

# Mississippi History

# MDAH

# NEWSLETTER

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February 2009

## Old Capitol Museum Public Grand Opening Feb. 7

### Black Tie Reception And Sneak Peek To Be Held Feb. 5

On Saturday, February 7, at 8:30 a.m., the public is invited to join Governor Haley Barbour, Lt. Governor Phil Bryant, and local elementary students for the ribbon-cutting and grand opening of Mississippi's Old Capitol Museum.

MDAH and the Foundation for Mississippi History will host a black tie reception and sneak peek of the Old Capitol from 6:30 to 9:30 on Thursday, February 5. Chef Luis Bruno will provide food. Tickets are \$100 each, and all attendees will become charter members of Keepers of the Capitol, the group that will help support the museum's activities.

Visitors to the National Historic Landmark will see the 1839 building in all its nineteenth-

century glory, restored from the polished limestone floors to the top of the rotunda dome 94 feet above. The Old Capitol was the first building to house all three branches of the state's government under one roof, and the Governor's Office, Supreme Court, House of Representatives, and Senate Chambers have been accurately and authentically restored to their nineteenth-century appearances.

An orientation film introduces visitors to the building, while exhibits explore what the region was like prior to 1839, the construction of the building and its uses over the past 170 years, the different constitutions the state has had, and the importance of historic preservation. Interactive multimedia exhibits let visitors hear speeches made by legislators during their time in the building, as well as court cases decided there and actions taken by the governor.



On opening day, the 8:30 ribbon cutting will kick off a full day of activities. Miss 103 will broadcast live from the museum from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., while providing refreshments to visitors. Children's activities will run throughout the day. The building's original caretaker, known as the Keeper of the Capitol, lived in the building and was responsible for its maintenance and upkeep.

During the grand opening, the Keeper of the Capitol will appear in authentic period dress to pass out commemorative keys to the building.

After February 7, the Old Capitol Museum will be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday to Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday, free of charge. For more information call 601-576-6920 or visit [www.oldcapitolmuseum.com](http://www.oldcapitolmuseum.com).

## Historical Society Meeting Will Focus On Preservation

Join the Mississippi Historical Society in Jackson March 5-7 for two days of presentations by national and state experts on historic preservation. The meeting will be in the newly restored Old Capitol Museum—Mississippi's most historic building, itself almost a casualty of neglect several times throughout its 170-year existence.

The meeting begins on Thursday, March 5, with a welcoming reception at the Governor's Mansion. On March 6 and 7

presentations will be made on the restoration of the Old Capitol, Mississippi Historical Society founder Benjamin Leonard Covington Wailes, Mississippi's Antiquities Act, the historic preservation movement in Mississippi, the work of the Historic Natchez Foundation, the legacy of Eudora Welty, Jefferson Davis and northern memory of the Civil War, the town of Indianola's attempt to change its historical identity, and the origins of the Mississippi Department of Archives and



History.

Peter H. Brink, senior vice president, Programs, National Trust for Historic Preservation (pictured at left), will give the keynote address, "Past Meets Future." Also scheduled are tours of the Eudora Welty House and the Old Capitol Museum.

Rooms have been reserved at a special rate at the Old Capitol Inn, one block north of the Old Capitol Museum. Call the Old

Capitol Inn at 601-359-9000 or 888-359-9001 by February 12 to request the MHS price of \$110 plus tax. Additional rooms are available through that same date at the Cabot Lodge Millsaps (601-948-8650 or 800-874-4737) for \$89 each plus tax.

Reservations for the Friday luncheon and banquet and Saturday awards brunch should be made by February 27. Call 601-576-6849 for more information or download the schedule and registration form at [mdah.state.ms.us/registration.pdf](http://mdah.state.ms.us/registration.pdf).

# History-themed Happenings around Mississippi

**BILOXI**—The Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art in Biloxi is featuring the exhibit *The Native Guard: A Photographic History of Ship Island's African American Regiment* through February 20. The exhibit features photographs from the collection of C.P. (Kitty) Weaver of Massachusetts and Isiah Edwards of Long Beach.

The photographs record the history of the Second Regiment of Louisiana Native Guards serving at Ship Island. More than 180,000 African Americans served in 163 units during the Civil War. Despite discouragement, thousands of black men did enlist in the Union army, including what would become Ship Island's Second Regiment of Louisiana Native Guards. The exhibition also includes the poetry of Gulfport native Natasha Trethewey, who received the Pulitzer Prize for her work *Native Guard*. For more information call 228-374-5547.

