

Public History

at Middle Tennessee State University

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Fall 2015

MEET DR. LOUIS KYRIAKOUCDES



Louis Kyriakouides

The History Department welcomed Dr. Louis Kyriakouides in August as director of the **Albert Gore Research Center** and faculty member. Kyriakouides earned his M.A. (1988) and Ph.D. (1997) from Vanderbilt University. From 2008 until the summer of 2015, he ran the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage at the University of Southern Mississippi.

His current research focuses largely on the history of the tobacco industry. He is in the process of writing a monograph on the culture, history, and North American origins of the global tobacco epidemic. He will explore the many ways in which cigarette manufacturers have studied the beliefs and practices of cigarette smokers and how smoking transformed American life over the course of the twentieth century. Alongside this research, he has developed an activist role as an expert witness against the tobacco industry in wrongful death litigation.

“What was attractive about MTSU was the ability to join a team of scholars and students committed to excellence in public history,” Kyriakouides said. “MTSU has a motivated and talented faculty, the resources, and the tools to be the best public history program in the United States—as it is and will continue to be. Public history right now is exploding in terms of the possibilities and excitement. We are in a period of change, but it is also a period of great opportunity, great energy, and just a lot of fun.”

Gore Center Director Louis Kyriakouides discusses the Center's veterans oral history project on WGNO's Truman Jones Show, November 2015.

Kyriakouides also aspires to expand the reach and impact of the Gore Center. His three major goals for the Center are to start an external capital campaign to increase resources, to develop greater digital access to materials, and to continue expanding the archives' collections. In the four months since he arrived, the Gore Center has received donations from WSMV News and the late Teddy Bart, a prominent Nashville media personality. (See page 3.)

“Four themes—archives, teaching, research, and outreach—are what drive my vision for the Gore Center. I hope to achieve that vision,” Kyriakouides said. “I want the Center to become the preeminent physical and digital archives for documenting the history of the modern South, particularly in terms of its politics and public policy.”

It is a bit of a homecoming for the Vanderbilt graduate, and Kyriakouides could not be more excited to be a part of the History Department at MTSU. He is looking forward to building partnerships and pushing the digital frontier of public history. 

—Sarah Calise



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**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY

New Master's Students

**M.A. IN HISTORY:
PUBLIC HISTORY
CONCENTRATION**

GRACE ALLEN
B.A., Harding
University

FAITH BAGLEY
B.A., Union University

EMILY BOERSMA
B.A., Western
Washington University

DARBY CAMPBELL
B.S., Middle Tennessee
State University

DAKOTA ELLIOTT
B.A., University of
Wisconsin-La Crosse

BRADLEY HARJEHAUSEN
B.A., University of
Redlands

KATE HATFIELD
B.A., University
of Tennessee

ANNABETH HAYES
B.A., Rhodes College

GENA HENDERSON
B.A., Lipscomb
University

SHERRY MICHELLE TEAL
B.S., Middle Tennessee
State University

News from the Centers

CENTER FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION (CHP)

This fall, the Center for Historic Preservation continued to explore digital history under the leadership of **Dr. Susan Knowles** (Ph.D., 2011), who is currently the digital humanities research fellow at the CHP. She has been working with Director **Dr. Carroll Van West** and other staff members in developing two initial digital humanities partnerships: *Shades of Gray and Blue: Reflections of Life in Civil War Tennessee*, a website that focuses on the material culture of the Civil War; and *Trials and Triumphs: Tennesseans' Search for Citizenship, Community, and Opportunity*, a digital collection that explores the experiences of African Americans in Tennessee during the era between the Civil War and World War II.

