want to learn about the culture of a place, then study the food. Author CiCi Williamson describes her book: "A quilt of writing formats drawn from a wealth of sources was patched together here to showcase the individuals and enterprises who, together, tell the story of almost 400 years of Virginians and their land."

I'd go so far as to say it's a whole lot more than a cookbook and tour book. It's also a history book, a guide to agricultural extension services, an encyclopedia of Virginia agriculture, a directory of Virginia bed and breakfast inns, and a compendium of quotes on Virginia agriculture by noted Virginia politicians. Not to mention that it's an excellent resource and buyer's guide to Virginia farmer's markets, restaurants, farms, wineries, food festivals, museums, gardens, and arboretums.

Did you know that chickens were domesticated around 3000 B.C., but turkeys were not domesticated until 1922 when Virginian Charles Wampler Sr., came along? There's a fascinating "interview" of Thomas Jefferson as gardener, culled from letters preserved by the Thomas Jefferson Foundation.

Colonial recipes, annotated with suggestions for modern-day preparation, include President James Monroe's Chicken Gumbo and Kenmore Gingerbread. Recipes from Virginian celebrities include Willard Scott's Country Pork Sausage and Edna Lewis's Pan-fried Virginia Spots. Modern recipes aren't left out. Imagine Conicville Ostrich Burgers or Stribling's Crock-pot Apple Butter. Turning these pages, reading these stories, makes me proud to be a Virginian!

KAREN CATHEY

***A Taste for War: The Culinary History of the Blue and the Gray.*** By William C. Davis. Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania: Stackpole Books, 2003. 240 pages. \$26.95.

Napoleon's observation that "an army marches on its stomach" was no less true in the American Civil War than in earlier wars. Soldiers always complain about the food, says William C. Davis, professor of history at Virginia Tech, but in this case, there was some justification. Neither army, according to Davis, ever "completely solved the problems of getting adequate food to the armies on time, or in the right place, or in palatable condition, let alone educating millions of strangers to the kitchen in how to cook and eat what they got."

There are stories of hardships from both sides—rotten meat, worm-infested bread, the complete absence of a balanced diet—but Southern soldiers probably suffered more, because of the inability of the South's transportation system to get food where it was needed. "Johnny Reb and Billy Yank went to extraordinary lengths to get food on their plates, and then to get it into their stomachs and keep it there. In the process, they overturned centuries of cultural and gender habit, demonstrated enormous ingenuity in

devising things to eat from the raw materials at hand, and endured untold privations that often haunted their health for the rest of their lives."

Davis skillfully and entertainingly weaves together journalistic accounts and observations from soldiers' diaries and letters to document these privations. Nowhere is soldiers' ingenuity more clearly seen than in the collection of recipes at the end of the book. Hardtack, toast soup, planked rat, Louisiana alligator, chinquapin coffee, spruce beer—it's perhaps not a collection that I'll cook from often, but it's inspiring to see how soldiers and civilians did their best to make life as normal as possible in very difficult times.

On Christmas Eve 1863 officers of the Louisiana Tigers camped near Raccoon Ford, Virginia, sent a servant out to look for whiskey and eggs for eggnog. He returned just before midnight, and one of the officers records: "The eggs were quickly beaten—the sugar stirred in and then the whiskey added, and we had one of the most delicious nogs that ever mortal man quaffed. Taking a couple of glasses apiece, we retired merrily to bed—to forget the hardships of a soldier's life, and dream of a joyful reunion with the dear absent one far away in Southland."

THOMAS HEAD

## SFA Contributors

**KAREN CATHEY** is the president of Bon Vivant, LLC, a food marketing consulting firm in Arlington, Virginia, and chairman of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Institute of Wine and Food.

**MATTHEW ROWLEY**, SFA secretary/treasurer, works for Assouline & Ting, a Philadelphia-based food importer and distributor. In 2002, he curated the University of Pennsylvania's exhibition *A Chef and His Library*.

**THOMAS HEAD** is the *Washingtonian* magazine's executive wine and food editor, one of its restaurant reviewers. He writes regularly for the *Washingtonian* and other publications on food, drink, and travel.

# MUW Students Cook, Clean Up, at SFA Symposium

"I couldn't make this stuff up if I tried," says SFA member Sarah Labensky, director of the Culinary Arts Institute at Mississippi University for Women. She's referring to the ingenuity of a group of 12 juniors and seniors in culinary arts at MUW who traveled from Columbus to Oxford to cook Friday lunch and much of Saturday dinner for the 225 participants in the 2003 symposium.

