



the Southern Register

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE • SPRING/SUMMER 2005

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

Faulkner's Inheritance

Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference
July 24-28, 2005

In a sense Faulkner's "inheritance" was the standard turn-of-the-century Southern condition, what Allen Tate years later referred to as the "double focus, a looking two ways." One of those ways was backward to the antebellum culture and the War between the States that was fought to defend it; the other was toward the present, modern world, with all its implicit and explicit challenges to much of what the Old South had stood for, good and bad. Mrs. L. H. Harris, writing in 1906, put it more poetically. Every Southerner, especially the white males, had to assume two roles simultaneously: to be "himself and his favorite forefather at the same time," to inhabit "two characters . . . one which condemns us, more or less downtrodden by facts, to the days of our own years, and one in which we tread a perpetual minuet of past glories."

The 32nd annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference will explore for five days some of the complexities of that "double focus," the way in which Faulkner's general Southern, as well as his distinctive "Faulkner," past and present come together in his fiction. His own "looking two ways" meant a continuous staging of fictional meetings between what constituted his background and the new conditions upon which he brought that background to bear. Among the questions that conference speakers will be raising are What is the nature of the relationships Faulkner had with his mother, Maud Butler Falkner, the "white maternal," and with Caroline Barr, the "black maternal"? How does the "culture of segregation," within which Faulkner spent virtually all his life, figure in his fiction? What is the place of one of the major Southern cultural contributions—the blues—in Faulkner's work? How does Faulkner's passion for innovation square with the very idea of "inheritance"?

FAULKNER'S INHERITANCE



JOHN MCCRADY, ILLUSTRATED THE SQUARE, THE DOWNTOWN GRILL, POLITICAL RALLY AND OXFORD ON A HILL, FOR THE 2005 FAULKNER & YOKNAPATAWPHA CONFERENCE POSTER.

The University of Mississippi
Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference
Oxford, Mississippi, July 24 - 28, 2005

The University of Mississippi announces the Thirty-Second Annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference. The conference is sponsored by the Department of English and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture and coordinated by the Office of Outreach and Continuing Education. For more information: Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference, Office of Outreach and Continuing Education, Post Office Box 372, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-0879. Telephone: 662-915-7293. FAX: 662-915-5138. E-mail: fycconf@olemiss.edu.

The Square, by John McCrady (1911-1968), illustrates the 2005 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference poster and program courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. William Lewis and the Downtown Grill. Flat copies of the poster and two others with McCrady paintings, *Political Rally* and *Oxford on a Hill*, are available for \$10.00 each plus \$3.50 postage and handling. Mississippi residents should add 7 percent sales tax. Send all orders to the Center for the Study of Southern Culture with a check, made payable to The University of Mississippi, or with a Visa or MasterCard account number and expiration dates. Credit card orders also may be made by calling 800-390-3527.

These and other issues will be taken up by Judith L. Sensibar, Susan Donaldson, Adam Gussow, Noel Polk, Martin Kreiswirth, Jon Smith, Priscilla Wald, and Lael Gold. Jay Parini, author of the recent widely acclaimed biography of

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

Robbie Robertson, the Canadian-born member of the seminal rock group the Band, once supposedly said the American South was the only place he had been where, when driving through the countryside, he heard music as though welling up from the ground.

The story may be apocryphal, but I can believe it. Southerners sang in their churches and parlors, made music in their kitchens and on their front porches. Later, juke joints and honky-tonks generated louder sounds. Now, urban neighborhoods showcase rap and hip-hop music, rooted in what has become known as the Dirty South. We've come a long way, but we are still making music.

The Center has launched a new Music of the South initiative, working with University Outreach, the Gertrude Castello Ford Center for the Performing Arts, and other on-campus committees that plan activities to extend from our study and presentation of Southern music. The inaugural Music of the South Symposium will be held September 2-3, 2005, to highlight our work in this area.

The Center has long documented Southern music, of course. The Blues Archive, *Living Blues* magazine, the *Highway 61* radio show, and, more recently, the Blues Today Symposium reflect our enduring interest in African American roots music. We have also published gospel music and old-time country magazines, produced a few Southern Culture Series record albums, and worked with local music festivals. We promote Sacred Harp singing around Oxford and are a sponsor of the *Thacker Mountain Radio Show* produced by Square Books.

This new initiative extends our musical interests in new ways. The Ford Center is producing Music of the South concerts, with such performers as B. B. King, Ricky Skaggs, the Blind Boys of Alabama, and jazzman Marcus Roberts. We hope to interview these performers for a new Archive of Southern Music and allow them an informal venue to talk with students, faculty, and the community about their music. Mississippi-born musician Marty Stuart has become a friend of the Center, and we have found him an enthusiastic and knowledgeable student of Southern music. He is interested in becoming more involved in our work.

Collaborating with the Mississippi Arts Commission, the Center, through project director Wiley Prewitt, created an archive of interviews and photographs of traditional performers in northeast Mississippi, an understudied Southern place.

The September symposium will bring together scholars, students, musicians, and anyone interested in Southern music for a wide-ranging discussion of Southern music, past and present. The campus will resonate with the sounds of gospel, country, bluegrass, blues, and other musical genres.

The Music of the South initiative aims to look at the regional context that produced so much of American music, beyond one single sound. The capstone of the initiative is our campaign to raise endowment funds for a Music of the South professorship. We will build on enthusiastic student interest in Southern music, our archival resources, and deep public interest in the music through a permanent faculty member to research, teach about, and organize activities to help us all understand music's profound role in Southern culture.

CHARLES REAGAN WILSON

In Memoriam

Bobby Gene Chatman

June 20, 1950 - March 18, 2005

Bobby Gene "Bob" Chatman was a longtime member of the Mighty Stars of Harmony, one of Lafayette County's oldest African American gospel groups. He joined the Mighty Stars of Harmony in the early 1980s and was a faithful, dedicated member.

Music of the South Symposium

Faulkner, *One Matchless Time*, will deliver the keynote address of the conference. There will also be two panel programs, addressing such topics as the Quixotic hero, the influence of the theories of Einstein, and the problem of “legacy” in several Faulkner texts.

Further illuminating the “background” of fiction, Elizabeth Shiver, a native of Oxford, will conduct a “Faulkner in Oxford” panel. Boyd Saunders, painter, sculptor, illustrator, and printmaker, will give a presentation about the University Museum’s exhibition of lithograph prints from his illustrations for Faulkner’s *Spotted Horses*. There will also be sessions on Teaching Faulkner; tours of North Mississippi; announcement of the winner of the 16th Faux Faulkner Contest; dramatic readings from Faulkner’s work; “Faulkner on the Fringe”—an “open-mike” evening at the Southside Gallery; and an assortment of social gatherings, including a buffet at historic Memory House, a picnic at Rowan Oak, and a party at Square Books.

For information about the conference program, course credit, and all other inquiries, contact Mary Beth Lasseter, telephone 662-915-5993, or e-mail fyconf@olemiss.edu. Visit www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner/ to register online.

DONALD M. KARTIGANER

The Center will host the first Music of the South Symposium on Friday and Saturday, September 2-3, 2005. The program will feature presentations, a reception, a catfish dinner in Taylor, Mississippi, and live music at the symposium and at clubs on the Oxford Square.

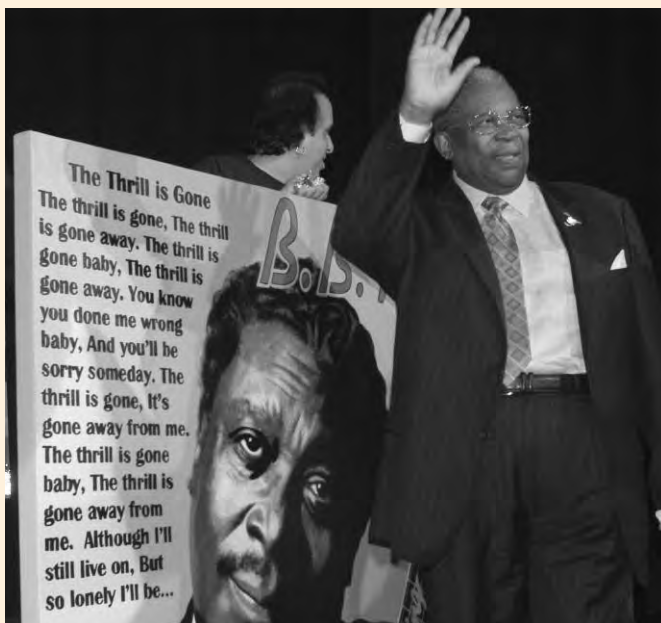
Keynote speaker for the symposium is Bill Malone, the renowned student of music and himself a musician and singer. Malone, author of *Don't Get above Your Raisin': Country Music and the Southern Working Class*, will examine the relationships among the various genres of music in the South.

One session, “Race, Region, and Identity: Southern Music in the Classroom,” looks at how Southern music can be incorporated into teaching at various levels. A session on Mississippi music will bring together leaders of cultural centers who present music through museum exhibitions, publications, and other institutional formats. Panels will also look at music in such specific Southern places as the urban South and the upper South.

Through music and lectures, the symposium will address country music as well as blues, gospel, and rap. One of the most recent self-consciously Southern music groups, the Drive-by Truckers, will be the subject of a session on generational divides in Southern music.

For more information, contact Mary Beth Lasseter at marybeth@olemiss.edu or 662-915-5993.

Fred Saucedman



Prior to the groundbreaking of the B. B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center in Indianola, Mississippi, June 10, artist Steve Kaufman (standing behind his painting, above) presented a portrait of “The King of the Blues” that will hang in the \$10 million facility. The museum will be partially located within an existing, abandoned cotton gin in downtown Indianola, where King once worked as a young man. The first phase is scheduled for a 2007 opening. Center director Charles Reagan Wilson and other members of the Mississippi Blues Commission attended the groundbreaking events.

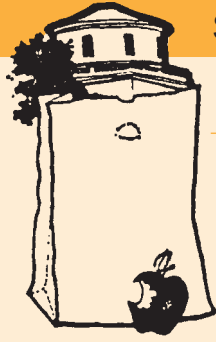
The Dianne Woest Fellowship in the Arts and Humanities

The Historic New Orleans Collection announces a new fellowship to support scholarly research and promote the history and culture of Louisiana and the Gulf South. The inaugural Dianne Woest Fellowship in the Arts and Humanities will be awarded in 2006.

Located in the heart of the city’s French Quarter, the Collection combines museum, research, and publishing facilities. Woest fellows will be based at the Williams Research Center, home to some 35,000 volumes, more than two miles of documents and manuscripts, and approximately 350,000 photographs, prints, drawings, paintings, and other artifacts on the history and culture of the Gulf South, Louisiana, and New Orleans.

The fellowship carries a stipend of \$4,000 per month, for a minimum of one and a maximum of three months. Applications for the 2006 Woest Fellowship are due August 1, 2005. Awards will be announced September 15, 2005, with research to begin on or after January 1, 2006.

For more information, visit www.hnoc.org or call Alfred Lemmon, Director of the Williams Research Center, at 504-598-7124, or Jessica Dorman, Director of Publications, at 504-598- 7174.



Brown Bag Lunch and Lecture Series

Fall 2005

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

AUGUST

- 31 "Music of the South Symposium, September 2-3"
Charles Wilson, Director, Center for the Study of Southern Culture
Professor of History and Southern Studies
with Special Guest, Tricia Walker

SEPTEMBER

- 7 "The Third Annual Oxford Film Festival: A Short"
- 14 "'Talk to the Music': A Festival in Alexandria, Louisiana, based on Arna Wendell Bontemps"
Byron Marshall
Arts Council of Central Louisiana
- 21 "Whispering Pines: A Gammill Gallery Talk"
Birney Imes, Photographer and Newspaper Editor
Columbus, Mississippi
- 28 "New Directions in African American Gender History: Porter L. Fortune Jr. History Symposium"
Nancy Bercaw, Associate Professor of History and Southern Studies
Angela M. Hornsby, Assistant Professor of History

OCTOBER

- 5 TBA
- 12 "Up from the Mudsills of Hell: Mass Agrarian Movements to Progressive Agriculture"
Connie Lester, Assistant Professor of History
Mississippi State University
- 19 "Blues Queens in the Black Press: Southern Catharsis and Cultural Identity in 1920s Chicago"
Mark Dolan
Assistant Professor of Journalism

- 26 "Tasting the South: Images of Southern Foodways"
Amy Evans, Artist and Oral Historian
Southern Foodways Alliance

NOVEMBER

- 2 "Mississippi Quilts: A Gammill Gallery Talk"
- 9 "Southern Feminist Writers"
Mary Ott Carruth, Director
Sarah Isom Center for Women and Gender Studies
- 16 "'With Signs Following...': Photographs from the Southern Religious Roadside"
Joe York, Southern Studies Alumnus and Photographer
- 30 "Laboring with Catfish: A Case Study of the Mississippi Delta"
Kirsten A. Dellinger
Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology

Mark Your Calendars

July 24-28, 2005
Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference
www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner

September 2-3, 2005
Music of the South Symposium
www.outreach.olemiss.edu/music_south

September 6-11, 2005
Oxford Film Festival
www.oxfordfilmfest.com

September 28-30, 2005
Porter L. Fortune Jr. History Symposium
www.olemiss.edu/depts/history/

October 27-30, 2005
Southern Foodways Symposium
www.southernfoodways.com

November 5, 2005
Quilting Conference

December 1-3, 2005
Endowment for the Future of the South

February 24-25, 2006
Blues Today: A *Living Blues* Symposium

March 27-30, 2006
Mississippi Delta Literary Tour

March 30-April 1, 2006
Oxford Conference for the Book

May 5, 2006
Southern Gardens Symposium

William Faulkner's Bible Returned to Rowan Oak during Dedication of Author's Restored Home

William Faulkner's Bible was recently returned to his home, Rowan Oak, by his daughter, Jill Faulkner Summers, more than 40 years after the Nobel laureate's death. Attending ceremonies to commemorate a \$1.3 million restoration of the home, Summers made the surprise announcement that she was returning both her father's Bible and another family Bible. "I felt this is where the Bibles belong," she said. "I took them when I moved, and I wanted to give them back."

