

## Southern Studies Grad Students Introduce the New First-Year Class

The members of the 2017 MA cohort have never met a stranger—including each other. Our fast bond stems from shared appreciation of Southern music, happy hour, and good food. We're excited to spend the next two years collaborating with each other, especially considering the wide range of backgrounds we bring to the program. Here, we introduce ourselves and our favorite songs, in the hope that you will join us for a karaoke night out.

**Rebecca Lauck Cleary** earned her bachelor of arts degree in journalism from the University of Mississippi, which came in handy as editor of *Oxford Town* magazine and as a communications specialist in UM's Department of Media and Public Relations. As the senior staff assistant at the Center, she decided to embrace her inner student and pursue her MA in Southern Studies because she remembered why, ideally, we take classes in the first place: not to affirm what we already believe, but to challenge and change us. Oxford's small-town charm, big-time culture, and love of all things literary keeps her rooted here, although she enjoys traveling as often as possible to hear live music. Although a struggle to choose, Rebecca's favorite karaoke song is "Are You Gonna Go My Way" by Lenny Kravitz.

**Molly Conway** was born and raised just outside of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Her father's job relocated



JAMES G. THOMAS, JR.

The incoming Southern Studies graduate class gathers on the steps of Barnard Observatory. Row 1: left to right, Caity Maddox, Molly Conway; row 2: Kate Wiggins, Abby Huggins, Lauren Veline; row 3: Drew Ford, Rebecca Lauck Cleary; row 4: Josh Green, George McDaniel, Frank Kossen

the family to Ridgeland, Mississippi, in 2007, where she attended high school. It took a little adjustment, but Molly fell in love with the South. She earned her BA in American history at Mississippi College, where she focused on gender roles in the antebellum South. She is currently a graduate assistant for the Ole Miss First scholarship program where she

mentors several undergraduates in pursuit of their degrees. She plans to use her Southern Studies degree for museum curatorship. Because of her love of the movie *Top Gun*, her favorite karaoke song is "You've Lost That Loving Feeling."

**Drew Ford** was born and raised in

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## DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

This fall, images and discussions of images may be even more central than usual to our work in Southern Studies. Of course there are multiple definitions of images, and that fact makes images especially intriguing. In one definition, an image is a common assumption, often held for particular purposes and open to interpretation and challenge. In another definition, an image is a visual experience based in the real world. A third combines the two, and an image becomes a visual experience full of multiple meanings.

This fall in Barnard Observatory, visual images abound. Visitors in Barnard Observatory can always see documentary photography in the Gammill Gallery, and this fall the exhibit has featured photographs by students in David Wharton's spring class on Documentary Photography. In the August issue of *Living Blues*, editor Brett Bonner did a memorable feature on B. B. King, using images and short sections from more than seventy pieces on B. B. from previous issues. *Gravy* has become a beautiful journal mixing words and visual images (and through its podcast, words and other sounds). *Study the South*, our relatively new online academic journal, has more visual images and sound than most academic journals, and the latest article, Jaime Cantrell's work on food images in lesbian poetry and fiction, includes vivid photographs of food and a video interview with one of the poets she studies. In making the film *50 Years and Forward*, the Southern Documentary Project and their partners at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History confronted the question of how best to use visual images to bring to life the specifics of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The theme for the Southern Foodways Symposium, and its September graduate conference, involves popular culture and Southern foodways, and that topic demands that we study visual and aural images about food and food culture, who creates those images, why, and how people understand, alter, and reject those images. The SFA's clever visual image, the popsicle that indicates we are studying pop culture, exists beside the quick description of a set of analytical questions: "Pop South: Who's Selling, Who's Buying, and at What Price?"

Visitors to Barnard are bringing their own sets of images. Gilder-Jordan lecturer Theda Perdue relied on numerous photographs to illustrate and analyze the variety of forms Native American Christianity took in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In the year's first Brown Bag lecture, Rhodes College professor Charles Hughes analyzed a popular image from the "Country-Soul Triangle" of Memphis, Nashville, and Muscle Shoals, which offered opportunities for racial integration and reconciliation. And Angela Pulley Hudson, visiting from Texas A&M, discussed the ways and reasons that a variety of Southerners claimed and lived out identities as Native Americans.

Campus discussions this fall, inspired in part by the summer murders in Charleston, South Carolina, and that state's decision to remove the Confederate flag from its capitol, addressed the image of the Confederate battle flag as part of the Mississippi state flag. A number of campus groups and university leaders have called for the removal of all Confederate imagery, including the state flag, from the university. The discussions have raised questions about, among other things, the meaning of history, the sources of unity and division, the relationships between public and private on a university campus, and the power of images.

The topic of images leads me to a kind of confession. When I came to the University of Mississippi back in the 1980s, I was not prepared to study images. Maybe I wasn't properly interested in them, maybe I thought it was my job as a scholar to get past images and study truths behind them. Maybe the excitement with which some scholars in my generation had rejected the Myth and Symbol school as being too full of consensus helps explain my disinterest, and I certainly

*continued on page 4*



# Living Blues News

I want to say thank you for everyone's kind words about the special B. B. King tribute we published in the last issue. King's death, of course, struck deep in the hearts of all blues fans, and it was gratifying to see that what we did to honor him was so well received.

Many blues fans have wondered about the future of the blues post-B. B. King, but if the most recent crop of new releases is any indication, things look pretty good. With new releases from Buddy Guy, Shemekia Copeland, Joe Louis Walker, John Mayall, and Robert Cray, I can't remember a recent time when so many top artists had new projects out all at once.

This issue's cover artist, Guy Davis, is another major player with a new release out. Davis certainly didn't come to the blues via the normal route, but the music grabbed him as a young man, and now at age sixty-three, Davis has fully embodied his personal journey with the blues. As he said in an earlier *LB* interview, "Blues is the African American folk music. I am one of the folk."

I first met record man Quinton Claunch in 1991 when Elliot Clark of the revived Goldwax Records label tried to hire me to sell CDs for them.

Now that he's ninety-three, Claunch's career in music spans much of the history of recorded music. From playing hardcore Alabama hillbilly music as a youth, working for Sam Phillips at Sun Records, launching two of Memphis's legendary soul labels (Hi and Goldwax Records) to even writing a song the Beatles covered, he has made his mark on music history. In this issue we feature part one of a two-part story on Claunch's life in music.

Just as his earlier piece in *LB* #230 on Lonnie Johnson did, Jas Obrecht's article on Tampa Red in this issue (excerpted from his new book *Early Blues: The First Stars of Blues Guitar*) sparked me to dive into the recordings of the Guitar Wizard. Red recorded more sides than any other prewar artist, so the dive into his work is deep. While many of his prewar recordings were either solo or duos with pianists Georgia Tom Dorsey or later Black Bob, Blind John Davis, and eventually Big Maceo, the arrival of the new Tampa Red collection from Ace



Records *Dynamite! The Unsung King of the Blues* was eye opening. The collection explores Red's (mostly) postwar recordings from 1941 to '53 when the star of the prewar era was trying to evolve in a postwar blues world. The 1953 sides with Sonny Boy Williamson II and Big Walter Horton are especially interesting.

I want to say good-bye to our circulation manager Sarah Holder and welcome her replacement Abby Huggins.

Don't forget to like us on Facebook and Twitter to keep up with all that is going on in the blues and in *Living Blues*. And if you are on the run, remember you can get a digital subscription to *Living Blues* or find individual issues on digital newsstands. Digital subscriptions are free to print subscribers. Just shoot us an e-mail at [info@livingblues.com](mailto:info@livingblues.com), and we'll sign you up.

Brett J. Bonner



# Brown Bag Lunch and Lecture Series

Fall 2015

The Brown Bag Series takes place at noon in the Barnard Observatory lecture hall.



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## October 28, 2015 • Maarten Zwiers

With his book, *Senator James Eastland: Mississippi's Jim Crow Democrat*, Maarten Zwiers examines the post-World War II political transformation of the South through the career of "Big Jim" Eastland,



whose segregationist and anticommunist views were notorious. Drawing on recently opened archival records, Zwiers offers a nuanced portrait of a man frequently portrayed as a Southern zealot and answers the question: how did conservative Southern Democrats stay politically effective in a national party that was becoming more receptive to post-war civil rights demands? In his lecture, Zwiers will talk about his book and about a new project, which focuses on the South in the 1970s and '80s

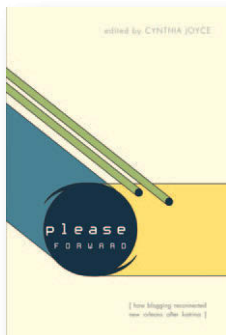
and features Lynyrd Skynyrd, Jimmy Carter, and the TV show *Dallas*.

**Maarten Zwiers**, an assistant professor in contemporary and US history at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, specializes in regional history and the history of political culture. He earned his MA in Southern Studies from the University of Mississippi in 2007.



## November 4, 2015 • Cynthia Joyce

Much of the story of Hurricane Katrina lived on the Internet as the city reconnected during its diaspora. When Cynthia Joyce went looking for one particularly vital account for a course she was teaching, she found the site down and the piece lost. This inspired her search for the works that became *Please Forward: How Blogging Reconnected New Orleans after Katrina*. Some of the writing included is famous and easily obtainable; a good percentage of the work is now unavailable because of aging servers and broken links. Taken together, these pieces are a powerful testament to the New Orleans blogging community that proved the Internet could function as a crucial platform in a time of crisis.



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**Cynthia Joyce** has been a writer, editor, and web producer for more than fifteen years and has contributed to several regional and national publications. She received her BA from Duke

University in 1991, and her MS in journalism from Northwestern University in 1993. She joined the UM faculty in 2011.



had no training in how to discuss imagery in class. I'm glad that colleagues in Southern Studies are better than I am at studying images and documenting, analyzing, and teaching with images.

Having confessed to shortcomings, I can happily mention two new developments that show the Center taking new steps in studying images and studying through the use of images. One is the arrival of a new filmmaker, Ava Lowrey, who joins the Southern Foodways Alliance staff as the Pihakis Foodways Documentary Fellow after completing her MFA at Duke University. She will make foodways films and teach one class a year on filmmaking. The other news is that the Future of the South Symposium in February 2016 will study clothing in Southern history as a way to approach the intersections of making clothing, designing it, choosing it, wearing it, repairing and re-wearing it, and observing and making meaning with it. One of the exciting things is that there is no central academic book that takes a regional approach to the topic and maybe no agreed-upon starting points or defining images for studying clothing in the South. We'll be studying the images of clothing in the South and studying clothing through multiple images. Details are coming soon—please join us.

Ted Ownby

## Mark Your Calendars!

**February 21–23, 2016**

Future of the South Symposium  
University of Mississippi

**March 2–4, 2016**

23rd Oxford Conference  
for the Book  
University of Mississippi and  
Oxford, Mississippi

**March 30–31, 2016**

Southern Documentary Project's  
Film Seminar  
University of Mississippi and  
Oxford, Mississippi



# Ava Lowrey Joins Southern Foodways Alliance as Pihakis Film Fellow

The Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA) is pleased to welcome a new colleague, Ava Lowrey. Lowrey joins the SFA staff as of November 1, 2015, as the SFA's Pihakis Film Fellow. A gift by Nick Pihakis of Birmingham, Alabama, endowed this position.

Lowrey comes to the Center from Durham, North Carolina, where she received an MFA in experimental and documentary arts from Duke University. A native of Alexander City, Alabama, she completed her undergraduate degree in film and television at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

SFA director John T. Edge said, "We're immensely proud to welcome Ava Lowrey as a colleague. She's a smart and empathetic documentarian whose work reveals truths about our region."