With the help of graduate research assistants and **Dr. Abigail Gautreau** (Ph.D., 2014), Knowles is leading the effort to expand another digital collection, *Southern Places*. This collaboration with the James E. Walker Library—a partnership recently highlighted in the library's *JEWEL* magazine—seeks to bring to the public the photographs and documents collected by the CHP during its 30 years of community-based preservation work. The database, which contains about 1,800 objects, features color photographs of many out-of-the-way historic sites (some no longer extant), as well as historic photographs, research notes, and hand-



drawn site plans. Churches, schools, cemeteries, and other historic sites are documented. Students who have assisted Knowles and **Ken Middleton** (M.A., 2000), Walker Library digital initiatives librarian, include **Jenna Stout**, **Denise Gallagher**, **Annabeth Hayes**, **Kim Cherry**, **Brad Miller**, and **Brad Eatherly**. About 25 percent of the collection has been placed online, and upcoming priorities include rural African American churches, Rosenwald schools, sites associated with the Civil Rights Movement in the Alabama "Black Belt," and places related to the Trail of Tears.

In addition to adding more materials to *Southern Places*, the CHP is searching for new ways to highlight the collection. Staff and students are working together to develop thematic interpretation and data visualization for the collection. Be sure to check our website (mtsuhistpres.org) for the latest news on our digital initiatives.

—Antoinette G. van Zelm

Above: St Mark's Presbyterian Church in Rogersville, Tenn., photographed by CHP Director Dr. Carroll Van West, can be found in the Southern Places digital collection and is featured in an online interpretive StoryMap by Brad Miller.

ALBERT GORE RESEARCH CENTER

Leadership change, new graduate assistants, important acquisitions, and major outreach activities have highlighted summer and fall 2015 at the Albert Gore Research Center. In August, Acting Director **Dr. Mary Hoffschwelle** welcomed new Director **Dr. Louis M. Kyriakouides** to the Gore Center. A graduate of the University of North Carolina (B.A.) and Vanderbilt University (M.A., Ph.D.), Kyriakouides comes to MTSU from the University of Southern Mississippi, where he served as director of the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage. Kyriakouides is a specialist in the economic history of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century United States, focusing on historical demography, economic development, and public health in the South.

Also joining the Gore Center are two first-year graduate research assistants, **Bradley Harjehausen** and **Julie Ann Maresco**. Harjehausen comes to the Gore Center from the University of Redlands, where he majored in history and served as a docent at the Lincoln Memorial Shrine. He is interested in both archives and museum studies. Maresco earned a degree in Art History from the State University of New York at New Paltz. Prior to coming to MTSU and the Gore Center, she worked as an archival assistant at the Tennessee State Library and Archives and at the Rutherford County Archives. She intends to work in collections management and archives after she completes her M.A. in Public History. Our new graduate assistants join veteran graduate assistants **Casey Gymrek** and **Sarah Calise** and project archivist **Evan Spencer**. The Gore Center hosts

undergraduate interns, and this fall was no exception. **Kelsey Lamkin** and **Amanda Richardson** have been working hard, reprocessing a portion of the Sen. Albert Gore Collection and digitizing photographs from the Marion Coleman Peck Collection.

The Gore Center acquired the papers of Teddy Bart, a member of the Tennessee Broadcasting Hall of Fame who died in 2014 at the age of 78. Bart's papers document his diverse career as a songwriter, broadcast journalist, and Nashville media personality. The Center also received significant additions to Congressman Bart Gordon's papers, as well as additional photographs from the estate of Margaret Lindsley Warden to add to the Warden Equine Studies Collection. And Gore Center staff celebrated the completion of the Cheekwood Archives Project, a major multi-year effort to organize and digitize the archival holdings of the Cheekwood historic house and art museum.

Staff and students have been busy making presentations on the Gore Center's work to scholarly, professional, and public audiences.

