

# THE SOUTHERN REGISTER

*A Publication of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture*

• *The University of Mississippi*

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WINTER 2022



In the old days before Covid, the end of a year brought family gatherings for holidays. As we inched our way back into that world, I regained the opportunity to field well-meaning questions by relatives about what it is that I do. For most of my extended family, my job falls under some broad umbrella of “teacher,” but the truth is that being the Center’s director has curtailed my time in the classroom, although the abbreviated hours I spend there remain the most personally meaningful parts of my day. Still, I pass more of my time interacting with people in different spaces. Two and a half years in, I am developing a clearer sense of what a Center director does.

First, I go to a lot of meetings. A lot of meetings. But my attendance matters because in every instance I am representing the Center; my being there means that the Center is quite literally at the table. Some of these meetings are tedious. Meetings on “curriculum and policy,” for instance, generally turn out to be just as scintillating as that sounds. Still, it is there that the Center adds new courses like SST 110: Slavery and the University, taught for the first time this past fall, under the direction of Jodi Skipper and Jeff Jackson. It is there that admissions standards for our undergraduate program, now topping fifty majors, are set.

It was at a meeting of the Gammill Gallery committee that we decided to invite Nadia Alexis, whose arresting photograph graces the cover of this issue of the *Southern Register*, to exhibit her work. I am also a member of the UM Slavery Research Group and one of three cochairs of the Black Power at Ole Miss Task Force. Both seek clear-eyed engagements with our institutional past as a way of embodying the contemporary university that we aspire to be. Meetings are important.

I also go places. I have resumed (masked) travel on the Center’s behalf, representing us, for example, at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History’s unveiling of the continually defaced sign marking the

place where Emmett Till’s body was retrieved from the Tallahatchie River. I may have taken an early-morning flight to DC, but Mississippi was everywhere in the nation’s capitol that day, right down to the other people milling wordlessly around that exhibit, just as the light spilled in from the museum’s elevated windows. The Center needed to be in that crowd. Closer to home, Center faculty and staff are in the crowd at meetings of the Mississippi Blues Commission, the editorial board of the University Press of Mississippi, and the UM Friends of the Museum. Barnard Observatory is a nice place to work, but we are always ready to leave if it means we will come back re-energized.

Finally, I have a lot of coffee. If you know me, you know immediately that that’s not true. I don’t drink coffee and can never even retain the instructions to make a decent cup for long enough to offer one to guests. (I drink tea.) But for me, “coffee” describes a genre of meeting—the kind without an agenda where people share ideas—and at those meetings I concentrate on listening, asking questions, and, if possible, getting to “yes.” Collaboration is the heart of a successful interdisciplinary center, and we strive to do more and more of it here. I have coffee with graduate students to hear about their thesis plans, with faculty and staff to hear about their goals as we begin new semesters, and with potential partners on and off campus to hear about how we might work together. Our recent cosponsorship of the Hostile Terrain 94 interactive art exhibit began at a coffee with Simone Delerme; we agreed to cofund a graduate assistantship with the Emmett Till Interpretive Center following a coffee I had with its director and Southern Studies alum, Patrick Weems; we hope that Maarten Zwiers will finally join us this spring as a visiting scholar from the Netherlands, in part because he and I had coffee in the summer of 2019.

My favorite coffees of all are the ones we have informally in Barnard Observatory, i.e. showing up in a colleague’s doorway to try out an idea. Associate directors Afton Thomas and Jimmy Thomas are champion coffee drinkers; we disappear for hours into brainstorming sessions. And the good news is that when we emerge—the coffee is still hot and the ideas are even better.

Have you got an idea you would like to discuss over coffee, an event you would like to invite one of us to attend, or even a meeting where the Center should be at the table? Give me a call or send me an email. Answering both is part of my job.



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The University of Mississippi

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On the cover: Photo by Nadia Alexis, *Woman in Dark Pattern*, No. 1

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# southtalks

S E R I E S

CENTER FOR THE STUDY  
OF SOUTHERN CULTURE

JANUARY 26

Noon, Virtual Event

“Shall We Stay in Hell on Earth?”

Alicia Jackson

By the early 1870s, life for rural Black Georgians was marred by restrictive laws that unduly regulated Black farmers, separated Black families, and incarcerated Black men at alarming numbers. More specifically, the growth in the incarceration of Black men fed into what became a burgeoning convict lease system for the state.

During this SouthTalk, Alicia Jackson will explore how formerly enslaved people found refuge from racial injustice during the waning years of Reconstruction and beyond by escaping to Black communities in places like Panola, Tate, and Marshall counties in North Mississippi. Here, many experienced a fleeting period of economic opportunity, access to political office, and freedom to establish their own churches and educational institutions. Jackson’s talk is part of her new book, *The Recovered Life of Isaac Anderson*. Isaac Anderson, a minister and politician, was forced to flee from his home in Georgia despite being elected to the state senate in 1870. Like hundreds of other formerly enslaved people, he found refuge in northern Mississippi, although that sanctuary would ultimately be short lived. *The Recovered Life of Isaac Anderson* uncovers his story.

Jackson is an associate professor of history at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia. She currently leads a student-based research project known as the District Hill Cemetery Project. With most of the grave-markers gone, the community-based project focuses on recovering the lost history and stories of a vibrant Black community located in southern Appalachia. Her most recent publications include “Having Our Own: The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church and the Struggle for Black Autonomy in Education,” which was included in the edited collection *Southern Religion, Southern Culture: Essays Honoring Charles Reagan Wilson*.



Spring 2022

During the 2021–22 academic year, the Center for the Study of Southern Culture turns to “Mississippi Voices” as our programming focus. In amplifying home, we do not mean to turn inward. Instead, we expect that in drawing close, we will simultaneously open wide to find through-lines to other places, problems, and people that solidify the global interconnectedness made undeniable by the pandemic. We want to ask questions about whose voices have been heard and whose voices have been drowned out. We want to look for times when Mississippi voices have led, and continue to lead, and for times when we may have misled ourselves. We want to reflect on choices to stay and work in this place and choices to leave and look back, frequently or never. In blending these many voices of Mississippi, we also plan to listen—for the futures of this state, “the South,” our country, and a common world.

SouthTalks is a series of events (including lectures, performances, film screenings, and panel discussions) that explores the interdisciplinary nature of Southern Studies. This series is free and open to the public, and typically takes place in the Tupelo Room of Barnard Observatory. However, as a result of the ongoing health crisis, some events will be virtual, free, and accessible on the Center’s YouTube channel after each live event. Visit the Center’s website for up-to-date-information about all Center events. Locations listed here are subject to change, and more events may be added throughout the semester. Registration will be required for all virtual events in order to receive the webinar link.

If you require special assistance relating to a disability, please contact Afton Thomas at [amthoma4@olemiss.edu](mailto:amthoma4@olemiss.edu) or by phone at 662-915-3363.

FEBRUARY 10

5:30 p.m., Gammill Gallery in Barnard Observatory

*What Endures*

Nadia Alexis

The artwork of Nadia Alexis—photographer, poet, and creative-writing-concentration PhD student at the University of Mississippi—will be shown in the Gammill Gallery in Barnard Observatory this spring. The photographs in her series

*What Endures* focus on the enduring spirit of Black women and contribute to the conversation on how Black women exist in photography.

During this Gammill Gallery walk and reception, Alexis will speak briefly about her exhibition and take questions. See pages 12 and 13 of this issue of the *Southern Register* for more on Alexis and her work.



## FEBRUARY 16

Noon, Tupelo Room in Barnard Observatory

### “Listening to the Mississippi Pictures of O. N. Pruitt”

Berkley Hudson

Originating in the Jim Crow era from Columbus, Mississippi, the photographs of O. N. Pruitt (1891–1967) offer a vehicle to consider the vexing interrelations of photography, community, culture, race, and historical memory. During this SouthTalk, Columbus, Mississippi-native and author of *O. N. Pruitt’s Possum Town: Photographing Trouble and Resilience in the American South*, Berkeley Hudson will share some of Pruitt’s photography and reflect on some of the images and themes captured.

Hudson is an associate professor emeritus of the Missouri School of Journalism.

## FEBRUARY 23

Noon, Tupelo Room in Barnard Observatory

### “Does My Message Define My Role?” Hip-Hop Artists’ Interpretation of Having a Role in Their Community”

Castel Sweet

Using data from interviews with hip-hop artists, Castel Sweet will discuss how artists’ emphasis on their music’s message influences their interpretation of having a role, or identifiable place, in their local community. Considering the significance of space and place within hip-hop music, Sweet examines how respondents’ identities as artists are shaped by their local communities and how artists’ identities influence their production of hip-hop music. Sweet explores if and how hip-hop artists maintain connections to their local communities and construct localized identities within a global market that encourages the deterritorialization of music.

Sweet is the director of the University of Mississippi’s Center for Community Engagement in the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, and assistant professor of practice in community engagement.

## MARCH 11

Noon, Virtual (Zoom)

### “*Voces Sureñas: Case Studies of Spanish in Northern Mississippi and Eastern North Carolina*”

Stephen Fafulas and Matt Van Hoose

Although the US South has experienced a significant Latinx demographic shift in recent decades, we still know little about the sociolinguistic implications of these

changes. In their talk, Stephen Fafulas and Matt Van Hoose consider how Spanish speakers’ language practices and patterns—such as code-switching and discourse markers—can be said to constitute the voice of Spanish-speaking communities in both north Mississippi and in eastern North Carolina.

Stephen Fafulas is assistant professor of Spanish at the University of Mississippi. Matthew J. Van Hoose is executive director of academic engagement at Howard Community College in Columbia, Maryland.

## MARCH 25

Noon, Tupelo Room in Barnard Observatory

### “Sam Wang: Persistent Discoveries”

Sam Wang and John Rash

Sam Wang is a South Carolina-based photographer and Clemson University distinguished professor emeritus of visual arts. This SouthTalk will be a discussion between Wang and Southern Documentary Project producer-director John Rash on the retrospective exhibition of Wang’s photographs. The photographs will be on view in the Gammill Gallery in Barnard Observatory. Rash curated the exhibition and produced an accompanying twenty-five-minute documentary film about Wang that has been screening as part of the traveling exhibition and is currently in the national film festival circuit.

## APRIL 13

Noon, Tupelo Room in Barnard Observatory

### “Eudora Welty’s Photographic Vision”

Annette Trefzer

Internationally known as a writer, Eudora Welty was also a talented photographer, yet the prevalent idea remains that Welty simply took snapshots before she found her true calling as a renowned fiction writer. But who was Welty as a photographer? What did she see? How and why did she photograph, and what did Welty know about modern photography? In this presentation, Annette Trefzer answers these questions by exploring Eudora Welty’s photographic archive.

Annette Trefzer is a professor of English at the University of Mississippi. She is the author of *Exposing Mississippi: Eudora Welty’s Photographic Reflections* and *Disturbing Indians: The Archaeology of Southern Fiction*. She is coeditor of five volumes in the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Series published by the University Press of Mississippi.

**APRIL 14  
Noon, Location to Be  
Announced**

**“Getting Something to Eat”**

**Joseph Ewoodzie Jr.**

Joseph Ewoodzie Jr. spent more than a year following a group of socioeconomically diverse African Americans—from upper-middle-class patrons of the city’s fine-dining restaurants to men experiencing homelessness who must organize their days around the schedules



**Joseph Ewoodzie Jr.**

of soup kitchens. He went food shopping, cooked, and ate with a young mother living in poverty and a grandmother working two jobs. He worked in a Black-owned BBQ restaurant, and he met a man who decided to become a vegan for health reasons but must drive across town to get tofu and quinoa. He learned about how soul food is changing and why it is no longer a staple survival food. Now he presents these findings to show how food choices influence, and are influenced by, the racial and class identities of Black Jacksonians.

Ewoodzie’s book, *Getting Something to Eat in Jackson: Race, Class, and Food in the American South*, provides a vivid portrait of African American life in the urban South and uses food to explore the complex interactions of race and class.



