

the Southern Register

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE • JUNE/SEPTEMBER 2003

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

“FAULKNER AND THE ECOLOGY OF THE SOUTH”

Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha

July 20-24, 2003

The heart of ecology is relationship: at the fullest and most complex level, the relations between human beings and the entire array of their physical and social environments. Much of our attention to Faulkner's fiction has been, not surprisingly, on the individual. His work is filled with memorable characters, many of whom are memorable precisely because of their uniqueness, often their isolation, within the community. Now, as our concern with ecology grows, our recognition that in many ways the determination of the quality of our lives lies in how we relate to each other and to the world at large, we begin to see how Faulkner's work, his Yoknapatawpha world, is about relationship: How his distinct communities, black and white, town and country, native and foreign, relate to each other. How characters necessarily encounter natural and built environments that always precede them, structuring their actions. How person and place become virtually a single, inseparable unit of being.

Some of the topics of “Faulkner and the Ecology of the South” that will be taken up by nine lecturers and six panelists will be the significance of the highly varied places of *Absalom, Absalom!*; the representation of labor in *The Hamlet*; comparison of the representations of Yoknapatawpha and Lafayette County in Faulkner's novels and John McCrary's paintings; Faulkner's *Native Americans* and the plantation economy.

In addition to the formal lectures and panel discussions, Tom Franklin will give a reading from his new novel *Hell at the Breach*. There will also be sessions on Teaching Faulkner, tours of North Mississippi, announcement of the winner of the 14th Faulkner Contest, readings from Faulkner, and an assortment of social gatherings, including a buffet supper at historic Irons Place, a picnic at Rowan Oak, and a closing party at Square Books.

For more information about the conference, contact the Office of Professional Development and Non-Credit Education, Post Office Box 879, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677-0879; telephone 662-915-7283; fax 662-915-5138; e-mail noncred@olemiss.edu; www.outreach.olemiss.edu or www.olemiss.edu/depts/south/ Faulkner/index.htm.

For information about participating in the conference through Elkhornstiel, call 877-426-8056 and refer to the program number 5260, or contact Carolyn Vance Smith by telephone (601-446-1208) or e-mail (carolyn.smith@colin.edu).

DONALD M. KARTGANER

FAULKNER AND THE ECOLOGY OF THE SOUTH



The University of Mississippi
Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference
Oxford, Mississippi, July 20-24, 2003

Oxford on the Hill, by John McCrary (1911-1988), is used as the illustration for the 2003 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference poster and program courtesy of the City of Oxford, owner of the painting. Flat copies of this poster and another one with a McCrary painting, *Political Rally*, are available for \$10.00 each plus \$3.50 postage and handling. Mississippi residents 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 Visa or MasterCard account number and expiration date. Credit card orders also may be made by calling 800-390-3527.

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

The spring semester ended with a lovely graduation day ceremony, sandwiched between unusually stormy days in Mississippi. The ritual end of the academic year and the coming of spring have caused me to reflect on Center work in recent months and to look ahead to what is coming next.

It was a lively semester, punctuated by several major events. The Southern Studies Faculty Forum showcased the research of our core faculty, showing the range of interests and achievement of their work. As interdisciplinary scholars, they drew from theoretical literature, diverse primary sources, and provocative ideas. It was work in progress, and those in attendance caught glimpses of future major studies. As part of the Center's 25th anniversary celebration, the Faculty Forum represented a new dialogue among our faculty, which we hope will always continue.

The first "Blues Today Symposium" took place in February, a new extension of the Center's long interest in studying Blues music. It brought together academics, music critics, and performers, in an altogether distinctive and stimulating forum. African American critic Stanley Crouch gave the keynote address, and one panel featured blues musicians Little Milton, Willie King, and Bobby Rush talking about the blues—this after performing a concert the night before. Commentators talk too much about the death of the blues. Anyone in Mississippi knows it is alive and well, different from the past surely, but supported by a new generation of performers and new venues in festivals and in clubs, such as Isaac Dyer's 630 Blues Café in Jackson and Morgan Freeman and Bill Luckert's Ground Zero in Clarksdale. Living Blues magazine is now involved in efforts to bring increased appreciation of the blues through working with other parties throughout the state to promote the blues as part of cultural tourism.

The Oxford Conference for the Book quietly celebrated its 10th anniversary in April, with a meeting that honored novelist, dramatist, and critic Stark Young. It also highlighted bright young novelists like Calvin Baker and Scott Morris, wild men like George Singleton (read *The Half-Memorial of Dixie* and you will know why he is wild), and the prolific Percival Everett. Ted Overby moderated one of my favorite sessions, a panel on "Writing Memoirs" that included the typical diversity of three seemingly unrelated memoirists, whose commonalities and differences made for fascinating listening. The conference every year also features local talent, as this year with David Galaf and students in the University's creative writing program. The Oxford Conference for the Book has become a community mainstay, and this year brought people from two dozen states to enjoy one of the South's premier literary festivals.

Our next conferences will draw attention to our new initiative to study the environment in the South. The initiative is not entirely new, as we began this effort several years ago with a year-long Southern Studies Colloquium on the environment, during which we brought in Scott Slovic, director of the Center for Environmental Arts and Humanities at the University of Nevada, as consultant to think about ways to highlight our interest in the environment. This year's Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference, July 20-24, will focus on "Faulkner and the Ecology of the South," and the theme of the Porter L. Fortune History Symposium, September 17-19, will be "The Environment and Southern History." These two meetings will bring scholars to campus to explore literary and historical dimensions on a topic with broad interdisciplinary appeal.

Much of the study of the environment has been in the West, but we hope these meetings, and the Center's continued interest in the environment, will give new momentum to a field of Southern environmental studies. As part of this initiative, David Wharton, director of Documentary Studies, is working with the Audubon Society in Mississippi to launch a new documentary fieldwork project at Strawberry Plains, a major environmental preserve in Marshall County, Mississippi. Finally, we are working with Bob Haws, chair of the Department of History and the Center's foreign secretary, and Joe Utgo, chair of the Department of English, to attract international scholars to the University to take part in these environmental-focused events and other projects.

We invite all the readers of the Southern Register to take part in our conferences as we pursue long interests in the blues and literature and as we build on our new interest in the Southern environment.

CHARLES BRADAN WILSON

Southern Studies Faculty News

The Center's two McMullan Professors in Southern Studies who hold joint appointments in Liberal Arts—Robbie Ethridge (anthropology) and Kathryn McKee (English)—were awarded tenure this spring. Congratulations to these two outstanding teachers and scholars!



Robbie Ethridge, McMullan assistant professor of Southern Studies and assistant professor of anthropology, is the recipient of a 2003 University of Mississippi Office of Research Faculty Research Fellowship, which will fund her research project titled "Chickasaw Slaving: Responding in a Shatter Zone." The fellowship will support two months of summer research in the Archives Nationales de France (French National Archives), examining French colonial documents for evidence of the Chickasaws' participation in the slave trade with Europeans during the 17th and 18th centuries. She will spend three weeks in Paris and the remainder of the time in Aix-en-Provence at Le Centre des Archives d'Outre Mer (Center for the Colonial Archives).



Adam Gussow, assistant professor of English and Southern Studies, has won Honorable Mention in the 2003 John G. Casselli Book Award, sponsored by the American Culture Association, for "outstanding scholarly inquiry into American culture," for his book *Seems Like Murder Here: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition*. This summer Gussow will be using a College of Liberal Arts summer research grant to support a project focusing on discourses and enactments of racial healing and racial reconciliation in the American South. On Sunday, July 13, he will be tooting aside his researcher's hat to play blues harmonica (or "blow harp," to use the vernacular) with drummer Sam Carr and the Delta Jukes at a free concert in the Grove at Ole Miss. Also on the bill will be Georgia blueswoman Precious Bryant.



Robbie Ethridge

First International Conference on Race: Racial Reconciliation

On October 1-4, 2003, the University's William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation will host a four-day conference exploring racial reconciliation in international contexts. Presentations will emphasize how local action-oriented initiatives resolve conflict.

The event will mark the close of the Open Doors commemorative year at the University. Began October 1, 2002, the commemoration has recognized the courage of James Meredith and all faculty, staff, students, and alumni who have worked for inclusion and greater opportunity and access. The year concludes with the international conference on racial reconciliation and the dedication of a civil rights memorial to be placed in the green space between the Lyceum and the John Davis Williams Library, in the heart of the campus.

The conference will begin with the

memorial dedication on October 1, followed by a community dinner in the Circle. The dinner heralds back to the successful event in the Circle on October 1, 2002, attended by 2,500 people from diverse backgrounds. On Thursday, the conference will offer panels and workshop sessions showcasing different methods for teaching about race.

Friday's events will include presentations by practitioners and academics reflecting on local methods of conflict resolution from across the globe. Charlyne Hunter-Gault has been invited to make the keynote address. Hunter-Gault, one of the first black students at the University of Georgia, is an award-winning journalist who has covered race in the United States as well as reporting from post-apartheid South Africa. Hunter-Gault's work nationally and internationally reflects the themes of the conference.

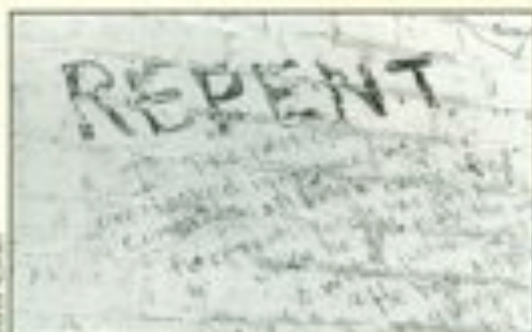
On Saturday will be additional presentations and a plenary session with Rev. James Lawson, a noted civil rights activist and proponent of reconciliation. A special highlight of the conference will be presentations by University students on the themes of the conference.

"The conference helps cement the goals of the year of Open Doors," said Winter Institute director Susan M. Glisson. "The year began by noting our own unique history and will now conclude by considering our commonalities with communities around the world attempting to build inclusive, successful societies. The conference," she added, "places the University at the forefront of international dialogue on racial reconciliation."

For more information, visit www.olemiss.edu/opendoors/ and www.olemiss.edu/winterinstitute/.

Student Photographers Exhibited in Gammill Gallery

During the fall semester of 2002, members of the Southern Studies Documentary Photography seminar, taught by David Wharton, traveled throughout Oxford and Lafayette County making images addressing the interrelated themes of tradition and change. There were ten students in the course: Warren Ables, Sarah Allford, Brooke Butler, Ben Cannon, Eija East, Hunter Gates, Judy Griffin, Dianne Jackson, Kendra Myers, and Todd Parker. At the end of the semester, each student compiled a 20-print portfolio of his/her best images. As a group, the students also selected 71 of the photographs for exhibition at Burnand Observatory's Gammill Gallery. That exhibition, *Yoknapatawpha 2002: Of Tradition and Change*, was shown at the gallery from March through May 2003. Here are a few of the pictures. More can be seen at the "special projects" link from the Center's Web site (www.olemiss.edu/depts/south).