The items on display inside Rowan Oak, including Faulkner's typewriter, represent 80 percent of the items left in the home following Faulkner's death, in 1962. Rowan Oak curator William Griffith was thrilled by Summers's desire to return yet two more artifacts to the home. "This is the greatest surprise of the day," Griffith said upon receiving the gift. "We will put the Bibles on display and give Rowan Oak a sense of reverence."

The dedication marked the completion of a three-year restoration of the house and grounds, owned and maintained by Ole Miss. Hundreds of people, including friends and family members of Faulkner, Governor Haley Barbour, U.S. Representative Roger Wicker, actor Morgan Freeman, and author John Grisham, attended the dedication. Offering the keynote address, Grisham said Faulkner would be proud of the efforts to restore the home: "If Faulkner were here today, he'd stroll the grounds and feel at home." The ceremonies also included John Maxwell, creator of the acclaimed one-man play "Oh, Mr. Faulkner, Do You Write?," reciting Faulkner's 1950 Nobel Prize acceptance speech. Summers, who at age 16 traveled with her father to Sweden to accept the award, was visibly moved by hearing the speech again.



Bruce Newman

Jill Faulkner Summers, daughter of author William Faulkner, looks over her childhood home as the renovation of Rowan Oak was celebrated this spring.

Originally known as the Bailey Place, Faulkner renamed the home Rowan Oak for the legend of the rowan tree. According to the legend, Scottish peasants placed a cross of rowan wood over their thresholds to ward off evil spirits and bring refuge, privacy, and peace. It was in the peaceful setting of Rowan Oak that Faulkner wrote the series of novels set in his "native soil" of Yoknapatawpha.

Throughout the restoration, none of the color schemes, wood moldings, or floor plans were altered. The three-phase restoration was made possible by private gifts and grants from the state of

Mississippi; U.S. Department of the Interior, Parks Service; and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Following the dedication, Rowan Oak was reopened for tours. Those interested may take virtual tours of the newly refurbished home by visiting www.olemiss.edu/depts/u_museum/rowan_oak/interactive.html.

Rowan Oak is open 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 1:00-4:00 p.m. Sunday and is closed on Mondays. For more information, call 662-234-3284.

TOBIE BAKER



The Administration and the Fury

If William Faulkner Were Writing on the Bush White House

By Sam Apple

Down the hall, under the chandelier, I could see them talking. They were walking toward me and Dick's face was white, and he stopped and gave a piece of paper to Rummy, and Rummy looked at the piece of paper and shook his head. He gave the paper back to Dick and Dick shook his head. They disappeared and then they were standing right next to me.

"Georgie's going to walk down to the Oval Office with me," Dick said.

"I just hope you got him all good and ready this time," Rummy said.

"Hush now," Dick said. "This aint no laughing matter. He know lot more than folks think."

Dick patted me on the back good and hard. "Come on now, Georgie," Dick said. "Never mind you, Rummy."

We walked down steps to the office. There were paintings of old people on the walls and the room was round like a circle and Condi was sitting on my desk. Her legs were crossed.

"Did you get him ready for the press conference?" Dick said.

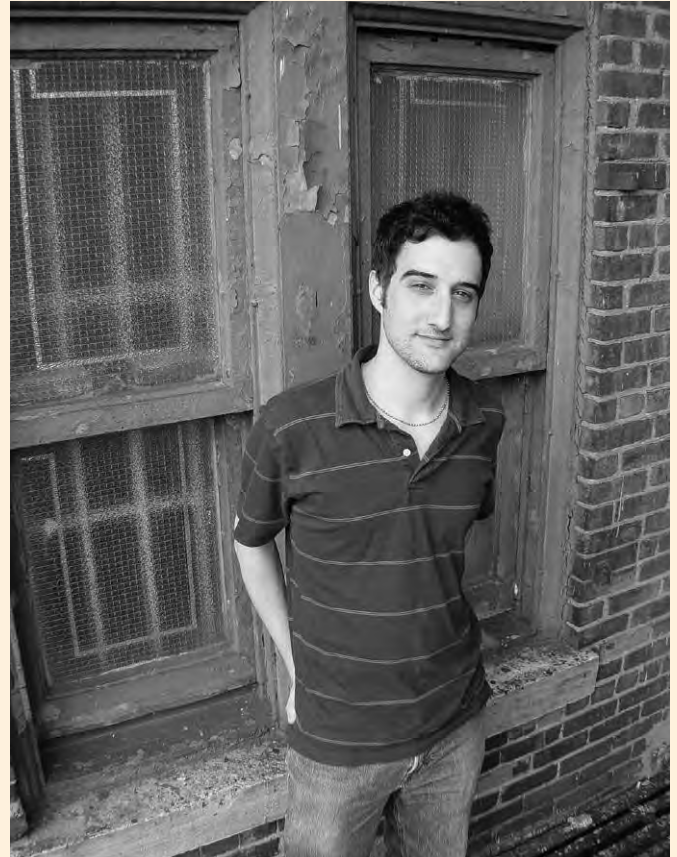
"Dont you worry about him. He'll be ready." Condi said. Condi stood up from the desk. Her legs were long and she smelled like the Xeroxed copies of the information packets they give me each day.

"Hello, Georgie," Condi said. "Did you come to see Condi?" Condi rubbed my hair and it tickled.

"Dont go messing up his hair," Dick said. "He's got a press conference in a few minutes."

Condi wiped some spit on her hand and patted down my hair. Her hand was soft and she smelled like Xerox copies coming right out of the machine. "He looks just fine," Condi said.

Fine day, isn't it, Georgie, Daddy said. Daddy was pitching horseshoes. Horseshoes flew through the air and it was hot. Jeb looked at me. Stand back or one of his horseshoes is going to hit you and knock you down real good, Jeb said. Jeb threw the horseshoe and it went right over the stick and Daddy clapped. Run and get me that horseshoe, Georgie, Daddy said. I ran and



Sam Apple, winner of the 16th annual Faux Faulkner Contest, is a graduate of the creative nonfiction MFA program at Columbia University. His first book, *Schlepping through the Alps*, was published in March 2005 by Ballantine Books. Apple is currently a contributing book editor at Nerve.com and at work on his second book.

picked up the horseshoe. The metal was hot in my hands, and I held it for a little bit and then I dropped it. I picked it up. It was hot in my hands and I started running away from Daddy and Jeb. Come back with that horseshoe, Daddy said. I was running as fast as I could. Jeb, run after him and get me my horseshoe before he throws another one in the river, Daddy hollered. Jeb was chasing after me fast. Come back with that horseshoe, Georgie, Jeb hollered. But I was fast and I kept running until I got to the river. Dont you dare throw that horseshoe in the river, Jeb said. I threw the horseshoe in the river. Jeb fell on the ground. Jeb kicked and cried and then I cried.

"He needs his makeup," Dick said.

"I'll do it," Condi said. She put a little brush on my check and it tickled and I laughed.

Rummy walked into the room. "Jesus, what's he laughing about," Rummy said.

"Dont you pay attention to him, Georgie," Dick said. "They're going to be asking you all about Social Security. You just remember what we talked about."

"He cant remember anything," Rummy said.

I started to holler. Dick's face was red and he looked at Rummy. "I told you to hush up already," Dick said. "Now look what you've gone and done."

"Go and get him Saddam's gun," Condi said. "You know how he likes to hold it."

Dick went to my desk drawer and took out Saddam's gun. He gave it to me, and it was hot in my hands. Rummy pulled the gun away.

"Do you want him carrying a gun into the press conference?" Rummy said. "Cant you think any better than he can?"

I was hollering and Dick was turning red and then white and the room was tilted.

"You give him that gun back, right this minute," Condi said. Rummy gave me Saddam's gun back and I held it my hands. It was hot like a horseshoe.

"You got the gun, now you stop that hollering," Rummy said.

Condi patted me on the back. "It sure is hot in here," she said. She fanned herself and took off her jacket. She smelled like perfume.

Apple will read his winning entry on Sunday, July 24, during the 32nd Annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference. The author's niece, Dean Faulkner Wells, is coordinator of the Faux Faulkner Contest. It is sponsored by *Hemispheres* magazine of United Airlines, the Yoknapatawpha Press, and the University of Mississippi.



Doug McLain

Jamie Kornegay, bookseller at Square Books and producer of *Thacker Mountain Radio*, introduces his daughter, Sophie, to the literary life during the 2005 Oxford Conference for the Book. For a report and more conference photographs, see pages 24-25 of this issue of the *Southern Register*.



UNC CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS IN SOUTHERN STUDIES

The UNC Center for the Study of the American South invites applications for two one-year postdoctoral fellowships in the history, culture, or society of the American South, to begin July 1, 2006. The awards support two outstanding junior scholars in the revision of book-length manuscripts for publication in fields related to the South, broadly construed to include the states of the former Confederacy and adjoining areas. Applications are welcome from any field, but projects are especially welcome that draw on the special collections of the UNC-CH Library or other research collections of the Triangle area, or explicitly engage issues of southern regional identity or distinctiveness.

Support. Each Fellowship provides a salary of \$40,000, plus health insurance and \$3,000 for research and travel. Fellows may arrange to teach no more than one course at UNC during the fellowship term.

Requirements. Applicants must have received the Ph.D. prior to the beginning of the fellowship year and no more than four years before the year begins. Scholars who have received tenure, published a previous scholarly book, or signed a book publication contract are not eligible.

Publication. Fellows are encouraged to submit their manuscripts to UNC Press. Acceptance is contingent on peer review and the editors' discretion. All manuscripts are subject to UNC Press's editorial processes.

Applications. Applications are due November 1, 2005 and must include a cover sheet (available for download at www.unc.edu/depts/csas/), a *curriculum vitae*, three letters of recommendation, a three- to five-page description of the project, including a comprehensive plan for revision of an existing manuscript, and a sample of writing from the project of no more than thirty pages. Following selection, each Fellow must submit a hard copy of the dissertation or existing manuscript.

Send applications to:
Postdoctoral Fellowships in Southern Studies
The Center for the Study of the American South
411 Hamilton Hall, CB# 9127, UNC-CH
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-9127

919-962-5665 or www.unc.edu/depts/csas/

Call for Papers

Society for the Study of Southern Literature Conference

Topic: "Labor, Literature, and the U.S. South"

Radisson Hotel, Birmingham, Alabama

March 30-April 2, 2006

"White trash," "lazy Negroes," the "Southern belle": work and the privilege of leisure (or, more pejoratively, idleness) have helped shape a broad range of race, gender, and class representations not only in the national and global arenas, but also within the region itself. Most obviously in the continuing legacy of plantation slavery, this heritage of work and leisure has directed cultural flows and exchanges reaching far beyond the global or national South. In *Black Reconstruction*, W. E. B. Du Bois provocatively positioned black slaves in the U.S. South—the extent of whose agency in gaining their freedom had largely remained obscure—at the center of a "general strike" that in effect disrupted plantation economies, and he argued that this phenomenon actually held important implications for the development of the national labor movement. In more recent years, with the emergence of the South as the epicenter of U.S. industry fueling exponential increases in its Hispanic, East Asian, and South Asian immigrant populations, the region has functioned as a key channel for the nation in facilitating processes of globalization while playing an increasingly decisive (and controversial) role in shaping its political landscape—a role that has remained obscure, until very recently, in national debates. Yet the U.S. South remains a neglected topic in contemporary labor studies and, surprisingly, has not much factored into that field's theoretical discussions of empire and imperialism. Similarly, labor studies remains for the most part sorely neglected in Southern Studies.