Kent Syler, Center special projects archivist and Political Science faculty member, has appeared frequently on local broadcast news media, including WTVP's *Inside Politics*, WKRN's *This Week with Bob Mueller*, and, with Center Director Louis Kyriakouides, on WGNO's *Truman Jones Show*. Kyriakouides also made a presentation on the Center's work documenting the experiences of veterans through oral history at the MTSU Honors Lecture Series. A

contingent of Gore Center graduate students attended the annual meeting of the Tennessee Branch of the Society of Archivists and presented a poster on their work here at MTSU. **Casey Gymrek**, **Sarah Calise**, and **Ethan Morris** presented a talk entitled "Balancing Out Memories of a Southern School," which explores the desegregation of the former Central High School in Murfreesboro. (See page 7.) University Archivist **Donna Baker** presented her research on Marion Coleman Peck's role in preparing the Holocaust

documentary exhibit *Lest We Forget* at MTSU's 12th International Holocaust Conference. Gore Center Archivist **Jim Havron** (M.A., 2009) gave a presentation on cybersecurity issues for small archives and libraries at the annual meeting of Digital Best Practices Exchange. Gore Center staff contributed to an online exhibit of the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress, *The Great Society Congress*, which documents the work of the 89th Congress. The exhibit features papers from the Gore Collection documenting the passage of legislation creating Medicare and Medicaid. It can be viewed online at acsc.lib.udel.edu/exhibits/show/legislation/social-security.

The Gore Center is working on a number of projects, including an exhibit commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act, focusing on its local impact in Middle Tennessee, and on efforts to build our video news collections. Finally, the Center offered a fond farewell to **Dallas Hanbury**, who left to take a full-time position as archivist for Montgomery County, Ala.

—Louis Kyriakouides



New Ph.D. Students

Ph.D. IN PUBLIC HISTORY

KATIE CRAWFORD-LACKEY
B.A., University of Cincinnati;
M.A., Northern Kentucky University

MICHAEL LETSINGER
B.A., Louisiana State University;
M.A., East Tennessee State University

KATIE McCLURKIN
B.A., M.A., Youngstown State University

HEATHER SCHEURER
B.A., University of Arkansas-Fort Smith;
M.A., Auburn University

LEAH VALLEY
B.A., Auburn University;
M.Ed., Auburn University;
M.A., Western Carolina University

Legendary Motown songwriter and producer Lamont Dozier with Center for Popular Music staff in the reading room.

CENTER FOR POPULAR MUSIC (CPM)

The Center for Popular Music has had an action-packed semester, presenting a wide variety of exciting programs. The fall highlight was a ceremony naming Motown songwriter, producer, and hit-maker **Lamont Dozier** as the second Fellow of the Center for Popular Music in a delightful and well-attended event. In conjunction with AmericanaFest in Nashville, the CPM welcomed iconic singer-songwriter **Buffy Sainte-Marie** to

continued on page 4

Congratulations to Our Fall 2015 Graduates

Ph.D.

Jerry T. Wooten

B.S., History, Austin Peay State University
M.A., History, Murray State University
Dissertation: "Jacksonville: The Evolution, Defense, and Demise of the Union's Tennessee River Supply Depot, 1790-1890"

M.A.

Amanda Barry

Ellen Harper

Brad Reed Miller

Evan Spencer

News from the Centers, cont.

campus in September. She toured the archives and spoke with Recording Industry students about her remarkable career as a creative artist and social activist. Students in the School of Music participated in a CPM-sponsored workshop by Jayme Stone and the Lomax Project, who also performed at an evening concert on campus. In October, 90-year-old drummer **Philip Paul**, who played on hundreds of important blues, R&B, and country recordings during his tenure as a session musician for Cincinnati's King Records, spoke about his long career and demonstrated a few of the classic grooves he created.

The CPM's research archives continue to grow, with significant acquisitions of recorded, printed, and manuscript materials that draw students and scholars from MTSU, across the U.S., and from countries such as Norway, Australia, and Japan. CPM staff remains busy processing collections, mounting new exhibits in the reading room, and preparing grant proposals for the Grammy Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Two graduate assistants from Public History are working in the CPM this year. **Dixie Johnson** has been busy creating original MARC records for posters in the CPM collection and assisting with accessioning various materials that have recently arrived. **Emily Boersma** processed the Dwight Peterson collection of square-dance 45s, including the creation of a finding aid (now online), and has begun working on the Tom Morgan collection of bluegrass ephemera.