The students arrived on Thursday afternoon to commandeer the kitchen of a local Baptist church and set up for their cooking marathon. Sarah Labensky and Ronni Lundy had worked out the menu in advance. Preparation was intense. "The first thing we had to do," Labensky says, "was to make a lot of bacon fat. The kids rendered an entire case of bacon just to get the drippings," indispensable to real Southern cooking.

The centerpiece of the meal was to be a big batch of Bill Best's shuck beans. But anyone who arrived at lunch expecting a pot of beans and cornbread was in for a surprise. A glorious buffet of the best of the Appalachian South surrounded it: cucumbers and onions in vinegar, Kentucky heirloom tomatoes, deviled eggs, potato salad, butter beans and sausage, green tomato casserole,

mustard greens with crowder peas, skillet corn, pumpkin grits pudding, cornbread muffins, yeast rolls, apple stack cake, blackberry cobbler, and peanut butter fudge. Of course there was plenty of sweet tea and cold buttermilk too.

While those of us who ate the lunch dozed through the afternoon's presentations, the students were faced with cleaning up. Problems were many. The sinks at the church clogged. The students literally had to bale water with buckets to prevent flooding the kitchen floor. But a potential crisis was averted when one of the students had the bright idea loading the big pots and sheet pans into a pickup truck and scrubbing them down at a car wash with a power sprayer. Since the bed of the truck had served as a de facto bus tub, they even had to scour the truck bed before putting the clean stuff back in.

Enterprising students like these are a hallmark of the MUW Culinary Arts Institute, a four-year program that began in 1997 and now enrolls about 72 students. The Bachelor of Science degree offers the students a chance to become culinary specialists with minors in entrepreneurship/small business development, food journalism, food art (food styling and photography), and

nutrition wellness. "Students know they want to cook when they sign up for our program," Labensky says. "They have a high level of commitment, and that makes them a real pleasure to work with."

The students look forward to the experience of working at the symposium. And their hard work does not go unappreciated. "The kids were great fun," says SFA president Damon Fowler. "They are very sharp and also very grounded. I was very impressed by their calm professionalism and good humor." The SFA tries to give back. In recognition of their efforts we donated \$500 to a recent student research trip to Atlanta, Georgia. What's more, several student internships have grown out of relationships forged at the symposium in Oxford.

MUW students participating in the 2003 symposium were Mel Howard, Millie Welborn, Allison Smith, David Stutts, Shannon Henderson, Opal Peacock, Rashanda Pruitt, Tameka Dallas, Cynthia Hembree, Gabe McCarter, Marie Eckl, Catlin Conner, and Pat Berry. Pictures of the students and their car-wash cleanup can be found on the Culinary Arts Institute's Web site at <http://www.muw.edu/interdisc/page64.html>.

THOMAS HEAD

## SOUTHERN FOODWAYS ALLIANCE



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# Faulkner and Material Culture

Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha • July 25-29, 2004

Literature is inseparable from its cultural contexts. Novels and poems may aspire to an original expression, to speak independently of their time and place, but they necessarily begin within a cultural network that implicates every word. Scholars and critics have come to attend closely to these cultural sources, both “high” and “low,” from lyric poetry to locker-room limericks, from Old Master paintings to subway graffiti, from string quartets to rap. Recently, however, they have learned to recognize another level of culture, specifically the *materially made* world in which we are so embedded as scarcely to recognize it as a cultural mode. This is the material way of our lives: our homes, our dress, our transportation, our work, our sport, our food and drink. None of them is “natural”; all are constructs that reflect desires, choices, social attitudes, moral values. They are all the products of creative power and they exert a great, if at times unnoticed, influence on our more conscious and deliberate creations.

The world of Faulkner’s fiction is a world of material abundance, intensified for readers by its relationship to the real world in which he lived and of which he wrote. The 31st Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference—“Faulkner and Material Culture”—will explore for five days of lectures, panel discussions, tours, and social gatherings Faulkner’s material world in its fictional and biographical manifestations. Appearing for the first time at the conference are several of America’s leading scholars of material culture: Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eléonore Raoul Professor of the Humanities and Professor of History at Emory University; T. J. Jackson Lears, Board of Governors Professor of History at Rutgers University, and Miles Orvell, professor of English and American Studies at Temple University.

