

Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Honors Center with Two Awards

The Center for the Study of Southern Culture will be well represented at this year's Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters (MIAL) awards banquet in Jackson.

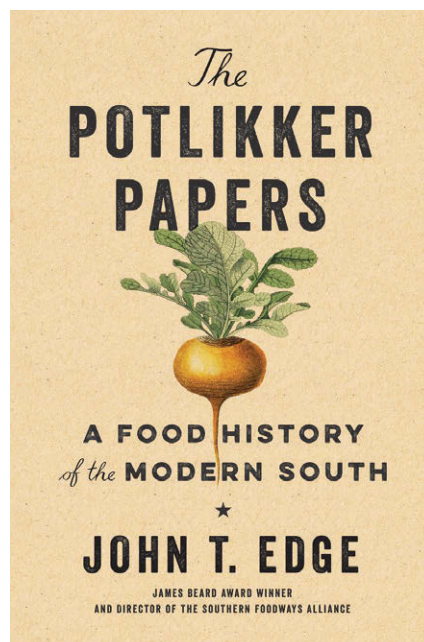
For the second time in four years, the Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters will honor the Center for its work in publishing. At this year's awards banquet, to be held at the Two Mississippi Museums on Saturday, June 2, MIAL will present Ted Ownby, Charles Reagan Wilson, Ann J. Abadie, Odie Lindsey, and James G. Thomas, Jr. with a Special Achievement Award for their work on the *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, published in May 2017 by the University Press of Mississippi. MIAL presented the Center with a Special Achievement Award for their work on *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (University of North Carolina Press) in 2014. *The Mississippi Encyclopedia* has also won an Award of Merit from the Mississippi Historical Society and the Heritage Award from the Mississippi Heritage Trust this year.

Also receiving an award at this year's banquet is John T. Edge, director of the Center's Southern Foodways Alliance. Edge is the winner of the Nonfiction Award for his recent book, *The Potlikker Papers: A Food History of the Modern South*. Edge has written or edited more than a dozen books, including the *Foodways*



volume of *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. In *The Potlikker Papers*, he traces how the food of working-class southerners became a pivotal part of American cuisine. The book has been roundly praised by major news outlets, from the *New York Times* to making NPR's list of 2017's Great Reads. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* asks, "Is *The Potlikker Papers* a history of the South by way of food stories, or a story about southern food by way of our history? By the time you come to the end of this rigorous volume, you'll know that the two are indivisible."

The Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters recently announced all of its award winners for works first published, performed, or shown in the year 2017. The award recipients, chosen by out-of-state jurors prominent in their respective fields, will be honored at the MIAL annual awards banquet. In addition to the awards banquet, Fischer Galleries in Jackson will feature the work of winners Jack Spencer and Charlie Buckley on Friday evening from 5:00 to 7:30. MIAL will also offer a tour of Pearl River Glass Studio on Saturday morning from 10:00 to 11:00 and readings and book signings by award winners at Lemuria Bookstore Dot Com Building at 1:30 on Saturday afternoon.





Stopping in a parking lot on a rainy morning. . . . With apologies to Robert Frost, I am stopped in a parking lot on a rainy morning. It is too dangerous to drive, so I'm waiting next to a church in northern Mississippi. I don't know anyone in this church or community, but I feel sure they wouldn't mind me stopping here.

As I wait, I'm looking out the window, pondering how the things I can see from this rainy parking lot might relate to various approaches in Southern Studies. The community where I'm parked is named for a secessionist politician who had an important role in Reconstruction. The church belongs to the most popular denomination for newly freed people after emancipation. From my window, there is nothing but fields and trees in two directions. And I'm noticing that one car after another is having trouble navigating a big puddle near the railroad tracks, a scene reminiscent of a moment in William Faulkner's *The Reivers*. For the Southern Studies scholar, the potential problem is that the combination of the Civil War, emancipation, Reconstruction, race and religion, rural life, and a scene from Faulkner start to seem like a stereotype of Southern Studies, as though *those* are the only topics that define the South and how to study it.

But the view out the window immediately complicates assumptions that Southern Studies only cares about a few predictable topics rooted in the past. Modern technologies appear in every direction. I sit next to several train cars at a railroad crossing, there are powerlines, a new bridge, and a small sign advertises cheap access to the Internet. One can see the hand of multiple governments in transportation, safety (seven signs at two intersections urge caution), electric power, and I think I see a post office in the distance. If an older Southern Studies tended to concentrate on African American churches for just a few topics—perhaps traditions of speech, music, and theology—this church seems likely to complicate any easy expectations. It is brick, with a large and well-marked parking lot, and it has multiple church buses, special

parking spaces for the minister and people with physical challenges, and a marquee mentioning multiple weekly services. This seems to be a solid, successful institution that might confound any quick expectations about church life in the rural South. Across the road, a different sign advertises a nondenominational church group I have not heard of, and I wonder if it competes with this one.

From my window or just a few miles from here, one can see connections to the wider range of more recent questions in Southern Studies. History and memory? A few hundred yards behind the church, several dozen small monuments honor the dead. And a Southern Studies colleague studies slavery and current understandings of it in a community just a county or two south of here. Literature? Another Southern Studies colleague studies the fiction of an author from that same community, and *The Mississippi Encyclopedia* tells me that at least two important poets live or grew up close to this spot. Music? We could ask how people in this community relate to the hill country blues with heroes not far from here. Protest? We're pretty close to the home of antilynching activist Ida B. Wells. Foodways? Aside from a cornfield or two, I see no examples of foodways, but there's a community a few miles north where people have put out intriguing signs that read "Family Table." Sports? Behind the church is a solitary basketball goal, a sign of the city game in the rural South, and the National Bird Dog Hall of Fame is located not far from here in Tennessee. The environment? Unlike Frost, I wouldn't assume I know whose woods these are. Education? The highway moves through an important area for innovations in religion and education, with colleges associated with multiple religious groups. Architecture? I'd like to explore the houses I can't really see from here, and a Southern Studies scholar of economics and family life wants to know more about an advertisement for "repo mobile homes." In contemporary Southern Studies, we listen and look for languages other than English, and signs along this highway advertise a number of *iglesias* ("churches"). And if one could get out of the car and start talking to people, things would get even more complicated.

There are times we may want to hurry up (in Frost's language, "to give the harness bells a shake") and ask too-quick questions. Who do these people vote for and why? How has rural life changed, or how is religion changing? What's the central theme or the most pressing problem, and how might they relate to ideas about the South? But a responsible form of Southern Studies does

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Living Blues News

Spring and summer have finally hit down here in Mississippi. My orchard is in full blossom, and the daffodils are blasting yellow joy by the thousands, signaling the end to yet another winter—at least here in Mississippi.

And with the end of winter comes the beginning of the blues festival season. This issue, #254, contains our 2018 *Living Blues* Festival Guide, the original festival guide for the blues industry. The first to publish every year, it gives you the chance to sit back and plan for the season. *LB* will be at several festivals this year, so stop by and say hello.

This issue's cover artists are perhaps the last of the classic East Coast acoustic blues duos with roots in the mid-twentieth century. At age eighty-seven, Warner Williams is one of the oldest active bluesmen in the nation. His ties to the acoustic blues of the East Coast go back further than anyone else alive.

Warner Williams and Jay Summerour (a mere sixty-seven years old) have been playing together for more than thirty years, and like other duos from the region, most notably Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee and John Cephas and Phil Wiggins, this duo goes together like toast and butter.

I first saw trumpet player James "Boogaloo" Bolden play with B. B. King in 1988 and was mesmerized with his nonstop, head-shaking dancing between horn riffs. Aptly given the nickname Boogaloo by King himself, Bolden was an integral member of the B. B. King Orchestra for thirty-five years, including taking

over as bandleader when Calvin Owens left in 1984 and remaining in that position until King's death in 2015. Bolden, who joined King after leaving the Duke Ellington Orchestra, carries on King's legacy with his own band and as a member of the B. B. King Blues Band.

Success doesn't always come to even the most talented musicians. Sometimes things just don't work out as planned. Take the case of Louisiana-born bluesman Eugene "Hideaway" Bridges. Bridges has all the talent—a good songwriter, vocalist, and guitar player—but he never could seem to break through in the blues scene in the United States. Fed up, he bought a one-way ticket to France and was quickly embraced by the European blues audience. Today, Bridges is an international blues ambassador who plays around the globe in places like Australia, Japan, Singapore, Belgium, Switzerland, England, France, Slovenia, and, yes, even the United States.

Have you ever wondered about the hundreds of bluesmen who never recorded? Much of our study of the early years of the blues has focused on recordings and the artists who made them. But what about all the musicians who, for whatever reason, never recorded? What about their influence, their appeal, their piece of the blues story? Central Mississippi bluesman Belton Sutherland is one such case. Sutherland, an accomplished country blues guitarist and singer, played around the Canton area for decades but never made a

not stop with too-quick questions. All of the people in this church and this community, all of the people connected to these woods and fields, and all of the people who travel through or communicate by

cheap Internet connections have multiple lives that do not fit into the categories scholars like me have created for them. And the point is not just that there's more to it. Even more importantly for a

record. However, unlike most others, Sutherland happened to be filmed by John Bishop, Worth Long, and Alan Lomax. These few minutes of film capture a bluesman whose music would have otherwise been lost to time, someone we clearly would have scoured over and studied if he had recorded. Makes one stop and think about all of the other amazing players whose music simply disappeared like fog lifting in the morning.

As is often the case in the winter, we have lost a considerable number of blues musicians and industry figures recently. In addition to the obituaries featured in this issue, the last several months have seen the passing of Floyd Miles, Rick Hall, Preston Shannon, Terry Evans, Sonny Payne, Algia Mae Hinton, and Little Sammy Davis. Obituaries on these individuals will appear in upcoming issues.

Brett J. Bonner



thoughtful and responsible approach to Southern Studies, there's more of it—more people, more topics, more stories, and even more questions.

Ted Ownby

A Look Ahead for Southern Studies Master of Arts Graduates

With graduation quickly approaching, students who are attaining their master's degrees in Southern Studies are busy mapping out their futures. Here's a quick look at what's in store for some of our graduates.

After graduation, Jacqueline Sahagian will move back to her hometown of Nashville in hopes of landing a job in a museum or other cultural institution. She plans to begin applying to doctoral programs for the fall of 2018 so that she may continue her research on the intersection of gender, race, and place in southern music. "I loved my time here at the Center and am obsessed with every aspect of Southern Studies," she said. Jacqui completed an MA thesis that explores the problematic marketing techniques deployed by the Oxford, Mississippi-based record label Fat Possum.

