

the Southern Register

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE • SPRING 2006



THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

Global Faulkner

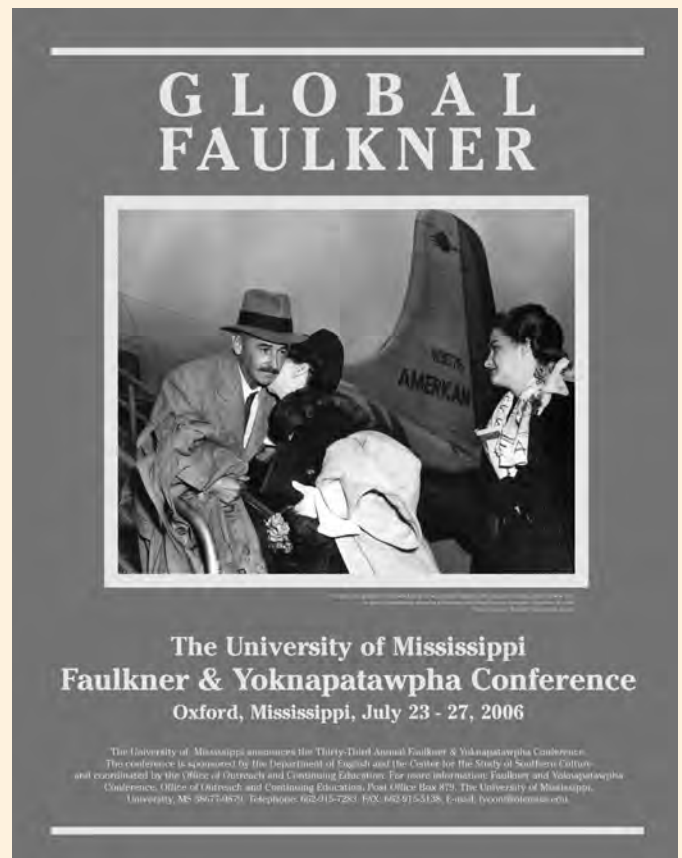
Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference

July 23–27, 2006

The story leading up to the rarely seen photograph on this page has become familiar to many Faulkner readers. On the morning of November 10, 1950, a Swedish journalist telephoned Rowan Oak to give Faulkner the news that the Swedish Academy had decided to award him the Nobel Prize. Faulkner expressed his appreciation, but when asked if he were looking forward to a trip to Stockholm, Faulkner replied, "I won't be able to come to receive the prize myself. It's too far away. I am a farmer down here and I can't get away."

Immediately afterwards, numerous people went into action, ranging from the U.S. State Department and Faulkner's publisher, Random House, to family and friends in Oxford. The writer's legendary shyness and his uneasiness in "distinguished" gatherings were genuine, as was his insistence on personal privacy. Somehow, it all came together—perhaps out of Faulkner's desire, apparent only later with the delivery of his Nobel Prize speech, to say something he thought needed to be said—and on December 6, with his 17-year-old daughter, Jill, he boarded the plane to New York, en route to Stockholm. At that point, William Faulkner, of Oxford, Mississippi, and Jefferson, Yoknapatawpha, officially became Global Faulkner: his work beginning the journey into the minds of readers and writers around the world as a story they would see as in many ways their own.

Nearly 60 years later, Faulkner's recreation of the South has become one of the sharpest mirrors of global reality that we have. The 33rd Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference will explore for five days such topics as the reflections of Faulkner's South in Japan, Spain, Italy, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Africa, in terms of civil war, the endangered wilderness, the poetics of memory, the hierarchies of race and class, and the economies of modernity. These topics will be taken up by Melanie Benson, Manuel Brancano, Keith Cartwright, Leigh Anne Duck, George Handley, Alfred



Illustrating the 2006 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference poster and program is a 1950 *Commercial Appeal* photograph of Faulkner saying good-bye to his wife, Estelle, as he and their daughter, Jill, prepare to board a plane in Memphis for New York, en route to Stockholm, to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature.

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

As winter gave way to spring, I had a busy travel season that took me to places I had not been—both geographically and intellectually. The overall impression is of a South changing, sometimes dramatically, yet remaining the South.

I was pleased to receive an invitation last year to deliver the Charles Edmondson Historical Lectures at Baylor University, and I presented the lectures March 7–8 in Waco, Texas. My theme was “The Religion of the American South in Global Perspective.” I enjoyed the research for these lectures, which argued that the South has had long global connections for its religion, from the early and enduring influence of African religions, to Evangelical Protestantism’s ties to Britain, to the cultural significance of Southern missionaries, to, more recently, the arrival of significant numbers of members of such world religions as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Latino Catholics. Globalization has religious implications, in other words, with the adaptation of new immigrants to Southern cultural ways and the adjustment of Southerners themselves to new ways a part of the regional context for globalization.

A few weeks later I was on a panel at the Association for Asian American Studies. Leslie Bow, of the University of Wisconsin, working with my friend Jon Smith, had put together the panel called “Asian American Studies Meets the New Southern Studies.” I learned from historian Moon-Ho Jung that the first Asians coming to North America had not come, as conventionally believed, to the West Coast, but they came to south Louisiana, after having worked in the Caribbean. All of us on the panel realized the creative exchange that happened that day; those of us in Southern Studies discovered a new part of our cultural story.


Finally, I went in late March to the Wallace Community College in south Alabama. Thanks to a well-deserved National Endowment for the Humanities grant, the college is hosting a faculty enrichment program on the South. A public lecture reached several hundred in the broader community, and a faculty seminar the next day explored religion’s abiding, if evolving, role in the South.

The level of public interest in the South remains high. I returned home in time for the 13th Oxford Conference for the Book’s large and enthusiastic crowds. At the same time, we all grapple with understanding the new social, cultural, and economic context of a South reaching into new global spheres while still trying to understand our past and its continuing meaning.

CHARLES REAGAN WILSON

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

Gammill



Gallery

Exhibition Schedule

<p>March 23–July 14, 2006 Bruce Newman <i>Authors at the Yellow Wall, and Then Some</i></p> <p>July 17–October 15, 2006 David Wharton <i>Recent Photographs</i></p>	<p>October 13, 2006– January 5, 2007 Southern Studies Documentary Students <i>Community Photography: A Comparative Approach</i></p>
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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.

Bruce Newman's Photographs on Display in Gammill Gallery

Bruce Newman



Stephen King (left) and John Grisham

Bruce Newman, award-winning photographer for the *Oxford Eagle*, is exhibiting *Authors at the Yellow Wall, and Then Some* in the Gammill Gallery at Barnard Observatory through July 14, 2006. The 24 photographs in the exhibition present some authors from Oxford and others who have visited here in recent years.

Portraits of authors who once called Oxford home are Larry Brown, John Grisham, and Willie Morris; current residents are Ace Atkins, Beth Ann Fennelly, and Barry Hannah. Among the visiting authors in the exhibition are Roy Blount, Shelby Foote, Richard Ford, Kaye Gibbons, David Halberstam, Jim Harrison, and Jill McCorkle. Photographs made at the Oxford Conference for the Book are of Willie Morris with William Styron and George Plimpton in 1993 and John Grisham with Stephen King in 1994

As newspaper photographer for the *Oxford Eagle* since September 1986, Newman has covered all aspects of small town life as well as the athletic programs at the University of Mississippi. His book *Return to Glory* features photographs of the 2003 Ole Miss football season. Newman is also a stringer for the Associated Press.

Barry Hannah



Bruce Newman

Sacred Harp Singing

Sacred Harp singing is a nondenominational community musical event emphasizing participation, not performance. Singers sit facing inward in a hollow square. Each individual is invited to take a turn “leading”—standing in the center, selecting a song, and beating time with the hand. The singing is not accompanied by harps or any other instrument. The group sings from *The Sacred Harp*, an oblong songbook first published in 1844 by B. F. White and E. J. King. The repertory includes psalm tunes, fugal tunes, odes, and anthems by the first American composers (1770–1810) and also settings of folk songs and revival hymns (1810–1860). The current 1991 Edition contains many songs in these styles by living composers.

This style of singing stems from singing schools in the colonial period. Preserved in the rural South, Sacred Harp singing (also called *fasola* singing or *shape-note* singing) is making a major resurgence in cities and campuses throughout North America. North Mississippi is fortunate to have traditional all-day singings within easy driving distance.

Most singings last from about ten in the morning until three in the afternoon, with an hour break at noon for dinner on the grounds.

The 26th annual all-day Sacred Harp singing at Oxford City Hall, sponsored by the City of Oxford and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, was held on Sunday, March 12, 2006, beginning at 9:45 a.m. in the municipal courtroom. Potluck dinner on the grounds was spread at noon at the Senior Center next door. The singing, which takes place annually on the second Sunday in March, attracts singers from Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and other states. For further information, call Warren Steel at 662-236-5356 or e-mail mudws@olemiss.edu.

WARREN STEEL

All-Day Singings in Mississippi Summer and Fall 2006

Except where noted, all singings are in *The Sacred Harp* (1991 Edition).

June 2006

- First Sunday: Sherman Baptist Church, Hwy 32, 10 miles west of Bruce. Info: Mark Davis, 601-932-9188.
- Second Sunday: Oak Springs Church, Derma.
- Fourth Sunday and Saturday before: Newton County Convention, Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church, southwest of Decatur (Christian Harmony).

July 2006

- July 4: Mt. Herman Primitive Baptist Church, north of Hwy 8, 3 miles west of Vardaman.
- Saturday before Fourth Sunday: Chickasaw County Convention, Enon Primitive Baptist Church, south of Hwy 8, 8 miles east of Houston.
- Fourth Sunday: Cherry Tree Singing, James Creek Primitive Baptist Church, east of Tremont.

August 2006

- Saturday before the Second Sunday: Calhoun County Musical Association, Bethel Primitive Baptist Church, Bruce.
- Fourth Sunday and Saturday before: Mississippi State Convention, Antioch Primitive Baptist Church, Hwy 21 between Forest and Sebastopol. Info: Mark Davis, 601-932-9188.
- Fourth Sunday and Saturday before: Pleasant Grove Convention, Calhoun County, location to be announced.

September 2006

- Second Sunday and Saturday before: Black Mississippi State Convention, location to be announced.