Yet Southern literature has consistently and complexly engaged the theme of labor. From Mary Chesnut's diaries to Charles Chesnut's "Po' Sandy," from William Faulkner's Haitian cadre of workers for Sutpen's Hundred to Zora Neale Hurston's recurrent fictional representations of life (and love) for men and women in labor camps in the South, from the copious leisure of Walker Percy's protagonists to the conspicuous labor of many of Richard Wright's characters, Southern literary history richly reveals a region largely defined by its work and its play.

The Society for the Study of Southern Literature invites proposals for papers and panels on the topic of labor, literature, and the U.S. South for its conference from March 30 to April 2, 2006, in Birmingham, Alabama. Even prior to the civil rights era, Birmingham's burgeoning industry, including iron and steel manufacturing, nurtured the emergence of several populist movements such as Alabama Communism, and it reminds us, perhaps most symbolically through Giuseppe Moretti's hulking Vulcan statue (recently

renovated and the largest metal statue ever cast in the United States), of the important place of the South in U.S. labor history. The conference hotel is located in Vulcan's shadow, less than a mile from the statue and just three blocks from the hip shops and restaurants of the Five Points South district.

Among some of the topics that might be discussed as they impinge upon Southern literary history are the following:

- Labor or idleness in the work of canonical as well as more contemporary Southern fiction writers
- Labor or idleness in fashioning representations of gender, ethnicity, race, and class in Southern literature
- Labor or idleness in the work of Southern women writers
- Labor and leadership in Southern social and political movements
- Domestic labor in the South
- The role of labor and leisure in shaping notions of masculinity, femininity (including maternity), family, and domesticity in Southern literature
- Labor in the global South
- Labor and love, including marriage and sexuality
- Labor and immigration
- Labor and religion
- Systems of labor in the South, e.g., convict leasing and sharecropping
- The prison industrial complex in the South
- Poor whites and slaves
- Labor in the classroom (i.e., teaching Southern literature)
- Writing the South
- Representations of Southern labor or leisure in film and art
- Tourism in the South (plantations, Colonial Williamsburg, civil rights, etc.)

We strongly encourage interdisciplinary perspectives, especially those that might generate cross-disciplinary discussion across the fields of Southern literature and Southern labor and economic history. Proposals for panels and individual papers must be submitted as Word attachments by November 1, 2005, to Riché Richardson at r Richardson@ucdavis.edu. *All proposals must include the proposer's name and e-mail address in the first two lines of the attached document itself.*

University Museum Exhibits Faulkner-Inspired Art by Boyd Saunders

The University Museum is exhibiting more than 40 etchings and lithographs Boyd Saunders created to illustrate *Spotted Horses*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *The Bear*, and other titles by William Faulkner. Saunders, painter, sculptor, illustrator, and printmaker, will talk about his work during a reception at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 24, 2005, the opening day of the 32nd Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference. "Faulkner's Inheritance" is this year's conference theme.



"Faulkner Prints" by Boyd Saunders
The University of Mississippi Museum

Birney Imes to Exhibit in Gammill Gallery

Whispering Pines, a collection of 27 color and black-and-white photographs by Mississippi photographer Birney Imes, will be on exhibit at Barnard Observatory's Gammill Gallery through September 16, 2005. There will be a reception for the artist on Sunday, July 24, at 1:00 p.m.

The photographs, taken during the late 1980s and early 1990s, tell the story of Blume Triplett, a Locofoma, Mississippi, native who opened the *Whispering Pines* roadhouse in 1949 for his wife, Eppie. The Pines was especially popular in the 1950s and '60s, inspiring the bluesman Mississippi Big Joe Williams to sing about it: "Thinkin' about the good times we had in Mississippi, boys, runnin' 'round by *Whispering Pines*."

Imes, editor of the *Columbus Dispatch* in Columbus, Mississippi, is known as one of the South's best photographers. His work is in permanent collections of 20 museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and the Art Institute of Chicago. He has produced three artistic books of photography, *Whispering Pines*, *Juke Joint*, and *Partial to Home*.

Blume Triplett (left), owner of the roadhouse *Whispering Pines*, with his longtime assistant, Rosie Stevenson



Birney Imes

l y n n & s t e w a r t

Gammill



Gallery

Exhibition Schedule

June 1 - Sept. 23, 2005
Whispering Pines
Birney Imes

Sept. 26 - Nov. 1, 2005
Tasting the South: Images of Southern Foodways
Amy Evans

Nov. 1 - Nov. 7, 2005
Quilts
Various Photographers

Nov. 7, 2005 - Jan. 13, 2006
"With Signs Following..."
Photographs from the Southern Religious Roadside
Joe York

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.

The Old Federal Road Project

A new Center project is studying the history of transportation, asking who traveled, how and why they traveled, and, especially, how travel has changed on an important road in northern Georgia.

The Old Federal Road turns 200 this year, and the Center is helping document that occasion as part of a project sponsored by the Georgia Department of Transportation. Cherokees first developed the Road, allowed the United States access to it in a treaty in 1805, and later had to leave on it as part of the Trail of Tears. The Road was a prime route for early U.S. settlers moving into north Georgia, and it became central to the antebellum transportation of cotton and people, both enslaved and free, on foot and by stagecoach. Maps from 1832 show the Federal Road as the only road through most parts of the Cherokee counties in north-central and northwestern Georgia. The Road has had military uses: Andrew Jackson's forces traveled parts of it on their way to fight Seminoles, and both Union and Confederate soldiers used it. In the late 1800s, rural people took the



James Campbell, owner of a roadside business at the intersection of Highways 2 and 41, near Ringgold, Georgia

Federal Road on infrequent trips to larger towns and cities.

Today a number of roads follow parts of the route of the Old Federal Road. Driving that route today takes one

through an intriguing range of Southern history. The eastern point of the Road starts near Gainesville, moves through Forsyth County, parts of which have become something of a suburb of the ever-expanding city of Atlanta, through mountains, intriguing smaller towns, and rural areas notable for camp meeting sites, farmhouses, and various populations. The route winds through parts of Hall, Forsyth, Cherokee, Pickens, Gilmer, Murray, Whitfield, and Catoosa counties in Georgia, before moving into Tennessee and Alabama, showing both dramatic new development in some areas, and depopulation in others.

The project will help alert people to the history of the Road, the history of Southern transportation, and the changes in life along the Road. Included will be a report about the Road and life along it, an audio driving tour on CD, an illustrated brochure that will be available for people taking the driving tour, and an exhibition on the history of the Road. The project will also identify 20 sites for new signs along the Road and write the text for those signs.



Abandoned building, Highway 411, Tennaga, Georgia

David Wharton



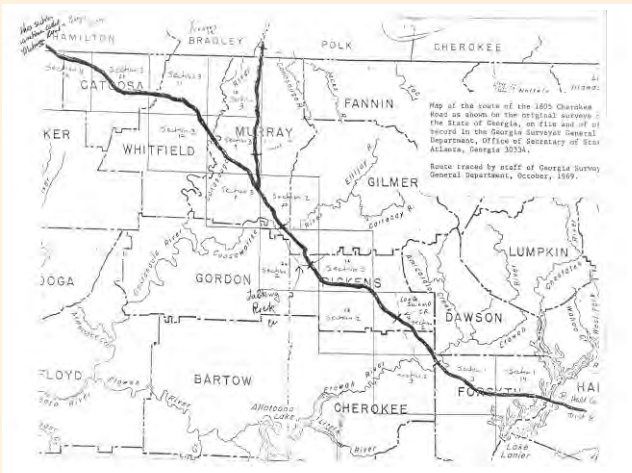
Tennessee state line, Highway 411, Tennega, Georgia

David Wharton



Varnell Market, Highway 2, Varnell, Georgia

The project, funded by a grant from the Georgia Department of Transportation, is employing historian Ted Ownby, documentary photographer David Wharton, and three graduate student assistants. The graduate students have worked with visual sources, Native American sources, and U.S. government sources.



Southern Studies Student Exhibition in Georgia

Community Photography, the Southern Studies student photography exhibition displayed at the Gammill Gallery this spring, traveled to Georgia this summer. Kathleen Gelvin, curator of the Fire House Gallery in Louisville, Georgia, had seen student exhibitions from previous years on the Center's Web site and contacted David Wharton about showing the most recent set of photographs, made during his Fall 2004 documentary photography seminar. "I asked the students and they were pretty excited about it," said Wharton, "so we arranged to send it over to Louisville once it came down here at the end of May." The exhibition ran from June 10 through July 11 and included photographs by Southern Studies students Robert Caldwell, Ellie Campbell, Jordan Craven, Matt Donohue, Sean Hughes, Nathan Kosub, Andrew Leventhal, Mary Margaret Miller, Angela Moore, Susie Penman, Renna Tuten, and Robin Yekaitis. Several of the students attended the June 11 opening and gave gallery talks that day.



DOCUMENTARY FIELDWORK PHOTOGRAPHS



"Community Portraiture in Six Small Towns Near Oxford, Mississippi"

by Twelve Students at the University of Mississippi Center for the Study of Southern Culture

June 10 - July 10, 2005
Artist Gallery Talk Saturday, June 11, 2005

The Fire House Gallery
605 Broad Street • Louisville, Georgia
information at www.ourlouisville.com

Southern Studies Students Complete MA Degrees

This spring the Center awarded 11 master's degrees to students whose research interests varied from country music to civil rights to religious expression to a Mississippi artist working in Korea. Although students are not required to write a thesis in order to graduate—two students, Matthew Donohue and Andrew Leventhal, completed internship programs instead—most do. Below is a listing of the students who completed theses, along with the titles of their research.

Richard Caldwell

“Willie Morris: Toward a Literary Biography”

Robert Hawkins

“Fretting over Faith: Protestantism and the Southern Musician”

Sean Hughes

“Honor, Commerce, Suffrage, and Civil Rights”

Nathan Kosub

“1+1+1+1 = 5: San Antonio, the 1950s, and the Sir Douglas Quintet without Doug Sahn”

Lynn Linnemeier

“Stereo Propaganda, Re-Imaging the South through Stereographic Photography and the History and Photographs from the African American Community of Mound Bayou”

Mayumi Morishita

“Florence Hedleston Crane: A Mississippi Woman Painting in Korea”

Teresa Parker

“City on a Hill: John McCrary's Oxford, Mississippi”

Angela Watkins

“Sing Me Back Home: Picking Country Music and Memories in Hernando, Mississippi”

Joe York

“1 Cross + 3 Nails = 4 Sale: Religion on the Southern Roadside”

2004-2005 Southern Studies Awards

PETER ASCHOFF PRIZE

Troy White for his paper “Defining the Blues as Blues Defining: Speech Acts in William Ferris's *Blues from the Delta*”

LUCILLE AND MOTEE DANIELS AWARDS

Mary Battle for her paper “The History of Racial Relations in Horry County, South Carolina”

Angela Moore for her paper “Latino Baptism in Panola County, Mississippi: Religion as a Spiritual Comfort and Secular Aid”

GRAY AWARD

Catherine Riggs for her paper “Reenacting as Social Movement”

COTERIE AWARD

Sarah Taylor for her paper “Not the Soft Soil”

Yoknapatawpha Arts Council

third annual

Oxford Film Festival

September 6-11, 2005

www.oxfordfilmfest.com

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Join us for a week of independent films, music, and Southern culture.

Panels: Screenwriters, Talent and Casting, Producers, Media, Documentary, and others

Film genres: Features, Documentaries, Shorts, Experimental, Music Videos, Animation, and Youth

“I've been to a few film festivals and this is definitely one of the top ones.” — Andy Sacks, producer of 2004 Academy Award winner *Two Soldiers*

“To have the excitement of the importance of film rise in this town of literature and music was so tremendous—kinda like the first time I had iced sweet tea.”
— Ron Shapiro, Oxford resident and former owner of The Hoka theater

Dedicated to Larry Brown (1951-2004)

Southern Studies Major Inducted into Nation's Oldest Honor Society, Earns Degree after Three Decades

Southern Studies major Becky Coyle thought the invitation she received asking her to join the Ole Miss chapter of Phi Beta Kappa was a mistake. After all, Phi Beta Kappa is the nation's oldest and most prestigious collegiate honor society, and Coyle, who has spent 12 years off-and-on working toward a bachelor's degree, says she thought membership in the organization was limited to more traditional students. A full-time University employee with three grown children, Coyle doesn't quite fit into the traditional student mold.

"I have so much respect for Becky," says Coyle's academic advisor Kathryn McKee, McMullan Associate Professor of Southern Studies and associate professor of English. "She's very resilient and very creative, and she's steadily hammered away at getting her degree, through working full time, taking care of children, and taking care of aging parents."