# The Ann J. Abadie Lecture in Southern Studies

Last year the Center and the Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference joined together to create a lasting tribute to one of the founders of the Faulkner Conference. The Ann J. Abadie Lecture in Southern Studies takes place annually at the Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference as a tribute to Ann Abadie, associate director emerita of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture and a long-time organizer of the Faulkner Conference. The over-arching goal of the lecture is to add broad context to Faulkner’s world by connecting it to other writers, places, and movements. This year’s conference theme is “Faulkner’s Modernisms” (July 17–21), and the Abadie Lecture will be delivered on Sunday, July 17, by Percival Everett.

Highly praised for his storytelling and ability to address the toughest issues of our time with humor, grace, and originality, Everett is the author of more than thirty novels and story collections, including *The Trees* (2021), *Telephone* (2020), which was a finalist for the 2021 Pulitzer Prize in fiction, *So Much Blue* (2017), *Glyph* (2014), *Percival Everett by Virgil Russell* (2013), *I Am Not Sidney Poitier* (2009), and *Erasure* (2001), all published by Graywolf Press. His recent novel *Telephone* has three different endings, depending on the version you read—and you can’t know ahead of time which ending you will get. It is a deeply affecting story about the lengths to which loss and grief will drive us: a Percival Everett novel that will shake you to the core as it asks questions about the power of narrative to save. In a recent interview about the variable endings, he stated, “I’m interested not in the authority of the artist, but the authority of the reader.”

Everett has won the Dos Passos Prize, the PEN Center USA Award for Fiction, the PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Literary Award, the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award for Fiction, the 2010 Believer Book Award, the Premio Gregor von Rezzori, a Creative Capital Award, and the Academy Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship. His stories have been included in the Pushcart Prize Anthology and Best American Short Stories, and they are often featured on *Selected Shorts*, a radio program aired on NPR from Symphony Space in NYC.

Percival Everett was born in 1956 and grew up in Columbia, South Carolina. After graduating from the University of Miami, he began a philosophy degree at the University of Oregon, then transferred to a master’s program in fiction at Brown, where he wrote his first book, *Suder*. In 1989 he was invited to address the South Carolina State Legislature, but during his speech refused to continue because of the presence of the Confederate flag, thus touching off a controversy that ended with the flag being removed from the Capitol building some years later. He was inspired by this experience to write his powerful and funny story “The Appropriation of Cultures.”

Everett is currently distinguished professor of English at University of Southern California. He lives in Los Angeles.



**Percival Everett**

# The Oxford Conference for the Book

*In-Person Event Scheduled for March 30–April 1, 2022*

The Oxford Conference for the Book is returning to Oxford and the University of Mississippi campus on March 30, 31, and April 1, 2022, as an in-person event. Conference sessions will be held on the University of Mississippi campus and in downtown Oxford.

“I’m so pleased to hold this conference in person this year, and we await March with bated breath,” said Jimmy Thomas, conference director. “We’ve already put together an amazing lineup of authors, and I’m looking forward to meeting them and hearing each of them read and discuss their work in person.”

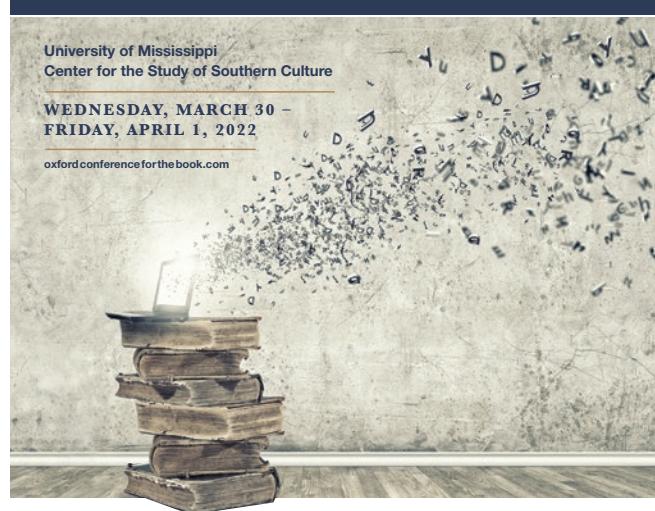
Many of the conference’s special events are being held again this year, including the opening reception at Memory House on the university campus, a lecture lunch in the Faulkner Room of the J. D. Williams Library, a poetry talk and lunch at the Lafayette County and Oxford Public Library, and a book signing and closing reception at Off Square Books.

The Oxford Conference for the Book is partnering with two distinguished awards institutions this year, the Willie Morris Awards for Southern Writing and the National Book Foundation. The Willie Morris Awards are given each year in the categories of fiction and poetry, and this year’s awards will be presented on Friday, April 1, during the final afternoon of the conference. The Willie Morris Awards will also sponsor the conference’s closing reception at Off Square Books that afternoon. “This is the second year of our amazing partnership with the Oxford Conference for the Book but our first year to host a face-to-face event,” said Susan Nicholas, coordinator for the Willie Morris Awards. “We are so excited to see book lovers return to Oxford and join with us in celebrating the winners of the Willie Morris Awards for Southern Writing!”

The National Book Foundation is the administrator of the National Book Awards, presented each year in the categories

of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, translated literature, and young adult literature. This year the National Book Foundation is sponsoring a conference session with the National Book Award winner in fiction, Jason Mott, and the short-list-nominated fiction author Robert Jones, Jr. The session will be moderated by W. Ralph Eubanks.

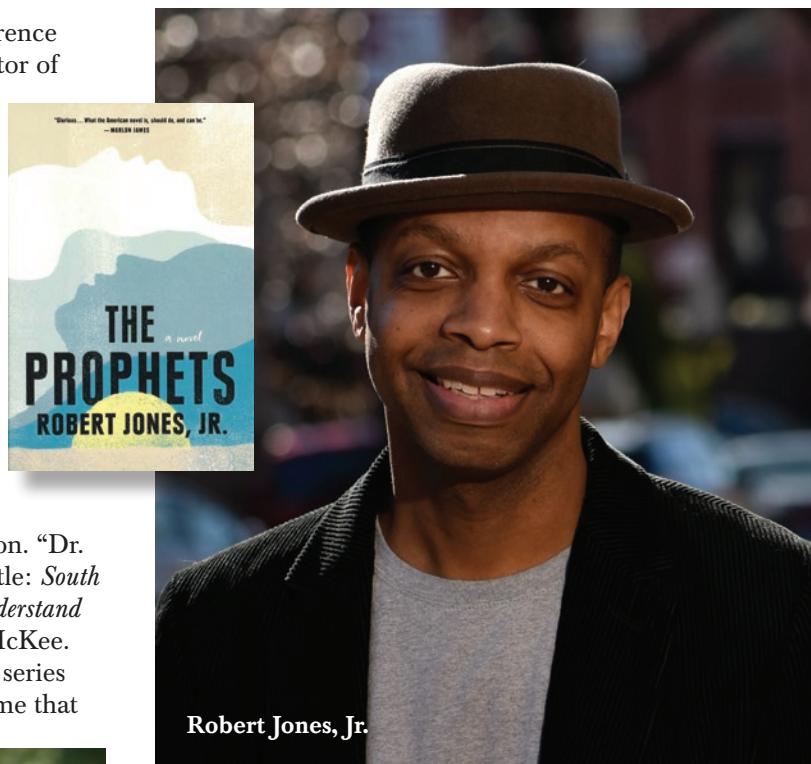
“The National Book Foundation is thrilled to celebrate 2021 National Book Award–honored authors Robert



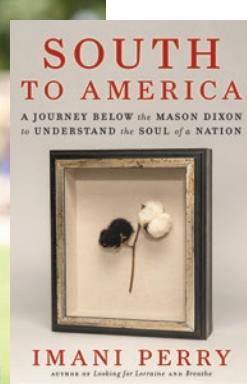
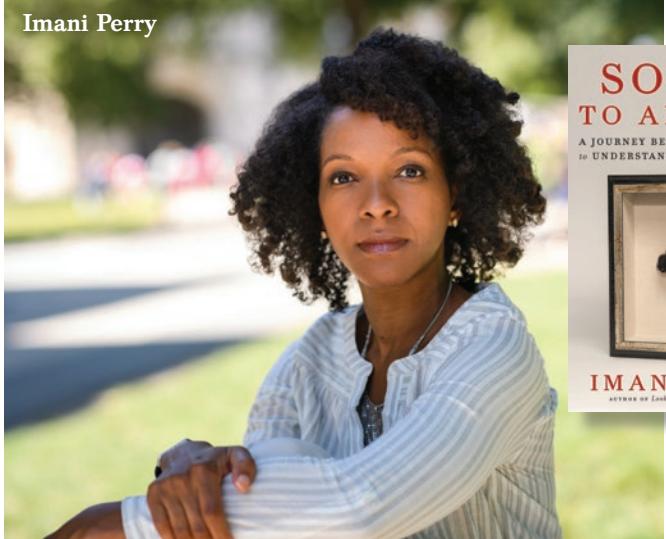
Oxford Conference for THE BOOK  
TWENTY-EIGHTH

Jones, Jr. and Jason Mott with the Oxford Conference for the Book," said Ruth Dickey, executive director of the National Book Foundation. "This NBF Presents event will be the culmination of two years of thoughtful planning and partnership with the conference, and we're so excited to gather with Mississippi book lovers to pay tribute to groundbreaking contemporary southern literature."

In addition to these two special sessions, the Center's Future of the South Lecture will partner with the Oxford Conference for the Book to bring Imani Perry to present the conference's keynote lecture. The Center annually invites a leading scholar and writer to think with us about the future of the region in a lecture supported by the Phil Hardin Foundation. "Dr. Perry's new book caught our attention from its title: *South to America: A Journey Below the Mason-Dixon to Understand the Soul of a Nation*," said Center director Katie McKee. "Her travels are particular—she moves through a series of highly individualized locations—at the same time that



Robert Jones, Jr.



SAMEER KHAN

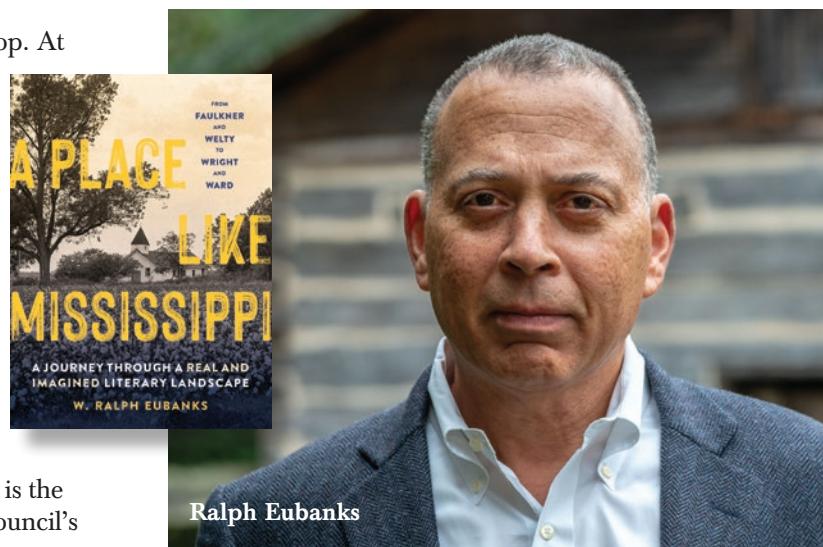
they gesture always toward the national backdrop. At the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, we see the 'future of the South' in just the same way: particular to place, but revelatory about patterns and problems at the root of our American identities." Perry is the Hughes-Rogers Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University. Her latest book is *South to America: A Journey Below the Mason-Dixon to Understand the Soul of a Nation*.

And Ralph Eubanks will present a "Reflecting Mississippi" lecture on his recent book, *A Place Like Mississippi: A Journey through a Real and Imagined Literary Landscape*, sponsored by the Mississippi Humanities Council. Eubanks is the recent recipient of the Mississippi Humanities Council's

Reflecting Mississippi Award for his work as a memoirist and literary scholar who has helped revise our state's narratives to reflect Mississippi more honestly and accurately.