The CPM in-house documentary label Spring Fed Records is pursuing an ambitious set of projects in the field of southern traditional music. In a December 2015 release, there was a reissue of home recordings by John Hartford and Grand Ole Opry fiddler Howdy Forrester, to be celebrated in January with a CD release show featuring

numerous distinguished Nashville musicians. Earlier this semester, Spring Fed Records organized and hosted an old-time music festival featuring 11 acts at the Short Mountain Distillery in Cannon County, Tenn.

—Gregory Reish

RUTHERFORD COUNTY ARCHIVES

We are excited to announce that the Rutherford County Historic Cemetery Survey is almost completed. The Rutherford County Archives is greatly indebted to the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation for partnering with us on this project. Ph.D. student **Michael Fletcher** worked with **Catherine Hawkins** (M.A., 2011) to locate and document all the cemeteries in Rutherford County. In addition to launching a web page, we received a grant from the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area to develop and print a driving tour brochure that highlights some of the more significant sites from the project. For more information about the brochure and the project, please visit the website at rutherfordcountyttn.gov/archives/projects.

In other news, we were happy to have **Julie Maresco** as our summer intern. In addition to helping maintain the daily operations of the county archives, Maresco worked on scanning and microfilming a backlog of county tax records. We also lost and gained graduate research assistants this year. **Beth Rouse Cavanaugh** accepted a full-time position at the Tennessee State Library and Archives. **Gena Henderson**, who started the M.A. Public History program this fall, replaced her. **Veronica Sales** is finishing up her assistantship this semester as she looks forward to graduating in the spring. As always, we're so grateful for the students who make our work possible. ↗

—John Lodl

Keeping up with Alums and Recent Grads

Amber Clawson (Ph.D., 2015) is executive director of the Historical Association of Catawba County, N.C. The association manages multiple historic properties and operates the county's museum.

Dallas Hanbury (Ph.D. candidate) is Montgomery County archivist in Montgomery, Ala.

Ashleigh Oatts (M.A., 2009) has moved to Athens, Ga., where she is the education coordinator at the Historic Home of T.R.R. Cobb.

Amy Rohmiller (M.A., 2011) is now program coordinator for local history and AmeriCorps at Ohio History Connection in Columbus, Ohio. ↗

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Launching the John Early Museum

October 22 marked the opening of a new museum in the Metro-Nashville area, the John Early Museum at John Early Museum Magnet Middle Prep. The only museum school in the nation to also have its own museum, John Early has a collection of nearly 5,000 cultural objects, transferred from the former Hartzler Towner Multi-cultural Museum at the Scarritt Bennett Center in Nashville. Public History M.A. student **Lane Tillner** interned at John Early during the summer of 2014, working under Instructional Designer **Becky Verner** (M.A., 2006) to organize accession records and the collection. Construction on the museum addition was completed in July 2015. Tillner returned as a volunteer collections consultant to move the collection into its new storage space and re-house the objects. She also developed, planned, and installed the opening exhibit, *Worldly Missions: Cultural Connections Across the Globe*. Tillner continues to assist with the collection. The creation of the museum allows the students to actively engage with objects, exhibitions, and museum principles only a few feet from their classrooms, where museum theory and practices are incorporated into the curriculum. ↗

—Lane Tillner



Lane Tillner developed, planned, and installed the opening exhibit at the John Early Museum addition.

Faculty News



Dr. Martha Norkunas co-chaired the Oct. 2015 Oral History Association conference in Tampa, Fla., an event attended by over 400 people from across the U.S. and abroad. The theme was “Stories of Social Change and Social Justice,” focusing special attention on the power of oral history to document and give rise to social-change movements

nationally and internationally. Norkunas and **Dr. Sharon Utakis** of Bronx Community College organized more than 90 panels, three plenary sessions, five performances, and a poster session. One of the highlights was a story-based performance by human rights comedian Hari Kondabolu. The plenaries showcased the work of oral historians in the Black Lives Matter/Ferguson movement, the Guantanamo Memory Project, and immigrant, LGBT, and labor rights movements.