Indeed Coyle's oldest child, Brad, now a medical doctor, was just two years old when she decided to take advantage of the University's policy allowing staff members to take classes free of charge. Coyle, who will soon be retiring as an executive secretary for University Development, was working in the school's Office of Continuing Education when she took her first courses, in 1975. She will graduate with honors this summer, 30 years later.

Initially, Coyle says, she took courses in topics that would help her in raising a family; after a few semesters, she considered becoming a veterinarian. But her academic plans were put on hold in the early 1980s with a new baby and a move to Richmond, Virginia. In the 1990s the Coyles moved back to Oxford, and in 1998, with her youngest child, Andrew, in middle school, Becky returned to work at the University, in the Development office. She decided then to pursue a degree in Southern Studies.



Arden Coyle

Becky Coyle (center) celebrates her induction into Phi Beta Kappa with Southern Studies professors Kathryn McKee and Ted Ownby.

"I define myself as a Southerner, and I wanted to learn more about my own culture," says Coyle, who settled with her parents, both Mississippi natives, in Clinton during her teens, after her father retired from the Air Force. "A Southern Studies degree is interdisciplinary and requires students to take classes from at least four different disciplines. My education has included a variety of subjects, such as Indians of Mississippi and the South, the anthropology of blues culture, the politics of the South, the civil rights era, and African American literature. Each class gave me a better understanding of myself and my South."

McKee, who has taught Coyle in several classes and is a resident member of Phi Beta Kappa, says that one reason Coyle was chosen for the honor society, beyond her grade-point average, is the combination of the "breadth and depth" of her course work. "What's most amazing about Becky is that she's not satisfied with just getting credit," McKee says. "She's really challenged

herself with the courses she's chosen, and she always does her best work. I've taught her in small seminar rooms and big lecture halls, and in both settings she stood out as a serious student willing to be challenged. It's remarkable, too, that she never once asked for an extension, an appointment outside of office hours, or anything special, when she had good reason to do that. She just wanted to be a student."

For her part, Coyle is effusively complimentary of her Southern Studies, English, and history professors in particular, but, she says, she's "loved every class [she's] taken at Ole Miss." She also says she couldn't have achieved her academic success without the support of coworkers, friends, teachers, and family. She is most especially grateful to her husband. Once she receives her degree, in August, Coyle will take a break from studying for a while, but she says "I will always be learning."

JENNIFER SOUTHALL

Mississippi Delta Tennessee Williams Festival

The 13th annual Mississippi Delta Tennessee Williams Festival is scheduled to take place in Clarksdale on October 14-15, 2005. Williams's 1964 play *The Eccentricities of a Nightingale* will be a focus of this year's festival. As in the past, the program will include presentations by Williams authorities and friends, several performances, a session with papers by scholars, and tours of the house and neighborhood where the playwright lived as a child. Also scheduled in conjunction with the festival are workshops for teachers and for student actors and a drama competition, with prizes totaling \$2,500 for the winners.

Williams authorities confirmed to participate in the festival are W. Kenneth Holditch, Colby Kullman, Allean Hale, Jay Jensen, Dorothy Shawhan, Nancy M. Tischler, and *New Directors* editor Thomas Keith of New York City. Actor Joe Bonelli will present Ray Stricklyn and Charlotte Chandler's *Confessions of a Nightingale*, a one-man play derived from interviews with Williams by Chandler and C. Robert Jennings. Actress and director Erma Duricko will perform as well as conduct an acting workshop for high school students. Drama teacher and theater director Jay Jensen also will lead an acting workshop

for students. Williams's brother, Dakin, will make his annual appearance. Other participants will be announced soon.

Scholars are invited to submit papers for possible presentation at the festival. Papers on any topic related to Williams and his work are eligible for consideration. Presentations should be no longer than 20 minutes. Authors whose papers are selected for presentation will receive free lodging during the festival and a waiver of the registration fee. The deadline for submissions is August 30, 2005. To enter, send a completed paper (7-8 pages) or an abstract (250 words) to Colby H. Kullman, Department of English, The University of Mississippi, P.O. Box 1848, University, MS 38677.

The Tennessee Williams Festival Acting Competition, hosted by Coahoma Community College, is open to high school students in Mississippi. The competition includes two acting categories: monologues and scenes. All material must be drawn from the plays of Tennessee Williams. Each monologue is to be two minutes or less, and each scene is to be between five and ten minutes and involve any number of characters.

Cash prizes are given for winning monologues and scenes, which will be



Collection of Richard Freeman Leavitt

performed for the festival audience. Prize money will go to schools of the winners for use with drama activities or library books related to theater and literature. Students, with their teacher-sponsors, will be given the opportunity to decide how the prize money will be spent.

For information on the 2005 festival and drama competition, write Tennessee Williams Festival, P.O. Box 1565, Clarksdale, MS 38614-1565; telephone 662-627-7337.

Tennessee Williams Tribute in Columbus

Columbus, Mississippi, the birthplace of playwright Tennessee Williams, will sponsor a long weekend of activities in his honor September 8-11, 2005. The Tennessee Williams Tribute and Tour of Victorian Homes offers a varied schedule: an opening night cocktail reception, a continental breakfast, luncheons, and a "Moon Lake" party with dinner and selections from Williams's plays performed by native Mississippian Anthony Herrera, long known to daytime television fans as James Stenbeck on *As the World Turns*. Patricia Guyton Marsh, a professional actress from Columbus, will present "The Ladies of Tennessee Williams,"

featuring Blanche Dubois from *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Maggie the Cat from *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and Amanda Wingfield from *The Glass Menagerie*, among other memorable characters.

A matinee movie showcases *The Rose Tattoo*, followed with commentary by Ole Miss English professor Colby Kullman. Other scholars who will make presentations are Virginia Carr, Georgia State University; George Crandall, Auburn University; W. Kenneth Holditch, emeritus, University of New Orleans; and Ralph Voss, University of Alabama. Dakin Williams, brother of the playwright, is also expected to attend. The weekend concludes with a church

service at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where Tennessee Williams's grandfather was rector; a luncheon; and an afternoon tour of three Victorian homes.

The event is sponsored by local groups and volunteer organizers. Proceeds are earmarked for the preservation of Tennessee Williams's first home, now the Columbus Welcome Center, and for the creation of a Tennessee Williams Museum.

Ticket packages purchased before September 1 are \$80 per person for all events; after that date, ticket prices are \$100 per person. Bus transportation to the Moon Lake party will be available. For more information, call 800-327-2686.

Regional


Upcoming Events of Interest

Roundup

Artist to Icon: Early Photographs of Elvis, Dylan, and the Beatles is on display at the Delta Blues Museum through August 1, 2005. The exhibition provides a glimpse into the lives of these aspiring artists prior to their becoming rock 'n' roll legends. Included are 48 rarely seen black-and-white photographs by Alfred Werthheimer, Astrid Kirchherr, Jurgen Vollmer, Max Scheler, and Daniel Kramer, who capture the innocence, ambition, and unbounded adventure of rock 'n' roll's first decade. *Artist to Icon* is a traveling exhibition developed by Experience Music Project. Located at No. 1 Blues Alley in downtown Clarksdale, the Delta Blues Museum is dedicated to creating a welcoming place where visitors find meaning, value, and perspective by exploring the history and heritage of this unique American musical art form known as the blues.



Lens on the Larder: The Foodways of Southern Appalachia in Focus, an exhibition of photographs and oral history by Larry Smith and Fred Sauceman of East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, will run November 3 through December 21 at the University's Reece Museum. An opening reception will be held November 3 at 6 p.m. The museum, a division of the Center for Appalachian Studies and Services, is open Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Thursdays until 7 p.m. There is no admission charge. For information, call the ETSU Office of University Relations at 423-439-4317.



Tennessee Williams
Tribute
& Tour of
Victorian Homes
September 8 - 11, 2005
Columbus, Mississippi
Birthplace of poet, author, and playwright
Tennessee Williams

Columbus Decorative Arts and Preservation Forum, Antiques Show and Sale Set for November 3-6, 2005

The Columbus Historic Foundation announces the 14th annual Decorative Arts and Preservation Forum and the 34th annual Antiques Show and Sale to be held November 3-6, 2005, in Columbus, Mississippi. The weekend features scholarly lectures, an antiques identification session, historic house tours, meals in historic homes, and a high quality antiques show and sale.

"George Washington Slept Here: The Colonial Revival in America, 1876-1930s" is the theme of the two-day forum, which is partially funded through a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council and will include four free public lectures. The first, on the

evening of November 4, will be a period music lecture/performance by Jim Gibson, Georgia State University. Lecturers on November 5 will be Roger Moss, The Athenaeum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Stephen Harrison, High Museum; and John W. Keefe, New Orleans Museum of Arts.

A \$100 grand patron ticket includes the Antiques Show Premier Party on Thursday night, dinner on Friday night, and breakfast, lunch, and dinner on Saturday. For information, visit the Web site www.historic-columbus.org.

Michael Knight: 2005-2006 Grisham Writer

Ole Miss writer in residence (and resident genius) Barry Hannah has said that Michael Knight is “more than a master of the short story,” that Knight “knows the true pace of life and does not cheat it, all the while offering whopping entertainment.” As the University’s 2005-2006 John and Renée Grisham Emerging Southern Writer, Knight will pass on some of what he’s learned in becoming a master of fiction while he also continues work on a new novel.

“I think it will be fantastic to work with the caliber of students in the MFA program at Ole Miss, students who are being published in places like *Harper’s* and *Best New American Voices*,” says Knight, who is the author of two short story collections, *Dogfight and Other Stories* (Plume, 1998) and *Goodnight, Nobody* (Atlantic Monthly, 2003), and the novel *Divining Rod* (Dutton, 1998). “It will also be fantastic to be with writers like Tom [Franklin, Ole Miss visiting writer in residence,] and Barry. That’s not to say we don’t have great students and great writers at [the University of] Tennessee but any diverse influence is a good thing.”

Knight, who currently serves as the director of the creative writing program at UT Knoxville, is the recipient of several awards for his work, including the *Dictionary of Literary Biography’s* 1999 Best First Novel Award, the Fellowship of Southern Writers’ 1999 New Writing Award, and a 1999 Special Citation in Fiction from the PEN/Hemingway Foundation. His first major award came in 1996, when he won *Playboy* magazine’s college fiction contest; the following year his work was included in *Scribner’s Best of the Fiction Workshops Anthology*. A graduate of the MFA program in creative writing at the University of Virginia, Knight holds a master’s degree in contemporary fiction from the University of Southern Mississippi and a bachelor’s degree from Hampden-Sydney College.

Although Knight is by all accounts a Southerner—he hails from Alabama—Franklin calls Knight “the rare ‘non-Southern’ Southern writer. That is, he’s someone who can get at the mysteries of human nature without using trailers, shotguns, rotgut, or dead mules. His stories are clear and beautiful, funny and moving, and his novel, *Divining Rod*, is a gem. We’re lucky to have him in Oxford.”

Knight was the unanimous choice of the Grisham Writer selection committee this year, says Joseph Urgo, professor and chair of the University’s English Department. As the 13th John and Renée Grisham Emerging Southern Writer, Knight will teach one fiction workshop this fall and another in the spring while he works on his second novel. In return, he’ll receive a stipend and housing from the University, funded by an endowment from the Grishams.

“The Department of English is pleased to host one of the region’s most promising young fiction writers—our students,



Michael Knight

and the community at large, should benefit greatly by his presence,” Urgo says. “And, if all goes well, we hope Oxford will have a beneficial effect on his writing.”

Knight thinks living and working in Oxford will no doubt be beneficial: “Oxford is such a literary town,” he says. “It seems like everyone there reads, and I’ll be just rock-throwing distance from Square Books. I’ve been there for readings and was there a couple of years ago for one of the best experiences I’ve had as a writer, for a celebration of young writers honoring Barry Hannah, who has been as much an influence on my generation as William Faulkner was on his. I look forward to having plenty of time to write in Oxford, to finishing my novel.”

Knight will be joined in Oxford by his wife, Jill; three-year-old daughter, Mary; and his newborn daughter, due July 10.

JENNIFER SOUTHALL

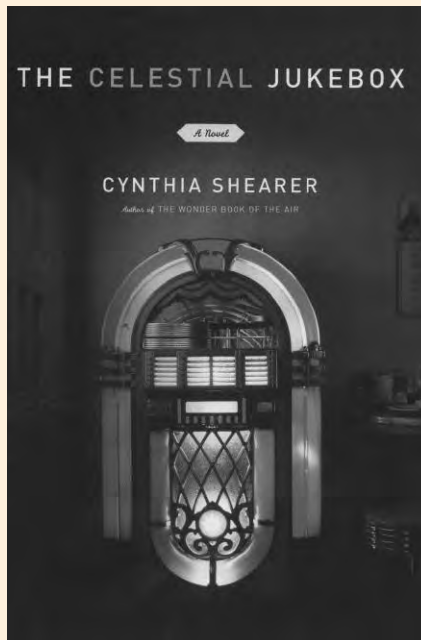
Reading the South

The Celestial Jukebox.