Fox-Genovese is the author of *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South*, *Feminism without Illusions: A Critique of*

*Individualism*, “*Feminism Is Not the Story of My Life*”: *How the Feminist Elite Has Lost Touch with the Real Concerns of Women*, and *Women and the Future of the Family*. She is also editor of the *Journal of The Historical Society*. Lears is the author of *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920*, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America*, and *Something for Nothing: Luck in America*. He is also editor in chief of *Raritan Quarterly Review*. Orvell is the author of *Invisible Parade: The Fiction of Flannery O’Connor*, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture*, *After the Machine: Visual Arts and the Erasing of Cultural Boundaries*, *American Photography*, and *John Vachon’s America: Photographs and Letters from the Depression to World War II*.

Also speaking at the conference for the first time are Charles S. Aiken, professor of geography at the University of Tennessee, author of *The Cotton Plantation South since the Civil War* and a recently completed book-length study, “A Cosmos of My Own: William Faulkner’s Geography”; Kathryn R. Henninger, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, who has published essays on Zora Neale Hurston, Josephine Humphreys, and Faulkner, and has recently completed a book-length study, “Ordering the Facade: Photography and the Politics of Representation in Contemporary Southern Women’s Fiction”; and D. Matthew Ramsey, of Denison University, who has written essays and reviews and has made numerous conference presentations on Faulkner and films based on Faulkner’s fiction.

Returning to the Faulkner Conference are Kevin Railey, professor and chair of the Department of English at Buffalo State College, author of *Natural Aristocracy: History, Ideology, and the Production of William Faulkner* and essays on literature, theory, and education and pedagogy; Jay Watson, associate professor of English, University



Charles S. Aiken

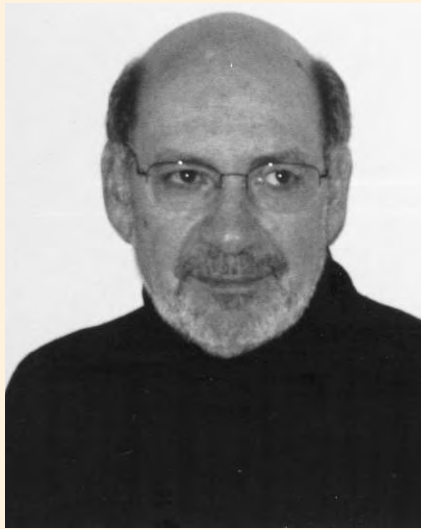
of Mississippi, author of *Forensic Fictions: The Lawyer Figure in Faulkner* and essays on Faulkner, Freud, legal theory, Lillian Smith, and Erskine Caldwell; and Patricia Yaeger, professor of English at the University of Michigan and author of *Honey-Mad Women: Emancipatory Strategies in Women’s Writing*, *The Geography of Identity*, and *Dirt and Desire: Reconstructing Southern Women’s Writing, 1930-1990*, and coeditor of *Refiguring the Father: New Feminist Readings of Patriarchy and Nationalisms and Sexualities*.

Among the topics that will be taken up during the conference will be Aiken’s study of the Old South agrarian infrastructure, within which a large part of Faulkner’s work is set; Henninger’s analysis of photographs in the fiction, as a material embodiment of the tension between oral and visual culture in the South; and Orvell’s focus on the small town in Faulkner—particularly in the context of contemporary avant-garde negativity toward the town—and how it served his imaginative purposes. Railey will consider the links between

*continued on page 25*

masculinity and the signs of material culture, such as glass-blowing machines, cars, and houses; Professor Ramsey will study the film Faulkner worked on, *Today We Live*, made from his short story "Turn About"; and Watson will explore the role of the timer/lumber economy in *Light in August*. Yaeger will examine how our reading of Faulkner has been affected by recent African American women writers' "rescripting" of his work, and the different material cultures at work in the process.

Other program events will include discussions by Faulkner friends and family; sessions on "Teaching Faulkner" directed by James B. Carothers, University of Kansas, Robert Hamblin, Southeast Missouri State University,



Miles Orvell

after in the Ford Center for the Performing Arts, followed by a buffet supper at Memory House, formerly the home of John Faulkner. A Sunday evening program, also at the Ford Center, will feature a return engagement of a singer/songwriter group, Reckon Crew, who will perform a brilliant musical adaptation of Faulkner's novel *As I Lay Dying*. Also on Sunday evening will be the announcement of the winner of the 15th Faux Faulkner Contest, coordinated by the author's niece, Dean Faulkner Wells, and sponsored by *Hemispheres Magazine*/United Airlines, Yoknapatawpha Press, and the University of Mississippi.

