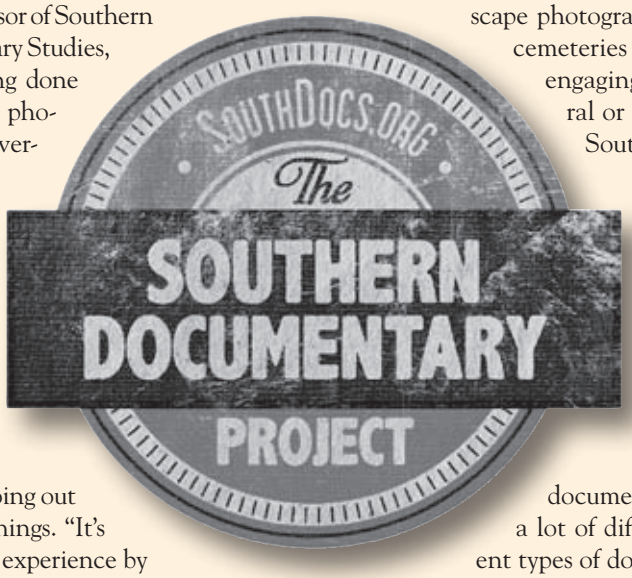
the Southern Register
The Newsletter of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture • Winter 2014 The University of Mississippi

The Future of Documentary Work

Documentary work is an integral part of the Center and takes many forms, including oral histories, films, and photographic presentations. Spending time in the field doing documentary study brings the Center's interdisciplinary coursework to life for many students.

David Wharton, assistant professor of Southern Studies and director of Documentary Studies, leads the documentary work being done at the Center. His documentary photography classes always have an overriding theme, and at the end of each semester students make a book with their own photographs, give an online presentation combining photographs and text, and curate a collection of 70 pictures to be exhibited the following semester in the Gammill Gallery.



Wharton's fieldwork class provides students with the tools for going out into the South and discovering things. "It's very important for students to get experience by being out in the field and talking to people, listening to people, observing people, and coming back to tell an audience something about their experience," he says. "In many cases that involves bringing something back, whether it's an interview, a photograph, or, for Andy Harper's classes, a film."

While his fieldwork classes focus more on process than product, Wharton wants his students to realize it's important to pay attention to the world around them. "Studying the South is more than just reading about it. The experience of being in the field is invaluable," he says.

Wharton's most recent book of photographs, *Small Town South* was published in 2012, with *The Soul of a Small Texas Town: Photographs, Memories, and History from McDade* published in 2000. In 2013 he was honored as Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters award winner for photography. He is almost finished with a book-length project titled *The Power of Belief: Spiritual Landscapes from the American South*, which examines the visual impact of traditional spirituality through landscape photography. The photographs also include cemeteries with religious signage and people engaging in various forms of worship in rural or small town settings throughout the South, including Texas, West Virginia, and Florida.

Wharton says he is proud of the documentary work the Center does, and he is pleased with the group of smart, interesting Southern Studies graduate students that come through each year. "I think the Center has developed a little bit of a reputation as a place where you can do documentary work and have the support of a lot of different types of faculty doing different types of documentary," he says.

Teaching students to tell the stories of the South through film is the role of Andy Harper, the director of the Southern Documentary Project, formerly known as Media and Documentary Projects. The name change came about to better reflect the unit's work since becoming a part of the Center. Harper took over a broadcast unit in 2004 with the direction to "make it academic." To him, that meant being part of Southern Studies, a mission accomplished in 2012.

"The genesis of this, way back when, was about turning the broadcast into a unit that told stories that leveraged the strengths that we have at this university," says Harper, an instructional

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the Southern Register

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Winter 2014

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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

This issue of the *Southern Register* features the documentary work of Southern Studies faculty, students, staff, and friends. Several years ago, President Bill Clinton introduced Bill Ferris by saying how much he envied the work Ferris had done. The president didn't go into detail, but I'm pretty confident it was the listening, talking, traveling, learning, filming, and teaching of a documentarian (not the administrative work of a Center director) that Clinton envied.

I don't do documentary work, but, like the former president, I tend to envy people who do. The Center has a long history of documentary photography and film, starting with the work of Ferris and then Tom Rankin and others and continuing to the exciting work of the colleagues described in articles in this issue. I envy the beginning of documentary work, with the excitement and even the potential for nervousness of going out to document. I envy the process of developing a relationship with a person or group or place and getting to know a subject on multiple levels. And I envy the end product that often welcomes a broader range of aesthetic responses than my own work that puts words on pages.

Documentary work is an essential part of Southern Studies teaching. The program has three classes specifically about documentary methods, film, and photography, and more than half of the Center's faculty members use interviewing, fieldwork, and other documentary approaches in their classes and scholarship. Doing documentary work means facing preconceptions, often in the early stages of deciding what to document. It often means wondering about the potential for romanticizing people, or treating a place as exotic, or seeing only one side or just a few sides of complicated people. It also means learning confidence in the use of technology, confronting issues of ethics, rights, and responsibilities, and, possibly, reproducing a documentary work and making it available. I love the fact that so much Center documentary work is available in libraries, in magazines, on websites, in books, at film festivals, at exhibitions, and on the walls of Barnard Observatory.

Southern Studies professors often give SST 101 or 102 students an assignment to conduct and record an interview and then transcribe it. It usually sounds simple, but it very often raises questions students had not confronted before. Most come back saying some part of it was harder and more complicated than they had expected. Students learn quickly that some people don't want to talk about some things, and some people don't want to talk at all. And in those and other classes, students confront the possibilities that they may have a lot in common with people they thought were far different from themselves. They also often discover that people they thought they knew and understood turn out to have plenty of surprises.

Southern Studies graduate students have been doing so many documentary projects that the faculty created a third track for the MA program, a documentary track with rules and expectations different from those of the thesis track and the internship track. The first students displayed a variety of scholarly approaches—some films, some photography projects, and a website that incorporates film, photography, and sound. Students do a whole range of documentary work, sometimes as part of their assistantships, theses, classes, and self-generated projects, and I love the fact that so many alumni do a form of documentary work as part of their jobs, their nonprofessional passions, and both.

Like many of us, I let James Agee raise questions about doing documentary work. *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941) begins with the photographs Walker Evans took of sharecropping families and their homes in Hale County, Alabama. Then, in about 10 nearly breathless pages, Agee confesses his worries about writing about those people—people he loves, admires, and sometimes pities, and, he fears, perhaps romanticizes. On his first page, he writes that it is "curious, not to say obscene and thoroughly terrifying," to do such work. It is also "unfathomably mysterious." On his second

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2014 Blues and the Spirit Symposium

Once again, *Living Blues* is teaming up with Dominican University to host the fourth annual Blues and the Spirit Symposium. The event will take place May 30th and 31st in Chicago.

Through two days of presentations, panel discussions, and live performances, participants will explore the African American cultural and musical legacy of the blues. A diverse group of scholars, writers, artists, critics, industry representatives, performers, and blues enthusiasts will participate in the dialogue.

This year's keynote speakers are African American scholars Tricia Rose from Brown University and Lance Williams of the Blacks on Blues project.

Tricia Rose is the director of Brown University's Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America. She is internationally respected for her work in African American culture in the post–civil rights era, race in America, popular culture, gender and sexuality, and music scholarship on blues and hip-hop. Her work has been published in *Time*, *Essence*, the *New York Times*, and the *Village Voice*, and she regularly contributes to MSNBC, CNN, NPR, and PBS. Rose's keynote address will kick off her semester-long visiting appointment as Dominican University's Lund-Gill Chair.

Lance Williams started Blacks on Blues in 1992 to preserve and honor African American art and culture, particularly the blues. Blacks on Blues events feature music, lectures, and multimedia presentations in a two-hour interactive format. The series takes place each month in Los Angeles's Leimert Park. Williams has also presented Blacks on Blues at the House of Blues, California State University, and Bryant Temple AME Church. He has also lectured on the blues at universities and in public forums across the country. Currently, Williams is developing a video and photo archive of his events, a strong web presence, and more events aimed at students.

Being honored with a Blues and the Spirit Award at the symposium this year is the Scott family, for more than four decades of musical contributions to blues and R&B, and Bob Koester of Delmark Records.

Other events include a performance by Howard Scott and the World Band at the Friday night reception and a free workshop during Saturday's program for musicians on copyright and publishing in the digital age. The symposium will close Saturday night at Rosa's Lounge with a multigenerational show, featuring Jamiah on Fire, Cicero Blake, and Theo Huff, among others.

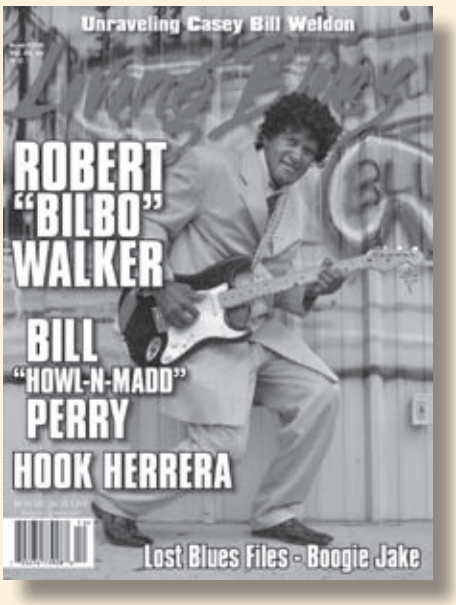
For more info on the Blues and the Spirit Symposium visit www.livingblues.com and www.dom.edu/blues. Any questions can be directed to info@livingblues.com or bluesandthespirit@dom.edu.

Camilla Ann Aikin

From the Pages of *Living Blues*

Living Blues issue #228 highlights the global reach of blues music, showcasing its ability to reach listeners across geographic and cultural lines. This issue features articles with Mississippi bluesmen Robert "Bilbo" Walker and Bill "Howl-N-Madd" Perry, Native American harmonica player Hook Herrera, electric blues pioneer Casey Bill Weldon, and Louisiana-born guitarist and singer Matthew "Boogie Jake" Jacobs.

In this issue's cover story, Margo Cooper sits down with Robert "Bilbo" Walker, a Mississippi native who came to the blues by secretly listening outside his father's juke joint near Alligator, Mississippi. Walker, the son of Delta sharecroppers, developed his singing voice and piano skills as a young child in rural Mississippi. His musical road resembles that of many Mississippi bluesmen. As a teenager, Walker moved from



Mississippi to Waukegan, Illinois, with his family, honing his skills as a singer and eventually landing on Chicago's Maxwell Street, where he transitioned from gospel music to the blues. He returned to Mississippi often, playing juke joints around Clarksdale and Alligator, and returning to Chicago when funds ran low. In the 1970s Walker traveled to California for two weeks of performances at the Rodeway Inn in Bakersfield. He liked it there, and he and his wife, Audrey, made California their home. Even today, Walker frequently returns to Mississippi to play music. "Whenever the people in Mississippi say they need me, I come, no matter when it is or where it is," he says. Turn to Cooper's article in *LB* for details on Walker's blues journey.

Scott M. Bock interviews Bill "Howl-N-Madd" Perry at the Cat Head Blues & Folk Art store in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Like Walker, Perry got his start in gospel music in Mississippi,

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Center for the Study of Southern Culture

The University of Mississippi

Brown Bag Lunch and Lecture Series

Spring Semester 2014

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

FEBRUARY

5 "A Small Step Show"
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity

12 "Photographs from the Social South"
David Wharton
Director of Documentary Studies and Assistant Professor of Southern Studies
University of Mississippi

17 A Monday Special Edition Brown Bag
"'Laissez Les Bons Temps Rouler!': Documenting Mardi Gras Cultures in Southwestern Louisiana"
Jodi Skipper
Assistant Professor of Anthropology
David Wharton
Director of Documentary Studies and Assistant Professor of Southern Studies

19 "The New South Project: Photographing India and the Deep South: A Gammill Gallery Lecture"
Brooke C. White
Associate Professor of Art
University of Mississippi

26 "Radicals on the Second Line: The Legacy of the Free Southern Theater in the Multicultural South"
Elizabeth Rodriguez Fielder
English Graduate Student
University of Mississippi

MARCH

5 "Hunch, Theme, and Theory: Strategies for Filmmaking as Research in the film *U Know Them by Their Fruit* (2013)"
Shannon Magness
University of Sussex, Brighton, England

19 "The Southern Documentary Project Presents 'Fifty Minutes with SouthDocs'"
Andy Harper
Director, Southern Documentary Project
University of Mississippi

26 "Sin and Salvation in Baptist Town: A Photo Essay from Greenwood, Mississippi"
Matt Eich, Photojournalist
Norfolk, Virginia

APRIL

2 "Songwriting in the South: Music of the South Conference, April 2–3"
Mark Camarigg
Living Blues Magazine

9 "Faith Powers and Gambling Spirits: Working-Class Belief and the Creation of Pentecostalism at the End of the Gilded Age"
Jarod Roll
Associate Professor of History
University of Mississippi

16 "This Ain't Chicago: Race, Class, and Regional Identity in the Post-Soul South"
Zandria Robinson
Assistant Professor of Sociology
University of Memphis

23 "Magic City Agriculture Project: Research in Practice in Birmingham"
Zachary Henson
Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow
Southern Studies
University of Mississippi

Mark Your Calendars!

February 6–9, 2014
Oxford Film Festival, featuring SouthDocs Films
Oxford, Mississippi

February 10, 2014
Screening of *The Loving Story*
Lafayette County and Oxford Public Library

February 12, 2014
John "JoJo" Herman
Music of the South Concert
Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts Studio Theater
University of Mississippi

February 19, 2014
Documentary Film: *Chasing Ice*
Overby Center Auditorium
University of Mississippi

February 21–23, 2014
Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration
Natchez, Mississippi

February 24, 2014
Paul Greenberg
Foodways Lecture
University of Mississippi

February 27–March 1, 2014
Transforming New South Identities Conference
University of Mississippi

March 7, 2014
The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture Lecture
Charles Reagan Wilson
Clinton School of Public Service
Little Rock, Arkansas

March 19, 2014
Documentary Film: *Last Call at the Oasis*
Overby Center Auditorium
University of Mississippi

March 26–28, 2014
Oxford Conference for the Book
University of Mississippi

April 2, 2014
Music of the South Concert, Artist TBA
Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts Studio Theater
University of Mississippi

April 2–3, 2014
Music of the South Symposium
University of Mississippi

April 6, 2014
New South Family Supper
Atlanta, Georgia

The 21st Oxford Conference for the Book, March 26–28, 2014

The 21st Oxford Conference for the Book (OCB), presented by the Center and Square Books, will take place March 26–28, 2014. The program, which is free and open to the public, includes readings, panel discussions, and talks by over 45 talented writers from across the nation. To see a full schedule and learn more about the guest authors, please visit the conference's website, oxfordconferenceforthebook.com.