October 2006

- Second Sunday: Taylor United Methodist Church, Taylor. Info: Warren Steel. 662-236-5356.
- Saturday before Fourth Sunday: Jordan's Chapel, 705 Campbell's Swamp Road, 12 miles south of Vicksburg (Cooper Revision). Afternoon session at Old Courthouse Museum, Vicksburg. Info: Gordon Cotton, 601-636-2466.
- Fourth Sunday: Sherwood Forest Primitive Baptist Church, off hwy 18, 8 miles southeast of Brandon (Cooper Revision). Info: Mark Davis, 601-932-9188.

December 2006

- Saturday before Second Sunday: Calhoun County Nursing Home, Calhoun City. 1:30 p.m.



Double Springs Sacred Harp by Ethel Wright Mohamed (1906–1992)
For limited edition prints of the above work, and for more information on the artist and her work, contact Mama's Dream World: The Ethel Wright Mohamed Stitchery Museum, 307 Central, Belzoni MS 39038; phone 662-247-1433; www.mamasdreamworld.com/.

Full listing of Sacred Harp singings in Mississippi is posted at <http://www.mcsr.olemiss.edu/~mudws/miss.html>. Other singings in the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom are listed at www.mcsr.olemiss.edu/~mudws/singings.html.

Music of the South Conference June 2–3, 2006

The second annual Music of the South Conference focuses on a wide range of music that is rooted in the American South, either having origins in the region or making use of regional themes and context. Country, bluegrass, blues, gospel, jazz, rock 'n' roll, rap/hip-hop, and art music that came out of the South will all be covered in lectures, panels, and musical performances. Participants will hear presentations by leading scholars, enjoy live music performances, and tour the Blues Archive and see a special exhibition on minstrel music at the J. D. Williams Library.

Keynote speaker for the conference is host and producer of NPR's *American Routes* Nick Spitzer, a folklorist specializing in American music and cultures of the Gulf South, with a long history of involvement in radio. Host, artistic director, and producer of the award-winning program *Folk Masters* (now on Smithsonian Folkways CDs), Spitzer is also a contributor of features on American music and culture to NPR's *All Things Considered*. He holds a doctorate in anthropology from the University of Texas and is currently professor of folklore and cultural conservation at the University of New Orleans.

Registration includes admission to lectures and panel discussions, as well as tickets to ancillary music events. For more information, visit www.outreach.olemiss.edu/music_south/ or contact Mary Beth Lasseter at marybeth@olemiss.edu or 662-915-5993.



Living Blues News

The Fourth Annual *Living Blues* Symposium occurred at the Center in February. The symposium featured live blues music on the Oxford square throughout the weekend, a tour of the University of Mississippi Blues Archive with writer/historian Gayle Dean Wardlow, and a sold-out guided bus tour of the Mississippi Delta. William Ferris, Joel R. Williamson Professor and associate director of the Center for the Study of the American South at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, delivered the Early Wright keynote address. Next year's symposium, scheduled for February 15–17, 2007, in Oxford, will focus on "Women and Soul Blues."

The response to February's special Hurricane Katrina edition of *Living Blues* was overwhelming. The issue featured a number of interviews with New Orleans' musicians impacted by the storm, including Irma Thomas, Clarence "Frogman" Henry, and George Porter Jr., as well as an introduction by New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin. The issue sold out at a number of newsstands, and testimonials indicated the stories resonated with many of our readers.

Our current issue features blues superstar Buddy Guy and guitarists Michael Powers and Cool John Ferguson. Buddy reflects on his early days in Chicago, his string of critically acclaimed recent albums, and his "Legends" blues club. Blues buffs will also enjoy a never-before-published Howlin' Wolf color photograph and interview from the 1969 Ann Arbor Blues Festival. The issue also contains our annual Blues Festival Guide and the 2006 *Living Blues* Reader's Award ballot. Readers can cast votes for their favorite musicians and recordings online at www.livingblues.com.

The upcoming summer issue of *Living Blues* will feature extensive coverage of zydeco music and include interviews with Buckwheat Zydeco, C. J. Chenier, and others in the contemporary zydeco scene. A one-year subscription to *Living Blues* is \$23.95, and blues fans can subscribe online at www.livingblues.com.

MARK CAMARIGG



2006 *Living Blues* Symposium participants (from left) Greg Johnson, Scott Barretta, Ann Abadie, Adam Gussow, William Ferris, and Jim O'Neal

In Memoriam

Dorothy Hagert Crosby

September 6, 1908–April 5, 2006

Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Friend and Patron of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture

Endesha Ida Mae Holland

August 29, 1944–January 25, 2006

Santa Monica, California

Civil Rights Activist, Scholar, Teacher, Dramatist

Internationally Acclaimed for Play and Memoir *From the Mississippi Delta*

Edna Lewis

April 13, 1916–February 13, 2006

Decatur, Georgia

Chef, Cooking Teacher, Author of *The Taste of Country Cooking* (1976),
Founding Member of the Southern Foodways Alliance, Named Grande
Dame of Les Dames d'Escoffier International (1999), Recipient of SFA's
1999 Lifetime Achievement

Keith Somerville Dockery McLean

May 30, 1914–April 3, 2006

Cleveland, Mississippi

Arts Patron, Founding Member of the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters
and the Center for the Study of Southern Culture's Advisory Committee,
Recipient of the 1994 Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts

Betty W. Ricks

January 6, 1922–January 26, 2006

Atlanta, Georgia

Cook, Gardener, Southern Foodways Alliance Charter Member

Charles K. Wolfe

August 14, 1943–February 9, 2006

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Professor of English Emeritus, Middle Tennessee State University; Author
of 19 Books on Country, Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Roots Music, including
A Good-Natured Riot: The Birth of the Grand Ole Opry (1999); Chief
Consultant for the PBS *American Roots Music Series*

John Vaught

May 6, 1909–February 3, 2006

Oxford, Mississippi

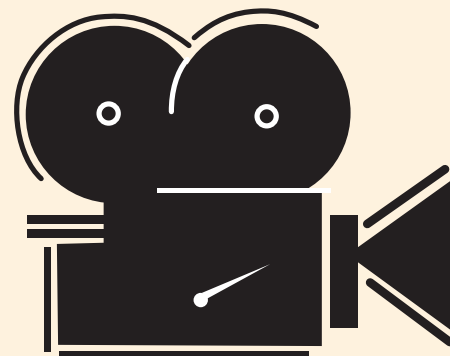
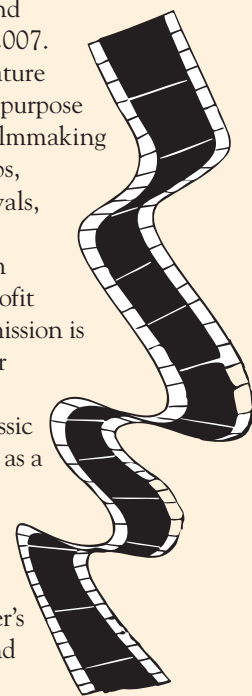
Legendary Ole Miss Football Coach, Icon of Southern Sports

Robinson Film Center in Shreveport

The Robinson Film Center held a ceremonial groundbreaking for renovations to the building located at 617/619 Texas Street in downtown Shreveport on Friday, April 7, 2006. A celebration of the groundbreaking took place the following day at the Shreveport Chamber of Commerce. Both events featured a video presentation walk-through of the renovated building prepared by lead architect Mike McSwain.

The renovation process is expected to last approximately eight months, with a projected grand opening in January 2007. The building will feature two theaters, a multipurpose space equipped for filmmaking classes and workshops, bimonthly film festivals, and more.

The Robinson Film Center is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to provide a venue for international, independent, and classic cinema while serving as a resource for film production and education. For more information on the Robinson Film Center's mission, programs, and history, visit www.robinsonfilmcenter.org or call 318-424-9090.



Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters 2006 Annual Awards Events to Be in Oxford

The Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters (MIAL) will present awards to outstanding artists in the categories of Fiction, Music Composition, Nonfiction, Photography, and Visual Arts during an annual gala scheduled for June 10, 2006, in Oxford.

The awards honor the achievements of living Mississippians (current residents or former ones with continuing, significant ties to the state). Artists are nominated on the basis of work shown, published, or performed in 2005.

MIAL, now in its 27th year, was established in to support, nurture, and recognize one of Mississippi's most important resources, her artists. Recipients are awarded cash prizes and Mississippi-made gifts. The competition is a juried one, with judges, prominent in their fields, chosen from out of state. MIAL is privately funded, self-perpetuating, and nonprofit.

Anyone may join; membership dues start at \$35 for an individual (students at \$15). Visit MIAL's Web site at www.ms-arts-letters.org for complete instructions about joining and about nominating an artist for an award.

A day of tours and other events will precede the annual awards gala at the Oxford Conference Center. A visit to Rowan Oak, a Double Decker Bus tour led by Beckett Howorth, readings and signings at Square Books, and an exhibition at the University Museum by Gwen Magee, a former MIAL award winner and current member of the MIAL Board of Governors, are some the special events being planned.

For additional information, contact Margaret Anne Mitchell at 601-366-0761 or write to MIAL, P.O. Box 2346, Jackson, MS 39225-2346. The MIAL Web site address is www.ms-arts-letters.org.

Chris Fullerton Memorial Scholarship

April 28, 2007, will mark the 10th anniversary of the death of Southern Studies alumnus Chris Fullerton. To honor his memory, family and friends seek to endow a scholarship in his name for the Southern Studies master's program.

A native of Woodbridge, Virginia, Fullerton received a bachelor's degree in history from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. He worked for the Museum of the Confederacy before entering the master's program at the University in the fall of 1992. During his time as a graduate student, he worked at the University Museums and served for a year as the assistant curator of Rowan Oak, William Faulkner's home.

Fullerton focused much of his research on the history of baseball and race relations. Friends and colleagues were able to edit and publish Fullerton's master's thesis, "Striking Out Jim Crow: The Birmingham Black Barons," in a posthumous volume, *Every Other Sunday: The Story of the Birmingham Black Barons*, in 2001.

His friends remember him fondly as the catalyst for the first Southern Studies softball team, whose poor win record did not accurately reflect the importance of the games for team members. "Chris was the glue that held our class together. He was tremendously funny and amidst the tragedy that often looms over the study of the South, Chris always made everyone laugh," says fellow alum, Aimée Schmidt.

Baseball remained Fullerton's singular love. In the fall of 1996, he returned to Birmingham, site of his many research trips, to become executive director of the Friends of Rickwood, a group devoted to the restoration of Rickwood Park, home of the Birmingham Black Barons and the nation's oldest baseball park.