Other events will include "Faulkner on the Fringe"—an "open-mike" evening at the Southside Gallery, guided daylong tours of North Mississippi, a picnic

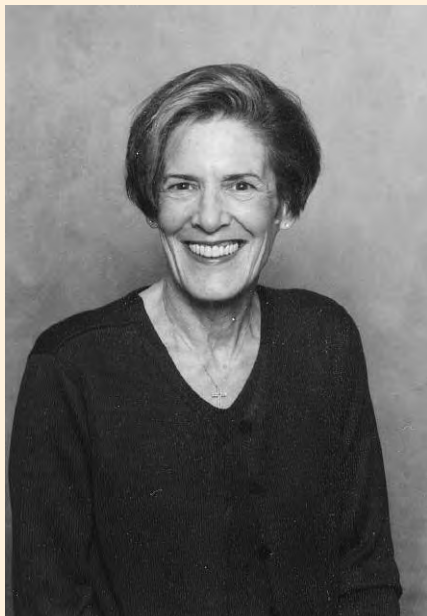
served at Faulkner's home, Rowan Oak, and a closing party at the home of Doctor and Mrs. Beckett Howorth. Films relating to Faulkner's life and work will be available during the week. In the Fortune Gallery of the University Museums Bruce Newman's photographs of prominent authors, *Worth a Thousand Words*, will be on display.

For more information about the conference contact the Office of Outreach and Continuing Education, Post Office Box 879, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-0879; telephone 662-915-7283; e-mail: [fyconf@olemiss.edu](mailto:fyconf@olemiss.edu). For information on the conference program, course credit, and all other inquiries, contact the Department of English, Box 1848, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-1848; telephone 662-915-7439; e-mail: [fyconf@olemiss.edu](mailto:fyconf@olemiss.edu). For online registration, visit us on the Web at <http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner/>

For information about participating in the conference through Elderhostel, call 877-426-8056 and refer to the program number 5760, or contact Carolyn Vance Smith by telephone (866-296- 6522) or e-mail: [carolyn.smith@colin.edu](mailto:carolyn.smith@colin.edu).

For information about participating in the conference through Interhostel at Ole Miss, contact the Office of Professional Development and Noncredit Education, E. F. Yerby Conference Center, Post Office Box 879, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-0879; call 662-915-7036; or visit our Web site ([www.outreach.olemiss.edu](http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu)).

DONALD M. KARTIGANER



Elizabeth Fox-Genovese

Charles Peek, University of Nebraska at Kearney, and Theresa M. Towner, University of Texas at Dallas; and an exhibition of Faulkner books, manuscripts, photographs, and memorabilia at the University's John Davis Williams Library.

The conference will begin on Sunday, July 25, with a reception at the University Museums and a special presentation—"The William Faulkner Exhibition and Museum Design Proposal"—that will outline the Museums' plan for a new Faulkner wing. The opening lectures of the conference will take place immediately

## Southern Writers, Southern Writing Graduate Student Conference

The tenth annual Southern Writers, Southern Writing Graduate Student Conference will be held at the University of Mississippi July 23-24, 2004. Creative and critical readings will address various topics on or about the South. Critical topics are not restricted to literature; we welcome submissions from other disciplines and are particularly interested in interdisciplinary perspectives. Students whose papers are accepted may register for the 31st annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference without paying a registration fee.

For more information, visit either the conference Web site (<http://www.olemiss.edu/conf/swsw/>) or [www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner](http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner) or write to Southern Writers, Southern Writing, Department of English, C128 Bondurant, University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-1848.

## Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha July 24-28, 2005 “Faulkner’s Inheritance”

As much as the fictional character closest to him—Quentin Compson—William Faulkner was “an empty hall echoing with sonorous defeated names . . . a commonwealth . . . a barracks filled with stubborn back-looking ghosts.” The names and ghosts, of course, were not just those of the Old South and the war fought on its behalf, but the world that grew up in the wake of their passing: a New South still harboring some of the values of the Old, a Falkner family history fostering comparably divided loyalties, a Modernist revolution in thought and art prepared to challenge all loyalties, North and South.