Holly Robinson has made plans to return to her home country of England, where she hopes to eventually make her way to London and start her ideal job working at the American embassy. "I would just like to thank the Center for the Study of Southern Culture and the British Association of American Studies for allowing me to study at Ole Miss, and to everyone here for their support," she said. "I will miss them all greatly." While she remains open to job opportunities, Holly has started looking at jobs in the public relations and marketing fields so that she may utilize what she learned while writing her thesis. Holly's MA thesis focused on Aunt Jemima and argues that the various owners of Aunt Jemima have commodified the African American body for their own commercial gain.

Immediately following graduation, Kevin Mitchell plans to return to Charleston, South Carolina, and assume his teaching position at the Culinary Institute of Charleston,



The graduating Southern Studies Master of Arts class of 2018: Left to right: Rachel Childs, Victoria de Leone, George McDaniel, Rebecca Lauck Cleary, Je'Monda Roy, Holly Robinson, and Kevin Mitchell. Not pictured: Jacqui Sahagian

where he currently holds a chef instructor position. "My time here has been fantastic," he said. "It has been a wonderful journey that was surrounded by colleagues who are doing great work in the field of Southern Studies, and it was an honor to be among them and learn from them." While working on his MA, Kevin has continued to teach online classes at CIC. As a chef, Kevin's thesis focused on foodways, discussing both enslaved and freed cooks from Charleston in the 1800s. His thesis also investigates how the foods that West African slaves brought with them and grew here have become part of the southern cuisine.

After graduation, Victoria de Leone plans to attend Wake Forest to earn an MFA in Documentary Arts. The three-year-long program offers coursework in arts business, pedagogy, and distribution. Tori believes that the program will allow her to delve deeper into her interest in film and turn it into a career one day. "The Center has been so outrageously supportive

of my development as a filmmaker and a scholar," she said. "Through the documentary track, and with the help of Ava Lowrey and Andy Harper in particular, I've been able to explore my interests, creativity, and critical thinking simultaneously, in a way that I don't believe any other program allows." Tori created *Small Batch*, a documentary thesis film centered on the role of women in the craft beer and whiskey industries. The short film focuses on a female brewer and a female distiller at two southern craft companies, and seeks to balance their experiences as women in the industry with their passion for their careers.

Rachel Childs is moving to New Mexico, where she has accepted a job working as a content specialist for PR Newswire. Meanwhile, she will continue looking for editorial and producer jobs in public media, public history, oral history, and at university presses for her long-term career path. While working on her MA, Rachel completed a thesis on the Mississippi State Lunatic

Center Holds Awards Ceremony at Graduation Luncheon

Each year the Center gives several awards for papers and documentary projects following the graduation ceremony on campus. Ted Ownby announced the recipients at the Southern Studies graduation luncheon in Barnard Observatory. Graduation was on Saturday, May 12, this year.

Here are the winners for 2018:

The Gray Award, which honors outstanding scholarship in an undergraduate paper, went to **Caitlin Kennedy** for her paper, "Vengeance, Violence, and Vigilantism: An Exploration of the 1891 Lynching of Eleven Italian-Americans in New Orleans." The work was Kennedy's

Honors College thesis in history. The Coterie Award, which also honors outstanding scholarship in an undergraduate paper, went to **Liam Nieman** for his paper, "Image Is One Thing: Elvis as an Image of Mississippi."

The Ann Abadie Award for the best documentary project went to **Rachel Childs** for her MA radio documentary, "A Body a Day: Constructing Deviance at the Mississippi State Asylum."

The Sarah Dixon Pegues Award in the study of southern music went to **Keerthi Chandrashakar** for his paper, "Seeing the Blues: Pride and Safety in Dress," and the Peter

Aschoff Award, also for outstanding work in the study of southern music, went to **Katherine Howell** for her paper, "The False Purification of a Hybrid Tradition: A Rhetorical Examination of the Racialized Connotations of Cultural Separation in Blues Authenticity Discourses."

The Sue Hart Award for outstanding work in gender studies went to **Victoria de Leone** for her thesis film, *Small Batch*, and to **Hooper Schultz**, for his paper, "Family Matters: Amendment 1 and the Fight over Marriage in North Carolina."

The Lucille and Motee Daniels Award, awarded for the best project by a first-year graduate student in Southern Studies, went to **Frankie Barrett**, "*S-Town*: Construction of Place in a Serial Narrative Podcast."

And the award for the Best Thesis had two winners this year. One award went to **Jacqui Sahagian** for "That Same Old Blues Crap: Selling the Blues at Fat Possum Records," and the other went to **Holly Robinson** for "Marketing the Myth: The Racial Commodification and Reclaiming of Aunt Jemima."

Left to right, first row: Jacqui Sahagian, Rebecca Lauck Cleary, Victoria de Leone, Bear Braswell; *second row,* Rachel Childs, Je'Monda Roy, Katherine Aberle; *third row,* Holly Robinson, Kevin Mitchell, and Tyler Necaise. *Not pictured:* Nick Thompson

JAMES G. THOMAS, JR.



Asylum, exploring how it served as a case study for southern psychiatry, constructions of deviance, and Mississippi's upholding of Jim Crow culture through eugenics. In addition to her written thesis, Rachel also produced a radio documentary that situated these questions around the

evidence of seven thousand bodies recently discovered buried on the University of Mississippi Medical Center campus (the site of the old asylum) and the Medical Center's plans to exhume them. "The support I received here from advisors, professors, friends, and colleagues

can't be overstated," she said. "I learned so much in a short amount of time and met the coolest people doing the most worthwhile, necessary things with vigor, care, and passion."

Grace Nelson

Mississippi Encyclopedia 2.0

State Reference Work to Debut Online Version

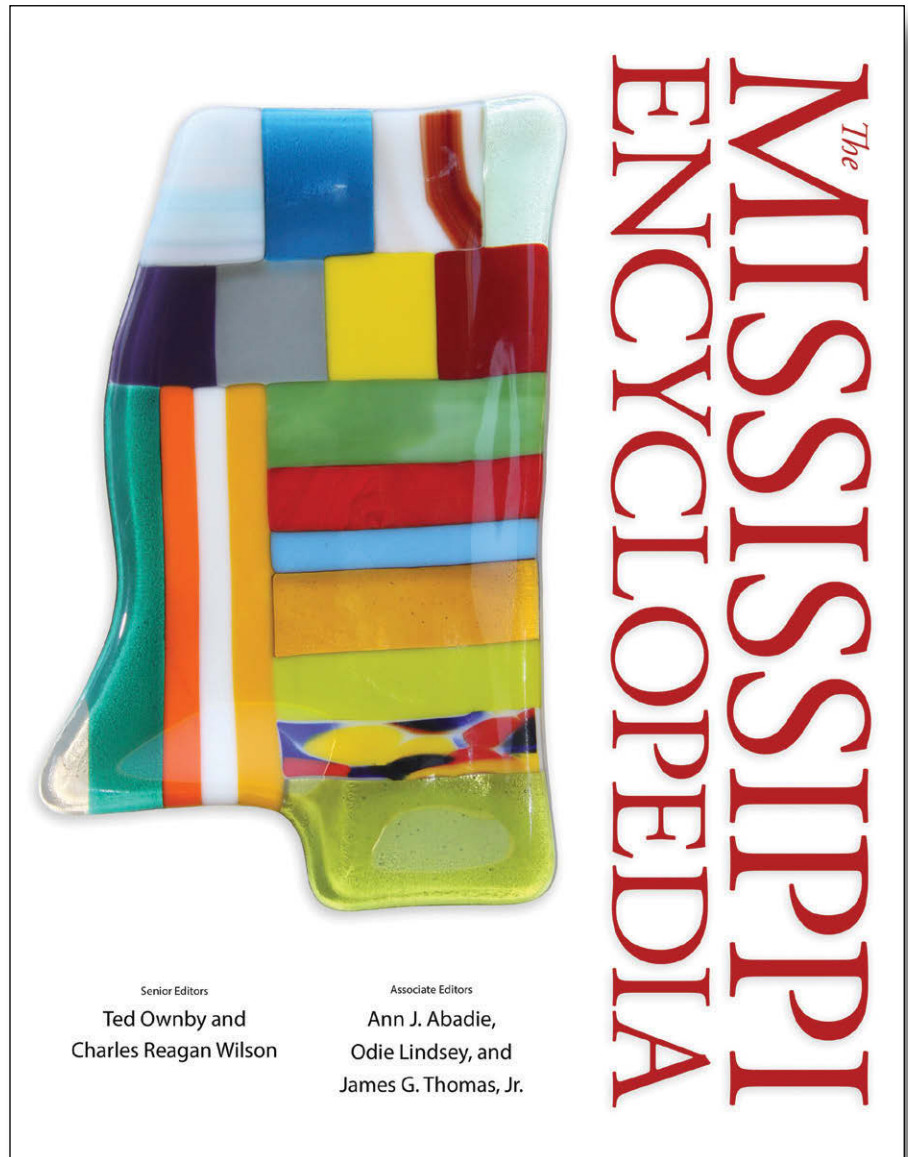
As of this summer, if you don't want to lug around the nine-pound *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, just grab your laptop and the wonders of the state are at your fingertips. Soon there will be an online version of the 1,451-page *Mississippi Encyclopedia*, a project that began at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture in 2003 and concluded with publication in 2017.

The Mississippi Encyclopedia includes solid, clear information contained in a single volume, offering with clarity and scholarship a breadth of topics unavailable anywhere else, with entries on every county, every governor, and numerous musicians, writers, artists, and activists. It is the first encyclopedic treatment of the state since 1907.

The volume, published by the University Press of Mississippi, appeals to anyone who wants to know more about Mississippi. It has proven to be especially helpful to students, teachers, and scholars researching, writing about, or otherwise discovering the state, past and present.

Stuart Rockoff, executive director of the Mississippi Humanities Council (MHC), is familiar with the encyclopedia project because he wrote the "Jews" and "Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life" entries. He said he is pleased that the MHC has been able to help make an online version a reality.

"I was excited to learn that the book would finally be published, but was especially interested in creating an online version that would be accessible to students across the state and people all over the world," Rockoff said. "I later learned that during the early stages of the encyclopedia project there were discussions about creating an online version. I wanted to bring that idea back and offer the Humanities



Senior Editors
Ted Ownby and
Charles Reagan Wilson

Associate Editors
Ann J. Abadie,
Odie Lindsey, and
James G. Thomas, Jr.

Council's resources to help make it happen. The online encyclopedia would not be possible without the commitment of the Center and its staff, not to mention their incredible work compiling and editing all of the entries that went into the book."

Rockoff added that the online version enables the encyclopedia to be a living document, with new entries being added and old ones being updated. "For people outside of our state but interested in our rich

history and culture, the online encyclopedia will offer them a wealth of information and analysis," he said. "For middle school and high school students taking Mississippi History, the online encyclopedia will be an incredible and accessible resource."