Most of Lowrey's short documentary films, which have screened at festivals across the region, explore under-the-radar characters and communities in the South. *FRED: The Town Dog* earned an audience choice award at the 2015 Montgomery Film

Festival and a special jury award at the 2015 Black Warrior Film Festival. *The Button King* will have its festival premiere at the Indie Memphis Film Festival in November.

Lowrey said, "My work as a documentary filmmaker centers around the South and its untold stories and hidden treasures. Southern Foodways Alliance's work documenting and studying the diverse food cultures of the South is inspirational. I'm thrilled to work with the SFA to continue telling meaningful Southern stories."

As Pihakis Film Fellow, Lowrey will split her time between producing documentary films about Southern foodways and teaching Southern Studies students. When she is not in the classroom, she will spend time in the field finding and documenting stories of Southern food and the men and women who grow, prepare, and serve it.

"We're excited to welcome Ava Lowrey to the Center as the Pihakis Fellow," said Center for the Study of Southern Culture director Ted



Ownby. "She has an impressive background in making films and in the academic study of film, and I look forward to seeing her new foodways films here, and to discussing the details of a new Southern Studies class she'll be teaching next year on documentary film."

Sara Camp Milam

## Thinking about Food in New Ways

### *Study the South* Publishes New Essay on the Confluence of Southern Food, Gender, and Literature

On September 10, *Study the South* published its newest essay, "Put a Taste of the South in Your Mouth: Carnal Appetites and Intersexuality," by Jaime Cantrell, a visiting assistant professor of English at the University of Mississippi.

The recently published essay reveals the tactile resonances, social dimensions, and affective possibilities of thinking about sex through Southern food in the fiction and poetry of

Dorothy Allison, Doris Davenport, and Minnie Bruce Pratt. Included in the essay is a video interview with Doris Davenport by Cantrell.

Cantrell delivered a version of her essay at the Center in October 2014.

Her manuscript-in-progress, "Southern Sapphisms: Sexuality and

Sociality in Literary Productions, 1969–1997," foregrounds the centrality of sexuality to the study of Southern literature as well as the region's defining role in the historiography of lesbian literature in the post-Stonewall-era United States.

Cantrell's and other essays can be found on the Center's *Study the South* website home page, [www.StudytheSouth.org](http://www.StudytheSouth.org). Forthcoming essays in *Study the South* include work by David Wharton, James Carson, and Gershun Avilez.

Those interested in submitting to the journal can contact James G. Thomas, Jr. at [jgthomas@olemiss.edu](mailto:jgthomas@olemiss.edu).



DESIGN BY JAMES KELLEYWAY/  
CONFIT WEB DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

# 23rd Annual Oxford Conference for the Book

University of Mississippi • Oxford, Mississippi

March 24, 2016

The 23rd Annual Oxford Conference for the Book (OCB) is set for March 2–4, 2016, to bring together fiction and nonfiction writers, journalists, poets, publishers, teachers, and students for three days of readings, lectures, panels, workshops, and social events that celebrate the written word.

Programs will include sessions on Southern foodways, Appalachian studies, poetry, creative nonfiction, Mississippi and Southern history, gender studies, and biography, among other topics. OCB partner Square Books will host several sessions of author readings and conversations.

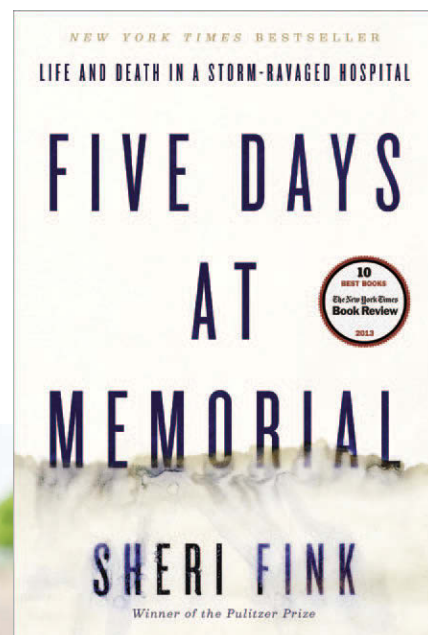
Those already scheduled to appear at the conference include Margaret McMullen (*Every Father's Daughter* and *Aftermath Lounge*); Minion K. C. Morrison (*Aaron Henry of Mississippi: Inside Agitator*); Dennis Mitchell (*A New History of Mississippi*); poets Richard Katrovas (*Scorpio Rising*), Rebecca Morgan Frank

(*Little Murders Everywhere*), Caki Wilkinson (*The Wynona Stone Poems*), Jericho Brown (*The New Testament*), Katie Peterson (*The Accounts*), Beth Ann Fennelly (*Unmentionables*), and Derrick Harriell (*Ropes*); Robert Gipe (*Trampoline*); Mark Essig (*Lesser Beasts: A Snout-to-Tail History of the Humble Pig*); and Pulitzer Prize winners Sheri Fink (*Five Days at Memorial*) and Edward Larson (*Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate over Science and Religion*).

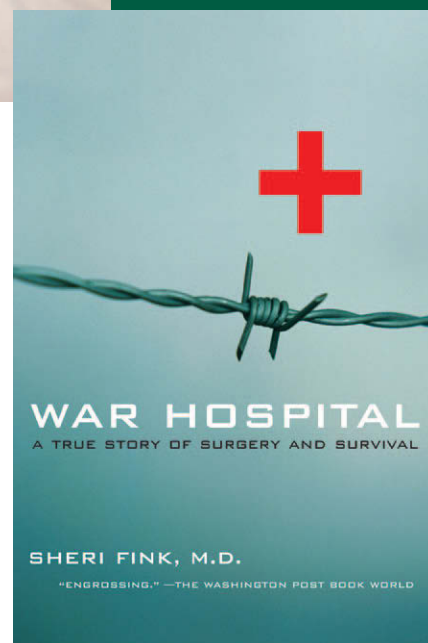
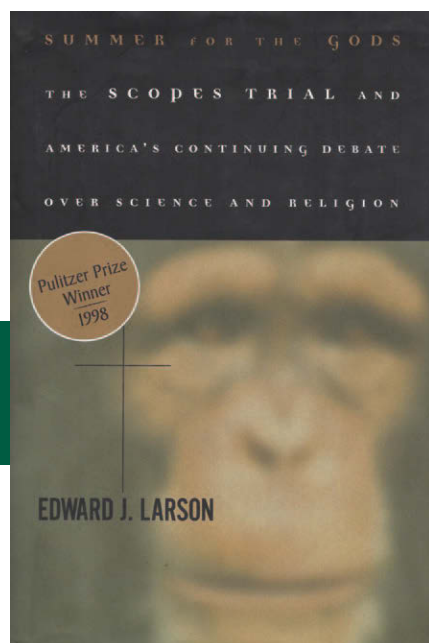
The slate of speakers is not yet complete. The complete program will soon be posted on the Center's website. The conference is open to the

public without charge, but reservations and advance payment are required for the opening-night gala dinner/cocktail reception on the evening of Wednesday, March 2 (\$50).

Sheri Fink



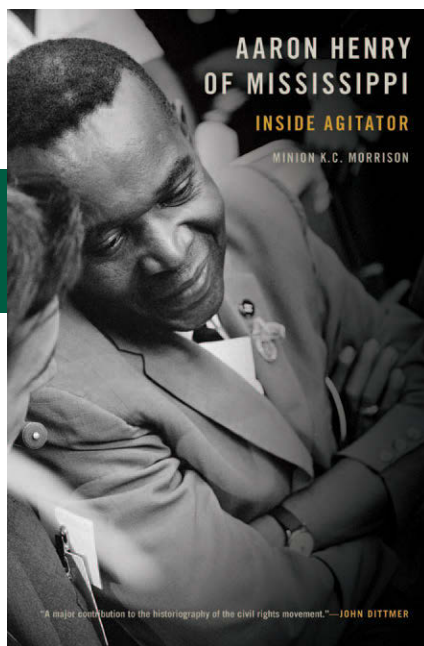
Edward Larson







Minion K. C. Morrison



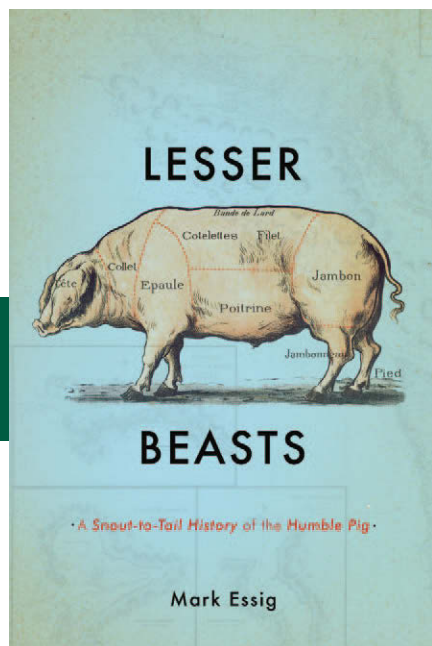
*Thacker Mountain Radio* will have a special OCB show at the Lyric Theater on the Oxford Square at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 3. Square Books will host book signings each evening for the authors presenting that day. The Wednesday and Friday signings will be at Off Square Books, and the Thursday signing will be at the Lyric Theater, before and after *Thacker Mountain Radio*.

The Children's Book Festival (CBF) will take place on Friday, March 4, at the Ford Center for Performing Arts. The goal of the CBF is to give each area first and fifth grader a book of his or her own, which they will read along with classmates and their teacher.

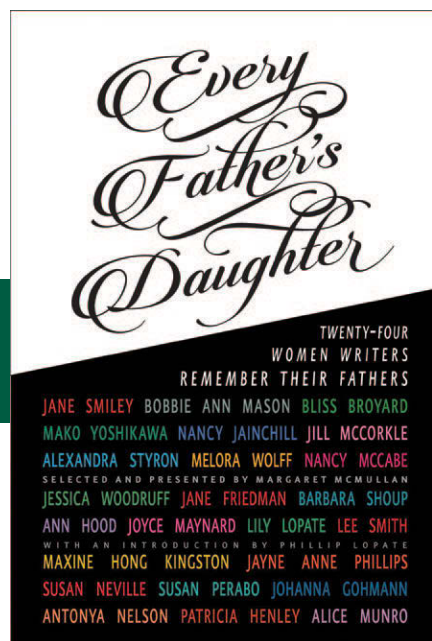
On-campus lodging is available at the Inn at Ole Miss, which offers special conference rates (\$104/standard, \$124/deluxe). Lodging in and near Oxford is available, and information can be found on the conference website.

The next *Southern Register* will have a detailed schedule, a complete list of authors, and more information about programs.

Call 662-915-3374, visit [www.oxfordconferenceforthebook.com](http://www.oxfordconferenceforthebook.com), or e-mail conference director James G. Thomas, Jr. at [jgthomas@olemiss.edu](mailto:jgthomas@olemiss.edu) for more information or to be added to the OCB mailing list.



Mark Essig



Margaret McMullen

Individuals and organizations interested in providing support for the Conference for the Book can mail a check with Conference for the Book noted in the memo line to the University of Mississippi Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655. Contact development director Nikki Neely at 662-915-6678 or [nneely@olemiss.edu](mailto:nneely@olemiss.edu) or by visiting [www.oxfordconferenceforthebook.com/support](http://www.oxfordconferenceforthebook.com/support).

# Journeyman Scholar

## Adam Gussow Sings and Teaches the Blues

New York native Adam Gussow arrived on a hot and humid University of Mississippi campus in August of 2002, harmonica in hand. The Center for Study of Southern Culture was in need of a blues expert at the time, and he was exactly what they were looking for. Gussow said moving from Vassar College in New York state to small-town Mississippi was a big transition, but it was an ideal one.