Family and friends hope to endow a scholarship fund in Fullerton's honor. They seek to raise \$10,000 and are well on their way to that goal with almost \$3,000 in hand so far. Checks should be made payable to the University of Mississippi Foundation/Fullerton Graduate Fellowship and be sent to the University of Mississippi Foundation at P.O. Box 249, University, MS 38677.

SUSAN M. GLISSON



Chris Fullerton

Southern Studies Alumni Report

Molly Boland Thompson (MA 2002) now works as the assistant registrar for Academic Credentials in the College of Arts and Science at Vanderbilt University in Nashville. After leaving the Center for the Study of Southern Culture where she wrote a thesis on the Appalachian mountain dulcimer and how its musical evolution reflects the Appalachian culture at large, Thompson moved to Nashville. While she says, "I am sorry to say that I have not yet been fortunate enough to find a job that allows me to utilize the same mental muscles that I flexed in the Southern Studies graduate program," Thompson is happy working for her undergraduate alma mater. She is the mother of two-year-old Ella and is expecting another child in May.

Preston Lauterbach (MA 2003) teaches history at the University of Memphis. In addition to his historical research on soul music history for Stax Museum-Academy curriculum, Preston works as a freelance writer. His work can be found in *Living Blues* magazine, as well as the *Commercial Appeal's* blogs site. Lauterbach recently guest-hosted the *Highway 61: Living Blues Radio Show*, featuring Stax recordings of "drinking blues." Listen to him on *Highway 61* at www.highway61radio.org/Media_Archive.html.



Ellen Meacham



Catherine Riggs (left)
with daughter, Zoe

Rana Wallace (MA 2002) will graduate from law school at the University of Florida in May. She has been hired by the Public Defender's Office in Fort Myers, Florida, where she plans to pursue public interest law. Wallace credits her years at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture to her initial interest in law. "During the 2002 Open Doors Ceremony, I saw first hand the substantive results of impassioned legal work and the fruits of the law at work as an agent and an instrument of social change. I was stirred by both the real and symbolic importance of the event. It was then that I decided I wanted to be a lawyer."

Ellen Meacham (MA 2003) is an instructor of journalism at the University of Mississippi, where she also serves as the Internship and Employment Coordinator for the Department of Journalism. Meacham recently completed a fellowship with the American Society of Newspaper Editors Institute of Journalism Excellence. One of only 20 journalism educators selected to participate in the program, Meacham spent six weeks working for Baton Rouge's *The Advocate*. She worked as a reporter covering a range of issues from federal policy, prison activity, and human interest.

Catherine (Cat) Riggs (BA 2005) is working as the assistant processing archivist with the Richard A. Gephardt Project at the Missouri Historical Society. Riggs says her work with the Senator James Eastland Project as a Southern Studies student led to her deep interest in public history and preservation. She will start graduate school in the fall of 2006 at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, with a fellowship in the museum studies program while continuing her work with the Gephardt Project. At Ole Miss, Riggs hosted the jazz radio program *West End Blues*. She and her four-year-old daughter, Zoe, live in St. Louis.

MARY MARGARET MILLER



SOUTHERN FOODWAYS REGISTER

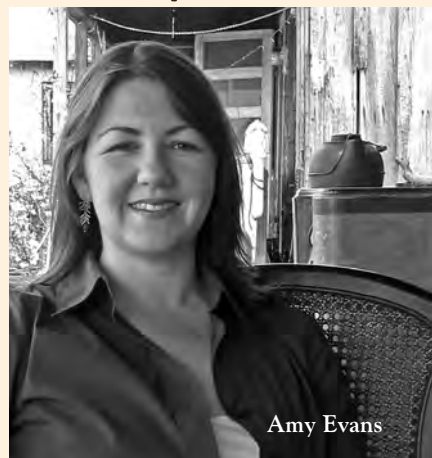
The Newsletter of the Southern Foodways Alliance

SFA's Amy Evans Wins Oral History Award

Amy Evans, oral historian for the Southern Foodways Alliance, was recently chosen as the first recipient of the Elbert R. Hilliard Oral History Award for a project on Greenville-based restaurant Doe's Eat Place. The award was established last year by the

Mississippi Historical Society to recognize outstanding work in oral history and is named for the retired head of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History for his diligent support of the medium.

Evans documented the history of



Kurt Streeter

Amy Evans



Amy Evans

Doe's Eat Place through photographs, written biographies, and audio interviews with customers, cooks, and the Signa family, who has owned and operated the business since the mid-1900s. Evans said the restaurant is "both a cultural and culinary icon of the state and the Delta."

"It's an exemplary project; they were diligent in following the principles and standards of doing an oral project while still being innovative," said Stephen Sloan, chairman of the Mississippi Historical Society's Oral History Committee, which chose the winner.

To view the Doe's Eat Place Oral History Project in its entirety, visit http://www.southernfoodways.com/oral_history/does_eat_place/index.shtml.

BROOKE HATCHETT

Florence Signa (aka Aunt Florence) has been working at Doe's Eat Place since 1948, when she married Frank "Jughead" Signa, Big Doe Signa's brother. Frank passed away in 1988, just one year after Doe, but Aunt Florence is still at Doe's Eat Place three nights a week, tossing salads and greeting the generations of customers who come for a steak and a hug from her.

Mississippi Delta Hot Tamale Trail Tour

Text and Photographs by Amy Evans • www.tamaletrail.com

In Latin America, hot tamales are as ubiquitous as the sandwich. This holds true in, of all places, the Mississippi Delta. Better known for its association with cotton and catfish, the Mississippi delta has a fascinating relationship with tamales. In restaurants, on street corners, and in kitchens throughout the Delta, this very old and time-consuming culinary tradition remains vibrant. But how and when were hot tamales introduced to what has been called “the most Southern place on earth”? And why have they stayed? There are as many answers to those questions as there are tamale recipes. Oral history interviews with tamale makers and vendors in the Delta today offer us some answers. They reveal the various ways in which tamale recipes have been acquired and how they have evolved, helping to explain the persistence of hot tamales in the Mississippi Delta.

The Mississippi Delta is the flat alluvial plane that flanks the western part of the state. This leaf-shaped area is often referred to as the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta, for its borders are

defined by these two powerful rivers.

David L. Cohn, Greenville native and author of *God Shakes Creation*, devised a geocultural definition of the region. He wrote that “the Delta begins in the lobby of the Peabody Hotel in Memphis and ends on Catfish Row in Vicksburg.” His boundaries encompass our Mississippi Delta Hot Tamale Trail.

Tamale recipes vary from place to place, person to person. In the Mississippi Delta, no two people make hot tamales exactly the same. Pork is traditional. Some folks use beef, while others prefer turkey. Some boil their meat, while others simply brown it. Some people use masa, while most prefer the rough texture of corn meal. Most wrap in corn shucks, while a few have turned to less expensive parchment paper. Some season the tamale in just one way, while many will season the meat and the meal, as well as the water used to simmer the rolled bundles. Some eat theirs straight out of the shuck, while others smother them in chili and cheese. Consider these variations as we make the following

stops on the Mississippi Delta Hot Tamale Trail.

**Hicks' World Famous
Hot Tamales & More**
305 South State Street
HWY 6, Clarksdale, MS 38614
662-624-9887

A black fellow taught me how to [make hot tamales]. He told me how to do tamales at 13 years old, and I finally decided to try to do it at 16. So we did it, and people liked it and said it tastes better than the man that taught [me]. And from there it kind of blossomed, you know, and one thing led to another. —Eugene Hicks

Eugene Hicks, born in 1944, has been making hot tamales since 1960. Acy Ware, who peddled tamales on the streets of Clarksdale, gave Hicks his recipe. In 1970, Hicks opened his first restaurant. The recipe has changed a bit over the years as he has experimented with different meats and spices. Hicks has never committed a recipe to writing, though. He works alone to cook and spice the meat, keeping the secrets to himself. What is no secret, though, are the custom devices and ingenious methods of production he has created. As a result, Hicks can produce 10 times the amount of hot tamales that could be made by hand.

[A]nywhere you go, you're going to basically find the same food. It may have a little twist to it, a little different way of preparing it, but the one food you don't find plentifully is the hot tamale. And I think that's what is so alluring. It's—it's different. It kind of has its own uniqueness. —Betty Hicks

Betty Hicks grew up in Isola, Mississippi. She moved to Clarksdale in the late 1960s to attend college. Soon thereafter, she met Eugene Hicks, who was already making hot tamales to sell on the weekends. They courted and



Betty and Eugene Hicks



Ground Zero

Betty helped Eugene make his hot tamales. Betty became so adept at rolling the masa and meal into the corn shuck she says that that's the reason her husband married her. She takes pride in her craft. With care and precision, Betty handles each individual tamale as a work of art. Before rolling the extruded length of meat and meal, Betty dips the corn shuck in oil and coats it with dry meal, creating a casing of sorts. The casing binds the tamale together. And it looks pretty, too, she says.

Ground Zero Blues Club
0 Blues Alley
Clarksdale, MS 38614
662-621-9009
www.groundzerobluesclub.com

[Y]ou know, the wait staff loves [the hot fried tamales], and so they recommend them. So people just, you know—who would have ever thought of frying a hot tamale? I mean, you know, we fry everything down here, so why not a hot tamale. —Trish Berry

Trish Berry attended the Memphis Culinary Academy. She is the pastry and catering chef at Madidi Restaurant in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Ground Zero Blues Club is a second restaurant venture by the owners of Madidi, Morgan Freeman and Bill Lockett. Trish, originally

from Vicksburg, also developed the menu at Ground Zero. As a native of the Delta, she considered hot tamales important. To meet the needs of Ground Zero, Trish tasted tamales from vendors around the Delta. She settled on a man in Cleveland to use for her Delta hot tamales. She also wanted to add fried hot tamales to the mix, but the Delta tamales didn't fry up well. She settled on a tamale out of Texas for those. So belly up to the bar for a taste and then settle in for some live blues, Delta-style.

