

Public History

at Middle Tennessee State University

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Spring 2011



Graduate Students Produce Traveling Exhibit for Civil War Sesquicentennial

This Cruel War: Rutherford County Experiences the Civil War, a traveling exhibit commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, opened at Oaklands Historic House museum on Thursday, April 28, 2011. Working under the direction of Dr. Bren Martin, the graduate students in Essentials of Museum Management developed the exhibition, which interprets civilian life in Rutherford County during the war. Nine panels cover the following themes: Prelude to War, War Comes to Rutherford County, Occupation, Divided Loyalties, Mapping the War, Emancipation, and the Legacies of the War. The exhibit team included Kimberly Tucker, project manager; Ashley Brown, exhibit designer; Rachel Drayton, GIS coordinator; Jared Bratton and Claire Ackerman, image curators; Rachel Morris, marketing/public relations coordinator; Natalie Goodwin, historian; Jaryn Abdallah, youth education coordinator; Kristen O'Hare, adult education coordinator; Charles Nichols, multimedia curator; Kelsey Fields, object Curator; Leslie Crouch, exhibit fabricator; and Sade Turnipseed, web exhibit curator. ↗



Exhibit Opening Group: Dr. Bren Martin and Essentials of Museum Management graduate students

Finding Rutherford County—Cemetery Community

May Term May 16–June 2, 2011

Cemetery Community was a sizable post-emancipation African American community located on a portion of what had been the battlefield during the Civil War Battle of Stones River in December 1862 and January 1863. When Stones River National Battlefield was formed during the 1930s, approximately 325 acres of the Community was acquired for the park. As part of current National Park Service initiatives to interpret slavery and its legacy at Civil War sites and battlefield parks, Stones River National Battlefield and Bradley Academy Museum are collaborating with the Public History program to further document the history of Cemetery Community.

This year's Maymester Experience will bring together graduate students and community scholars with knowledge of local African American history

to conduct historic preservation surveys, record oral histories, and produce web-based interpretive exhibits.

On May 24, field school participants will present preliminary research findings at a day-long community workshop hosted by Bradley Academy and open to the public. Featured speakers include Carla Jones, president of the Matt Gardner Homestead Museum in Elkton, Tennessee; Robert Sutton, chief historian of the National Park Service; Allison Dorsey, Swarthmore College, who has researched post-emancipation African American communities in Georgia; and Susan Eva O'Donovan, University of Memphis, who has compiled a documentary history of emancipation for the Freedmen and Southern Society Project and written about former slaves in the "cotton" south. ↗

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Department of History

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Newsletter Editor
Mary Kate Stringer

Unlock the Past The Key to Your Future

New Graduate Students

Abigail Gautreau,
B.A. Randolph-
Macon Women's
College, Virginia;
M.A. Oxford
University

Amanda Schaffer,
B.A. Bloomsburg
University,
Pennsylvania

Jaryn Abdallah,
B.A. Houghton
College, New York

Jessica White,
B.A. MTSU

Ph.D. Professional Residencies

Albert Whittenberg,
Department of History,
MTSU

Jane Davis, Ulysses S.
Grant National Historic
Site, St. Louis, Missouri

Kristen Baldwin
Deathridge, Church of the
Holy Trinity Episcopal,
Nashville, Tennessee

Congratulations to Our New Graduates

Fall 2010

M.A. in Public History

Amanda Hall
Elizabeth Rhea Lambert
Katherine Looney
Elizabeth D. Smith
Megan Akerstrom

Ph.D. in Public History

Gwyneth A. Thayer
(B.A., Brown; M.A.,
University of Texas-
Austin) "Going to the
Dogs: A History of
Greyhound Racing in
the United States."



Gwynn Thayer and
Dr. Rebecca Conard

Spring 2011

M.A. in Public History

Bud Alley
Garet Bleddynn
Layton Carr
Catherine Hawkins
Lauren Pate

Ph.D. in Public History

Susan Knowles (M.L.S., George Peabody; M.A.,
Vanderbilt; B.A., Vanderbilt), "Of Structure and
Society: Tennessee Marble in Civic Architecture."

Angela Smith (M.A., MTSU; B.A., Belmont),
"John Beecher: An Activist Poet Chronicles an
American Century."

Awards and Publications

The Public History program congratulates recent graduates and students for their awards and publications this past year.

Awards

Katie Rosta won the 2011 Tennessee Association of Museums Annual Conference Scholarship. The conference, "Go Tell It on the Mountain," was held March 23-25 in Johnson City.