Other confirmed participants so far include biographer Kate Clifford Larson (*Walk with Me: A Biography of Fannie Lou Hamer*); poets Marcus Amaker (*The Birth of All Things*), Joshua Nguyen (*Come Clean*), and Marcella Sulak (*City of Skypapers*); and novelist Raven Lalani (*Luster*). Additional authors and panelists will be announced in the coming weeks.

This year the Children's Book Festival, held annually in conjunction with the Oxford Conference for the Book for students from Oxford and Lafayette County



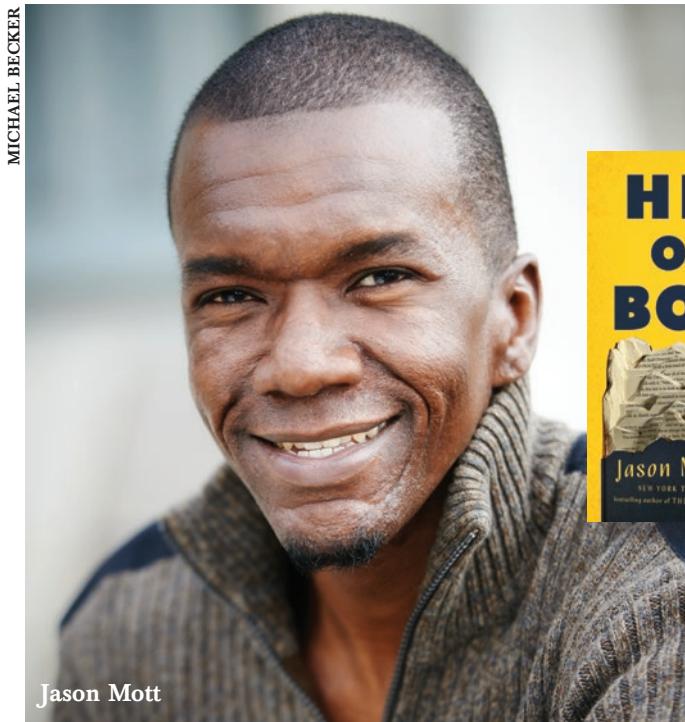
Ralph Eubanks

schools, will be on Thursday, March 31, in the Ford Center for Performing Arts. Rajani LaRocca will speak to first-graders at 9:00 a.m. about her book *Where Three Oceans Meet*. Rajani LaRocca was born in India, raised in Kentucky, and now lives in the Boston area, where she practices medicine and writes books for young readers. The fifth-grade author, who will speak at 10:30 a.m., will soon be announced.

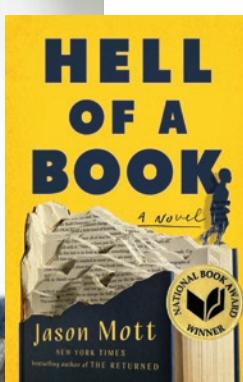
The goal of the Children's Book Festival is to give each child a book of their own, which they will read along with classmates and their teacher during the school year. Committees made up of local school librarians, teachers, and representatives from the Lafayette County Literacy Council (sponsor of the first grade), Junior Auxiliary (sponsor of the fifth grade), and Square Books, Jr. choose the book each year.



Marcella Sulak



Jason Mott



Studies Program, the Sherman L. Muths, Jr., Lecture Series in Law Endowment, the Overby Center for Southern Journalism and Politics, the Center for Inclusion and Cross-Cultural Engagement, the Sarah Isom Center for Women and Gender Studies, the Lafayette County Literacy Council, and the Junior Auxiliary of Oxford. The conference is partially funded by the University of Mississippi, the Willie Morris Awards for Southern Writing, the National Book Foundation, the R&B Feder Foundation for the Beaux Arts, and a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council. Promotional support comes from Visit Oxford.

A block of discounted rooms is being held at the Inn at Ole Miss on the University of Mississippi campus. Keep an eye on the conference website, [www.oxfordconferenceforthebook.com](http://www.oxfordconferenceforthebook.com), for information on special events, news, and updates.



Kate Clifford Larson

The conference then invites those authors to present programs to each grade.

Aware that people are understandably wary of attending in-person events, Thomas says that the conference will strictly follow the university's and Oxford's Covid guidelines, adhering to recommendations in place at the time of the conference. "While we all want to 'return to normal,' we still need to make sure our authors and audience are safe and feel confident about attending sessions in person," he said.

The Oxford Conference for the Book is sponsored by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, Square Books, the Departments of English and History, the African American

# Spreading Love, One Bite at a Time

## *Southern Studies Carries Over into a Passion for Baking*

Natoria Kennell-Foster (MA 2011) first started baking about fifteen years ago, when her pastor's wife taught her to make a red velvet cake and a German chocolate cake. She was immediately hooked and embraced the knowledge being passed on to her.

Then, in 2019, her husband, Lavender, started Foster's Sweeties. Eventually, they both ended up navigating the bakery life together.

What is it like to live and work together? She says, in a word: funny.

"Since we are cottage bakers, we bake from our home, which means navigating one kitchen often at the same time," Kennell-Foster said. "We are very different in how we prep and move, so it's been quite hilarious watching us find some rhythm to deal with our different quirks. It took a while, but we now move like a well-oiled machine. Even when it was crazy, though, I still absolutely loved doing this with him. I want him in the kitchen with me even when he's not baking!"

Their baking adventures take them all over town. "We started at the Mid-Town Farmers' Market in the summer of 2019, and that market led us to the Oxford Community Market in 2020," she said. "We love working at both and think of each as a different extension of our family. We appreciate the people of Oxford and our market families



PHOTO COURTESY NATORIA KENNELL-FOSTER

for welcoming us with such open arms and for helping us to continually grow. We look forward to what the future brings with Foster's Sweeties."

Being able to sell their baked goods at both of those markets is also a way to meet new people, as well as to see returning customers. "For sure the people are the best part, or maybe serving them is," she said. "We love meeting new people and being able to help them. It brightens our day when one of our baked goods can bring a bit of happiness to people. We do everything with love, so serving others is our way of spreading love."

Of course, every baker has something they enjoy making the most. "Pound cakes are probably my most favorite thing to bake," she said. "I love coming up with different flavors. Chantilly cakes, or anything that includes mascarpone, are probably a close runner-up."

Foster earned her Southern Studies master's degree in 2011, and she says the degree also helps her in the kitchen. "I think it helps me be more aware," she said. "I see things in a different way than I did before studying culture as an art. I love being able to say that Southern Studies was once home!"

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

# Tastes Like Home

## *Kevin Mitchell Coauthors New Book on South Carolina's Food*

Flipping through *Taste the State: South Carolina's Signature Foods, Recipes, and Their Stories*, the reader is immediately drawn to the history and ingredients of South Carolina, and this is no accident.

Renowned food scholar David Shields approached Kevin Mitchell with the idea of writing a book together, and *Taste the State* is the culmination of their efforts. Mitchell, who earned his Southern Studies master's degree in 2018, is a chef-instructor at the Charleston Culinary Institute. While studying at the University of Mississippi, he was the SFA's Nathalie Dupree Graduate Fellow and wrote his thesis on "From Black Hands to White Mouths: Charleston's Freed and Enslaved Cooks and Their Influence on the Food of the South."

Their 230-page book is already in its second printing, and *Forbes* magazine named it as one of the best new cookbooks for travelers. The Gourmand World Cookbook Awards also listed *Taste the State* as the US winner and 2021 nominee for the global winner in the Tourism Food Book category in 2022. Gourmand selects one book per nation in each of its award categories; *Taste the State* was that one book. It then competes with all the other national winners for the world prize.

The book focuses on the signature dishes of South Carolina. The idea was a deep dive into the food of the Palmetto state, a look at historical recipes and a timeline of when dishes and ingredients became part of South Carolina cuisine. For example, the root vegetables of the nineteenth century are not the same as those in the twenty-first century.

"We tried to keep the focus on the mission of the book: be entertaining and inspiring, put people in the kitchen to try recipes, and not be overly academic," said Mitchell, who was named a South Carolina Chef Ambassador in 2020.

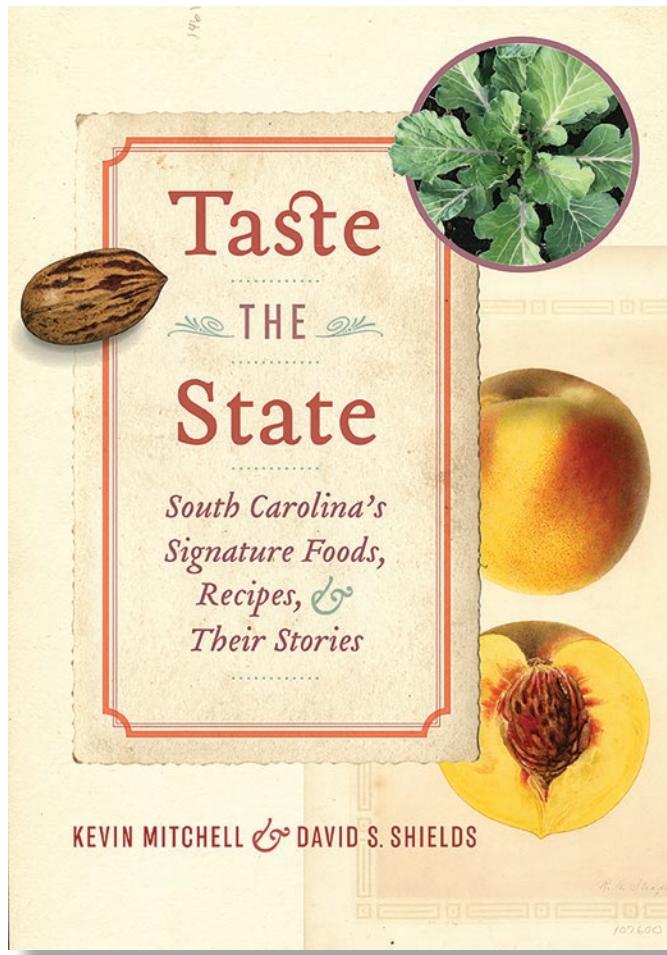
They list eighty-two of the state's most distinctive ingredients, such as Carolina Gold rice, Sea Island White Flint corn, and the cone-shaped Charleston Wakefield cabbage, plus signature dishes, such as shrimp and grits, chicken bog, okra soup, Frogmore stew, and crab rice,

Kevin Mitchell



providing origin stories and tales of kitchen creativity and agricultural innovation.

It was easy for Mitchell to work with Shields, who is the Carolina Distinguished Professor of the English Language and Literature Department at the University of South Carolina and the chair of the Carolina Gold Rice Foundation. Shields is the author of numerous books, including *Southern Provisions: The Creation and Revival of a*



*Cuisine and The Culinarians: Lives and Careers from the First Age of American Fine Dining*, and the recipient of the SFA's Ruth Fertel Keeper of the Flame Award.

"David locates people who reintroduce these ingredients into our world and then connects them to chefs like me," Mitchell said. "It's important as an instructor to get my students to understand how those relationships form. David sends me a box of peppers or corn to play with, and it inspires me to bring it to my students and hope they bring it to chefs they work for."

A few weeks after Shields proposed to the University of South Carolina Press that Mitchell would be the coauthor, the duo started writing. According to the book's preface, the press wanted "something that would be informative even to the most schooled local cooks and historians, but also interesting to the visitor and the general reader."

Their research also involved combing through genealogybank.com, which has newspaper archives, census records, and historical books. "The process was overwhelming at times, which was due to the fact that many of the ingredients and dishes had so many entries in newspapers, that it was hard to decide what source to use

to write our entries," he said. "It was, however, a really interesting way to research. I definitely would use that technique again."

*Taste the State* is written in dictionary form, in alphabetical order. "We focused on three things: tell people about the ingredients that were forgotten, focus on dishes synonymous with South Carolina, and include dishes people would be surprised by, like asparagus or oranges," Mitchell said. "When we turned in the manuscript, we had a list of a hundred dishes/ingredients and realized we went too far. Our contract was for seventy-five thousand words and our first draft was one hundred and fifty thousand words, so we had to remove quite a bit," Mitchell said.