Joe's Hot Tamale Place
902 Main Street
Rosedale, MS 38769
662-759-3842

Joe barely fixed his breakfast. But he loved making those tamales, though. . . . He loved making tamales, and that's about all he ever cooked. No one in my family really cooked. —Barbara Pope

Born in 1924, Joe Pope was the oldest of 10 children. His family moved from Alabama to the Rosedale area in the 1930s. Joe held different jobs over the years, but in the 1970s, after a friend shared a recipe with him, he began selling hot tamales. It is said that the friend, John Hooks, got the recipe from a Mexican migrant sometime in the 1930s. A side job at first, Joe's Hot Tamale Place, also known as the White Front Café, became so popular that Joe made it a full-time business when he retired from his day job. Joe passed away in December of 2004, but his youngest sister, Barbara Pope, is still making his famous tamales. Barbara worked at her brother's side for seven years, helping to fill and roll the tamales by hand. Today, Barbara, her sisters, and their 97-year-old mother,

(continued on page 12)



Barbara Pope

Emma, can be found at the White Front, cooking and selling the same hot tamales that Joe made famous.

Airport Grocery
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I already knew how to make tamales [from] . . . watching a friend of mine's grandmother [make them]. [Hers] are tied at both ends . . . folded at both ends. And these are left open at the [one] end, and they



Tamara Calhoun

sit up in the pot. The other ones, you lay them down in the pot. —Tamara Calhoun

Jonathan Vance, a native of Benoit, Mississippi, owns the Shanty and Airport Grocery in Cleveland, Mississippi. When he opened Airport Grocery in 1992, Jonathan wanted to honor the Delta hot tamale tradition. Jonathan's grandfather was a friend of renowned tamale-maker Joe Pope of Joe's Hot Tamale Place, aka White Front Café, in Rosedale. Mr. Pope was generous enough to share his expertise

with the Vance family. Now Pope's tamale recipe is used at Jonathan's second restaurant venture in Cleveland, the Shanty. Tamara Calhoun is the tamale maker for both restaurants, and she makes the tamales according to Joe Pope's method.

SFA Contributors

AMY EVANS is the oral historian for the Southern Foodways Alliance and a special projects consultant for Viking Range Corporation. *Food & Wine* named Evans one of the "top 35 under 35" to watch, and her interviews with Doe's Eat Place in Greenville recently won the Mississippi Historical Society's Elbert R. Hilliard Oral History Award. Evans holds an MA in Southern Studies from the University of Mississippi and a BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art. An exhibiting artist and former art educator, she is cofounder of PieceWorks, a nonprofit arts and outreach organization serving the Deep South. Evans lives in Oxford, Mississippi, with her husband, Kurt Streeter.

BROOKE HATCHETT is a junior journalism major with a magazine emphasis at the University of Mississippi. She is an intern for the University's Media and Public Relations Department.

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Florida's Forgotten Coast

Stories of the Men and Women Who Work the Apalachicola Bay Photographs by Amy Evans

The Florida's Forgotten Coast Oral History Project pays homage to the men and women who have long worked the water, tonging for oysters, casting nets for shrimp and fish, and diligently cultivating soft-shell crabs. Southern Foodways Alliance oral historian Amy Evans has conducted three fieldwork-gathering trips to Apalachicola, Florida, to document the seafood industry in this particular part of the Sunshine State. People have drawn their livelihoods from the Apalachicola Bay for generations, but their way of life is changing; the seafood industry is being squeezed out as tourism moves in. Oral history subjects tell stories of the days before Red Tide, when schools of mullet were thick as oil, and when tupelo honey was a local find, not a Hollywood star.* More than fish tales and folklore, these are the stories of the men and women who have depended on the Apalachicola Bay for generations.

Thanks to funding from the St. Joe Company, Evans has been able to collect 23 oral history interviews. These interviews and the accompanying photographs make this the SFA's largest oral history project to date. A handful of oral history subjects are profiled here. Read complete transcripts and listen to audio clips online at www.southernfoodways.com.

*See Victor Nunez's 1997 film *Ulee's Gold*, starring Peter Fonda.



"Since I've been in the honey business, I've started making honey meade, which is like honey wine. I learned it from a friend in New Orleans. He taught me how to do it, and he said to use any kind of honey. It don't have to be table grade honey. But I tried that, and it made a real powerful alcohol that I didn't like too good. But the tupelo honey made a better tasting wine." —George Watkins, beekeeper



"I started oystering when I was 17 years old. I've been doing it all my life just about. I quit school when I was 16 and started working the next day after I quit school. To me, it's fun. I mean, I get pleasure out of it, you know. It's hard work and all, but the one thing about oystering [is that] if you own your own rig, you're your own boss." —A. L. Quick, oysterman

"In 1959, when me and Johnny [Richards] married, I started out shucking oysters. And we've been married 46 years. That's how long I've been shucking oysters—46 years. And I enjoy it. You got nobody over you; you can be your own boss. I'll be shucking until I die. Because I just don't see anything else I know to do." —Janice Richards, shucker





Regional

Upcoming Events of Interest

Roundup

The 23rd Annual International Country Music Conference will take place on May 25–27, 2006, in Cookeville, Tennessee. The program, to be dedicated to the memory of noted music scholar Charles Wolfe, will begin with Lance Ledbetter's keynote address "Standing in the Presence of the Past: Dust-to-Digital and the Preservation of Old Time Music." Other presentations will include Kevin Fontenot's "How Do You Fight a Song: Country Music in Jimmie Davis's 1944 Gubernatorial Campaign," Nolan Porterfield's "The Role of the Phonograph in the Convergence of Folk Music and Hillbilly Music," and Bambi Cochran's "An Exploration of Gender and Sexuality in the Country Song Lyrics of Shel Silverstein."

To register for ICMC 2006, please send \$90 (US) in the form of a check made payable to ICMC by Friday, May 19, 2006, to James E. Akenson, Box 5042, Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, TN 38505 USA. For additional information e-mail JAkenson@tntech.edu.

The Wiregrass Literacy and Literature Festival of the Deep South will take place September 14–16, 2006, at Valdosta State University in Valdosta, Georgia. This annual event combines an academic conference with a literary festival, bringing together national and regional authors, academics, educators, adult literacy experts, and policy makers, musicians, artists, academics, and community leaders to celebrate the power of writing and to promote literacy.

Speakers and writing workshop leaders for 2006 include Bob Shacochis, journalist and winner of the National Book Award for his first story collection, *Easy in the Islands*; best-selling author Marita Golden, director of the Zora Neale Hurston/Richard Wright Foundation; and Andrew Carroll, editor of the forthcoming *Above and Beyond*, a National Endowment of the Arts anthology of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction by U.S. soldiers and their families of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For additional information and a registration form, visit www.valdosta.edu/getlit.

Emory & Henry College will host its 25th Literary Festival on September 21–23, 2006, in Emory and nearby Abingdon, Virginia. Sponsored by the English Department and the *Iron Mountain Review*, the annual festival celebrates a creative writer with strong ties to southern Appalachia. The 25th festival is "a reunion event that promises to be exceptionally noteworthy in its gathering of writers from the mountain South for readings and panel discussions." The program will feature 20 past

honorees, including Lisa Alther, Fred Chappell, John Ehle, Denise Giardina, George Ella Lyon, Jeff Daniel Marion, Robert Morgan, Ron Rash, and Lee Smith. For additional information, contact John Lang, Emory & Henry College, P.O. Box 947, Emory, VA 24327-0947; 276-944-6143; jlange@ehc.edu.

The Eudora Welty House opened to the public with a special free preview weekend April 29 and 30, 2006. Already a National Historic Landmark, the Welty House is one of the nation's most intact literary house museums, reflecting the author's life there over 76 years. The Eudora Welty House, located at 1119 Pinehurst Street in Jackson, Mississippi, is shown by reservation only Wednesdays through Fridays at 9 and 11 a.m. and 1 and 3 p.m.

Welty left her house and collection of thousands of books to the state, and the Welty family donated furniture and art. Visitors will see Welty's house as she lived in it. Mary Alice White, director of the Eudora Welty House and Welty's niece, said the Mississippi Department of Archives and History had "worked hard to make sure that the house would still feel like her home."

MDAH has overseen the transition from private residence to historic site and is now working to open a visitors center to provide space for special exhibits on Welty as well as on-site restrooms and parking.

Beginning May 3, admission to the Eudora Welty House and garden will be \$5 for adults, \$3 for students, and free for children under six. Group discounts are available on all tours. Welty's birthday was April 13, and when the 13th of each month falls on a day the Eudora Welty House is open, admission will be free. For more information or to schedule a tour, call 601-353-7762 or e-mail weltytours@mdah.state.ms.us.

The Museum of the Confederacy's exhibition *Art of the Confederacy* will be on display through December 2006, providing a small yet significant showcase of works by a handful of professional artists as well as the far more common amateur soldier artists. Among the paintings, prints, photography, and sketches exhibited are pieces created between the years 1861–1865 and postwar works by Northern publishers and artists lamenting the "Lost Cause" and commemorating the chivalry of Confederate soldiers.

Of special interest is the newly restored Mosby Triptych, three oil paintings created to showcase the bravery of Mosby's Rangers during the war. Frequently reproduced for generations following the war, these paintings are on public display for the first time since their recent restoration.

The Museum of the Confederacy is a private, nonprofit educational institution. The Museum and White House of the Confederacy are located in the historic Court End neighborhood in downtown Richmond and are open Monday through Saturday 10-5 and Sunday 12-5. Free parking is available in the MCV/VCU Hospitals Visitor/Patient parking deck adjacent to the Museum. For additional information, please call 804-649-1861 or visit www.moc.org.

Reading the South

Southern Single Blessedness: Unmarried Women in the Urban South, 1800–1865.

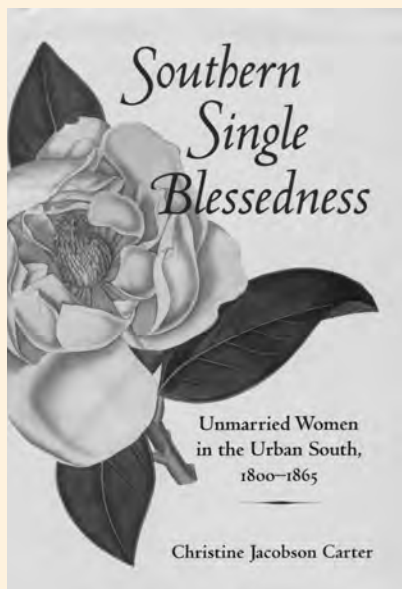
By Christine Jacobson Carter.
Urbana: University of Illinois Press,
2006. 220 pages. \$35.00 cloth.