This year's conference is held in conjunction with the Southern Literary Festival, an organization of Southern colleges and schools founded in 1937 to promote literature of the South. Each year a different school hosts the festival—which is, in effect, an undergraduate writing conference that entails writing workshops in fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, and playwriting; writing competitions; and a venue in which the participating students, faculty, and general public attend readings by well-known writers.

Panel Discussions and Talks

Panels will explore a range of topics, including memory and Southern history, recent journalism books, hybrid forms, documentary photography, feminism and American crime fiction, Robert Johnson in story and song, and food and travel writing. The Lafayette County Literacy Council will lead the yearly discussion of literacy, this year focusing on adult and family literacy, and there will be several poetry readings and conversations.

Thacker Mountain Radio will have a special OCB show at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 27.

Readings and Conversations presented by Square Books

Square Books will present several sessions of readings by both well-known and up-and-coming writers currently on book tour. This year's writers include Kiese Laymon, Susan Minot, Lorrie Moore, and Amy Greene. Deborah Johnson and Amy Einhorn will have a conversation about the editor-author relationship.

Book Signings

Square Books will host book signings each evening for the authors presenting that day. The Wednesday and Thursday signings will be at Off Square Books, and the Thursday signing will be at the Lyric Theater, before and after *Thacker Mountain Radio*.

Young Author's Fair

The 2014 Young Author's Fair (YAF) will be held Thursday, March 27, at the Ford Center for Performing Arts, with more than 1,200 first graders and fifth graders from the public schools of Lafayette County and Oxford in attendance. Drew Daywalt, author of *The Day the Crayons Quit*, will present a first-grade program, and Obert Skye, author of *Wonkenstein*, will present a program for fifth graders.

The goal of the YAF is to give each child a book of his or her own to read along with classmates and teachers during the 2013–

THE OXFORD CONFERENCE FOR THE BOOK, MARCH 26–28, 2014

The Conference for the Book is free and open to the public, although three special events require reservations.

PLEASE MAIL REGISTRATION FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS: CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI • P.O. BOX 1848 • UNIVERSITY, MS 38677-1848 OR FAX TO 662-915-5814

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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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E-MAIL _____

Special OCB Events

I would like to reserve a spot for:

___ 3/26 UM Library Lunch (free)

___ 3/26 Cocktail Reception ($50)

___ 3/28 Oxford Library Lunch (free)

___ Please mail me a parking pass for the UM Campus for March 26-28. You must return this form by March 10 if choosing this option. See page 7 for more information.

I am making a payment of $_____.

___Check, made payable to THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI, is enclosed.

___Charge to ___Visa ___MasterCard Expiration Date _____

Account Number _____

Signature _____ Date _____

You may also sign up for the OCB online – oxfordconferenceforthebook.com

Payments are refundable if written request for cancellation is postmarked no later than March 10. No refunds will be made after March 10, 2014.

Oxford Conference for the Book Schedule

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26

11:30 a.m. Welcome Lunch hosted by the University of Mississippi Library
Noon Opening Talk by Greg Johnson and Derrick Harriell
1:30 p.m. Fiction, Memory, and Southern History
Ted Ownby, moderator
Jonathan O'Dell, Bill Cheng, Françoise Hamlin
3:00 p.m. Journalism Forum
Curtis Wilkie, moderator
H. Brandt Ayers, Denise Kiernan, Ben Bradlee Jr.
4:30 p.m. Square Books Readings Session I and Signing
Kiese Laymon talk
6:30 p.m. Opening Reception (advance registration required)
Barksdale-Isom Place

THURSDAY, MARCH 27

9:00 a.m. Young Author's Fair: 1st Grade
Drew Daywalt, *The Day the Crayons Quit*
10:30 a.m. Pictures and Pages: A Documentary Photography Conversation
David Wharton, moderator
Maude Schuyler Clay, George Thompson, Tom Rankin, Deborah Luster, David Skolkin
10:30 a.m. Young Author's Fair: 5th Grade
Obert Skye, *Wonkenstein*
1:00 p.m. Poetry Panel
Beth Ann Fennelly, moderator
Tess Taylor, Steve Scafidi, Kevin Young
2:15 p.m. Hybrid Forms
Jack Pendarvis, moderator
Aurelie Sheehan, Leanne Shapton, Luke Geddes, Michael Garriga
3:30 p.m. Square Books Session II: An Editor and Author Conversation
Deborah Johnson and Amy Einhorn
5:00 p.m. Doors open for Square Books Pop-up Shop and Book Signing with Thursday authors, Lyric Theater
6:00 p.m. *Thacker Mountain Radio*
Featuring poet Kevin Young, musical guests the Eisenhaur Band and others
7:00 p.m. Square Books Pop-up Shop and Book Signing with Thursday authors
9:00 p.m. Southern Literary Festival Open Mike

FRIDAY, MARCH 28

9:00 a.m. Lafayette County Literacy Council Forum: Adult and Family Literacy
Nancy Opalko, moderator
Kevin Dean, Elizabeth Triplett, Liz Brown, Beth Little
10:30 a.m. Hellhounds, Crossroads, and a Bluesman's Woman: Robert Johnson in Story and Song
Adam Gussow, moderator
Snowden Wright, Ace Atkins, Fruteland Jackson
Noon Lafayette County and Oxford Public Library Poetry Talk and Lunch with Tess Taylor (advance registration required)
1:30 p.m. Square Books Session III: Reading and Conversation
Susan Minot, Lorrie Moore, and Amy Greene
2:45 p.m. Dissecting a Bestseller: The Making of *An Italian Palate*
William Dunlap, moderator
Wyatt Waters, Robert St. John, John Langston
4:00 p.m. When Harriet the Spy Grew Up: Feminism and the Second Golden Age of American Crime Fiction, talk by Laura Lippman
This is a keynote presented in partnership with the Sarah Isom Center for Women and Gender Studies and their Student Gender Conference.
6:15 p.m. Southern Literary Festival Keynote
Megan Abbott, speaker
7:15 p.m. Closing Reception and Book Signing
9:00 p.m. Southern Literary Festival Celebration of North Mississippi Hill Country Music, with Rising Star Fife and Drum Band, Shannon McNally, Duwayne Burnside

14 school year. Teachers and librarians work with Square Books Jr. to choose books relevant and engaging for the students. The conference then invites the books' authors to present programs to each grade. Both authors will sign books at Square Books Jr.

Special thanks to the Lafayette County Literacy Council for sponsoring the first-grade program and to the Junior Auxiliary of Oxford for sponsoring the fifth-grade program. Sincere thanks to Square Books Jr., the engine of the YAF.

SPECIAL SOCIAL EVENTS

Welcome Lunch—Wednesday, March 26, at 11:30 a.m.

Hosted by the University of Mississippi Library, this lunch in Archives and Special Collections is a wonderful kick-off event and will conclude with a talk by Greg Johnson and Derrick Harriell.

A SPECIAL NOTE ON PARKING AT THE CONFERENCE

Because of the growth of enrollment at the University of Mississippi, parking for visitors becomes more challenging with each passing year. Parking passes are necessary for visitors on the UM campus, and parking is allowed only in designated lots, a change from previous years. Please visit the UM Parking Office's information page for visitors for further information and maps: www.olemiss.edu/parking/visitors.html.

Thank you in advance for your patience.

Free but reservations appreciated. Please return the form or sign-up at oxfordconferenceforthebook.com/attend.

Opening Reception Benefiting the OCB—Wednesday, March 26, at 6:30 p.m.

Held at the historic Barksdale-Isom Place, this much-loved opening reception is a lively fundraiser with wonderful food, drinks, and conversation between fellow conference attendees and guest writers. A portion of the ticket proceeds is tax deductible.

$50 and reservations required by March 19. Please return the form or purchase tickets through the OCB website.

Poetry Talk and Lunch—Friday, March 28, at noon

Hosted by the Lafayette County and Oxford Public Library, this lunch includes a talk on craft by poet Tess Taylor.

Free but reservations needed. Return the form, sign up at the OCB website, or call 662-234-5751 to reserve your spot.

The OCB will mail parking passes for requests that we receive by **March 10**. Please indicate on the registration form or online or email rebeccac@olemiss.edu if you would like us to send you a pass. After that, campus visitors may purchase and print their own passes for $1/day by visiting the OCB website, or visitors can purchase a pass for $1/day at the welcome center on University Avenue, adjacent to the Grove, upon arrival at the conference each day. **Because of new campus policies, conference organizers will not distribute passes during the conference. We apologize for the inconvenience.**

Center Scholars Participate in the 2014 Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration

Many of the South's best-known authors will gather February 20–23, 2014, in Natchez for the silver anniversary of the Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration, an award-winning humanities-based conference.

The 2014 theme is "60 Years and Counting: Voices of the Civil Rights Movement." The conference takes place 60 years after *Brown v. Board of Education*, a Supreme Court decision that declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional, and 50 years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibited discrimination in public places.

"These decisions caused sweeping changes in America," said Carolyn Vance Smith of Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Natchez, founder and cochairman of the conference. "Voices of the civil rights movement then and now permeate our country's daily life," she said.

Among the Center friends and faculty on the program whose works reflect the civil rights movement are:

- Charles Reagan Wilson of the University of Mississippi, general editor of the 24-volume *New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* and an authority on music of the civil rights era
- David G. Sansing of Oxford, Mississippi, noted UM historian who is author of a new Mississippi history book recently adopted by schools in the state
- Robert Khayat of Oxford, Mississippi, retired chancellor of the University of Mississippi and author of a new book, *An Education of a Lifetime*
- William R. Ferris of Vicksburg, Mississippi, and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, former director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture and the National Endowment for the Humanities, and author of a new book, *The Storied South: Voices of Writers and Artists*

Enhancing the lecture series will be a premiere screening of *The Toughest Job: William Winter's Mississippi*, a documentary film produced by Matthew Graves and Andy Harper of the Southern Documentary Project at the University of Mississippi.

In addition will be book signings; live music of the civil rights era by Holy Family Catholic Church Choir and Tougaloo College Choir; an open house at the Natchez Museum of African American History and Culture; a writing awards ceremony conducted by the film, television, and Broadway actor Gerald McRaney and historians David G. Sansing and John D. W. Guice; the unveiling of a special double issue of the *Southern Quarterly*, a scholarly journal at the University of Southern Mississippi that salutes the NLCC's 25th anniversary; and a festive silver-anniversary reception honoring the NLCC at the Natchez Visitor Center.

The NLCC, an award-winning, mostly free conference, will begin at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, February 20, at Trinity Episcopal Church. It continues Friday and Saturday, February 21 and 22, at the Natchez Convention Center, and ends Sunday, February 23, with free tours of four historically black downtown churches, all of which were involved during the civil rights movement.

The conference is sponsored by Copiah-Lincoln Community College and Mississippi Department of Archives and History. It is supported by the Natchez National Historical Park and Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Director of proceedings for the 25th year is William F. Winter, former governor of Mississippi, long known for his work with racial reconciliation.

Information about the conference is available by calling 601-446-1289 or, toll-free, 866-296-NLCC (6522); by visiting www.colin.edu/nlcc; or by e-mailing NLCC@colin.edu.

Faculty Members Teach New Classes on Special Topics

This spring, faculty members Barbara Combs, Zac Henson, and Jodi Skipper are teaching special topics courses for Southern Studies graduate students and advanced undergraduates. These classes are designed to enrich and extend introductory Southern Studies coursework, and faculty members often design classes related to their own research.

Barbara Combs, who recently published *From Selma to Montgomery: The Long March to Freedom*, will teach Collective Memory and the Civil Rights Movement. This course is particularly timely because of the 50th anniversaries of events like James Meredith's 1962 integration of the University of Mississippi and the upcoming anniversaries of Freedom Summer and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The course will explore the "social construct of collective memory as it is shaped through history, ritual, and performance." Combs notes that the Southern landscape, with its geography of Confederate memorials, slavery landmarks, and civil rights markers, reflects "the conflicted nature of history and memory, and its influence on Southern regional identity."

In a class titled Race, Agrarian Policy, and Social Movements, Southern Foodways Alliance postdoctoral fellow Zac Henson will introduce students to current debates within the alternative food movement, debates that he notes are sharply divided, with race "the primary locus" for two distinct factions. "The first faction, which is primarily white, extremely visible, and well funded, focuses on changing the food system through consumer choice, while the second faction, which is primarily a combination of people of color and more radical activists, focuses on using agriculture to build economic self-sufficiency and community self-reliance." Students will study the historical roots of these movements as well as contemporary debates related to agrarian policy.

Jodi Skipper's Transforming New South Identities: A Collaborative Research Seminar is designed to help students add depth to their understanding of Southern Studies as a field, as well as give them an understanding of the processes involved in academic conference attendance. Students will gain experience with presenting and peer review, necessary skills for those considering careers in academia. Skipper's plans for the course include students' review of pieces submitted by scholars participating in the Transforming New South Identities Symposium. This symposium, which Skipper directs, seeks to survey the field of Southern Studies as currently practiced by social science and humanities scholars and activists working in a wide range of academic and practical settings. Students will engage these scholars through workshops and roundtables held during the conference, which will take place in late February.