"It looked like a really good fit," Gussow said reflecting on his arrival to campus. "It was a great fit, the perfect job for doing what I liked to do: being a blues scholar and teaching American lit. Then, of course, I was a blues harmonica player, and it was Mississippi."

Right away, Gussow began combining his interest in the blues with the Center's outreach. From 2003 to 2005 he organized the Blues Today Symposium. "That was sort of the way I brought together my life as a musician with my life academically," he said. He wanted the symposia to create conversations between more than the "usual suspects." In particular, he wanted to push for cross-racial dialogue and wanted people who were passionately connected to the music in different ways to have public conversations.

Gussow's passion for the music goes back to his childhood. He purchased his first harmonica when he was sixteen. He had always enjoyed listening to the blues, but the song "Whammer Jammer" by the J. Geils Band caught his attention his senior year of high school.

"I'd always liked the blues, but I got bit by the bug in a huge way that



1986, Sterling "Satan" McGee began to influence Gussow's journey to becoming a blues performer. "It wasn't until I started playing in the streets of Harlem with Sterling McGee that I really began to learn the music—to learn how to make it work as a performer," Gussow ex-

plains. McGee and Gussow would go on to become the blues duo Satan and Adam, playing together for nearly five years. "So I had kind of a show business career," he reflected. He said most of his greatest moments have been when he is playing with McGee.

fall," Gussow said. "I thought that I was so smart because I was the valedictorian-in-waiting. I figured that I should be able to get a harmonica and learn how to play that thing. Then everybody would think I'm cool instead of a nerd." He said it was essentially the same as guys picking up the guitar to get girls. "Honestly, the things that lead us to pick something up at first are things like that. That's not what ultimately connects you with it and keeps you going."

Gussow would practice his harmonica playing for about ten years before meeting his first teacher. New York player Nat Riddles took Gussow in, jokingly referring to him as Little Cricket, and began mentoring him.

A few years later, in the fall of

Gussow and McGee's first major performance was in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at the River Blues Festival. When the duo arrived there was a massive crowd. "I said, 'Who are they here to see?' Someone said, 'Don't you know? They've been playing your CD all week on WXPB, and they've been calling you the find of the festival.'"

"We were famous in Philly for about a year and a half. Much more famous than in New York or any other city,"





Gussow laughed. “For some reason we became mini-stars in Philly, and for some reason I’ve always thought that was the moment we arrived.” The moment of arrival was important to Gussow because that is when he knew they were “making it.”

Gussow is still making things happen today. He is a part of a new duo the Blues Doctors, the other half of the band being UM psychology professor Alan Gross. Gussow said the group is very much a part-time thing doing occasional shows during the school sessions and more often in the summer.

Although he is on sabbatical this fall, next spring Gussow will teach Engl 324: The Blues Tradition in American Literature. He’s twice taught SST 598: Robert Johnson, the Devil’s Music, and the Blues. When he isn’t playing music or teaching, he’s following his passion somewhere else. His essay “I Got a Big White Fellow from Memphis Made a Deal with Me”: Black Men, White Boys, and the Anxieties of

Blues Post-Modernity in Walter Hill’s *Crossroads*” was recently published in the August 2015 issue of the *Arkansas Review*. That article is part of his recently completed book-length manuscript, “Beyond the Crossroads: The Devil and the Blues Tradition.”

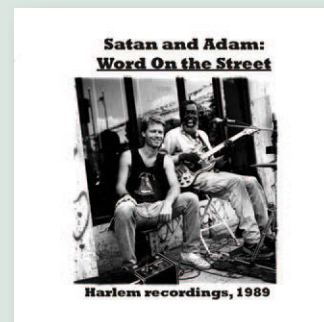
Another one of Gussow’s latest endeavors is his first novel, *Busker’s Holiday*. The book follows a young graduate student and his friend as they play music on the streets throughout Europe. “It’s my first and last novel. I’ve been working on it for a long time,” Gussow said. “It’s my book baby.”

In addition to performing the blues, teaching, and writing, Gussow is the subject of the in-production film *Satan and Adam: A Documentary*, which has been two decades in the making. The documentary includes clips and interviews that range back those twenty years. There is currently a campaign in progress on Indiegogo to raise money to complete the documentary that explores Gussow and McGee’s unexpected partnership. “They’ve been working on it for twenty years. I’ve given up hope on it so many times that I sort of stopped giving up hope. I sort of said, ‘I’ll just wait.’” A trailer for the film can be found online at [www.igg.me/at/satanandadam](http://www.igg.me/at/satanandadam).

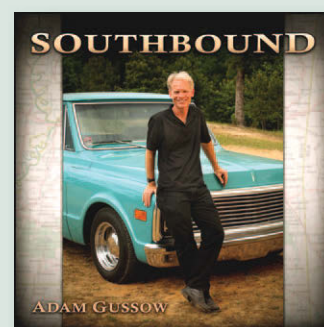
Today Gussow passionately discusses his work and his busy life, but said the blues is more often meant to be an escape for people. “Blues is the place folks go to get away from critical thinking. This heavily rhythmic music that grabs them deep down,” he said. “Me too. Me too.”

Lana Ferguson

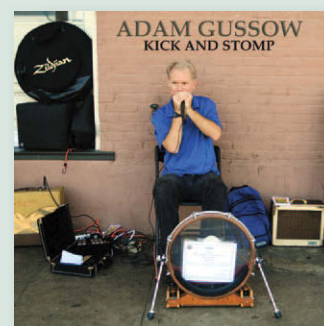
## Selected Recordings by Adam Gussow



*Word on the Street* (2008)



*Southbound* (2012)

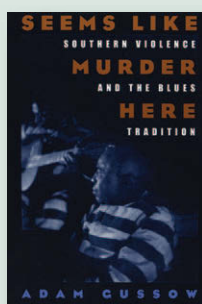


*Kick and Stomp* (2014)

## Selected Books by Adam Gussow



*Mister Satan's Apprentice: A Blues Memoir*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1998



*Seems Like Murder Here: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002

*Busker's Holiday*, Modern Blues Harmonica, 2016



Little Rock, Arkansas. She received her BA in political science from the College of Charleston. She spent the last year serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA member focusing on child hunger and nutrition. In her free time Drew enjoys taking road trips, absorbing useless pop culture, and eating great meals with friends. Her favorite karaoke song is anything that makes the whole place sing along. (We feel this is a cop out, but we'll let it slide.)

Originally from Madison, Mississippi, **Josh Green** first attended the University of Virginia in pursuit of an engineering degree before transferring to the University of Mississippi in 2005. After this change in venue, along with several additional changes in majors, Josh ultimately graduated from the University of Mississippi in 2008 with a BA in history and classics. Likely inspired by his undergraduate thesis work, which focused in part on alcohol and the repeal of prohibition, Josh opted to relocate to New Orleans, Louisiana, where he obtained a law degree in 2012 from Tulane University. After several years of practicing law in New Orleans, Josh has decided to return to Oxford to pursue a masters in Southern Studies and to concentrate on Southern history (although he is also encouraged by his classmates' shared passion for "alcohol studies").

**Abby Huggins** grew up in North Carolina and earned a BS in elementary education from Appalachian State University. She has worked with community-based nonprofits and sustainable farms in Grenada (West Indies), Alaska, and North Carolina. She gratefully enters the world of Southern Studies with an interest in culture, food, and oral history. Her favorite karaoke song is a toss-up between "Don't Stop Believing" and "Total Eclipse of the Heart," naturally.

**Frank Kossen**, a native of Jackson, Mississippi, enjoys traveling, hearing live music, and (thankfully) reading.

His other hobbies include plate lunches, collecting refrigerator magnets, dancing barefoot in the grass, and cheering on the Rebels and the Saints. His obsession with Christmas music borders on unhealthy, resulting in a yearly mixed CD of holiday tunes for family and friends. He prefers the Stones over the Beatles, truck stops over strip malls, and byways over highways, but can't decide between sunshine and moonlight or Muddy and the Wolf. He is also a newlywed, having improved his station by marrying a Tarheel at the end of the summer. His favorite karaoke tune is "The Gambler" by Kenny Rogers.

Born to a New York mother and a Mississippi father and raised in Memphis, Tennessee, **Caity Maddox** has always dreamed of combining her love of teaching and period costumes into a career. She received a BA in history and a BS in social studies education from Mississippi State University. While in Starkville, Caity—who registered to vote at midnight on her eighteenth birthday—became fascinated with antisuffragist women and the Southern fight against the Nineteenth Amendment. After a lifetime of cheering against the Rebels, Caity made the courageous decision to continue her education at the University of Mississippi. When she is not organizing her cowbell collection, Caity enjoys traveling as much as she possibly can and showing off her canine best friend, Ari. An avid fan of all things area code 901, her favorite karaoke song is "Walking in Memphis."

**George McDaniel** was born in Memphis, Tennessee, and raised in Summerville, South Carolina, with a few years spent in Atlanta, Georgia, in between. He was brought up in a household full of music and has a deep love and appreciation of music of all kinds. In high school, he saw a video of Stevie Ray Vaughan and has been a guitar player ever since. He graduated from Davidson College in 2005 and has been playing music in bands for the past ten years. He is very proud to have released a fully realized album this past May with his band, the Shutter

Dogs. He encourages everyone to check out the band's album, *Better Days*, on iTunes and Spotify. He is excited to be a part of the Southern Studies program and looks forward to the semesters ahead. George's favorite karaoke song—and personal anthem—is "Ramblin' Man" by the Allman Brothers.

**Lauren Veline** graduated from the University of South Carolina with a BA in advertising and a minor in Southern Studies. The combination of advertising, Southern Studies, and being from the Charleston area helped her develop an interest in tourism and branding in the South. In her free time she enjoys collecting records and useless information, and being the brunt of jokes about her undergraduate mascot. (Go Gamecocks!) After much prodding, Lauren has finally admitted that her favorite karaoke song is "Achy Breaky Heart" by Billy Ray Cyrus.

**Kate Wiggins** is a sixth-generation North Carolinian and has a BS in business from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Most recently, she spent nine years as owner and operator of a coffee shop and bakery in downtown Bozeman, Montana. She was giddy to learn that the Center and the Southern Foodways Alliance were telling stories of preparing and sharing food—two things she finds inspiring. She decided to re-enter academia to study her native region's foodways and learn to tell those stories herself. Kate enjoys skiing, hiking, reading, and hanging out with her dog, Julia Sugarbaker. Her favorite karaoke song is "Proud Mary"—Tina's version, of course.

Kate Wiggins and Caity Maddox

We're building an e-mail list for all alumni of the Southern Studies MA and BA programs so we can keep in touch better. If you're an alum and would like to be included in the list, sign up at [southernstudies.olemiss.edu/people/alumni](http://southernstudies.olemiss.edu/people/alumni) or e-mail Becca Walton at [rwalton@olemiss.edu](mailto:rwalton@olemiss.edu).



# New Faces in the Crowd

## Center Gains Three New Staffers

Those who have attended the Center's weekly Brown Bag Lecture Series and other events in Barnard Observatory over the years will now be greeted by a new receptionist—one who may, in fact, be recognizable. In early September, Margaret Gaffney joined the Center staff as its new staff assistant.

For Gaffney, moving to Oxford was not about leaving home, but about returning to the place she considered her childhood hometown. She moved around a lot as she grew up, but she always found herself connected to Oxford. Her stepfather teaches in the UM English Department, and her mother, an author by trade, worked at Square Books for several years. Margaret, too, worked at Square Books for a bit, and it was there she was first introduced to the Oxford Conference for the Book.

