

Public History

at Middle Tennessee State University

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Welcome Martha Norkunas, Our New Public History Faculty Member



The Public History program is proud to announce that Dr. Martha Norkunas has accepted an offer to join us as a faculty member next fall. "I'm delighted to be joining the distinguished Public History faculty at Middle Tennessee State University," says Norkunas. "It is one of the best Public History programs in the nation, and I'm looking forward to working with my colleagues to continue to build and strengthen the program."

Dr. Norkunas holds a Ph.D. in folklore from Indiana University's Folklore Institute. She is the author of *The Politics of Public Memory: Tourism, History and Ethnicity in Monterey, California* (SUNY Press, 1993) and *Monuments and Memory: History and Representation in Lowell, Massachusetts* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002/ Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006). She has worked with museums, historic sites, and nonprofits across the country on issues of memory, identity, gender, and the representation of minority voices. She is also an oral historian and has been involved in a number of oral history projects on industrial and labor history, immigration, racial identity, and gender. She is currently on the faculty at the University of Texas-Austin, teaching interdisciplinary teams of graduate

students to think critically about memory, history, and culture and to apply their knowledge to social and cultural issues.

In 1999 Norkunas began the Project in Interpreting the Texas Past (ITP) to shed new light on the Texas and American past by researching, interpreting and presenting the histories of women and minority communities. A project of the

Intellectual Entrepreneurship Consortium, ITP has produced award-winning films, Web sites, exhibits, educational materials, posters, brochures, oral history booklets, an in-depth oral history project with African Americans in Texas, and an oral history project exploring mixed-race identity among college students.

Dr. Norkunas brings a wealth of experience as a public historian that will undoubtedly enhance the prestige and visibility of MTSU's Public History program. "My particular areas of expertise are cultural history and oral history. I've been involved in projects documenting the lives of African Americans, women, and people in the labor movement and hope to continue some of that work at MTSU." We welcome Dr. Norkunas to the program and look forward to working with her in the years to come. 🔑

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Unlock the Past The Key to Your Future



Still Perfect on the ACA Exam

Recent graduates **Dorothy Davis** and **Betsy Snowden Johnson** received word in September that they had passed the certification examination given by the Academy of Certified Archivists. Both will be awarded the title "Certified Archivist" after one year's professional experience.

According to the academy's Web site, certification provides a means for employers to identify individuals who have appropriate academic preparation and a commitment to the highest standards of the profession. This is the fourth consecutive year that every graduate of the public history program who specialized in archival management has taken and passed the examination.

Dorothy works with Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in Nashville. Betsy is employed by the Pendleton (South Carolina) Historic District. ↗

Dr. Spencer Crew: Our 2009 Distinguished Visiting Public Historian

It is our pleasure to announce that Dr. Spencer Crew will serve as the 2009 Distinguished Visiting Public Historian at MTSU. Dr. Crew is widely recognized as one of the top public historians in the nation. After graduating with his Ph.D. in history from Rutgers University, he began a long career working with the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History (NMAH). From 1981 to 2001, he worked his way up from historian to executive director of the Smithsonian NMAH. Along the way, he developed several exhibits, including the celebrated "From Field to Factory," and he launched major initiatives that revolutionized the Smithsonian's outreach and fundraising programs. In 2001, he left the Smithsonian to

take the position of executive director/CEO of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. In January 2008, he resigned from NURFC to assume a public history faculty position at George Mason University, where he continues his work with museums and historic sites throughout the nation. His perspective on museums and sites of conscience, drawn from the breadth and depth of his impressive professional career, will benefit our students tremendously. ↗



Graduate Student Internships in 2008

Megan Akerstrom interned at the Franklin Historic Preservation Office. She worked with the Franklin Battlefield Task Force and Historic Zoning Commission to develop preservation plans and protect Franklin's historic resources.

Ray Barnett had a joint internship at the National Air and Space Museum and the Smithsonian Museum Conservation Institute (MCI). At MCI he researched and evaluated the techniques, cleaning materials, and methods used in restoring the three Saturn V rockets in their collection.

Marie Bourassa worked at MTSU's Walker Library as the digital projects assistant. She helped develop an online database of historical materials related to the MTSU centennial celebration in 2011.

Dollie Boyd conducted oral history interviews and coordinated planning for a "heritage day" celebration at Tims Ford State Park for people displaced by the construction of Tims Ford Lake. She also designed and fabricated an exhibit for the event and helped park staff plan and implement the program.

Elena DiGrado interned at the Historic New Orleans Collection. She assisted the ongoing progress of transferring the Vieux Carre Survey into an online database for researchers.

Elizabeth Goetsch interned at Stones River National Battlefield. She worked as a park ranger, giving tours and conducting programs for the public.

Amanda Hall worked with Walker Library's digital projects team on the MTSU Memory Project. Hall selected, edited, and converted relevant MTSU oral histories into an audio format that will be accessible to the public online as the digital project progresses.