Becca Walton

Archiving the South

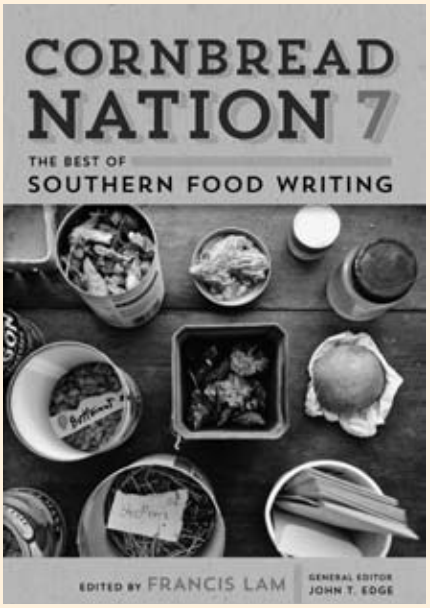
Graduate assistant Leslie Hassel prepares photographs from all of David Wharton's documentary photography courses since 2000. The photographs will be deposited in the Southern Media Archive at the University of Mississippi.

David Wharton

Cornbread Nation 7
Coming May 2014

The seventh volume of *Cornbread Nation: The Best of Southern Food Writing* is forthcoming from the University of Georgia Press in May 2014. SFA director John T. Edge is the series editor of *Cornbread Nation*, and food writer and editor Francis Lam served as volume editor for *Cornbread Nation 7*. Lam, who lives in New York and works as an editor at Clarkson Potter, is a longtime SFA member. A New Jersey native of Chinese descent, he developed a deep interest in Southern foodways while working as a volunteer in the Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. In 2008 he traveled to Biloxi, Mississippi, to conduct oral histories for the SFA with members of Biloxi's shrimping industry.

Using his own "outsider" status as a starting point, Lam organized *Cornbread Nation 7* around the dual perspectives of Southerners leaving their home region and outsiders coming in. In his introduction, Lam writes, "This book is sort of a continuing education for me on what it means to be Southern. I recognize my odd position as a guide to the South, and I hope that my ignorances and curiosities don't get too much in the way. I hope, instead, that my unfamiliarity helps to fill this book with ideas that you know well, but that you will be inspired to look at again, or anew."



Meet Jenna Grem

In November 2013 Jenna Grem joined the Southern Foodways Alliance as a part-time office manager. She earned her BA and MA in Spanish at the University of Georgia, where she also taught as a Spanish instructor. Before signing on at the SFA, her professional experience ranged from waiting tables and bartending to teaching speed-reading and English as a second language. A Navy brat raised mostly "in the South but not of it," Jenna has nevertheless settled on the region as her home, in large part because of her passion for pulled pork and pound cake. Her husband, Darren Grem, is a professor of history and Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi.

Tennessee Arts Commission Honors Odie Lindsey

Courtesy Odie Lindsey

Odie Lindsey and Dana Deloca with their daughter Virginia Philomena Lindsey

Odie Lindsey, the managing editor of the *Mississippi Encyclopedia* and a 2007 Southern Studies MA graduate who wrote his thesis on "Industrial War, Unattainable Manhood, and the Homosocial Dynamic in Works by William Faulkner, James Dickey, and Larry Brown," has received a literary fellowship from the Tennessee Arts Commission (TAC).

Up to three grants of $5,000 each are given annually to poets, fiction writers, and creative nonfiction writers who are financially compensated for their work as professional artists. Residents of Tennessee who are not enrolled full time in a degree-granting program are eligible.

"Given the legion of talented Tennessee writers, I was floored to receive the TAC fellowship," Lindsey says. "The award supports a novel-in-progress about a female veteran who comes home to north Mississippi and her struggle to reengage rural Southern life. Without doubt, my graduate studies under the scholars at the Center and my work on the *Mississippi Encyclopedia* greatly inform the project."

Up to 25 pages of poetry or prose, a personal statement, and a résumé are required to be considered for the fellowship, and Lindsey submitted parts of a novel as well as a short story. "Alongside a hunk of the novel, I submitted the story 'Hers,' from the Harper Perennial anthology *Forty Stories*. As a veteran who hopes to expand the scope of war lit, I feel so validated to receive the TAC's support," Lindsey says.

In the comments about Lindsey's submission, one of the adjudicators wrote, "This submission clearly stood out from all the others. These stories are both excellent. Both concern Iraq War soldiers/vets. The writer managed to give us multidimensional characters in terrible circumstances without resorting to cliché or sentimentality. The writer includes many precise and odd details that make the stories vivid. The writer's depiction of how men and women interact during war is fascinating and brave. The writer has a lot to say and clearly knows how to say it."

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

The 11th Annual Mississippi Delta Cultural Tour, set for May 21–24, 2014

On May 21–24, 2014, the Mississippi Delta Cultural Tour returns to Greenwood and environs. The 2014 tour has been moved to May to accommodate those whose March schedules have prevented them from joining the tour in years past. We're also hoping to get some of that perfect springtime-in-Mississippi weather, to find some crops pushing through the fertile Delta soil, and to catch some blues out of doors.

The tour is again based at the Alluvian Hotel in downtown Greenwood, and from there we'll explore the rich literary, culinary, and musical heritage of the Delta towns of Greenwood, Greenville, Clarksdale, Indianola, Leland, Stoneville, Ruleville, Merigold, Mound Bayou, and Cleveland. We'll make several new stops, and we'll meet new people along the road.

On Wednesday afternoon, May 21, we'll gather at Turnrow Book Company for an overview of the Mississippi Delta titled "Introduction to the 'Most Southern Place on Earth.'" Following this presentation by the director of Delta State University's Delta Center for Culture and Learning, Luther Brown, will be a happy hour at the Alluvian with music by a Delta musician. We'll end the day with dinner at the famous Giardina's Restaurant, founded in 1936.

Jimmy Thomas

Dee Canale, John Harrison, Ruth Koffman, and Donald Best pose in front of local blues performers in Leland, 2012

Jimmy Thomas

At bluesman Robert Johnson's (likely) gravesite, 2011

On Thursday, May 22, we'll start the day touring various blues sites, such as "where the Southern crosses the dog," and then visit the B. B. King Museum and Interpretive Center in Indianola. We'll eat soul food at the iconic Club Ebony juke joint and hear literary scholar Marion Barnwell discuss the stories and novels of Delta author Lewis Nordan. We'll stop by the author's boyhood home in Itta Bena en route back to Greenwood, where Mississippi historians Mary Carol Miller and Allan Hammons will talk about their pictorial book *Greenwood: Mississippi Memories*. Miller will lead a historical walking tour of downtown Greenwood that will end with a hot-tamales-and-blues happy hour, complete with a visit by the hot tamales maker. The evening concludes with dinner at Delta Bistro, owned and operated by the 2011 James Beard Awards "Best Chef: South" semi-finalist Taylor Bowen Ricketts.

On Friday, May 23, we'll travel due west to the gravesite of the "Father of the Delta Blues," Charley Patton, in Holly Ridge. A stop in downtown Leland to see the blues murals and Mississippi Blues Trail Markers will be followed by a trip to the country where we'll tour the Delta Research and Extension Center, led by Dr. Rebekah Ray. We'll then have lunch at Cicero's Restaurant in Stoneville. After lunch we'll visit the William Alexander Percy Memorial Library in Greenville for a talk on *Holt Collier, His Life, His Roosevelt Hunts, and the Origin of the Teddy Bear* by the author, Minor F. Buchanan, and view the library's Greenville Writers Exhibit. Afterward we'll tour the 1927 Flood Museum and take a drive south to Warfield Point Park for an up-close view of the Mighty Mississippi. Early evening will find the tour visiting a local art opening, *Delta*

Collects: Works from the Collection of Lester Nelkin, at the E. E. Bass Cultural Arts Center. After a long day we'll have dinner at the famous Doe's Eat Place in Greenville.

On Saturday, May 24, we'll travel to Clarksdale via Cleveland and Merigold. Blues scholar and host of *Highway 61 Radio*, Scott Barretta, will join the tour to guide us through the heart of the Delta. Along the way we'll visit legendary bluesman Robert Johnson's gravesite (or at least the one that is most likely out of three possible sites), pause before the remains of Bryant's Grocery in Money, where Emmett Till allegedly made his tragic wolf whistle, stop at Fannie Lou Hamer's grave and memorial garden in Ruleville, and visit Dockery Plantation, one of the Delta's most important plantations and occasional home to Charley Patton and other blues legends. In Cleveland we'll tour the Mississippi Delta Chinese Heritage Museum with docent and Delta State University archivist Emily Jones. We'll have lunch at the Gallery, which is the restaurant of potter Lee McCarty, and afterward visit the McCarty Pottery showroom and garden, followed by a visit to one of the last remaining Delta juke joints, Po' Monkey's Juke Joint. On the way to Clarksdale we'll stop in historic Mound Bayou, and in Clarksdale we'll visit the Cutrer Mansion, the showplace residence that young Tom "Tennessee" Williams visited with his grandfather on parish calls. The residence is considered to be Tennessee's Belle Reve—the lost ancestral home of Blanche DuBois and Stella Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Jen Waller, director of the Coahoma County Higher Education Center in Clarksdale will provide background information on the

At the historic Burrus House in Benoit, where Tennessee Williams's screenplay *Baby Doll* (1956) was filmed, 2013

Jimmy Thomas

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THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA CULTURAL TOUR, MAY 21–24, 2014

The Delta Tour is $600 per person for all program activities, daily meals, and local transportation. The fee does not include lodging.

PLEASE MAIL REGISTRATION FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS:
MISSISSIPPI DELTA CULTURAL TOUR • CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI • P.O. BOX 1848 • UNIVERSITY, MS 38677-1848
OR FAX TO 662-915-5814

REGISTRATION FORM (Please print the information requested.)

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continued from 11 *Delta Tour*

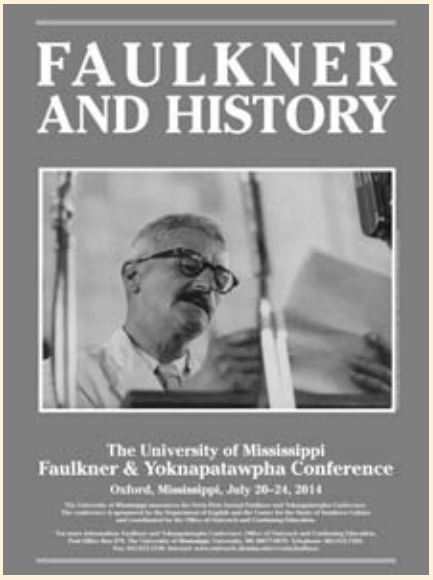
house and its relationship to Williams. We'll then visit the Delta Blues Museum, followed by happy hour at a local blues club. We'll end the long day at the appropriately named Rest Haven, the Delta's first stop for fine Lebanese food. Just prior to dinner, tour guide Jimmy Thomas will talk about how the Lebanese arrived in the Mississippi Delta.

Look for more information on the places we'll visit, as well as dozens of photos of past tours, on the tour's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/mdct13) and on the Center's website (http://southernstudies.olemiss.edu/mdct/). For up-to-the-minute information, please contact tour organizer Jimmy Thomas via e-mail at jgthomas@olemiss.edu or by telephone at 662-915-3374. **Please use the form on page 11 to register.**

The tour will again be based in Greenwood and is $600 per person for all program activities, meals, and local transportation. **The fee does not include lodging.** Remember to sign up early. Only 40 spots are available. Group accommodations are offered at the Alluvian, in downtown Greenwood (www.thealluvian.com). **Rooms at the Alluvian require a separate registration and are priced at a discounted rate of $185 a night plus tax, which includes a full Southern breakfast.** Call 866-600-5201 and ask for the "Delta Tour" rate. Rooms are also available at the Greenwood Best Western, 662-455-5777, or the Hampton Inn, 662-455-7985.

Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference Update

Planning continues for "Faulkner and History," the 41st annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference, scheduled for July 20–24, 2014, on the University of Mississippi campus. Conference attendees will have an exciting opportunity to learn more about Faulkner's extensive literary career at an exhibit hosted by Archives and Special Collections in the J. D. Williams Library. *William Faulkner's Books: A Bibliographic Exhibit* features 20 cases dedicated to Faulkner's works and artifacts that go along with them. The curators have selected some of the rarest items from the library's collections, including materials pertaining to the first editions of Faulkner's books. Featured books include *Soldiers' Pay*, *As I Lay Dying*, *The Sound and the Fury*, and *Absalom, Absalom!* The display also includes a case featuring a hand-bound, illustrated copy of *The Marionettes*, a play Faulkner penned in 1921. Other items include original Faulkner poetry manuscripts, manuscripts from the Rowan Oak Papers (a collection consisting of 1,800 pages of early Faulkner manuscript material), original short stories in periodicals, and photographs from the Cofield Collection and the Martin J. Dain Collection. The exhibit is located in the Faulkner Room on the Library's third floor and will be open on the conference days of Monday, July 21, through Thursday, July 24, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information please contact Jennifer Ford, Head of Archives and Special Collections, at 662-915-7408.



The University Museum invites conference goers to visit a major exhibition that will be up during the conference week. "Blues @ Home: Mississippi's Living Blues Legends" is a collaborative project between Mississippi artist H. C. Porter and producer, composer, and songwriter Tena Clark. The project documents some of Mississippi's most renowned blues performers through mixed-media artwork by Porter and oral histories and recordings collected by Clark. Among the 30 featured musicians are David "Honeyboy" Edwards, T-Model Ford, James "Super Chikan" Johnson, Bobby Rush, Kenny Brown, Jimbo Mathus, and Terry "Harmonica" Bean. Materials from "Blues @ Home" will be on display in the museum's main galleries. Contemporary bronze artist Tom Corbin will also have work on display in the smaller, temporary exhibition gallery. Conference attendees can view these exhibits at a special reception that will kick off "Faulkner and History" on Sunday, July 20, at 1:00 p.m. The materials will also be on display during the museum's regular hours on Tuesday, July 22, through Thursday, July 24.

The publicity poster for "Faulkner and History" features an image by photographer Bern Keating, who documented Faulkner addressing the 17th annual meeting of the Delta Council in Cleveland, Mississippi, on May 15, 1952. The photograph, which now resides in the Bern Keating Collection at the J. D. Williams Library, offers a useful reminder that Faulkner was not only an artist with a keen interest in history but a significant and at times controversial historical figure in his own right. "Faulkner and History" promises a lively week of activities exploring both aspects of the writer's distinguished career.