After college, Gaffney returned to Oxford and worked at the City Grocery, a local restaurant owned by chef John Currence. It was during this time that she learned about the Southern Foodways Alliance, while catering an event for the fall symposium.

Gaffney found herself leaving Oxford once more for New York City, and she later worked in the television and film industries, which took her all over the country. She developed a great love for documentaries while working for a PBS series called *Dance in America*. She sees this genre of film as a powerful means of storytelling.

The Center offers Gaffney connection to her love of this type of storytelling through its emphasis on documentary studies. Since arriving, Gaffney's favorite part of working at the Center has been speaking with the graduate students about their studies and working on projects with her two work-study students.



Margaret Gaffney (left) and Sarah Radford. Helanna Salinas not pictured

Mary Hartwell Howorth held Gaffney's position for two decades before retiring this past spring, and she and Gaffney are longtime family friends. "I'm certainly not the 'new Mary Hartwell,'" said Gaffney. "There can never be another Mary Hartwell. She's irreplaceable."

For now, Gaffney is happy to go by the informal title for her position: "Secretary."

Sarah Radford



In addition to Margaret Gaffney, the Center welcomes two new part-time work-study students, Sarah Radford and Helanna Salinas, to Barnard Observatory.

To Radford, the University of Mississippi is quite different than what she experienced growing up. Besides the weather, UM is a nearly completely different culture compared to the suburbs of Chicago, but somehow, the university still gives her that feeling of home. Radford wanted to attend UM—nearly ten

hours away from home—mainly to experience a different culture. And that is exactly why the Center is such a perfect fit as she enters her junior year. The Center has given her a sense of what Southern culture means, beyond dressing up for football games. "My favorite part of the Center is the people. Everyone is so warm and welcoming, proving that Southern hospitality is a true part of the culture down here," she said. Radford is studying secondary education, and hopes to one day teach high school math back in Chicago, despite the weather.

Growing up in Houston, Texas, freshman Helanna Salinas found the University of Mississippi to be far from home. However, she chose the school because, despite the distance, UM felt like home. Salinas is majoring in biology and on the premed track. Even with a heavy course load, she still finds time to minor in psychology and chemistry and work at the Center. Her favorite part? She, too, says it is the people. "Everyone is welcoming, and it is a great atmosphere to work in," said Salinas.

# Documenting the South

## Southern Studies Alums Take Their Training into the Field

These Southern Studies alums are all documentarians. Whether they are producing a podcast about a beloved home region, filming lectures on the history of fishing, making films for social change, or producing content for StoryCorps, they all help explore the varied nature of the South with their investigations.



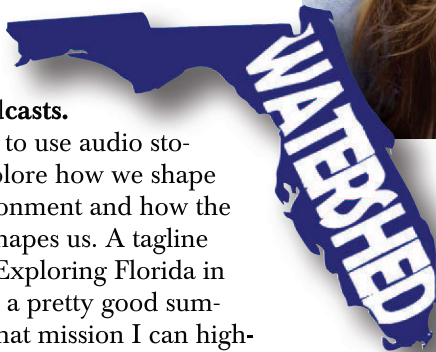
### Anna Hamilton

*Anna Hamilton's Watershed podcast celebrates its one-year anniversary next month. Podcasting is a natural fit for her because she's both a radio producer and an oral historian by trade. The medium is also a great way to experiment and to showcase stories that traditional broadcasting forms may not accommodate. Hamilton graduated with an MA in Southern Studies in 2014.*

**Tell me about the Watershed podcasts.**

The premise is to use audio storytelling to explore how we shape Florida's environment and how the environment shapes us. A tagline I often use is "Exploring Florida in Flux," which is a pretty good summation. With that mission I can highlight a huge breadth of stories on the environmental topics continuum: policy, history, foodways, activism, art, and so on. We've told stories of potato farmers, bat biologists, long-leaf pine enthusiasts, political controversy, conservation photographers, and more.

For now, this is a totally extracurricular side project. No one pays me to do it, though I occasionally receive donations from listeners. It's not my full-time job. I would love to have the time and resources to devote more energy and attention to



it, to create a business plan, and to bring in other producers and reporters to add a variety of perspectives.

**Why is it important for you to explore the Florida landscape through podcasts?**

Part of what I'm trying to do with *Watershed* is to uncover a more nuanced and complicated understanding of the state and its environment.

On a more personal level, *Watershed* is a response to the unprecedented growth we're seeing in Florida. I hardly recognize where I grew up, and though that's become a common Floridian refrain, it breaks my heart. St. Johns County,

where I live, has grown so much that the county is financially underwater and the infrastructure has started to fail the residents. I'm not anti-growth, but I'm a huge proponent of sustainability and smart planning. *Watershed* is always kind of quietly asking the questions "Is this the best way to do this? Is there a smarter way we could be addressing these issues?" Environmental degradation is not just an aesthetic issue. It's a civil rights and social justice issue, too. Storytelling is an important form of activism, and telling these stories puts a human face on issues that can seem far away and irrelevant.

I love where I live. I am a proud Floridian. We're full of contradicting cultures, overlapping regions, and incredible wild spaces; it's just a big, beautiful mess. And when you love something like that, you fight for it. I think that has a Southern Studies ring to it, doesn't it?

**What is the latest *Watershed* podcast about?**

It's called "On the Fringe of 450," and it takes a hard look at the cultural landscape of St. Augustine, Florida, my hometown. The Nation's Oldest City celebrated its 450th birthday earlier this month, but not everyone was happy with the way the city commemorated this historical milestone. "On the Fringe" explores ideas of history, representation, and tourism. How should we commemorate historical milestones like this? What can we learn from the stories we tell about ourselves?

*To listen to Watershed visit online at [www.watershedradio.com](http://www.watershedradio.com).*





## John Agricola

*John Agricola lives in Guntersville, Alabama, sometimes referred to as the "Jewel of the TVA." He graduated with an MA in Southern Studies in 2014 and first became familiar with TVA history in a Depression-era investigation of murals in the Tennessee Valley, which promoted the ideological goals of the original TVA Act of 1933. That early discovery has led him to begin work, with funding from the Alabama Humanities Foundation, on a lecture series, traveling exhibit, and documentary called Alabama Rigged: A Cultural History of Fishing in North Alabama.*

### How did *Alabama Rigged* come about?

The project is deeply rooted to my connection to place, as well as to former theses projects. This was a thesis project finished at the University of Wyoming where I learned about material and visual culture, and worked on putting exhibitions together for the University of Wyoming Museum of Art. Later, in the Southern Studies program at UM, I worked on a thesis about a labor war occurring in neighboring Gadsden, Alabama, in the 1930s. The end result of the labor war was the victory of unions at the Goodyear Rubber factory and the creation of the five-day work-week. This afforded workers time for leisure, and many chose to spend that time fishing throughout the year.

While still completing my MA at UM I filmed a 2014 Bassmaster Classic fishing competition on Lake Guntersville and was awed by the turnout and popularity of this event. The event raised interesting questions about religion, as the whole event was suffused with the fanfare of an early American revival. Here competitors thanked God for speaking to them about where on the lake to try, and fans responded in kind to their favorite fisherman being humble enough to thank a higher power for practical knowledge. I began to wonder if this were a



John Agricola at work and at leisure

corporate strategy for co-opting a religious consumer or whether these fishermen were simply Southerners raised in a culture of evangelism. At the same event I documented a culture of conspicuous consumption, highlighted by the myriad sponsors of fishermen. In the exhibit, as well as in the documentary, I hope to address the rise of middle-class recreational values that were transformed by the circumstances of post-World War II values. The intention of the TVA Act of 1933 was not to create a tourist industry in the inundated river valley, but that—in particular, the industry built around bass fishing—has happened as a result of modernization.

Focusing my energies on examining the Tennessee and Coosa Valleys in a regionalist way would not have been possible without some of the theories I learned in Charles Reagan Wilson's Regionalism class. So, after graduation I began to consider North Alabama ripe for deeper investigation into the folk history of rod builders from Sand Mountain, fly tiers from Gadsden, and the stories of men and women who have close relationships to their local environment. I interviewed some of the most well-respected fly fishermen and conventional fishermen in the area, and I attended peculiar

COURTESY JOHN AGRICOLA

functions, such as a church event called Rifles and Rods 4 Christ. I continued to wonder about the connections between masculinity, religion, and recreational activities. Ted Ownby's book *Subduing Satan* became a kind of guide for thinking about the long history of evangelical churches sanctioning outdoor activities, such as hunting, but I was baffled by how this particular church had conflated religiosity and a strange set-up tableau of a man cave with faux fireplace and taxidermy mounts. Though the documentary is in the early stages I hope to use some of the footage from this event as a way to demonstrate how some of Ownby's theories about evangelical culture, masculinity, and outdoor sporting are still conjoined today. Gender and outdoor sporting have become more complicated with bikini-clad fisherwomen all over the Internet and on the lakes and streams themselves, but at Rifles and Rods 4 Christ the speaker was very clear in his opening salvo that WBs (wife bringers) were a source of irritation at hunting camps and, by extension, fishing camps.

### What are your future plans for *Alabama Rigged*?

I currently am organizing a lecture series at three different river venues for the spring of 2016 that includes two cultural historians and an environmental historian. My plan is to collaborate with former Southern Studies grad Meghan Holmes to film these lectures. My hope is that what the lecturers present will help me construct a traveling exhibit set for the spring of 2017. I will synthesize their talks into wall texts and a documentary to accompany the exhibit. The focus will be religious culture and fishing, gender, and the environmental history of the North Alabama. I will also use some labor history to uncover the historical underpinnings of free time in this semi-industrial region. The Guntersville Museum's collection of antique plugs and flies will be used in the future exhibit and lecture series as well.



## Natalie Irby

*Documentary filmmaker Natalie Irby has lived in Los Angeles for eight years, and wanted to bring social justice to the big screen. She graduated with a BA in Southern Studies in 2005.*

### Tell me about Corner to Corner Productions.

I began writing, directing, and producing films about four years ago, which was the catalyst for creating my own company. Not only did I want a place to house my own original content, but I also wanted a place to foster outside content that I truly believed in. I chose the independent approach in order to preserve artistic integrity, while still maintaining market consciousness.

As a filmmaker, I primarily create narrative content, oftentimes centered on a female protagonist. I love films that delve into the complexities of the mundane, so those are the types of films I choose to make. How we attempt to relate to and communicate with one another on the most basic level. I also have a deep love for documentaries. Therefore, I created a branch of the company that partners with documentarians who are on the ground making it happen. Even if I'm not shooting docs, I'm compelled to produce and support those who are doing such invaluable work. As a result, I expanded the company to include two branches, Narrative and Documentary, in order to have a well-rounded, heart-fulfilling career.

### Why was it important to you to produce films that promote social action?

After graduating from the University of Mississippi, I lived in Nashville for two and half years. I spent my time there as an activist, immersing myself in social justice work. I worked for the Nashville Peace and Justice Center, volunteered for the Race Relations Institute at Fisk University, participated in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, which led to my

Natalie Irby directing her first narrative short, *Weightless*, in 2011. Irby wrote, directed, produced, and edited the film.



COURTESY NATALIE IRBY

becoming a cofacilitator for a program in a minimum-security prison. My passion for social justice stemmed from my interest in African American history, which intensified in college. Ever since then, I've had an insatiable desire for historical knowledge, seeking truth and justice in all its forms.

I believe the most effective way to inspire social action is through the medium of film. Documentaries give people the chance to actually see what they are fighting for, who they are fighting for, and why. It's more than just words on a piece of paper.

Because of the immediate accessibility provided by the Internet and social media, many documentaries have built-in social action campaigns. They not only tell you what the issue is, but also how to get involved and be a part of affecting change. The questions "How can I help?" or "How could I possibly make a difference?" or "Why doesn't somebody do something about that?" are no longer valid. Films not only inform you, but they also empower, giving you a guide on how to take action.