Repent, Lafayette County



Child Playing,
Lafayette County Courthouse,
Oxford



Tourists at Rowan Oak, Oxford



Otha Tarnet, Foodways Conference,
Oxford



Girl at Convenience Store, Lafayette County



Lombstone, Oxford



Family on ATV, Oxford

BERTOLAET to Exhibit in Gammill Gallery

Photographer Todd Bertolaet's *Red Hills to Gulf Shores: Autographics* will be on exhibit at Barnard Observatory's Gammill Gallery through August 31, 2003. There will be a reception for the artist on Sunday, July 20, at 1:00 p.m.

Bertolaet is professor of photography and coordinator of the photography program at Florida A&M University, where he has taught since 1986. He is the author of *Caucus River: Waterways of Florida's Big Bend* (University Press of Florida, 1998). His photographs have been published in numerous magazines and exhibited throughout the United States in more than 100 juried, solo, and invitational exhibitions.

His most recent project, *Red Hills to Gulf Shores: Autographics*, incorporates hand-written drawings and text with photographic imagery to create narratives of historical, environmental, and personal significance. Many of his pieces are photographic collages that juxtapose the South's once-natural landscape with images of how human activity has altered that landscape. Bertolaet's drawings and texts, hand-written in white ink on the photographs' black margins, are variously wry, poignant, and tongue-in-cheek disingenuous. The result is a body of work that is unfailingly beautiful and often funny and sad at the same time.



Old Bank, Everglades City, Florida

Ivan Stewart

Gammill



Gallery

EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

June 4 - August 31, 2003

Red Hills to Gulf Shores: Autographics
Todd Bertolaet

September 1 - October 31, 2003

Southern Photographs
David Wharton

November 1 - January 15

*Thunder and Grace: Racing on American
Dirt*
Susan Boer Lee

The Gammill Gallery, located in Barnard Observatory, is open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., except for University holidays. Telephone: 662-915-5993.

The 31st Annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference

"Faulkner and Material Culture"

The University of Mississippi

July 25-29, 2004

The aim of cultural studies is to situate the literary text within the multivariant phenomena of cultural context. It is to see the text not so much as a unique object, somehow separate from its sociopolitical/economic milieu, but as touching every level of the cultural fabric within which it was created. As Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt have written, the task of cultural criticism is "finding the creative power that shapes literary works outside the narrow boundaries in which it had hitherto been located, as well as within those boundaries."

While we often think of culture, both "high" and "low," in terms of the contents of language—from lyric poetry to locker room limericks, the visual arts—from Old Master paintings to subway graffiti, and music—from string quartets to rap, perhaps most abundant and having the most bearing on how we live (and what we create) is the material world we often do not see in "cultural" terms, because we are so deeply embedded in it. This is the material way of our lives, our homes, our clothes, our transportation, our work, our sport, our food and drink. Each is a source of creative power and each is itself a product of such power.

The world of Faulkner's fiction is a world of material abundance, intensified for readers by its relationship to the real world in which Faulkner lived and wrote and which he "translated" into "Yoknapatawpha." The 2004 Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference will explore Faulkner's material world in its fictional and historical manifestations. Consider, for example, the significance of houses in Faulkner, from the Rowan Oak estate, which he renovated and lived in for 30 years, to the homes of Sarpes and McCaslin, McCaslin and Burdick. Or the importance of costume for this writer, who adamantly presented himself in the "dandy" garb of "Casin No Casin" and the aristocratic hating dress of Virginia, and described meticulously the awfully contradictory clothing of Joe Christmas: trousers soiled but sharply creased, shirt soiled but white, "and he wore a tie and a stiff-brim straw hat that was quite new, cocked at an angle arrogant and baleful above his wild hair."

What do these material concerns tell us about Faulkner and his fiction? What is the work and play of men and women in his world? What does it mean to be a planter or a slaveowner, a horse-trader or spinner of tales? How do we read the "shards of pottery and broken bottles and old brick" strewn along the graves in "Paradox in Black," the "hog-bone with blood meat still on it" in "That Evening Sun," the "graphophone" that is the culminating prize at the end of the journey in *As I Lay Dying*?

We are inviting both 50-minute plenary addresses and 15-minute papers for this conference. Plenary papers consist of approximately 6,000 words and will be published by the University Press of Mississippi. Conference papers consist of approximately 1,500 words and will be delivered at panel sessions.

For plenary papers the 14th edition of the University of Chicago *Manual of Style* should be used as a guide in preparing manuscripts. Three copies of manuscripts must be submitted by January 15, 2004. Notification of selection will be made by March 1, 2004. Authors whose papers are selected for presentation at the conference and publication will receive (1) a waiver of the conference registration fee, (2) lodging at the University Alumni House from Saturday, July 24, through Thursday, July 29, and (3) reimbursement of travel expenses, up to \$500 (5:345 a mile by automobile or tourist class air fare).

For short papers, three copies of two-page abstracts must be submitted by January 15, 2004. Notification will be made by March 1, 2004. Authors whose papers are selected for panel presentation will receive a waiver of the \$275 conference registration fee. In addition to commercial lodging, inexpensive dormitory rooms are available.

All manuscripts and inquiries should be addressed to Donald Kartiganer, Department of English, The University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677. Telephone: 662-915-5293, e-mail: dkartiga@olemiss.edu. Panel abstracts may be sent by e-mail attachment; plenary manuscripts should only be sent by conventional mail.

TEACHER
SEMINARS

Mississippi teachers—120 from throughout the state—and 50 other participants attended two seminars on George Washington this winter—one on Thursday, February 6, in at the State Historical Museum in Jackson and the other on Saturday, February 8, at the Center in Oxford.

The seminar in Jackson opened with Dennis Pogue's slide lecture "George Washington: Architect and Entrepreneur." The presentation was based on the speaker's study of anthropology and his work on archaeological and architectural investigations at Mount Vernon, where he is associate director for preservation. For her presentation about Martha Washington, Mary Thompson drew on the extensive materials in the Collections Department at Mount Vernon, where she is a research specialist. Larry Earl, director of education at the Charles Wright Museum of African American History, used stories and songs to illustrate slave life at Mount Vernon. William Sommerfield and Pat Jordan, of the American Historical Theatre in Philadelphia, drew on their study of history and read letters, real and fictional, to portray George and Martha Washington for the audience.

The seminar in Oxford began with a presentation by Frank Grizzard, who drew on his study of history and his work as an editor of the Papers of George Washington to discuss Washington's military career. Historian and Ole Miss alumnus Jack D. Warren drew on his work as a former editor of the Papers of George Washington to discuss Washington's political career. Historians Scott Cooper and Charles Wilson used slides and displayed assorted mementoes in their presentation "George Washington and Elvis Presley: Cultural Icons of the 18th and 20th Centuries." William Sommerfield used letters, assorted historical documents, newspapers, histories, and biographies to portray George Washington in the "Presidential News Conference" program.

The Center and George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate sponsored the programs in collaboration with the Mississippi Department of Education and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and with financial support from the Phil Hardin Foundation and the Mississippi Humanities Council.

"Our goal was to make George Washington come alive to teachers so they can help their students appreciate the fundamental role Washington played in the founding of our nation and, through his example, to discover ways in which they, too, can serve their family and community," said Lynn Crosby Gammall of Hattiesburg, who chairs Mount Vernon's Education Committee. "The seminars were especially important for teachers in Mississippi, where the study of Colonial America is often neglected or plays a minor role in a society that emphasizes the Civil War and its aftermath."



William Sommerfield, the actor who often portrays George Washington at Mount Vernon's most important events, and actress Pat Jordan, who plays Martha Washington, participated in the February 6 seminar for Mississippi teachers.



Actor William Sommerfield poses with cardboard cutout of Elvis Presley during February 8 seminar during which Mississippi teachers attended a session on "George Washington and Elvis Presley: Cultural Icons of the 18th and 20th Centuries."



Center for the Study of Southern Culture

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

FALL 2003

SEPTEMBER

- 3 "Run Tell That": Spreading the Word about the *Mississippi Encyclopedia*
Andrea Finley - Managing Editor
Ted Ownby - Professor of History and Southern Studies
- 10 "Safe at Home: Examining the Culture of the Oxford High School Baseball Community"
Christopher Hodgin - Southern Studies Graduate Student
- 11 "The Environment and Southern History"
Patricia L. Fortune Symposium - September 17-19, 2003
Charles Wilson - Director, Center for the Study of Southern Culture
Professor of History and Southern Studies
Jack Temple Kirby - W. E. Smith Professor of History
Miami University of Ohio
- 24 "October 3-4, 2003 - First International Conference on Race: Racial Reconciliation"
Susan M. Glisson - Director, Women Institute for Racial Reconciliation

OCTOBER

- 1 "The Southern Foodways Alliance at the Five-Year Mark"
John T. Edge - Director, Southern Foodways Alliance
- 8 "The Mississippi Delta Tennessee Williams Festival in Clarksdale"
Penny Mayfield - Clarksdale, Mississippi
Colby Kullman, Professor of English
- 15 "Segregation through the Lens: The John E. Pusey Collection"
Jennifer Antonson - Curator of Visual Collections, J. D. Williams Library
- 22 "Mortuary Ritual at the Ole Miss Confederate Cemetery"
Allan Lennson
Archaeology Graduate Student
- 29 "More Southern Photographs: An Expanded Gallery Talk"
David Wharton - Director of Documentary Projects
Assistant Professor of Southern Studies

NOVEMBER

- 5 "Local History à la Lowndes County"
Russell D. James, Dilaps-Garth Archives and Manuscript Librarian
Columbus-Lowndes Public Library
Columbus, Mississippi
- 12 "Tim Jackson's *Evansville Movies*"
Makow Dorough - Film Editor
Director, Freeman Mathematics
- 19 "Talking Dirty: A Spring Car Driver's Story"
Keraha Myron - Southern Studies Graduate Student

The Brown Bag Lunch and Lecture Series takes place each Wednesday or noon in the Burnside Observatory Lecture Hall during the regular academic year.

PORTER L. FORTUNE

HISTORY SYMPOSIUM

Center director Charles Reagan Wilson is directing the 23rd Porter L. Fortune History Symposium, September 17-19, 2003, at the Yerby Center at the University of Mississippi. The topic is "The Environment and Southern History." This year's meeting draws from recent scholarship on the topic and should contribute to a growing momentum of Southern environmental studies.

Historian Jack Temple Kirby, author of *Popcorn: A Study of Rural Landscape and Society and Rural Worlds Lost: The American South, 1920-1960*, will give the keynote address, based in his current research on a history of the Southern environment. (See Symposium schedule, opposite page.) He will

touch on the idea of a field of Southern environmental history and tell about Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, the Florida writer whose understanding of the landscape of Cross Creek made her a prime literary chronicler of the Southern environment.