Discount rates for the conference are available for groups of five or more students. Inexpensive dormitory housing is available for all registrants. Contact Robert Fox at rfox@olemiss.edu for details. For all other inquiries, contact Jay Watson, director, at jwatson@olemiss.edu.

Jay Watson

SFA Expands *Gravy* Quarterly

The SFA is pleased to announce the expansion of *Gravy*, its quarterly journal. With issue No. 50, published in December 2013, *Gravy* grew to 40 pages of essays, poetry, recipes, and more. SFA director John T. Edge said of the expansion, "Gravy has evolved through the years, from a folded pamphlet to a stapled journal, from a public-relations clarion to a showcase of great writing. But this is our greatest leap, to a perfect-bound journal with a color cover and smarter-than-ever writing." All SFA members receive a subscription to *Gravy*, and the publication is also available at Billy Reid clothing stores and a handful of restaurants and retail establishments across the region. Issue No. 50, a literary-focused Winter Reading issue, includes poetry by PEN Award winner Kevin Young, an essay by Michael Oates Palmer about food in the correspondence between Eudora Welty and her editor, William Maxwell, and book recommendations from some of the South's most respected and most well-read chefs.

Southern Foodways Alliance Explores Inclusion and Exclusion in 2014

In 2014 the Southern Foodways Alliance explores inclusion and exclusion at the Southern table, inspired by the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. To mark that historic piece of legislation, which ended de jure segregation in restaurants and other public spaces, the SFA will delve into issues such as food access, food shaming, obesity, land and business ownership, and social justice as they relate to the Southern table. Fifty years after the Civil Rights Act promised all Southerners a seat at the physical table, who sits at the metaphorical "welcome table," and who is still left out? The SFA encourages all curious eaters to join us as 2014 members as we "celebrate counter culture." We will mark this year with a variety of scholarship and events, including a summer symposium held this June in Jackson, Mississippi.

SOUTHERN FOODWAYS ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP

Southern Foodways Alliance

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, VISIT US AT OUR WEBSITE: www.southernfoodways.org or e-mail info@southernfoodways.org

The Power of Belief: An Interview with David Wharton


David Wharton

Jimmy Thomas

As soon as people enter the Gammill Gallery in Barnard Observatory, they quickly come to understand that documentary photography is an integral component of the Center's mission to "investigate, document, interpret, and teach about the American South." The chief curator of the gallery is David Wharton, the Center's Director for Documentary Studies and an assistant professor of Southern Studies. Last year, Wharton published his second book of photographs, *Small Town South*, which records rural townscapes from across the South—portraits of small Southern towns in the first decades of the 21st century and evidence of how residents of those towns express their distinct culture. The current Gammill Gallery exhibition is a collection of work from one of Wharton's current projects, *The Power of Belief: Spiritual Landscapes from the Rural South*. Jimmy Thomas caught up with Wharton between projects to talk about teaching documentary studies, the craft of photography, and other ongoing projects.

Moniac Baptist Church, Charlton City, Georgia, 2007

David Wharton

Jimmy Thomas: So what initially drew you to the field of documentary photography?

David Wharton: Well, in 1974, my wife Marianne and I were tired of the mundane jobs we had. I was teaching high school English, and she was a college librarian. We lived in upstate New York and started saving money. We saved, what was for us at that point, a lot of money, and then we just quit our jobs and went to South America. We got on a plane and flew to Bogota, Colombia. We spent about six months traveling by bus and train between Bogota and La Paz, Bolivia. One of our interests was bird watching, but the thing that really caught my attention was the human world—things that were going on around us. I saw so many things that just amazed me in the social realm, the human realm. Things worth recording. But I didn't have a camera. I had never used a camera at all. I told myself that once I got back to the States I would buy a camera and teach myself how to use it. And that's basically what happened. I guess I bought that camera in late 1974, early 1975. By 1982 I'd started looking at graduate schools, and I ended up at the University of Texas in the fall of 1983. I finished my MFA in 1986 with an exhibition of work I had done on McDade, Texas, a small community about 40 miles east of Austin. I went on to enter the PhD program in American studies at UT, and my first book, *The Soul of a Small Texas Town: Photographs, Memories, and History from McDade*, came from my dissertation. I came to the Center in January of 1999.

JT: You're teaching documentary studies classes here, specifically Documentary Fieldwork and Documentary Photography. What do you want your students take away from your classes?

DW: That it's worth paying attention to the world around them. Each place

David Wharton

Lincoln City, North Carolina, 2008

has its own physical manifestations, its own visible character, and I think the best documentary photography shows the relationship between the appearance of a place, which can be deceiving, and the realities out of which that appearance grows. In many instances, that's an accumulation of things that have happened in the past. If we look at things long enough, and with the proper training, sometimes we begin to *see* them. Documentary photography makes us look at the world, something that very few of us do as we make our way through it.

JT: The technology of photography is rapidly changing, and it now seems that everyone is a quasi-documentarian—or at least a photographer. I mean, there are folks out there shooting any number of subjects with their iPhones and sharing them on Facebook and Tumblr and Flickr, in a sense documenting their world. Do you think that this technological revolution is in any way redefining or at least complicating the field of documentary photography, or is that sort of photography so far removed from the field as not to affect it?
DW: Making interesting images is not necessarily the same thing as engaging in documentary photography. There are many differences, but perhaps the most important one in this regard has to do with the photographer's investment—in terms of time, thought, and energy—in the process. But there's no question that the onset of easily performed digital photography has affected the field as a whole. At the risk of sounding like an old dog who doesn't want to learn a new trick, I think that effect has largely been negative, especially on young photographers. The digital photographic process promotes the illusion that it's easy to make a good photograph. While it may be true that it's easier to make a technically competent—or even excellent—photograph with a present-day digital camera than with older film cameras, that has nothing to do with the heart of what documentary photography is about, which is content. Ultimately, the technical ease of digital leads to the illusion that photography is easy, whereas in actuality it's still very difficult to make an image that speaks to an audience about other people's lives. Digital photography makes it seem like there's not much need for the photographer to invest much of himself or herself in the documentary process.

JT: Social documentary photography in America found a wide audience in the 1930s' and '40s' Farm Security Administration photography program. Do you find that most students become comfortable enough behind the camera to try to make big statements about sensitive subjects?
DW: I don't charge students with making big statements. Instead I charge them with making images that explore the world around them by showing small, but significant, truths. The world is a highly visual place, and human beings experience it primarily through their eyes. We take more "raw data" in through our eyes than any other of our senses, but we're not as accustomed to consciously making meaning from it as we are from words, whether heard or read. I try to get students to "see" in meaningful ways and to demonstrate that sight by using a camera to record it. If nothing else, this makes them conscious of the connection between seeing and making meaning. And that is the first step in making meaningful photographs.

JT: How do you prepare students to interact with their human subjects?
DW: Students almost always blow their fears of such interactions way out of proportion, so I try to emphasize that making photographs of people is no big deal.


David Wharton

Christian Worship Assembly, near Eden, North Carolina, 2009

You ask people in a friendly, polite manner if you can photograph them, and if they say no, you smile, say thanks, and move on. I repeatedly tell my students that in my many years of photographing strangers that people are almost always flattered when you ask. I emphasize good manners, a friendly, calm demeanor, and genuine interest in the person you're hoping to photograph.

JT: Photography does an efficient job of illustrating the effects of events, such as natural disasters or rural poverty, but where can we draw the line between documentary photography and exploitation?
DW: That's a tough one, since many photographs can be used for either, depending on context. I suppose if the photograph is primarily for the photographer's self-aggrandizement, through shock value, dangers inherent in making it, and so on, it's exploitative. If it can add something new and meaningful to the understanding of an event, then perhaps it isn't. I think back to the many photographic books that were made of New Orleans in the immediate wake of Katrina. One in particular was a huge, very expensive book of gorgeous abstract color photographs of the flood-wrecked city. Despite the beauty of the photographs, that struck me as exploitative.

JT: Your latest project deals with the religious landscape of the South. What inspires you to investigate that subject through photography?
DW: I'm not really sure. I've always been interested in spiritual matters, although I'm not a churchgoer. I'm curious, though, about people's dealing with ultimate things. I think religion grows out of consciousness of death, a search for the reasons for why we die, which leads to a variety of beliefs. I'm interested in how those beliefs take form in the present-time physical world. Many of my pictures are of churches, from fancy ones to small, modest ones. I make images of signage and cemeteries. I think religious Southerners have distinct ways of expressing their beliefs in a public manner, in a manner that makes marks upon the landscapes. Religious belief makes people do things. People in the South live their religious beliefs in a public way, and

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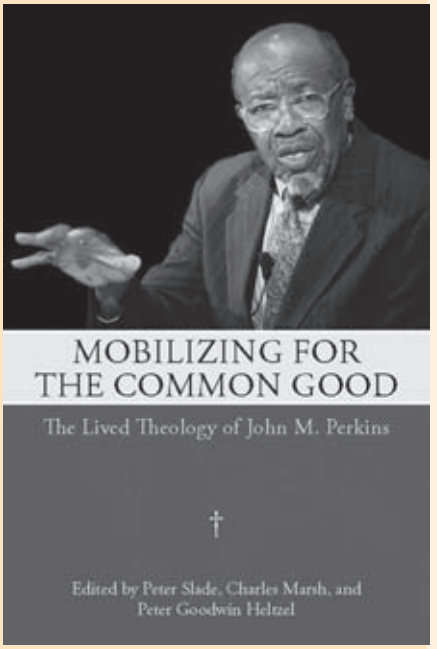
Spreading the Word: Southern Studies Scholars Put Pen to Paper in Various Ways



Whether they write fiction, songs, or scholarly works, Southern Studies students and alumni write about an impressive range of topics. For example, MA alumnus Peter Slade co-edited, along with Charles Marsh and Peter Heltzel, *Mobilizing for the Common Good*, a University Press of Mississippi collection of scholarly essays on Mississippi religious leader John Perkins. Gretchen Wood published the photo essay "Outback Elvis: Riding with the King in Parkes, Australia" in the Spring 2013 issue of *Southern Cultures*, and Jimmy Thomas published "Mississippi *Mahjar*: Lebanese Migration to the Mississippi Delta" in the Winter 2013 issue of *Southern Cultures*.

Students and alumni are frequently giving presentations at scholarly conferences. Steven Saunders, a 2013 alum, delivered a paper, "Amphibious Slave Rebellion: Environmentalism Meets the Plantation in 1972's *Frogs*," at the South Atlantic Modern Languages Association conference in Atlanta in November. Current students Virginia Anderson, Shawna Felkins, and Anna Hamilton gave papers at the Southern Foodways Alliance/Sarah Isom Center Graduate Conference on Women, Work, and Food in the fall, and Micajah Henley is presenting a paper, "Violence, Grace, and the Essential Self in American Cinema: *Boogie Nights*, *Pulp Fiction*, and Flannery O'Connor" at the 2014 International Conference on Religion and Film at the University of Nebraska–Omaha.

Singer-songwriter Caroline Herring's fifth CD, *I Will Go into the Day*, came out early in 2014, and *Black Highway*, by Tyler Keith and the Apostles, came out in 2013. Odie Lindsey received a 2014 individual artist fellowship for fiction writing from the Tennessee Arts Commission, and Kyle Bennett published his first novel, *Magpie*.

Ted Ownby

Eudora Welty Awards

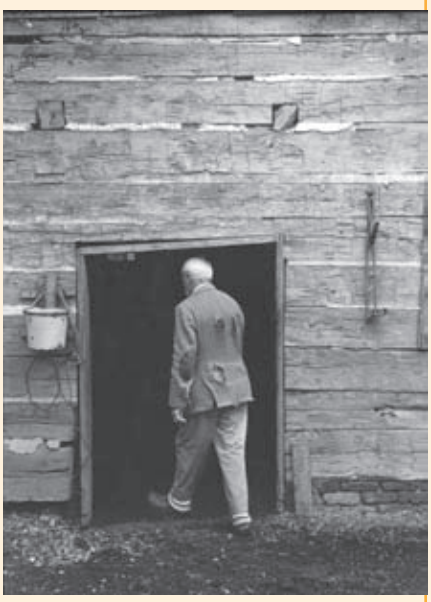
Do you have a son who might be the next Richard Wright? A daughter who can channel her inner O'Connor with a flick of a pen? If so, encourage these young people to enter stories and poems for consideration in the Center for the Study of Southern Culture's annual Eudora Welty Awards.

Kay Bell

Students must be Mississippi residents. The competition is open to 9th through 12th graders, and writing should be submitted through students' high schools. Short stories should not exceed 3,000 words, and poetry should not exceed 100 lines. Schools may submit one entry per category. Winning students will be notified at least a month prior to award presentation. The first-place prize for each category is $500, and the second-place prize is $250. The winners will also be recognized at the opening of the 2013 Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference on the University campus in July.

Each entry should be accompanied by the entry form and postmarked by April 15, 2014. Faculty from the University of Mississippi English Department will judge the entries and select the winners. Application and submission requirements will be sent to all Mississippi public and private schools. If you know a Mississippi student currently enrolled in high school outside of the state or who is home-schooled, e-mail rebeccac@olemiss.edu or call 662-915-3369 for a copy. To see a list of past winners or to download the application, visit southernstudies.olemiss.edu/2013/01/08/eudora-welty-awards/.

Faulkner's World: The Photographs of Martin J. Dain A Traveling Exhibition



Martin Dain

The photographs of Martin Dain provide a unique journey into the world of William Faulkner. Taken between 1961 and 1963, Dain's photographs portray Faulkner at home as well as provide a comprehensive look at the people and cultural traditions that inspired him. This collection provides an extraordinary window through which to view community history and from which to reflect on culture and change in Oxford and the surrounding area. As the exhibition discusses and interprets the legacy of William Faulkner, it also provides an opportunity to prompt community dialogue.

The exhibition opened at the University of Mississippi in 1997 and traveled for two years as part of the Faulkner Centennial Celebration. It had an encore tour in 2007 in conjunction with the Mississippi Reads project administered through the Mississippi Library Commission, and is once again available, this time for libraries, museums, and cultural centers in Mississippi and surrounding states. *Faulkner's World: The Photographs of Martin J. Dain* was curated and produced by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. The exhibition includes thirty-six 16" x 20" black-and-white photographs and four text panels, presented in 24" x 30" frames.