### Tell me about your current project.

I am currently in pre-production for a short film, with the working title *Still Here*, which explores the unique ways in which people attempt to remain connected to those they have lost. In addition, I have a narrative

feature in development, and Corner to Corner Productions has partnered with Blue Magnolia films on a project called Celebrating Storytellers. It is a series of twenty-five documentaries to be completed by the Mississippi Bicentennial in 2017.

Visit Corner to Corner online at [www.cornertocornerproductions.com](http://www.cornertocornerproductions.com).



## Danielle Andersen

*StoryCorps' mission is to provide people of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, share, and preserve the stories of their lives. Danielle Andersen, who graduated with an MA in Southern Studies in 2012, began working with StoryCorps in January 2014 as a six-month intern, then in a contract position as a facilitator.*

### What are you working on right now?

I'm still on the road, doing a four-month stretch that started in Jackson and New Orleans and included Sioux City, Colorado Springs, Seattle, and Sacramento. Then I will be in Los Angeles and Tucson to finish out the year. I work as a facilitator, walking people through the recording process, helping them get the recording. Basically, I am a witness and answer any questions they have.



## What's the best part of working with StoryCorps?

I like the people, because you never know who is going to walk through the booth or what they are going to talk about. It's surprising. You quickly learn to get rid of any preconceived notions you might have, and you open yourself up to different ideas. It's pretty great. Each town is different, and what you hear in various communities differs. But some of the same themes do appear, such as the importance of family.

## What is your next project?

I'm working on a short documentary project of my own, looking at local neighborhoods, but after my contract is up with StoryCorps in March, I'll have to figure out where I want to go and what I want to do. I'd like to keep working on documentaries in some way, and I'd like to get back down south.



## Kate Medley

*Kate Medley's Eudora Welty Portrait Reader—a forty-eight-page book that features illustrations of Welty and words inspired by those illustrations—gives new life to the beloved Southern author, honoring Welty's contributions by way of a multidisciplinary art project. The publication includes portraits by twenty artists from across the South.*

*Medley graduated with an MA in Southern Studies in 2007.*

## Why did you decide to put this project together?

Brooke Hatfield created a portrait 'zine in 2014 featuring Flannery O'Connor. Emily Wallace, the third collaborator, and I thought it was a terrific concept, so we approached Brooke about the idea of doing something similar to honor Eudora Welty.

We could of never imagined the level of interest the *Portrait Reader* would receive, both from artists around the South wanting to contribute and from



Danielle Andersen at work on the StoryCorps Mobile Tour

COURTESY STORYCORPS MOBILE TOUR

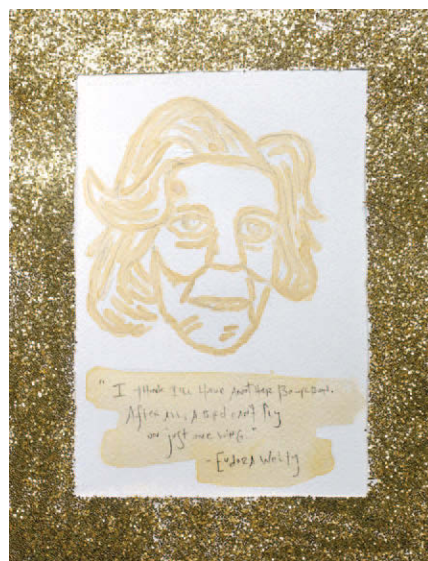
the literary community wanting to join in the celebration. While the primary goal of the project was to raise awareness about the author and to bring the Jackson community together to celebrate her work, we are also proud to have raised \$3,000 to support the Eudora Welty Foundation.

## What other events surround the project?

This summer we hosted more than 130 people at the Eudora Welty House in Jackson, where twenty-six portraits were on display, including all the portraits from the *Reader* and several portraits contributed by community

members. Ms. Welty's friend Patti Carr Black gave a talk about Welty as a painter and discussed her range of artistic pursuits. The Welty family brought an original painting of hers from their private collection for us all to see. The project was also launched in the *Bitter Southerner*. With more help from the *Bitter Southerner* gang, we hosted upwards of 200 people at the Goat Farm Arts Center in Atlanta for an hour-long art-house-style performance of readings from our *Portrait Reader*. There was also an event in Decatur, Georgia, at the Georgia Center for the Book.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary



COURTESY KATE MEDLEY

Portrait of Eudora Welty for *The Eudora Welty Portrait Reader*, by Kate Medley



Kate Medley (center) in Atlanta

COURTESY KATE MEDLEY

# Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference

## “Faulkner and the Native South,” July 17–21, 2016

William Faulkner improvised an Indian name, “Yoknapatawpha,” for the fictional North Mississippi county he created in his novels and stories. Native figures occupy key positions in a number of the overlapping origin narratives he developed for his imaginary domain, which comes into historical focus against the background of Indian Removal in the Southeast. He also enlisted Native characters and communities in searching explorations of Yoknapatawpha’s foundations in colonialism, slavery, and environmental abuse. For these reasons and others, Native American writers have found in Faulkner’s work a rich but difficult legacy. The 43rd annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha conference, “Faulkner and the Native South,” will devote five days of lectures, panels, tours, and presentations to charting the confluence of Choctaw, Chickasaw, European, and African energies at work in Faulkner’s literary imagination and the additional currents that flow between his writings and the Native American literary canon.

This year’s lineup of featured speakers includes writers and scholars from across several disciplines. Four keynoters are making their Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha debuts in 2016. Oxford’s own Robbie Ethridge is professor of anthropology at the University of Mississippi, where she joined the faculty in 1997. Author of *Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World* (2003) and *From Chicaza to Chickasaw: The European Invasion and the Transformation of the Mississippian World, 1540–1715*, she has also coedited three scholarly collections on the ethnohistory of southeastern Indians and is coeditor in chief of the journal *Native South*.

Patricia Kay Galloway is professor of archival enterprise in the School of Information at the University of Texas. A former editor and projects



Gary Anderson

officer at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, she is the author of *Choctaw Genesis, 1500–1700* (1995) and *Practicing Ethnohistory: Mining Archives, Hearing Testimony, Constructing Narrative* (2006), and the editor of *The Hernando de Soto Expedition: History, Historiography, and “Discovery” in the Southeast* (2005). Her essay “The Construction of Faulkner’s Indians” appeared in the 2002–03 special issue of the *Faulkner Journal* on “Faulkner’s Indians.”

LeAnne Howe, an enrolled citizen

of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, is Eidson Distinguished Professor in the Department of English at the University of Georgia. Her many books include two novels, *Shell Shaker* (2001) and *Miko Kings: An Indian Baseball Story* (2007); *Evidence of Red: Poems and Prose* (2005); a nonfiction collection, *Choctalking on Other Realities* (2013); and a coedited essay collection, *Seeing Red, Pixelated Skins: American Indians and Film* (2013). Founder and director of the WagonBurner Theatre Troop, she is also a playwright and filmmaker, and in 2006–07 she was the John and Renee Grisham Visiting



Patricia Kay Galloway



Melanie Benson Taylor



Writer in Residence at the University of Mississippi.

Katherine M. B. Osburn is associate professor of history at Arizona State University, where she has taught since 2011. Her publications include *Southern Ute Women: Autonomy and Assimilation on the Reservation, 1885–1934* (1998), *Choctaw Resurgence in Mississippi: Race, Class, and Nation Building in the Jim Crow South, 1830–1977* (2014), and numerous essays in Native American history, and she was the recipient of an NEH research fellowship in 2008.

Three keynote speakers are making return appearances at Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha. Eric Gary Anderson is associate professor of English at George Mason University, where he was the recipient of a University Teaching Excellence award in 2014. Author of *American Indian Literature and the Southwest: Contexts and Dispositions* (1999) and essays in such distinguished scholarly journals as *PMLA*, *American Literary History*, *American Literature*, and *ESQ*, he has also coedited a special issue of *Mississippi Quarterly* on “Southern Roots and Routes: Origins, Migrations, Transformations.” He was a keynote speaker at the “Faulkner and the Ecology of the South” conference in 2003.

A veteran of the 2006 conference on “Global Faulkner,” Melanie Benson Taylor is associate professor of Native American studies at Dartmouth College. She is the author of two books, *Disturbing Calculations: The Economics of Identity in Postcolonial Southern Literature, 1912–2002* (2008) and *Reconstructing the Native South: American Indian Literature and the Lost Cause* (2012), and her essays have appeared in numerous journals and collections, including *The Cambridge Companion to William Faulkner* and *American Cinema and the Southern Imaginary*. Professor Taylor’s current work-in-progress includes two book projects with a direct bearing on this year’s conference theme: “Faulkner’s Doom: Indians, Capitalism, and Anxiety in the New South,” and “Indian Killers: The Savage

Economics of Contemporary Native Literature.”

Annette Trefzer is associate professor of English at the University of Mississippi, where she is a member of the interdisciplinary faculty working groups on indigenous studies and on the Global South. Author of *Disturbing Indians: The Archaeology of Southern Fiction* (2007), Trefzer has also coedited an essay collection, *Reclaiming Native American Cultures* (1998), a special issue of *American Literature* on “Global Contexts, Local Literatures: The New Southern Studies” (2006), and a 2014 special issue of *The Global South* on “The Global South and/in the Global North: Interdisciplinary Investigations.” She spoke on Faulkner’s Indian stories of the 1930s at the “Faulkner in the 21st Century” conference in 2000.

Additional speakers and panelists will be selected early next year from the conference call for papers, which can be viewed at [www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner](http://www.outreach.olemiss.edu/events/faulkner).

Other conference events include the popular “Teaching Faulkner” sessions led by James Carothers, Brian McDonald, Charles Peek, Terrell Tebbets, and Theresa Towner. Collaborators on Digital Yoknapatawpha, a digital humanities project at the University of Virginia, will present updates at a lunchtime session. Bookseller Seth Berner will lead a presentation on “Collecting Faulkner,” the J. D. Williams Library will exhibit rare Faulkner materials, and University Museums will welcome conference registrants to a special exhibition. Optional day-long guided tours will visit Faulkner-related locations and historic Native sites in Northeast Mississippi and the Mississippi Delta.

Discount rates for the conference are available for groups of five or more students. Inexpensive dormitory housing is available for all registrants. Contact Justin Murphree at [jcmurphr@olemiss.edu](mailto:jcmurphr@olemiss.edu) for details. For other inquiries, contact Jay Watson, director, at [jwatson@olemiss.edu](mailto:jwatson@olemiss.edu).

Jay Watson

## *Faulkner’s World: The Photographs of Martin J. Dain* A Traveling Exhibition

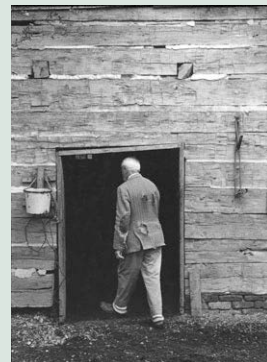
The photographs of Martin Dain provide a unique journey into the world of William Faulkner. Taken between 1961 and 1963, Dain’s photographs

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, 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 has thirty-six 16" x 20" black-and-white photographs and four text panels, presented in 24" x 30" frames.

Persons interested in scheduling the traveling exhibition of Dain photographs should contact James Thomas by e-mail ([jgthomas@olemiss.edu](mailto:jgthomas@olemiss.edu)) or telephone (662-915-3374).