By Cynthia Shearer.
Washington, D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2005.
431 pages. \$25.00 cloth.

When a Mauritanian teenager asks for directions at the Celestial Grocery in Cynthia Shearer's fictitious Madagascar, Mississippi, he says he is "straight off the boat." Boubacar has just learned the phrase from a friendly African American soldier who drives him from the Memphis airport to the rural community where the boy's uncles work at a casino built on Delta farmland. These earlier immigrants dare not take a few hours off to meet the plane because they can be quickly "replaced by some other newcomer equally adept at carving carrot-roses, or spiring baggage off big American buses, or smiling without rancor at old infidel women with no manners." A New York reviewer of *The Celestial Jukebox* praises the "lyrical, floating world" Shearer creates in her second novel, while adding that Madagascar, Mississippi, "could not and does not exist."

In fact, Cynthia Shearer's confluence of Africans, Hondurans, and Chinese with descendants of slaves and planters is an accurate reflection of the contemporary South. "Ain't no such thing as original Americans. . . . We all come off the same boat," says Angus Chien, whose father opened the Celestial Grocery in 1938 after fleeing Japanese invaders at Nanking. The common language of all these old and new Southerners is music. When a classic National Steel guitar passes into Boubacar's



eager arms, *The Celestial Jukebox* reconfigures the sense of South and even the sense of nation for the 21st century.

"Music was like a seine net," Angus's longtime friend and customer Dean Fondren reflects, "trawling the air to catch the spirits of the mutilated of the world, and to romance them back into the arms of the rest, who could help them. Anything else was just a noise, a plague of grasshoppers that would strip the land bare." The international scale of such plagues appears in references to World War II, Vietnam, and the attack on the World Trade Center; the South's particular plagues range from race and class tensions to casino development. Nevertheless, the novel's first and final chapters are headed "Introit" and "Benedictus," a hopeful, ceremonial frame for the region's history. Clearly, music is a prime source and major symbol of

the hope. Several chapter titles echo the names of songs, songs as different from each other as Son Thomas's "Catfish Blues," Wanda Jackson's "Fujiyama Mama," and Lulu Masisela's "Six Mabone."

In a recent essay for Beatrice.com, Shearer says she is "always on the lookout for something new and odd to listen to"; and she describes *The Celestial Jukebox* as "a love letter to all musicians from any epoch or place, regardless of how they might register on Sony's Richter scale." She pays special tribute to Mississippi's bluesmen (Othar Turner, Junior Kimbrough, R. L. Burnside, and many more)—her "masters" during the years Shearer was curator of Faulkner's Rowan Oak in Oxford. "I wanted to learn to write English words the way these guys could play trance music," she explains; such an art "consisted of locating lost chords of joy, creating them *ex nihilo*, out of nothing."

The Celestial Jukebox strikes these elusive chords—not *ex nihilo*, but out of an artist's deep well: remembrances of bottle trees, juke joints, casino parking lots, Beale Street, abandoned country churches, a children's performance of Gilbert and Sullivan, Elvis T-shirts, an encounter with an immigration judge who stopped at Rowan Oak when Shearer was on the job. Faulkner talked about rummaging in the lumber room of his imagination; Eudora Welty envisioned a tapestry: "The strands are all there: to the memory nothing is ever really lost." From countless strands, this novel is crafted as meticulously as the birdhouses Miss Bebe Marie Abide shapes from the

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Celestial Grocery's cast-off bottle caps and from old leather book covers she retrieves from her family's rotting mansion. Shearer told Square Books' *Dear Reader* newsletter that the 37 unnumbered chapters of *The Celestial Jukebox* began as 13 linked short stories—"So the fourth and fifth drafts were like cutting a deck of cards and shuffling them." Her artful rearrangement has little in common with those casino card games that lure the prosperous black farmer Aubrey Ellerbee away from his Delta fields.

Shearer's shuffling is more like that of the splendid Rock-ola that Angus Chien's father installed in the Celestial Grocery in 1939. Surprises are in the mix. When you drop a coin into the slot, you don't know what you'll hear because the Memphis Novelty Company's jukebox leases were burned in a riot the night Martin Luther King was killed, and the machine hasn't been serviced since then. The Rock-ola's playlist is "the musical equivalent of the ant in the amber glass at Pompeii: customers could choose almost anything they wanted, as long as it had been released before April of 1968. Johnny Cash, Otis Redding, Carl Perkins, Percy Sledge, Slim Harpo, Wilson Pickett."

Working at the Celestial Grocery, Boubacar favors Johnny Cash and B. B. King; but he gradually learns how to make his own music. After the Reverend Calvin Dearborn adjusts a pin on the boy's National Steel at a Holy Ghost party, "A joyous squeal came into the church and then vanished into the rafters as if some captive animal had been suddenly set free." Like Boubacar's silver guitar, *The Celestial Jukebox* vibrates with joyous sounds.

JOAN WYLIE HALL

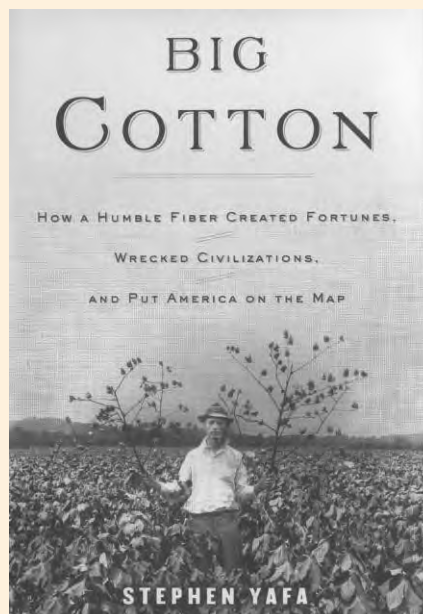
Big Cotton: How a Humble Fiber Created Fortunes, Wrecked Civilizations, and Put America on the Map.

By Stephen Yafa.

New York: Viking Press, 2004.

448 pages. \$25.95 cloth.

In *Big Cotton*, Stephen Yafa takes on the daunting task of writing a history of the industries, cultures, machines, products, social movements, fashion trends, individuals, and insects connected to the cotton plant. Though he focuses mainly on the role of cotton in American history, Yafa's text powerfully conveys the magnitude of cotton's usage and influence throughout the history of the world, as he states in his introduction: "Cotton rode on the back of Alexander the Great all the way from India to Europe, robbed ancient Egyptian priests, generated the conflicts that led to the American Civil War, inspired Marx's and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*, fooled Columbus into thinking he had reached Asia, and made at least one bug, the boll weevil, world famous. It



also created the Industrial Revolution in England and in the United States, motivated single American women to leave home for the first time in history, and played a pivotal role in Mahatma Gandhi's fight for India's independence from British colonial rule. . . . Forty billion pounds a year grow on about seventy-seven million acres in more than eighty countries."

Before reading *Big Cotton*, I usually associated cotton with Gap T-shirts and Q-tips, or in long white rows in rust-colored dirt along Mississippi highways, but Yafa reveals that cotton has actually played a pervasively large and even central role in almost every aspect of human history. From establishing the first American upper classes, to pop culture, to institutionalized enslavement and poverty, cotton has historically brought out the most innovative and gluttonously cruel aspects of human nature through its ability to make and destroy fortunes and empires, since the plant was first domesticated 5,500 years ago.

Therefore Yafa's scope in this history of cotton is broad, but one of the strengths of his well-crafted writing structure is his ability to weave in specific details and stories. Highlights in the book range from a description of Samuel Slater disguising himself as a farmer to escape Britain and build the first cotton mill in America from nothing but his memories of the machines; to the tale of B. B. King as a young boy in Mississippi, listening to his grandmother tell him that in the world of sharecropping cotton, singing "mattered just as much as breathing, sometimes maybe even more"; to the role of World War II veterans, cowboys, and Hollywood actors such as Marlon Brando and James Dean in promoting denim as a fashion trend and the cotton industry boom around the world. So

while *Big Cotton* is an industrial history of a “scrawny, gangling plant that produces hairs about as insubstantial as milkweed,” it often reads like a historical drama, with the human insights and romance of an epic novel.

From my limited prior knowledge of the cotton industry, I found Stephen Yafa’s work to be enlightening, in his ability to clearly unravel and connect various complicated strands of human history to cotton’s history. But when I asked a man who has worked in the Memphis Cotton Exchange for decades what he thought of *Big Cotton*, he responded, “Well, I thought the beginning was pretty good, but really it struck me as a little sophomoric at times, don’t you think?” So perhaps the significance of cotton in human history is even greater and more complicated than can be captured in one historical text, no matter how expansive and detailed the scope, but I still found Stephen Yafa’s *Big Cotton* to be fascinating and informative.

MARY BATTLE

Gardens and Historic Plants of the Antebellum South.

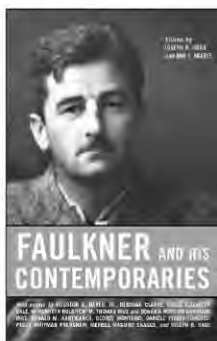
By James R. Cothran.
Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003. 344 pages, 142 color illustrations, 21 halftones, 27 line art. \$49.95.

Unless someone unexpectedly turns up a long-lost treasure trove of manuscripts from a musty attic somewhere, James Cothran’s epic new *Gardens and Historic Plants of the Antebellum South* will no doubt stand the test of time as the single most

Refine your reading

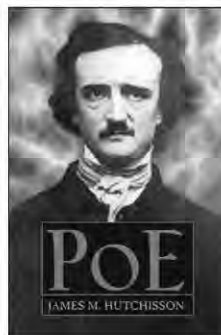


Faulkner
A Biography
By Joseph Blotner
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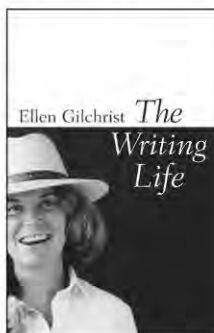


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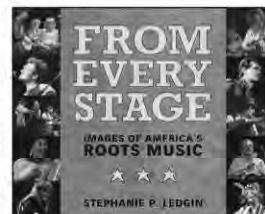


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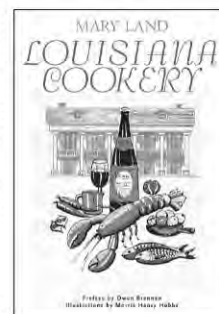


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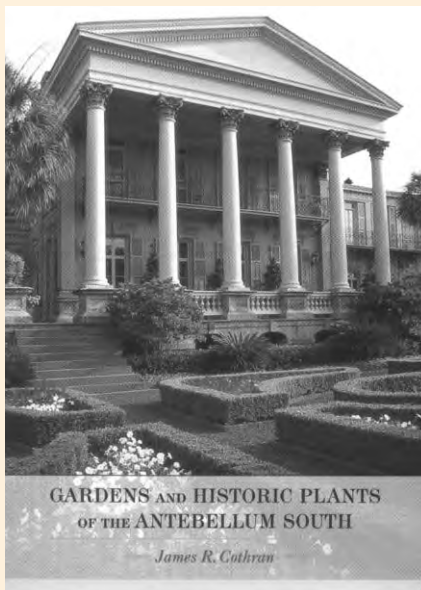
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influential one-stop resource for garden historians and lovers of Southern gardens and culture.

Cothran's appreciation of subtle details, honed from decades of poring over historic notes, diaries, interviews, lecture preparations, and "scratch and sniff" tours of surviving gardens, is amply demonstrated through his careful balance of observations and opinions from the most prominent designers, gardeners, researchers, and journalists of the South—both past and present. Just reading the jacket-note comments from our top garden historians and making a quick run-down in the acknowledgement of some of the folks who assisted in this monumental endeavor are comforting evidence that Cothran's work has the solid backing of "everyone who is anyone."

The big book includes enough direct quotes from the most serious horticulturists from our most affluent period to bring alive this journey into how we evolved as a gardening society. Cothran clearly documents how quickly our pioneer ancestors went from early dealings with an uncomfortable climate and strange native plants, through trying out exotic new plants from around the world, and finally settling down into what, in the long run, has become a genteel partnership between us and our region.

Cothran's judicious blend of photography, line drawings, garden plans, and paintings is evocative without being pedantic and helps the reader and student understand the efforts of the thoughtful men and women who came to tame the land, but who were adept enough at cobbling together resources from several major cultural influences into a unique style that sets well on the countryside. He has also highlighted delightful and useful plants that were introduced into gardens during that rambunctious period, many of which continue to define the South.