A book of the Dain photographs, published by the Center and the University Press of Mississippi, is available with the exhibition. Oxford author Larry Brown wrote the foreword for the book. Tom Rankin, editor of the book and curator of the exhibition, wrote the introduction, which examines Dain's life and career as a photographer. Also included is the DVD *"Are You Walkin' with Me?" Sister Thea Bowman, William Faulkner, and African American Culture*, produced by Lisa N. Howorth.

Faulkner's World is currently at the Pascagoula (Mississippi) Public Library through February 2014.

Persons interested in scheduling the traveling exhibition of Dain photographs should contact Mary Hartwell Howorth by e-mail (mheh@olemiss.edu) or telephone (662-915-5993).

Music of the South Conference: Songwriting and the South, April 2–3, 2014

Scholars, including graduate students, will gather on the UM campus on April 2–3 during the Music of the South Conference to share current research on the culture, meaning, and practices surrounding songwriting in and from the American South. The conference will include panels, lectures, films, and a concert.

Visit the Center website for more information or e-mail musicofsouth@olemiss.edu.

There is no registration fee for this conference. The conference is cosponsored by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture and *Living Blues* Magazine.

Southern Studies Alumni Continue to Document the World

The Center promotes research on the South's varied cultures by supporting the work of its alums, and several Southern Studies graduates are documentarians in one way or another. Some of them are inspired by work they began at the Center. Others feel the need to photograph residents of their current neighborhoods or to write about their hometowns. However motivation finds them, their documentary work, whether in film, oral history, or the written word, will live on for future generations.

A 2013 MA graduate, **Chelsea Wright** tries to focus on subjects she is passionate about, as was the case with her thesis work, which revolved around her mother's side of her family. "I have always been taught that you will never know where you are going until you know where you have been," Wright says. "So analyzing the past through photographs and interviews was the perfect avenue for that."

Growing up Wright listened to the adults around her having conversations, and she always asked questions. That curiosity as a child spawned her documentary work as an adult. She is currently working on three projects, all of which are untitled. "Project A focuses on my trips to San Pedro, Belize," she says. "I am interviewing individuals about their lives, what they do to sustain themselves, exploring the culture, and just having them speak on their experiences, especially on the living conditions of those in the San Mateo community, which is essentially a slum.

"Project B goes hand-in-hand with Project A, because I am seeking to do a comparative analysis of this idea of a Global South. I want to explore the connections in cultural practices, racial paradigms, foodways, and more between the Deep South and the Caribbean."

"Lastly, Project C reverberates around the concept of colorism in the African American community. I am interviewing a specific group of African American women and asking them about their experiences of being black within the community and how they believe they are perceived by others in the community. I'm seeking to understand their experiences, and I want to research the source of this internal racism," Wright says.

Courtesy Chelsea Wright

Chelsea Wright

Through her work in the Southern Studies program, and by having her photography exhibition *Down Friendship: A Journey Home* win the Ann Abadie Award for best work in documentary media, she found value in her work. Although she always did research and took photographs, it was during her thesis project that she realized the wealth of knowledge she could share with others.

"The best part about making documentaries is the fact that I get to interact with many different people. My fellow cohort Teah Hairston dubbed me a 'social dragon,' so what better way to spread my wings and breathe fire than to speak with several different people throughout these projects," Wright says. "More than anything, I hope that when people see or read my documentaries, they are able to step out of themselves and put them in the place of some of my 'characters.' If anyone is able to see the world through my worldview or the lenses of others that I display, that would fulfill my dreams."

Melanie Young, contributing writer and photographer for *Living Blues* magazine, started out in 2009 as an editorial assistant while she was a Southern Studies master's student. She served as circulation manager there from 2009 to 2010. The prospect of working for a music magazine was one of the reasons she applied for the Southern Studies program. "I've always loved music and had decided I wanted to write about it while completing my bachelor's in English at Southern Miss, but until I came to Oxford I had no journalism or fieldwork experience to speak of," Young says. "My time spent as Brett Bonner's editorial assistant at *Living Blues*, as well as in Dr. David Wharton's documentary photography and fieldwork classes and the Library of Congress/American Folklife Center summer field school, provided me with both the fundamentals and encouragement I needed. My experiences ultimately led to my decision to write a historical analysis of *Living Blues* for my master's thesis."

Her work now for *Living Blues* includes reviewing albums, videos, and books; writing features; and occasionally attending and photographing blues-related events in the region. "I have an article in the works on blues musician Tommie 'T-Bone' Pruitt. I interviewed him at his home in Ellisville, Mississippi," she says. "He's 80 years old and has lived in the area all his life, playing guitar and singing in a style similar to B. B. King. He's a wonderful performer and has shared stages with artists like Ike and Tina Turner and Bo Diddley."

According to the 2013 graduate, the most important things necessary for good fieldwork are an open, observant mind, respect for your interviewee, and making sure to have all of the equipment in working order. "The best

Courtesy Katie Radishofski

Katie Radishofski

part for me is meeting and talking to the people I interview for *Living Blues*, whether it's in person or over the telephone," Young says. "Each person has a story worth sharing, and I've been moved and inspired by every musician I've spoken with. In turn, I view sharing their words with my readers as a responsibility—one I take very seriously."

After graduating, **Evan Hatch** worked for Spring Fed Records in in Woodbury, Tennessee, which issued more than 50 recordings from 2001 to 2013. What started out as a label that specialized in hillbilly recordings became a Grammy-winning record label issuing rare performances from Mississippi John Hurt, Nashville's Fairfield Four, Howard "Howdy" Forrester, and the infamous moonshining ballad singer from Altamont, Tennessee, Hamper McBee. With the CD *John Work III: Recording Black Culture*, Spring Fed Records found its balance with remarkable rare recordings, expert mastering and graphic design, and first-rate liner notes.

"In addition to producing for Spring Fed Records, I completed fieldwork with tradition bearers of the area," Hatch says. "I recorded interviews with white oak basketry makers, blacksmiths, self-taught artists, musicians, cooks, and moonshiners, among others."

He secured the Arts Center's cornerstone collection of self-taught art and served as curator for the Arts Center's two gallery spaces, served as the president of the Tennessee Folklore Society, and curated the Folklife area of the 2011 national Folk Festival in Nashville, Tennessee. Hatch has recently relocated to Asheville, North Carolina, to be closer to family and friends and to seek opportunities in the traditional arts community in North Carolina.

While he was at UM, Hatch says he was fortunate to be able study with David Wharton and learn to understand that everybody has a good story to tell. Hatch credits Wharton's support with helping to instill a love of documentary photography. "I feel like I have learned so much from conducting oral histories and making documentaries," he says. "They provide a fantastic opportunity to interact with folks you'd never have the chance to meet. And, if you listen, you can learn something new from everybody you come into contact with."

Katie Radishofski has completed her first semester at Columbia University's PhD program in ethnomusicology, with a future plan of remaining in academia by teaching. In addition to her classwork, she is looking at African American tourism in Brooklyn by working on a hip-hop memorialization project. "There is a guy trying to get a street corner named for Christopher Wallace, otherwise known as the Notorious BIG, close to where Wallace grew up," Radishofski says. "He is having some resistance to that, so I am documenting it. I've also talked to the producer of *My Brooklyn*, a 2012 film looking at the gentrification project of Fulton Mall and the hip-hop culture taking place there. We've discussed hip-hop-related angles and the process of getting the resistance to Notorious BIG project made into film."

Radishofski is also investigating urban murals and the artists who spray-paint portraits of people on businesses. "There is a morality debate surrounding hip-hop culture, and I would like to document that. Also I want to create a final product that is more accessible for the community, because they feel they've been marginalized by some of those tourism projects. I want to bring attention to that," she says.

Last summer, Radishofski worked on a documentary film project in Clarksdale, which was an extension of her thesis, "Last (Un)Fair Deal Goin' Down: A Case Study of the Racial Perspectives and Projects of Blues Tourism Superintendents in Clarksdale, Mississippi," winner of the Lucille and Motee Daniels Award. "I used a camera instead of a digital audio recorder, and I filmed music concerts and tourism events and looked at the racial politics of tourism projects," she says. "I had a successful Kickstarter for it and raised money for my travel expenses and to pay the participants who owned the clubs and the performers."

Radishofski, who earned her undergraduate degree in cultural anthropology at University of Oregon, says that her time in the Southern Studies program provided good training to look at the historical narrative of the South. "Southern Studies provided training for interviewing techniques, and the consideration you bring to ethnography, oral history, and documentary techniques is conducive to ethnography," she says.

Before his time in the Southern Studies program, **Mark Coltrain** hadn't done any formal documentary work. While a deejay at the UNC–Greensboro radio station, he interviewed people such as Fred Wesley and bluesman George Higgs without any real training or experience. While in Oxford, he received assistantships at *Living Blues* magazine as well

as *Highway 61 Radio*. He learned how to ask thoughtful questions, listen, and construct compelling narratives about people's lives. "There is no formal way to learn how to interview. I learned that you just need to do it repeatedly until you get comfortable asking questions and paying quiet attention," Coltrain says. "Mark Camarigg, Brett Bonner, Scott Barretta, and Joe York were generous with their time as they patiently shepherded me through interviews with a multitude of fascinating people. Thanks to their suggestions, instruction, and guiding hands, I interviewed fascinating musicians like One-Man Band Adolphus Bell from Birmingham, Cool John Ferguson, Cedric and Gary Burnside, Nathan and the Zydeco Cha-Chas, and wrote tributes to the likes of R. L. Burnside, Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown, and Little Milton."

In 2009 Coltrain started an oral history project at his current workplace, Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) in Charlotte, North Carolina, where he is the E-Learning Librarian. The project, called CPCC and the Global South, chronicles the stories of CPCC's international student, faculty, and staff population, which is incredibly diverse. The student body represents more than 165 countries.

"I'm still lucky enough to be a contributing writer for *Living Blues*, and because of my time at Ole Miss, I have stories and experiences I can share with others for a long time," Coltrain says.

Bobby Anderson's first documentary work was in Bill Ferris's class. Since Southern Studies did not offer film production classes at that time, Anderson would sneak into Farley Hall and teach himself how to use the equipment. "It was clumsy and poor quality, but it set my future in stone," Anderson says. "I put together a piece that was basically nothing more than a series of talking heads that included Alex Chilton, Jim Dickinson, MoJo Nixon, Will Kimbrough, and a handful of other bands. I think there's a copy buried in a suitcase somewhere that has hundreds of band recordings I made in Oxford between 1994 and 2000."

Now, Anderson lives in Jackson and works on shorts that range between 5 to 15 minutes in length. "The topics vary, but I mainly find myself making vignettes about misfit musicians. Drama seems to follow those with guitars. I'm currently in the beginning stages of editing a feature-length film on famed Mississippi journalist Bill Minor," he says.


Mark Coltrain

Courtesy Mark Coltrain

Eric Griffis

Courtesy Eric Griffis

When riding her bike home to Brooklyn from work one night, **Danielle Anderson** looked at all the new buildings going up and thought about how quickly neighborhoods change and what that means for residents. Shortly thereafter, she began working on a project to photograph streets in Brooklyn, because they change so quickly, and to talk to and film as many people on those streets as possible. "I met this one guy," Anderson says. "His name was Mr. B. He was sitting outside of his place, and he said that he had lived in the same house for 59 years—he was now in his late 80s. Across the street from him a new resident building was going up, a big four-story, probably 80-apartment type thing, so it got my wheels spinning.

"As of now, it's still a photo project and still very much in the beginning stages. The idea is to photograph the same street every day for a year and then focus on streets that have new buildings going up, because that's happening all over in my neighborhood right now."

Additionally, she is an intern with StoryCorps, one of the largest oral-history projects of its kind. The project is an independent nonprofit whose mission is to provide people of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, share, and preserve the stories of their lives. Since 2003 StoryCorps has collected and archived more than 45,000 interviews with nearly 90,000 participants. Each conversation is recorded on a free CD to share and is preserved at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

"I was lucky during my time in Southern Studies, because not only did I get to take classes from Dr. Wharton, but I got to work with Andy Harper, and I did my assistantship with him," says Anderson. "I was constantly doing interviews and filming, and it helped me get over any nervousness that I had about approaching people or talking to people directly, and doing interviews. It helped me become more confident."

During his studies at UM, **Eric Griffis** concentrated on the digital photo and video approaches to oral history and cultural ethnography, and he was lucky enough to intern at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, doing videography and editing for music videos and interviews. "I enjoyed working with them and went back after I graduated to help them shoot video during the annual Smithsonian Folk Festival on the National Mall," Griffis says.

Grffis learned the hands-on technical side of documentary work, as well as intangible lessons. "Some of these lessons did not sink in until after I left school and had time to reflect. Mostly, I think I came away with an appreciation for the responsibility of telling someone else's story," he says.

He uses his skills in his current job as a field technician with the Tribal Archaeology Section of the Tribal Historic Preservation Office of the Seminole Tribe of Florida (THPO).

Courtesy Sudye Cauthen

Sudye Cauthen

"This is a unique job in a relatively new field of archaeology," Griffis says. "Basically, when the tribe needs archaeology testing done on a piece of property to meet federal and state permitting guidelines for development, whether it is commercial, agricultural, or residential, I go out and dig the holes." He then photographs the area and gives recommendations to the various tribal departments and the Bureau of Indian Affairs or the National Park Service, taking into consideration the cultural concerns of the tribe, relying heavily on the input of tribal members themselves telling their own story. "We often interact with elders and conduct oral history interviews about the places we need to preserve. We have tribal members show us in person where historically significant locations are, and what is 'historically significant' according to strict federal guidelines is not always the same from the perspective of the tribal members."

With his anthropological background, he tries to understand the cultural considerations of the people he works with. "Many times this has meant not taking a photo when I otherwise would have wanted to, or not recording a conversation, or not writing an article about an experience I have had. In that way, it may be counterintuitive to call what I do documentary work. That is what I love about the unique job I have. In November, the THPO presented a symposium at the Southeastern Archaeological Conference about how our approach to documenting culture is different from the traditional practices of archaeologists. We were offered the opportunity to produce an academic book based on those presentations. So, in a way, we are documenting ourselves along the way so that, hopefully, some of our best practices will be adopted in our field as a whole."