MARTIN DAIN

# SouthDocs and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History Begin New Partnership

On September 22, the Southern Documentary Project, along with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), hosted a screening of their film *50 Years and Forward: The Voting Rights Act in Mississippi*. They held the screening and panel discussion at the William F. Winter Archives and History building in Jackson.

Andy Harper, SouthDocs director, hopes the film not only tells the story of voting rights in the state, but will also mark a new partnership between MDAH and the Southern Documentary Project. The Center for the Study of Southern Culture and its institutes seek to build and strengthen ties with cultural partners throughout the state with similar projects in the coming years. Harper and Becca Walton, associate director for projects at the Center, collaborated with Mississippi Department of Archives and History director Katie Blount and Julia Young, head of the MDAH Archives Division, on *50 Years and Forward*.

The archives staff of MDAH pulled photographs and video footage from the archives' collection to be used throughout the film and contacted potential interview subjects. Walton and Harper produced the film, with Walton conducting the interviews.

"SouthDocs films are different from many other documentary films, as the people being interviewed tell the whole story," Walton said. "There's no voice-over, it's all told from the mouths of the people."

The film, which took five months to complete, tells the story of voting rights in Mississippi from the



**Voter registration, August 25, 1965, at the Magnolia Motel in Prentiss, following passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Federal examiner C. A. Phillips administers voter registration oath to Joe Ella Moore.**

perspective of "a mixture of folks inside of politics and outside of politics." Those featured in the film are Gov. William F. Winter, Leslie-Burl McLemore, Minion K. C. Morrison, Flonzie Brown Wright, Rims Barber, Robert G. Clark Jr., David L. Jordan, Wendell Paris, and John Horhn.

Above all, Walton and Harper wanted to tell Mississippi's story. With the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in August, they hoped to capture the unique experiences of Mississippians and how historic fights for equality continue to be relevant to the state today.

After screening the film in Jackson, Harper moderated a panel discussion with McLemore, Brown Wright,

and Barber. "There are lots of civil rights stories, and many of them have been told as we hit anniversaries," Harper said. "But this is one that people haven't talked a lot about, because it wasn't an event, it wasn't a march. It was legislation.

"The folks in this film, they lived through this, they fought for this, they fought to have the simple right to vote," Harper continued. "And they're very passionately concerned that we are heading backwards with some of the modification of the Voting Rights Act in the last couple of years. So this film and forum gave them an opportunity to publicly express those concerns."

Ellen Whitaker



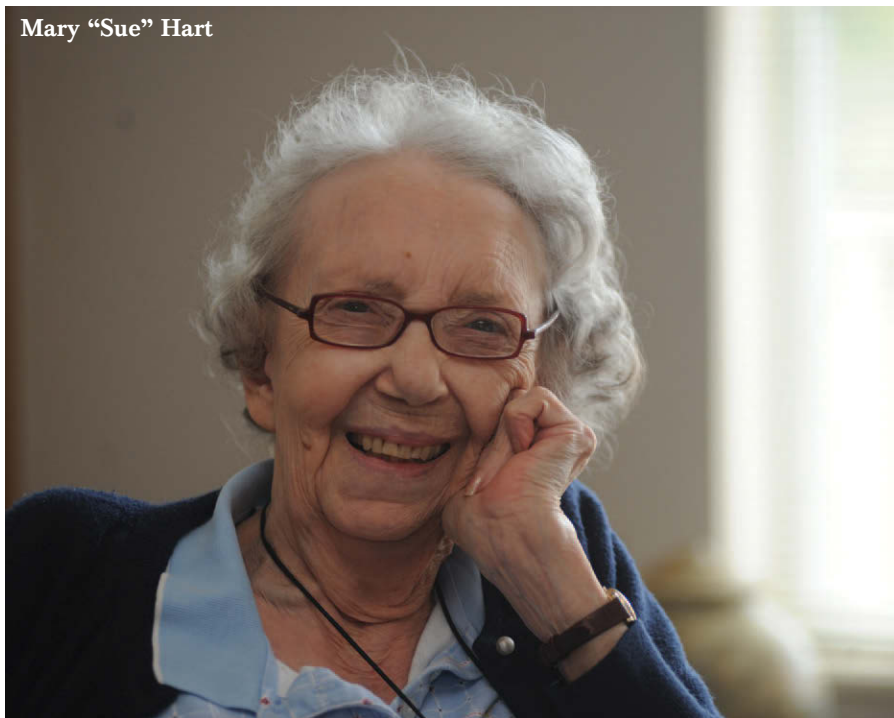
# Center Establishes New Gender Studies Prize

The Center for the Study of Southern Culture has established a new prize for scholarship: the Sue Hart Prize in Southern Gender Studies. Each year, the award will honor the best paper or project on gender studies in the South. The award is open to all University of Mississippi students, graduate and undergraduate.

Mary Lillian “Sue” Hart was a longtime staff member of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. Beginning in 1979, she was research librarian and publications editor at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture until her retirement in 1995. She edited the *Southern Register*, coedited *The Blues: A Bibliographical Guide*, compiled “Sports in the South: A Selective Bibliography” for *Southern Exposure*, and was an important part of numerous other Center projects. Hart died July 21, 2012, in Oxford.

Hart had the initial idea for the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* and served as an associate editor of the one-volume edition, published in 1989. Charles Reagan Wilson, general editor of the new twenty-four-volume edition, described her as “an

Mary “Sue” Hart



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invaluable member of the original encyclopedia team, bringing the careful and precise eye of the librarian, and an iconoclastic spirit, to our work.”

In retirement Hart continued to be a voracious reader and an enthusiastic participant in discussions

about sports, especially the Atlanta Braves, and politics. She also loved going to the UM campus for lectures, exhibitions, and musical events at the Ford Center.

The prize was funded by an anonymous donor.

## In Memoriam

William Jay Smith  
April 22, 1918–August 18, 2015

Dorothy Lee Tatum  
May 3, 1924–August 20, 2015

Lee McCarty  
February 21, 1923–September 7, 2015



# What I Did on My Summer Vacation

## Grad Students Take Advantage of Internship Opportunities

While summertime can mean a break from school, second-year MA students Katie Gill and Irene Van Riper were gaining work experience during those hot months.

Gill worked as a curatorial intern for the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in St. Michaels, Maryland, just a few hours away from Washington, D.C.

“My main duty was to help inventory the museum’s collection, which involved physically counting and inventorying every item and making sure every item was in its proper place,” Gill said.

She also accessioned in objects, properly labeled and stored them, and entered their information into the museum’s database. As well, she helped install *A Broad Reach: 50 Years of Collecting*, the museum’s fiftieth-anniversary exhibition.

Although boats and fishing are not part of Gill’s studies at UM, working at the museum—where it was emphasized how seemingly static topics such as a duck decoy can

be remarkably complex—will influence her approach to future studies.

“Some decoys are more decorative, some are crudely made, some you’d never put on the water, some are weighted, some have weights attached, and so on and so forth,” Gill said. “The person who made the red, glossy, decorative one with glass eyes, the duck bending its head in a certain position, is a totally different person from the person who made the functional one, just painted drab brown with a large weight crudely attached to the bottom. It’s never *just* a duck decoy. Everything can be complicated and needs to be



JAMES G. THOMAS, JR.

**Irene Van Riper at the Mississippi Mobile Farm bus during Food Day at the University of Mississippi**

sociology professor, for an MSAN board of directors blog post.

“I wrote a federal-assistance grant that would give MSAN and the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives the technical assistance necessary to bring forty local farmers to the twenty-fifth anniversary Southern SAWG

(Sustainable Agriculture Working Group) Conference in Lexington, Kentucky,” Van Riper said. “I also researched Mississippi protein (live-stock, meat) regulations, which will eventually be turned into a written resource for small-scale meat producers in the state.”

She also began making a Mississippi Local Food Guide and an Oxford Real Food Guide, two regional food and farm guides that will serve as platforms for farmers, business owners, and consumers to connect and exchange products, information, and ideas.

“The hope is that by creating annual printed versions of the guides, in addition to online guides, people’s access and awareness of local food options will increase along with economic sustainability for farmers. In this, MSAN hopes to help grow local food systems in the region and state by supporting the needs of both consumers and farmers in socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable ways.”

Irene received an internship grant from the Julian and Kathryn Wiener Endowment. Kathryn Wiener, a Center Advisory Committee member, established the endowment to enable Southern Studies graduate students to pursue internships. Irene is the third student to benefit from the fund.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary



**Katie Gill at Barnard Observatory**

JAMES G. THOMAS, JR.

complicated, otherwise you’ll just skim the surface.”

Irene Van Riper stayed closer to Oxford this summer, working as an intern with the Mississippi Sustainable Agriculture Network (MSAN), an Oxford-based nonprofit organization that engages local communities over issues such as food justice, environmental stewardship, health and wellness, community organizing, public policy, and edible education.

She interviewed local farmers and wrote blog posts about them for MSAN’s “Farm Features” blog. She also interviewed and profiled John Green, a University of Mississippi



# READING THE SOUTH

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

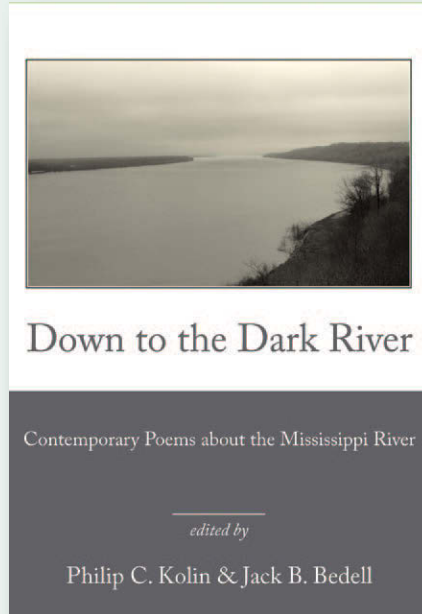
## *Down to the Dark River: Contemporary Poems about the Mississippi River*

Edited by Philip C. Kolin and Jack B. Bedell. Hammond: Louisiana Literature Press, 2016. 206 pages. \$17.95 paper.

*Down to the Dark River* is an ambitious collection of 129 poems by 100 contemporary American poets, all of them concerned with some aspect of the Mississippi River or its many tributaries. Most of these poems are published for the first time here, and together they represent a diversity of writers ranging from new MFAs to poets laureate. These selections are arranged alphabetically by the author's last names, probably the best ordering for such a large and varied gathering of poets and poems. Editors Philip C. Kolin and Jack B. Bedell also provide a helpful introduction entitled "The Voices of the River," a topical survey suggesting ways of looking at their selections that follow.

As most readers do with a new collection, I thumbed and sampled the pages of *Down to the Dark River*, pausing most often on poets with names I recognized or poems with titles I liked. As a reviewer, I then read the entire collection all the way through from Ralph Adamo to Jianqing Zheng. Like any literary collection of this kind, the selections are somewhat uneven in quality, though by and large they are readable and interesting. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts, though, and gathering so many visions on the great American river turns the volume into an intriguing montage for even the casual reader.

Students and scholars of many



academic disciplines should find *Down to the Dark River* even more compelling as a collection. When taken together, its scope, its diversity, and its focus force the more careful reader to reconsider its matter, the Mississippi River, and its form, contemporary American poetry. Readers of this more serious bent will develop their own approaches to the selections presented here—especially those in Southern Studies, like myself. My own thoughts about arrangements included space and time, the Mississippi's immense geographical flows and its extensive historical currents. Moreover, these geographies and histories shaped the people who traveled or settled by the great river, particularly in regard to the informing binaries of gender and race.