Though there will always be a need for interpreting who we are by how we garden, Cothran has pulled into one comprehensive volume what so many have been uncovering piecemeal; my own copy of the hefty book has already had its bound spine loosened from use and has given me both a broader overview and deeper insights into what made—and continues to make—the Southern garden culture the genteel envy of the rest of the country.

This book not only shows how we came about; by cementing our historic roles in garden development, it can also help us understand why we continue to defy modern efforts at streamlining our gardens to fit the rest of the world.

FELDER RUSHING

Burnin' Down the House: Home in African American Literature.

Valerie Sweeney Prince.
New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
160 pages. \$64.50 cloth, \$24.50 paper.

In the spirit of full disclosure, I should

begin by admitting that I came to this book prejudiced in its favor. I had the pleasure of sharing the stage with Valerie Prince at a panel discussion on the blues at the last American Studies Association meeting in Atlanta (she chaired the program and offered wise, attentive commentary), and I still remember a paper she gave at an international conference on the blues at Penn State back in 1999, where she offered a scintillating exegesis of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* revolving around the fact that the novel's action takes place at 124 Bluestone Road. Bluestone, she noted, may be read "Blues Tone." No one, to my knowledge, had previously made this point. She went on from there, masterfully diagramming the way in which Morrison's blues-toned narrative voice animated her slavery-haunted Southern Gothic tale.

Although *Burnin' Down the House* offers extended readings of Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Song of Solomon*, Prince has left *Beloved* out. And while this book, her first, offers ample evidence of the critical originality and acuity that marked that earlier performance, it also leaves me vaguely dissatisfied—possessed by a fan's blues, if you will.

Prince's study is plainly animated by a feminist-revisionist dissatisfaction of its own: a repeatedly expressed desire to reconstruct the theory of blues expressiveness articulated by Houston A. Baker in his influential *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature* (1984). Seconding other critics such as Ann du Cille and Michael Awkward, Prince critiques Baker for having essentially erased the mother—her maternal body and bittersweet, healing blues song—from his oft-invoked "blues matrix." If a key site within Baker's blues matrix is what he calls "the black (w)hole," a loophole of retreat within which a black protagonist such as Ralph Ellison's

Invisible Man may evade white violence, gather his energies, and prophesy future emergence, then Prince lops off the “w,” reconfigures this retreat as a regressive, infantile male desire to crawl back into the maternal womb (Eva Peace’s son Plum in *Sula*), and speaks harshly of “the failure of the construct of Baker’s black hole.” “The unsexed hole,” she insists, “is neither a viable home place nor a place for rebirth.”

Prince is dead wrong on this last point, it seems to me, and the reason she’s wrong has less to do with gender politics than with her failure to ground her theory of blues expressiveness in actual blues performance practices of the sort brilliantly expostulated upon by Albert Murray in *Stomping the Blues*. Another word for the “unsexed hole” within which a blues protagonist, male or female, achieves technical competence and spiritual wholeness as a prelude to a public display of mastery is, of course, the *woodshed*—a term first credited to Charlie Parker after his backyard interregnum in Kansas City in the 1930s, but equally applicable to, for example, the narrator of Sherley Anne Williams’s poem “Any Woman’s Blues,” or Ellison’s Invisible Man, or Ursa Corregidora, protagonist of Gayl Jones’s *Corregidora*, who transforms her posthysterectomy bedroom into a kind of woodshed as she limbers up her bruised, bluesed voice on “Trouble in Mind” and “Shake, Rattle, and Roll” in preparation for a nightclub gig that will mark her first tentative reemergence.

If Prince neglects to theorize the woodshed as a site of transformative blues expressiveness, then she does so because her eyes and ears are focused on three other crucial spaces within which, she argues, African Americans struggled to make a home during and after the two Great Migrations of the 20th century: the city, the kitchen,

and the womb. Taking Richard Wright’s *Native Son* and the novels mentioned above as representative texts, Prince tracks the way that Southern-born migrants and their Northern-sited descendants retreated to increasingly constricted spaces, suffered various sorts of blues in and around them, and either found a way of making blues song itself a sustaining home-place or—in the case of Bigger Thomas, the Invisible Man, Pecola Breedlove—were cornered, immobilized, and driven mad by life up North.

Prince’s approach, a strikingly original fusion of blues-feminism, Heideggerian spatial poetics, and recent work on the built environment, is perhaps most successful in its articulation of the so-called blues kitchen, a nourishing, South-sounding domestic space inhabited, among others, by Ellison’s Harlem rooming-house mother hen, Mary Rambo, and Mrs. McTeer, a mother exemplar in *The Bluest Eye*. “The blues,” Prince argues convincingly, “serves Mary as a repository into which she can pour her pain and negative emotion. Mary’s blues kitchen emerges as part of a larger cultural practice of establishing ‘home ground.’ The blues becomes a metaphorical bottle tree that is constructed to guard the home and protect its occupants by containing the evil.” Similarly, the “greens-and-blues” kitchen presided over by Mrs. McTeer—in which the sound of “St. Louis Blues” mingles with the tang of stewing mustard greens—helps ground the young female narrator Claudia in the energies black vernacular resistance, inoculating her against the self-hatred engendered in Pecola and Pauline Breedlove by white cultural norms.

This is fertile and exciting theoretical ground. Prince’s study of blues expressiveness on the African American home front would have been even stronger, though, if she’d

contextualized her analysis more fully within the blues tradition. Why no mention of Robert Johnson’s “Come on in My Kitchen” or the many food-based blues songs recorded by Bessie Smith and other classic blueswomen, including “Kitchen Man,” “Need a Little Sugar in My Bowl,” and “Nobody in Town Can Bake a Sweet Jelly Roll Like Mine”? In her discussion of Mary Rambo, Prince invokes the kitchen-singer’s emblematic song (“Back Water Blues”) but again neglects a chance to anchor her claims in blues performance and blues literary history: a hit for Bessie Smith, the song was also the centerpiece of Sterling Brown’s great poem “Ma Rainey,” another canonical work in which blues song “gets inside” black auditors, creates a safe space, and heals.

I have no doubt that Prince, a gifted blues-toned critic, can make such connections, even if she hasn’t made them here. My critiques remain a fan’s critiques. We’ll hear from Prince again, and will be dazzled and provoked.

ADAM GUSSOW

**Tom Ashley, Sam McGee,
Bukka White, Tennessee
Traditional Singers.**

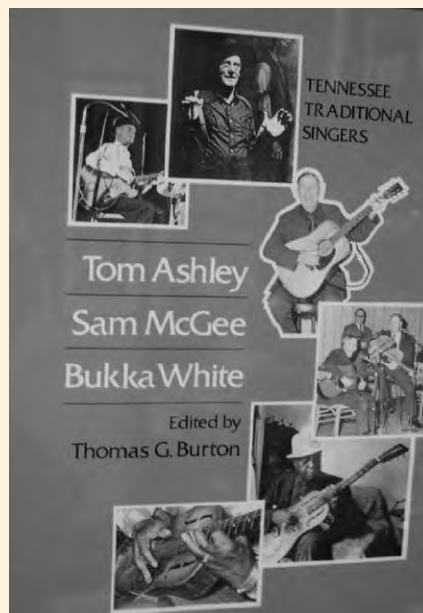
Edited by Thomas G. Burton.
Knoxville: University of Tennessee
Press, 2005. 240 pages. \$50.00 paper.

The University of Tennessee Press is reissuing, in paperback, a book that has been out of print since 1981. Thomas Burton—artfully editing essays by Ambrose N. Manning and Minnie M. Miller, Charles K. Wolfe, and F. Jack Hurley and David Evans—has put together a volume that should be valuable to students of American musicology and specifically to those interested in

music of the South. Each piece delineates the influences of the musical careers of Tom Ashley, Sam McGee, and Bukka White, representing east Tennessee's Anglo-American tradition, middle Tennessee's country music tradition, and west Tennessee's African American tradition respectively. The selected bibliographies, 14 pages of discographies, an index of song titles, and a general index contribute to the usefulness of this study to students and scholars.

The first essay on Tom Ashley, by Ambrose Manning and Minnie Miller, reveals a fascinating artist's life—a life that went way beyond music—from his mining coal to his working in sawmills. The authors incorporate revealing anecdotes in the singer's words. Among them are those from his visit to East Tennessee State University's Folk Festival in 1966; others are from his children; and some are from Roy Acuff and from Doc Watson, with whom he played music. The section includes seven photos and six song lyrics complete with musical notations and a brief chronology listing the highlights of Ashley's career—from his joining Doc White Cloud's Medicine Show at age 16 and to his performance at Eastern Tennessee State University a year before he died.

Second is Charles Wolfe's piece, which begins with a 1975 story about Sam McGee's journey to the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers Association in Alabama. Wolfe transcribes several of McGee's tales detailing the three primary influences of his musical style: traditional fiddle and banjo, Negro blues and dance music, and piano music. At first hesitant to become part of the folk revival of the 1950s and '60s, McGee and his brother Kirk eventually played at several of its nationally important venues. Similar to the other essays, Wolfe's



contains pictures, songs with music, as well as a biographical chronology.

Paralleling, in style and approach, the first two sections of the book, F. Jack Hurley and David Evans employ lengthy redactions of taped interviews in Bukka White's molasses-thick Delta dialect. These authors also include photographs, songs with musical notations, and a chronology. Like Tom Ashley and Sam McGee, White was by no means just a musician. His occupations led him many places, but he settled permanently in Memphis in 1942. The essay recounts at length his tutelary relationship with his young cousin, Riley "B. B." King. The '60s folk revival kept White from fading into obscurity, and two West Coast students "rediscovered" him and hauled him out to Berkeley, from where he toured the California folk scene for a year. Booker T. Washington White's immortal blues tunes like "Parchman Farm Blues" and "Fixin' to Die" have firmly established him as a giant of his craft and a worthy member of this triumvirate of Tennessee traditional singers.

In the conclusion, summarizing the lives of these three musicians,

Burton employs a poetic image in which he invites the reader to "muse" that each of these men "was given the same stage directions"—each directed to accept with dignity his fading places in music history, then "Recede into the wings, since you have become somewhat anachronistic; but come forward when an audience cries out for an encore and a spotlight is focused on you. Bow; then exit." This book is just such an encore and a spotlight—one that applauds and illuminates the lives of three distinguished pioneers who have preserved, perpetuated, and enriched the musical heritage of Tennessee.

MICHAEL DAVENPORT

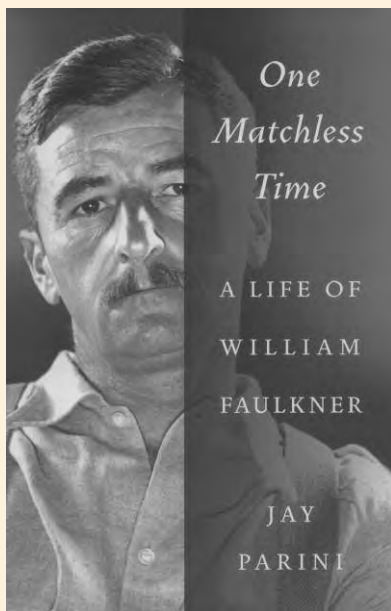
One Matchless Time: A Life of William Faulkner.

By Jay Parini.

New York: HarperCollins, 2004.
512 pages. \$29.95 cloth.

The gamble of writing a biography of William Faulkner lies in the simple fact that the writer's life is not nearly as interesting as the fictional world he created. Jay Parini hopes to dismiss this idea in *One Matchless Time: A Life of William Faulkner*. For Parini, the mystery of Faulkner's life is how he achieved a supreme art: without either the education of Thomas Wolfe or Scott Fitzgerald or the experience of John Steinbeck or Ernest Hemingway, Faulkner surpassed these novelists to become the most discussed, critiqued, and praised writer of 20th-century America.

Two central myths of William Faulkner involve his past, and Parini quickly dismisses them. Faulkner's family were not Old South aristocrats, but rugged individualists who



stamped their name in Tennessee and Mississippi, the western front of the old Southwest. It was this dynamic and unpredictable country that appealed to Faulkner's creative mind. Also, the turn-of-the-century farming economy did not create a dualistic society of only blacks and whites and rich and poor. Instead, an array of social classes existed, including clusters of town people—merchants, lawyers, and government officials—who composed the middle class. Faulkner's family emerged from shadowlike myths of the Lost Cause to stake a claim among these salt-of-the-earth capitalists.