Dr. Kathryn Sikes conducted the Public History program’s first archaeological field school during the summer. Graduate and advanced undergraduate students participated in archaeological research excavations of Clover Bottom Plantation (Site 40DV186), funded by a Federal Preservation Grant from the Tennessee Historical Commission. Located on state land managed by the Tennessee Historical Commission in Davidson County, Clover Bottom was owned by the slaveholding Hoggatt and Price families throughout most of the antebellum period and during Reconstruction, and much is recorded in primary source documents about these two families. However, the majority of the site’s residents were African Americans whose names and experiences were not as frequently discussed on paper. MTSU excavations aimed to identify and investigate outbuildings, workspaces, communal gathering spaces, and dwellings used by African American families at Clover Bottom. Public History graduate students will be presenting their work with Sikes at the Society for Historical Archaeology annual conference in Washington, D.C., in January. ↗



Ph.D. Residencies

This year **Jenna Stout** is working at the Kentucky Heritage Council's State Historic Preservation Office on a Multiple Property Submission (MPS) for the National Register of Historic Places. Under the guidance of the National Register state coordinator and the state survey coordinator, she has spent the past few months researching and surveying Kentucky's tubercular sanatoria. Stout's MPS focuses on tuberculosis sanatoria operating in Kentucky from the 1940s through the 1970s. Her residency work feeds directly into her dissertation, tentatively entitled "Infected Houses and Sanitized Spaces: Architecture, Adaptive Reuse, and Tourism of the Twentieth-Century Tubercular Era." Follow Stout's residency blog to learn more: tuberculararchitectureofthesouth.wordpress.com.

Rachel Lewis (left) is completing her residency at the Frances Willard Historical Association (FWHA) in Evanston, Ill. Founded in 1900, the FWHA is the longest-operating house museum in the U.S. that focuses on women's history, interpreting the life and work of nineteenth-century educator, reformer, and suffragist Frances Willard. Lewis's major project for FWHA has been to create a new interpretive plan for the museum while it is closed for restoration work. At the same time, she is also learning valuable not-for-profit management skills.

Kayla Pressley Seay got married on Sept. 26, and after her honeymoon she jumped right back into her residency with the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Western Office in Asheville. She has been gaining field experience with the National Register process and recently curated and installed an exhibition on the Star Wars franchise and its continuing impact on pop culture. The exhibit *Star Wars: The FORCE of Popular Culture* (below) opened on



Dec. 4 and will run through January. Now that the exhibit is up, Seay will continue research for another exhibit about the impact of World War I on Asheville and the development of the Veterans Administration hospital. She also will be working in the archives, digitizing and organizing new accessions.

Heba Abdelsalam spent the first part of her residency at the British Museum in London, working with the International Training Program, which instructs museum staff from different countries. Her role in the program was to facilitate current participants and to report on past Egyptian participants over the last ten years. Abdelsalam is now in Germany working at the Center of Culture Heritage at Heidelberg University. She is teaching a museum class to undergraduate students and coordinating a cultural event that will take place next spring. The event will bring Coptic scholars from around the world to Heidelberg to discuss their research and to promote cultural awareness through a workshop open to the public.



Aleia Brown (above) served her residency with the multidisciplinary Michigan State University Museum, where she has accessioned and catalogued the Carolyn Mazloomi collection of contemporary quilts related to the African American experience. She also worked on the exhibition committee, evaluating exhibit proposals, and she contributed to Project 60/50, a university initiative intended to celebrate major civil rights anniversaries and promote ongoing conversations addressing persistent inequalities. Her residency has been so productive that the museum has invited Brown to stay on to manage and curate a joint exhibition with the Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation. [↗](#)

Papers, Posters, and Panels



Four graduate students attended the centennial conference of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History this past September in Atlanta (above). **Torren Gatson**, **Marquita Reed**, **Aleia Brown**, and **Tiffany Momon** presented at a panel session entitled, “Materials, Memory, Place: The Public History of the Black Freedom Struggle.” The panel was chaired by **Dr. Thomas Bynum** (second from left) and moderated by **Dr. Louis Woods** (back).