Other presenters at the symposium include Mart Stewart, who will give an updated look at the climate and Southern history; Shepard Krech, who will look at the cultural meanings that emerge from Native Americans' relationships with birds; Margaret Humphries, who will talk about disease and Southern history; Donald Davis, who will discuss the Appalachian Mountains; Timothy Silver, who will sketch

ideas on the Civil War and its impact on the environment; and Paul Sutter, who will give a case study of conservation and its ironic meanings in the case of one Georgia state park.

Ted Steinberg, historian at Case Western Reserve University, will give a final commentary at the symposium. The author of *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History* and *Acts of God: The Unnatural History of Natural Disaster in America*, Steinberg promises to put the South's story in national perspective.

For more information, e-mail Charles Reagan Wilson at crwilson@olemiss.edu or visit the history symposium website at www.olemiss.edu/depts/history/symposium.

Tennessee Williams Tribute & Tour of Victorian Homes

September 11-14, 2003

Columbus, Mississippi

Columbus

Birthplace of poet, author, and playwright Tennessee Williams
plays • parties
book signings & scholarly papers • photo exhibits & movies

For more information, call
Streetcar Productions 662-240-1832
Tennessee Williams Welcome Center
662-328-0222 or Columbus Convention and
Visitors Bureau 1-800-327-2686
www.columbus-ms.org



THE
ENVIRONMENT
AND SOUTHERN
HISTORY

SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2003

Wednesday Evening,
September 17

Keynote

Jack Temple Kirby, Miami of Ohio

Thursday, September 18

A New Look at the Southern Climate
Matt Stewart, Western Washington
University

American Indians and Birds in the
South: An Environmental History
Shepard Knech, Brown University

An Environmental History of the
Appalachians
Donald Davis, Dalton State College

Disease and Environment in Southern
History
Margaret Humphries, Duke University

Friday, September 19

The Civil War and the Southern
Environment
Timothy Silver, Appalachian State
University

Georgia's Little Grand Canyon
Paul Sutter, University of Georgia

Commentary
Ted Steinsberg, Case Western Reserve
University

Mississippi Delta Tennessee Williams Festival

The 11th annual Mississippi Delta Tennessee Williams Festival, set for October 9-11, 2003 in Clarksdale, continues the celebration of America's great playwright in his childhood home. The focus of this year's program will be two of Williams's one-act plays, *27 Wagon Fall of Cotton* and *The Unsatisfactory Dinner*, and the film *Baby Doll*.

The festival will feature performances and readings by Blue Roses Productions of New York City, a screening of the movie *Baby Doll*, presentations by Williams authorities and friends, a session with papers by scholars, punch plays, and gourmet dinners in the historic Williams neighborhood and Uncle Henry's Place on Moon Lake. Also scheduled in conjunction with the festival are workshops for teachers and for student actors and a drama competition, with prizes totaling \$4,000 for the winners.

Actress Carroll Baker, who was nominated for an Academy Award for her role as *Baby Doll*, has been invited to share her reminiscences, and Delta blues musicians will be performing the playwright's songs, *Blue Mountain Ballad*.

Opening the festival in the renovated downtown passenger depot, Clarksdale Station, will be Kenneth Hoddinck of New Orleans with "Tennessee Delta: Cotton, Rising Tides, and Blues." Following this presentation will be an optional field trip down U.S. 1, the famous River Road, through Sherard, Garrison, Perthshire, and Rosedale, to the Barris Maroon in Beroid where *Baby Doll* was filmed.

Speakers will be introduced at a reception and dinner Thursday night at the vintage Belle Clark Maroon, restored archaean home of Clarksdale founder John Clark.

Among the speakers and panelists are theatre director and drama professional Robert Canon of Suedis, Erna Duricko with her company from New York, Jay Jensen of Miami and scholars Colby Kullman of the University of Mississippi, Henry Outlaw and William Spencer of Delta State University, and Ralph F. Voss of the University of Alabama. Actress and director Erna Duricko will perform. She and drama coach Jay Jensen also will conduct an acting workshop for high school students. Williams's brother, Dakin, will give his annual poetry reading and commentary.

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 20 minutes maximum. 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, 2003. 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, 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 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 2003 festival and drama competition, write Tennessee Williams Festival, Clarksdale/Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 1565, Clarksdale, MS 38614-1565; telephone 662-627-7337.

Northeast Mississippi

Wiley Prewitt, director of the Northeast Mississippi Traditional Music Project, tells about his work documenting music traditions in an often-overlooked part of the state. The Center and the Mississippi Arts Commission collaborated on the project, which was supported by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts' Folk and Traditional Arts Initiative program. For a full report, visit www.arts.state.ms.us/.

Although Mississippi was the nursery of Elvis, music scholars and collectors have paid little attention to northeast portions of the state. Blues enthusiasts tend to focus on the Mississippi Delta. Those in search of country music examine Tennessee and other parts of the Upper South.

The Traditional Music Project aimed to help rectify the neglect of the area and identify and document some of the musical traditions found in that corner of Mississippi bordered on the west by Oxford and to the south by Aberdeen. One result will be to make a database of artists, venues, and promoters accessible to those interested in the music of the area.

The project also produced a series of music and narrative programs at the Lafayette County and Oxford Public Library, after which several of the musicians appeared on Thacker Mountain Radio, broadcast live from Off Square Books near the town square. The university community, which was our main audience, and the performers who came to town, perhaps not surprisingly, know very little of each other. The exposure was beneficial for both groups.

Early on, I feared that what Alan Lomax called "cultural grey out" had diminished the differences among music types and performers. But I am happy to report that any musical homogeneity I sensed was only because I wasn't getting out and listening. If one considers traditional music something that connects generations within and among families and unites communities through the expression of distinct tastes and local talents, then I can say that traditional music is doing fairly well in Northeast Mississippi.

The project identified a number of traditions that indicate the vitality of musical activity in the area. In the services of the charismatic Church of the Living God, musicians employ a pedal steel, once known as a Hawaiian guitar, for a unique sound. The pedal steel is a familiar instrument to white country music fans, although the Church of the Living God is majority African American.

Live broadcasts on radio and television, once a mainstay of country and gospel music, still have an important place in the region. Groups like Oxford's Mighty Stars of Harmony, Winona's Forest Brothers, Tupelo's Spiritual Truthlights, to only name three, enjoy wide followings among African American gospel listeners. The Hanchie Bottom Boys of Corinth are immediately recognizable to bluegrass fans in the area, and live radio shows and dozens of personal appearances make Bud and Hazel Huddleston celebrated figures in the country north of Tupelo. And most Mississippians recognize Tupelo's Kay Bair, who hosts a steady stream of old hands and young hopefuls in the music segment of WTVB's morning show.

Northeast Mississippi also supports small music halls and opeys that feature local musicians playing country or gospel. The music halls bring live music typically in an alcohol-free, "family" atmosphere to small but loyal crowds. The white and African American communities support a large number of gospel groups that perform in churches, community centers, and other public venues through the area. Local music festivals often include gospel, bluegrass, country, or a combination, and most of the towns support some type of annual event. The growing Hispanic community has brought new musical traditions that are just beginning to appear at parties and clubs in the area.



Dr. Lowe rents his Tupelo club to event organizers and promoters. Most recently, he has hosted several Mexican groups for a musical experience that is sure to grow more common.

Traditional Music Project

photos by Wiley Prewitt



Ray Miller hosts a popular Saturday morning jam session at his music store in New Albany.



Television personality and singer Kay Bain with Joe Garrett of the Hatchie Bottom Boys bluegrass group.



Former music venue in Ripley



Joann Reed, of Houlka, organizes gospel shows at the local community center and hosts a Saturday afternoon radio show in Houston.



Lenny Campbell leads the group the Mississippi Lively Ones, which includes his niece Silvia Dodson (left). Their repertoire of country music and popular tunes from the first half of the twentieth century keeps them in demand among the older crowd in the Tapelo area.



Bobby Carter, of Amory, continues his family's long tradition of fiddle playing.



Dulcimer clubs that meet for weekly practice and performance have sprung up throughout Northwest Mississippi.

Living Blues Hosts First Blues Symposium

E-mail address: blues@olemiss.edu

Blues enthusiasts from around the globe gathered at the University of Mississippi, home of Living Blues, on February 21-22 to take part in "The Blues Today: A Living Blues Symposium." The symposium incorporated a number of special events, each of which offered unique perspectives on the genre and attested to the depth and breadth of blues and its extraordinary influences on American culture. Noted author, jazz scholar, and critic Stanley Crouch delivered the Early Wright memorial keynote address.

The most emphatic declaration of the blues' vitality was made on stage by three of the genre's essential contemporary performers: Bobby Rush, Little Milton, and Willie King. Each played a set at an Oxford club—Little Milton's was his first performance in the city since he played at an all-white Ole Miss fraternity house before the University's integration 40 years ago. Jackson, Mississippi, attorney, club-owner, and patron of the blues, Isaac K. Byrd Jr., sponsored the concert.

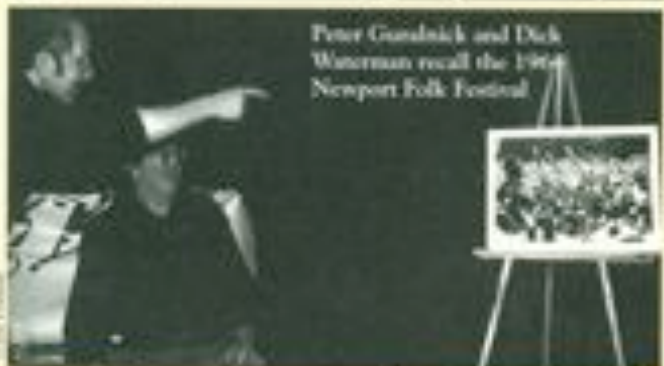
A panel discussion the following day devoted to "Blues Music Today," moderated by Living Blues co-founder Jim O'Neal, covered the range of musical perspectives from Little Milton, to King's downhome "smuggling blues," and the glamorous soul blues of Bobby Rush. Also participating was Memphis-based blues retailer Malcolm Anthony and blues scholar Lea Gilmore. (Gilmore's 2002 Keeping the Blues Alive Award-winning Web site devoted to women in blues history can be viewed at: www.p-dub.com/thang.) Discussion centered on a number of important topics on the current blues scene, such as the negative connotations blues stirs in some minds and the epidemic of bootleg recordings.

One such subject is the definition of blues, particularly as it influences the perspective of the audience and the repertoire of the performer. Bobby Rush recalled that he was "booed in Amsterdam. They were told I was a black guy who sang blues, so they expect me to sound like Muddy Waters," he said. Little Milton concurred: "To play blues doesn't mean you have to be illiterate, or drunk, or heartbroken all of the time," he said.

Malcolm Anthony added that misconceptions about blues result from the fact that "blues has always been the music of the black community. Today's black audience listens to soul blues but is accused of not supporting blues, because some people don't think that soul blues is authentic or traditional. Some people want to think blues is just some old guy strumming on a porch, but it's evolved from that, and soul blues is that evolution of blues in the black community," he said.