Ted Ownby, director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, used the print version of the *Encyclopedia* in teaching a HST 452: History of Mississippi course at the University of Mississippi and echoed

the importance of an online version widening availability for learners. "Using the *Encyclopedia* as a reference in teaching Mississippi history this spring enabled me to make the course much more distinctive, more about the specific individuals—people and places—rather than generalities, so the online version will be more useful for schools and students doing projects," Ownby said. "We love the fact that a hardcopy encourages browsing and surprise, and we hope the online version holds the same possibilities for searching for one thing and finding a dozen things that are equally interesting."

Ownby said the online version allows for updates of the print version, as well as a chance to make any corrections. "It will have more illustrations because there are no limits on page count and the online version will have a few original documentary films," he said. "Since the print version came out a year ago a number of things have changed.

Senator Thad Cochran retired, people published new books and received recognition, and several subjects of the entries have died."

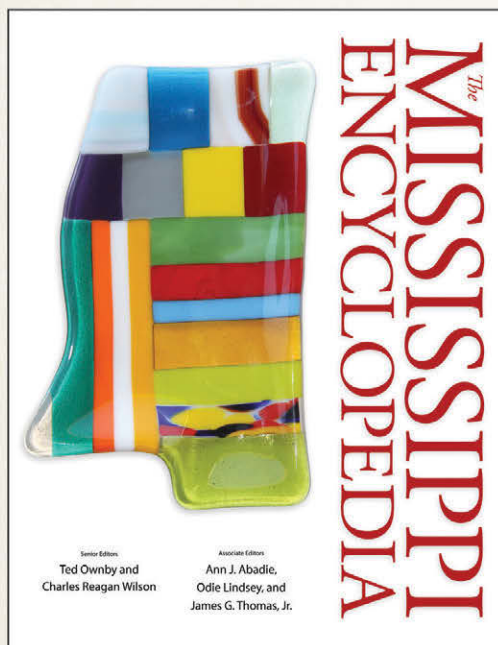
The importance of *The Mississippi Encyclopedia* has not gone unnoticed, as the book won a Mississippi Institute of Arts and Letters Award, and awards of merit from the Mississippi Historical Society and the Mississippi Heritage Trust.

The Mississippi Encyclopedia is the successful result of numerous collaborations—between the University Press of Mississippi and the Center for the Southern Culture, among the numerous supporters who contributed to or helped organize the project, among the thirty topic editors from around the state and far beyond it, and among the authors, an intriguing mixture of scholars. The Mississippi Humanities Council and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History helped a great deal, and the University of Mississippi Department of History

and School of Law joined the Southern Studies program in encouraging advanced students to write for the project. Early support came from the University of Mississippi and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Each entry in *The Mississippi Encyclopedia* provides an authoritative but accessible introduction to the topic discussed. It also features long essays on agriculture, archaeology, the civil rights movement, the Civil War, contemporary issues, drama, education, the environment, ethnicity, fiction, folklife, foodways, gender, geography, industry and industrial workers, law, science and medicine, music, myths and representations, Native Americans, nonfiction, poetry, politics and government, the press, religion, social and economic history, sports, and visual art.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary



The Mississippi Encyclopedia

An A-to-Z compendium of people, places, and events from prehistoric times to today

OVER 1400 ENTRIES ON

- African American history and culture
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 - Celebrities
 - Civil Rights
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 - Food
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Steve Cheseborough Continues to Update Blues Guidebook

In 1997 the University Press of Mississippi (UPM) came up with the idea for a guidebook to Mississippi blues sites. At that time, the only guide was Jim O'Neal's *Delta Blues Map Kit*, which was forty hand-stapled pages without detailed directions or much background. UPM contacted David Evans, a longtime blues scholar who was head of ethnomusicology at Memphis State University. He suggested Steve Cheseborough, a first-semester Southern Studies student who traveled to Memphis once a week for Evans's graduate blues seminar.

"Evans knew I was already doing basically what working on the book would entail: traveling to blues-related sites and blues festivals, talking to blues musicians, reading and thinking about blues history and geography," Cheseborough said. "He also knew about my journalism background—I had left a longtime job as a newspaper reporter to enter the Southern Studies program. I think the press considered a few other authors, but after a few months I had a contract with them to write the book. It has been a big hit for them—I mean, it's not on the *New York Times* bestseller list or anything, but for a university press it has been a big success, sold steadily and well."

If there had been a book such as *Blues Traveling* available for Cheseborough when he arrived in Mississippi, he certainly would have purchased it, but instead, it turns out he was the perfect person to be the author.

This fall, UPM will publish the fourth edition of *Blues Traveling*, now known as an indisputably essential guidebook to Mississippi's musical places and its blues history.

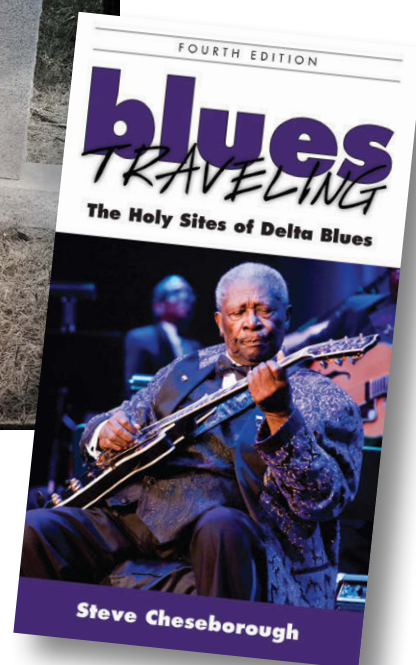


BILL STEBER

Cheseborough takes readers to the intersection where Robert Johnson sold his soul to the Devil, of course, but also uncovers fresh destinations with updated material on new festivals, state blues markers, club openings and closings, and many other transformations in the Delta's blues scene. There are photographs, maps, and easy-to-follow directions, while readers go in and out of Clarksdale, Greenwood, Rolling Fork, Jackson, Natchez, Bentonia, Rosedale, Itta Bena, and dozens of other locales where generations of blues musicians have lived, traveled, and performed.

Although Cheseborough lives in Oregon now, he always returns to the South for research. For the fourth edition, Bookfriends of the University Press of Mississippi provided a grant sponsoring his trip, which he says was wonderful. "I spent about a month traveling around gathering and updating information and shooting photos," Cheseborough said. "There's really not much I like better than traveling around Mississippi. Even

Steve Cheseborough playing at the dedication of Bo Carter's headstone, July 2017, in Nitta Yuma, Mississippi



though I live in exile in Portland, Oregon, now, I manage to get back down there regularly. Since the book-update trip I've been to Mississippi twice: I spoke and performed at the dedication of Bo Carter's grave marker in Nitta Yuma last year, and in March I performed at the Templeton Ragtime Festival at Mississippi State."

Although *Blues Traveling* is not actually based on the research he did for his master's thesis, it is related. He wrote his thesis about the life and music of Bo Carter, a 1930s Mississippi blues artist. His interests in blues and Mississippi travel all led him to enter the Southern Studies program—and then to a book deal.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

Ellen Meacham Publishes Book Examining RFK's Delta Visit

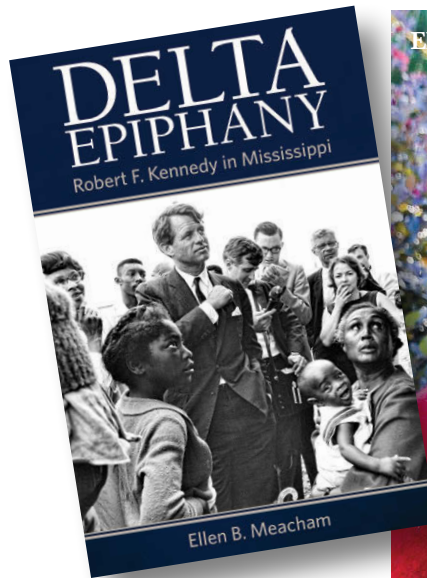
University of Mississippi journalism professor and Southern Studies MA grad Ellen Meacham details Robert F. Kennedy's visit to the Mississippi Delta in 1967 in her new book *Delta Epiphany: Robert F. Kennedy in Mississippi*.

Meacham's book, published by University Press of Mississippi, examines the history, economics, and politics of the Delta and how those factors influenced the lives of people Kennedy met there during that visit.

The book was inspired by an oftentold story of Kennedy traveling to "one of the worst places I've ever seen" and finding a toddler starving in "a dark windowless shack." "I wondered about the impact it had on Kennedy," Meacham said, "because it's mentioned as an important moment in all of his biographies. The next question I had was, 'What happened to the baby?'"

After seven years of searching, Meacham found and interviewed children from the four families Kennedy encountered on his visit, including that toddler. "As I got into the research, I realized pretty quickly that there was a big part of the story that had not been told," she said. "Most of the contemporary news accounts and later historians had only looked at RFK on the stage. The people who were living the lives that moved him so were more of a 'poverty stage set.'"

Meacham wanted to tell the stories of those people. "It became very important to me to bring those families into the light and find out how they came to be in that place at that time, what struggles they faced and their accomplishments since," she said. "I think it brings more balance. It's not just a story of a hero or a saint. It's about a real person meeting real people."



The book also features about a dozen never-published photos, including the image on the cover. "The photographs were essential to telling this story," Meacham said. "They brought such a vivid realism that showed the impact of the visit on Kennedy in a powerful way."

A working journalist for more than two decades, Meacham used her experience as a newspaper reporter in Mississippi, which gave her access to contacts within both politics and journalism in the state, putting her in a unique position to tell these stories. She claims her work in the Southern Studies program was also a big influence on how she approached her work for the book.

She began her master's work in the mid-1990s and finished in 2003. Although she was already doing journalism while in the program, Southern Studies "deepened my understanding of government policy and the choices people make," she said. Her thesis focused on the influence of southern culture on domestic violence policy in South Carolina.



Meacham said that the program provided her with a larger picture of the politics in Mississippi in terms of race and other issues. "Southern Studies exposed me to so many disciplines that look at political theories, economics, sociology, history, and culture," she said. "What I learned as a master's student helped me weave together in *Delta Epiphany* what I hope is a powerful narrative that explores the forces at work in the Mississippi Delta."

"Looking back," she said, "one of the practical things I did as an MA student in Southern Studies was read Jim Cobb's *The Most Southern Place on Earth*, which gave me a deeper, multifaceted understanding of that place. The program also introduced me to great scholar role models and mentors like Charles Reagan Wilson, Ted Ownby, and John T. Edge, who were helpful and offered key insights and encouragement through the whole process."

Christina Steube

A Deal with the Devil

Adam Gussow Subject of New Documentary, Wins Cawelti Award

Adam Gussow wears many hats, including scholar, author, and musician. Now Gussow, associate professor of English and Southern Studies, is also the subject of a documentary and among the stars of this year's seventeenth annual Tribeca Film Festival. On April 20, *Satan & Adam*, a documentary about Gussow's longtime blues duo, premiered in New York City.