The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race, and Respectability in New Orleans, 1865–1920.

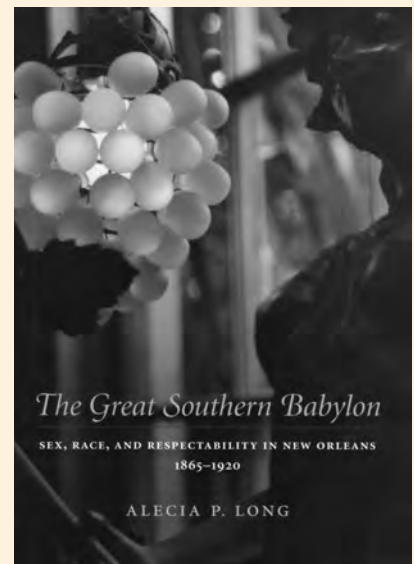
By Alecia P. Long. Baton Rouge:
Louisiana State University Press,
2004. 282 pages. \$39.95 cloth,
19.95 paper.

These two books take unique approaches to groups of urban women in the 19th- and early 20th-century South. While some historians—today more often called gender historians than women’s historians—have been working to analyze the ways different Southerners used concepts of womanhood and manhood to support, reform, or undermine the nature of Southern society, others, such as Christine Jacobson Carter and Alecia Long, have been expanding the range of women’s history to study groups scholars have generally ignored. *Southern Single Blessedness* studies wealthy or at least comfortable unmarried women in antebellum Charleston and Savannah, while *The Great Southern Babylon* examines prostitutes and their world in post-Civil War New Orleans. Both deal with issues women who lived outside the norms of a society that expected women to live as dependents in homes with family members, and both offer intriguing ways that notions of respectability mattered to people whose lives belied the expectations of their time and place.

The women Christine Jacobson



Carter studies were comfortable, literate, and self-reflective urbanites—active, busy people with plenty of family, friends, community and church responsibilities. They wrote letters, kept up intense personal connections, and when possible engaged in philanthropy. An especially effective chapter shows single urban women in webs of relations trying to do their duties as daughters, sisters, and aunts. The author makes clear she is not suggesting the single women, even though they made the decision to stay outside one of the most fundamental institutions of their society, were not generally outsiders or reformers who critiqued slavery, patriarchy, or even marriage. In many ways they benefited from elite status and slave labor. A concluding chapter describes changes during the Civil War when many single women either married quickly or grew more quiet in their diaries and letters, less sure about the state of their society. The book is useful and important in



part because it takes note of a group of women scholars have rarely recognized; it is especially good at getting to know some of them in personal detail. Savannah’s Mary Telfair stands out as the key figure, writing, being a loyal friend and family member, helping the poor and orphaned, and growing troubled and frustrated during the Civil War.

Long’s *The Great Southern Babylon* offers more surprises, in part from its status as one of the few works on prostitution in the South, in part from its ability to bring people to life from obscure urban records. Many of the book’s strengths resemble the strengths of *Southern Single Blessedness*. While studying prostitution in New Orleans—the prostitutes, their employers, their customers, the advertising, the setting, the laws, the reformers, and the people who tried to look the other way—Long never loses sight of individual personalities. Storyville took its name from Sidney Story, the reformer who tried in 1897 to create a vice district to keep the rest of New

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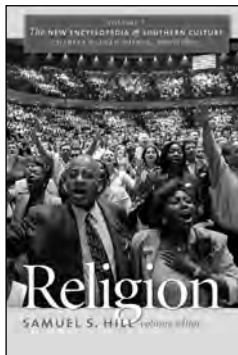


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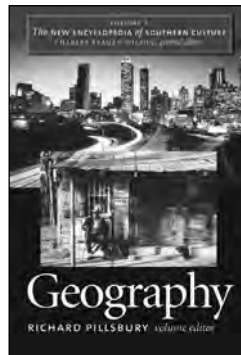
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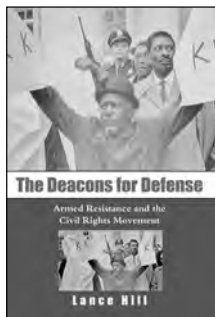
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Reading the South *continued*

Orleans free from knowing or thinking very much about prostitution. Mary Deubler was a successful madam whose life exemplified Long’s important arguments that people in the Storyville district had lives “vitaly connected to the larger community through family ties and financial relationships” and that many of them had considerable desires for respectability. Deubler’s personal life, dress, and even brothel décor showed a desire to be treated with as a woman of respect. Willie Piazza used her own uncertain racial status to further her entrepreneurial efforts at a time when madams described and many men imagined “octoroons” as having exotic sexual allure. The book deals with court cases that reveal the ambiguities of a city that both wanted to attract and serve the various groups of men who frequented prostitution districts while also trying to present itself as a clean, healthy, morally respectable community.

TED OWNBY

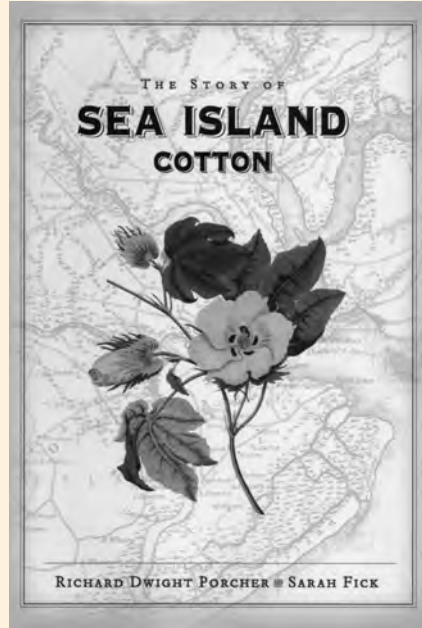
The Story of Sea Island Cotton.

By Richard Dwight Porcher and Sarah Fick.
Charleston: Wyrick & Company, 2005. 592 pages,
200 black and white photographs. \$39.95 cloth.

The Story of Sea Island Cotton by Richard Dwight Porcher and Sarah Fick provides a detailed account of the development, cultivation, and demise of Sea Island cotton as a cash crop in the Sea Islands of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. According to Porcher and Fick, the long-staple, silky fibers of Sea Island cotton were “the finest quality of cotton ever grown—anywhere or at any time” until the arrival of the boll weevil ruined the crop in the 1920s, and the last Sea Island cotton seeds were permanently lost in the 1940s. Part 1, written by Porcher, a field biologist and ecologist, looks at the role of Sea Island cotton from the natural history of the Sea Island landscape and the origins of the plant, to the crop’s role in the Industrial Revolution as one of the most important economic forces in the southeastern United States from 1790 until just before the Civil War and, to a lesser extent, in the early 20th century. Part 2, by Fick, an architectural historian, examines the architecture of the homes of Sea Island cotton planters, through photography and research into the families who lived in them. Most of these homes, built from 1790 to the 1860s, were beautiful but simple structures that held grand historical “mystiques” because of their isolated Sea Island locations.

The most striking thing in reading *The Story of Sea Island Cotton* is that the whole of Part 1, which takes up the bulk of the book, is truly all about cotton. Whether

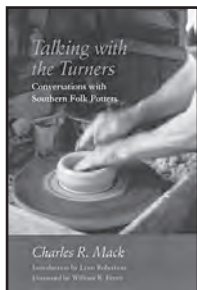
explaining the ideal soil and climate conditions for *Gossypium barbadense*, providing diagrams of the various cotton gins invented throughout history, or describing the quality of lace made from the fine fibers, Porcher rarely strays to any subject that does not directly involve the cultivation, distribution, and usage of the Sea Island cotton plant. Topics such as the social hierarchy surrounding cotton labor, the complex culture of the African slaves on the Sea Islands and their descendents, or even descriptions of the European-descended planters and their lifestyles are only briefly mentioned. Even Part 2 focuses on more factual details about architecture and the families who inhabited the homes rather than giving in to the temptation of personal and cultural tales. In the introduction of the book, Porcher explains that his



intentions are to focus on his own areas of expertise and to avoid topics that are already adequately covered in

other works, which is fair enough, but it was still surprising that the authors did not reveal more about the people involved in the cultivation of Sea Island cotton, beyond their entrepreneurial economic role, because their stories seem so vital as well as fascinating.

Perhaps this is my own weakness. My mother's family is from the South Carolina Lowcountry, where the bulk of Sea Island cotton was grown, and the places and family names that roll through Porcher and Fick's accounts of various plantations and the farming techniques of the individuals who developed them are familiar to the point of probably being somewhere in my family tree. So perhaps it is a biased curiosity or just habit that leads me to hope for more details about how people lived on the Sea Islands, the struggles, experiences, and lifestyles of



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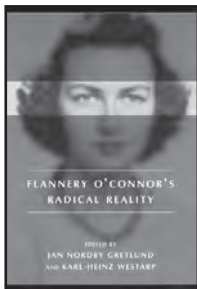
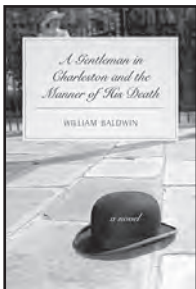
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planters and especially slaves and their descendants, what people ate, or maybe a ghost story or two—the types of things my grandmother would tell me about her memories of growing up on a colony of old plantations outside of Bluffton, South Carolina.

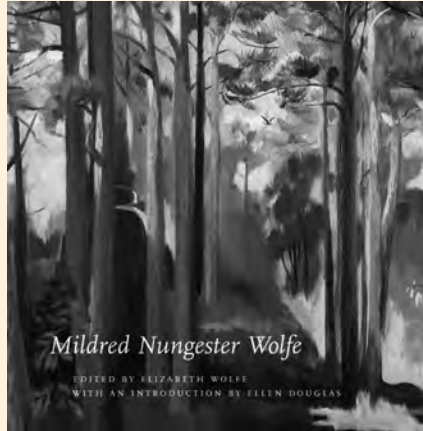
But Porcher and Fick diligently focus on their specific realms of research, and indeed I enjoyed learning about topics that I never even thought to consider about where my ancestors lived, especially in the natural history of the Sea Islands, the role of Native American shell circles and mounds and their effect on the soil, or the different directions the homes faced depending on what season the planter expected to be in residence. *The Story of Sea Island Cotton* is a well-researched book that should be praised for its direct and informative approach to studying the history of Sea Island cotton cultivation, despite my yearning for tales from such a culturally rich area.