Ashleigh Oatts worked at the Don F. Pratt Museum at Fort Campbell. She worked with collections management, museum education, exhibit creation, and more, while also learning how Army museums function.

Carolyn Powell did her internship at Tennessee Technological University. She produced a 42-minute documentary film on the life of Joseph L. Ewins, a Congressman from Tennessee whose service spanned 30 years (1946-1976).

Elizabeth Smith interned at the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, New York. As an intern, she researched the origins, evolution, and management of the Women's Rights National Historical Park. ↗

A Partnership with Shacklett's Photography



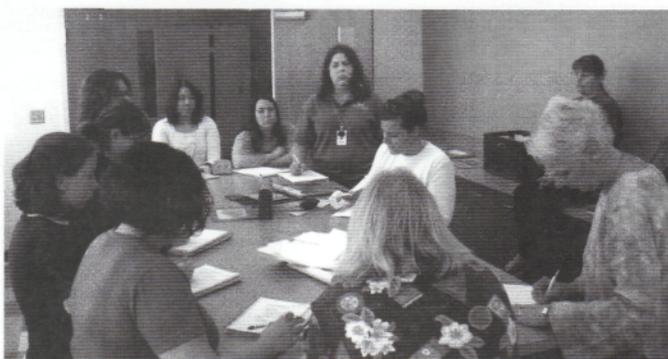
Kerr Field, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, c.1923. Courtesy of Shacklett's Photography

Anyone who has explored the history of middle Tennessee may already know that Shacklett's Photography possesses an incredibly valuable collection of photographs documenting regional history. However, there has never been much public access to that collection, partly because the collection has never

been properly processed. "We want for people to use the collection," says Gloria Shacklett Christy, "but we're not sure of what we have because we've never had the time or resources

to organize the collection." To address that problem, the MTSU Public History program has entered into a cooperative agreement with Shacklett's and the Rutherford County Archives to catalog, preserve, and digitize the company's rich, historic photograph collection.

Dr. Martin's museum studies students began the project last fall with 100 of the most threatened images in the collection. Utilizing the county archives as the staging ground for the project, students cleaned the images, conducted high-resolution scans, stored the images in archival sleeves, and entered the



Public History graduate students take notes at a photograph conservation workshop conducted by staff members of Tennessee State Library and Archives.

information about the images into a database system. Dr. Martin said: "Not only do we get the opportunity to open up this collection for future projects, but this is also a great hands-on training project that teaches graduate students the fundamentals of photograph conservation and best practices for digitizing and cataloging images." Selected images from the digitized collection will be featured in an upcoming exhibit. 🔗

Our Newest M.A. Graduates

Congratulations to our most recent M.A. graduates! Here is a list of Public History graduate students who graduated in 2008.

Scott Anderson
Thesis: "We Just Saw It from a Different Perspective': Multiple Perspectives on Bob Dylan's Christian Period"

Dorothy Davis
Thesis: "Strangers in the Attic: The Documentation of Nashville Germans"

Elizabeth M. Snowden
Thesis: "Our Archives, Ourselves: Baby Boomer Youth Identity and Its Impact on the Archival Profession"

Ashley Falls Tate
Thesis: "The Development of Cultural Tourism in Cherokee, North Carolina" 🔗

Whatever happened to . . . ?

Please let us know where you are and what you are doing: cbmartin@mtsu.edu.

Editor: Brenden Martin, Director of Public History

Alumni Spotlight



Kent Whitworth

Kent Whitworth, who earned his M.A. in history with an emphasis in historic preservation at MTSU in 1989, is director of the Kentucky Historical Society. Reflecting on his experience at MTSU, he said, "I received an excellent grounding in history, public history, and historic

preservation during my two years at MTSU! The emphasis on real-life application through projects and internships has also served me well. I am especially grateful for

the constructive combination of both challenge and encouragement while in graduate school at MTSU!"

Following the completion of his M.A., Whitworth became director of Blount Mansion in Knoxville, where he spent five and one-half years. From 1995 to 2003, he served as director of the East Tennessee Historical Society, where he guided the endeavors that doubled the size of the East Tennessee Historical Center and significantly expanded its programming. His successful track record of historical administration led to his appointment as director of the Kentucky Historical Society in 2004.

A native of Louisville and a seventh-generation Kentuckian, Whitworth now lives in Frankfurt with his wife, Sarah, and their two children, Andrew and Margaret. ↪

In Memoriam: Dr. Thaddeus Smith

On July 22, 2008, the History Department lost a cherished friend, colleague, teacher, and mentor with the death of Dr. Thaddeus Smith. He entered the History Department in 1988 and later became the first African American professor to be tenured in the department. He served as chair from 1996 to 2007, leading the department through a critical time of growth and transition. More recently, Dr. Smith was the coordinator of History Day, helping the department reach out to regional social studies teachers. His sudden loss left many in the department shocked and heartbroken. Survived by his sister, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews, he will be missed by students, alumni, and colleagues at MTSU. ↪



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