In a third reading of *Down to the Dark River*, I tried to identify poets by gender and/or race to see if these differences were reflected in their poems about the river. Although the many of the poets are white men, women and people of color are well represented almost as well. In my own quick analysis

for this review, it seems as if the poems by women are more concerned with the river as a symbol of nature and with their personal connections with its geography and history. However, both men and women that I could identify as nonwhite seemed more interested in the Mississippi as symbolic of racial histories and identities.

Different readers will find various favorites among the rich collection of poets and poems that comprise *Down to the Dark River*. As a reader of contemporary American poetry, I knew most of the poets and several of the poems reprinted here. I have even written on one of them, Natasha Trethewey's "Pilgrimage," in which the autobiographical persona contemplates the dark realities beneath the bright facade of the Natchez Pilgrimage. Other poets here who probably are known to readers of a collection like this include Kelly Cherry, Max Garland, Michael Heffernan, Yusef Komunyakaa, Ted Kooser, Paul Mariani, Linda Pastan, Carl Phillips, and Virgil Suarez. Among those publishing new work here are several personal interests of mine, though perhaps not so well known, such as Philip C. Kolin, Maurice Manning, Susan Swarthout, Margaret Britton Vaughn, Frank X Walker, Jerry W. Ward, Jr., and Claude Wilkinson. Of course, I discovered some names of poets new to me, ones to look for in journals and collections of contemporary American poetry, like Jack B. Bedell, Peter Campion, Malaika Favorite, Duriel E. Harris, Jane McKinley, Billy Middleton, Paul Ruffin, Christopher Shipman, and John Sibley Williams. If I were forced to select a personal favorite from *Down to the Dark River*, it would be Ted Kooser's "For Buttons of Pearl," though it would be difficult to choose one among so many.

In closing, I believe that readers will discover many poems and poets to enjoy and to learn more about no matter how they approach *Down to the Dark River*. Perhaps more importantly, they will view the collection's central subject, the Mississippi River, and its overall mode, contemporary American poetry, in new ways as well. This solid volume is a handsome production. Editors Kolin and Bedell have done fine work with *Down to the Dark River*, as has Louisiana Literature Press.

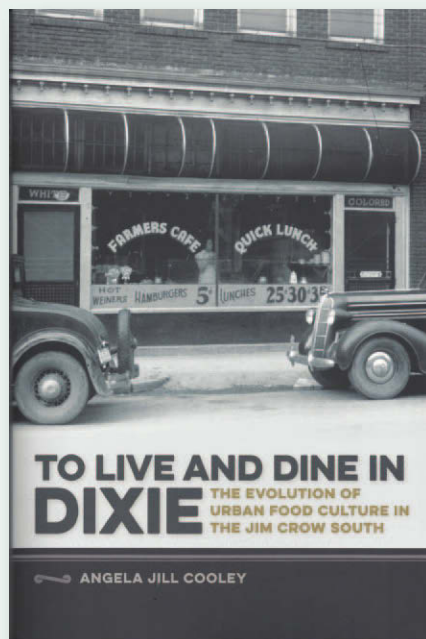
Joseph Millichap

## *To Live and Dine in Dixie: The Evolution of Urban Food Culture in the Jim Crow South*

By Angela Jill Cooley. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015. 208 pages. \$69.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper, and \$24.95 ebook.

How does Angela Jill Cooley cover so much ground, and so well, in under 200 pages? *To Live and Dine in Dixie* is thoughtful and concise, and it adds meaningfully to the growing canon of incisive writing on Southern foodways. Like her contemporaries in the field, Cooley expertly utilizes foodways to deliver a trenchant critique of the Jim Crow South. Unlike other foodways scholars, however, Cooley also holds a law degree. Her scholarship in this book indicates we should not hold that against her; instead, we must acknowledge and appreciate the depth of insight her training offers to an analysis of the de jure and de facto segregation and discrimination that characterized the twentieth-century South. Her exploration of the post-Reconstruction era up to the 1970s resonates today, for obvious reasons.

Cooley begins by probing a primary complex question of segregated eating establishments: why did white



Southerners “consider it acceptable to eat food that had been prepared by black hands, but inappropriate to eat that same food sitting beside black diners?” The book is really a thorough examination of how the law and white social mores worked to justify that absurdity. In a chapter devoted to white resistance to integrated eating spaces, Cooley offers a response to that initial query: “White southerners eagerly consumed the same foods that they derided African Americans for eating. One way for white southerners to enjoy these foods without actively connecting themselves to ‘black’ foodways was to physically separate themselves from the black consumption of the same foods. Black and white southerners could eat the same foods, prepared by the same black hands, but—if white supremacists had their way—they could not do so together, thereby preserving the status of the white consumer and the sanctity of the white body.” For me, this passage encapsulates the greatest contribution of this book: a concerted attention to the fervent psyche of white supremacy, which relies upon the derision of African Americans and their continued struggle for equality and justice, and which sees even miniscule racial progress as a perpetual threat to white privilege.

This was not the book’s only

contribution, however. Underlying Cooley’s interest in white efforts to preserve white supremacy is recurring attention to the interwoven taboos of interracial sex and interracial eating, both of which stem from whites’ obsession with racial purity. That staunch anti-integration restaurant proprietors made reference to the “mulatto grandchildren” that may result from integrating lunch counters offers ample evidence of such illogical (but interesting?) preoccupations. Cooley demonstrates that white fixation on racial purity underlies the evolution of both Southern food culture and legal regulation of practices (like sex and eating) previously considered private.

Along with introductory and concluding paragraphs, the book is divided into three sections, each containing two chapters. The first section, “Southern Food Culture in Transition, 1876–1935,” focuses on the ways in which white, urban, middle-class women used scientific methods and home economics to reclaim Southern foodways from black cooks, whose culinary knowledge was deemed innate, and, therefore, crude and even unclean. This period also saw the emergence of the cafe as a contested urban space, where discourses about the fragility of white femininity prompted legislation to enforce racial and gendered segregation in eating establishments. Part Two, “Democratizing Southern Foodways, 1936–1959,” also explores both the home and public spheres. During the New Deal, post-WWII era, many home cooks professed to reject the scientifically based cooking of the previous generation in favor of a romanticized rendition of antebellum Southern fare. In this construct, black cooks were praised for their immutable and innate culinary talents, thus naturalizing their role as servants or common laborers. This era saw the spread of fast food and the standardization in public eating establishments that were created as white spaces. Part Three, “The Civil Rights Revolution, 1960–1975,” exposed the contrast between civil rights activists who sought equality in the consumer sphere as a



citizenship right and white supremacists who considered segregation to be a property right, bestowed on them by the Bible and the Constitution. One need not be a legal scholar to know that the end of de jure segregation did not signal an end to de facto segregation of Southern eating establishments (or other places, for that matter). However, Cooley's legal training offers tremendous insight into the complexities and tensions that underlie the evolving interpretation of who has access to Southern urban space. As she offers in her concluding chapter, which exposes the Cracker Barrel restaurant chain for its "southern strategy" of covertly opposing racial progress: "the myth and reality of southern foodways have served to both unite and divide this fractious region at various times." Indeed.

Catarina Passidomo

## *Yoknapatawpha Blues: Faulkner's Fiction and Southern Roots Music*

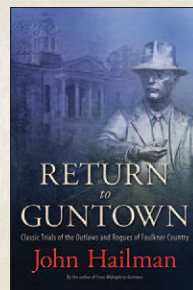
By Tim A. Ryan. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015. \$45.00 cloth.

The temptation to pair Mississippi's most celebrated literary figure with Mississippi's most celebrated cultural product, the Delta blues, is almost impossible to resist—even though Faulkner lived and wrote in the hills while the blues singers dominated working-class social life down on the state's alluvial floodplains. A white author, black musicians; distinctive subregions, different creative modes: anyone seeking a unified field theory of twentieth-century Mississippi artistry, and Southern creativity more broadly, senses the generative power of this particular dyad. The MA program in Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi, for example, begins its pitch to prospective students by suggesting that they "can study an array of Southern topics and issues, from Faulkner to the blues." The word "to" suggests a divide to be bridged: an exemplary matched set whose pairing might, if properly appreciated, hold the key to some redemptive transracial understanding, or tragic failure of understanding, or both.

*Yoknapatawpha Blues*, a scintillating new study by Tim A. Ryan, attempts to forge such a cross-cultural dialogue. Ryan knows who we Faulkner-and-the-blues folk are—from Ken Bennett and Thadious Davis through Carol Gartner and Charles Peek—and he's given us our props. But he's also kicked the can a long way down the road. Although he makes no pretense to comprehensiveness, preferring instead to offer a handful of focused case studies, Ryan has managed not just to consolidate and define this particular subregion of blues studies, but to do so with such bracing originality and panache that he is sure to provoke additional new work.

In order to accomplish his task, Ryan must first convince us that a novel or short story by Faulkner and a three-minute

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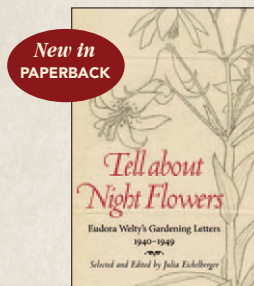
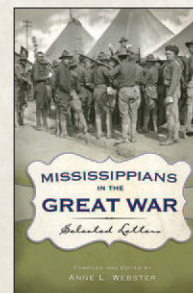
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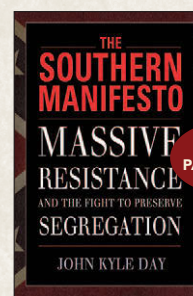
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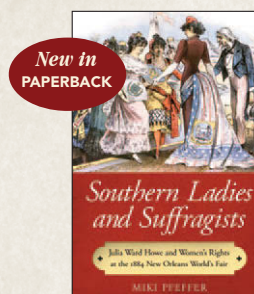
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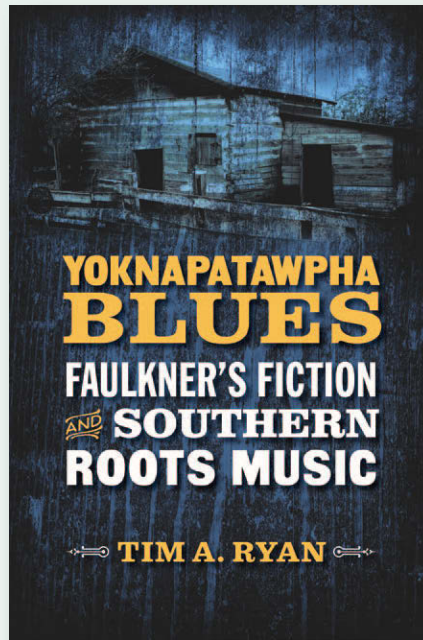


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recording by Charley Patton are not woefully incommensurate texts—the critical equivalent of *Dancing with the Stars*, a trained professional hooper paired with a game but lagging famous person—but instead actually deserve shared consideration. In the past, Faulkner’s blues-based critics have for the most part sidestepped this issue by framing the comparison narrowly, focusing on Faulkner’s own somewhat spotty experience of, and knowledge about, live and recorded blues music and tracking the resonances of certain specific songs through his texts. “That Evening Sun,” with its titular echo of a famous line from W. C. Handy’s “St. Louis Blues,” is Exhibit A for this sort of approach. A key problem for such critics, as Ryan notes, is that Faulkner “never gave any indication that he purchased so much as a single record of the Mississippi blues.” Nor, with brief, scattered exceptions, did he represent blues musicians in his writings. How, then, to articulate the potential continuities between Faulkner’s fiction and Patton’s recorded wordsmithing?