Satan & Adam is the story of two emerging musicians who not only found each other, but also their passion for blues, on the streets of

Harlem. After twenty-three years of closely following the lives of Gussow and Sterling "Mr. Satan" Magee, filmmaker V. Scott Balcerek has finally finished the story of the acclaimed blues duo.

"It's remarkable," Gussow said. "I think it's a film about a lot of things. First, I think it shows the potential of someone who looks old and broken down. It's

obviously about New York and the racial strife of the 1980s and '90s. And in the end, I think it's testifying to what Dr. King called 'beloved community': the 'true interrelatedness' of the human family."

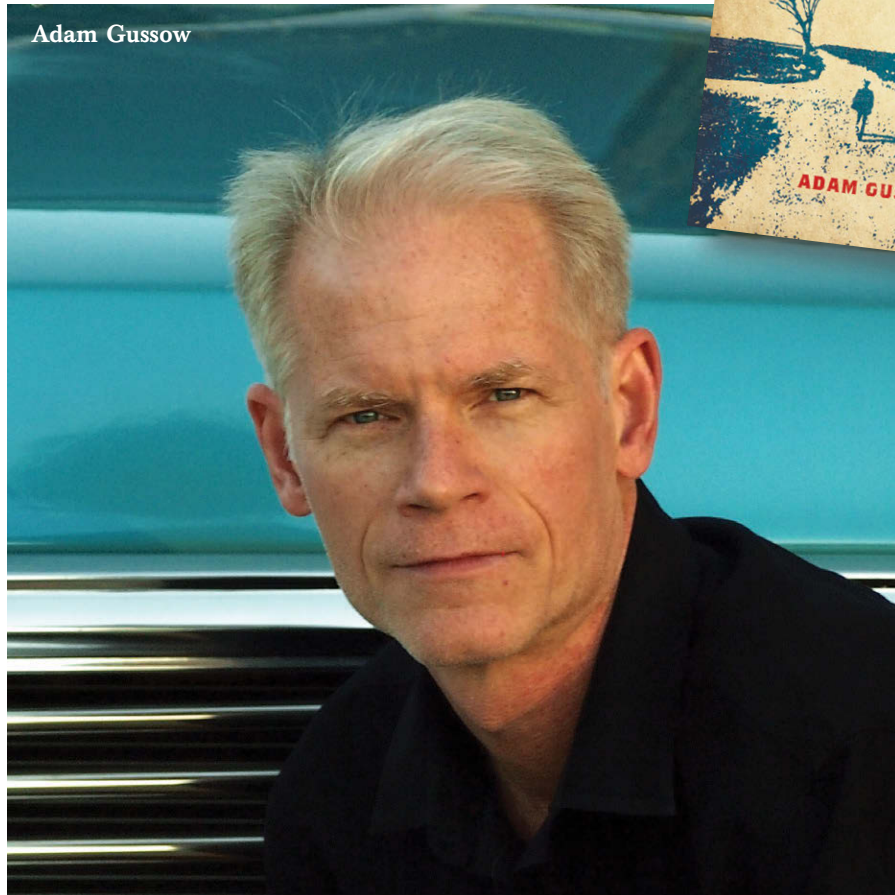
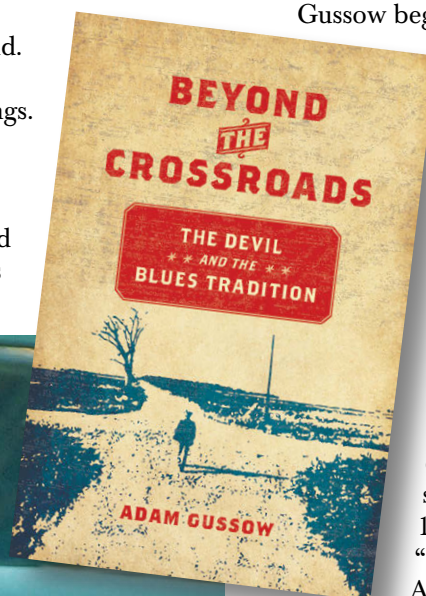
Gussow began his musical career

when he picked up the harmonica at age sixteen, and he continued to play through his adolescence and into his college years. As a young white harmonica player, a Princeton graduate, and a Columbia graduate school dropout, Gussow was driving through the streets of Harlem in 1986 when he found "Satan," an African American guitarist and local legend.

The two men bonded over their love of music and immediately found their rhythm as a blues duo. They began as street musicians in Harlem in 1986 before taking their talents further as a touring act, playing at clubs across New York, until they were finally "discovered" in 1991.

They issued their first album, *Harlem Blues*, which was nominated for a W. C. Handy Award for traditional blues album, in 1991.

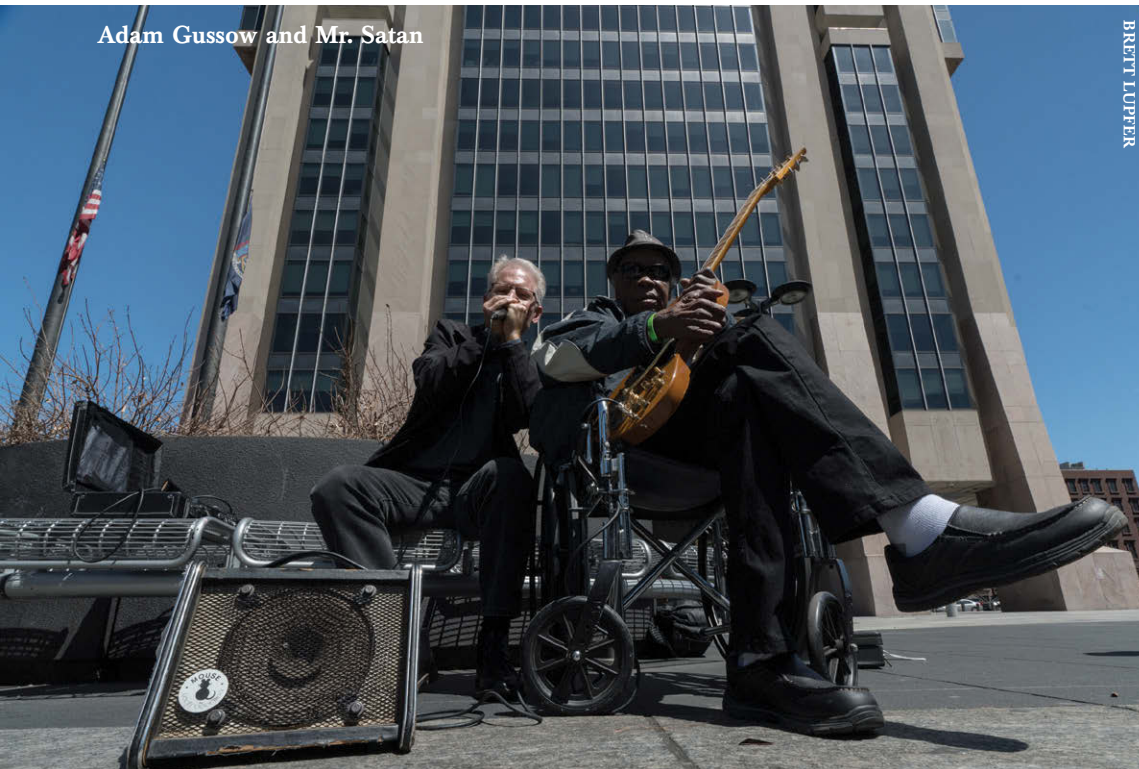
Promising young filmmaker V. Scott Balcerek found the duo in the fall of 1995 and instantly had the idea to make them the subject of his newest project. Balcerek's other projects include the short documentary



Adam Gussow

Adam Gussow and Mr. Satan

BRETT LUPFER



Street Songs, which received a Student Academy Award, and the acclaimed LeBron James documentary *More Than a Game*.

Satan & Adam was initially going to be filmed over the span of a few years, following the duo as they trail-blazed their way through the New York music scene.

Although Balcerek started filming the musicians in the '90s, he begins the documentary with original footage of the two men from the mid-'80s, in a moment when New York was rippling with racial tension and musical expression. More than two decades later, Balcerek's efforts are complete.

"We're all incredibly excited to be going up to New York," Gussow said. "We'll be there for the screenings at the Tribeca Film Festival on April 20 and 21—they're all sold out, too. We're really hoping for the best-case scenario with it."

In addition to being the subject of a new documentary, Adam Gussow explores the story of the Devil himself and the blues though more than just clichés in his book

Beyond the Crossroads: The Devil and the Blues Tradition, published last fall by University of North Carolina Press. The book recently received the John G. Cawelti Award for the Best Textbook/Primer from the Popular Culture Association (PCA).

Gussow is pleased that his efforts are receiving recognition. "It's a nice honor, and it's wonderful vindication for the nine years I spent researching and writing the book," he said.

The mission of the Popular Culture Association is to promote the study of popular culture throughout the world through the establishment and promotion of conferences, publications, and discussion. Aiding the PCA in this goal is the PCA Endowment, which offers support for scholars and scholarship.

The Cawelti award is given for noteworthy textbooks, primers, and scholarly books on popular and American culture. "The award committee selected Adam Gussow's *Beyond the Crossroads* as this year's John G. Cawelti Award recipient because it was a thoroughly researched, well-written,

and innovative project that demonstrated how the Devil has functioned as a malleable metaphor within the history of the blues," said Kraig Larkin, associate professor of history at Colby-Sawyer College. "The committee valued Adam's ability to illustrate how the Devil appears and reappears at specific moments in American history, often to enable musicians an opportunity to deliver a disguised critique of racial power."

In *Beyond the Crossroads*, Gussow takes the full measure of the Devil's presence. Working from original transcriptions of more

than 125 recordings released during the past 90 years, Gussow explores the varied uses to which black southern blues artists have put this trouble-sowing, love-wrecking, but also empowering, figure.

The book culminates with a bold reinterpretation of Robert Johnson's music and a provocative investigation of the way in which the citizens of Clarksdale managed to rebrand a commercial hub as "the crossroads" in 1999, claiming Johnson and the Devil as their own.

Gussow's first academic monograph, *Seems Like Murder Here: Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition*, was an honorable-mention for the Cawelti in 2003, and his second academic book, *Journeyman's Road: Modern Blues Lives from Faulkner's Mississippi to Post-9/11 New York*, was an honorable mention for the PCA/ACA Ray and Pat Browne Award. He is also the author of *Mister Satan's Apprentice: A Blues Memoir*.