MARY BATTLE

Mildred Nungester Wolfe.

Edited by Elizabeth Wolfe.
Introduction by Ellen Douglas.
Jackson: University Press of
Mississippi, 2005. 112 pages, 50
color illustrations. \$35.00 cloth.

Mildred Nungester Wolfe (b. 1912) is among Mississippi's most prominent artists. Her portrait of Eudora Welty hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., and her paintings and sculptures are included in the collections of the Mississippi Museum of Art, Millsaps College, Montgomery Museum of Art, the Library of Congress, and in several private collections. From the wrought-iron gates of Methodist Children's Home, to the terra cotta statue of St. Anthony for St. Dominic's Hospital (both in Jackson, Mississippi), to the mosaic plaque for the water fountain



in the town of Richton's First Methodist Church, Mississippians have been privileged to enjoy Wolfe's art, most without their knowing it.

Over five decades of artistic activity, Wolfe has worked in a wide variety of media: oils, watercolors, ceramics, printmaking, and stained glass. Her style blends impressionism with postimpressionism, and her technique is influenced by her interest in the effects of light. As she writes, "I get excited about everyday accidents of atmosphere and light. Every painting is an attempt to remember and make a permanent record of a moment of intense visual perception: the delicate arabesque of weeds silhouetted against the deep russet of sedge, a sharp blue sky, the unbelievable grace of birds, etched on my memory."

Mildred Nungester Wolfe is a retrospective of her work featuring 50 color reproductions of her art, an introduction by noted author Ellen Douglas, and a chronology of Wolfe's life. In the text, Wolfe candidly reflects on her childhood, training at the Art Institute of Chicago, early career, her collaborations with her artist husband Karl Wolfe, her career as a teacher and mentor, and her techniques. This is a long-overdue tribute to a master creator.

Mildred Wolfe's daughter, Elizabeth Wolfe, edited the book. Also an artist, she runs Wolfe Studio in Jackson, Mississippi.

STEVE YATES

Poe.

By James M. Hutchisson. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005. 275 pages. \$30.00 cloth.

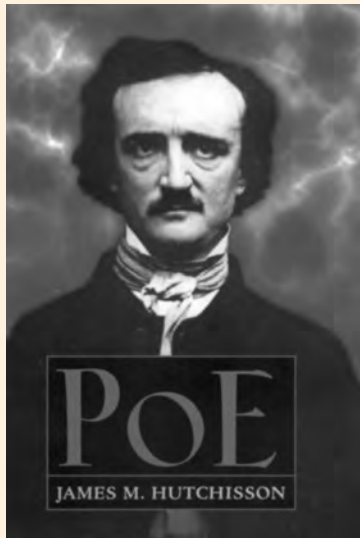
For some previous biographers, the temptation to shroud Edgar Allan Poe's life in mystery and obscurity proved too great. However, biographer and critic James M. Hutchisson finds the documentary records, on the whole, to be full, colorful, and clear.

Writing his new biography *Poe*, Hutchisson said there were many myths he wished to dispel. "Where do I start?" Hutchisson asked. "That he was a drug addict, that he was a wastrel drunk, that he physically abused women, that he impregnated other peoples' wives and—dare I even mention this one?—that he was a murderer. The popular image of Poe has become inseparable from the bizarre madmen he portrayed in his fiction."

Poe (1809–1849) was an American original—a luminous literary theorist, an erratic genius, and an analyst of human obsession and compulsion par excellence. From 1835 until his death, he was arguably the main protagonist in the story of the building of American literature. The scope of his achievements and the dramatic character of Poe's life have drawn readers and critics to him in droves.

And yet, upon his death, one obituary penned by a literary enemy in the New York *Daily Tribune* cascaded into a lasting stain on Poe's character, leaving a historic misunderstanding. To many, Poe is remembered as a difficult, self-pitying, troubled drunkard often incapable of caring for himself.

Poe reclaims the Baltimore and Virginia writer's reputation and power, retracing Poe's life and career. Hutchisson, a professor of American literature and Southern Studies at the Citadel, captures the boisterous worlds of literary New York and Philadelphia



in the 1800s to understand why Poe wrote the way he did and why his achievement was so important to American literature. The biography presents a critical overview of Poe's major works and his main themes, techniques, and imaginative preoccupations.

This portrait of the writer emphasizes as never before Poe's Southern identity. It traces his existence as a workaday journalist in the burgeoning magazine era and later his tremendous authority as a literary critic and cultural arbiter. His courtly demeanor and sense of social propriety stand out in this biography as does his patronage of women writers. In Poe's work, Hutchisson reveals Poe adapting art forms as diverse as the so-called gutter press and the haunting rhythms of African American spirituals and borrowing imagery from such popular social movements as temperance and freemasonry. To counter the long-lasting damage done by Poe's literary enemies, Hutchisson explores the far-reaching, posthumous influence Poe's literary and critical work exerted on the sister arts and on modern writers from Nietzsche to Nabokov.

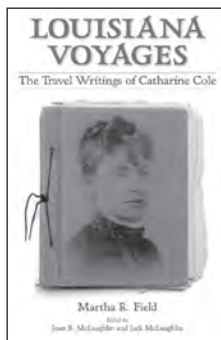
STEVE YATES

THE ART OF A GOOD READ



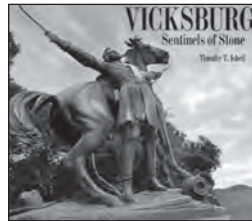
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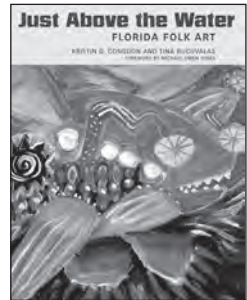
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2006 Oxford Conference for the Book

The 2006 Oxford Conference for the Book, organized by the Center and Square Books, once again brought notable authors, editors, and other leading figures in the publishing world to north Mississippi for a weekend of readings, discussions, and celebrations. Reading at the 13th conference, held March 30–April 1, were nine visiting fiction writers—Brian Keith Jackson, Michael Knight, Starling Lawrence, James Meek, Lewis Nordan, Jack Pendarvis, George Saunders, Olympia Vernon—and poets Tyehimba Jess, Aimee Nezhukumatathil, Aleda Shirley, and Natasha Trethewey.

Novelist, journalist, and playwright Larry L. King unveiled his memoir of Willie Morris and talked with Eudora Welty's biographer Suzanne Marrs and Darlene Harbour Unrue, author of a biography of Katherine Anne Porter. Artist and arts commentator William Dunlap led a discussion with art historians Patti Carr Black, Mary Lynn Kotz, and Annalyn Swan. Ole Miss journalism professor Curtis Wilkie moderated "Writing about Politics" with panelists James Gill, of the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*; Thomas Oliphant, longtime Washington correspondent for the *Boston Globe*; and Trent Lott, U.S. Senator from Mississippi and author of the memoir *Herding Cats: A Life in Politics*.

Author Barry Hannah, director of the MFA program at the University of Mississippi, led a panel with author



Eric Vitello

Members of Shelby Foote's Memphis book club (from left) Michael McDonnell, William Pearson, and William Reed were panelists for a session moderated by Richard Howorth, owner of Square Books and Mayor of Oxford.

T. A. Barron; agent Alex Glass; author and editor Starling Lawrence; and representatives of Sarabande Books, editor in chief Sarah Gorham and marketing director Nickole Brown. Nationally known literacy and reading advocate Elaine H. Scott talked with panelists Claiborne Barksdale, director of the Barksdale Reading Institute at the University of Mississippi; Sarah Combs, teen specialist in the collection department of BWI Books in Lexington, Kentucky; Cindy Dach, marketing director of Changing Hands Bookstore in Tempe, Arizona; and Pamela Pridgen, director of the public

library in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and a board member of the Mississippi Library Commission.

Pridgen announced a new Mississippi Reads project to encourage reading of the state's authors.

Once again, the Junior Auxiliary of Oxford, the Lafayette County Literacy Council, Square Books Jr., and other collaborators brought local schoolchildren to the conference to meet award-winning authors of books for young readers. More than 500 fifth graders received copies of T. A. Barron's *The Ancient One* and heard the author talk about his writing, and 500 ninth graders,

Doug McClain



From left: Curtis Wilkie, Senator Trent Lott, Thomas Oliphant, and James Gill discuss "Writing about Politics."



T. A. Barron (left) and Barry Hannah

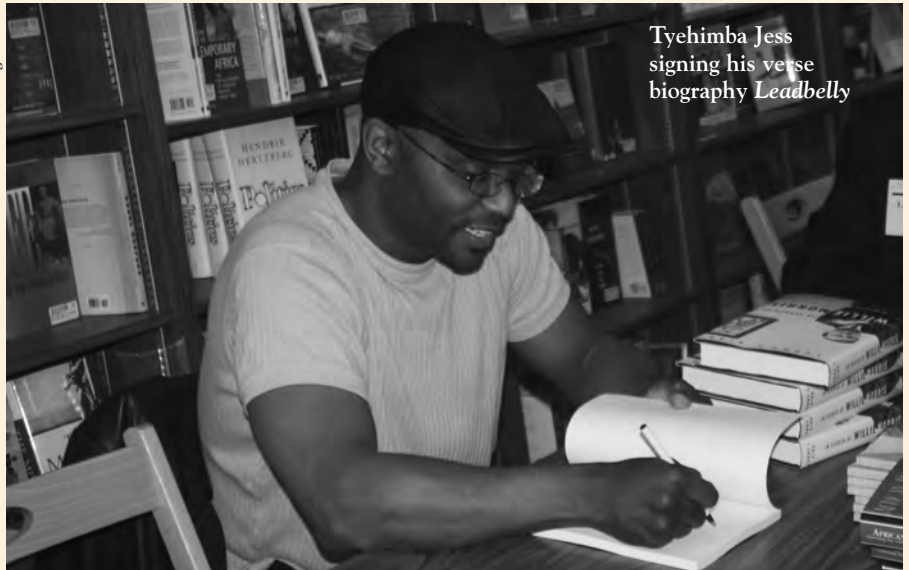


“Writing about Art and Artists” speakers (from left) Mary Lynn Kotz, Patti Carr Black, and Annalyn Swan



Aleda Shirley read from her collection *Dark Familiar* as part of the book conference celebration of American Poetry Month.

who had received copies of *The Battle of Jericho*, enjoyed a session with the author of that novel, Sharon M. Draper.