The significant role of blues in American literature was explored in the panel "Blues Aesthetics in American Culture," moderated by Adam Gamow, professor of English and Southern Studies at Ole Miss and the harmonica playing half of the duo Sarah and Adam. University of Alabama professor Anthony Bolden, Ursinus College professor Patricia Schoedel, University of Wisconsin professor Craig

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Reading the South

Louisiana: An Illustrated History. By C. E. Richard. Baton Rouge: Foundation for Excellence in Louisiana Public Broadcasting, 2003. 224 pages, 300 illustrations. \$45.00 cloth.



When Napoleon Bonaparte, having concluded that Louisiana as the center of a French Empire in the Americas was untenable, decided to sell his vast territory to the United States, the resulting Louisiana Purchase produced a profound and dramatic change in the development of the young republic. The Purchase gave the U.S. possession and control of the Mississippi River and doubled the land area of the nation, adding territory that stretched from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes and westward to the Rocky Mountains, a huge area that included what was to become all or part of 13 states, including Louisiana, which gained statehood in 1812.

To celebrate the bicentennial observance of the Louisiana Purchase, the Foundation for Excellence in Louisiana Public Broadcasting has published *Louisiana: An Illustrated History*, an extraordinarily handsome volume written by C. E. Richard, author of screenplays and other works on the state's history and culture. The book is intended as a companion piece to *Louisiana: A History*, a six-hour documentary to be presented in September of this year.

The book traces the history of Louisiana from its founding and earliest settlements as first a French, then Spanish, colony to its acquisition by the U.S. as part of the Purchase, and to its most recent past, a period of just over 300 years. The text provides informative and enjoyable reading, confirms boldly the state's

unruly episodes, its often eccentric and sometimes bizarre politics and politicians, and gives full treatment to the rich cultural mixture that characterizes Louisiana. However, the book's most notable achievement is found in its stunningly beautiful illustrations, many in color, drawn from artwork, photographs, and various historical documents. As such, it is a valuable collector's item for those with an appreciation for the history of Louisiana and the Mississippi Valley, and, indeed, the United States.

A Portion of the People: Three Hundred Years of Southern Jewish Life. Edited by Theodore Rosengarten and Dale Rosengarten. Columbia University of South Carolina Press, 2002. 288 pages, 86 color plates, 74 halftones. \$34.95 cloth.



In this monumental effort, Dale and Theodore Rosengarten have created a beautiful companion book in concert with the exhibition at the McKim Museum housed at the University of South Carolina. Independently, this book is a much-needed addition to the scholarship on American Jews and particularly Jews in the South. Though the

exhibition emphasizes 300 years of Southern Jewish life specifically in South Carolina, heirlooms, artifacts, paintings, ephemera, and photographs are, as Eli Evans proclaims in the preface, "a public celebration of southern Jewish history, with bold assertions of the vital role played by Jews" (xv).

Through a series of brief, informative chapters accompanied by photographs of artifacts, the Rosengartens introduce readers to the broad scope of Jewish experience in the South. Topics include the immigration experience, home and family life, the working lives of men and women, courting and marital rituals, the rise of communities, Jewish men and women's involvement in the Civil War, their participation in World War I, and the post-Holocaust Southern Jewish experience. Allowing material culture to reveal historical experience, the collection of artifacts that Dale Rosengarten and others have uncovered beautifully underscores the rich complexity of the South Carolina Jewish experience.

Creating a companion to such a broad exhibit would have been plenty, yet the Rosengartens include a marvelous photo



essay by Bill Aron that surveys contemporary Southern and Jewish identities. Included are images that are both familiar and remarkable. Pictures of three generations of Southern Jewish hunters, a Jewish-owned pigeon plant, and African American Jews are fascinating (though not surprising, as they testify to successful Jewish and Southern acculturation). Other of Aron's photographs show synagogues, cemeteries, holiday meal preparation, prayer, a Mah-jongg game, and family activities.

In addition to the photo essay, the Rosengartens include essays by prominent Jewish scholars that further illuminate the Southern Jewish experience. In his preface, Eli Evans provides a brief history of Jews in South Carolina, while Theodore Rosengarten confronts the difficult and complex relationship of Jews and enslaved African Americans, agreeing with scholar Bettina Wallace Korn that Jews observed the "dominant morality of the time" (4). The remaining essays, by Deborah Dash Moore, Jenna Weisman Joselit, and Jack Bas, focus on the theme of freedom.

Deborah Dash Moore's essay explores the Americanization of Orthodox Judaism—specifically how Southern Jews revamped their Judaism in response to reigning political, social, and economic systems and ideologies. Moore situates changes in American Judaism squarely within the events of the time and, in particular, within Denmark Vesey's slave rebellion. In the midst of growing chaos, Jews saw their place in Southern society as increasingly unstable and therefore shaped Reform Judaism to mirror acceptable Christian customs to secure their own place and freedom in Southern society.

Jenna Weisman Joselit's essay addresses the migration of Jews from Eastern Europe, concentrating on their reasons for choosing a virtual frontier over the established cities of the northeast. The essay shows that Eastern European immigrants had different experiences from their predecessors, working as peddlers, shopkeepers, and scrap-metal dealers instead of inserting themselves into the plantation economy. Joselit also demonstrates the splits that developed between earlier and later Jewish migration and how they impacted South Carolina Jews.

Jack Bas, a native South Carolinian, explores Jewish participation in civic life throughout the state's history, noting that

Jews had been prominently involved in public and private organizations from the colony's inception. Bas juxtaposes Jewish participation in public life with existent anti-Semitism in the state and reveals that in their response to civil rights Southern Jews both accommodated and subverted Jim Crow in public and private acts.

Theodore Rosengarten claims that the exhibition and the accompanying book are to dispel myths about Southern Jews. As editors, Dale and Theodore Rosengarten have accomplished much more. They have introduced Jews and non-Jews alike to a vibrant Southern Jewish culture. Topics, issues, and the Jewish histories and identities uncovered and addressed by scholars and amassed material artifacts are by no means comprehensive nor are they meant to be. This book introduces readers and exhibition viewers to Southern Jewish history, illuminates the Southern Jewish experience, and inspires further investigation.

JENNIFER A. STOLLMAN

Mordecai: An Early American Family.

By Emily Bingham. New York: Hill and Wang, 2003. 346 pages. \$26.00 cloth.

Lately, the field of American Southern Jewish history has experienced a renaissance. Beginning in the seventies, scholars researched the history, demographics, religiosity, immigration, and acculturation experiences of Jews from all over the South. Despite an intense initial investigation, Southern Jewish historical studies stagnated over the next two decades. A resurgence in the interest of ethnic studies within the South, a desire to broaden the black/white paradigm that has framed much of the scholarship on the region, and a discovery of new sources have encouraged a renewed interest in Southern Jewry. Most students of Southern Jewry, like their Northern counterparts, have framed their investigations around anti-Semitism and assimilation. While this is a good way to uncover the Jewish experience in the South, recent scholars have discovered that, at times, this approach tends to marginalize Southern Jews from other Southerners.

Perhaps a statement on increased American tolerance, Emily Bingham's *Mordecai: An Early American Family* is not burdened with the politicized discourses

often found in American Jewish historical narratives. Unlike earlier scholars, Bingham does not feel obligated to provide a litany of the worthy contributions the Mordecai family made to Southern society. Nor does she actively create a triumphalist narrative, in which the Mordecais overcame opposition, anti-Semitism, and marginalization to gain acceptance by white Protestant Southerners. In fact, Bingham's work assumes a priori that the Mordecais were Southerners and supports recent conclusions that a single American Southern Jewish experience does not exist. Bingham trusts her sources, and her balanced story effectively chronicles the public and private lives of a Southern Jewish family affected by the changing events and ideologies of the Revolutionary, early Republic, and Civil War eras. To tie the members of the Mordecai clan together, Bingham invents the secular and religious framework of "enlightened domesticity" in which the family "seized upon a protective covenant fusing bourgeois domesticity, intellectual cultivation, and religious liberalism" (5). According to Bingham, this philosophy shaped individual family members' world views, personal decisions, and approaches to religion and education.

Fulfilling the project of enlightened domesticity proved to be a difficult task during the first half of the 19th century. In many ways, its concerted emphasis on reason encouraged the questioning of traditional family values. Additionally, increased focus on education, Christianity, gender norms, sentimental love, notions of Southern white middle-class respectability, individualism, and appropriate sexuality created conflicts between notions of respectability among the generations. Consequently, many Mordecais chafed at fulfilling family expectations of domestic enlightenment while carving lives that were personally and publicly satisfying.

Most of the Mordecai family members had few problems as children fulfilling the precepts of enlightened domesticity, but as they approached adulthood, most rejected their father's and grandfather's notions of respectability. Most of the Mordecai men favored newly developed forms of individualism and pursued their public and private goals while barely consulting their fathers and rarely considering the family. Many were successful in trade, law, medicine, and the military. Most did not marry Jews. Because of coverture laws and

reigning gender philosophies of the day, the Mordecai women had less freedom to make their choices, but they still exercised their own agency. For example, Rachel Mordecai Lazarus, always the dutiful daughter, assisted her father in the academy he founded and helped school several family members, yet converted to Christianity on her deathbed after years of wrestling with her faith. Ellen Mordecai, paled in Rachel's shadow, also assisted with the domestic upkeep of family homes, farms, and schools, yet converted and maintained a rather successful living by publishing her conversion experiences. Caroline Mordecai Plunkett fell into a deep depression abiding by her father's refusal to accept a suitor, yet ultimately married Achilles Plunkett, a non-Jew. Only one daughter, Emma, remained faithful to Judaism. The third generation proved to be even more interesting: Rachel Mordecai Lazarus's son, Marx Edgeworth Mordecai, led a rather unorthodox life as he actively promoted the free love movement. His sister, Ellen Lazarus, became a radicalized feminist and was intent on becoming a physician of alternative therapies.

Emily Bingham has accomplished something truly amazing. To create such a descriptive composite of the Mordecai family, she examined thousands of 18th- and 19th-century diaries, letters, journals, business logs, and other ephemera. This research was difficult, time-consuming, and laborious. Employing an evocative writing style, Bingham created a work that represents the best of family biography, one in which readers may access the connections between the generations to gain a clearer understanding of the early 19th-century Southern experience.

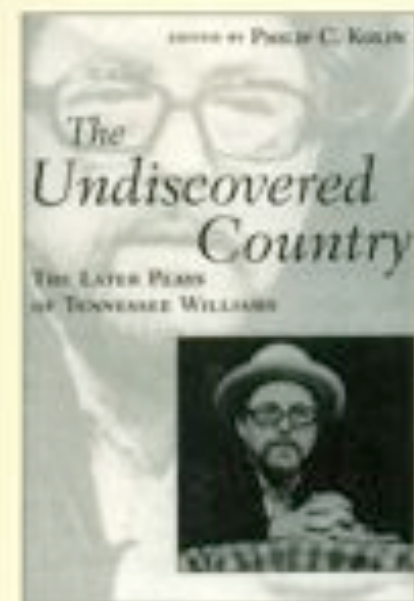
Problems within Bingham's work reflect the genre's shortcomings and are not the fault of the author. While framing an entire history around anti-Semitism is limiting, the sources Bingham used suggest that anti-Semitism was virtually nonexistent. Elsewhere, scholars of Southern Jewry have argued that anti-Semitism existed in the 19th-century South in social relations and discourse, trading practices, and politics. Bingham's sources hint at the existence of anti-Semitism but fail to fully flesh out or respond to this anti-Semitism. Enlightened domesticity emphasizes retreat into the home, domestic Judaism, and overcoming perceived shortcomings of the family. The question begs, "What is the family steering themselves against?"