Grace Nelson and
Rebecca Lauck Cleary

Catarina Passidomo Receives Fulbright Award to Study Foodways in Peru

University of Mississippi professor Catarina Passidomo is looking forward to traveling to Lima, Peru, to teach and conduct research in 2019 as the recipient of a Fulbright US Scholar award. While in Lima, the UM assistant professor of anthropology and Southern Studies will teach two courses in the Department of Social Sciences at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru. She also plans to engage in independent and collaborative research on Peruvian cuisine and foodways for a project titled “Gastrodiplomacy in Peru: Cuisine as Nation-Brand in Postcolonial Context.”

“As a scholar of southern foodways, I have taught and directed research that uses food as a lens to explore social and cultural phenomena: who has power in a society and who lacks it; how people interpret or remember the past; how race, class, and gender identities influence what and how people produce, consume, and think about food,” Passidomo wrote in her Fulbright application. The grant period is four months, beginning in March 2019.

“I first became aware of Peru’s culinary renaissance—what is often referred to as its ‘gastronomic boom’—the explosion of global interest in Peruvian food and the tremendous national pride that accompanies it—during a CIEE Faculty Development Seminar on Peruvian Foodways in Lima during the summer of 2015,” Passidomo said.

“Funding for that seminar was provided by the Provost’s Faculty Development Award for Campus Internationalization, which allowed several UM faculty members to participate in CIEE programs all around the world. Thanks to a College of Liberal Arts Summer Research Grant, I was able to return to Peru in 2016.”

Catarina Passidomo



Passidomo, who also works closely with the Southern Foodways Alliance, said she is ecstatic about the opportunity. “This allows me to do what I’ve been wanting to pursue for a long while,” she said, “and it’s a synergistic opportunity to combine food and identity in the two regions.”

Once a year, Passidomo teaches Southern Studies 555: Foodways and Southern Culture, an innovative class available to graduate students and advanced undergraduates. “She is also a successful teacher outside the classroom,” said Ted Ownby, director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. “People come to foodways scholarship from lots of directions, and Catarina has done an excellent job both listening and teaching,” Ownby said.

Passidomo leads the Southern Foodways Alliance fall graduate seminar in foodways by both critiquing and encouraging papers and presentations in the quickly changing academic field of foodways scholarship. At one Southern Foodways Symposium, she served as scholar-in-residence, introducing

talks by various speakers, connecting them to each other, raising academic questions to an audience that mixes many people, only a few of whom are professional scholars.

Passidomo serves on the SFA’s academic committee, which is committed to setting high academic standards for the organization’s projects, and she is a mentor to University of Mississippi students outside the classroom, serving as a faculty adviser for the Real Food Rebels, a student organization advocating to increase access to real food on campus.

The Fulbright program, which aims to increase mutual exchange between the people of the United States and of other countries, is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the US government.

Fulbright alumni have become heads of state, judges, ambassadors, cabinet ministers, CEOs, and university presidents, as well as leading journalists, artists, scientists, and teachers. They include fifty-nine Nobel laureates, eighty-two Pulitzer Prize winners, seventy-one MacArthur fellows, and sixteen Presidential Medal of Freedom recipients.

The Fulbright offers fellowships for teaching, research, and teaching/research. Passidomo’s award is teaching/research, part of the Educational Exchange Program between Peru and the United States.

A native of Naples, Florida, Passidomo received her doctorate in human geography from the University of Georgia in 2013. She also holds a master’s degree in ecological anthropology from the University of Georgia and a bachelor’s degree in sociology and anthropology from Washington and Lee University.

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

Ted Ownby Named William F. Winter Professor of History

As director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, Ted Ownby fulfills many roles. Now he can add one more to the list: William F. Winter Professor of History.

Ownby, professor of history and Southern Studies, recently received news of his appointment. In 1992 the University of Mississippi Foundation established this endowed William F. Winter Chair of History in order to promote and recognize excellence in historical scholarship and to honor William F. Winter, a former governor (1980–84) and staunch supporter of public education in Mississippi. Winter was a 1943 University of Mississippi graduate who majored in history. He earned his law degree from UM in 1949.

“Being named an endowed chair is an honor, and having an endowed chair named for William Winter is particularly meaningful,” Ownby said. “Governor Winter has been a leader in education,

in racial reconciliation work, in Mississippi history, and he believes in continuing to work for progress of multiple kinds. Winter is Mississippi history’s most accomplished governor, and he is a great example for all of us. It’s exciting as a scholar and teacher and encyclopedia editor to be connected to him.”

A committee comprised of full professors of history selected Ownby to be the third holder of this prestigious professorship, the previous two being professors Winthrop Jordan and Charles Eagles. A faculty member at UM since 1988 and director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture since 2008, Ownby is widely regarded as a leading scholar in the area of southern history and is the author of three books, *Subduing Satan* (1990), *American Dreams in Mississippi* (1999), and *Hurtin’ Words: Ideas of Family Crisis and the Twentieth-Century South*, which will be published this fall by the

University of North Carolina Press. He is the editor or coeditor of eight other books, including *The Mississippi Encyclopedia*, published last year by the University Press of Mississippi.

According to Jeffrey Watt, acting chair of history, Ownby has been a pillar of the graduate programs in both history and Southern Studies during the past three decades. He has directed to completion twenty-eight history doctoral dissertations and approximately fifty master’s theses in history and Southern Studies.

“Although the Winter Chair is not specifically designated for a specialist in southern history,” Watt said, “Ownby definitely writes the type of history that fans of William Winter are bound to enjoy. Simply put, Ted Ownby is an invaluable asset to the Arch Dalrymple III Department of History and is most worthy of this honor.”

Rebecca Lauck Cleary

Jodi Skipper Meets with National Trust for Historic Preservation

UM associate professor of anthropology and Southern Studies Jodi Skipper helped welcome visitors from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to Holly Springs on Friday, April 18. The group spent four days in Mississippi touring historic sites, several related to African American heritage.

The Holly Springs tour began at the Wakefield mansion, moved on to the Randy Hayes Art Gallery, then stopped at Burton Place to observe the historic slave quarters. David Person welcomed the tour group to Burton Place, his home since 2005, and to Holly Springs.

In addition to Jodi Skipper, who interprets slavery through dwellings lived in by slaves, special guests were invited to make presentations

and answer questions at Burton Place about the preservation of these underrepresented sites. Included in that list were Jobie Hill, an architect who works to preserve dwellings once occupied by slaves and their descendants in the US; Debra Davis, a descendant of Tom Burton, an early slave living at Burton Place; and Stephanie Meeks, president and CEO of the National Trust.

Skipper said seven slaves lived in the Burton Place slave kitchen and quarters, three of whom were children. Those living in the three-room slave quarters were possibly chambermaids, cooks, and valets, she said. Mary Burton owned about eighty slaves, about sixty-seven of whom have been identified by genealogist Debra Davis. Davis, who lives in the

St. Louis, Missouri, area, said she is working to document and identify the people who lived and worked on the property of Mary Burton.

“Telling the Full History’ is our theme in establishing a fund to preserve buildings associated with enslaved persons,” Meeks told the local tour organizers. “We at the National Trust for Historic Preservation are so pleased to see that Holly Springs recognizes the importance of these buildings. We look forward to working with you in this important work.”

Sue Watson

A version of this article was originally published in the Holly Springs South Reporter. Used with permission.

Center on the Road

The Southern Studies faculty and staff stay busy—both on and off the University of Mississippi campus. This past winter and spring, a number of faculty members were invited to give papers and lectures at meetings, conferences, and in classrooms across the country.

In February, **Katie McKee** presented “Watch[ing] ghosts go by”: Looking out the Nineteenth-Century Windows of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Constance Fenimore Woolson, and Sherwood Bonner” at the Society for the Study of Southern Literature meeting in Austin, Texas. In March, she represented the UM College of Liberal Arts at Humanities Advocacy Day in Washington, DC.

On February 16, **John Rash’s** film *Yangtze Drift* was screened as part of the Embrace Our Rivers: DAMnedART exhibition at Goethe-Institut Max Mueller Bhavan in Chennai, India. On March 2, Rash presented *Yangtze Drift* as part of the Society of Photographic Education’s National Conference and Media Festival in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

On February 22, **Brian Foster** presented his work “That’s for the White Folks: Black Racial Attitudes and Place Unmaking in the Rural South” at the Du Bois-King Symposium on Race in Atlanta, Georgia. On April 6 and 7, he participated in the annual meeting of the Southern Sociological Society in New Orleans. There he presented “That’s for the White Folks: Black Racial Attitudes and Place Unmaking in the Rural South,” was a critic during the Author-Meets-Critics session for Jean Beaman’s *Citizen Outsider: Children of North African Immigrants in France*, and participated in the “Southern Sociology in the Era of Trump?” panel discussion. On April 24, Foster was a discussant during the “Chocolate Cities Symposium” in Memphis, Tennessee.

In March, **Rex Jones** screened *Flag Flap over Mississippi* in cities



Left to right: Laura Pulido, Craig Colten, Michael Crutcher, Rebecca Sheehan, AAG President Derek Alderman, and Catarina Passidomo at the annual meeting of the American Association of Geographers in New Orleans

across the state as part of the Best of the Oxford Film Fest. The film also aired on Mississippi Public Broadcasting.

On March 15, **Jessie Wilkerson** presented the Woman’s History Month lecture, “Who Gets to Speak for Appalachia? Women, Gender, and Historical Memory,” at Louisiana Tech University.

On April 10, **Catarina Passidomo** participated in the presidential plenary session at the annual meeting of the American Association of Geographers in New Orleans. The session featured five scholars speaking to various themes of struggle within New Orleans. Passidomo spoke about New Orleans’s racial and edible geographies in historic and contemporary contexts.

On April 25, students in **Jessie Wilkerson’s** Southern Studies 506: Graduate Seminar in Southern LGBTQ History and Oral History Methods class gave an oral history performance, which was the culmination of reading, writing, listening, re-listening, telling, and re-telling queer history and memory in Oxford

and at the University of Mississippi. Each student conducted original research and recorded a first-person account with a narrator, with the “conscious intent of creating a permanent record to contribute to an understanding of the past.” The event was held at the Burns-Belfry Museum & Multicultural Center in Oxford.

On April 29, **Ted Ownby** presented “Mississippians and Their Autobiographies” at the opening of the Mississippi Arts and Entertainment Experience in Meridian.

On May 1, **John T. Edge** discussed his book *The Potlikker Papers* and the participated in a panel discussion with restaurateur Sean Brock of Husk; restaurateur Manmeet Chauhan of Chauhan Ale & Masala House, Tansuo, and The Mockingbird; and Caroline Randall Williams, author of *Soul Food Love*. Edge’s book was the selection for this year’s Nashville Reads. Nashville Reads is “a way of bringing the entire city together to read great literature in an attempt to broaden the literary horizons of the city and open up a forum for discussion.” The event took place at the Nashville Public Library.