The 32nd annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference will attempt to take the measure of Faulkner’s “inheritance”: the varied elements that went into his making and the making of his work. Obviously the range is great. What events of Southern and North Mississippi history, what aspects of the personal life, what ideas in the intellectual ferment of Modernism figure most strikingly in the fiction he wrote? What do we as readers most need to know of the world Faulkner inhabited—political, social, cultural—in order to best understand that fiction? In commenting once on his work, he spoke, uncharacteristically, of “the amazing gift I had,” and wondered “where it came from . . . why God or gods or whoever it was, selected me to be the vessel.” The aim of this conference will be to explore, in somewhat more mundane terms, “where it came from” and what—given that “amazing gift”—Faulkner made out of what he was given.

## Elderhostel Program for 2004 Faulkner Conference Participants

Lounge on Oxford’s Courthouse Square, from which William Faulkner drew inspiration. Enjoy a picnic under the ancient trees at his beloved family home, Rowan Oak. Visit the Nobel Prize-winning writer’s church and gravesite. And for five days, revel in the wisdom of more than a dozen internationally known scholars at the 31st annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference, July 25-29, 2004.

“It’s easy to attend,” said Carolyn Vance Smith of Natchez, a longtime Elderhostel program provider and member of the of the Center Advisory Committee. “Just register through Elderhostel, an internationally recognized leader in educational travel for adults 55 or older or traveling with someone 55 or older. We’ll handle all arrangements for you.”

The 2004 conference will examine the theme “Faulkner and Material Culture.” Faulkner’s life, home, clothes, transportation, work, sport, food, and drink were sources and products of his creative power. “Whether you are a general reader or a scholar, you will love these days on what Faulkner called his ‘postage stamp of native soil,’” Smith said.

Special Elderhostel-only sessions will be led by Faulkner experts. To register, call toll-free to Elderhostel headquarters in Boston (877-426-8056) and ask for program number 5760-0725. The rate of \$832 per person includes all conference fees, four nights’ lodging at the Triplett Alumni Center Hotel (double occupancy), all meals, and local transportation. A limited number of single-occupancy rooms are available at extra cost.

For more information, call Smith at 601-446-1208, e-mail her at [carolyn.smith@colin.edu](mailto:carolyn.smith@colin.edu), or check out the Web site [www.elderhostel.org](http://www.elderhostel.org).

## Interhostel Program for 2004 Faulkner Conference Participants

The University of Mississippi is recognized as a preeminent institution in the study of the South. Its archives and museums contain the original works and papers of Mississippi’s own William Faulkner. Explore the relationship between the real world in which Faulkner lived and the world of his fiction while expanding your knowledge of this unique and vibrant part of U.S. culture.

The five-day conference includes dramatic readings from Faulkner’s fiction; lectures examining the South’s history and politics from the antebellum period to that of the New South; curate-guided tour and picnic on the grounds of William Faulkner’s home, Rowan Oak; excursion to Holly Springs, Mississippi, to explore antebellum homes, art, and Southern architecture; guided tour of the University campus, including the Center for the Study of Southern Culture; free time to enjoy the gracious hospitality of the University and Oxford; closing banquet at a renowned restaurant in Taylor, Mississippi; evening films.

The cost is \$1,195 per person double occupancy; add \$395 for a single supplement.

Registration is open to anyone interested. Preregistration is required. For more information, contact Interhostel at Ole Miss, Office of Professional Development and Noncredit Education, E. F. Yerby Conference Center, Post Office Box 879, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-0879; call 662-915-7036; or visit our Web site ([www.outreach.olemiss.edu](http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu)).



# Mayfield Book about His Life and Art

Folk artist M. B. Mayfield said the idea of an autobiography had been “in (his) mind for a long time.” No doubt the Ecu native had a great deal to say—after all, he got his start studying art secretly from a broom closet at the then-segregated University of Mississippi.

Fortunately, a friend of Mayfield’s finally convinced him to record his life’s story. The result is *The Baby Who Crawled Backwards*, published by Mayfield himself this fall. Not only does the book contain Mayfield’s extraordinary history—including the story of how he crawled backwards as a toddler—but it also features his original poetry along with full-color photographs of more than five decades’ worth of his artwork. “I wasn’t thinking about money or anything like that when I started writing the book,” said Mayfield. “It was about getting something out that needed to come out and the story coming to maturity.”