One of the things that had to be left out was madeira, which Mitchell says is one of his biggest regrets. "So many times when we speak about alcohol in the South we lean towards bourbon," he said. "It was great to see that South Carolina had this great history tied to madeira."

After months of research, writing, and editing, Mitchell was finally able to see a physical copy of the book in the fall. "To finally hold the book in my hand was surreal," he said. "After the time spent preparing the manuscript, taking photos, and cooking food, it was great to have the finished product in my hands. It was the same feeling I had when I completed my master's thesis."

While at UM, his thesis advisor was Catarina Passidomo, Southern Foodways Alliance Associate Professor of Southern Studies and Anthropology. It is exciting for her to see her former student thrive in the years since he graduated. "Kevin is really thoughtful about keeping us apprised of his goings-on, and they're always impressive," said Passidomo, who is also the graduate program coordinator for Southern Studies. "His book project with David Shields is a meaningful and novel contribution to southern food scholarship, and his perspective as a professional chef and preserver of culinary tradition provides particularly interesting insights. Mississippi misses him, but I know South Carolina is glad to have him back!"

Mitchell's experiences while at the Center gave him a better understanding of how to become a better instructor too. "I have been able to use the techniques for research and writing in designing a new course called Southern Cuisine and Culture," he said. "I have been able to add some of the readings from Dr. Passidomo's Foodways class into the curriculum, not only teaching students about the food but the topics centered around southern food, as well."

Mitchell proves that even when he is a teacher, he is a student too, and he hopes to always keep learning about the cuisine of his home state and the South.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

# What Endures

*New Exhibition Explores the Black Female Subject,  
Trauma, and the Natural World*

Images by Nadia Alexis • Text by Janeth Jackson



*Woman in White, No. 1*



**Woman in White, No. 11**

The artwork of Nadia Alexis—photographer, poet, and creative-writing-concentration PhD student here at the University of Mississippi—will be shown in the Gammill Gallery in Barnard Observatory this spring. The photographs in her series *What Endures* focus on the enduring spirit of Black women and contribute to the conversation on how Black women exist in photography.

The photographs in this series began as an independent study course that Alexis took in the UM Department of Art and Art History, where she was inspired to make

photographs informed by her personal experiences and those of other Black women survivors of trauma. The images in her exhibition are of Alexis and her mother, all of which were taken outdoors in Oxford, Mississippi. The images explore themes of survival, freedom, and transcendence.

Alexis says that *What Endures* is a body of work that tells the story of returning to self and explores what it means to be a Black woman in the world. “As a poet and photographer of Haitian heritage navigating the American landscape,” she said, “I

am a descendant of women survivors whose traumas I grapple with as I make photographs. Using my body and my mother’s body as the ‘Woman in White,’ I perform a relationship between the Black female subject and the natural landscape, asserting that the natural world is a place of freedom and communion, as well as a place of haunting and alienation.”

*What Endures* will exhibit in Gammill Gallery from January 10 to February 18. The cover image of this issue of the *Southern Register* is from Alexis’s *What Endures* exhibition, titled *Woman in Dark Pattern, No. 1*.

# Being of Assistance

## *Gift to Southern Studies Benefits Graduate Students*

A recent trip to the University of Mississippi to learn more about the Center for the Study of Southern Culture gave tax attorney Marc Rosen the opportunity to continue his education in southern literature, to build relationships, and to impact the lives of Southern Studies students.

With a \$55,000 gift, the Los Angeles, California, native established the Marc Rosen Fund for Graduate Student Support at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. In the spirit of the university's Now & Ever: The Campaign for Ole Miss, he is increasing his gift to \$60,000. The fund will be disbursed at the discretion of Center director Katie McKee, in consultation with Lee Cohen, dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

"I wanted to support the academics at the heart of the Center," said Rosen, who gives annually to the Center but wanted to increase his impact. "When talking with Katie, I asked her what her biggest need was, and we worked to establish a goal for which I'm now focusing my support," he said. "I'm elated to be of assistance in supporting the Center's graduate students in their work to acquire a degree or degrees from Ole Miss, and I hope to inspire others to join with me."

McKee said the gift will make an immediate impact by allowing for the retention of Southern Studies graduate students and aiding in future recruitment to the program. "We are very grateful for Mr. Rosen's gift, which we plan to use to create graduate assistantships in the upcoming year," she said. "We're seeing more students coming to us knowing that they want to stay for three years, rolling from their MA to an MFA degree in documentary expression, and gifts like this one make a tremendous difference."

"It's very gratifying," McKee continued. "It's also thrilling and very rewarding when someone like Mr. Rosen, who had no previous connection to Southern Studies or the university, comes to our events, sees the interdisciplinary conversations we're seeking to facilitate and the research we're pursuing, and wants to support that."



JAMES G. THOMAS, JR.

Rosen, an avid reader of William Faulkner, became interested in the Center after hearing a lecture by Bill Ferris. "Bill's presentation was amazing, and I decided to attend the university's Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference in 2018 to see what it was all about," Rosen said. "And you know what? It was phenomenal! It was absolutely a continuing education experience for me."

One trip to Oxford led to another and another until Rosen, a friend member of the Ole Miss Alumni Association and member of the Friends of the Center, now makes at least four annual visits to events on campus: the Oxford Conference for the Book, the Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference, and two Ole Miss football games.

"I've met so many wonderful people on campus and in town that coming back to the Center and to Ole Miss is like coming back to see distant family members," said Rosen, who with his wife, Liz, has two grown children, Josh and Laura.

"I am blown away by the work being done at the Center, and the staff has done a fantastic job with their outreach, such as the SouthTalks lecture series and various programming," he continued. "I'm committed to giving my support and my time to help spread the word about the great things happening there."

The Marc Rosen Fund for Graduate Student Support at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture is open to support from businesses and individuals. Gifts can be made online at [nowandever.olemiss.edu](http://nowandever.olemiss.edu) or by sending a check, with the fund's name noted on the memo line, to the University of Mississippi Foundation, 406 University Ave., Oxford, MS 38655.

For more information about supporting the Center, contact Rob Jolly at [jolly@olemiss.edu](mailto:jolly@olemiss.edu) or 662-915-3085.

Mary Stanton Knight

# The Value of Creative Collaboration

## *A Conversation with Melanie Ho*

The Center for the Study of Southern Culture recently welcomed Melanie Ho to the SouthDocs staff. Melanie is a filmmaker, writer, and Florida native. She earned her MFA from the social documentation program at UC Santa Cruz, and much of her work centers around underrepresented voices and stories in the South.

**Danielle Buckingham:** Food seems to be a significant theme in your work. Why do you so often focus on food?

**Melanie Ho:** I started understanding my own Vietnamese American identity through food. I was really into creative writing in college, and I would write a lot about food, how it ties into identity, and how we sometimes process the world through food. I remember when *Bon Appetit* had this video that came out, “How to Eat Pho,” and it was this white guy explaining how to eat pho. He was really snarky about the correct way to eat it, and I was thinking, how did this giant media company publish this? How many eyes were on this, and who was behind this thought process? So I started exploring food and identity, and how those things intersect.

**DB:** Much of your work also centers marginalized folks, especially Vietnamese Americans.

**MH:** Yes, now that I am here, I’m trying to think about stories that I can dive into that are specific to Mississippi, specifically for Vietnamese communities. I was looking at Biloxi because Andy Harper shared with me a piece that SouthDocs made in Biloxi about



JAMES G. THOMAS, JR.

a Vietnamese fishermen. I’ve also been looking at catfish just because it’s specific to Mississippi.

**DB:** Your film project, *sóng ở đây*, focused on Vietnamese shrimpers and elderly farmers in New Orleans. Can you talk a little bit about that project, and what led you there?

**MH:** I wanted to make a story in the South, specific to the Vietnamese communities just because that’s what aligned with my identity. I saw a film by S. Leo Chiang called *A Village Called Versailles*, about the Vietnamese community in New Orleans, and I was like, oh, this is really interesting. I started reading about why there are a lot of Vietnamese folks there. I became really interested in understanding how similar New Orleans is to Vietnam and also in this double displacement that has happened for the folks that had to leave Vietnam because of the war, went to New Orleans, but then had to leave again because of Katrina. It had a lot of complexities to it. I ended up going to New Orleans and just trying to meet folks and understand the community. I originally wanted to explore the production of food and how it goes from the land to harvest and how it

is represented in different dishes, but I went a different way and started focusing on labor a lot more.

**DB:** What are you most looking forward to during your time with SouthDocs?

**MH:** I’m really excited to get connected to folks like the students in the MFA program and the MA program, and to just learn about what everyone’s working on. I feel like that’s always a breath of fresh air. I sat in on both John Rash’s and Rex Jones’s classes and watched what people were sharing. It’s really amazing. I love learning about these stories that I don’t often get a chance to hear about. But also, I really want to make an effort toward more collaborative filmmaking. I’m used to doing everything by myself, but I think there’s a lot more opportunity for creativity when you get to do something with other people.

Also, being able to be here, and really focusing on the South, it’s like nothing I ever imagined. I was making films in the South, but now I feel supported in it. I felt supported in my master’s program too, but here I’m constantly in the mindset of thinking about the region, exploring things I never knew about, while also highlighting things I’m already interested in. It’s really exciting. I’ll be taking the time to discover what stories aren’t represented. The South as a whole is so underrepresented. The Center for Asian American Media did specific talks and storytelling in the South, and they presented statistics about the lack of conversations in the South. I hope to add to that conversation.

Danielle Buckingham

# Lasseter and Hall Serve as Interim Co-Directors of the Southern Foodways Alliance

Beginning January 1, 2022, Melissa Booth Hall and Mary Beth Lasseter will lead the Southern Foodways Alliance as interim co-directors. Lasseter joined SFA in 2000, earning an MA in Southern Studies in 2002 and an MBA in 2004. Hall earned a JD before joining SFA in 2003. John T. Edge, director since the 1999 inception of the SFA, will center his University of Mississippi work on creativity initiatives. He will also serve SFA as founding director. These transitions result from five years of succession planning and financial planning. SFA thanks its board of advisors for their stewardship, its members and donors for their support, its collaborators for their work, and its University of Mississippi colleagues for their leadership.



## Southern Foodways Alliance Partners with Hub City Press to Distribute *Gravy*

The Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA) and Hub City Press are proud to announce a new partnership to distribute SFA's quarterly print journal, *Gravy*. The publication tells stories of the changing American South.

"I am delighted to begin this relationship with Hub City Press," said Sara Camp Milam, SFA managing editor. "For years we have been eager to get *Gravy* in the hands of more readers in the South and beyond. I admire Hub City for their expansive, inclusive thinking around southern literature, and I am so grateful they will help us extend the reach of *Gravy* so that even more readers can enjoy and learn from these stories."

Hub City Press, now in its twenty-sixth year, is the South's premier independent literary press. Funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and focused on finding and spotlighting extraordinary new and unsung writers from the American

COVER ART BY MOLLY BROOKS



South, their curated list champions diverse authors and books that don't fit into the commercial or academic publishing landscape. Hub City Press books have been widely praised and featured in the *New York*

*Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *NPR*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Entertainment Weekly*, the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and many other outlets.

"I couldn't be more thrilled at this new partnership," said Meg Reid, director of Hub City Press. "Our hope is that by distributing *Gravy* to a wider audience, we can help amplify the incredible work the SFA team is doing. Plus, this collaboration advances the shared mission of both our organizations: working to transform and expand the national perception of the American South in literature and beyond."

The partnership will formally begin with the Winter 2022 issue of *Gravy*, which will be released on January 20. The issue will be for sale on Hub City Press's website and also nationally distributed to the trade by Publishers Group West, making the magazine available in independent bookstores, gift shops, and other retail entities nationwide.

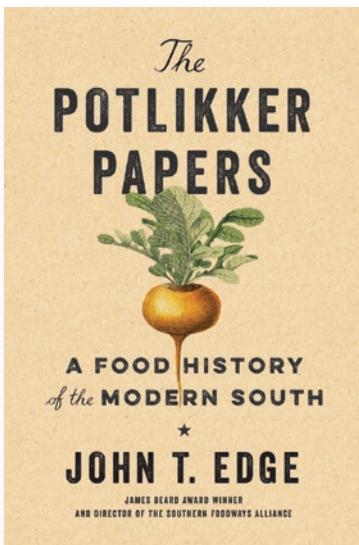
# University of Alabama Honors College Selects *The Potlikker Papers* for Common Read

The University of Alabama Honors College has selected John T. Edge's book *The Potlikker Papers: A Food History of the Modern South* for its Common Book Experience in 2021–22.