Ryan’s foundational move, at once risky and productive, is to abandon the biography-and-influences model of critical inquiry, insisting that the black man’s (and in the case of Geechee Wiley, black woman’s) songs, although of notably shorter duration than the white man’s novels (250 words rather than 250 pages), are complex and compelling works of modernist art, equally deserving of sustained inquiry. Ryan’s exploration of thematic and formal parallels between Faulkner and his blues-playing contemporaries takes much of its impetus from what the founder of historicism, Hippolyte Taine, called “race, milieu, and moment.” What Faulkner and the blues singers had in common, Ryan argues, were the social and natural challenges leveled by Mississippi and its Deep South environs during a particular historical period, albeit challenges lived out on opposite sides of the color line, along with a set of aesthetic strategies for transmuting those challenges into resonant utterance. “Both [Faulkner’s fiction and the recorded blues] . . . address such specific shared topics as the



flooding of the Mississippi [River], relationships between paternalist white planters and white sharecroppers, male sexual impotence, incarceration at Parchman Farm, and racial violence, as well as the effects of the boll weevil upon southern agriculture.” These two bodies of work, he argues, not only emerged from the same locale during the same period of time—1928 to 1932 are a golden age for both Faulkner and classic country blues on record—but achieved (delayed) recognition together and “declined almost simultaneously.” Late Faulkner and late Howlin’ Wolf, as Ryan tells it, were aging Mississippians struggling to make art in the midst of diminished creative powers, retelling and revising (in *The Reivers* and *The Back Door Wolf*) a handful of old stories they had long ago spun out of their own epic lives.

Ryan is well aware of potential objections that might be leveled at his study, and not just by mandarins in English departments. “Music fans—and even professional music critics—are sometimes unreceptive to academic studies that characterize blues songs as something more than uncomplicated musical entertainment, or which suggest that lyrics contain anything other than lightly dramatized autobiography.” His entire study is premised on deep, extended readings of just six blues recordings (by Patton, Wiley,

Robert Johnson, Wolf, Bukka White, and Leadbelly) paired with a handful of Faulkner’s works, including “Old Man,” “That Evening Sun,” *Sanctuary*, and *The Reivers*. Can such a small sampling of songs, no matter how orphic, imaginatively suggestive, and filled with social implication, really sustain such attentions, much less hold their own in this sort of comparative study?

Indeed they can. I’ve shared several conference stages with Ryan over the years and have long been impressed not just by his interpretive gifts in the matter of blues lyric utterance, but by the unerring clarity and vigor of his writing; both those strengths are vividly present here. One of his principal claims, for all that, is slightly askew. He argues that while “Faulkner’s fiction revels in loquacity, the blues is a genre rooted in minimalism.” The latter assertion is true enough if what one is talking about is blues recordings, where the technology of the 78-rpm disc stipulated a three-minute limit. But in the juke joints and especially at the house parties described by Honeyboy Edwards, Mance Lipscomb, and other Deep South bluesmen, songs were routinely extended to far greater length with the help of mix-and-match lyrics and willful repetition, the better to keep dancers happy, and the gigs often roared on from dusk to dawn: all night long, to quote Junior Kimbrough. (Bill Ferris transcribes such an event in the appendix to his folkloric study, *Blues from the Delta*.) To that extent, the presumptive “minimalism” of the blues is in fact an epiphenomenon of technological modernity—and this fact actually supports Ryan’s broader claims for Patton, Wiley, and the others as distinctly contemporary (rather than archaic) creative artists and of a piece with Faulkner in that respect.

Ryan’s first significant pairing juxtaposes two creative responses to the Great Flood of 1927, an epochal event that displaced white as well as black but also, like Hurricane Katrina, revealed stark racial fault lines: Patton’s two-part recording “High Water Everywhere” and the “Old Man”



portion of *If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem*. Discerning a significant variance between the self-focused, cocky, wide-ranging persona evoked by Patton in the first part of his song and the mournful conscience of the community he becomes on the B-side, Ryan contrasts *both* Pattons with the stoic, resigned, self-defeatingly hardboiled “tall convict” of Faulkner’s story, a man who survives everything nature has thrown at him only to find himself clapped back into prison when his ordeal is through. “Although Faulkner’s protagonist apparently asserts control over what he has endured [during the flood] by telling his story to an appreciative crowd [in the prison], it is, finally, an inadequate tale told in a contrived manner to a restricted—and literally captive—audience.” Although both Mississippians are members of an oppressed lumpenproletariat, structurally disadvantaged by their lowdown social location, Patton’s intrepid mobility, burnished by his lyric eloquence, wins him a victory unavailable to his white countryman, who merely suffers the blues without being able to voice them in an effective way.

One may disagree with specific elements of Ryan’s reading of “Old Man,” as I do, and still find the juxtapositional interpretive method thoroughly compelling. Ryan argues, for example, that the “young, black, lean-hipped man” who is strumming his guitar as his boat full of African American refugees passes a stranded white man perched on a cotton-house roof “serenades [the white man] with a tune,” but Faulkner’s text offers no sign that the guitarist even notices the white man, much less directs any performative energy at him. Still, given the fury that the “bastard nigger guitar” provokes in the cotton-house man, and the ruined cotton kingdom over which his perch gives him symbolic purview, Ryan is entirely right to insist that voice, power, and blues—as both a welter of feelings bred by disaster and the formal shaping of those feelings into utterance—are of vital concern here. Our understandings of both Faulkner’s story and Patton’s song are deepened by the comparison.

Ryan’s book offers many pleasures to Faulkner’s fans and scholars as well as those of us who write about blues from a literary and cultural studies perspective. But the centerpiece of *Yoknapatawpha Blues* is surely his tandem reading of “That Evening Sun” and Geechee Wiley’s “Last Kind Words Blues.” Full disclosure requires me to acknowledge that he refers to my own writing on lynching and the blues no fewer than six times in this particular chapter, but that means about as much as saying that the designer of the Bugatti Veyron borrowed the four-wheels-and-a-drive-train idea from Henry Ford. Both Faulkner’s story and Wiley’s song feature a beleaguered African American woman, one whose obsession with an absent male lover is threaded with anxieties about violence that are aggravated by indeterminacy—as though the violence is a calculus equation with too many variables to be solved outright. Has the absent man been lynched—or driven out of town by the threat of lynching? Killed on a battlefield? Or is he perhaps a potential source of violence against the woman herself? The sum total of these questions is either the phantasm that haunts the woman in a way that disempowers her, or the fantasy that has been deliberately conjured up by her as a way of creating a margin of power in a situation that *threatens* to disempower her. Ryan works through the possibilities in an orderly and sequential way, unearthing layer upon layer of meaning, preternaturally attentive to the “gaps, absences, and unspoken implications” that structure both the story and the song. “That Evening Sun” has been the subject of a number of excellent readings over the years; Ryan’s is definitive. “Last Kind Words Blues” has accumulated no such record of commentary, apart from one story in the *New York Times Magazine* (“The Ballad of Geechie and Elvie”), and here Ryan is leading the way, brilliantly, gifting us with some of the very best writing about the blues we are likely to see.

Adam Gussow

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Brett J. Bonner** is the editor of *Living Blues* magazine.

**Rebecca Lauck Cleary** is the Center’s senior staff assistant and website administrator.

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**Adam Gussow** is an associate professor of English and Southern Studies.

**Sara Camp Milam** is the publications editor for the Southern Foodways Alliance.

**Michael Newsom** is a communications specialist at the University of Mississippi.

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**Catarina Passidomo** has a joint appointment in anthropology and Southern Studies.

**Sarah Radford** is a work-study student at the Center. She is a junior secondary education major from Chicago, Illinois.

**Caity Maddox** is a first-year Southern Studies graduate from Memphis, Tennessee.

**Joseph Millichap** is professor of English emeritus at Western Kentucky University.

**Jay Watson** is a professor of English at the University of Mississippi and director of the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference.

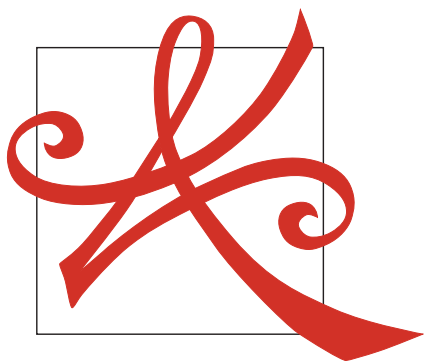
**Ellen Whitaker** is a senior print journalism major at the University of Mississippi. She is originally from Vicksburg.

**Kate Wiggins** is a first-year Southern Studies graduate student from North Carolina.

# Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters

On Saturday, June 11, 2016, at the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson, the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters (MIAL) will host its annual awards banquet. Nominations for these awards are now being accepted in the categories of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, classical music composition, contemporary music composition, visual arts, and photography for works first published, performed, or publicly exhibited in the calendar year January–December 2015. Only members of MIAL may nominate artists for these awards. Information about membership may be found on the Institute's website at [www.ms-arts-letters.org](http://www.ms-arts-letters.org). Members may nominate more than one individual in any category and may nominate in as many categories as they wish. These awards honor living Mississippians who are either current or former residents with significant and continuing ties to the state. The nominations must be postmarked on or before January 15, 2016. Attached to the nomination form should be the artist's representative work (slides, CDs, photographs, books, etc.). Nominations should be mailed to the appropriate category chair listed below.

## MISSISSIPPI INSTITUTE of



## ARTS & LETTERS

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**FICTION** (novel, short story collection, etc.) Eligible is work first published in 2015. Submit author's name, publisher, title of publication, and date of publication.

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#### Fiction

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#### Nonfiction

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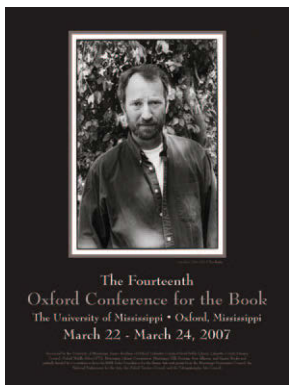
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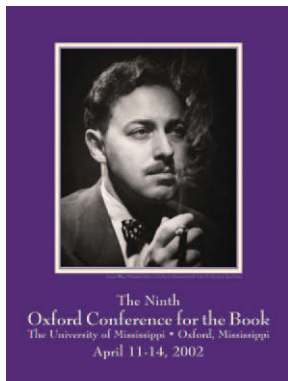
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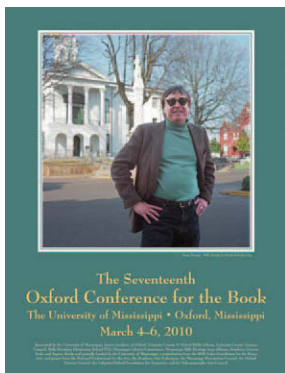
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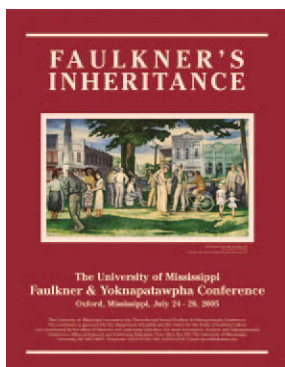
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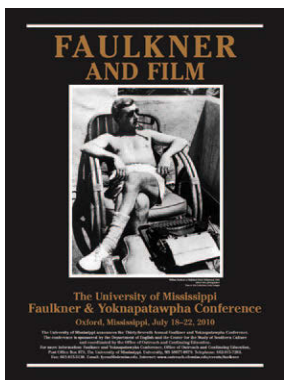
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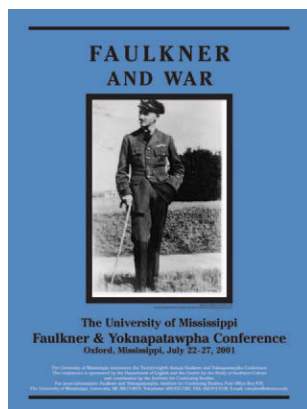
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