Additionally, biography privileges historical voices and sacrifices overarching context. Contextualizing the Mordecai experiences within larger 19th-century social, economic, and political systems would facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the Mordecais as Southerners and Jews. Bingham seemingly anticipates this though, as she provides an extensive bibliographic essay at the end of the book. The essay is divided by topics, making it easy for interested readers to consult suggested readings.

The shortcomings mentioned are minor, and *Mordecai: An Early American Family* is a compelling read to all scholars and those interested in a wide range of 19th-century topics, beyond just Southern Jewry. Those less interested in things academic will also enjoy the biography as a first-rate family saga that details the trials and tribulations of one American Southern family.

JENNIFER A. STOLDMAN

The Undiscovered Country: The Later Plays of Tennessee Williams. Edited by Philip C. Kolin. New York: Peter Lang, 2002. 223 pages. \$32.95 paper.



With unerving dialogue, exaggerated make-up, and stylized gestures, actors from the University of Mississippi staged Tennessee Williams's *The Gnädige Fräulein* at the 2002 Oxford Conference for the Book. Viewers who came expecting another *Glass Menagerie*—or even another *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* or *Streetcar Named Desire*—quickly learned why Williams's

alternative title was not "gracious young lady" (as he translated the German phrase) but rather *Slapstick Tragedy*.

Amused and confused by the blend of vaudeville with Sophoclean drama, the audience appreciated the rare opportunity offered by director Michele Casano and the University's Theatre Arts students. The playwright died in 1983; but, as the well-known Williams scholar Philip C. Kolin emphasizes at the start of his new essay collection: "The post-Night of the Iguana (1961) canon still remains largely undiscovered country, elusively difficult to edit, classify, and interpret" (3). Until very recently, critics and producers alike have avoided these unconventional works. And in "The Gnädige Fräulein: Tennessee Williams's *Clown Show*," Allean Hale observes that this play is "perhaps the most unusual and most difficult" of Williams's more later dramas (46).

A striking pair of illustrations accompanies Hale's essay: a photo of the bloodied, blinded title character in a University of Illinois production, juxtaposed with a painting by Williams titled *Self-portrait as Clown*. Both figures have wild wigs, bold lips, and painted teeth. In the sacred clown tradition familiar to Williams, says Hale, white makeup is a death symbol. She concludes that the play is not absurdist (as critics have suggested) but existential: "It reminds us of Dostoev's *Mother Courage*, eternally pulling her wagon, or *Camus's* *Styphos*, daily pushing his rock up the hill even though he knows it will roll down again. 'En avant!' was Williams' battle cry" (52).

"En avant!" could be the cry of the 15 contributors who explore the undiscovered country in Kolin's volume. These essays are original in both senses: never before published, and highly imaginative as well. Illustrating Williams's obscurity, essays develop many contexts for the plays, including theology (Kolin on *Small Craft Warnings*); the Gnostic politics of space (Robert E. Gross on *The Red Devil Battery Sign*); Japanese No theatre (Michael Paller on *The Milk Train Dream's* *Stop Here Anymore*); and a postmodern "resurgent romanticism" (Norma Jenckes on *Comino Real and Clothes for a Summer Holiday*).

Uma Chaudhuri takes a particularly unusual approach in "AWK!": *Extremity, Animality, and the Aesthetic of Awkwardness in Tennessee Williams's The Gnädige Fräulein*. Alert to the cries of

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Williams's grotesque cocooned bird, Chaudhuri proposes that the theory of "the animalizing imagination" is "one of the more progressive and promising resources of postmodernism" (60). The difficulty of Chaudhuri's critical language (though often playful) mirrors the playful difficulty of the drama itself; but her conclusion is straightforward and much like Allan Hale's "The slapstick tragedy," says Chaudhuri, "ends not with death or defeat but with perseverance. Though blood-soaked and blinded, the Fräulein keeps flapping her scabby arms like wings, awkwardly performing the awkwardness of survival on 'this risky planet'" (65).

The Gaudiger Fräulein is also a central text for Annette J. Saddik in "The Inexpressible Regret of All Her Regrets: Tennessee Williams's Later Plays as Artisan Theater of Cruelty." Author of *The Politics of Reputation: The Critical Reception of Tennessee Williams's Late Plays* (1999), Saddik compares the play to *Kingdom of Earth*, *Now the Cats with Jewelled Claws*, and *This Is the Peaceable Kingdom*—all of which reflect Annonin Artaud's stress on "ideological elements of the presentation of ritualistic spectacle, a moral reversal in the primacy of nature over culture, and a revelation of inevitable metaphysical cruelty" (22-23).

Gene D. Phillips, S.J., discusses one of these plays, *Kingdom of Earth*, in "Tennessee Williams's Forgotten Film: The Last of the Mobile Hot-Shots as a Screen Version of The Seven Descents of Myrtle." Broadway producer David Merrick convinced Williams to change the title *Kingdom of Earth* to *Seven Descents of Myrtle*, a work that is not "front rank," according to Phillips, yet nonetheless deserving of study, as is the movie version. Phillips spoke with Williams at the 1976 Cannes International Film Festival, and he records the playwright's insistence that the drama is a comedy, a fact that is not always stressed in productions. In lively detail, the essayist demonstrates that Sidney Lumet's screen version had its own set of problems, including British actress Lynn Redgrave's struggle with Southern intonation.

Like Phillips, several other contributors to *The Undiscovered Country* make excellent use of biographical material, offsetting the "antagonistic biographical criticism" that Kolin outlines in his introduction (1-2). Especially intriguing is Terri Smith Rackel's exploration of the "poorly textured" of *In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel* in light of Williams's dozens of

networks (his oil painting *Many Moons Ago* is reproduced in the essay). James Fisher presents *Something Cloudy, Something Clear* as "both a triumph of autobiographical confession and a culmination of prevalent themes in Williams's plays" (194). In an outstanding study of *A House Not Meant to Stand: A Gothic Comedy*, Thomas Keith compares this 1982 drama to other late works that reveal "the rigors and fears Williams faced—physical, mental, and emotional—during the last ten years of his life and career" (207). Similarly, Felicia Hardison Londré relates the themes of *The Two-Character Play* and *One Cry to Williams's* fear of confinement (bodily and artistic confinement, but also the dread of being trapped in any single role or identity).

Robert Bray suggests that, in *Vieux Carré*—despite Williams's "genius for experimentation" (142)—the playwright did not fully escape the trap of his own early successes. Theatre critics at the 1977 premiere accused him of recycling character types and places for which he had become famous, and Bray acknowledges that Williams set dozens of works in New Orleans. "None, however," the critic emphasizes, "is more atmospherically charged with French Quarter charm and decadence than the play that bears its name" (147). Moreover, the city's uniqueness "provided Williams with an entirely new sense of 'local color'" (148).

Like Bray, Verna Foster and George W. Crandell carefully distinguish apparent repetition from new developments in the late works. Quoting Williams's comment that *A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur* is "almost a different genre," Foster sums up the difference as a blend of the early "psychological realism" with the late "grotesque style" (155). Comparing the 1978 play with a version from the late 1950s, she sees definite advances in Williams's dramaturgy and characterization.

Crandell examines Williams's changing treatment of time and memory, with special attention to *Clothes for a Summer Hotel*, a little-known play with well-known characters: Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald. "More than its later counterparts," says Crandell, this Dantesque work "dramatizes something unique in the Williams canon: a lack of faith in the future to transform the present" (170). In *Zelda's* asylum setting, "performance" is the single therapy that might "mitigate the effects of exile from

wholeness" (177); and, whether in life or in drama, Crandell concludes, performance is also "the only way against the 'enemy' time" (178).

The tragic vision of *Clothes for a Summer Hotel* is far from the slapstick tragedy of *The Goodbye Feast* or the lusty humor of *The Seven Descents of Myrtle*. As Philip Kolin suggests in his introduction to *The Undiscovered Country*, "Not even the convoluted classification system of Polonius—"pastoral, comical, historical pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical: historical-pastoral"—can do justice to the highly experimental plays of Williams's last three decades" (3). For Hamlet, who killed the feckish Polonius, death itself was "the undiscovered country," from which no traveler returns. In his final years, however, Tennessee Williams was able to work that miracle. "Ghosts, in one form or another, are a recurring element in five of Williams's later plays" (211), notes Thomas Keith. Williams never stayed in one place for long.

JOAN WYLLIE HALL

Sodom Laurel Album. Photographs, oral histories, and text by Rob Amberg. 167 pages, 136 photographs, audio CD. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press (in association with the Center for Documentary Studies), 2002. \$45.00 cloth.



Rob Amberg came to the North Carolina mountains in 1973, a 26-year-old refugee from the suburbs of Washington, D.C. By his own admission, he arrived with scars in his eyes, afflicted by nostalgia for a past he'd never had and a place he'd never known. He worked at

various jobs in the area for a couple of years, then found a position as a part-time photography instructor and archivist at Mars Hill College, not far from Asheville. One afternoon, a student took him to meet her 77-year-old great-aunt, Delle Norton, a traditional Appalachian singer who had gained a modest degree of recognition during the folk revival of the 1960s and owner of a small mountain farm near the tiny community of Sodom Laurel. Ms. Norton and Amberg got along well, and before long he was staying in her spare bedroom and helping with the farm chores. He was also making a lot of pictures. Though he didn't know it at the time, he had started on a project that would take 27 years to complete.

Sodom Laurel Album is a good book. It succeeds quite nicely at much of what documentary photography does well. Amberg's photographs tell us a lot, most of it well worth knowing, about people whose lives are unlike our own. His pictures make us privy to many of the facts of life in Sodom Laurel—the difficult topography its residents contend with every day, the houses they live in, the work they do, and the relationships they form—in ways that neither threaten, belittle, nor stereotype those facts. That's no small accomplishment. Nor is there reason to doubt Amberg's sensitivity and sincerity. He became deeply involved with the Sodom Laurel community over the years, living and working there for various periods of time, and this involvement shows in the easy familiarity of his pictures. None of the images seems intrusive or stolen, and even though some of the photographs are posed (portraits for the most part), none feels artificial. It's evident in his pictures that he has a deep and abiding regard for many of the people he came to know in Sodom Laurel.