At the annual meeting of the Society of American Baseball Research’s Jerry Malloy Negro Leagues Conference this past August in Pittsburgh, **Josh Howard** presented “The Wendell Smith Papers: Curating a Digital Exhibit/Archive at the National Baseball Hall of Fame,” based on his residency last year. Congratulations to Howard for winning the John Coates Next Generation Award for his Hall of Fame work and for editing the website ussporthistory.com.

At the September meeting of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) in Louisville, **Josh Howard** presented a paper entitled “Visitors Talk Back: Talk-Back Boards at Seminary Ridge Museum and Women’s Rights National Historical Park.” With him on the panel were **Barbara Franco**, founding director of the Seminary Ridge Museum, and **John Rudy** of the National Park Service. Also at AASLH, **Lane Tillner** and **Caleb Knies** presented a poster entitled “Transcending Time: Place and the Development of Community,” based on the exhibit *Cornerstone of the Community: A History of 110 West College Street*, created for the Center for the Arts in Murfreesboro.

Four MTSU Public History graduate students attended the Second Annual Slave Dwelling Project Conference in October in Charleston. The theme of the conference was “A History Denied: Preserving Tangible Evidences of Slave Dwellings.” Supported by the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area and the Center for Historic Preservation, **Torren Gatson**, **Noel**



Harris, **Tiffany Momon**, and **Marquita Reed** presented a panel entitled “Transitional Space, Transitional Times: Looking at Slave Dwellings Beyond the Civil War.” The panel was chaired and moderated by **Leigh Ann Gardner** (M.A., 2012), interpretive specialist for the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area.

Also in October, the student chapter of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) presented a panel at the annual conference of the Society of Tennessee Archivists (STA), held at Pickwick Landing State Park. The topic was “The Development of Tennessee Graduate Student Interest in Archives: The Middle Tennessee State University Society of American Archivists Student Chapter, Origins, Current Status, and Future Plans.” The SAA also created an organizational poster that was on display during the meeting. Student attendees were **Dallas Hanbury** (Ph.D. candidate), **Evan Spencer** (M.A., 2015), **Bradley Boshers**, **Mona Brittingham**, and **Bradley Harjehausen**.

At the Southeastern Museums Conference this past October in Jacksonville, Fla., three graduate students—**Sarah Calise**, **Casey Gymrek**, and **Ethan Morris**—accepted the Spotlight on Student Research in Museums Award. They also presented on the award-winning exhibit project that they and nine other classmates completed in spring 2015 as coursework for Essentials of Museum Management. The exhibit, *A Legacy in Learning*, charted the history of Central Magnet School in Murfreesboro. ↗



In October, **Casey Gymrek**, **Ethan Morris**, and **Sarah Calise** presented research about the history of Central Magnet School during the Southeastern Museums Conference in Jacksonville, Fla. “Balancing Out Memories of a Southern School” discusses desegregation of the former Central High School in Murfreesboro.

The Aiken-Rhett House in Charleston, S.C., (above) shows where slaves lived and worked. The residence was part of the program, “A History Denied: Preserving Tangible Evidences of Slave Dwellings.”



In October, **Gore Center** graduate assistants (l-r) **Dallas Hanbury**, **Evan Spencer**, and **Bradley Harjehausen**, along with Public History graduate students **Bradley Boshers** and **Mona Brittingham**, presented the work of the MTSU student chapter of the Society of American Archivists.

The Maymester Experience



This year's Maymester with visiting professor **Carol Kammen** was an exceptional opportunity, a rare academic treat—part lecture, part workshop, part think tank. So eager were we to get started every day that she could never beat us to the classroom in the morning. We were always there waiting for her.

A renowned county historian and former professor at Cornell University, Kammen has authored, coauthored, and edited a number of books, including *On Doing Local History* and the *Encyclopedia of Local History*, which is currently being revised for its third edition. Her popular column for the American Association for State and Local History's publication, *History News*, has generated a wealth of insightful essays over the years—many of which were collected and reprinted in *Zen and the Art of Local History*, co-edited by Kammen and **Bob Beatty**, chief operating officer for AASLH (also working on a Ph.D. in Public History at MTSU).