**COLUMBUS**—The Columbus-Lowndes Public Library is hosting the traveling exhibition *Forever Free: Abraham Lincoln's Journey to Emancipation* February 5–March 20. *Forever Free* examines Lincoln's quest to restore a Union divided by Civil War and shows how his beliefs about freeing the slaves were transformed by wartime developments.

There will be an opening reception and program at 6 p.m. on February 5 featuring George C. Rable, Charles G. Summersell Chair in Southern History at the University of Alabama, presenting "Abraham Lincoln's Civil Religion."

On February 12 at 6 p.m. Chris Small, from the Lincoln Project, will portray the sixteenth president during his presentation "Mr. Lincoln and Emancipation." On February 17 at 6 p.m. Mississippi School

for Math and Science instructor Chuck Yarborough will present "The Columbus African American Experience after Freedom: 1865–1875." For more information on the exhibit and additional programs, visit [lowndeslibforeverfree.wordpress.com](http://lowndeslibforeverfree.wordpress.com) or call 662-329-5304. *Forever Free* was organized by the Huntington Library and others.

**JACKSON**—On February 13 at Millsaps College, the Eudora Welty House and Millsaps College Teachers Institute will present a seminar for teachers, *Eudora Welty and the Civil Rights Movement: "Where is the Voice Coming From?"*

Welty biographer Suzanne Marrs and Medgar Evers House curator Minnie Watson will lead participants in a reading of Welty's short story "Where is the Voice Coming From?" Afterwards there will be tours of the houses of Evers and Welty.

Register by February 6 by calling Wanda Manor at Millsaps College, 601-974-1133. Cost is \$50; a .5 CEU credit is included in the fee. The seminar will begin at 8:30 a.m. and finish at 3:30 p.m.

**NATCHEZ**—The twentieth annual **Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration** will be held February 19–22 at the Natchez Convention Center. The theme is "Southern Women Writers: Saluting the Eudora Welty Centennial."

Presentations on February 19 will focus on Welty's life and work and will include talks by Bridget Pieschel, MUW; Suzanne Marrs, Millsaps College; Patti Carr Black, Jackson; Randall Kenan, University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill; Mary Alice Welty White, Eudora Welty House; former governor William F. Winter; and Judy Daniels Wiggins, Copiah—Lincoln Community College. Screenings will be

offered that day of *Eudora Welty: Woman of the World, Daughter of Mississippi* and *A Worn Path*.

The focus on February 20 will be "Eudora Welty's 20th-Century Contemporaries," and will include talks about Elizabeth Spencer, Ellen Douglas, Margaret Walker Alexander, and Harper Lee. At 8 p.m. the Natchez Little Theatre will present a performance of Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

"Eudora Welty's Followers in the 21st Century; William and Elise Winter Day" is the title for the February 21 session. There will be presentations by Rebecca Mark, Tulane University; Brenda Marie Osbey, Louisiana State University; JoAnne Prichard Morris, Jackson; Unita Blackwell, Mayersville; Wendi Berman, New Orleans; Julia Reed, New Orleans; and Dorothea Benton Frank, Sullivan's Island, S.C. The 6:15 p.m. awards ceremony will honor Carolyn Haines and Natasha Trethewey for literary excellence and Steven Soderbergh for special achievement in screenwriting. There will be a screening of Soderbergh's film *Erin Brockovich* at 7:30 p.m.

On February 22 there will be three classes as part of the "Ellen Douglas Writing Workshops" session. Tricia Walker, director of the Delta Music Institute at Delta State University will present "Say It in a Song: Songwriting 101." Ruth Williams, author of *Younger Than That Now*, will present "Creative Awareness: Being a Writer Today," and JoAnne Prichard Morris will present "Reality Check: The Publisher's Point of View."

Most programs of the NLCC are free of charge, although meals and some other functions require a fee and registration. For more information visit [www.colin.edu/nlcc](http://www.colin.edu/nlcc) or email [nlcc@colin.edu](mailto:nlcc@colin.edu).

**OXFORD**—The University of Mississippi will be the site of

**Blues Today: A Living Blues Symposium** February 26 and 27. Events will include an unveiling and dedication of a Mississippi Blues Trail marker and a blues-themed special edition of Thacker Mountain Radio featuring George Mitchell, Art Rosenbaum, Kenny Brown, and Cedric Burnside.

On February 27 at 8 p.m., legendary soul and gospel singer Mavis Staples will give a concert at the Ford Center for Performing Arts. To purchase tickets for the concert or to learn more about the symposium, call 662-915-2787.

**NATCHEZ**—The **Mississippi Archaeological Association and Louisiana Archaeological Society** will hold their joint annual meeting February 27–March 1 at the Eola Hotel in Natchez.