Those things that Mayfield “got out” include the story of his lifelong friendship with Stuart Purser, the University’s first art department chair and the man Mayfield credits in his book with changing the direction of his life. Purser met Mayfield in the summer of 1949 while driving to the campus from his previous post at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga. The art professor was so impressed with the paintings he saw on the front porch of Mayfield’s family farmhouse that he stopped to speak with the artist.

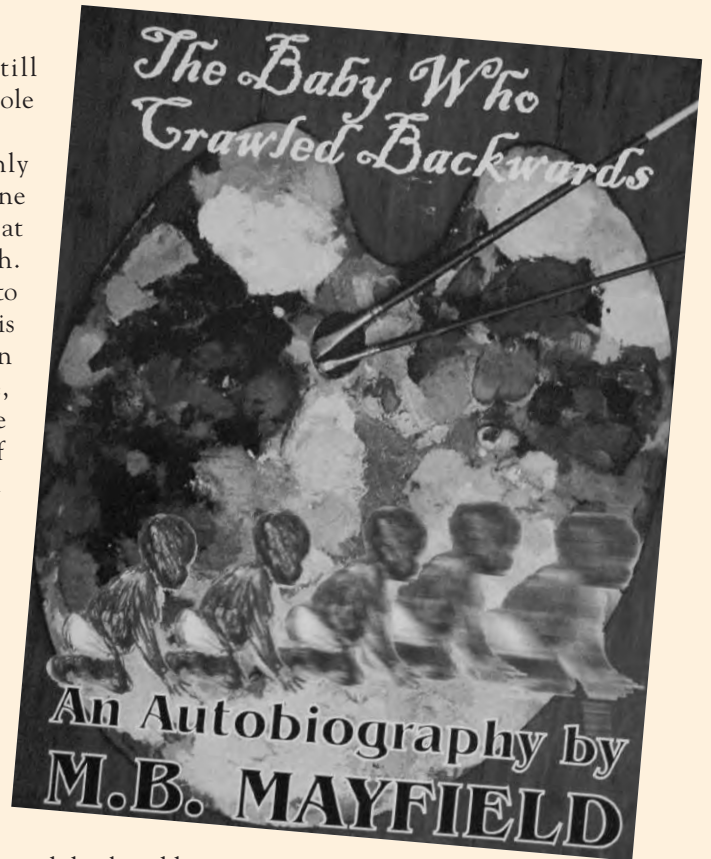
Then 26-years-old, Mayfield traveled to Oxford that fall to work as a custodian in the art department, where he studied one-on-one with Purser and spent a number of hours listening to lectures from a broom closet. “The really fascinating thing about Mayfield is this intersection with the world of fine art that he stumbled into,” said Lisa Howorth, who taught classes on folk art at the Center for several years. “He got to look at the art world at Ole

Miss but was still marginal to the whole thing.”

Mayfield not only saw the world of fine art through his job at Ole Miss, though. After moving back to Ecu to attend to his ailing mother, then moving to Racine, Washington, where he held a number of odd jobs, Mayfield was drawn into the world of fine art—if only marginally—once again. In 1969, Mayfield took a job as a custodian at the Brooks Memorial Art Gallery in Memphis, where he studied the paintings on display and displayed his own works for other gallery employees in the museum’s stairwells and work areas.

The nature of his involvement in the art world has left Mayfield with seemingly no bitterness, though he said he doesn’t like to speak about his time at Ole Miss, since he believes it detracts from the achievements of James Meredith, who integrated the university in 1963. “I didn’t accomplish the things he did. He was the one who took the punishment,” Mayfield said of Meredith. “I’d really like to meet him one day.”

But Mayfield’s ties to the University remain strong. A number of his paintings, including a portrait of Martin Luther King, hang in the University Museums, and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture was the home of one of Mayfield’s first big exhibits, in 1986. Following that show, Mayfield’s career flourished, so much so that he has sold almost everything he’s painted since then. His eyes are not as good as the used



to be, though, so he’s slowed his painting in recent years. Writing is his art now, he said. “I always doubted myself and was very self-conscious, but writing the book has been a real neat experience,” said Mayfield, who keeps his ideas for a possible second publication in a scrapbook.

Charles Reagan Wilson, director of the Center, believes Mayfield’s book represents a “parable of the contemporary South. He tells of someone who moved through the rural segregated South to something very different,” Wilson said. “He was a janitor and unable to attend classes, yet he drew from the real strengths of Southern culture to learn and express his creativity.”