Sudye Cauthen's fondness for her native Florida shines through her work, starting with her first book, *Southern Comforts: Rooted in a Florida Place*, winner of the 2007 Florida Book Award for Nonfiction. She directed Florida's first Folk-Arts-in-the-Schools program, where she first met Bill Ferris, and she is the founder of the North Florida Center for Documentary Studies, which documents north Florida culture in oral histories, fiction, nonfiction, poetry, video, and photographs.

"I intended to explore this area of the state, north of the area that I wrote about before in my book *Southern Comforts*," says Cauthen, who lives on the Suwanee River in White Springs, Florida. "I meant to do the fieldwork in this part of the state, and I did one big exhibit that was oral histories and documentary photographs. I had about 50 photographs of the natural environment, vegetation, animals, plants, and old houses, and I had a narrative that was posted around the room in a huge font so people could read it, pieces of their interviews interspersed with my own observations."

Her writing is a mix of memoir, history, nature writing, and oral history, and she is hard at work on her third book. "I just didn't realize that it could possibly take so long to finish the work that I started in Alachua County. Now I am trying to do a third book and trying to include the area that I left out of the first book," says Cauthen, a 1993 Southern Studies MA graduate.

For the 71-year-old, documentary fieldwork is a lot easier now than it used to be. "I had to transcribe all those things on a typewriter. And it would take me almost 50 hours to really do a thorough job of transcribing one hour of an informant's talk," Cauthen says. "Now, you can buy a tape recorder to record the person's interview and then just plug it into your computer, which it will convert it into a document."

Cauthen admits that she underestimates how long things are going to take her, but she wants to finish this book this year. "The book starts with the cave drawings at Lascaux, where the primitive peoples drew the pictures of bovines on the walls of the cave. Cows are the motif throughout, but then eventually the book focuses on this area of Alachua County where there used to be farms. It's really one of the points I want to make, about the demise of the family farm, including my father's farm."

"I am still doing documentary work, I'm just not collecting new material. I am trying to finish up the material that I have. I will still be decluttering with my last breath. I didn't realize how much work it was going to be, but I really believe it's so important to do this work and I think it's more important than ever because people move around so much and the world is changing so fast that I think a lot of places don't have a sense of their own place," Cauthen says. "It has meaning for me, and I guess that's everybody's first job is to create meaning in their own lives."

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

The Egerton School of Public Service, Truth Telling, Rabble Rousing, and Close Talking

In November 2013 we lost John Egerton, writer, scholar, activist, and SFA founder. A celebration of his life was held on December 8 at the public library in his adopted hometown of Nashville, Tennessee. SFA Director John T. Edge participated in the event by offering the following words of remembrance.

I came to know John in the last two decades of his life, after he wrote *Southern Food*, which the culinary-obsessed members of his tribe, like me, consider a masterwork. I came to know John just as Knopf published *Speak Now against the Day*, his lyrical and scholarly ode to the pre–civil rights possibilities of this butt-sprung region.

That makes me a late-20th-century convert to the Egerton School of Public Service, Truth Telling, Rabble Rousing, and Close Talking.

Like most of you here today, I know what it meant to be close-talked by John. I know what it meant on first meeting—and every meeting hence—for him to invade your personal space. For John to step up and talk to you, wearing a sweater vest and a blue button-down shirt, looking like the most conservative back-bencher you've ever met. For John to stand, nose to nose with you, his twinkling eyes scrunched up and boring in on you, his arm around your neck, or his hand on your forearm. Not in a gesture of control, but in a gesture of genial embrace.

We all know what it meant to be close-talked by John.

We know what it was like when John talked to you about an idea. How he started out by saying, "This probably isn't the kind of thing you want to do. You're too far along in your career for this. You're too busy for this. Somebody else should be doing this. But while I have you"—and he always had you—"maybe you'll hear me out?"

And we know, too, what it was like—during all that genial close-talking—for John's words, his kindness, his goodness, his convictions, to lay claim to us, to unsettle our consciences and compel us to action.

John Egerton

Pableaux Johnson

I spoke with Steve Suitts the other day. He and John worked together from the 1960s onward at the Southern Regional Council and at the Southern Educational Foundation—back when John was tearing up the blacktop, working as a long-form journalist, documenting while prodding the fitful integration of our public schools, our voting booths, our restaurants, our lives. Steve called John an enabler.

What a beautiful turn of phrase. John Egerton was indeed an enabler. Not an enabler in the negative sense, in the way we think of codependent spouses with destructive traits. Instead, by way of his belief in the possibilities of our region, by way of his willingness to speak truth to power—while pouring Power a drink and handing Power a ham biscuit and promising Power a spoonful of homemade lemon curd, too—John Egerton enabled two generations of Southerners to do better by our region and by our common man.

John chose a variety of paths for that good work. I wish to focus on his service to Nashville and the South.

The men and women of the Concerned Citizens for Improved Schools—who bounded together in the 1970s to integrate Nashville's public schools—knew John's persuasive powers. So did the various people who took stock of the progress and regress of the late-20th-century South and gathered under the banner of the Southern Conference on Human Welfare for a symposium called Unfinished Business. He addressed that group in 1998, saying, "As black and white Southerners, we have much in our experience that is recognizably similar, if not altogether common to us both, from food to faith, from music and language and social customs to family ties and folklore and spellbinding parables out of the past."

"Out of our kinship," he wrote, sounding a clarion for the future, "as Southerners, as citizens, as figurative and literal brothers and sisters, can come a mutual understanding and respect and an affirmation of equality that fundamentally redefines the model of race relations in America."

At different times, under different banners, John worked to codify and catalyze the study of the civil rights movement through his support of the Nashville Public Library. Through his stewardship of Community Food Advocates, also in Nashville, he worked to end hunger through food-justice activism and actions.

As those of us assembled today know, such examples are a small measure of the good work John did. We'll likely never know the breadth and depth of his work. That's just the way he wanted it. For John was always a master of deflection, a skilled bequeather of credit to others.

I've talked a good bit about John's engagement in big ideas and serious pursuits. That said, John could be corny, too. I remember him—maybe it was five years back—standing on the rear of a flatbed truck, parked behind City House restaurant here in Nashville for an end-of-summer hoedown and harvest celebration. He took the stage just after a performance by the singer and

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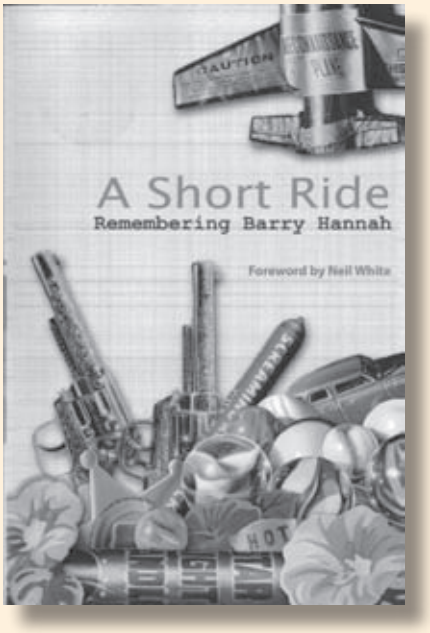
Reading the South

A Short Ride: Remembering Barry Hannah

Edited by Louis Bourgeois, Adam Young, and J. W. Young. Oxford: VOX Press, 2012. 225 pages. $19.00 paper.



Edited by three of Barry Hannah's creative writing students at the University of Mississippi, *A Short Ride* memorializes the author and MFA director in the best possible way, with unforgettable scenes and vivid words. In collaboration with Adam Young and Joy Wilson Young, VOX Press cofounder and chief editor Louis Bourgeois selected more than 30 tributes that "best reflected the writer's encounter with Hannah on a truly personal level, either in print, in person, or both." In contrast with Ruth D. Weston's *Barry Hannah: Postmodern Romantic* (1998) and Martyn Bone's essay collection *Perspectives on Barry Hannah* (2007), *A Short Ride* is more of a eulogy than a scholarly study. Nevertheless, the book—enhanced by three dozen photographs by Maude Schuyler Clay and others—is an excellent resource not only for fans and friends but also for any serious student of Hannah's "Deep Pop" fiction.

The phrase "Deep Pop" comes from Glennray Tutor's "Barry Hannah, Early On, and a Few Other Thoughts," one of the best essays in the book. At a 1979 reading at Senatobia's Northwest Junior College, a year before Hannah moved to Mississippi, Tutor had his stunning first encounter with the writer. "After his first two sentences, I straightened in my seat and attuned myself to him," Tutor says of the man who became his comrade for three decades. "The more I heard, the more astonished I became. Here was literature unlike anything to which I had been exposed." Playing on the word *exposure*, Tutor compares his experience to "receiving a high dose of literary radioactivity." An exceptional photorealist, Tutor later painted the cover art for Hannah's Grove Press editions. His contributions to *A Short Ride* include the cover illustration of firecrackers, marbles, and gleaming cap guns—a graphic expression of Hannah's explosive prose. As Tutor explains, he felt a "kinship" with an artist whose technique resembled his own; both believed they were "breaking barriers and carrying our respective medium and personal visions further than they had ever been carried."

Another comrade, Dan Williams, describes music-lover Hannah as "a remarkable jazz musician," whose prose dazzled with "improvisational riffs, syncopated beats, and unexpected rhythms." Former head of the University of Mississippi English Department, Williams spoke at a celebration of Hannah's life at the close of the 2010 Oxford Conference for the Book. Hannah was to be the conference's featured writer, and his sudden death shocked readers and colleagues, who had planned to spend the week in his company. *A Short Ride* reprints Williams's heartfelt farewell to the friend with whom he "talked endlessly about everything, but especially writing and writers," often on motorcycle excursions to Sardis, to Memphis, and even to the Shiloh battlefield. Williams's text is preceded by a facsimile of the Fulton Chapel memorial program and followed by a photograph of Hannah's tombstone in Oxford's St. Peter's Cemetery. The inscription, "It was a short ride like all the last ones," comes from *Airships* (1978), a story collection cited by several contributors to the tribute volume.

In an interview included in *A Short Ride*, Hannah tells editor Louis Bourgeois, "Avant-garde is the medal I'd seek." Although he admired Cormac McCarthy, William Gay, Harry Crews, and Flannery O'Connor, Hannah resisted the label of Southern writer. In fact, contributor Humphreys McGee, a student in his 2002 fiction workshop, says that Hannah critiqued "the exploitation of the South, by Southerners" in his later work. While many essays emphasize Hannah's great kindness to people and to animals (sometimes the same essays that relate legends of Hannah as the "Wild Man" of Tuscaloosa, Alabama), McGee particularly emphasizes Hannah's attitude of "forgiveness." McGee suggests that Hannah "embraced" this virtue not for its "altruism and naïveté, but its insanity, its freakishness, its *perversely hopeless nobility*." Dan Williams offers a similar insight on "Water Liars" from *Airships*. Like the old man and the narrator in this "exquisite" story, Hannah "told the truth, even when it crucified him."

Glennray Tutor describes his painting *Phoenix*—an image of marbles in

Book Reviews and Notes by Faculty, Staff, Students, and Friends of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture

an ashtray—as an homage to Hannah and his wife, Susan, along with Tutor's parents and other "devout smokers." Several pieces in *A Short Ride* picture Barry Hannah smoking cigarettes, but just as many metaphorically describe him as "hot," a "kindling intelligence," a "screaming rebel rocket" of a firecracker marked "flammable." Alex Taylor says that Barry Hannah was, "For all of his postmodern oddity, a spinner of yarns, a keeper of fire" who "saw beauty in the bent and broken, the cast-out and malformed." "He rose up," Taylor concludes—like the "Reconnaissance Plane" firecracker that hurtles off the top margin of Glennray Tutor's bright cover.

Joan Wylie Hall

Conversations with Natasha Trethewey

Edited by Joan Wylie Hall. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2013. 216 pages. $65.00 printed casebinding, $25.00 paper.

Southern Quarterly: Special Issue: Natasha Trethewey, U.S. Poet Laureate

Guest edited by Joan Wylie Hall. Hattiesburg: University of Southern Mississippi, 50:4 (Summer 2013). 236 pages. $25.00 paper.

On June 7, 2012, the day of Natasha Trethewey's appointment to the post of U.S. Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, *New York Times* writer Charles McGrath claimed that Trethewey "is still in midcareer and not well known outside poetry circles," despite her having won the 2007 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry for her book *Native Guard* and her previous (and current) appointment as Mississippi Poet Laureate. In the short time since McGrath's comment, Joan Wylie Hall, lecturer in the English Department at the University of Mississippi, has edited two substantial volumes on the poet—*Conversations with Natasha Trethewey* and a special issue of the *Southern Quarterly*.

In *Conversations with Natasha Trethewey*, Hall presents 18 conversations with the Mississippi-born poet, dating from 1996 to 2011. The interviews come from a wide variety of sources, including a poetry journal website, a Southern Studies website, an African American studies journal, a book of collected poetry on poets' landscapes, poetry and literary journals, an online magazine, and an English department newsletter. In addition, Hall includes a concise yet valuable biographical chronology and an extensive index.

Hall's footnoted introduction presents themes that run through the conversations and inform the reader of other interviews with Trethewey that did not make this collection. The interviews that are included here leave the reader with a sense of precise knowing, unlike when reading poetry, where the reader depends upon metaphor, images, and ambiguities for meaning. The personal and poetical importance of family to Trethewey is a theme that runs from the first interview through the last. On the subject of her mother's murder by her ex-husband, Trethewey states, "I think that a defining moment in my life was [my mother's] death, and it has shaped everything I've done. If I think about the things that have defined who I am as a poet, and what I feel it is my duty to write, such as being born of mixed race in 1960s Mississippi, it was losing my mother."