Artifact displays and speakers are being planned. Vin Steponaitis, University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, will deliver the keynote address on his research at Feltus Mounds, located just outside Natchez. A tour of the mounds is planned for March 1.

Registration is \$15 before or \$20 the day of the meeting. Registration forms are available online at [www.msarchaeology.org](http://www.msarchaeology.org). For more information contact Rita Fields, meeting chairperson, at 601-558-2596 or 601-517-1490.

**BRANDON**—There will be living history displays courtesy of Camp #265 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans at a program February 28 focusing on **Holt Collier, his life, his Roosevelt hunts, and the origin of the teddy bear**. Author Minor Ferris Buchanan will speak about Collier at 5 p.m.

The free event begins at 2 p.m. at the Mississippi State Extension Building at 601 Marquette Road, Brandon. For more information call 601-829-3525.

# Welty Centennial Includes Plays, Concerts, Exhibits

Eudora Welty, one of the state's most beloved and celebrated authors, would have turned 100 on April 13 of this year. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History, repository for Welty's papers and administrator of the Eudora Welty House, is celebrating her centennial with events around the state and across the nation. These plays, concerts, and exhibits will culminate during the week of April 13.

## Calendar of Centennial Events

Eudora Welty's *Collected Stories* is the 2009 featured book for Mississippi Reads, a statewide project focusing on a different author each year. For more information see [mississippireads.org](http://mississippireads.org).

**Through February 16.** *Eudora Welty in New York: Photographs of the Early 1930s*, an exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York.

**February 19–22.** *Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration*, "Southern Women Writers: Saluting the Eudora Welty Centennial." Online at [www.colin.edu/nlcc](http://www.colin.edu/nlcc).

**February 22,** 1 p.m., *Scholastic Art and Writing Awards Ceremony* (Alliance for Young Artists and Writers) at the Jackson Convention Complex. More information at [www.artandwriting.org](http://www.artandwriting.org)

**March 6,** 1:30 p.m., *Preserving Eudora Welty's Legacy*, a panel discussion at the Mississippi Historical Society annual meeting at the Old Capitol in Jackson, Mississippi. Online at [mdah.state.ms.us/registration.pdf](http://mdah.state.ms.us/registration.pdf)

**March 20–22.** *Eudora Welty New Play Series* at New Stage Theatre, Jackson. See [www.newstagetheatre.com](http://www.newstagetheatre.com) for more information.

**March 24,** 2 p.m., Eudora Welty House induction into the *Southern Literary Trail*; Patti Carr Black, keynote speaker. Online at [www.southernliterarytrail.org/](http://www.southernliterarytrail.org/).

**March 28,** 9 a.m.–noon, *Heirloom Plants in Garden Design*, a seminar at Belhaven College with William Welch, Texas A&M, and Jenny Rose Carter, Temple University Arboretum. A plant sale and tour of the Welty garden will follow.

**March 29,** 2 p.m. at the Old Capitol Museum. Unveiling of Welty's portrait for the *Mississippi Hall of Fame*, with remarks from Welty biographer Suzanne Marrs.

**April 11–July 5.** *Welty in New York*, photographic exhibit moves from New York to the Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson. Online at [www.msmuseumart.org/](http://www.msmuseumart.org/).

**April 14–18.** *Tour Packages.* Overnight tour package includes photography exhibit, Welty House tour, trolley ride, dinner, play, and accommodations. Contact the Fairview Inn at 888-948-1908. Daytime only package includes

photography exhibit, Welty House tour, lunch, and trolley ride. Contact the Fondren Express trolley at 601-213-7433.

**April 14–26.** New Stage Theatre, Jackson, presents Welty's *The Ponder Heart*. Online at [www.newstagetheatre.com](http://www.newstagetheatre.com).

**April 16–18.** Joint meeting of the Eudora Welty Society and the Southern Literary Festival at Millsaps College.

**April 17.** 8 p.m. *Mary Chapin Carpenter, Kate Campbell, Caroline Herring, and Claire Holley* performing at the Belhaven Center for the Arts. Sponsored by Cellular South. Contact Ticketmaster at 601-355-5252 for tickets.

**April 18.** Eudora Welty Day at New Stage Theatre, Jackson.

**April 18,** 7:30 p.m., Mississippi Symphony Bravo Series featuring James Sclater's *Images from Welty* and Crafton Beck's adaptation of *The Whistle* at Thalia Mara Hall, Jackson.

**September 1.** *Welty in New York* photography exhibit moves from Jackson to the Lauren Rogers Museum of Art, Laurel.

**September 26.** Premiere of Welty's state fair painting and opening of Welty State Fair photographs at the Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson.