In *The Potlikker Papers*, the Southern Foodways Alliance founding director weaves together the story of food and politics in the South over the last six decades. Beginning in 1955 with the Black women whose food and labor provided fuel for the Montgomery bus boycott, Edge takes the reader on a culinary odyssey that reveals the history of the modern South. Highlighting the stories of noted southern chefs, restaurateurs, and politicians, *The Potlikker Papers* is the history of the modern South as seen through the lens of food.

A campus-wide committee composed of faculty and staff chooses the UA Honors Common Book. It is read by all first-year students in the Honors College and is discussed by freshmen, faculty, and mentors, both inside and outside of the classroom.

"Foodways scholarship is the perfect vehicle for introducing our students to interdisciplinary studies," said Anne Franklin Lamar, director of Honors Year One. "As Edge shows us, the study of food helps us make meaning of the intersecting aspects of our lives. Food is not only central to our daily rituals but also to our cultural construction and our understanding of the past and world around us today. We all have stories to share about food, whether they are about a recipe passed down for generations or a simple connection made over a shared meal. As we read



JASON THRASHER

*The Potlikker Papers* together, we'll explore the often unheard stories of the South and its people and discuss how identity, place, and narrative are interwoven in our understanding and analysis of the text."

The Honors College welcomed John T. Edge to campus, October 3–5. Programming included faculty roundtables and class lectures, culminating in a public lecture given by Edge on Tuesday, October 5, in Moody Auditorium on the University of Alabama campus.

## SFA 2021 in Review

In 2021 the Southern Foodways Alliance told transformative stories—from the compassion of public-school lunch ladies in Appalachia to food-justice work in Mississippi to entrepreneurship in Alabama's Black Belt.

*Gravy* quarterly and podcast supported the work of sixty-seven writers, producers, illustrators, and photographers. Plus, we welcomed *Gravy* guest editor Adrian Miller to tell barbecue stories from Copenhagen to Cairo (Illinois, that is) with stops in West Africa and eastern North Carolina.

SFA hosted its twenty-fourth Fall Symposium as the first in-person event since 2019. We launched a new symposium ticket pricing structure—capping all tickets at \$500 and introducing a pay-what-you-can model—that reflects SFA's commitment to a more equitable, inclusive, and financially accessible event.

Led by oral historian Annemarie Anderson, SFA completed sixty-five interviews and continued work on SFA's largest project to date, the Covid-19 oral history project.

Pihakis Foodways Filmmaker Zaire Love joined SFA in April. Love hit the ground running, producing a film tribute to Craig Claiborne Lifetime Achievement Award Winner Bill Smith and directing a film amplifying the work of writer, scholar, and symposium speaker Carolyn Finney.

SFA thanks its members, donors, and collaborators for their support of our work.

# Photographing Place in the American South

Using the medium of still photography, David Wharton's fall Southern Studies 598 course, Photographing Place in the American South, focused on the relationship between local cultures and the physical world(s) that such cultures create. Students in the class made photographs in Oxford, in Lafayette County, and in the counties that border Lafayette County. In-class activities examined the idea of "place," reviewed the visual landscape/place tradition, considered various examples of cultural-and social-landscape photography, and discussed student-made photographs. Late-semester class sessions were devoted to editing and curating student photographs for an exhibition that will hang in the Gammill Gallery in the spring of 2022.

Here is a selection of photographs produced in the class.

Katherine Aberle,  
*Terry Likin in His  
Barbershop, Oxford  
Wheel Estates,  
Oxford, Mississippi*



Christina Huff, *Dollar General, Sardis, Mississippi*





**Janeth Jackson, Terry, Bad Boys Bar-B-Q, Holly Springs, Mississippi**



**Emily Williams, Sawn Log, the South Campus Trails, Oxford, Mississippi**



**Jessica Cobb, Statue of Jamie Whitten, US Congressman, Charleston, Mississippi**



**Kathryn McCullouch, Front Porch, Taylor, Mississippi**

# The Stuff of Legend

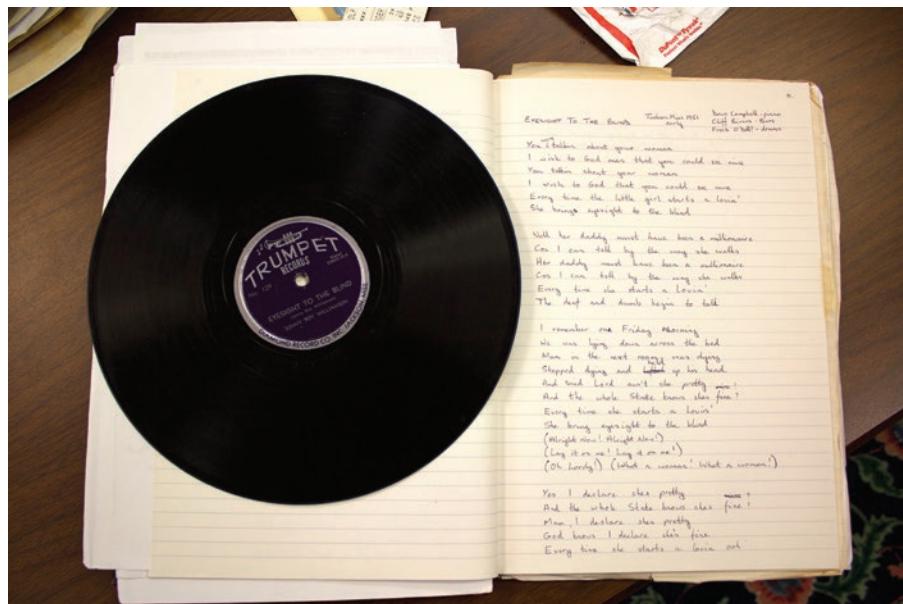
## *Bill Donoghue Collection Donated to Special Collections*

Sonny Boy Williamson soap and incense, test pressings of Memphis Slim and Buddy Holly records, and a signed contract by B. B. King are only a few of the many items recently donated by the family of Bill Donoghue to the Department of Archives and Special Collections at the University of Mississippi's J. D. Williams Library.

Donoghue (June 25, 1941–January 16, 2017) was born in West Chester, Pennsylvania, but settled in Seattle, Washington, and was a man of many interests. He was a respected author and investment expert, best known for his book and newsletter that tracked the growth of money-market mutual funds. In 1980 Donoghue wrote *William E. Donoghue's Complete Money Market Guide*, which reached number three on the *New York Times* best seller list, and he followed that successful first guide with a series of similar books.

But Donoghue's other passion was Aleck Miller, better known as Sonny Boy Williamson II (1912–1965), an American blues harmonica player, singer, and songwriter. Williamson first recorded with Elmore James on "Dust My Broom," and some of his popular songs include "Don't Start Me Talkin'," "Checkin' Up on My Baby," and "Help Me," which became a blues standard recorded by many blues and rock artists. He toured Europe with the American Folk Blues Festival and recorded with English rockers the Yardbirds and the Animals.

Donoghue's brother Ned said



An early pressing of Sonny Boy Williamson's "Eyesight to the Blind" alongside session notes and lyrics transcribed by Bill Donoghue

Bill was a great enthusiast for Williamson, as well as for anything else jazz or blues related. Bill Donoghue maintained a website devoted to Williamson, in addition to collecting Williamson memorabilia. After conducting and recording interviews with more than two hundred of Williamson's friends and colleagues, Donoghue started writing a biography about the singer-songwriter titled *Hiding in the Spotlight: The Untold Story of Sonny Boy Williamson II*.

In the introduction, he wrote, "His mysterious life is the stuff of legend, and in my opinion, he was arguably the most colorful and overlooked character in American blues folklore." He

goes on to write that his "obsession" with Williamson began in August of 1995 while visiting Memphis for Elvis Week. It was then that *Living Blues* magazine founder Jim O'Neal gave him a tour of the Delta, which included Williamson's gravesite.

After his brother's death, Ned Donoghue wanted to find the proper place for Bill's incredible amount of memorabilia, so he called the Center for the Study of Southern Culture and spoke with Center director, Katie McKee.

"I was moved and touched by one brother's concern for another's collection, so I put Ned in touch with Greg Johnson, the blues curator at the Blues Archive," McKee said.

JAMES G. THOMAS, JR.

"I believe it is here that the collection can be most accessible to the broadest range of scholars and be well taken care of by Greg. People look to the Center as a starting place to see how other people study what is important to them, and the fun part of my job is connecting people who need to know each other." It is also fitting because Bill had done research at the University of Mississippi's Blues Archive with Johnson, so it made sense for his collection to be in Oxford.

"I thought about the great literary and blues scholarship reputation the University of Mississippi has as an institution, and I knew Greg shared his enthusiasm for jazz and blues," Ned Donoghue said. "The Donoghue Collection at the University of Mississippi will serve as a Mecca for the music or popular-culture scholar who seeks primary and secondary source material conducive to interpreting the man and the oeuvre and the legend that was Sonny Boy Williamson II."

Johnson said Bill originally came to do research on Trumpet Records, which recorded a number of blues, gospel, and rockabilly artists. "Bill came here because of the Trumpet Records collection, which was based in Jackson in the 1950s and run by Lillian McMurry," Johnson said. "She was the first person to record Sonny Boy, and we have his recording contracts, royalty statements, correspondence, and more. Bill looked at that and the Ivy Gladden Collection from Helena, Arkansas, which has the famous King Biscuit photos with Sonny Boy used to sell cornmeal."

Johnson has fond memories of Donoghue in the archives. "I remember him being just so excited about Sonny Boy, it was clearly his obsession," Johnson said. "He had so many great anecdotes, and he shared stories with me. He was really excited to see the Trumpet Collection. Seeing real source material is a powerful experience, and this was his passion."

When the enormous collection

arrived via truck from Seattle, Johnson said he was blown away. "This is a huge collection with an awful lot of research and display potential," he said. "There is great value to researchers, and so many beautiful posters, photos, and fliers. We can't wait to put up the physical collection. Archives depend upon donations, and the value of something like this is...who knows? Archives can't go out and purchase things like this, so donations make it all possible."

Luckily, Johnson isn't the only one who will be able to see it, as Archives and Special Collections is planning a Donoghue Collection exhibit in the Faulkner Room to begin this January and go through the end of 2022, so everyone will get to see the vast array of items.

But first, there is the task of cataloging all the items. Initially, Johnson went through all of the sound recordings and books to inventory everything, creating spreadsheets and lists to see what filled in the gaps in the library's

collection and placing everything into archival boxes and folders.

"The first thing I did was go through the 78s put them in acid-free archival sleeves and type up the inventory," he said. "Everything here will be put into a finding aid so researchers can see what we have and what to request. We are already several months into it, and there will be a series of refining the collection. We'll get an initial finding aid up, and it will be roughly organized. Then we'll narrow it down to add more granularity to the descriptions."

Johnson, as well as the Donoghue family, all look forward to showing off the collection. "The good thing is all of this will be made available and accessible to the public. It is mostly blues, but some jazz and some video and audio interviews with transcripts," Johnson said. "There is a lot to go through, but I'm excited about the exhibit to show all this off."

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

## Christmas Came Early

Archives and Special Collections also received another large shipment recently. Bill Ferris, founding director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, donated thirty-two boxes of items including LPs, CDs, and DVDs in the genre of blues, gospel, and bluegrass.

Greg Johnson said these contents will be easy to catalog because they are commercial sound recordings, and they will add to the collection Ferris has built up over the years in Special Collections. "Bill was instrumental in helping establish the Blues Archive and getting the B. B. King archives," Johnson said. "It's nice to have him add to the existing collection he helped establish."



Greg Johnson unboxing a large shipment of records donated by Bill Ferris

JAMES G. THOMAS, JR.