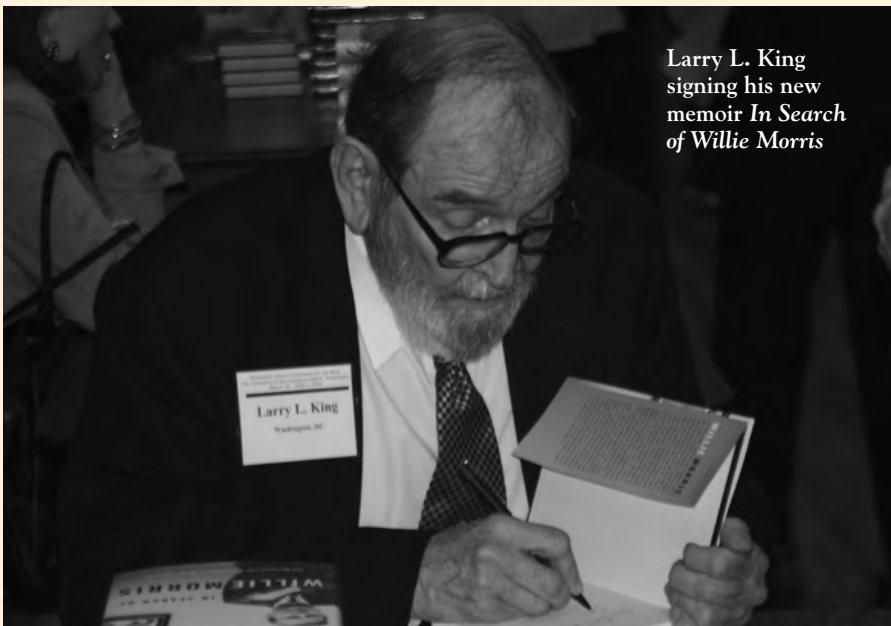
Tyehimba Jess signing his verse biography *Leadbelly*

Dedicated to Mississippi-born novelist and historian Shelby Foote (1916–2005), the conference included talks by novelist Ellen Douglas and historian Gary W. Gallagher, a panel

with members of Foote’s Memphis book club, and a filmed tribute by documentary filmmaker Ken Burns. Among other highlights of the conference were exhibitions and lunch at the John Davis Williams Library, a special conference edition of *Thacker Mountain Radio*, a fiction and poetry jam, an Elderhostel program, a marathon book signing at Square Books, and a literary tour of the Mississippi Delta, which preceded the conference.

The 2006 conference was partially funded by the University of Mississippi, a contribution from the R&B Feder Foundation for the Beaux Arts, and grants from the Mississippi Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council.

The 14th conference is set for March 22–24, 2007, and will be dedicated to Larry Brown. For details, click the Web site oxfordconferenceforthebook.com.



Larry L. King signing his new memoir *In Search of Willie Morris*

Mississippi Delta Literary Tour

The third Mississippi Delta Literary Tour sponsored by the Center and based at the Alluvian Hotel in Greenwood was a great success. The March 27–30, 2006, tour began with a bus trip to the historic town of Carrollton and included talks on “Creativity in the Delta” by Center director and cultural historian Charles Reagan Wilson and “Landscapes of the Soul: Elizabeth Spencer and Endesha Ida Mae Holland” by literary scholar Marion Barnwell. Following dinner at Tuttle House in Carrollton, the group returned to Greenwood for the new Turnrow Book Co.’s “Afrossippi Blues” program with novelist Cynthia Shearer, journalist Alan Huffman, and musician Gueel Kumba.

On Tuesday, March 28, Delta native and Center staffer Jimmy Thomas was guide for the trip to Greenville, home of so many writers that it is known as “the Athens of Mississippi” or “the Athens of the South.” Literary scholar W. Kenneth Holditch presented “Jordan County Chronicles: The Fiction of Shelby Foote” at the William Alexander Percy Library, the group had lunch at Doe’s Eat Place, and McCormick Book Inn sponsored a



M. Susan Tucker

Lewis Nordan at the Alluvian Hotel in Greenwood, with William Dunlap’s painting *Landscape Askew: Delta Dog Trot*

program with Lewis Nordan reading from his memoir, *Boy with Loaded Gun*, and Cynthia Shearer reading from her novel *The Celestial Jukebox*. The day also included a drive through Itta Bena, Nordan’s hometown and the model for

Arrow Catcher in his fiction, and dinner at Lusco’s in Greenwood.

On Wednesday, March 29, with Luther Brown of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning as guide, the group drove to Sumner, seeing along the way

Maude Schuyler Clay



Preparing for the “Civil Rights in the Delta” program with Curtis Wilkie at the Tallahatchie County Courthouse in Sumner are (from left) Betty Pearson, Wheeler Parker, Joe York, Bill Pearson, Henry Outlaw, William F. Winter, Andy Harper, Patti Carr Black, and Frank Mitchener.



From left: Lewis Nordan, Mary Dayle McCormick, and Cynthia Shearer at McCormick Book Inn in Greenville

bluesman Robert Johnson's grave site at Little Zion Church, a documentary on Emmett Till's murder, and the store at Money where Till made his fatal wolf whistle. That morning, at Bayou Bend Country Club, Patti Carr Black read from her novel about growing up in Sumner, Maude Schuyler Clay read an essay about her lifelong fascination with Emmett Till and presented a slide show of her Delta photographs, and staff of the Tutwiler Community Education Center displayed their quilts and sang gospel music. That afternoon, at the Tallahatchie County Courthouse, where the Till murder trial took place 50 years ago, journalist Curtis Wilkie talked about civil rights in the Delta with Black, Till's cousin Wheeler Parker, Sumner residents Frank Mitchener and Betty and Bill Pearson, Henry Outlaw of the Delta Center, and former Mississippi governor William F. Winter. The program ended with readings from *The Celestial Jukebox* by Cynthia Shearer, *A Killing in This Town* by Olympia Vernon, and *Wolf Whistle* by Lewis Nordan.

Dinner was served that evening at Giardina's in Greenwood, and the next morning tour participants traveled to Oxford, arriving in time to visit Faulkner's home, Rowan Oak, tour the town, see exhibitions at the Williams Library, and attend the Oxford Conference for the Book, which began that afternoon.

The fourth Delta Literary Tour, scheduled for March



Curtis Wilkie with daughter, Leighton McCool, in Sumner for the civil rights program he moderated at the Tallahatchie County Courthouse



Enjoying lunch at Bayou Bend Country Club in Sumner are (from left) Nancy Ashley, Center Advisory Committee member from Dallas, Texas; Marion Barnwell, guide and speaker for the Delta Literary Tour program in Carrollton; and Kenneth Holditch, who presented a talk on Shelby Foote during the tour day in Greenville.

19-22, 2007, will visit Indianola, Greenville, and Clarksdale. Once again, group accommodations will be available at the Alluvian Hotel in downtown Greenwood. By early fall, details will be posted on the Center's Web site (www.olemiss.edu/depts/south/).



Tallahatchie County Courthouse in Sumner

Ghosts of Emmett Till

On the hot, sticky August night that 14-year-old Emmett Till was kidnapped and subsequently murdered by two white men in their thirties, I had just celebrated my second birthday. However, having no direct recollection of this event does not diminish its power to have penetrated my very being. After all, this terrible thing had happened in my state, my county, my town, my community. Yet I did not even hear about Emmett Till until many years later when a teacher in junior high school casually related a story about her having been a teenager around our age—14—at the time of the trial in Sumner, Mississippi, in 1955. She said the town of Sumner had been full of reporters, “outside agitators,” and the many people—black and white—attending the trial, and that she had been told by her parents not to speak to anyone about anything when the West Tallahatchie school bus stopped to let her off in town. Whether she had any opinion then—in 1967—about what had happened in Sumner in September of 1955 was not anything that she related to us. It was just something that had happened: at most, she indicated that she had been inconvenienced by not being able to get off the bus in town and visit with her friends, loiter around the Sumner Drug Store or Mr. Frank Williams’s store, and drink Cokes and eat nabs—whatever white teenagers did then after school—because there were so many “outsiders” at the Tallahatchie County courthouse. I do recall her saying something to the effect that “all eyes in the nation were on Sumner, Mississippi.”

Emmett Till was the same age as my teacher in 1955 (14), which was the same age I was when I heard the story in 1967. I was even going to the same segregated high school that my teacher had attended in 1955. I did not really then know any 14-year-old black person, male or female, but I do remember thinking we were all more than connected.

I became obsessed with the story surrounding Emmett Till, yet I could not easily find out any facts about it since none of my elders—not my parents, not my parents’ friends, not the polite, loving black couple that worked for us—wanted to talk about it. Oh, I had heard little things here and there, one funny thing being that because of the trial, my grandmother had had to change bootleggers (Tallahatchie was a dry county until the late ’60s) because “the bootlegger Mrs. Bryant was kin to “those Bryants and Milams.” There were no history books to consult, and no records where I knew to look up anything. (The entire court transcript of the Till trial mysteriously “disappeared” from the Tallahatchie County courthouse shortly after the trial.) But witnesses lived on and told their stories, reporters had taken notes and photographs, newsreels were filmed, and the murderers even “confessed” to William Bradford Huie of *Look* magazine, for the then-princely sum of \$4,000, that they had indeed killed the boy, disclosing all the harrowing details.

Around that time I fully realized there were two kinds of history: one was white history and the other was black history.