*The Baby Who Crawled Backwards* can be ordered by calling the Town Square Post Office and Museum in Pontotoc at 662-488-0388. Copies are available for \$35 plus shipping.

JENNIFER SOUTHALL

# 11th Annual Mississippi Delta Tennessee Williams Festival Celebrates Food, Art, Religion, Music, and Performance

This year's Mississippi Delta Tennessee Williams Festival, held in Clarksdale, October 9-11, 2003, stretched out in an entirely new direction when Randall Andrews (a celebrity chef introduced frequently on culinary television shows as "Chef to the Stars") and Carl Pitts (an accomplished chef and veteran social studies and history instructor at Coahoma Community College) teamed up to celebrate the ethnic foods of the Mississippi Delta and focus on recipes for Southern food and drink mentioned in Tennessee Williams's plays: Big Daddy's hot buttered biscuits and hoppin' john; Aunt Rose's greens, pot liquor, and Eggs Birmingham; Baby Doll's and Amanda's lemonade; and Maxine's rum-cocos. The food preparation demonstrations and festival feasting delighted a community crowd of over 200 who overflowed the confines of Clarksdale Station.

This year's special event was the dedication of St. George's Episcopal Church's former rectory as a National Literary Landmark. Tennessee Williams's beloved grandfather, the Reverend



Colby H. Kullman

Seated: Ruth Moon Kampher; standing, from left: Travis Montgomery, William Spencer, Janna Montgomery, and Robert Canon, at Morgan Freeman's Ground Zero restaurant and blues club

Walter Dakin, was rector there from 1915-1933; and Tennessee and Rose

Williams spent significant amounts of time living there during their youth. Kenneth Holditch officiated by explaining the significance of the rectory to the world of Tennessee Williams—and now all of us.

Kenneth Holditch's opening address on "Tennessee's Delta: Cotton, Rising Tides, and Blues" set the stage opulently for the grand show that was to follow. The scholarly part of the Festival focused on Williams's short plays *27 Wagons Full of Cotton* and *The Unsatisfactory Supper* as well as his screenplay *Baby Doll*, which was shown as part of the program. Scholars Robert Canon, Erma Duricko, Kenneth Holditch, Jay Jensen, Colby Kullman, William Spencer, and Ralph Voss commented on the two one-act plays that were put together to make the screenplay.

Later, Vernon Chadwick presented "Tiger Tail: The Exorcism of Farce"; Ruth Moon Kempher, on "Baby Blue

Colby H. Kullman



Sarah Wright, Erma Duriko and Jody McDowell at moon Lake Casino





Dakin Williams, in front of festival coordinator Panny Mayfield's house

Ribbons and Roses," a study of womanly images in selected Williams plays and paintings; and Travis Montgomery, on "Leaving Laurel: Migration and the Failure of Geographic Cure in Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*."

Porch plays are an innovation of the Williams Festival that make it unique. This year Janna Montgomery performed monologues of Williams's heroines while Coahoma County High School students acted in a scene from *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* on two of the porches of the old homes in the historic area of Clarksdale near St. George's Episcopal Church and rectory.

With the festival from the beginning, Erma Duricko (who has directed off and off-off Broadway and at theatres across the country) once again brought actors from her Blue Roses Productions, Inc., to perform at the Williams Festival. At Uncle Henry's Place (the

real site of the playwright's Moon Lake Casino), Duricko herself performed Blanche Dubois's monologue about the death of her 17-year-old husband, Allan Gray, as he ran out of Moon Lake Casino to shoot himself; and actors Jimmy Ireland and Marissa Duricko recreated the roles of Dr. John Buchanan and Alma Winemiller from *Summer and Smoke* as they spend part of an evening at Moon Lake Casino, then run by Papa Gonzales.

Special guest, JoAnn C. McDowell, president of Prince William Sound Community College in Valdez, Alaska, and founder and director of Alaska's Last Frontier Theatre Festival, spoke about her prestigious festival as well as about Kansas's William Inge Theatre Festival (with which she was connected for over a decade). Along with the Williams Festival, all three programs, among the best in the nation, are supported by outstanding community colleges: Prince William Sound Community College, Independence Community College, and Coahoma Community College.