# I'VE GOT THE NEW YORK CITY BLUES

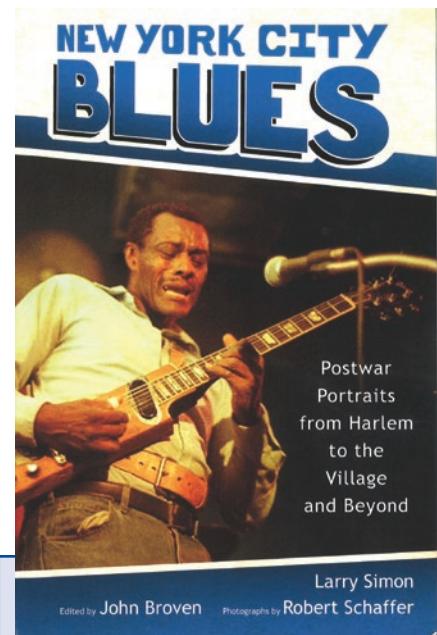
By Adam Gussow

New York City blues? I can almost hear the reader's objection to what may feel like a category error, the obverse of the equally unlikely "Mississippi jazz"—although the latter is a thing, of course, and includes luminaries like Cassandra Wilson, Wadadda Leo Smith, Milt Hinton, Jimmie Lunceford, and Mulgrew Miller. But I get the objection. What is New York City blues, after all? Does it have a characteristic sound, like Chicago blues, or Delta blues, or Piedmont blues? Did the Big Apple produce some heretofore unacknowledged cohort of influential stylists—the East Coast equivalents of Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf? The answer to both questions is . . . not really, but it's complicated.

And, to be honest, I'm incapable of being objective about all this. I wasn't just an active participant in the New York City blues scene for almost two decades before moving to Oxford in 2002, but I knew, performed with, and recorded with a number of the individuals featured in this invaluable new interview-feast *cum* cultural history, including guitarists Wild Jimmy Spruill, Larry Johnson, and Bob Malenky, producers Bobby Robinson and Len Kunstadt, and harmonica player Paul "Brooklyn Slim" Oscher. Page 191 offers a photo, new to me, of Bobby

Bennett, aka Professor Six Million, playing washtub bass on a Harlem sidewalk with guitarist Sterling "Mister Satan" Magee, four years before I wandered along and sat in on harmonica with both men. The duo act that Magee and I ended up creating on 125th Street and working at intervals for the next thirty-odd years, Satan and Adam, is mentioned on the following page. So I'm deep in it: the ultimate unreliable narrator, or reviewer. I, too, have tried, as participant/observer, to chronicle and explain the New York blues world I knew, both in a memoir, *Mister Satan's Apprentice* (1998), and in *Journeyman's Road: Modern Blues Lives from Faulkner's Mississippi to Post-9/11 New York* (2007).

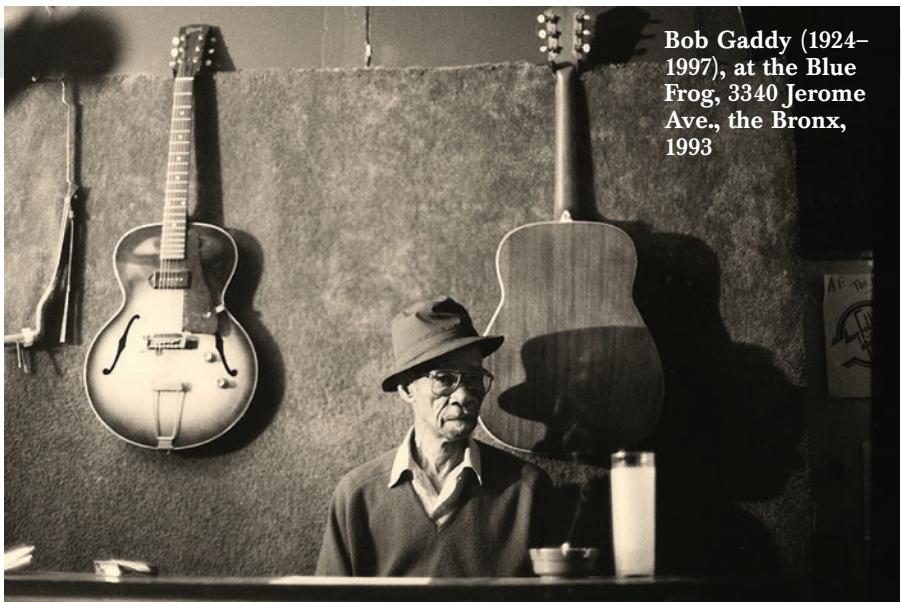
What makes *New York City Blues* so valuable—and, from my perspective, so thrilling—is that it's the first study of that scene to focus on the postwar decades, when the musicians and record men that I came to know later as formidable elders were young movers and shakers trying to take what they'd brought with them as southern-born Black migrants and forge careers in New York's bustling and heterogeneous entertainment zone. Simon, a jazz-blues guitarist who conducted half of the book's interviews, happens also to be responsible for bringing



*New York City Blues: Postwar Portraits from Harlem to the Village and Beyond*  
Edited by John Broven Photographs by Robert Schaffer

*New York City Blues: Postwar Portraits from Harlem to the Village and Beyond.* By Larry Simon. John Broven, ed. Photos by Robert Schaffer. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2021. 340 pages.

Spruill, pianist Bob Gaddy, guitarist Larry Dale, and several other of his interviewees back into circulation in the early 1990s, taking them on tour and backing them up with his band. Broven, a veteran UK blues journalist and editor of this volume, contributed four interviews from his time as a correspondent at *Juke Blues*. *New York City Blues* fills a yawning gap in the city's blues history between the Samuel Charters/Leonard Kunstadt volume, *Jazz: A History of the New York Scene* (1962), which offers excellent coverage of



the blues craze of the 1920s and its 1930s aftermath, and my own efforts as chronicler of the post-1980 period.

I knew Bobby Robinson (1917–2011), for example, as the gruff but irrepressible owner of Bobby's Happy House Records in Harlem, the legendary producer of everybody from James Cotton and Gladys Knight to Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five. In 1989 he told me first-hand the story of how he'd taken Wilbert Harrison into the studio and ended up with the million-selling "Kansas City," featuring Spruill on that spare, catchy, chunk-a-chunk guitar. When I was trying to finalize the contract for the first Satan and Adam album, *Harlem Blues* (1991), Bobby and I wrangled briefly—the aging Black record man who'd paid every sort of dues five times over, the younger white harmonica player bursting with ambition—before settling our differences. Here, though, I encountered Bobby as a much younger man and found out several things that surprised me.

One was the comparative privilege in which he'd grown up as a farm boy in rural South Carolina. He was the grandson of a preacher who'd purchased his own land in 1892, a fact which gave the family economic independence and meant, as he told Simon, that "I never had a hungry day in my life. [...] See, we could raise what we want to. We could do what

we wanted. And that was very rare. [I was] very, very lucky. Especially Black farms, there was only two or three in the whole county that I knew. Everybody else worked sharecropping." This unusual family background clearly enabled the entrepreneurial spirit that led Robinson to open his Harlem record shop in 1946—the first Black-owned business on 125th Street—and, against all odds, start his own record labels and forge ahead.

But what gave him a feel for the blues, and for what southern-born black migrants wanted to hear, was the gutbucket experience he'd managed to accrue as that same South Carolina farm boy. His interview with Simon offers this extraordinary evocation of Depression-era blues life:

Saturday night they used to have what they called a frolic. This is as low as they get. Way out in the country a bootlegger he had this thing way out in the cotton field, way in the country there. I was fourteen or fifteen. [...] I'd go down the road apiece from my house after it got dark, and the guys would come and pick me up. This is a dangerous place because the guy is a bootlegger, illegal liquor dealer, and whatnot. And the guy would have three lanterns tied to the porch. There was no light. And you'd walk in the house past where the beds was and just two chairs and two guitar players, that's

all that was in the room then you go ahead into the kitchen coming from the living room across the kitchen there was a table, and there was two big women there frying fish and chicken and whatnot all night long. Every time you go you have to buy a piece of fish or chicken or a drink. Man those guys, they got there in the corner facing each other with guitars, acoustic guitars, and they sang the blues, and they get onto dancing and after a while after three or four drinks of that good strong liquor, they were gone. It was like that all night long. I was fascinated with it. Here were people who worked hard on the farms all day long. They went out on a Saturday night with liquor and music and dance and they let their hair down. This was for real. [...] They didn't worry about money. There weren't no money to be got. I'm talking about the '30s. So they got drunk and danced until day. Two guitars, that was the real blues.

What is New York City blues? It is, or was, the product of Black southern migrants like Robinson, and my longtime partner Magee (b. Mount Olive, Mississippi, 1936), both of them veterans of the US military, who carried this sort of juke joint sensibility into the hustle and bustle of Harlem and made something new of it, updating the sound without losing the feel. But it was also women like Victoria Spivey (1906–1976), Houston-born, a celebrated blues queen in the 1920s who later resettled in Brooklyn, cohabited with her much younger admirer, producer Lenny Kunstadt—I knew him as a sprightly older man who chattered like Jimmy Durante—and made her house a haven for younger white blues and folk artists like Paul Oscher and Bob Dylan, the latter of whom credits her with giving him his start as a performer in Greenwich Village. "I ain't got nothing but young boys around me," she told journalist and photographer Val Wilmer. "They keep me young."

The pleasures of this book are legion and include an invaluable introductory essay by Broven in which he acknowledges that prewar New York, a recording industry hub, was “effectively a clearinghouse for the blues, not a permanent domicile,” even while making a case for the national importance of Spruill, Robinson, and their peers, Black and (later) white, including songwriter/blues shouter Doc Pomus, author of “Lonely Avenue,” and Greenwich Village native John Hammond Jr. Songwriter Rose Marie McCoy (b. 1922), a native Arkansan, wrote hits for Big Maybelle, Ruth Brown, Nat King Cole, Nappy Brown, and Elvis Presley. “[W]e used to write songs in Beefsteak Charlie’s,” she remembered of her early 1950s’ midtown Manhattan beginnings in the Brill Building. “We used to come in there at six o’clock in the morning and we had a booth and we could write in there. We would buy a glass of wine for thirty cents and we would sip on it. And they would take our phone calls and all the big publishers used to come there and hear our songs.”

That, pal, is, or was, New York City blues.



Adam Gussow has a joint appointment in English and Southern Studies. His books include *Mister Satan's Apprentice: A Blues Memoir* (1998), *Seems Like Murder Here: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition* (2000), *Beyond the Crossroads: The Devil and the Blues Tradition* (2017), and *Whose Blues? Facing Up to Race and the Future of the Music* (2020).



# Eudora Welty Awards

Each year the Center for the Study of Southern Culture presents the Eudora Welty Awards in Creative Writing to Mississippi high school students during the annual Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference. Established and endowed by the late Frances Patterson of Tupelo, the awards are given for creative writing in either prose or poem form.

As in past years, students must be Mississippi residents. The competition is open to ninth through twelfth graders, and writing should be submitted through students' high schools. Short stories should not exceed three thousand words, and poetry should not exceed one hundred lines. Winning students will be notified at least a month prior to award presentation. The first-place prize is \$500, and the second-place prize is \$250. The winners will also be recognized at the opening of the 2022 Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference on the University of Mississippi campus in Oxford on July 17.

Each entry should be accompanied by the entry form and postmarked by Friday, May



13, 2022. Faculty and staff from the Center for the Study of Southern Culture will judge the entries and select the winners. Application and submission requirements will be sent to all Mississippi public and private schools. If you know a Mississippi student currently enrolled in high school outside of the state or who is homeschooled, please e-mail [rebeccac@olemiss.edu](mailto:rebeccac@olemiss.edu). To see a list of past winners or to download or complete the application, visit [www.southernstudies.olemiss.edu/academics/high-school-eudora-welty-awards](http://www.southernstudies.olemiss.edu/academics/high-school-eudora-welty-awards).

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**Charles Reagan Wilson** is director emeritus of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture (1998–2007).