Other themes emerge as important to Trethewey's work. On the role of history in her work: "I also wanted to use history as a way to understand my place in the world." On stories that are left out of the historical record, or what she calls "historical erasure": "I think a lot of the revisions or omissions in Southern history are about people not wanting to end up on the wrong side of history, because once everything changed, once we had the civil rights movement, it was clear that the events of the past were unjust. Who wants to be on the side of injustice when the world comes to acknowledge the horrors of it?" On her native South: "Down here I drive around all the time with this sense

of exile because everything is named for Confederate heroes; you'd think the South won the war. During the [Georgia] flag controversy, there was a letter to the editor saying all true Southerners love that flag. It was his way of saying all true Southerners are white Southerners. It was important for me to say: This is my South; I love it and I hate it, too, but it's mine."

Worthy of note is that all of the interviews in this collection occurred before Trethewey was named U.S. Poet Laureate. One can only hope that Hall is given the opportunity to one day edit a second collection of this poet's interviews.

The *Southern Quarterly* special issue on Trethewey adds additional depth of understanding to the poet's work and life. The issue opens with Hall's introduction, "'The Necessary Utterance': Natasha Trethewey's Southern Poetics," and is followed by "Enlightenment," a poem from Trethewey's latest collection, *Thrall*. (Hall's review of that collection can be found in the Winter 2013 issue of the *Southern Register*.) The issue also includes an October 2012 conversation between Trethewey and Emory University Vice President Rosemary Magee, which is part of Emory's Creativity Conversation series. James Applewhite contributes a poem, "The Literary Conference in Chattanooga (for Rodney, Andrew, and Natasha)," followed by a companion prose account of the Fellowship of Southern Writers panel on Southern poetic identities that included panelists Trethewey, Andrew Hudgins, and Rodney Jones.

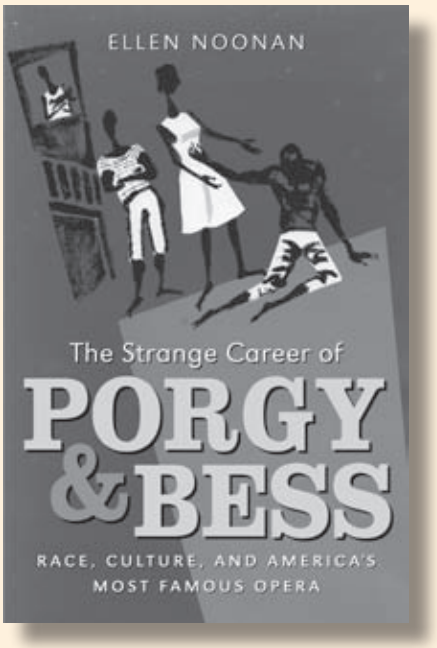
Eight scholarly essays, with generous notes and lists of works cited, and "grouped to suggest three approaches to Trethewey's work," comprise the bulk of the special issue. Thadious M. Davis ("Enfoldments: Natasha Trethewey's Racial-Spatial Phototexting"), Katherine R. Hennninger ("What Remains: Race, Nation, and the Adult Child in the Poetry of Natasha Terthewey"), and Nagueyalti Warren ("History, Memory, and Nostalgia in the Works of Natasha Trethewey") contribute essays in the section on "History, Race, and Nation"; Daniel Cross Turner ("Lyric Dissections: Rendering Blood Memory in Natasha Trethewey's and Yusef Komunyakaa's Poetry of the Black Diaspora") and Malin Pereira ("Rereading Trethewey through Mixed Race Studies") contribute to the "Blood, Memory, and the Biracial Self" section; and Pearl Amelia McHaney ("Natasha Trethewey's Triptych: The Bodies of History in *Bellocq's Ophelia*, *Native Guard*, and *Thrall*"), Kimberly Wallace-Sanders ("'Your Eyes Are Returning My Own Gaze': Distortion and Photography as Meta-Narrative in Trethewey's Poetry"), and Joseph Millichap ("Love and Knowledge: Daughters and Fathers in Natasha Trethewey's *Thrall*") complete the essays in the "Intertextuality and the Ekphrastic Arts" section.

Three poems by Jake Adam York, Olga Dugan, and Claude Wilkinson are also included in the issue, which is rounded out with review of *Thrall* by Lorie Watkins. Together, *Conversations with Natasha Trethewey* and the *Southern Quarterly*'s special issue on Trethewey make up the most comprehensive collection of scholarship on Trethewey's life and work. Poets, poetry and literature scholars, historians, and general readers alike will find that Hall's two collections add great depth to our understanding of Trethewey and the circumstances about which she writes.

Jimmy Thomas

The Strange Career of Porgy and Bess: *Race, Culture, and America's Most Famous Opera*

By Ellen Noonan. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. 440 pages. $39.95 cloth.



Studying relationships between race and entertainment is an essential task for scholars, and it is also exceptionally difficult. Ellen Noonan's thorough history of *Porgy and Bess* shows that the book, play, musical, and film have virtually always been subjects for controversy. Questions about ownership and authenticity, respect and stereotypes, political relevance and possible timelessness have dominated discussions about the book and drama for almost 100 years.

Ellen Noonan approaches the subject by studying the various versions of the book and play, tracing how they changed over the years, documenting and analyzing the numerous critiques and defenses of those versions, and also thinking about the history of Charleston, South Carolina, the setting of the play and home of its author. The structure of the book is intriguing. It moves from Dubose Heyward's book *Porgy*, published in 1925, to the first play by the same name in 1927, then to the musical version of *Porgy and Bess*, generally called an opera, with music by George Gershwin in 1935, on to international touring shows of *Porgy and Bess* in the 1950s, to new versions of the play, including a popular 1959 film. Interspersed are three interludes and an epilogue that deal with relevant periods of Charleston history.

Critiques of *Porgy and Bess* started early, as did defenses. Almost immediately, some African American critics worried that a white man could not properly understand the stories, languages, and goals of African Americans. In a critique that continues now almost a century after the publication of the book, many were troubled that the book and play portrayed all of Charleston's African Americans as poor, and related critiques worried that the book and play treated its subjects as exotic and colorful characters to be pitied, cheered, or condemned. Heyward and his supporters consistently argued that its author, as a South Carolinian, knew Charleston's African Americans and tried to treat them with dignity. Once the book went on stage, a principal defense became that it offered starring roles to African American actors, rather than having whites performing those roles or having African Americans as secondary figures to white star performers.

George Gershwin's music for the opera that opened in the 1930s led to new discussions. Did opera ennoble the performance by bringing the standards of European music to the portrayal of African Americans? Or did it suggest that dignity could only come from emulating non–African American musical forms? And how should performers sing the opera? Should they use Gullah language that would dramatize the difference between operatic traditions and the speech of many South Carolina African Americans? Should they use Standard English pronunciation and say "I've got plenty of nothing" or drop the g and say "nothin'?"

Noonan has read an extraordinary number of reviews of the book and play, both to understand what various artistic standards were and to explore the range of praise and critique. One of the strengths of the volume is the thoroughness with which she documents and analyzes multiple responses, not just African American and white responses, but Northern and Southern, American and international, and what one might call arts insiders and ordinary fans, to the various versions of *Porgy and Bess*.

Performers play important roles in the book as well, especially in a powerful chapter on civil rights and cold war–era performers who took the play throughout the world and performed in the movie version. One of the arguments in favor of the various versions of the play was that actors and musicians gained a stage far beyond the physical concert stage. Performers dealt with a range of questions about whether *Porgy and Bess* showed respect for African American musical traditions or reinforced stereotypes of African Americans as essentially mu-

sical people. They faced the issue of whether the play allowed performers new platforms for their talents and outlets for their potential influence or if playing poor people suggested that African Americans were only right for certain roles as poor people.

The author's attention to change and multiplicity shows there is no authentic, accurate version or interpretation of *Porgy and Bess*, no version or perspective that does not generate a range of responses. Noonan deals thoughtfully with the ways the play seems to have become, in many people's minds, a musical classic that no longer deserves criticism either because its issues seem rooted in a long-ago past or because of the beauty and power of the music. And while some people claim it as a timeless classic, other performances try new settings, with futuristic sets or references to recent hurricanes. The three interludes about Charleston are crucial in discussing issues the play and its performers and audiences were addressing or, sometimes, avoiding.

If the volume has any shortcomings, they would probably involve music. While doing a thorough job with the range of political issues in writing, staging, selling, hearing, and critiquing *Porgy and Bess*, the author may not do enough to describe the actual music. Noonan briefly mentions that jazz performers helped turn songs like "Summertime," "I Loves You, Porgy," and "It Ain't Necessarily So" into standards separate from the play itself. For a book on the politics of aesthetics to do full justice to both aesthetics and politics, the songs and their various performances and meanings likely deserve fuller treatment.

Ted Ownby

touring nationally on the professional gospel circuit. Perry, too, eventually came to the blues, along the way playing with artists such as Little Milton and J. J. Taylor, performing studio work for Chess Studios in Chicago, and earning a spot on Don Cornelius's television hit *Soul Train*. In recent years, Perry's career caught fire, as fans have seen the release of five albums since 2006, as well as performances at the King Biscuit Blues Festival and the Chicago Blues Festival.

LB contributor Corey Harris caught up with harmonica great Hook Herrera in New York this winter. As a Native American blues player, Herrera occupies a unique space in blues culture. His story begins in California, where he mowed lawns to earn the $2.75 for his first harmonica. Herrera lived for 20 years in Europe, where he built a loyal fan base, and today he lives and works in New York. Look for more on Herrera and the Native American links to the blues in the pages of *LB*.

Jim O'Neal tackles the difficult task of unraveling the biographical mystery of Casey Bill Weldon. While researching, O'Neal uncovered several previously unknown bits of information surrounding Weldon's life and death, including details of his family life and the location of his burial site. Weldon's early efforts on the amplified steel guitar earned him a reputation as a pioneer of electric guitar blues. O'Neal's research spurred an increased awareness of Weldon in the blues world, and as a result a headstone will be placed at his burial site, with help from Steve Salter and the Killer Headstone Project.

Gene Tomko brings news of another lost son of the blues, Matthew "Boogie Jake" Jacobs. The singer and guitarist is a cousin to harmonica virtuoso Little Walter, and Jacobs cites his cousin as a key influence on his early musical development. Tomko revisits Jacobs's blues career, including his musical history with Little Walter, in the article with Jacobs.

Look for issue #228 on digital newsstands today, or pick up a hard copy at your local retailer. Our upcoming issue hits stands this February and features articles on Billy Branch, Rip Lee Pryor, Zydeco Ray, and Frank Bey. You may also find *LB* on Facebook and Twitter for frequent updates on the blues scene.

Leslie Hassel

Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters' Awards Nominees Announced

The Board of Governors of the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters is pleased to announce its nominees for awards to be presented at its annual Awards Banquet on June 7, 2014, at the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson, Mississippi. These juried awards will be presented for works first shown, published, or performed in 2013 in the categories of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, visual arts, photography, classical music composition, and contemporary music composition. All nominees must have significant ties to the state of Mississippi. Judges for each category are from outside the state.

Fiction nominees this year are Tom Franklin and Beth Ann Fennelly, Matthew Guinn, Kiese Laymon, Jonathan Miles, Michael Farris Smith, Donna Tartt, Steve Yarbrough, and Steve Yates. Nominated for the nonfiction award are Aaron D. Anderson, Charles Bolton, William Ferris, John Hailman, Alan Huffman, Robert Khayat, Kiese Laymon, Leslie Southwick, Susannah J. Ural, and Jesmyn Ward. The poetry nominees are Melissa Ginsberg, Ava Leavell Haymon, Derrick Harriell, and R. Flowers Rivera.

The category for classical music composition has these nominees: ElizaBeth Beckham, Quincy C. Hilliard, Richard Montalto, and Shandy Phillips. In the contemporary musical composition category, Claire Holley, Jimbo Mathus, and Leo Welch have been nominated.

Ana S. Anest, Jason Bouldin, Sylvain Chamberlain, Ron Dale, J. J. Foley, Laurin McCracken, Marcus Michels, Shara Rowley Plough, Gus Staub, and Wyatt Waters are the nominees in visual arts. Nominated in the photography category are Ed Croom, Brooke White, Kathleen Robbins, Milly West, and Steve White.

Each winner selected will receive a cash prize and a gift made by a Mississippi artist. Past winners include Eudora Welty, Will D. Campbell, Natasha Trethewey, Samuel Jones, Caroline Herring, William Dunlap, and William Eggleston.

The president of the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters is George Bassi of Laurel, Mississippi. Jan Taylor of Jackson serves as treasurer, and Margaret Anne Robbins of Pontotoc is secretary. Anyone may join MIAL and thus be eligible to nominate in each of the award categories. For more information about membership or about attending the awards banquet, visit the website at www.ms-arts-letters.org.

Mary M. Thompson

continued from 16 *David Wharton*

I'm really interested in the mark that religion has made upon present-day Southern culture, whether that's in the physical landscape or in the way people live their lives.

JT: Finally, tell me about your current Lafayette, Louisiana, project.
DW: Well, I've begun going down to Lafayette at Mardi Gras to photograph. I go with my colleague Jodi Skipper, who is originally from there. I find Mardi Gras in rural south Louisiana to be a cultural binding of a relatively small area. Not a whole lot of people outside of south Louisiana know about this culture. Most people think about Mardi Gras as being a crazy party in New Orleans, but there are all these other traditions in these smaller towns. Some have to do with ethnicity. Some Mardi Gras traditions are rural and white, some have their roots in Cajun culture, some are African American. But all are a creole-like mix of all the local cultures. Every town, every individual parade, every family celebrates Mardi Gras in their own way, and I think that's worth looking into. I've yet to scratch the surface, though. There's always more to see.

continued from 2 *Director's Column*

page, he wonders about how their initial assignment might have affected what he and Evans ultimately did. And more important, he wonders about "the strange quality of their relationship with those whose lives they so tenderly and sternly respected, and so rashly undertook to investigate and to record." He discusses fear and confusion and admits, "I am only human" and thus cannot understand the whole range of things he has experienced. He celebrates the camera as "the central instrument of our time" and undercuts his own attempts at writing, stating that he wishes he could express what he wants only through the senses. And, "Above all else; in God's name don't think of it as Art."