Katie Stringer won the Bart McCash Award for Outstanding Graduate Student in History from the MTSU Department of History.

Cassie Sade Turnipseed was awarded a George Melendez Wright Student Travel Scholarship to attend the George Wright Society Biennial Conference in New Orleans in March 2011.

Presentations

Garet Bleddynn, "The Times, They Are a Changin': Future Archivists Speak Out," Society of Tennessee Archivists Annual Meeting, November 2010.

Dr. Rebecca Conard, "Stones River National Battlefield: Telling New Stories with Old Landscapes," George Wright Society Biennial Conference, New Orleans, March 2011.

Kristen Baldwin Deathridge, "Sacred and Secular: A Tale of Two Churches," Seventh Savannah Symposium: Spirituality and Place, Savannah, Georgia, February 2011.

Rebecca Duke, "Connecting Educational Communities: Museums and Formal Learning," National Council on Public History, Pensacola, Florida, April 2011.



Katie Stringer with
Chair Amy Sayward

Rachael Finch, "The Public Historian's Role during the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War Working Group," National Council on Public History, Pensacola, Florida, April 2011.

Elizabeth Goestch, "Knowledge All around You: Cultural Landscapes Management from a Landscape Point of View," George Wright Society Biennial Conference, New Orleans, Louisiana, March 2011.

Benjamin R. Hayes, "Without Controversy: The Development of Fort Pillow State Historic Park," George Wright Society Biennial Conference, New Orleans, March 2011.

Cheri Laflamme, "Contraband Communities: Marriage, Race, and Family at Grand Junction, Tennessee," National Council on Public History, Pensacola, Florida, April 2011.

Cheri Laflamme, "An Urban Oasis: Fort Negley Comes Full Circle," American Society for Environmental History, Phoenix, April 2011.

Zada Law and Susan Knowles, "The Value of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Historical Research and Public History Applications," National Council on Public History, Pensacola, Florida, April 2011.

Dr. Bren Martin, "Moments of Awareness: Narrating and Representing Race and Racial Consciousness," Oral History Association Conference, Atlanta, October 2010.

Dr. Martha Norkunas, "Commemorating the 9-11 Anniversary: Ten Years Later," National Council on Public History, Pensacola, Florida, April 2011.

Dr. Martha Norkunas, "Racial Consciousness: Narrating Awareness," Oral History Association Conference, Atlanta, October 2010.



Cheri Laflamme
presents at NCPH

News from the Centers

Center for Historic Preservation

by Dr. Stacey Graham

Research assistants continue their roles as main contributors on projects, reports, and exhibits. Undergraduate Sara Beth Gideon's exhibit, *Community, Competitions, and the University Campus, 1926–2010*, highlights the intersection of the local community and state- and nation-wide high school athletic competitions at MTSU. It is the first senior Honors thesis to be presented as an exhibit and provided Sara Beth with hands-on experience in museum interpretation. It is available for viewing at the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County as part of the center's MTSU Centennial observance. A project that speaks to statewide history is the upcoming Trail of Tears driving tour, a partnership project with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation. Graduate research assistant Amy Kostine is researching and drafting text for the driving tour and interpretive markers. Beyond Tennessee, nine students from Dr. Carroll Van West's Essentials in Historic Preservation seminar (fall 2010), assisted by Katie Randall, worked on a heritage development plan for Skyline Farms, a New Deal community in Jackson County, Alabama. The plan includes historical context, a resource inventory, a preservation needs assessment of the Rock Store, a museum plan, a strategic plan for the Skyline Farms Heritage Association, and the possibility of a future multiple property nomination to the National Register.

Center for Popular Music

By Lucinda Cockrell



Rachel Morris with her exhibit at the Center for Popular Music

Public History graduate assistants in the Center for Popular Music produced several exhibits mounted in James Walker Library from January through March. Rachel Morris researched, produced, and mounted *Winter Music* in January, *Valentine's Day*

and *Songs of Romance* in February, and *Irish Music* in March. Abby Hathaway researched, produced, and mounted *Women in Music* for Women's History

Month in March. All the exhibits contained numerous materials from special collections at the Center for Popular Music such as sheet music, sound recordings, performance documents, photographs, and manuscripts. Abby Hathaway is also processing the Everett Corbin collection of traditional country music materials. Rachel Morris is processing the Gene Jones collection of jazz, ragtime, and Broadway music.