# Living Blues News

This issue, #276, features a wide swath of blues, beginning with cover artist Sugaray Rayford from Phoenix. Rayford is a vocalist who commands the stage with his charismatic presence and powerful vocals. New Orleans-based Alabama Slim is an old-school performer; at age eighty-two he has only recently come to the attention of the blues world. On the other end of the spectrum is twenty-eight-year-old Joey J. Saye from Chicago who is just beginning to work his way onto the blues scene.

Alabama bluesman Ric Patton is taking a unique route to reach fans. He has shifted his focus from playing music on the street to becoming a TikTok star posting blues on the internet daily.

We also catch up with our old friend Corey Harris about his new album and how he was forced to stay in Italy for nearly a year due to Covid travel restrictions, and we take a look at Lightnin' Hopkins's 1959 recording session with Sam Charters for Folkways.

On a more solemn note, one of my best friends in the blues, Willie Cobbs, has died. Willie was a gem and was truly one of a kind. He was one of the greatest characters I have ever met. He had the most infectious laugh I have ever been around, and Willie laughed ALL the time. You could say "hamburger" and Willie would laugh and suddenly you would be laughing too. In the spring of 2000, my wife and I drove to Smale, Arkansas, to meet Willie. We drove through a mini-tornado on a levee called Hog Farm Lane, lost in the Arkansas Delta until we turned in a drive and saw this strange, white, adobe-looking house that

had, in two-foot-high letters stretched across the front of it, "Welcome to the Cobbs." We knew we were there!

Willie Cobbs is best known for writing "You Don't Love Me." The song has been covered by a string of artists, most notably the Allman Brothers in 1971 and Dawn Penn, who had a huge reggae hit with it in 1994. But Willie was far more than that one song. He was himself. He knew he was good. He knew he was unique musically. And for eighty-nine years he followed that vision.

As he told me when I interviewed him in 2000, "You Don't Love Me" was a picture. Back then people plowed with mules. You may be in a slough or in a field over across the woods, a little slice over between you and him. That's what started me. I could hear this guy singing. And the echo came over the water, over the mist, came to where I was, and it was, 'Uh, uh, uh, you don't love me, yes I know.' You could just hear the cry in his voice. And that's what the Lord gave me. I was just lying in bed, and He just woke me up. And He said, 'This is the message. I want you to take

Living Blues Talks To Corey Harris



it to the world.' It was so sad. I just couldn't help it. I just had to sit there and cry. But I've still never done it as He showed me. In other words, I feel like I'm holding something away from the whole world. 'Cause I'm the onliest one that heard it. And I still haven't took it the way He asked me to take it. I think if I turn around and do that song with an acoustic guitar and sing it and blow that harp, no drums, and no nothin'—the acoustic might get it. Keep it slow. It's like the graveyard."

I'll miss you, Willie.

I recently got word of two other losses in the blues world—both Sonny Rhodes and Joe Simon have died. We will have obituaries for both in the next issue.

Hopefully in 2022 we will turn the corner on Covid and begin to realize our post-pandemic normal with a healthy dose of live blues activity.

Brett J. Bonner

by Christopher Klug

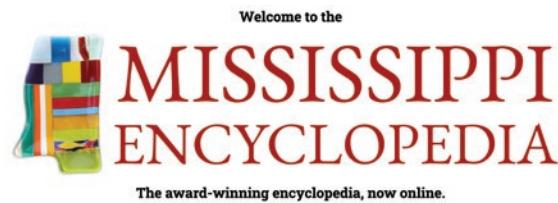
Alabama Slim

Longtime New Orleans resident Alabama Slim adds a compelling figure to the blues pantheon. impeccably dressed in a tailored suit and a fedora hat often with his equally sartorial best friend Little Walter, he's a throwback to the middle 20th century—a stripped-down blend of country and urban blues reminiscent of John Lee Hooker, Lightnin' Hopkins, or early Muddy Waters.

My baby is going to be a blues man one day

The Mississippi Encyclopedia has recently published new entries on Olympic gold medalist Ralph Boston and on the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol. Here's another recent addition, on what was once the most popular exhibit in the old Mississippi state history museum.

You can find this and other entries about life in Mississippi, past and present, online by going to [www.mississippiencyclopedia.org](http://www.mississippiencyclopedia.org).



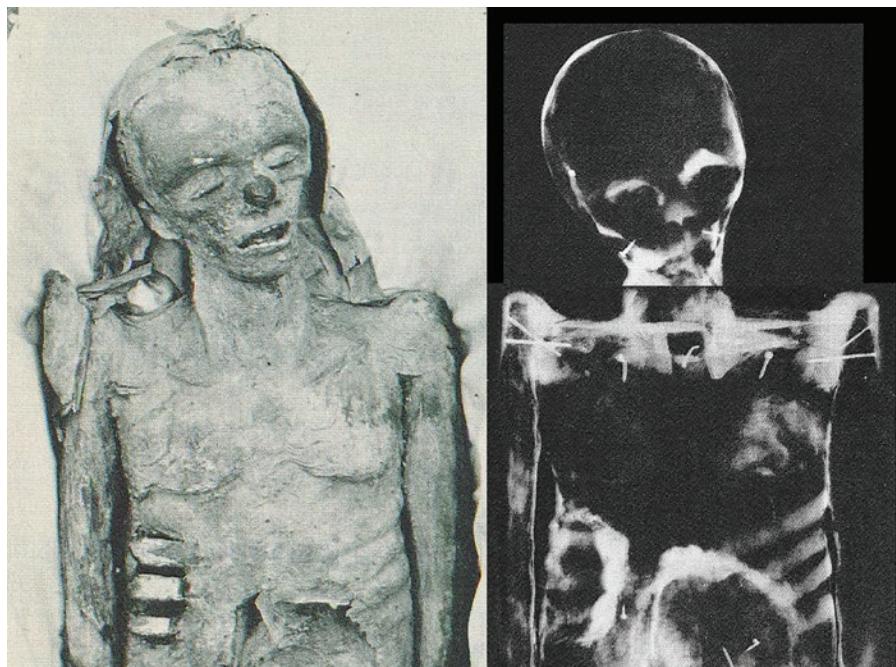
# “The Dummy Mummy”

For decades children from Jackson and across Mississippi visited the state capitol and thrilled to the displays of Native American arrowheads, a menacing nineteenth-century Bowie knife, and a World War I machine gun. But one artifact surpassed all others in popularity—a small, mummified Egyptian princess. Generations of young people viewed the delightfully macabre figure in its red velvet coffin.

A public outcry arose in the late 1950s when the state decided not to include the mummy in the new Mississippi history museum being planned at the Old Capitol. Many letters to the editor decried the decision after it was relegated to a storage room when that museum opened.

The artifact was not exhibited because it did not pertain directly to Mississippi history, but in 1969 another reason to keep it hidden away was revealed—the mummy was a fake. University of Mississippi Medical School student Gentry W. Yeatman, who had been given permission to examine the artifact for a class project, discovered the deception.

Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) director Charlotte Capers wrote in a *Delta* magazine article titled “Dummy Mummy” the next year: “Last summer, the same summer that saw men walk on the moon, science ripped the veil from another mystery and left disillusion and distress in the wake of an x-ray beam.” Yeatman,



A photo of the Dummy Mummy (*left*) and the x-ray (*right*) that exposed the artifact as a fraud.

Capers wrote, found that the artifact’s “heart was full of nails. Further, her shoulders were built of boards, she had a German language newspaper in her foot, and over her liver was a fragment of the *Milwaukee Journal* from 1898.”

The mummy came to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in 1923 as part of a large collection of “antiquities” purchased from heirs of Brevoort Butler Jr. of Yazoo City. Dunbar Rowland recommended its acquisition in 1910 when he served as MDAH director; his evaluation of

the collection found it to contain nearly “every kind of implement, ornament, or weapon used in the daily life of the Indians.”

Because of its popularity among Mississippians, the artifact was officially accessioned into the MDAH collection in 2012. The Dummy Mummy often reappears in October at MDAH sites—with new interpretation that tells the full story of the artifact.

Chris Goodwin  
Mississippi Department of  
Archives and History

IMAGES COURTESY OF THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

# WHAT HAS BEEN WILL BE AGAIN

## PHOTOGRAPHIC MEDITATIONS ON SOCIAL ISOLATION IN ALABAMA

Social isolation is both a phrase and an experience that has defined the past year in the wake of the global Covid-19 pandemic. Jared Ragland's ongoing photographic travelogue, *What Has Been Will Be Again: Photographic Meditations on Social Isolation in Alabama*, expressly evokes the loneliness that has characterized this period. Catherine Wilkins's text for this new *Study the South* essay describes how Ragland's images speak to "the mood of our moment while also asserting the timelessness of its theme . . . by illustrating the perpetuated use of segregation and sequestration in service of the white supremacist myths of American individualism and exceptionalism. As viewers prepare to emerge from quarantine and rejoin in a 'post-pandemic' society," Wilkins writes, "Ragland asks us to bear witness to the people and places who cannot so easily shrug off the mantle of social isolation."

Jared Ragland (MFA, Tulane University) is an assistant professor of photography at Utah State University. His socially conscious visual practice confronts issues of identity, marginalization, and the history of place through social-science, literary, and historical-research methodologies.



*Evergreen, Conecuh County, Alabama. Antoine, 2021*



*Spring Hill, Barbour County, Alabama. Michael Farmer fashions a scarecrow next to his garden on Election Day, 2020*

Catherine Wilkins (PhD, Tulane University) is an instructor in the Judy Genshaft Honors College at the University of South Florida and is committed to community-engaged teaching and research practices. A cultural historian, Wilkins focuses on visual and literary production—from the nineteenth century to today—and its intersection with sociopolitical issues.

Visit *Study the South* online at [www.StudytheSouth.com](http://www.StudytheSouth.com) to read the essay.

*Study the South* is a peer-reviewed, multimedia, online journal, published and managed by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi. The journal, founded in 2014, exists to encourage interdisciplinary academic thought and discourse on the culture of the American South, particularly in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, music, literature, documentary studies, gender studies, religion, geography, media studies, race studies, ethnicity, folklife, and art. Contact James G. Thomas, Jr. at [jgthomas@olemiss.edu](mailto:jgthomas@olemiss.edu) for more information.

# “All Our Names Were Freedom”

## *Oral History Project Now Available Online*

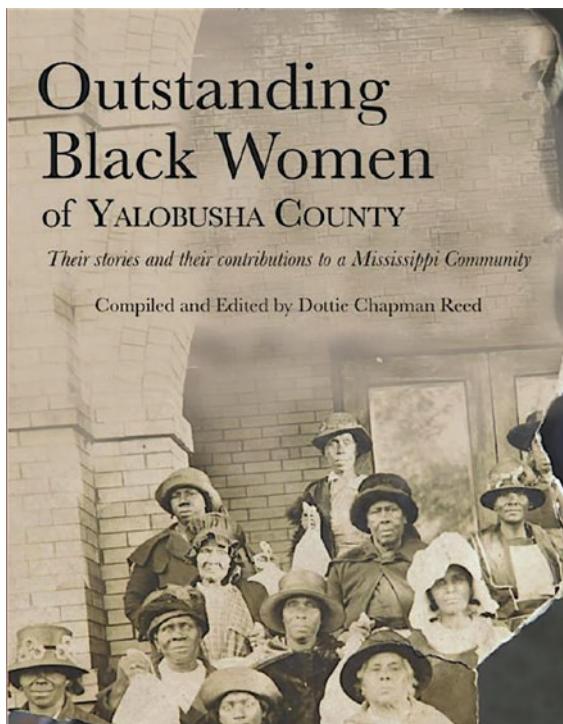
In the fall of 2019, Water Valley native Dottie Reed and former graduate director for the Center for the Study of Southern Culture Jessica Wilkerson began discussing ways of sharing the untold struggles, triumphs, and legacies of local Black families. Their desire soon sparked an oral history project that documented the stories of elder African American men and women in Yalobusha County.

During the spring semester of 2020, Brian Foster, former assistant professor of sociology and Southern Studies, took over as director of the project and collaborated with Reed and students from his Oral History of Southern Social Movements class to keep the project moving forward. The students who collected the oral histories

included Colton Babbitt, Michelle Bright, Brittany Brown, Keon Burns, Rhondalyn Peairs, and Jasmine Stansberry.