## Important Information for Newsletter Subscribers

The *Mississippi History Newsletter* has had a tremendous response from subscribers during the process of updating the mailing list. For those subscribers who have not yet resubmitted their contact information, please do so by March 31 to avoid being dropped from the list. The newsletter will still be free of charge.

There are four ways to submit your information: fill out the form below and mail it to *Mississippi History Newsletter*, P.O. Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205-0571; fill out the form and fax it to 601-576-6975; sign up online at [mdah.state.ms.us/list.html](http://mdah.state.ms.us/list.html); or email the information below to [newsletter@mdah.state.ms.us](mailto:newsletter@mdah.state.ms.us).

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Send my copy to the above address. \_\_\_\_\_ I prefer to receive my newsletter by email. \_\_\_\_\_

## February MDAH Events Across the State

### CLOSING

The state archives will close Saturday, February 7, due to the Dixie National Parade. The archives will reopen at its regular time of 9 a.m. on Monday, February 9.

### JACKSON

#### **Old Capitol Museum**

State Street at Capitol  
601-576-6920

**Thursday, February 5,** 6:30–9:30 p.m. *Black Tie Reception.* Enjoy a sneak peek of the restored Old Capitol and become a charter member of the Keepers of the Capitol. Food by Chef Luis Bruno. Tickets \$100 each.

**Tuesdays and Thursdays, February 16–26,** 9 and 10:30 a.m. *Black History Program.* Students will learn the rich history of Mississippi's African Americans from the slaves and freedmen of early Mississippi to the leaders of Mississippi's civil rights movement.

**Monday, February 23,** 6 p.m. Architect *Robert Parker Adams* discusses the restoration of Mississippi's most historic building. Enjoy refreshments and tour the building from 5 to 6 p.m.

#### **History Is Lunch Series**

Noon–1 p.m., William F. Winter Archives and History Building  
200 North Street  
601-576-6998

**Wednesday, February 4—** Authors Turry Flucker and Phoenix Savage will present images from their new book, *African Americans in Jackson.*

**Wednesday, February 11—** Jazz enthusiast John Autry presents "Mississippi Jazz Musicians."

**Wednesday, February 25—** Author Jerusha Bosarge will talk about her book *Inventing Ott: The Legacy of Arthur C. Guyton.*

**Manship House Museum**  
420 E. Fortification Street  
601-961-4724

**Thursday, February 12,** 3:30 p.m. *Victorian Valentines.* Children ages five to twelve will make a Victorian-style valentine. Free, reservations required.

### WASHINGTON

**Historic Jefferson College**  
Highway 61 North  
601-442-2901

**Through February 28.** *In The Southern Wild: Wildlife*

*Photography,* a photo exhibit by Joe Mac Hudspeth, Jr.

**Saturday, February 14.** *EXPLORE! Animal Tracks.* Whose tracks are those? Find-out in this fun class for kids ages 6-8 (10–11:30 a.m.) and 9-12 (2–3:30 p.m.). \$10 fee; pre-payment required.

**Thursday, February 19,** noon. *Lunchtime Lecture Series: Chair Caning.* Frogmore Plantation archivist Melissa Powell will demonstrate the art of creating and repairing cane chair seats and backs. Free of charge, bring a lunch.

**Thursday, February 26,** noon. *Lunchtime Lecture Series: James Wilkinson: A Curious Man.* HJC historian Clark Burkett will give a lecture on the life of the man from whom Wilkinson County takes its name. Free of charge, bring a lunch.

**Saturday, February 28,** 9 a.m. *19th-Century Geocaching Trail Race.* Individuals and teams will compete using compasses to find hidden caches on the HJC nature trail. Pre-registration required; fee is \$3 per adult and \$1 for students.

## Oral History Project at USM Marks Decade

For the last ten years, the story of Mississippi has been captured through the voices of its people with the help of the University of Southern Mississippi's Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage. This year, the center will mark that achievement by celebrating and promoting the Mississippi Oral History Project.

A statewide initiative launched in 1999 and administered by the center, the MOHP has resulted in one of the largest oral history collections in the Gulf South. About 3,500 taped interviews with citizens, from top political leaders to ordinary people sharing their experiences, constitute the collection to date and are housed at the university.

A reception and display to celebrate the anniversary will be held at the State Capitol February 26 from 1 to 5 p.m. CD compilations of interviews from the Hurricane Katrina Oral History Project and segments of the MPB program "Mississippi Moments" will be available. To learn more, visit [www.usm.edu/msoralhistory](http://www.usm.edu/msoralhistory).