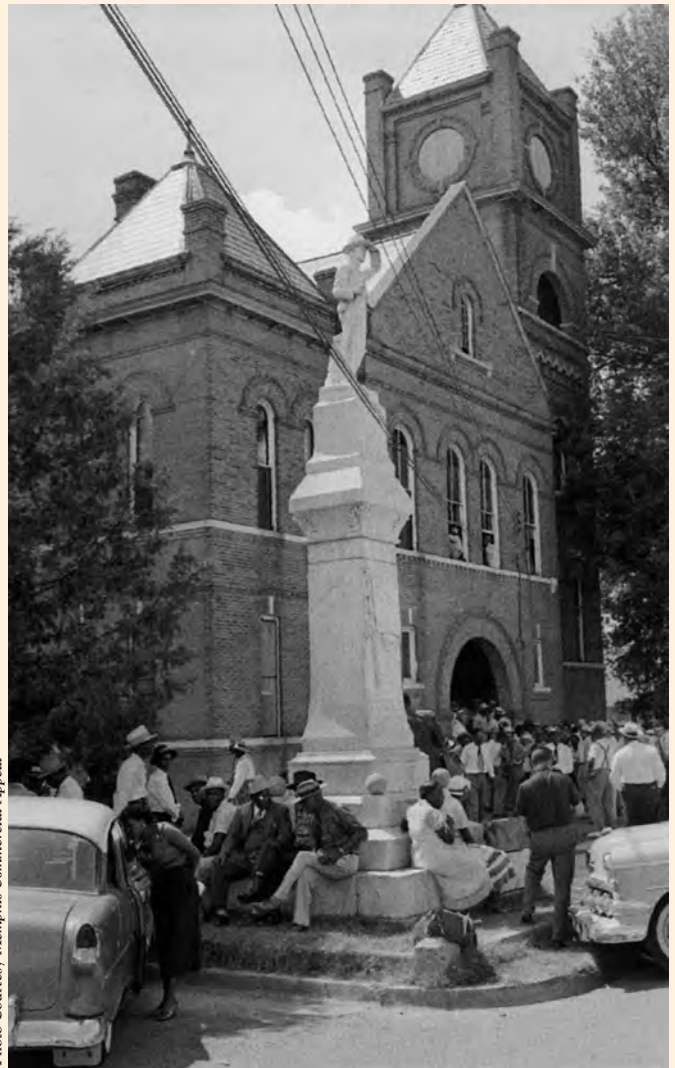


Photo Courtesy: Memphis Commercial Appeal

Scene at courthouse in Sumner in 1955 during the Emmett Till murder trial

And the chances were that I would never fully know black history since I wasn’t black and hadn’t had to live my life in the shadow of fear.

For a privileged white girl who had never known any kind of fear, the story of Emmett Till took on mythic proportions: A young “foreigner” from Chicago (my own father was a “foreigner” from Chicago) came to the Mississippi Delta in August of 1955 to visit his mother’s 64-year-old uncle, Mose Wright, and his extended family in Money, Mississippi. The visitor from Chicago and his teenaged Mississippi cousins worked in the blazing hot fields by day—I actually had an inkling of just how excruciating that was, as my brother and I had once tried to make a little money chopping cotton, and another time we had picked cotton, each of our attempts lasting little more than a few hours before we returned feeling



Bryant Store in Money, Mississippi, where Emmett Till gave his tragic wolf whistle in 1955

exhausted (and possibly sunstroked, according to our alarmed mother) to our air-conditioned house. But Emmett Till and his cousins had no air conditioning, and they had no relief from the hard work of the fields until the sun went down. It was on a late afternoon, after working all day, that they walked into Bryant's Grocery, bought a cold drink and maybe some candy, and Emmett supposedly said something brashly untoward to pretty 22-year-old Carolyn Bryant, the proprietor's wife, who was working behind the counter. Emmett's mother, Mamie Till Mobley, a Mississippi Delta native, had actually warned him before leaving Chicago that he must defer to all the white people in Mississippi, that he should, in her words, "jump off the sidewalk into the street if a white person was walking down the same sidewalk," that things in Mississippi were not like things in Chicago, but Emmett apparently took no heed of her warnings. When his cousins realized that he had allegedly spoken in a forbidden, familiar way to Mrs. Bryant, they rushed him out of the store and hightailed it out to Mose Wright's house in the countryside out from Money. A few days passed and just when the cousins thought they had safely escaped, a knock came on the door in the dead of night and white men took Emmett away. I think we all know the rest of this sickening, disheartening story.

William Faulkner said in his 1956 *Harper's* essay "On Fear" of this cowardly kidnapping: "If the facts about the Till case are correct, this remains: two adults, armed, in the dark, kidnap a 14-year-old boy and take him away to frighten him. Instead of which, the 14-year-old boy not only refuses to be frightened, but unarmed, alone, in the dark, so frightens the two armed adults, that they must destroy him."

This story does indeed sound like Greek tragedy or great mythic literature. But there is a ray of light that comes from this senseless killing: that one 14-year-old boy's death at the hands of cowardly grown white men and the subsequent cover-up at their trial by other grown white men who could have instead spoken out for the truth, has had such repercussions. Mainly because in 1955—this was pre-civil rights era, and I don't believe one black person in the state of Mississippi, much less Tallahatchie County, was allowed to



Abandoned Bryant Store in Money, Mississippi, in 2006

even to register to vote (that all came later at even more sacrifice) Emmett Till's mother, Mamie, even in her deepest grief at the loss of her only son, had the unselfish determination to get his body out of Mississippi (where the sheriff of Tallahatchie County had ordered it to be immediately buried) and have it displayed in Chicago in its horribly mutilated state to show the world what had happened. *To show the world what had happened.* This brash, foolish, unknowing, unskilled-in-the-ways-of-Mississippi-Jim-Crow-racism Chicago boy's killers may have been acquitted in one hour and seven minutes, and Tallahatchie County and Sumner, Mississippi, and that jury and the lawyers that defended the murderers had what was undoubtedly their darkest hour, but the world does now know what happened. I believe anyone with a mind or heart or any love or hope of mankind feels a deep, sorrowful shame that it was allowed to happen here.

Bob Dylan may have put shame best in the last stanza of his 1963 song "The Ballad of Emmett Till":

If you can't speak out against this kind of crime
that's so unjust
Your eyes are filled with dead men's dirt and your
mind is filled with dust
Your arms and legs they must be in shackled chains,
and your blood must refuse to flow
For you to let this human race fall down so god-
awful low.

I dedicated my book of photographs, *Delta Land*, to the memory of Emmett Till. And all the pictures of the Mississippi Delta I have taken over the last few years have, for the most part, somehow been tied to his mythic, tragic story. I hope somewhere, somehow Emmett Till knows we are all trying to make it up to him. Without his forgiveness, we all remain ghosts.

MAUDE SCHUYLER CLAY

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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

MARK CAMARIGG is the former assistant editor and current publications manager for *Living Blues* magazine. He is also a doctoral student in the Department of History at the University of Mississippi researching Soul Blues music in the American South.

MAUDE SCHUYLER CLAY is a fifth-generation native of the Delta town of Sumner, Mississippi. *Delta Land*, her book of 75 black-and-white photographs made between 1993 and 1998, is a beautiful homage to her home.

BROOKE HATCHETT is a junior journalism major with a magazine emphasis at the University of Mississippi. She is interning for the university's media and public relations department.

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

MARY MARGARET MILLER is a first-year Southern Studies graduate student from the Mississippi Delta. She has an undergraduate degree in journalism from the University of Mississippi and works as a freelance journalist.

WARREN STEEL is associate professor of Music and Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi. In addition to teaching courses in music history, ethnomusicology, and applied organ and harpsichord, he performs with early music ensembles, has published edition of the collected works of American composers, and is active in Sacred Harp singing, both as a singer and Web site developer.

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 in recent issues of *Southwest Review*, *Texas Review*, and *Louisiana Literature*.

(continued from page 1)

Lopez, Mario Materassi, John T. Matthews, and Takako Tanaka.

In addition to these scholars, as well as nine panelists, the conference will welcome Tierno Monenembo, a native of Guinea in West Africa and the author of eight novels, the most recent being *The Oldest Orphan*, based on the Rwanda genocide. Holding a doctorate in biochemistry, and having studied and taught in Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Brazil, Algeria, Morocco, and France, he now lives in Paris and devotes his full time to writing. An earlier novel, *Les écailles du ciel* (*The Shells of the Sky*), was awarded the Grand Prix de l'Afrique Noire.

In addition to formal lectures, Elizabeth Shiver, a native of Oxford, will moderate a "Faulkner in Oxford" panel, and there will be sessions on Teaching Faulkner, tours of North Mississippi (including for the first time Memphis), "Faulkner on the Fringe"—an "open mike" evening at the Southside Gallery, and an assortment of social events, including a picnic at Rowan Oak and a closing party at Off Square Books. For information about the conference program, contact Mary Beth Lasseter by telephone (662-816-2055) or e-mail marybeth@olemiss.edu.

Visit www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner for full information and online registration.

DONALD M. KARTIGANER



Tierno Monenembo

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J. B. Murry: Writing in an Unknown Tongue; Reading through the Water

J. B. Murry, a self-educated African American visionary from Georgia, celebrates ritual "writing in the Spirit" and water divination.



These traditional expressions, derived from African influences, occur throughout the Caribbean, South America, and the American South. This DVD shows Murray performing the rituals and includes shots of some of the paintings for which he has gained national recognition. This short documentary raises issues about the relationship between the spiritual and the aesthetic in the art of religious visionaries. By Judith McWillie/University of Georgia. 1986.

Color, 15 minutes.

DVD1145 \$15.00

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James "Son" Thomas

A renowned Delta blues singer, "Son" Thomas was also a gifted clay sculptor. Filmed at his home in Leland, Mississippi,



this treatment juxtaposes Thomas's artwork with several musical performances. It also includes a sequence showing how he worked clay to create his famous sculptures of the human skull. By Judith McWillie/University of Georgia. 1986.

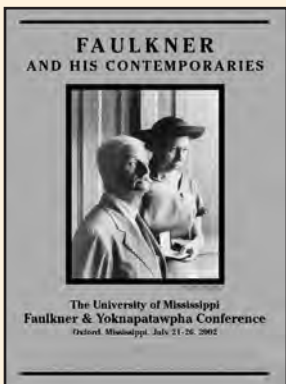
Color, 17 minutes.

DVD1104 \$15.00

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William Faulkner and Eudora Welty

This film features Eudora Welty at the opening session of the 1987 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference. Welty reads from her story "Why I Live at the P.O." and answers questions about her work and Faulkner's.



Color, 34 minutes.

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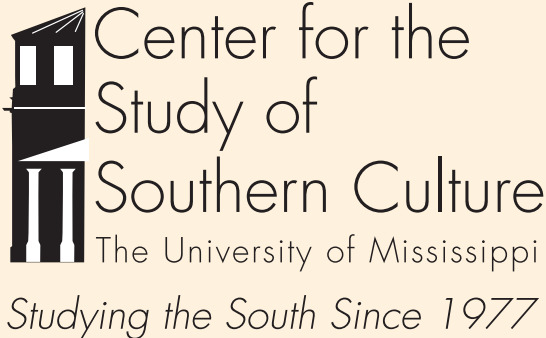
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