The students conducted original research and recorded first-person accounts with eight narrators, all of whom grew up in and had strong family ties to Yalobusha County: Lillie Roberts, Emma Faye Gooch, Dorothy Kee, Marjorie Moore, Katherine Roland Pollard, Luther Folson Jr., Luther Folson Sr., and James Wright. The stories they collected were testimonials surrounding African Americans' involvement in buying land, building churches and schools, and participating in civil rights protests. Other stories included conversations about equality, the right to vote, and the daily hardships of being African American in the US South.

After several listening sessions of stories they collected, the students created a multivocal and multi-layered history, which they entitled “All Our Names Were Freedom”: Agency, Resiliency, and Community in Yalobusha County.” On December 7, 2019, they presented the collected narratives in a staged reading at Spring Hill M.B. Church. Additionally, in the spring semester of 2020, the students collaborated with Reed for a performance of “All Our Names Were Freedom” as part of the Center’s SouthTalks series.



Recently, Reed released a book entitled *Outstanding Black Women of Yalobusha County: Their Stories and Their Contributions to a Mississippi Community*. Within her work, Reed shares stories of the resilience, perseverance, and determination of Black women in Yalobusha County. Several of Reed’s books’ participants are also participants of the Black Families of Yalobusha County project. PhD candidate Jasmine Stansberry is also using the stories she collected in the Black Families of Yalobusha County project in her dissertation. Within her work, she highlights stories of Black college-student activism during the 1960s and early 1970s. Her dissertation also examines the Black Power movement and its

connections with Black residents of Mississippi.

The Black Families of Yalobusha County project is currently on hiatus; however, those who have participated in the project are eager to continue sharing the dynamic stories of those of Yalobusha County. The Center for the Study of Southern Culture director, Katie McKee, said, “We celebrate the voices of those we were able to hear. We’re grateful to Ms. Reed for her partnership in navigating the dynamics of the community of Water Valley, and we look forward to finding ways to continue to work with Ms. Reed and the community in Yalobusha County.”

Black Families of Yalobusha County has been supported by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, the Arch Dalrymple III Department of History, and the UM Diversity Incentive Fund. With the support of a \$3,000 donation from the Sylarn Foundation, students will soon be able to continue collecting stories. The oral history interviews of Black Families of Yalobusha County are now available on the University of Mississippi’s eGrove website at [egrove.olemiss.edu/blkfam\\_yalo/](http://egrove.olemiss.edu/blkfam_yalo/).

Janeth Jackson

# Exploring the South with Jane Rule Burdine

*“From the Vault” is a regular column exploring southern artwork found in the permanent collection of the University of Mississippi Museum.*

“My work really is just getting in the car, filling it up with gas and . . . where am I gonna go?” says Jane Rule Burdine. “Left? Right? North or South? And I just take off and see what happens.”

Photographers have long had a fascination with the American South. Its history and culture are so strongly tied to environment that it’s a fitting subject for an aesthetic medium. It takes very little work to make the South look interesting, to promote curiosity, and to inspire imagination. But through the eyes and lens of Greenville, Mississippi, native and longtime Taylor, Mississippi, resident Jane Rule Burdine, the South becomes much more complex. As Burdine states, “When I go out hunting for these photographs, it’s not like a stranger coming to town. I can move fluidly. I know what I’m seeing. There’s so much here that I know and can discover within my knowledge.”

Growing up, Burdine envisioned more than what was expected of any young Delta lady, namely, a good marriage and lots of children. “I struck out on my own,” she said, and got her master’s degree in sociology, then began working as a photojournalist for the Louisiana State Tourism Bureau. After returning to Mississippi, Burdine started a long-term photography project in the 1980s on an area of Tunica, Mississippi, known as Sugar Ditch. At that time Sugar Ditch was the poorest county in the nation, and Burdine spent over a year photographing the people who lived there. She has also done several photographic projects for the Children’s Defense Fund, documenting families living in poverty in rural agricultural areas. With all these projects, it was important to her that she photograph these subjects honestly, without sensationalizing their circumstance, an effort



*Natchez Ladies*, 1981, Jane Rule Burdine, Cibachrome II Print Photograph, Object ID #: 1985.001.0003. Used by permission of the University of Mississippi Museum and Historic Houses.

that translates clearly in her images.

The South’s complex history makes it a compelling photographic subject. Photographers who attempt to record their impressions of it often reduce the region to one of two clichés: either the tropes of southern iconography or the romantic aesthetics of its decaying architecture—as Burdine puts it, “dead barn art.” The problem with these is that they fail to capture the South honestly, which can be problematic.

Burdine wants the viewer to stop and look at the dead barn, but

more than that, she wants us to really get to know it, to attempt to understand it within a larger, more complex context. And that’s what she hopes her photography accomplishes.

Her work can also capture the more bizarre or eccentric aspects of the South. She calls this her “wacko” work, or work that captures “the it-ness of a weird thing seen.” What makes photography so unique is its ability to capture the truth of the world, while also seeking out its magic, what makes it a little mysterious and sometimes absurd. Jane Rule Burdine’s photography finds that magic—whether its kids playing in a front yard, or two ladies in Natchez, Mississippi—and asks us to take a closer look.

The University of Mississippi Museum holds several of Burdine’s photographs in their permanent collection.

Amanda Malloy

*Amanda Malloy received her MA in Southern Studies from the University of Mississippi, focusing on southern photography. She is currently the visual arts editor of Mississippi Folklife.*



# Sudye Cauthen

(January 13, 1943–September 1, 2021)

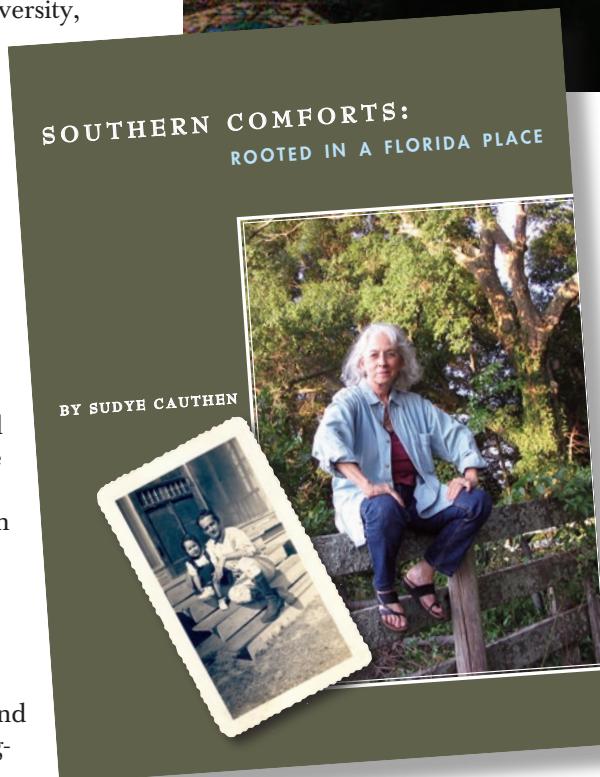
Sudye Cauthen passed away in September and was buried in her family's cemetery near LaCrosse, Florida, on September 13. Cauthen was one of the earliest Southern Studies graduate students, beginning her coursework in 1990. She came to the Center with a wealth of oral history interviews and plunged into documentary work that she hoped would help her understand her little postage stamp of north Florida in and around Alachua.

As a Southern Studies student, she was part of a student and faculty exchange with the folklife program at Western Kentucky University, where she presented her research. Her

master's thesis in 1993 utilized poetry, fiction, oral history, and memoir to illuminate her geographic and social points of origin. She later built a cabin on the Suwannee River and enjoyed the pleasures—and endured the occasional environmental headaches—of living close to nature, while avoiding the distractions of modern life and pursuing her writing passion.

Cauthen founded the North Florida Center for Documentary Studies in 1997. She taught poetry and fiction in a special writing-in-the-schools program in several public schools, and she taught at the University of Central Florida, Florida State University, and community colleges along the Suwannee River near her home in White Springs.

Cauthen was a recipient of the



Florida Individual Artist Fellowship in Literature and the author of three books that combined oral history, meditation, and social analysis: *Southern Comforts: Rooted in a Florida Place* (2007), *The Salvation of Maggie Rider: Stories*

from *Nokofta* (2010), and *Florida's Bellamy Road: A Place Remembered* (2018). She was honest and rigorous in bringing alive the stories of her extended family and the diverse peoples who had occupied the land of her birth for generations. Her works together established a model of doing Southern Studies rooted in listening to the voices that were once buried but that she brought alive. Her stories show how self-reflection can be an important part of bringing a place into greater clarity.

Florida writer Harry Crews read *Southern Comforts* in one sitting and recommended we all do so: "To make history—place—beat with the pulse of blood is perhaps the most difficult of all the writer's alchemy and, when it is done well, it is the most rewarding. Sudye Cauthen has rewarded us with the eye, ear, and memory of the natural writer." That should be on her tombstone: Natural Writer.

Charles Reagan Wilson

# Madeleine Monica McMullan

## (July 18, 1929–October 1, 2021)

Longtime Center friend and supporter Madeleine Monica McMullan, née Engel de Jánosi, died on October 1, 2021, surrounded by family at her home in Lake Forest, Illinois. She was ninety-two.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Carlette (Kalmus) and Friedrich Engel de Jánosi; and her husband, James Michael McMullan.

Madeleine was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1929. After Nazis seized the family estate, Madeleine and her parents fled to Lyons, France, in 1939, where relatives hid them. Eventually, the family settled in England, where Madeleine taught herself English by reading the dictionary. When the History Department at Johns Hopkins University offered her father a teaching position, the family emigrated to the United States.

Madeleine graduated from Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart in Baltimore, Maryland, where her mother taught French and art history. Madeleine earned her BA in English from Trinity College in Washington, DC, and her MA in history from Johns Hopkins University in 1952. She wrote for the *Washington Evening Star* before becoming an intelligence officer for the Central Intelligence Agency.

In 1957, at a party in Washington, DC, Madeleine met a young man from Newton, Mississippi, who was visiting his sister. Three days later, James McMullan proposed. They married and moved to Mississippi where Madeleine taught at East Central Junior College and then Millsaps College, where she became an associate professor. She taught European history and coauthored an integrated humanities program that was awarded a Ford Foundation grant. Madeleine also served as president of the Mississippi Art Association and the Opera Guild board.

When her husband took a job in the securities business with William Blair & Company in Chicago in 1969, they moved to Lake Forest, Illinois. Madeleine focused on philanthropy and volunteer work at Holy Family Church in Chicago, the Women's Board of Lake Forest Hospital, the Chicago Botanic Garden, and the Chicago Historical Society. She also became a founding member of the Infant Welfare Society of Chicago, where she volunteered for decades, focusing on helping immigrants fill the gap in their health care coverage. In 2004 Madeleine and James established the Madeleine and James McMullan-Carl E. Eybel, MD Chair of Excellence in Clinical Cardiology, and endowed a Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory for the new wing at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. Back in Mississippi, the couple were long-time supporters of the University of Mississippi's Center for



**Madeleine Monica McMullan**

the Study of Southern Culture, establishing two jointly appointed McMullan professorships to support the Center's interdisciplinary research and teaching.

After her husband's death in 2012, Madeleine continued her philanthropic foundation work providing generous education grants, scholarships, and funding to numerous nonprofit organizations, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Public Library, the Mississippi Museum of Art, the Mississippi Book Festival, the Eudora Welty Foundation, Millsaps College, the University of Mississippi, Newton High School, Pass Christian High School, and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. Madeleine also initiated paid internships at the Art Institute of Chicago for students who have been historically underrepresented in the arts community.

Madeleine is survived by her two daughters, Carlette McMullan of Lake Forest, Illinois, and her husband John Gibbons; Margaret McMullan of Pass Christian, Mississippi, and her husband Patrick O'Connor; and two grandchildren, Madeleine Honor Gibbons and James Raymond Engel de Jánosi O'Connor of Washington, DC.



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