By establishing these basic assumptions about the society that shaped Faulkner, Parini owes a large debt to other biographies by Joseph Blotner, Richard Gray, Frederick R. Karl, and David Minter. He draws on their conclusions (as well as other fine writers such as Robert Penn Warren and Jorge Luis Borges) and insists that his insight to Faulkner's life is both different and sincere. As a man of letters and novelist in his own right, Parini transforms his own concepts of art, language, and storytelling into a version of Faulkner's life. But he is also a true outsider to Southern

culture and history. He escapes from the urge to "tell about the South." And what Parini really brings to the table with this new interpretation is not only a vast compendium of Faulkner's chronicle on American life but also a skilled retelling of the events as they transpired. One reads the pages and feels almost absorbed into a novel. It is as if the story of Faulkner's art can be an art in itself.

RICHIE CALDWELL

The Writing Life.

By Ellen Gilchrist.

Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005. \$28.00 cloth.

Celebrated author Ellen Gilchrist has played many roles—writer and speaker, wife and lover, mother and grandmother. But she never tackled the role of teacher.

Offered the opportunity to teach creative writing at the University of Arkansas, Gilchrist took up the challenge and ventured into

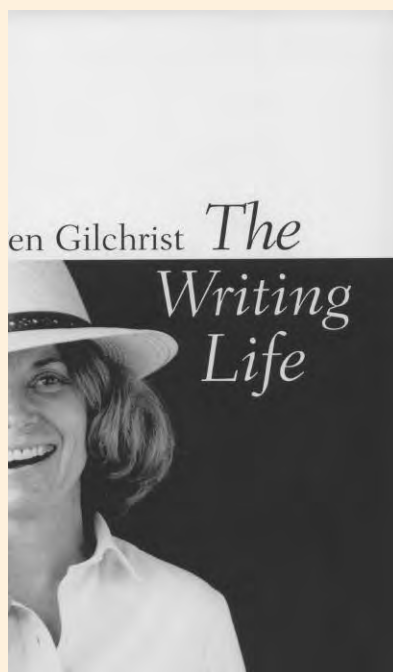
unknown territory. In the process of teaching more than two hundred students since her first class in 2000, she has found inspiration in their lives and ambitions, and in the challenge of conveying to them the lessons she has learned from living and writing.

The Writing Life brings together 50 essays and vignettes centered on the transforming magic of literature and the teaching and writing of it. A portion of the collection discusses the delicate balance between an artistic life and family commitments, especially the daily pressures and frequent compromises faced by a young mother. Gilchrist next focuses on the process of writing itself with essays ranging from "How I Wrote a Book of Short Stories in Three Months" to "Why Is Rewriting So Hard?"

Publishers Weekly raved about the book, saying, "Gilchrist's love of life, her tireless work ethic and her self-assured sense of fun and folly shine in this vital and inspiring collection."

Several essays discuss her appreciation of other writers, from Shakespeare to Larry McMurtry, and the lessons she learned from them. Eudora Welty made an indelible impact on Gilchrist's work. When Gilchrist takes on the task of teaching, her essays reveal an enriched understanding of the role writing plays in any life devoted to the craft. Humorous and insightful, she assesses her own abilities as an instructor and confronts the challenge of inspiring students to attain the discipline and courage to pursue the sullen art. Some of these pieces have been previously published in magazines, but most are unpublished and all appear here in book form for the first time.

STEVE YATES



2005 Oxford Conference for the Book

The 2005 Oxford Conference for the Book proved to be a great success, with 300 book lovers from across the country descending on Oxford and Ole Miss April 7-9 to hear from the country's leading creators of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Included on the 2005 lineup were Mississippi native and

National Book Award nominee Ellen Douglas, *New Yorker* writer Hendrik Hertzberg, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Nick Kotz, International Crime Novel of the Year award winner George Pelecanos, Yale Younger Poets Prize winner Davis McCombs, Newbery Medalist Richard Peck, and many more. The writers were joined by editors, agents, and other publishing insiders for discussions on topics ranging from creating the perfect crime novel to politics to literacy issues.

Dedicated to Flannery O'Connor, the 12th Conference for the Book included a special panel on the Georgia writer, with Jackson, Mississippi, resident Beverly Fatherree delivering a monologue as O'Connor. Other highlights of the 2005 conference included the annual Young Author's Fair, with more than 500 local fifth graders gathering in the Ford Center for Performing Arts to hear Peck read from *A Year Down Yonder*; a special reading by visiting Russian writers; and a literary tour of the Delta, which preceded the conference.

JENNIFER SOUTHALL



Bruce Newman

Author Ronald Goldfarb (right) speaks during a panel discussion as Ellen Douglas looks on.



Bruce Newman

Randy Wayne White, a *New York Times* best-selling author, addresses the audience during the book conference edition of *Thacker Mountain Radio*.



Amy Evans

Bill Dunlap, Kenneth Holditch, and JoAnne Prichard Morris at Willie Morris's grave in Yazoo City during the Delta Literary Tour, which preceded the conference



Amy Evans

Looking at the Blues Highway mural in Leland, Mississippi, during the Delta Literary Tour that preceded the book conference



Doug McLain

Hendrik Hertzberg, writer and editor for the *New Yorker* magazine and author of *Politics: Observations and Arguments, 1966-2004*



Doug McLain

From left: Artist and arts commentator William Dunlap moderated a session on “Writing about Truth, Art, and Sex” with panelists Ellen Douglas, author of celebrated novels and *Witnessing*, a new collection of essays; Ronald Goldfarb, a lawyer, writer, and literary agent based in Washington, D.C.; Julia Reed, senior writer for *Vogue* and author of *Queen of the Turtle Derby and Other Southern Phenomena*; Ashley Warlick, author of *Seek the Living* and two other novels; and Steve Almond, author of two story collections and the nonfiction work *Candyfreak*.



Doug McLain

John Green (left), author of the debut novel *Looking for Alaska*, and Ronne Hartfield, author of *Another Way Home: The Tangled Roots of Race in One Chicago Family*.



Doug McLain

Amy Stolls (left), literature specialist for the National Endowment for the Arts and author of *Palms to the Ground*, with Tayari Jones, author of *Leaving Atlanta* and *The Untelling*



Doug McLain

Poet Katrina Vandenberg (left) and Brad Watson, 2004-2005 John and Renée Grisham Visiting Southern Writer at the University of Mississippi

Hickory Hill Forum

Southern historians, including Center director Charles Reagan Wilson, took part in the inaugural Hickory Hill Forum, at Thomson, Georgia, May 19-22. Scholars had studied a collection of primary documents on the forum's theme, "Imperial Ambitions of the South, 1800-1860," and a lively and far-ranging discussion ensued.

David Shields, McClintock Professor of Southern Letters at the University of South Carolina and a former participant in the Oxford Conference for the Book, was an organizer and facilitator of discussion. He noted that primary issues treated at the forum included regional rhetoric among territorial expansionists, the belief in geographic determinism in imagining the limits of the United States, and the images of priorities lurking in the mid-19th-century discussion of this issue.

Among the participants were Michael Holt, historian of the Whig Party; Don Doyle, author of *Faulkner's County*; Alan Kulikoff, a colonial historian who is now studying nationalism; and Amy Greenberg, author of a new book about American expansionism entitled *Manifest Manhood*. The interdisciplinary group also included such literary scholars as Brady Harrison, who has authored works on fictional representations of Southern expansion, and Robert Levine, whose work on black expansionist Martin Delaney was central to the discussion.

The Watson-Brown Foundation, directed by Tad Brown, sponsored the conference as part of its efforts to advance research and discussion on Southern Studies. The event was a rich Southern experience, complete with pheasant and venison dinners.

The setting for the forum was the historic Hickory Hill, home of Georgia Populist and U.S. Senator Tom Watson. The foundation recently restored the home, which was opened to the public in November 2004. Hickory Hill hosts tours and educational activities, under the direction of curator Michelle Zupan.



Hickory Hill

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

TOBIE BAKER is a communications specialist for the Office of Media and Public Relations at the University of Mississippi. Formerly a newspaper reporter in Grenada, he received his BS in journalism from the University of Mississippi in 1996.

MARY BATTLE is a second-year graduate Southern Studies student at the University of Mississippi. She is serving as an intern for the soon-to-be-opened Cotton Exchange Museum in Memphis, Tennessee.

RICHIE CALDWELL received his MA degree in Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi in May 2005. He wrote his thesis on Willie Morris.

MICHAEL DAVENPORT, a retired teacher who lives near Greenville, Tennessee, taught Advanced Placement English and Great Books courses for 30 years. He was a Saks Fellow at the 2001 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference and is currently writing fiction and working on some editing projects.

ADAM GUSSOW, assistant professor of English and Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi, is the author of *Mister Satan's Apprentice: A Blues Memoir* and *Seems Like Murder Here: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition*, winner of the C. Hugh Holman Award for the best book of literary scholarship or criticism in Southern literature published in 2002.

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 and Yoknapatawpha 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."

FELDER RUSHING is a horticulturist and author who lives in Jackson, Mississippi. The author of *Passalong Plants* and other gardening books, he is the host of *The Gestalt Gardener*, a weekly program on Mississippi Public Broadcasting.

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 BA in English.

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*.

STEVE YATES, of Flowood, Mississippi, has published fiction in many journals and has short stories forthcoming in the *Southwest Review*, the *Texas Review*, and *Louisiana Literature*.



Oral History Project at Child Nutrition Archives Spotlights School Lunch in the South

What is your earliest memory of school lunch? Interviewers at the Child Nutrition Archives posed this question to individuals whose careers focused on feeding children. Brenda Hawkins of Gainesboro, Tennessee, thought back to the 1950s and the ladies in her school cafeteria serving “those huge lima beans.” Mary Nix of Kennesaw, Georgia, recalled attending a split-session school in the late 1930s and early 1940s in a rural farming area where “farmers would bring their excess fresh produce to school to serve, and if somebody brought in turnip greens and green beans, they’d have to be fixed that day.”

The oral history project is one of many undertaken by the Child Nutrition Archives at the National Food Service Management Institute at the University of Mississippi in Oxford. Established in 2003, through the support of U.S. Senator Thad Cochran of Mississippi, the Child Nutrition Archives collects, preserves, and makes available to researchers, collections concerning the federal Child Nutrition Programs.

The Mary Thompson Collection contains photos that provide rare glimpses of early lunch programs in segregated South Carolina during the 1940s and 1950s. The Earnestine Camp Collection chronicles the development of school lunch programs in Arkansas from the 1930s onward by way of correspondence, newsletters, photographs, and hundreds of school recipes. In addition to describing school lunch programs in the South, these collections and oral history interviews document how Southern school food service leaders participated in the development of the National School Lunch Program.

To read transcripts of interviews or browse through guides to the collections, please visit www.nfsmi.org/Archives/index.htm. If you have any questions or have information of interest to the archives, please contact Meredith Johnston at mjohnst@olemiss.edu.

Virginia Wine

Jefferson’s Dream Becomes Reality

Every mention of Virginia wine includes Thomas Jefferson and his failed attempt to grow quality wine grapes and produce quality wine. Well, it’s time to put that reference to rest.

Virginia wine has come into its own. It may not be the equal of California, Bordeaux, or Burgundy, but the idea that the state is fated to follow in Jefferson’s footsteps just isn’t true anymore. Consider the results from this spring’s *Dallas Morning News* wine competition, where Virginia wines won 10 medals, including two golds—for a Cabernet Franc from Charlottesville’s White Hall Vineyards and for a Norton from Chrysalis Vineyards in Middleburg.

“I don’t think, 20 years ago, that anyone would have defended Virginia wine,” says Dave McIntyre, a Washington-area wine critic who publishes the *WineLine* e-letter and has judged Virginia wine competitions. “But that’s all changed. The best wineries have figured out which grapes to grow to make the best wine, and their vineyard management techniques have gone a long way toward overcoming problems—higher humidity, frost—that they don’t have in France or California.”

Virginia, since Jefferson, has had difficulty producing quality wine because the best wine grapes—*vitis vinifera*, the species that includes Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, and the like—don’t tolerate heat, humidity, and cold weather especially well and are susceptible to a variety of diseases under those conditions. So Virginia winemakers were forced to make wine from native grapes like the Norton or from hybrid grapes like the Chambourcin, which tolerate the conditions better. But those grapes are oftentimes more difficult to work with and may require more skill in the making of quality wine.

In fact, Virginia winemakers—and there are almost seven dozen wineries today—have made two grapes their own. Producers like White Hall and Pearmund (near Broad Run) have taken Cabernet Franc, used mostly in blends in California and Bordeaux, and turned it into a quality wine. Chrysalis and Horton Cellars (in Gordonsville), among others, are bringing about a renaissance in the Norton, one of the most underappreciated grape varieties in the world. Chrysalis Norton is particularly interesting; owner Jennifer McCloud is blending it with Cabernet to make a complex wine.