Despite his worries, Agee with Evans created a great work, whether we call it art or documentary or something else. To conclude with a sentence of almost Ageean length, we might say that documentary work does all sorts of things and confronts all sorts of complexities, publicizing problems and possible solutions, giving voice or attention to people who not enough people know about or listen to, getting stories the world needs to know before its subjects pass away or move away, recording stories because, in fact, everybody has interesting, unique stories worth telling, collecting stories because they are remarkable, recording stories because they are typical, celebrating creativity, achievement, strength, and survival, gaining better understanding of the worst of human behavior as well as the best, exploring relationships between aesthetics and social change, offering understanding of a specific part of a broader picture or a broader perspective on something specific, and documenting the look and sound of particular moments—and maybe someday, as James Agee hoped, also the taste, smell, and feel of them.

Ted Ownby

CONTRIBUTORS

Camilla Ann Aikin is circulation manager for *Living Blues* and a graduate of the Southern Studies graduate program.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary is the Center's senior staff assistant and website administrator. She received a BA in journalism from the University in 1997 and has written for the *Southern Register* since 2005.

Joan Wylie Hall is a lecturer in the English Department at the University of Mississippi. She is the author of *Shirley Jackson: Studies in Short Fiction* and the editor of *Conversations with Audre Lorde* and *Conversations with Natasha Trethewey*. Her work has also been published in numerous journals such as *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, *Mississippi Quarterly*, *Faulkner Journal*, and the *Eudora Welty Review*.

Leslie Hassel is a second-year graduate student in the Southern Studies program and graduate assistant for *Living Blues*.

Ted Ownby, director of the Center, holds a joint appointment in Southern Studies and history.

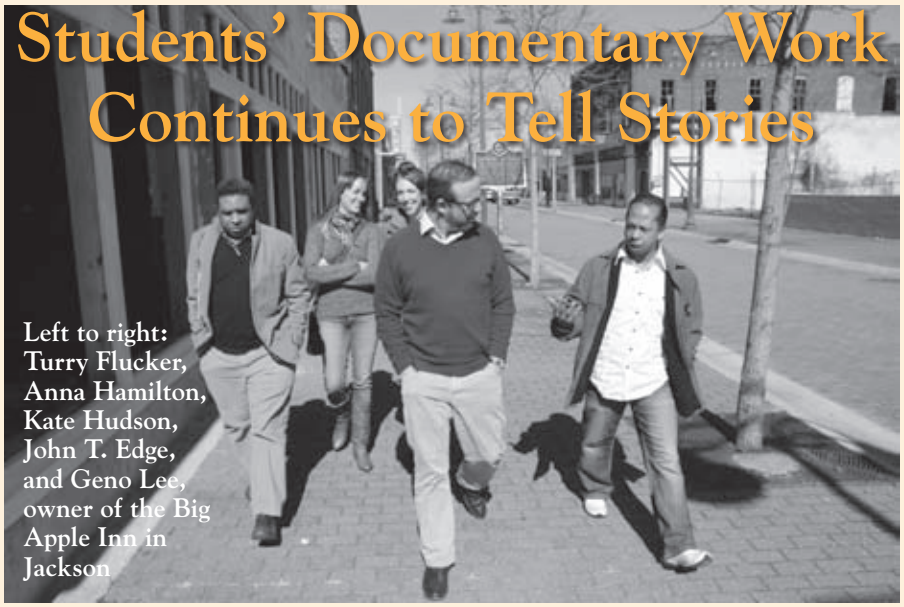
Jimmy Thomas is the Center's associate director for publications.

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

Becca Walton is the Center's associate director for projects.

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

Students' Documentary Work Continues to Tell Stories



Left to right: Turry Flucker, Anna Hamilton, Kate Hudson, John T. Edge, and Geno Lee, owner of the Big Apple Inn in Jackson

Southern Studies students have been hard at work on projects throughout the state, using skills learned in the Center's documentary courses to tell the stories of communities in Tutwiler and Jackson.

Kate Hudson and Paige Prather have worked on the Tutwiler project since June 2013. "We lived in the Tutwiler Habitat for Humanity dorms over the summer, made a short documentary film about the Tutwiler Community Education Center, and recorded an audio CD of the Tutwiler senior gospel choir," Prather says. "Since then, we have initiated and implemented a teen documentary class through the Community Education Center, where we teach basic film documentary skills to six teenage students. At this point we are in the editing process for all three projects and hope to have an exhibition of the teen work in the spring."

The duo learned about community documentation in Andy Harper's community documentation independent study course. Harper says they have done a phenomenal job with their project, which will ultimately become the elements of their thesis. "Ultimately, if we do our jobs right, in the next 20 years, that's the legacy we will leave behind to the state—the legacy of community empowerment so that people can tell their own stories," he says. "I think the seed was planted in the independent study class last spring, and the result is that there are some really interesting projects created by the students. More importantly, we're letting these students know, hey, you can do this. It isn't something that's out of your reach."

Work in Jackson includes a joint effort of the Southern Documentary Project and the Southern Foodways Alliance that examines the impact of the 1964 Civil Rights Act on public accommodations. One area looked at by Kate Hudson, Turry Flucker, and Anna Hamilton is the Farish Street Historic District, which was a thriving African American business district in the 1950s and early '60s. Over the past year, students have been learning about the impact for businesses in downtown Jackson, and their wide approach to the storytelling will culminate in a larger project with the Southern Foodways Alliance.

"There will be a webpage with all the photographs and transcribed interviews, a short documentary film, and events with the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson this summer that commemorate this project and the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act," Harper says.

Having students working on advocacy-based documentaries is a way to learn the lessons of the past and let the stories be told with oral histories. "When I say advocacy-based documentary work, I mean drawing attention to an issue and, hopefully, leading to necessary policy changes. That is much more important to me. If we are talking about the impact of documentaries, that is the most profound impact—having a direct effect on things that need to be changed," Harper says.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

assistant professor of Southern Studies and journalism. "We have a tradition of telling stories and there is no shortage of stories to tell." The name change to Southern Documentary Project is the culmination of that. "It's a name that recognizes what we do in a clear and specific way," Harper says. "It's open-ended, but the idea behind that is it's a project that will never be finished." With a nod to singer-songwriter Robert Earl Keen, Harper jokes, "Documenting goes on forever, but the story is never told."

"I want us to be wide open enough that if we have a student who wants to work with us on oral history projects, they probably will have worked with Amy Evans, hopefully will have taken the training that she is able to offer, but then to be able to work with us on a longer term academic project that might be their master's thesis, for example," Harper says. "Likewise, for photography projects that are multimedia, they probably will have been trained by Dr. Wharton in his classes in documentary fieldwork and photography, but if they want to take what they've learned there and make it a broader project, then I would like to be able to help them with that, kind of multimedia documentary thesis."

The name change to Southern Documentary Project encompasses all of that, while providing room within the larger umbrella of documentary work. Harper wants students to be able to come to the university to learn how to make documentary films as part of a unique documentary track for graduate students, consisting of courses in documentary fieldwork, photography, and film.

Documenting the South in Film, taught by Harper, is an introductory class where students learn all the elements of production, including shooting, lighting, and audio. By the end of the semester, they are able to produce a project of their own. "For some of them, that will be the end of the road. They just want to learn how to do that, and that's it. For those who will make documentary part of their thesis, then I work with those students individually in the summer."

Being able to offer students a larger cultural context, as they learn the technical aspects of filmmaking, ideally means they leave the university able to tell richer, more nuanced stories, with the elements of photography, oral history, and documentary film.

Alongside the scholarly research and work that has always been done at the Center, the documentary component to that scholarship will distinguish both the Center and the university. "The Southern Documentary Project takes its place in the outstanding body of work on the cultural South that has been done by the Center," Harper says. "That was always my goal, and I am proud and honored that we are part of that."

The oral history aspect of documentary work mostly lies in the hands of Amy C. Evans, project coordinator for the Southern Foodways Alliance. Evans has always been interested in other people's stories, without using the term "oral history." Her formal introduction to the field happened when she began the Southern Studies master's program in 2001. "I conducted interviews for one of my first graduate seminar projects, and I learned methods and practices from David Wharton's documentary photography and fieldwork classes," Evans said.

After graduation, Evans conducted formal oral history fieldwork, and in the summer of 2003 the SFA hired her to do an oral history project in Greenwood. "It was really trial by fire, but the final project ended up laying the groundwork for the SFA's oral history initiative, which I have overseen ever since," Evans says.

She loves having the opportunity to connect with people, explore different places, and create a document of those experiences. "Thankfully, I have a job that calls that 'oral history,' and I end up creating an archive of primary source material that is part of the historical record," Evans says. Although she never considered the field of oral history, and really just fell into it, 12 years later she has amassed an archive of more than 800 oral histories that document the food culture of the region and beyond.

"My passion for community-based work that informed my time in Southern Studies, as well as my interest in photography, ended up being easily applied to fieldwork," Evans says. "Thankfully, John T. and the SFA board trusted me to do this work and grow the program."


Amy C. Evans

Denny Culbert

Part of Evans's work is to host oral history workshops in the summer. Since she has a background in teaching, one of the reasons she started the workshops was to bring young people into the field.

"I find that so many people are so burdened by the perceived formality of conducting an oral history interview, what equipment to use, and so on, that I want to demystify it for them, to bring it back to the idea of connecting with another person," Evans says. "Yes, there are methods and standards and legalities involved, but past that, you're having a conversation with someone. It really is the most rewarding work, and I always look forward to sharing that part of my job with students."

The workshop has also proven to be a great way to work with a diverse and talented group of young scholars, some of whom end up on collaborations long after the workshop is over. "Sherri Sheu, for example, attended my 2012 workshop and did the interviews for our Pie in Arkansas oral history project last summer," Evans says.

Documentaries are important to SFA for many reasons. "Through our documentary work, we celebrate the uncelebrated, maintain an archive of primary source material, and document the larger social cultures of our region," Evans says. "Food just brings us to the table."

Perhaps one of the longest-running documentary projects is *Living Blues*. Since 1983 the Center has published *Living Blues* magazine, which it purchased from the magazine's founders in Chicago. The *Living Blues* and B. B. King collections of records and memorabilia were among the first major components of the Blues Archive, established by the university in 1984 and housed in the J. D. Williams Library.

Living Blues, the first American magazine dedicated exclusively to the blues, was founded in 1970 by seven young enthusiasts in Chicago. Cofounders Amy van Singel and Jim O'Neal became owners and publishers of the magazine in 1971, operating it until its transfer to the university. "One of our goals from day one has been to document the living tradition of the African American blues scene in America—and for 44 years now we have done just that," says Brett Bonner, editor since 2000. "With 228 issues and over 2,000 artist profiles, *Living Blues* has chronicled the history of blues music and the men and women who have created it for over four decades. This ongoing work is not being done by anyone else, and without the magazine many of these musicians' stories would never have been captured. Sure, there are books out there on B. B. King, Elmore James, and Muddy Waters, but there may never be a book on Chick Willis or Johnny Shines or Lefty Dizz. Yet their contributions to the blues are recorded forever in *Living Blues*."

Mark Camarigg, publications manager, says that the vast collection of feature articles are essentially oral histories of blues music and culture straight from blues musicians, both famous and otherwise. "In addition to oral history documentation," he says, "*Living Blues* remains at the forefront of primary blues research. For example, the most recent issue chronicled long-forgotten electric blues pioneer Casey Bill Weldon with information culled from census records, state archives, historical societies, and the Social Security Death Index," Camarigg says.

Another documentation aspect of *Living Blues* is its continued contribution to the Blues Archive at the J. D. Williams Library. Increasingly, *Living Blues* staff works with collectors and researchers to digitize interviews and photographs for inclusion in the archive or for use in possible manuscripts.

"While other blues periodicals have come and gone, *Living Blues* remains a major source document for use by blues and music researchers, writers, educators, and students," Camarigg says. "The longevity of *Living Blues* also speaks to the vitality of the genre and the stories emanating from it, despite lack of radio airplay or self-aggrandizing proclamations imploring the public to 'keep the blues alive.'"

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

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songwriter Valerie June. Wearing a Hawaiian shirt and khakis, mopping sweat from his brow with a bandana, brandishing a collection of hand-scribbled notes that he retrieved from his shirt pocket, John recited a series of height-of-summer tomato haiku. To wit: "Tight skin, red as fire / Can't keep my eyes off of you / I worship your orbs." And: "Tennessee Williams / Couldn't hold a candle to / Tennessee Big Boys." So, yes, he was corny. But corny in the service of humility, corny in the service of humanity.

John was also a great synthesizer of Southern cultural expressions. He understood, and tried his darnedest to help us understand, the linkages between his two big books, one on food, and the other on race relations. Speaking of food, he said that eating and drinking was his favorite way to socialize, his "favorite way to maintain close relationships with people I love." For John, time at table with good food and drink restored his energy and enthusiasm. "I love the idea that people come to the feast bringing their own riches," he said, "and make a real banquet out of it."

To that end, I remember John—last September 15—standing before a crowd at Highlands Bar and Grill in Birmingham, at an event celebrating the anniversary of the Southern Foodways Alliance, the organization that John conceived and I direct. It would have been appropriate to talk about the work of the organization. To enumerate the films made and oral histories collected. To talk of the events staged and members won. But John didn't do that.

Instead John talked about the church bombing that took place—49 years ago to the day—just a few blocks north, the bombing that shook our nation and took the lives of those four little girls. John reminded us, as we ate and drank our way through the night, that our good spirits were being lifted by the sweet spirits of those martyred innocents.

When I told my 12-year-old son about John's death, Jess told me how sorry he was. He knew how much John meant to me, even if he couldn't quite understand how much. Twenty minutes later, Jess asked, "Hey, Daddy, was John Egerton the man with the really good lemonade and the big swing?" Jess was referring to a recent visit our family shared with John, when we enjoyed that swing and drank deeply from a pitcher of John's homemade lemonade.

But Jess also struck the perfect metaphorical note. John Egerton was many things to many people. And many of those people are gathered here today. He taught two generations of Southerners how to get good work done in our long-troubled region. He taught us how to affect change while modeling humility. He taught us that, although our past was dark, our future is bright.

John loved the South. It's true that the South didn't always love him back. But John never gave up on our benighted and beautiful region. He never gave up on us. For that, and for so much more, I stand before you—and before Ann and Brooks and March, before all of John's family—to say that that I am so very thankful.

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