A highlight of the Williams Festival since its early days has been the student acting competition, with over \$ 2,500 in cash prizes going to the drama departments of the winning actors' schools. This year top honors in monologue, scene, costume, and "Stella!" shouting went to Oak Grove High School of Hattiesburg, APAC of Jackson, Coahoma County High School of Clarksdale, and Rankin High School of Jackson.

Once again, food and music added just the right spice to the Williams program. The opening Thursday night feast at Uncle Henry's Place on Moon Lake, the Friday night dinner at Belle Clark with music by guitarists John Ruskey and Tater Foster playing blues ballads by Tennessee Williams, and the Saturday night banquet at Clarksdale Station on Blues Alley with musical entertainment by the Wesley Jefferson Band brought each day's activities to a close with a truly "Most Satisfactory Supper."

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# Regional

Upcoming Events of Interest

# Roundup

Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama, will host a Summer Institute of Christian Spirituality comprised of biblical, historical, pastoral, and moral courses led by faculty from its division of philosophy and theology as well as visiting faculty. Session 1 will be held May 30 - June 5, and Session 2 will be June 6-12. Among the visiting faculty will be Charles Reagan Wilson, director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, who will teach on course on Southern Spirituality. For more information, contact the Office of Graduate Studies (251-380-3094), visit the Web site at [www.shc.edu/sics](http://www.shc.edu/sics), or contact Pat Warren, coordinator of the Institute, by telephone (251-380-4670) or by e-mail ([pdwarren@bellsouth.net](mailto:pdwarren@bellsouth.net)).



The Holly Springs Garden Club will host its 66th annual pilgrimage April 16-18, 2004. Seven historic antebellum homes will be open for tours, including Walter Place (1858-59), a blend of Gothic and Greek Revival styles, home of General and Mrs. U. S. Grant during the planning of the Vicksburg campaign, and Strawberry Plains (1851), a two-story Greek Revival home now owned, with its surrounding 2,000 acres, by the Southeastern Headquarters of the National Audubon Society. Three antebellum churches, the Marshall County Historical Museum, and the Kate Freeman Clark Art Gallery will also be open for tours. For additional information, call 662-252-6479 or 662-252-1537.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

ANGELINA ALTOBELLIS joined the Center's staff in July as advancement associate. She earned her M.A. in comparative literature from the University of Texas at Austin.

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

DONALD M. KARTIGANER holds the William Howry Chair in Faulkner Studies at the University of Mississippi and is director of the Faulkner Conference. He is the author of *The Fragile Thread: The Meaning of Form in Faulkner's Novels* and is near completion of a book-length study, "Repetition Forward: A Theory of Modernist Reading."

COLBY H. KULLMAN is professor of English at the University of Mississippi. Among his publications are articles on Tennessee Williams and other modern dramatists, *Theatre Companies of the World*, and *Speaking on Stage: Interviews with Contemporary American Playwrights*. He is coeditor of *Studies in American Drama: 1945-Present*.

NASH MOLPUS is a second-year graduate student in Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi. She received her undergraduate degree at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina. She is presently working as an intern at the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation.

JENNIFER SOUTHALL is a communications specialist for the Office of Media and Public Relations at the University of Mississippi. She taught high school English and worked as a magazine editor before returning to the University, where she received a B.A. in English.

JIMMY THOMAS is managing editor of a new edition of the Center's *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. He received B.A. degrees in English and philosophy at the University of Mississippi and has worked for publications in Oxford and New York.

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

CHARLES REAGAN WILSON is director of the Center and professor of history and Southern Studies. Among his publications are *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause* and *Judgment and Grace in Dixie: Southern Faiths from Faulkner to Elvis*.

**For a complete list of posters, cds, videos, and other items, see the Southern Culture Catalog on our Web Site**

## POSTER

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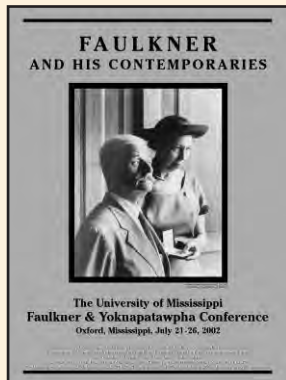
Poster features Eudora Welty portrait by Mildred Nungester Wolfe from the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



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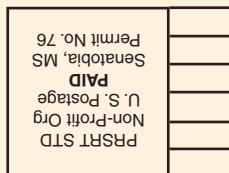
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