Amberg's photographs didn't come by this relaxed, open quality easily. In the preface to *Sodom Laurel Album*, he shows that he's thought long and hard enough about documentary photography to understand some of its shortcomings, especially the dangers posed by stereotypes—both building upon already-existing stereotypes and helping to create new ones—and photography's inherent superficiality. The way in which the book's pictures and texts (some of the words are Amberg's, others are passages from recorded oral histories he conducted with

continued on page 18

Sodom Laurel residents) supplement one another in proof of intelligent engagement with these issues. Sodom Laurel Album avoids stereotypes by sometimes surprising us and occasionally even allowing image and text to contradict one another, and it achieves greater depth than many photographic documentaries by allowing words and pictures to work together in partnership rather than having one or the other dominate. Amberg also writes about how his understanding of the project grew over the years, making a slow evolution from "objective" documentary study to more subjective personal narrative. Here, too, Sodom Laurel Album provides more food for thought than many documentaries.

All these nice things said (and meant), there's still something that bothers me about Sodom Laurel Album. I had hoped to dismiss it as a mere quibble, but it seems to be demanding more attention than that. Essentially, my complaint is that the book seems all too much like what it says it is—an album. We learn a lot about various aspects of life in and around Sodom Laurel, but not much about the community's center—whatever it is that holds the place and its people together. It's difficult to say, in any specific sense, what the book's about. Parts of it are devoted to the life of Dellie Norton, her extended family, and her small mountain farm. Other segments focus on her adopted disabled son Junior (actually a much younger cousin whose parents "gave" him to Dellie when he was small), area musicians and their travels to festivals in "foreign" places (the price of purchase includes an audio CD made by musicians with ties to the community); Sodom Laurel's younger generation(s); public social events (family reunions, cemetery clean-ups, and the like); and tobacco agriculture. This last seems only tangentially related to Sodom Laurel. Although a few of the tobacco pictures are from Dellie Norton's farm (taken in the mid-1970s, early on in Amberg's project), most come from different times and places, some of them, apparently, not all that close to Sodom Laurel. My complaint is not, however, that Amberg casts his net too wide; instead, it's that he hasn't made (or allowed) these disparate groups of very fine pictures to hang together, to cohere, as well as they should (and surely could). Perhaps the fact that the photographs were all made by the same person in more or less the same

place is focal point enough, but that places the center of attention on Amberg and his pictures rather than on their subjects. Judging from the self-effacing way he's photographed and written about the people of Sodom Laurel, I don't think that's where he would want the focus to be.

In the final analysis, though, it's still a very nice book. Anyone interested in rural America, especially the interplay between traditional lifestyles and encroaching modernity, should be sure not to miss it.

DAVID WHARTON

Nations Divided: America, Italy, and the Southern Question. By Don H. Doyle. Georgia Southern University Jack N. and Addie D. Averitt Lecture Series Number 10. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002. 130 pages. \$24.95 cloth.

The Southern Question in this intriguing work of comparative history concerns the relationship the nations of Italy and the United States had with their southern regions. Author of works on small places like Lafayette County, Mississippi, and Jacksonville, Illinois, and cities such as Nashville, Don H. Doyle in this book expands his vision to consider two questions: what forces have helped hold together the nations of Italy and the United States, and how has the Southern Question been important in the process of nationhood? This short book, which began as a series of lectures at Georgia Southern University, asks big questions about why these southern regions matter so much in discussions of national identity.

Doyle writes against a tendency among many current scholars who view nationalism as a fiction imposed by elites to try to keep together people who would otherwise be in conflict. Frequently, according to Doyle, elites' efforts to create national unity by appealing to an old, shared history fail. Instead, this book concentrates on people's often changing everyday understandings of national identity in topics such as religion, language, education, holidays, and, significantly, war.

The United States emerged without old calls for primordial ties among people with shared identities based on common

history. Instead, it emerged as a new nation founded on hope for a future based on representative government. Italian nationalism came later, through a complicated series of military, diplomatic, and political events that did not create today's understanding of Italy until 1870. Calls for Italian nationalism came from various sources, some emphasizing past greatness in the Roman Empire or the Renaissance, others stressing hopes for a liberal republic, some hoping for some combination of the two.

The Southern Question has differed in the United States and Italy. In the United States, of course, the South tried to form its own nation. In recent years in Italy, it has been the Northern League that called for secession from what its members see as the economically parasitic southern regions of Sicily and Naples. But there are strong similarities as well. Both Souths seem, in the consciousness of their nations, poor, slow, and strange in both customs and political organization. As Doyle writes of 19th-century Italy, "The idea of a civilized North and a barbaric South took on important meaning for the way in which the former would govern the latter" (71). In the U.S., issues concerning slavery and free labor became central to broad demands for American unity based on political rights. The intriguing issue, in both cases, was how Americans and Italians could unify politically with people they considered different in significant ways and whose difference, in fact, helped sustain some understandings of national unity.

This book does not answer all of the big questions it raises. No volume of about 100 pages could do so. But by tracing the parallel stories of the American and Italian Southern Problem, Doyle's volume encourages broad thinking about regional questions in our global age. He ends with a brief conclusion that contrasts the bitter and violent divisions of contemporary Europe with the difficulties but also the promise of the American Civil War: separation fails, often with bloody results, but inclusive visions of nationalism, no matter how sloppy, how pragmatic, how intellectually vague in definition, continue to offer great potential. As Doyle begins his final paragraph, "The American Union that Lincoln struggled to preserve offered a model of how peoples of remarkable diversity might learn to live together peacefully" (95).

TED OWEN



SFA Field Trip and Symposium Explore Appalachian Food

The rich tradition of Appalachian food is the theme of the third annual Southern Foodways Alliance Field Trip, August 1-3, 2003, hosted by the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. The itinerary includes a behind-the-scenes tour of Biltmore Estate's agricultural programs, its vineyards and winery operations, and its kitchens; a discussion of Southern wines and wineries with a tasting; and tours of local farms and markets.

And of course, there's food: a game

dinner at Biltmore, an Appalachian Iron Skillet competition sponsored by the North Carolina Sweet Potato Council and Lodge Manufacturing, and one of White Lily's famous breakfasts. Along the way, you might even learn to clog.

SFA's Field Trips always sell out early. To register, e-mail Manda Palomares at sfa2003@biltmore.com or phone 828-231-9092. Registration is \$245 for SFA members and \$275 for others. A special rate of \$135 per night has

been arranged at the Inn on the Biltmore Estate. For information and reservations, call 828-231-9092.

Programming for the 2003 Southern Foodways Symposium will also highlight Appalachia. Speakers confirmed at press time include food writer Rosamund Lundy, journalist Rick Bragg, and novelist Lee Smith. Dates are October 2-5, and registration will open in July. Check our Web site for program details: www.southernfoodways.com.

The Great PC Competition

The Southern Foodways Alliance, the Southeast Dairy Association, and the Web site www.dovecheese.com are seeking pimento cheese recipes and recollections. Tell us about how your mother always hand-grated her cheese. Let the world know about how your father's homemade mayonnaise made all the difference. Tell us a story of 100 or so words about what pimento cheese has meant to you and your people. Include a recipe and please detail the recipe's provenance.

E-mail submissions to dama@olemiss.edu. Deadline for entries is July 31. Three finalists will be announced on August 31. The winner will receive a free trip to the Southern Foodways Symposium, to be held October 2-5 in Oxford, Mississippi.

But wait, there's more: In addition to receiving a monster jar of pimento and a wheel of delicious sharp cheddar cheese, the winner can take pride in knowing that chef Louis Ozren will feature his or her recipe on the menu at Louis's at Pawley's for the month of November. Questions should be directed to the Southern Foodways Alliance at 662-915-9993.



P'minnuh Cheese: The Pâté of the South

Pimento cheese, or "PC," was born in the South. It's been fundamental to our bridge luncheons, picnic baskets, kid's lunchboxes, afternoon teas, lunch counter menus, and light suppers since at least 1915. You might meet a Southerner who doesn't care for it, but you'll never meet one who doesn't know what it is. The most popular sandwich consumed at the Masters Tournament in Augusta, Georgia, available for a mere \$1.25! Of course—pimento cheese on white bread, wrapped, naturally, in green waxed paper.

How did this simple spread made of grated cheese and little red things, usually bound with mayonnaise and perhaps

spiked with an extra spice or two, come to mean so much to so many Southerners? Let's start with the little red things.

The pimiento pepper is red, sweet, and heart-shaped. We know pimientos as olive-stuffers, staddlers of meat-product loaf, and of course for their partnership with cheese, but it should be noted that the pimiento is also often used to make paprika. "Pimiento," Spanish for "pepper," became Americanized to "pimento," which is now the most common spelling. Georgia leads the United States in growth and production of the pepper.

continued on page 20

P'minnuh Cheese: The Pâté of the South

continued from page 14

The moment of harmonious convergence of the humble pimento and sharp cheese remains a mystery, but we do know that already-prepared spread was featured in Southern grocery stores as early as 1915. Pimento Products Company founder George Reigel of Griffin, Georgia, began canning Savannah Pimento in 1916, making it even easier for home cooks to produce their own versions of it. Some food historians suggest that pimento cheese was a special treat for families at the turn of the 20th century, since sharp cheddar cheese was store-bought and not made at home. During the 1920s and 1930s, the economical food became even more of a staple in the South.

P.C. is woven into the fabric of many Southern memories. Most aficionados agree that only sharp cheese will do, but the glue for the spread varies. Recipes call for mayonnaise or milk or buttermilk or egg or cottage cheese. Some say not to drain your pimentos and to use that juice. Others use lemon or sweet pickle juice. Some really experimental folks use cream cheese. But that sounds a little Yankified. People put cream cheese on bagels, for God's sake.

Even the coming together of the P.C. is up for debate. Versions call for using a blender, a whisk, a hand mixer, a fork, or your hands. Some add Tabasco, onions, or jalapeno peppers. Elvish's favorite recipe reportedly calls for Worcestershire sauce, and native North Carolinian author Reynolds Price adds garlic to the concoction that was the "peanut butter of [his] childhood."

Why do we love it so? Well, it's easy to make, it's cheap, and it tastes great. It doesn't make soft white bread go soggy, and it keeps well. It's good between two slices of bread, lining a rib of celery, packed into a cherry tomato, or perched on a cracker. It's heaven on a hamburger or a hot dog. Or eaten with a spoon right out of the crock.

C. D. Wright summed up our relationship with pimento cheese in her poem "Personale": "Since 1971 or before, I have banned a bench where I could eat my pimento cheese in peace."

That's what pimento cheese can mean, however your grandmother made it: a little comfort, a little memory, a lot of peace. Dig in.

KENDRA MYERS

Arkansas Wine: Making Do and Doing Well

In the well-established hierarchy of wine, there are countries and regions, like Burgundy, Bordeaux, Napa and Sonoma, that are famous throughout the world. Their wine is made from grapes that are equally famous—varieties of *vitis vinifera*, the family that includes Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Merlot, and other well-known varieties. So where does a winery in Arkansas that uses native American and hybrid grapes fit into things? Quite nicely, thank you.