Stones River National Battlefield Wayside Exhibit

By John Lynch



Students plan wayside exhibit

on that land. Over the past several years, MTSU students have dedicated untold hours of research and thousands of words to telling the story of the Cemetery Community at Stones River National Battlefield. Public history students in Dr. Rebecca Conard's Seminar in Cultural Resources Management spent the spring 2011 semester working to assimilate and distill that research into fewer than 300 words and a handful of images for a wayside exhibit proposal for the battlefield. The students held focus groups with interested community members at Bradley Academy Historical Center and Stones River United Methodist Church. Among those community advisors were Leonora Washington, teacher and advocate for Cemetery Community; Katie Wilson, chair of the Bradley Academy board; and Devora Butler, author of *African Americans in Rutherford County*.

Days of fighting and death in 1862–63 turned the fields and cedar forests at Stones River into a landscape of unimaginable carnage and destruction. Former slaves, soldiers, and freedmen helped bury the dead, restore the land, and build a thriving community



Congressman Bart Gordon and archivist Jim Havron at the Gore Research Center

Gore Center Receives Bart Gordon Papers

The Albert Gore Research Center (AGRC) received the Bart Gordon papers. In December 2009, congressman and MTSU alumnus Bart Gordon retired after 26 years as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and the process of transferring his papers to the Albert Gore Research Center began. The center has received more than 600 cartons of papers and an electronic database, all of which will document Gordon's career in Congress. Unusual for such donations, Gordon decided to include casework files that document the ways in which Tennesseans call upon their elected officials to assist with health care, Social Security, veterans, and other life issues. The Gordon papers also include the first significant set of electronic records to be donated to the AGRC. The AGRC's partnership

with the graduate program in Public History at MTSU allows it to offer hands-on experience in the processing of large collections such as the Gordon papers and to prepare M.A. students for careers in archival management.

In the Community

National Council on Public History

Several students and the entire Public History program faculty attended the National Council on Public History (NCPH) Annual Meeting April 6-9 in Pensacola, Florida. We look forward to hosting NCPH in 2015! ↗



Staff, alumni, students, and friends gathered at the NCPH conference



Krista Castillo, director of Fort Negley Visitor Center; Nashville mayor Karl Dean; Zada Law

Public History in Action

by Zada Law

On Wednesday, April 13, 2011, Ph.D. student Zada Law participated in Nashville's "Walk 100 Miles with Mayor Karl Dean" Challenge. They walked twice around Fort Negley for a total of one mile, and Zada provided a narrative for the mayor about the history of the fort, where federal troops were encamped during the Civil War, and what has been found archaeologically at the site. ↗

Alumni Spotlights

Ashleigh Oatts, class of 2009, has served as education coordinator at Blount Mansion in Knoxville since July 2010. Blount Mansion recently received a Save America's Treasures grant. The grant will be used in part for preserving a historic site on the property to be used as a new education center. Ashleigh is involved in planning for three new exhibits. ↗



Alumni Ashleigh Oatts at Blount Mansion

Scott Stroh, class of 1997, was named Florida state historic preservation officer and director of the Division of Historical Resources in November 2009. He also was elected to the Executive Council of the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH) in 2009 and serves as chair of the AASLH Mentor Committee and the 2012 AASLH Annual Meeting Program Committee. ↗



Alumni Scott Stroh

Awards *continued from page 2*

Mandi Pitt, "Interpreting Narratives of Race, Class, and Gender in Public Programming," Oral History Association Conference, Atlanta, October 2010.

Mandi Pitt, "The Times, They Are a Changin': Future Archivists Speak Out," Society of Tennessee Archivists Annual Meeting, November 2010.

Katie Randall, "Mothers of Opportunity: The Founding of the Alabama Boys' Industrial School," at *Court House, State House, Her House*: Southern Women and Politics Conference, Gulfport, Mississippi, April 2011.

Tyler Sanderlin, "Narrating Racialized Space in the Historic Franklin Theater," Oral History Association Conference, Atlanta, October 2010.

Dr. Carroll Van West, moderator, "The Coming of the Civil War Sesquicentennial and Public History," National Council on Public History, Pensacola, Florida, April 2011.

Dr. James Williams, "A Storied Community: The Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress Roundtable," National Council on Public History, Pensacola, Florida, April 2011. ↗



Mandi Pitt, Tyler Sanderlin, and Dr. Martha Norkunas at the Oral History Association Conference

On the Web

You can now get the Public History program newsletter in PDF form online!

Please visit MTSU History's other online resources:

Website: www.mtsu.edu/publichistory/index.shtml

Twitter: @mtsuhistory

Blog: <http://mtsuhistory.blogspot.com/>

Facebook: MTSU History and MTSU Public History. ↗

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