Still Hungry in America

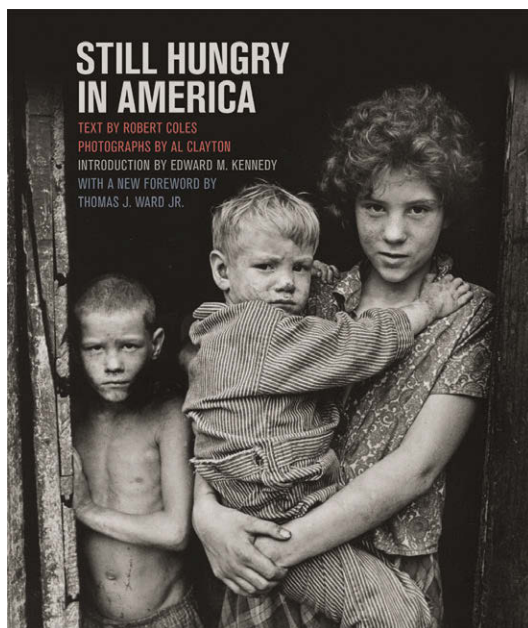
SFA and UGA Press Reissue Book on Hunger in the US South

The Southern Foodways Alliance, in partnership with the University of Georgia Press, has republished *Still Hungry in America* as part of the SFA Studies in Culture, People, and Place book series. The book is a collection of photographs by Al Clayton, complemented by text written by Harvard professor Robert Coles, and an introduction penned by Sen. Ted Kennedy. In this reissue, Thomas J. Ward, chairman of the history department at Spring Hill College, offers a new foreword.

Originally published in 1969, the documentary evidence of poverty and malnutrition in the American South showcased in *Still Hungry in America* still resonates today. The work was created to complement a July 1967 US Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Manpower, and Poverty hearings on hunger in America. At those hearings, witnesses documented examples of deprivation afflicting hundreds of thousands of American families. The most powerful testimonies came from the authors of this profoundly disturbing and important book.

Al Clayton's sensitive camerawork enabled the subcommittee members to see the agonizing results of insufficient food and improper diet, rendered graphically in stunted, weakened, and fractured bones, dry, shrunken, and ulcerated skin, wasting muscles, and bloated legs and abdomens. Physician and child psychiatrist Robert Coles, who had worked with these populations for many years, described with fierce clarity the medical and psychological effects of hunger. Coles's powerful narrative, reinforced by heartbreaking interviews with impoverished people and accompanied by 101 photographs taken by Clayton in Appalachia, rural Mississippi, and Atlanta, Georgia, convey the plight of the millions of hungry citizens in the most affluent nation on earth.

The new foreword by historian Thomas J. Ward Jr. analyzes food insecurity among today's rural and urban poor and frames the current crisis in the American diet not as a scarcity of food but as an overabundance of empty calories leading to obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure.



CONTRIBUTORS

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

Rebecca Lauck Cleary is the Center's senior staff assistant and website administrator. She received a BA in journalism from the University of Mississippi and recently completed work on her MA in Southern Studies.

Victoria de Leone graduated from the Southern Studies MA program this spring. She is headed to Wake Forest in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to begin work on an MFA in Documentary Studies.

Joan Wylie Hall is a lecturer in the Department of English at the University of Mississippi.

Grace Nelson, a recent Honors College student at the University of Mississippi, graduated this past spring. During the 2017–18 school year, Grace assisted with a number of projects, including the Oxford Conference for the Book.

Liam Nieman is a junior Southern Studies and English major. He is lifestyles editor of the *Daily Mississippian*.

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

Christina Steube is a communications specialist at the University of Mississippi.

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





Study the South Publishes Work on “Blues Expressiveness and the Blues Ethos”

The blues—as a palette of intense, often contradictory feelings; a range of social conditions heavily inflected by blackness and southernness; an expressive form encompassing literature as well as music; and a philosophical orientation towards experience—are a more complex cultural phenomenon than some realize. In Adam Gussow’s new essay, “Blues Expressiveness and the Blues Ethos,” published in *Study the South* on January 24, he unpacks the title’s two concepts: blues expressiveness and the blues ethos. Blues expressiveness is constituted by a range of cultural practices, including the AAB stanza, call and response procedure, vocalizations, blues-idiomatic language, and signifying. The blues ethos, too, offers multiple strategies for surviving bad times by refusing to reify the down-ness of the present moment as an inescapable condition, sometimes with the help of harsh, redemptive laughter.

In this essay, Gussow draws on a range of lyric, literary, and folkloristic commentary by Langston Hughes, Cornell West, Bessie Smith, Howard Odum, Kalamu ya Salaam, W. C. Handy, Angela Y. Davis, Lonnie Johnson, and many others. The essay also takes an autobiographical turn as Gussow mines his own bandstand and classroom experience with Mississippi-born blues performers Sterling “Mr. Satan” Magee and Bill “Howl-N-Madd” Perry to illustrate the blues ethos in action.

Gussow is an associate professor of English and Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi. His teaching and research interests include American and African American literature; blues, country, and other southern musics; the pastoral South; Freedom Summer; and the shaping role of race on southern culture. He has published five books, including *Southern Violence and the Blues Tradition* and, most recently, *Beyond the Crossroads: The Devil and the Blues Tradition*.

Study the South publishes a variety of works by institutionally affiliated and independent scholars. Like the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, *Study the South* embraces a diversity of media, including written essays with accompanying audio, video, and photography components; documentary photography; and video projects. *Study the South* is available via the Center’s website at www.studythesouth.org.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Study the South

A Center for the Study of Southern Culture Publication

Study the South, a peer-reviewed, multimedia, open-access journal published by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi, announces a general call for papers.

Study the South exists to encourage interdisciplinary academic thought and discourse on the culture of the American South. Editors welcome submissions by faculty members, advanced graduate students, and professional scholars doing work in the fields of history, anthropology, sociology, music, literature, documentary studies, gender studies, religion, geography, media studies, race studies, ethnicity, folklife, and art to submit article abstracts or complete manuscripts. Final manuscripts and projects must attempt to build upon and expand the understanding of the American South in order to be considered for publication.

To submit an original paper for consideration, please e-mail James G. Thomas, Jr. at jgthomas@olemiss.edu. Submissions must be previously unpublished.

For questions or additional information, please contact: James G. Thomas, Jr., Center for the Study of Southern Culture, jgthomas@olemiss.edu, (662) 915-3374. *Study the South* is available via the Center’s website at www.studythesouth.org.

STUDY
— the —
SOUTH

Study the South Announces Recipient of Research Fellowship

The Center for the Study of Southern Culture is pleased to announce that Bobby J. Smith II is the first recipient of the *Study the South* Research Fellowship. The award provides the opportunity for funded research in the collections of the Department of Archives and Special Collections at the J. D. Williams Library at the University of Mississippi.

"We received dozens of research applications, from published scholars to masters students from abroad," said James G. Thomas, Jr., editor of *Study the South*. "The committee was very impressed with the quality of proposals, and we look forward to hosting Smith here on campus. We'll pay close attention to the publication paths of many of the applicants' work, and we hope to engage with those who are able to visit the archives here."

Smith's research agenda is located at the intersection of sociology, African American studies, food studies, agriculture, and history. "The *Study the South* fellowship will enable me to conduct primary research that will allow me to examine the relationship between food, power, and opposition to the civil rights movement in Mississippi," Smith said. "This project is an extension of my dissertation work and departs from the traditional line of civil rights inquiry that usually focuses almost exclusively on proponents of the movement. By shifting our prefigured gaze from proponent to opponents, I hope



COURTESY BOBBY J. SMITH II

Bobby J. Smith II

to illuminate how food was used as a weapon against the movement and to create a more complete picture of the civil rights era that could inform contemporary struggles with Mississippi politics that impact issues of food access, poverty, and hunger throughout the state and beyond."

Smith recently defended his dissertation in the Department of Development Sociology at Cornell University and has accepted the Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Associate position in the Department of African American Studies at the University of Illinois

at Urbana-Champaign. His dissertation repositions food narratives in civil rights historiography to extend what we know about the American civil rights era and to inform contemporary struggles around food justice and food sovereignty in the United States. Specifically, his work focuses on how food was a weapon of opposition and a tool of resistance in the Mississippi Delta during this era. It also focuses on amplifying the voices of contemporary activists in rural areas and their connections to food narratives in the civil rights movement. He graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture, with a focus on agricultural economics from Prairie View A&M University, and he earned a Master of Science degree in agricultural economics from Cornell University.

James G. Thomas, Jr.

Save the Date!

The Twenty-Sixth Oxford Conference for the Book
March 27–29, 2019

UM and Center Well Represented at Natchez Literary Celebration

The University of Mississippi was well represented at the twenty-ninth annual Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration this past February.

Besides the four William Winter Scholars from UM who were recognized, two history professors, including Center director emeritus, Charles Reagan Wilson, were honored, and two additional professors gave presentations at the event, which was held February 22–24 at the Natchez Convention Center.

As part of this annual event, students and faculty of the liberal arts departments from schools around Mississippi were recognized as William Winter scholars in honor of former Gov. William Winter. Each winner was recognized during the opening ceremony.

Attending as William Winter scholars from UM were three faculty members: Simone Delorme, McMullen assistant professor of Southern Studies and assistant professor of anthropology; Beth Spencer, lecturer in English; and Harrison Witt, assistant professor of theatre arts. Laura Wilson, a graduate student in English, rounds out the William Winter scholars.

Receiving the Richard Wright Award for Literary Excellence was Charles Reagan Wilson. The award, established in 1994, is named in honor of the famed Mississippi author and goes each year to outstanding writers and scholars with strong Mississippi ties.

Wilson, who recently retired as the Kelly Gene Cook Chair of History and Southern Studies at UM, is the author of many works of southern history, including *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause* and *Flashes of a Southern Spirit: Meanings of the Spirit in the US South*. Wilson was director of the Center from 1998 to 2007.



Left to right: Copiah-Lincoln Community College system president, Jane G. Hulon; Charles Reagan Wilson; and Marie Antoon at a reception for the Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration

Previous winners of the Richard Wright Award for Literary Excellence include Shelby Foote, Curtis Wilkie, Greg Iles, Barry Hannah, Beth Henley, Kathryn Stockett, William Raspberry, Rick Cleveland, Jerry Mitchell, James Meredith, and Stanley Nelson.

The theme of this year's festival was Southern Gothic and featured many different speakers touching on related topics. Among those giving presentations at the event were Jay Watson, the UM Howry Chair in Faulkner Studies and professor of English, who discussed "William Faulkner and the Southern Gothic Tradition," and Kathleen Wickham, UM professor of journalism, who discussed "The Journalism of the Ole Miss Riots."