"When the climate or the soil isn't conducive or you have to worry about disease resistance, then you have to make do with what you have," says Paul Post, one of eight brothers and sisters who run the Post Familie Vineyards in Altus, in the Arkansas River Valley in northwestern part of the state. The winery's origins predate the 20th century, and its current incarnation dates from 1951 and Matthew Post, Paul's father and the fourth generation of Posts in the area.

Much of Post's wine is made from native grapes like the Norton and Concord, grape-like fruit such as the muscadine, and hybrid grapes (so called because they're crosses between native grapes and *vinifera*) like the Vidal and the Seyval Blanc. Natives and hybrids are much more difficult grapes to work with, and too many wineries pile on sugar to cover up a wild, almost foxy kind of flavor. But when they're done well,

a Norton or Seyval Blanc can wax just as poetic as a Cabernet.

And the Posts have had that kind of success. One of the most recent highlights came at the prestigious Dallas Morning News Wine Competition this spring, when a \$6 Post Vidal Blanc (an off-dry white that fits somewhere between a Riesling and a Sauvignon Blanc) won a bronze medal.

In this, they are part of a large and almost unknown regional wine industry throughout the South (and the U.S.). Wine is produced in as many as 49 states; not only does it not all taste like California Chardonnay, it's not supposed to. There are intriguing and very well-made wines from states such as Virginia, North Carolina, and Missouri that, unfortunately, antiquated liquor laws make almost impossible to find outside of the home states. Yet none of this seems to bother the Posts too much.

"Part of the reason we keep doing it is the family tradition," says Paul, whose family's winery produces 50,000 cases a year—not much by Beinger standards, but the most in Arkansas. "It's deep in our roots. We grew up planting and picking grapes. Yes, it is hard work, but it also taught us a lot of things, and we've learned to appreciate it."

JEFF SIGGEL

SFA Contributors

KENDRA MYERS, of Atlanta, Georgia, is a playwright, presently enrolled as a graduate student in Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi.

JEFF SIGGEL, 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*.

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2003

Oxford Conference for the Book

photos by Doug McLain, except as noted

The weather could not have been more perfect, nor the spirits higher, at the 10th Oxford Conference for the Book, held on the campus of the University of Mississippi and at various locations in the town of Oxford April 10-14, 2003.

As part of a recent tradition, the conference got under way at the Thacker Mountain Radio Show (www.thackermountain.com), broadcast live from Off Square Books on Thursday, April 10. Conference authors Percival Everett and Robert Stone read from their most recent novels, *Everett and Bay of Souls* respectively. The featured music guest for the show was Ben Mize of Athens, Georgia, and ace North Mississippi blues guitarist Kenny Brown was a featured guest with the Thacker house band.

The official kick-off took place Friday morning on the campus at Johnson Commons, as Oxford's mayor, and conference cofounder, Richard Howorth, welcomed the crowd. Local favorite Barry Hannah took over, moderating two panels on writing and publishing, both chock full of writers—including locals Shay Youngblood, Jere Hout, and Scott Morris, newcomers George Singleton, Calvin Baker, Crystal Wilkinson, and the aforementioned Everett and Stone—and book industry experts such as Algonquin editor Kathy Fories, outspoken Context Books publisher Beau Friedlander, Beacon Books publisher Helene Atwan, and Jackson, Mississippi, bookseller John Evans of Lemana Bookstore.

After an afternoon welcome by Ole Miss Chancellor Robert Khayat, Friday's sessions continued with a presentation by noted Southern publishing house Algonquin Books, featuring esteemed editor Shannon Ravenel and her protégé Kathy Fories, plus three excellent readings by house writers George Singleton (*The Half-Mammas of Dixie*), Scott Morris (*Waiting for April*), and Marshall Bowwell (*Trouble with Goli*).

Another highlight was the mid-afternoon panel on race and publishing, moderated by Helene Atwan, who did a great job soliciting input from the audience as well as the panel's



Calvin Baker



Crystal Wilkinson



Marshall Bowwell



Jere Hout



From left: Calvin Baker, Helene Atwan, Percival Everett during "Race and Publishing in America" panel

2003 Oxford Conference for the Book

participants, Percival Everett and Calvin Baker, who shared many thought-provoking points on the topic.

The day's events concluded with readings by current and former Johns and Bernice Griham Southern Writers in Residence Shay Youngblood and Tom Franklin, who premiered a new story and previewed a portion of his forthcoming novel *Hell at the Beach*.

For those who forged on, the night's activities offered a cocktail party fundraiser for the conference at Off Square Books and a panel on writing workshops by the University's creative writing M.F.A. coordinator David Gafel.

Saturday's sessions began with "The Endangered Species: Readers Today and Tomorrow," an annual panel moderated by Elaine Scott and featuring local literacy advocate Claiborne Barkdale, children's author George Ella Lyon, and Priscilla Handy, vice president of the Lafayette County Literacy Council.

A discussion of personal memoirs led by Ted Overby featured insightful comments and heartfelt readings by Lauren Winner, author of *Girl Meets God*; Mississippi native Clifton Taulbert; and Michael Newshaw, author of the literary memoir *Do I Owe You Something?*

The conference's ode to Stark Young filled a large portion of the day, with a program by the North Mississippi Storytellers Guild at the University Museum, a presentation by University professor emeritus John Pilkington, and performances by local theatre troupes.

Saturday's formal events culminated with a panel on novels set in volatile third-world locales, moderated by the *Boston Globe's* former Middle East correspondent Curtis Wilkie, no stranger to the world's hotspots, and featured readings and remarks by Robert Stone, whose *Bay of Souls* is set in Haiti, and Michael Newshaw, author of the Central Asian thriller *Shelter from the Storm*.

The evening offered a book signing with all conference authors at Off Square Books and an open-mike poetry jam, moderated by M.F.A. student Lacey Gubsmith.

The final day, Sunday, ran its full course, beginning with a panel on Appalachian writers, moderated by Kathryn McKee and featuring remarks and readings by children's author, poet, and novelist George Ella Lyon; Ron Rash, author of the acclaimed new novel *One Foot in Eden*; and Crystal Wilkinson of Kentucky, author of the novel *Water Street* and a story collection, *Blackberries*.

Two local authors with suspenseful new novels took the stage for mid-morning readings—Ace Atkins, author of *Dark End of the Street*, and Jerry Hout, whose novel *The He* was one of the conference's most popular discoveries.

University English professor Ethel Young-Mince led a discussion on books on the civil rights movement, featuring two timely works—*Sons of Mississippi*, an examination of the legacy of intolerance in the wake of the Meredith riots at Ole Miss, by Paul Herschickson, and

Nana (Clara Lee Arnold) and Simon (Jobrey McPhail) in Stark Young's play *Mandrilla*



Guido (Damir Mehmedic) and Lisetta (Jenna Montgomery) in Young's play *The Twilight Sabre*



Kathy Porius (left) with Shannon Ravenel



Mississippi Harmony, the memoirs of freedom fighter Winston Hudson, as told to Constance Curry.

The popular poetry panel, moderated by Blair Hobbs, was changed by readings from Beth Ann Fennelly, newly added poetry professor at Ole Miss; Jamaican-born poet Shara McCullam, author of *Song of Thieves*; and Ron Rash.

And the final panel of the day featured readings and remarks by newcomers Calvin Baker, author of the novel *Once Two Heron*; Emily Bingham, whose nonfiction work *Mondaca* explores a prominent Jewish family from the South; and Lewis Robinson, author of the acclaimed story collection *Officer Friendly and Other Stories*.

The conference culminated with a laid-back country dinner at Taylor Grocery in Lafayette County.

The 11th Oxford Conference for the Book, which is already in the planning stages and promises to feature another great line-up, will be held April 1-3, 2004.

JAMIE KORNBLAU



Tennessee Williams Tribute and Tour of Victorian Homes

Columbus, Mississippi - September 11-14, 2003

Columbus, Mississippi, birthplace of Tennessee Williams, will honor the playwright with lectures and performances during a weekend that will also offer tours of the town's Victorian homes. The program will begin on Tuesday, September 11, with a production of *Trunk in the Gate of Illusion* at 7:00 p.m.

Friday's event will include talks on Williams by literary scholars Clyde Williams, of Mississippi State University, and Jane Hinton, of Mississippi University for Women, as well as book signings, exhibitions,

and a "Moon Lake Party" at Lake Norris.

Literary scholars Pearl McHalsey, of Georgia State University, and W. Kenneth Holdirch, professor emeritus, University of New Orleans, will give presentations on Saturday morning. Colby Kullman, of the University of Mississippi, will lecture on *Night of the Iguana* before the film version of the play is screened that afternoon. The Columbus Community Theatre will present an evening performance of *This Property Is Condemned*.

On Sunday, worship services

at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where the Reverend Walter E. Dakin was rector when the playwright, his grandson, was born, will be followed by lunch at noon and tours of Victorian homes in the afternoon.

There is no charge for lectures and the film. Play and tour tickets are \$10 each. Tickets for lunch on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday are \$15 each, and the Moon Lake Party is \$50 per person.

For more information, call 662-240-1832 or e-mail quarkay@ebicon.net.

Hansen Werner, and Syracuse University professor Arthur Flowers explored the depth of blues' influence in the work of William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway and the presence of the blues ethos of individuality in present-day hip-hop culture.

Longtime Living Blues contributor David Whiteis moderated a discussion of "Documenting the Blues: Journalism, Biography, and Autobiography," featuring Elvis Presley biographer Peter Guralnick, Muddy Waters biographer Robert Gordon, Billie Holiday biographer Farah Jasmine Griffin, and Mississippi-born blues poet Sterling Plumpp.

To close the symposium, Peter Guralnick hosted a conversation with Dick Waterman, who shared his photographs and stories of Mississippi John Hart, Son House, Skip James, and others, from his long career as a blues photographer, promoter, and ombudsman.

The symposium was organized by the Center and was sponsored by the Mississippi Humanities Council, the Yoknapatawpha Arts Council, the Mississippi Development Authority, and Isaac K. Byrd Jr. Living Blues plans for the symposium to become a yearly event and will announce next year's schedule and list of participants in a future issue.

PRESTON LAUTERBACK

Ella King Torrey: A Remembrance

Ella King Torrey, a long-time friend of many Center faculty and staff, died on April 30, 2003, in San Francisco, where until last year she had served as president of the San Francisco Art Institute. Torrey was at the Center from 1981 to 1984, working on research projects and her master of arts thesis in Southern folk art.

I came to the Center in September of 1981, and Ella had arrived here a few months earlier. She became one of my best friends and a bright and lively presence on the Oxford scene. She had graduated cum laude from Yale in 1980, having completed her senior thesis on the meanings of the Barbie Doll in popular culture, and she came to Mississippi to find out more about folk art. She and I discovered many common interests, including a sometimes off-beat aesthetic that made room for the down-to-earth pleasures of pop culture and folk culture. While Ella King was in Oxford, our Wal-Mart opened, and she made countless pilgrimages there, always finding the perfect little knickknack for presents for friends. She was a believer in what Elvis called "happies," thoughtful little gifts, and had a sense of wonder about life, even down to the fun that could be had at Wal-Mart.