To tackle the Maymester topic of "On Becoming a Public Historian," Kammen assigned readings from an eclectic cross-section of works, from Herodotus to Eudora Welty to Lucy Salmon, Carl Becker, and Michael Kammen, Carol's late husband, whose *Mystic Chords of Memory* has become a must-read for public historians. We also sampled a buffet of primary sources—newspaper articles, advertisements, diary entries, census records, and letters. And we "perambulated"—a term Kammen prefers to the more mundane "walk." A key principle of studying local history, according to her, is to get boots on the ground, or, maybe, sneakers on the sidewalk. So some days the class took to the road, to visit the Nashville Public Library, downtown Murfreesboro, and Stones River National Battlefield. (Watching Kammen expertly mine information from library and National Park Service staff was worth taking the class.) She referred to our road trips as "rather joyous occasions, where we all learned from each other."

Kammen readily admits she approaches the teaching of history from a very different perspective than an academic public historian might: "I am interested in and believe in documents so I introduce typical examples that might be found in any archive. In class we read them aloud, puzzled about meaning, and also about how best to use this sort of evidence." Our essay assignments too were not the norm. Kammen insisted that they be personal—no academic objectivity allowed. Our final project was even more unorthodox—a scrapbook, documenting our daily encounters with history during the course. These are now part of the fabric of MTSU, archived at the Albert Gore Research Center.

While Kammen suspects she surprised the students with her approach, they also surprised her: "The students asked some great questions, we had some lively discussions, and they caused me to reconsider some of my assumptions about the material." Student **Marquita Reed** said the big takeaway from the course for her was "gaining a better understanding of how to blend academic history with public history to connect with the community, to use our knowledge to engage the community with history." ✨

—Jenny Andrews

Alumni Spotlight

NANCY ADGENT (M.A., 2005)

After a productive ten-year stint, **Nancy Adgent** has recently retired as archivist for the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) in Sleepy Hollow, N.Y. She now is channeling her energies and expertise into being a public history consultant and renovating her family's farm home in Chapel Hill, Tenn. Initially, the RAC brought Nancy on board to facilitate the Collaborative Electronic Records Project (CERP), a three-year joint initiative with the Smithsonian Institution. Her charge was to evaluate how best to organize and manage electronic records, particularly emails, as archival materials, and to devise a procedure that was not only efficient but also user-friendly. "We were one of the first to tackle electronic media as archives, so we knew we were working on something that would be really useful," Adgent said. "And we succeeded." For more information, see <http://siarchives.si.edu/cerp/>.

At the conclusion of CERP, Adgent worked on organizing various business records at RAC (her previous 25-year career in the business world, she said, proved invaluable). Then she segued to reference and exhibit development, spending most of her time assisting researchers onsite and answering outside inquiries. "Helping researchers was what I truly loved most," she recalls. Her best preparation for this role, she notes, was her time at MTSU, where she worked on a variety of projects for both the Center for Historic Preservation and the Albert Gore Research Center. "I can't stress enough," she said, "how important it is to develop good solid research habits and writing skills."

Adgent has also been active in the Association for Gravestone Studies (AGS), a natural step after working on National Register nominations for gravesites while at the CHP. In 2008 she was elected to the AGS board of trustees and chair of the archives committee. Adept at organizing and managing archives, Adgent facilitated the challenging transfer of AGS archives to their new home at the Department of Special Collections at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. She and another MTSU alum, **Perky Beisel** (Ph.D., 2005), were awarded a Preserve America Grant to create a booklet about cemeteries in Texas, which has been a resounding success. "There is so much to be gained from student collaborations. They can be so rewarding, with lots of spin-offs." As proof, Adgent is currently working on a book about cemeteries, which she hopes to complete in a couple of years. ✨



—Jenny Andrews