MIAL Honors Center

continued from page 1

The Noel Polk Lifetime Achievement Award this year is shared by Robert Ivy and Andrew Cary Young. Robert Ivy is executive vice president and CEO of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), an Alpha Rho Chi Master Architect, and author of *Fay Jones: Architect*. Prior to joining AIA, Ivy was editor-in-chief of the journal *Architectural Record*. The journal received the National Magazine Award for General Excellence under his leadership. Andrew Cary Young, the president and chief designer of Pearl River Glass Studio, which he founded in 1975, is considered a forerunner in stained-glass innovation, pioneering such techniques as fused glass in leaded windows and the use of acid etching in new and modern ways.

Other award winners include Michael Knight, Fiction

Award winner for *Eveningland*; Molly McCully Brown, Poetry Award winner for her book *The Virginia State Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-minded: Poems*; James Sclater, Music Composition (Classical) Award winner for *No Fairer Isle on Which to Dwell*; Shannon McNally, Music Composition (Contemporary) Award winner for her album *Black Irish*; Charlie Buckley, Visual Arts Award winner for *Charlie Buckley: Recent Paintings*; and Jack Spencer, Photography Award winner for *This Land: An American Portrait*.

For more information about attending the awards banquet and related events, please visit the MIAL website at www.ms-arts-letters.org.

Mary Thompson

READING THE SOUTH

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

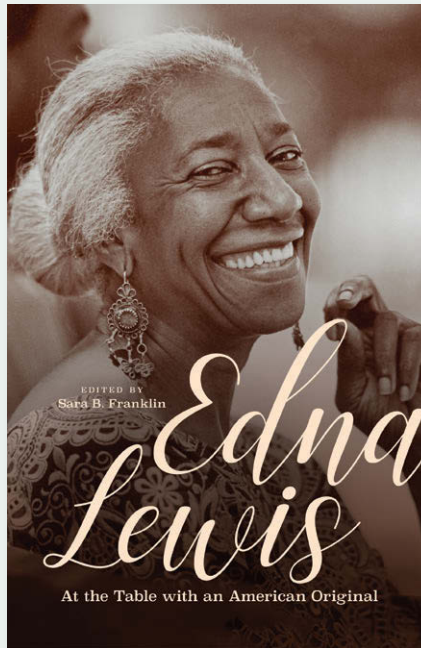
Edna Lewis: At the Table with an American Original

Edited by Sara B. Franklin.
Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018.
259 pages. \$28.00 cloth.

A new volume of essays entitled *Edna Lewis: At the Table with an American Original*, edited by Sara B. Franklin, has recently joined the growing library of books on southern foodways. The collection uses essays from food experts and writers familiar with and influenced by the work of Edna Lewis, a simultaneously underappreciated and venerated figure in the history of southern food. Though Lewis's work is known by a small number of southern food enthusiasts, her impact on them has been great, and her position as a foundation of southern food in a modern context cannot be understated.

Among the work that Lewis is recognized for are three cookbooks, each positioning seasonal and wild foods centrally in her conception of southernness. While her restaurant cooking at the celebrated Cafe Nicholson is what paved the way for her first book, her second, *The Taste of Country Cooking*, is what launched her as a popular, if slightly niche, figure. The ethos of good, whole food connected to culture and place present in that book have since been picked up by such well-known figures as Alice Waters, the chef at Chez Panisse and an essayist included in Franklin's book.

Other contributors to the project include Southern Foodways Alliance director John T. Edge, *New York Times* columnist Francis Lam, James



Beard Award winner Michael W. Twitty, and a host of other food scholars, chefs, and writers. Individually, they take up the main points of Lewis's life and explain the impact she had on them, their work, or the wider culture. Together, they weave a three-dimensional view of a complicated, politically active, compassionate, and talented woman.

Their contributions are arranged into three parts, allowing readers to ease their way into familiarity with Lewis's work and life. Part 1, "Encountering Miss Lewis," makes a woman of an icon. It recognizes Lewis's space as an integral piece of African American cooking, as well as someone who changed the meaning of that phrase. It serves as a kind of in-depth introduction for those who are unfamiliar with Lewis. Part 2, "Miss Lewis Standing in Culinary History," takes a more critical approach. The writers of these essays reach beyond the person of Edna to situate her among her contemporaries and among

broader social forces, contextualizing her as a figure in southern foodways history. The third and final part, "At Table with Miss Lewis Today," brings Lewis into a contemporary context. This is when the reader learns about the ways that Lewis impacts contemporary food cultures, through chefs, family memories, and collective history.

Perhaps the most compelling piece in the collection lives in this third section. Lewis's sister, Ruth Lewis Smith, and niece, Nina Williams-Mbengue, collaborate on the "Afterwords." In a volume that paints Lewis as a character, an icon, and an inspiration, this is as close to Lewis as we get. Simply written, and yet permeated with the love and respect that each woman has for their kin, it rounds out the volume with a reminder that as we look to Edna to understand a "new" kind of southern, we must also let the people of Freetown, Lewis's own inspiration, inspire us as well. "I know that the people of Freetown would be proud and astonished to learn that Edna took their stories and dreams with her when she journeyed north with her brothers and sisters," Williams-Mbengue writes. "I hope that people who discover Aunt Edna's cooking and are inspired to become chefs, be part of the farm-to-table movement, or just cook some incredible food will remember them, too."

It's a testament to Franklin's skill as an editor that the collection, despite its wide reach and varied focus, hangs together beautifully. Although each article is unique and often contradict one another, they do so without detracting from each other. Instead, Lewis becomes more than just a picture on a postage stamp or some words on the page, and rises up in front of readers, whether they're familiar with her work or not. In

her introduction, Franklin makes it clear that that was her goal. “What emerges from this many-tongued volume is a nuanced picture of Lewis as deeply human, a woman whose spirit and impact is very much alive today, countering the notion that she is but an icon, a figure of the past, an untouchable archetype frozen in time.” Lewis, in other words, still helps shape the fabric of what we consider to be southern foodways, and this collection of essays only makes that shaping visible.

Victoria de Leone

King Zeno

By Nathaniel Rich. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2018. 386 pages. \$28.00 cloth.

“I am very fond of jazz music, and I swear by all the devils in the nether regions that every person shall be spared in whose home a jazz band is in full swing,” wrote the mysterious Axeman of New Orleans (or someone posing as him, at least) in his infamous letter to the *Times-Picayune* on March 13, 1919. The letter came after five murders committed by the Axeman spurred New Orleanians to action. On the prescribed night, rich households hosted parties, jazz clubs filled to capacity, and the Axeman took no victims.

In reality, the Axeman murder cases were never solved. But in *King Zeno*, author Nathaniel Rich wonders what would have happened if they had been and imagines who the killer might have been. Rich’s third novel, after *Odds against Tomorrow* and *The Mayor’s Tongue*, puts the Axeman’s killing spree, the ensuing investigation, and his oddly specific music taste on center stage, with a high-energy jazz band backing.

King Zeno combines historical details uncovered through Rich’s research into newspapers and



interviews from 1910s New Orleans with a literary attention to style. Rich’s prose, marked by short, taut sentences and poetic descriptions that evoke the senses, pushes the novel beyond the normal limits of historical fiction. The book primarily follows three people: Bill Bastrop, a detective for NOPD and a veteran haunted by World War I; Beatrice Vizzini, the heiress of the shadowy construction company in charge of building New Orleans’ new Industrial Canal; and Izzy Isadore, a laborer by day on the Industrial Canal and a jazzman by night in the Slim Izzy Quartet. These characters come from different social and economic classes in a divided New Orleans, but major events like the construction of the canal, the birth of jazz music, an outbreak of Spanish flu, and the Axeman’s murders cause their lives to intersect, even if only for brief moments.

Though the Axeman killings sound like something that might appear in a fast-paced crime novel, *King Zeno* isn’t particularly strong as a mystery book. Rich tends to jump between his three main characters, which distracts from the plot, and the pacing of the book doesn’t truly pick up until the final fifty pages, when Bill finally starts to put the pieces of his case together. But where

King Zeno fails as a detective novel, it succeeds as a portrayal of New Orleans in the 1910s, a regional city on the precipice of becoming a national one.

King Zeno is full of details of life in 1910s New Orleans, which create an at-times dirty, at-times beautiful, and always complex picture of the city. In preparation for writing the book, Rich listened to oral histories about the plot’s events and read newspapers from the time. And this work shows. Besides including excerpts from *Times-Picayune* articles about subjects such as the canal, a string of robberies, and the Axeman at the beginning of each of the book’s three sections, the novel references headlines or particularly vivid descriptions from newspaper articles, such as the *Times*’ description of jazz as like “the grease-dripping doughnut and the dime novel, its musical value nil, its possibilities of harm great.” These moments ground the book in its particular time and place, providing support for Rich’s description of the period, especially demonstrating the real-life fervor surrounding the Axeman.

Rich’s best writing comes through in his descriptions of the city in all its oppositions. On the night of the Axeman jazz shows, the upper-class neighborhoods at night are “lit like a carnival, electricity spilling from the windows of mansions” with “the music bursting drunkenly out of mansions and town houses.” This is all in stark contrast to the conditions that working-class laborers, many of whom play in the jazz bands, must endure during their days at the canal. They deal with bugs. In one scene, Sore Dick, one of Izzy’s fellow bandmates and diggers, “spit[s] out a mosquito” between sentences, before blowing “at a cloud of mosquitoes hovering near his head” just a few sentences later. They deal with mud. “The mud was alive, not only breathing but also wiggling into every bodily crevice.” But above all else, they deal with the smell, described variously as “atrocious, sickly sweet grotesque,” “animal and

woody and sour,” and “a stench that Isadore could only compare to human feces.”

On the night of the Axeman concerts, Izzy can't shake the feeling that he's dreaming until he quickly glances down at his hands and finds them “stained with mud” before he goes back to the night's euphoria. With this same dexterity and quickness, *King Zeno* leaps between the physical—mud, bugs, that smell—and abstract concepts—ambition, fear, immortality—one might expect from great literature. And just like the fearful people who hosted those parties to protect their lives, all of Rich's characters have consequential motivations that push them toward the places where they are by the book's end. Bill's cowardice on the European front causes him to lose the respect of those most important to him, and he takes the Axeman case up not as a requirement of his job but as a personal project to prove himself. Izzy, an artist with

his cornet, sets out to create “a new sound that would live forever, flowing from one generation to the next down the river of time into the sea of immortality.” Even Beatrice, the most unexplored main character in the novel, is shouldered with her family's attempt to singlehandedly “make New Orleans the world's greatest port again.” While Rich's description of the city may be his best writing, the forces that drive his characters are what truly distinguish *King Zeno* from comparable books.

“That's what real music did: it made a distinction,” thinks Izzy when we see him reflecting on his craft. Just like Izzy's jazz is real music, Rich's *King Zeno* is real literature. In its historical depiction of a place and its substantial portrayal of people, it provides insight and makes a distinction beyond just telling a story of a people, place, and time.