Virginia still has some problems to overcome, of course. Its wines’ price-value ratio is still too high (Chrysalis charges \$35 retail for its top-end Norton, and there are few drinkable inexpensive wines). In addition, it’s difficult, but not impossible, to get Virginia wine in much of the country—because of the antiquated U.S. distribution system. But given the state’s success so far, it’s worth trying.

JEFF SIEGEL

“Our steroids were white beans, cornbread, and pig’s feet.”
—former Negro Leagues star Sidney Bunch
to the *Nashville Tennessean*

Bartenders of New Orleans

Text and Photographs by Amy Evans

In 1838, Antoine Amadee Peychaud played around with brandy, bitters, and an egg cup (called a *coquetier* in French; some maintain this is the origin of the word cocktail), and the American cocktail was born—in New Orleans. Almost 170 years later, the Big Easy still serves this concoction known as the Sazerac. The drink itself has seen a few changes, but one thing remains the same: New Orleans is ground zero for the cocktail. Much has been written about this liquid history, and many are familiar with the establishments that offer one libation or another with names like the Hurricane, the Ramos Gin Fizz, the Mint Julep. But not a lot of attention has been paid to the folks who combine all of the proper ingredients and pass them across the bar. The men and women of New Orleans who carry on these traditions and serve the thirsty masses are the keepers of this history. Whether it's the tableside performance of the Café Brulot or simply popping the cap off an Abita, these folks are good at what they do, and they have been doing it for a long time. Cocktail recipes are recorded in books, but the history of drinking in New Orleans is standing just on the other side of the bar.

Amy Evans, associate director of the Southern Foodways Alliance's Oral History Initiative, interviewed 11 New Orleans bartenders as part of a project sponsored by Southern Comfort and the SFA. Sketches and photographs of Gilberto Eyzaguirre and Martin Sawyer and the names and current work sites of the other bartenders Evans interviewed are presented below.

Visit www.southernfoodways.com for more information.

O'Neil Broyard - Saturn Bar

Greg Cowman - Napoleon House

Paul Gustings - Tujague's and the Napoleon House

Gertrude Mayfield - Mayfair Lounge

Bobby Oakes - Arnaud's Restaurant



Gilberto Eyzaguirre

For anyone familiar with the famed Galatoire's Restaurant on Bourbon Street in the heart of the French Quarter, Gilberto's reputation precedes him. It was during his 25-year tenure as a waiter there that he made cocktails for his customers, as did other waiters, in the Galatoire's tradition. The restaurant has seen quite a few changes in recent years, and the hiring of bartenders is one of them. But Gilberto is from the era of Galatoire's service when waiters chopped ice from blocks, prepared Café Brulot tableside, and became notorious for their generously mixed cocktails served to their devoted customers. And what customers wouldn't be devoted to a waiter who could write their names in flames on the tablecloth in front of them as he prepared a Café Brulot? At Galatoire's, beloved waiters not only gave excellent service, they poured excellent drinks.

Michael Santucci - Touché Bar and the Rib Room (both at the Royal Orleans Hotel)

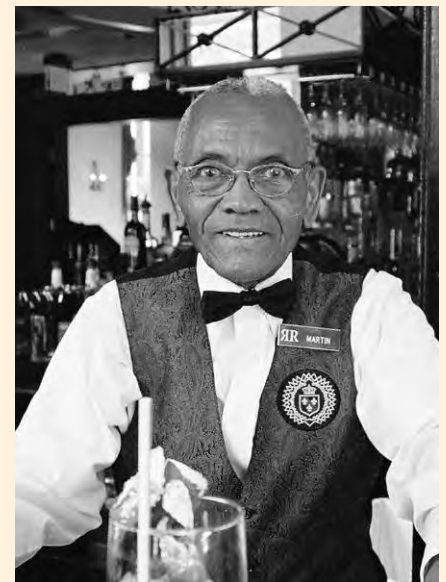
Michael Smith - The Columns

John Strickland - Antoine's Restaurant.

Floria Woodard - The Court of Two Sisters

Martin Sawyer

With almost 50 years of bartending under his belt and 34 years working at the Rib Room alone, 84-year-old Martin Sawyer has seen it all. He got his first job as a barback at the infamous 500 Club. A bartender friend recruited him for the job so Martin could help him make out drink orders, as Martin was one of the few young men in his circle of friends who could read. With the nickname "Professor," Martin studied up on cocktails and quickly became a fixture on the French Quarter bar scene. He had his picture taken with Louis Armstrong and served champagne to General De Gaul. With all that time tending bar, it is easy to believe that he would have had a few brushes with celebrity. What's hard to believe, though, is the number of cocktails this man has mixed over the years. With time, care, and a painstaking attention to detail, he has made mixing drinks a high art. All of these years later, Martin is still at it, making his famous Mint Julep with all the care and attention he did when he first mixed the drink almost five decades ago.



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Excited about New Orleans this summer? Buy the new official T-shirt for the field trip. Want to share news of SFA with the world? Buy a bumper sticker for your car. Want to be on the cutting edge of fashion? Well, maybe a T-shirt won't do it. But you can be on the cutting edge of what's cool with the SFA. Visit our online store to get great SFA gear now, and know that proceeds benefit our organization! www.cafepress.com/southernfood

SFA Needs Your Help

We are in the middle of our sponsorship drive to support 2005/2006 programming and ask you to think about companies and organizations that would benefit from a partnership with SFA. We are looking for partners who identify with good Southern eating and strong Southern roots. Please e-mail your ideas and contacts to our new sponsorship development person, Jamie Estes, at Jamie@estespr.com, or give her a call at 502-244-5313. It's not too late to participate as a sponsor in the fall symposium or regional dinners. She is also looking for sponsors to help fund our oral history project. Just give your ideas and contact information to Jamie, and she will follow up.

Kitchen Project Alabama

Check out the Kitchen Project from Project Alabama, an organization operating out of Florence. They are doing terrific work employing local workers to create hand-made haute couture clothing. Working with SFA member Angie Mosier, they built an online exhibit of oral history and photography, inspired in part by the SFA oral history project. Visit the organization's Web site at www.projectalabama.com/Catalogue.htm.

TET Boiled Pinders

Tom Hanchett, historian at the Levine Museum of the New South, writes from Charlotte, North Carolina:

We went to the huge Tet celebration yesterday at Asian Corner Mall. Along with the firecrackers and dragon dance and speeches, there were a dozen or more church and civic tables selling food. One table featured bags of boiled peanuts. Turns out these are an old Vietnamese tradition! (Peanuts in Vietnamese are *dau phong*.) They taste just like Carolina boiled peanuts—no special spices I could detect. No wonder so many thousands of Vietnamese have chosen to settle in the South.

A Fine Romance

The former Ann Segrest writes from Athens, Georgia:

The field trip to Birmingham was my first SFA experience, and I had a ball. I had been working very hard in my catering business for two years, and it was a treat to be away. On Saturday morning we boarded three Greyhounds for Aliceville and the Willie King Freedom Creek Blues Festival. The buses pulled up in Willie's cornfield under a perfectly blue sky. We piled out and as our group dispersed, I was mesmerized by the music and the day—and I desperately wanted a beer.

Out of nowhere I heard a voice asking, "What are you doing here?" I turned around, and this man in sunglasses and a Panama hat is standing there with a Crown Royal bag in hand.

I said, "If you'll give me some of what's in that bag, I'll tell you."

He opened the bag and said, "Take your pick, darling." It was full of harmonicas—he plays blues harmonica on the side. (He's a chemical engineer by day.) We spent the rest of the day together, talking and drinking beer.

I knew he was the man I was to marry. On Monday, back in Athens, I called him. We proceeded to talk twice a day for an hour every day until meeting again in Birmingham two weeks later. Two weeks after that, he came to Athens and asked me to marry him. Of course, I said yes! We were married on January 15 here in Athens at a fun, elegant wedding. A postreception party was held at the locally famous 40 Watt Club with a blues band from Mississippi, Big Jim and the Hot Shots. The town is still talking about it! His name, by the way, is Terry Freeze, and I'm trying to avoid being known as AnniFreeze.

Camp Bacon: SFA Day Camp

The first Southern Foodways Alliance Day Camp will take place in Louisville, Kentucky, September 16, 2005. Join the SFA at the historic Brown Hotel for a bacon-obsessed day and night. Dan Philips—Grateful Palate proprietor, Bacon of the Month Club mastermind, the man *Food & Wine* dubbed Captain

Bacon—will be our guest curator, pairing artisanal Kentucky bacons with acclaimed Kentucky chefs for a once-in-a-lifetime dinner in the luxe English Grill.

Featured talents include Joe Castro of the English Grill, John Castro of Winston's, Dean Corbett of Equus, Jim Gerhardt of Limestone, Ouita Michel of

Holly Hill Inn, Jared Richardson of Wallace Station, and Anoosh Shariat of Park Place. The 6:30 p.m. dinner is priced at a piddling \$75. The special, deeply discounted SFA room rate is \$119. For dinner and room reservations, call 502-583-1234, extension 7108.

From the President

Dear SFA Members,

2005 has begun as an exciting year for our organization. Following our January board meeting and benefit dinner hosted by board member John Fleeer at Blackberry Farm, we heard from several folks who offered to do an SFA dinner in their communities.

We participated in one such event in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, under the guidance of Chef Brian Stapleton and president-elect Marcie Ferris. The dinner, staged at the Carolina Inn, was a remembrance of Bill Neal and featured several SFA kitchen masters including Stapleton, Magnolia Grill's Ben and Karen Barker, City Grocery's John Currence, Hominy Grill's Robert Stehling, and Crook's Corner's Bill Smith. A panel discussion about Neal, with participation from David Perry, John Currence, Robert Stehling, Gene Hamer, and Moreton Neal, gave context to the great food.

On September 16 we'll stage another dinner, hosted by our friends in Louisville at the Brown Hotel. Look for details and reservation information soon on the SFA Web site. And speaking of the Web site, we have recently revised it. Take a look.

You will also notice a freshly redesigned SFA brochure, which is available in printed form and as a PDF file on the Web. The piece has updated information about our mission, our

goals and objectives, and ways in which folks can support us. We've also begun recording a radio show, tentatively scheduled for distribution on public radio stations, and Ronni Lundy is hard at work on *Cornbread Nation 3*.

We've also seen SFA in the news this year. I hope you were able to watch John T's appearance on CBS *Sunday Morning*—in search of perfect fried chicken. And we were used as a resource for NPR's Kitchen Sisters' segment on *Morning Edition* about Georgia Gilmore. Additionally, North Carolina's *Our State* magazine—and a plethora of other publications—published profiles of our organization.

Our oral history initiative has also been very active the first few months of 2005. Amy Evans has spearheaded an oral history project around SFA's

founding members, and many of you have volunteered in helping us gather this important information.

Remember we continue to need your financial help in moving this important work ahead.

We're also working on New Orleans bartender oral histories—a group I'll bet has quite a few interesting tales to tell. And, speaking of New Orleans, our contingent there put together a great program. It sold out in record time.

Finally, board member Adrian Miller is hard at work on our sugar symposium for October, and we should be getting details on this effort soon. Stay tuned and hope to see you in New Orleans, Louisville, and Oxford.

Best wishes and good eating,
Elizabeth Sims

SFA Contributors

AMY EVANS is associate director of the Southern Foodways Alliance's Oral History Initiative and a special projects consultant for Viking Range Corporation. She is also an exhibiting artist, freelance photographer, and cofounder of PieceWorks, a nonprofit arts and outreach organization.

JEFF SIEGEL, a graduate of the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, has authored six books, and his writing has appeared in *Sports Illustrated*, *Gourmet*, and *Travel & Leisure*.

ELIZABETH SIMS, current SFA president, has been the communications director for the Biltmore Company in Asheville, North Carolina, since 1990. She holds a BA in English from Rhodes College and an MA in literature from the University of Arkansas.

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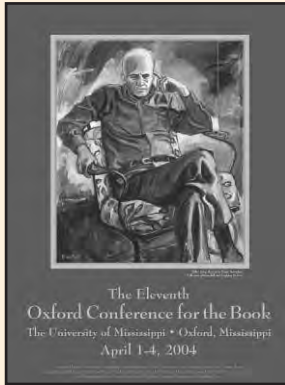
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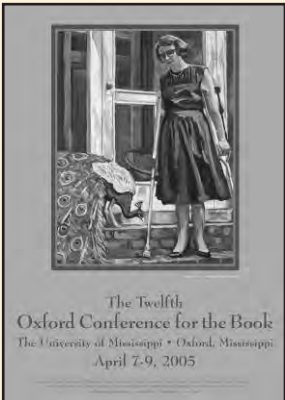
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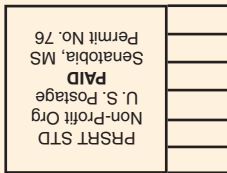
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