Oxford in those days had more ties to the Southern past than it does now, and like many people new to the place Ella King and I were out and about sampling the local culture. We had a plate lunch at the Auction Barn in Lafayette County and looked at the livestock. We went to Saturday night auctions on North Lamar where we purchased everything from wooden hampers to use as coffee tables, to oil lanterns for lighting, to vintage clothing. She ate enough catfish while

here to mark her forever as an adopted Mississippian. We should have had honorary plaques at the Holiday Inn bar, because we would regularly meet there at the end of the day to relax and swap stories. It was one of the few bars in Oxford then with a mostly adult crowd, including writer Willie Morris, who moved to Oxford about the same time as we had arrived and often regaled us with his own stories. Ella King's little house on Fudgetown Road quickly became a party center, as we all hovered around the wood-burning stove in the winter, the only source of heat for the place.

My favorite ritual with Ella King was Saturday morning breakfast at Smitty's, the classic Southern town square, biscuits-and-gravy eatery. It had a warm atmosphere and downhome waitresses that knew us well. We ate many a steaming bowl of grits and homemade biscuits slathered with Louise Smith's own scrumptious pear preserves.

Ella King had a desk at Barnard Observatory, from which she worked with Maude Wahlman on an exhibition and catalogue, *Ten African American Quilters*. We all learned much from her about material culture and about new Southern culture heroines with names like Sarah Mary Taylor, Pecolia Warner, and Pearlise Posey. She wrote her master's thesis on the religious art of Theona Hamblett, a north Mississippi folk artist who documented rural life and drew from the religious culture around her. Ella King could be a demon for hand work, including the immense research she did on the quilting project and on Hamblett and on other religious folk artists that put her work in context.

All of which is to say that Ella King

made herself a part of Oxford while she was here, contributing to the Center's early accomplishments in the study of folk culture and generating friendships that long endured. She came back to Oxford the last time for Memorial Day weekend in 2000, and it was like old times. Her beloved cat, born on Fudgetown Road, died in San Francisco shortly before her trip back, and she decided to bring its ashes to Oxford to scatter them in the Mississippi dunes. Our friend Lisa Howorth went with us out to the country, to the house on Fudgetown Road, where we were greeted by a bevy of large dogs and a young man with a long and unruly beard that made him look like the last mountain man—and one not looking for company. In typical fashion, Ella King got out of the car and began confidently striding toward the somewhat unfriendly welcoming party. Lisa and I looked at each other and hopped out, too, thinking we couldn't sit in the car and observe whatever was going to happen. When the young man found out our purpose, he was quite friendly, observing that if his dogs died, he too would want them a part of a place he had known. We scattered the ashes, said some words, and returned to Oxford, sending Ella King on her way for the last time away from Mississippi.

Ella King Torrey lived a life of high achievement, serving for a decade at the Pew Charitable Trusts and then leading the San Francisco Art Institute into a dynamic new period. Ella King left a piece of herself here in Oxford, and her friends will always remember her. She was one of the most vibrant people I have ever known, and her joyous spirit will be missed.

CHARLES REAGAN WILSON

Regional

Upcoming Events of Interest

Roundup

Louisiana: A History, a six-hour documentary commemorating the Louisiana Purchase, will be aired on Louisiana Public Broadcasting September 14-19, 2003. The television series begins with prehistory and explores the major events, movements, and personalities that have shaped Louisiana down to the modern era. It features historical renderings, rarely seen photographs, and historical documents. For details, visit www.louisianahistory.org.

The Southern Women Writers Conference, to be held October 16-18, 2003, at Berry College in Rome, Georgia, will examine the theme "Self Locations/Delocations." Among the featured speakers will be Dorothy Allison, Marlon Awiakta, Rosemary Daniell, Lorraine Lopez, Janisse Ray, and Nanasha Tretthway. For more information, call 706-368-5625 or visit the conference Web site (www.berry.edu/academics/humanities/english/wwc2003).

The Mint Museum of Art salutes one of North Carolina's pottery legends in the exhibition *Barlow Craig and His Legacy* through October 19 in the Bedges Gallery of North Carolina Pottery. Craig, who died last year at age 88, was considered one of America's great folk potters. He was honored with the National Folk Heritage Award by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1984. Featured will be utilitarian churns, milk crocks, birdhouses, and monkey jugs as well as the face jugs and snake jugs that helped make him famous. For details, write Mint Museum of Art, 2732 Randolph Road, Charlotte, NC 28207, call 704-337-2000, or visit the Web site (www.mintmuseum.org).

The Deep South Regional Humanities Center at Tulane University and the Louisiana Creole Heritage Center at Northwestern State University, through the Creole Studies Consortium, will sponsor a conference on the topic "Creole Legacies: The Current and Future Prospects of Creole Studies Research," October 23-25, in New Orleans. The first international conference to explore past, present, and future studies of Creole culture, "Creole Legacies" aims to bring together scholars and members of the general public from throughout the United States and beyond to share their research findings and family histories. To learn more, visit www.deepsouth.tulane.edu/programs/creole.html.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

JOHN T. EDGE, director of the Southern Foodways Alliance, writes about Southern food and travel. He is the author of *A Gracious Plenty: Recipes and Recollections from the American South and Southern Belly*. His articles have appeared in *Food & Wine*, *Gourmet*, and other publications.

JOAN WELBE 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. KARTGANER 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*.

JAMIE KORNBEIG is a bookseller at Square Books, editor of the store's *Dear Reader* newsletter, and a freelance writer. He lives in Water Valley, Mississippi.

PRESTON LAUTERBACH is a graduate of the M.A. program in Southern Studies at Ole Miss and a member of the editorial staff at *Living Blues* magazine.

TED OWNEY holds a joint appointment in Southern Studies and history. He is the author of *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920* and *American Dreams in Mississippi: Consumers, Poverty, and Culture, 1880-1998*.

WILEY PREWITT is director of the Northeast Mississippi Traditional Music Project sponsored by the Center and the Mississippi Arts Commission. He has extensive experience documenting traditional culture throughout the state, including work on projects for the Center (First Monday Trade Days), the Pine Hills Culture Program at the University of Southern Mississippi, and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

JENNIFER A. STICKMAN is acting assistant professor of history and Southern Studies. She earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Michigan, a master's degree from Wayne State, and a Ph.D. from Michigan State University. Her research interests include studies in ethnicity, gender, race, and sexuality.

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*.

James Meredith (left)
with his son, John



Photo: E. Ensley

ENSLEY GIVES MEREDITH PHOTOGRAPH TO THE CENTER

Dr. Philip K. Ensley, veterinarian at the Wild Animal Park in San Diego, California, came the Center in 2001 while in Mississippi visiting the Strawberry Plains Audubon Center in Holly Springs. Seeing the article "40 Years after Infamy, Ole Miss Looks to Reflect and Heal," in the *New York Times* last September, Ensley sent Wilson the photograph printed here with excerpts of the accompanying letter.

Because of that news article I went through some files and found this photograph of James Meredith and his son I thought you might like to have for your files. I took this photo at a book signing a few years ago here in San Diego. He did not recognize me as the young college sophomore who met him nearly 40 years earlier. I reminded him about the circumstances of the meeting that took place at the Jackson, Mississippi residence of Constance Motley in June 1962. He sat to my left, holding a narrow walking cane looking a bit like a graduate student attending an Ivy League college. He sat up erect listening quietly to the discussion of the lawyers present nodding occasionally with approval on issues concerning strategy to gain admission to the University of Mississippi. The meeting atmosphere was very serious. I made no contribution to the conversation, as most of the legalese was above my head anyway. I had attended the meeting with William L. Higgs, the lawyer James Meredith first turned to for assistance when he sought legal advice on entering Ole Miss.

For this photograph Mr. Meredith obliged me and held up a 1962 copy of the *Mississippi Free Press* that I had saved from that summer. On the front page was a photograph of James and his mother. In addition there was an article detailing the arrest of Bill Higgs in Clarkdale. I was also involved in that arrest. In February of 1963 I was subpoenaed to testify in front of a Federal Grand Jury in Oxford. I spent the evening prior to testifying on campus at the residence of James Silver. He described the events on the night of September 30th as they appeared through his front window. He was a good friend of Bill Higgs. This was the same Bill Higgs who graduated first in his class at Ole Miss, went on to Harvard Law School and was ultimately disbarred in Mississippi. This is the same Bill Higgs I have petitioned Governor Magrove to pardon posthumously. . . .

I hope things are going well for you and the Center. I always look forward to receiving the *Southern Register*.

10th Oxford Conference for the Book

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Jeri Year, Sara Friedman, Scott W. Morris, Kathy Paris,
George Singler, Shy Youngblood
- BCS0002A Finding a Voice/Teaching an Audience
- BCS0002B Betsy Storch, moderator
- BCS0002Y Helene Amos, Galia Baker, John Evans, Perceal Everett,
Mary Knoff, Robert Stone, Crystal Williams
- BCS0003A Welcome
- BCS0003B Robert C. Elmer, Chancellor
- BCS0003Y Algonquin Books: Discussion
Kathy Paris, Shannon Rowland
Algonquin Authors: Readings
Marshall Knoff, Scott W. Morris, George Singler
- BCS0004A Race and Publishing in America
- BCS0004B Helene Amos, moderator
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- BCS0007B Elaine H. Scott, moderator
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- BCS0011A Third World Theaters
- BCS0011B Geri White, moderator
- BCS0011Y Robert Stone, Michael Newlin
- BCS0012A Open Mike: Poetry & Fiction Jam
- BCS0012B Jerry Colburn, moderator
- BCS0012Y
- BCS0013A Appalachian Voices
- BCS0013B Kate Wilson, moderator
- BCS0013Y George Eli Lyon, Ron Kisk, Crystal Williams
- BCS0014A Readings/Remarks
- BCS0014B Joe Allen, Jeri Year
- BCS0014Y
- BCS0015A Books in the Civil Rights Movement
- BCS0015B Shy Youngblood, moderator
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Charles Ward
- BCS0016A Poetry: Readings and Remarks
- BCS0016B Celebration of Retired Poetry Books
- BCS0016Y Blain Noble, moderator
Beth Ann Kennedy, Shira McCullum, Ron Kisk
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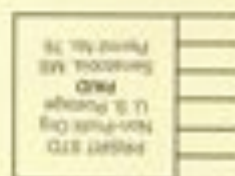
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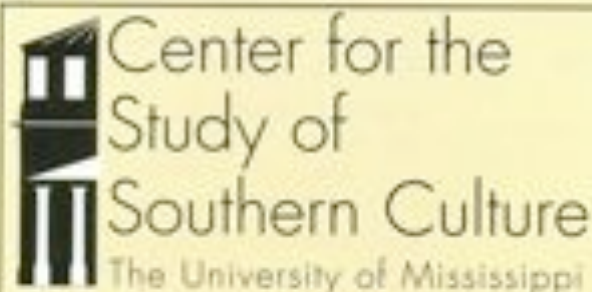
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