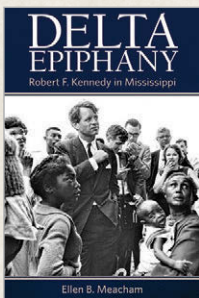
Liam Nieman

Teaching the Works of Eudora Welty: Twenty-First-Century Approaches

Edited by Mae Miller Claxton and Julia Eichelberger.
Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2018. 260 pages. \$85.00 cloth and \$30.00 paper.

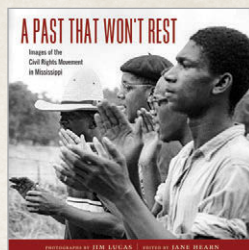
Like most of the thirty-two contributors to this essay collection, I have taught Eudora Welty's works in many courses, from freshman writing to senior directed readings. Decades ago, in an Indiana classroom, a humanities student said she would remember Welty's “A Worn Path” and the central character, Phoenix Jackson, every year at Christmas for the rest of her life. According to Welty, the elderly black woman expresses “the deep-grained habit of love,” painfully walking the Natchez

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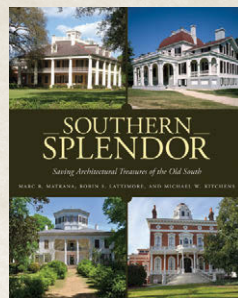
Delta Epiphany
Robert F. Kennedy in Mississippi
Ellen B. Meacham

Teaching the Works of Eudora Welty
Twenty-First-Century Approaches
Edited by Mae Miller Claxton and Julia Eichelberger



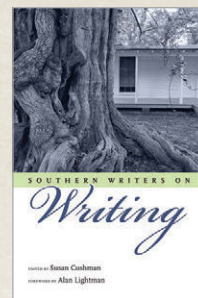
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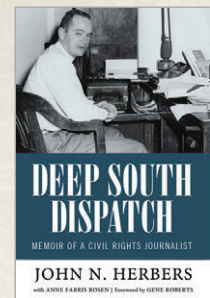
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Marc R. Matrana, Robin S. Lattimore, and Michael W. Kitchens

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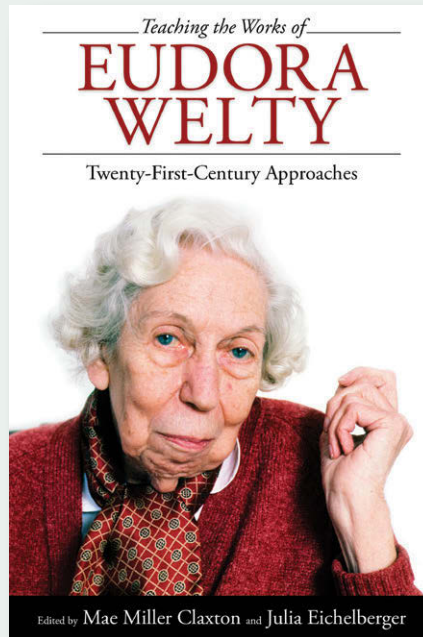
ALSO AVAILABLE AS EBOOKS



Trace in the coldest season to find medicine for her desperately ill grandson. My midwestern class had never heard of the Natchez Trace, yet my student responded unforgettably to what Welty called the story's "emotional value."

In their introduction to *Teaching the Works of Eudora Welty*, editors Mae Miller Claxton and Julia Eichelberger emphasize the author's "cosmopolitan sensibilities and progressive politics." They urge instructors to acknowledge "Welty's depth and range" by looking beyond such early works as "A Worn Path," "Petrified Man," "Why I Live at the P.O.," and "Powerhouse," which have added to the popular view of Welty as a local colorist or southern regional writer. Essayists Harriet Pollack and David McWhirter counter this limited perception by focusing on Welty's modernist techniques and contexts. Pollack points to "the pleasure created by her nonfulfillment of readers' expectations"; McWhirter teaches *The Golden Apples* in a class on Anglo-American modernism, along with works by Virginia Woolf, Jean Toomer, Joseph Conrad, William Faulkner, and other innovators. Pearl Amelia McHaney describes Welty as a "world citizen" and compares her late short story "Where Is the Voice Coming From?" to a story by Sindiwe Magona of South Africa. Noting that Welty traveled extensively in the United States, Mexico, and Europe, Stephen M. Fuller addresses another late work in "Post Southern and International: Teaching Welty's Cosmopolitanism in 'Going to Naples.'"

Nevertheless, because Welty's early stories appear so often in the standard literature anthologies, the new volume refers to them throughout, greatly aiding English teachers at every level, from high school through graduate school. Yet the essayists do not re-trace the worn paths of early Welty scholarship. Forty years ago, my humanities students discussed the myth of the phoenix, the archetypal quest, and Welty's emphasis on the power of place in fiction. In this volume for twenty-first-century



teachers, essays on "A Worn Path" are informed by political, economic, racial, cultural, gender, interdisciplinary, and global realities.

Thus, Casey Kayser encourages teachers and students to address community needs in "Using 'A Worn Path' to Explore Contemporary Health Disparities in a Service-Learning Course." Amy Weldon emphasizes "our human interconnectedness with all the other human and nonhuman elements of life on earth in "'A Worn Path' in the Creative Writing Classroom: Writing, Attention, and the Ecological Thought." Particularly stunning is Keith Cartwright's "'We Must Have Your History, You Know': African/ Soul Survivals, Swallowed Lye, and the Medicine-Journey of 'A Worn Path.'" Cartwright finds "something historically specific about following a Jackson (Phoenix) through a space cleared violently by that frontier president whose face appears on the twenty-dollar bill." Drawing on folktales from the African diaspora, along with "Afro-creole religious structures," Cartwright reads Phoenix Jackson's journey as "a story of soul-survival itself in a world where the spirit and any holistic claim to knowledge or humanity has been imperiled."

Cartwright's essay is a powerful addition to the resources explored in Ebony Lumumba's "The Matter of Black Lives in American Literature: Welty's Nonfiction and Photography." At the historically black Tougaloo College, in Jackson, Mississippi, Lumumba says her students are "initially resistant to the author's descriptions of Phoenix Jackson and critique the characterization as reductive and racist." Their reactions are more complicated after they study Welty's photos of African American subjects, read Welty's narratives of black women in "Pageant of Birds" and "Ida M'Toy," and visit Farish Street Baptist Church and other Jackson sites that Welty visited as a white outsider. Lumumba believes that "Welty's photography and nonfiction centered on the black lives she encountered achieve something quite different from some of the black characters in her fiction." But Lumumba concludes that the African Americans portrayed in the camerawork and essays "would have likely never made it into the pages of the American literary canon had Welty not captured and written about their 'special beauty.'" The closing phrase comes from Toni Morrison's praise for Welty's "special clarity, her special beauty, her very special brilliance."

As editors Claxton and Eichelberger admit, Welty's fiction is "often difficult and sometimes disturbing." The thirty-two essayists "demonstrate that the very things that may have prevented readers from enjoying Welty can become sources of immense pleasure and insight." *Teaching the Works of Eudora Welty* provides twenty-first-century instructors with a host of mentors and colleagues. Any reader of Welty's work will benefit from the lessons so generously shared.

Joan Wylie Hall



Faulkner & Yoknapatawpha Conference 2019

“Faulkner’s Families” • July 21–25, 2019

Call for Papers

It seems almost outrageous to suggest that one of the twentieth-century’s most important literary cartographers of the private recesses of consciousness is also among its great novelists of family, but William Faulkner fits the bill on both counts. Family played an outsized role in both his life and his writings, often in deeply problematic ways. A key organizational and scalar unit of his creative work, family surfaces across his oeuvre in a dazzling range of distorted, distended, defamiliarized, demystified, and transgressive forms, while on other occasions it is a crucible for crushing forces of conformity, convention, tradition. The forty-sixth annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference will examine Faulkner’s many families—actual and imagined—as especially revealing windows onto his work and his world.

The program committee especially encourages full panel proposals for seventy-five-minute conference sessions. Such proposals should include a one-page

overview of the session topic or theme, followed by four hundred- to five hundred-word abstracts for each of the panel papers to be included. We also welcome individually submitted four hundred- to five hundred-word abstracts for fifteen- to twenty-minute panel papers. Panel papers consist of approximately 2,500 words and will be considered by the conference program committee for possible expansion and inclusion in the conference volume published by the University Press of Mississippi.

Session proposals and panel paper abstracts must be submitted by January 31, 2019, preferably through email attachment. All manuscripts, proposals, abstracts, and inquiries should be addressed to Jay Watson, Department of English, University of Mississippi, PO Box 1848, University, MS 38677-1848. Email: jwatson@olemiss.edu. Decisions for all submissions will be made by March 15, 2019.

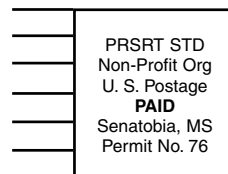
Topics could include, but are by no means limited to:

- original biographical scholarship on the Faulkner, Falkner, Butler, Oldham, Stone, Thompson, Summers, or other families that figure significantly in William Faulkner’s life and work
- the family as a crucible for heteronormative power relations and identity formations, or as a site for resistant performances of gender and sexuality
- queer(ed) family arrangements, kinship networks, lines of affiliation or intersectionality, alternate “bloodlines”
- new insights into or models for Faulkner’s genealogical imagination
- the visual or material culture of family in Faulkner
- the poetics and politics of family space(s), family and/in its built environments
- the sociology of family structures and relations as they vary by race, class, nationality, religion, etc.
- new approaches to the interracial or multiracial family in Faulkner’s writings and life
- the family under slavery, postslavery, colonialism, or empire in Faulkner’s work
- anthropological approaches to family: kinship patterns, folkways, foodways, deathways, other domestic customs, rituals, prohibitions
- family-systems or other psychologically informed

- approaches to family difficulties or difficult families in Faulkner; intergenerational transmission of trauma, affect, memory
- experiences or representations of illness, aging, disability within the family ecology
- representations of childhood in Faulkner’s writings or the social construction of childhood in his life and world: childhood as psychologically formative; as sexualized; childhood phenomenology, emotion, language use; orphaned children
- family and the workings of affect: its genesis, circulation, transmission, intensity, management
- the family as an economic formation: unit of production, division of labor, site of consumption; family and/in/as the transmission of property
- the family and the state; family as site and vehicle of modern biopower; the politicization of reproduction by eugenics, blood quanta, and other social discourses
- other examples of the impact of modernization on family arrangements, identities, affairs
- war and the family
- approaches to Faulkner through family law
- comparative readings of family in Faulkner and other writers, artists, or intellectuals; Faulkner in the literary history of family
- interspecies families; posthuman kinship and affiliation



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