

MISSISSIPPI HISTORY NEWSLETTER

MDAH
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
ARCHIVES & HISTORY

A Publication of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History

March 2025

Volume 67, No. 1



This image displays an uplifting message during Hurricane Katrina's widespread devastation. (Photo courtesy of Melody Golding)

New Hurricane Katrina Exhibit Begins 20th Anniversary Remembrance of Storm's Impact

Page 3

Inside This Issue

Page 4

Get Ready for Mississippi Makers Fest

The annual gathering of artists, crafts people, and musicians will be held May 10.

Page 6

FedEx Sponsors Extended MLK Free Weekend

The annual MLK free weekend celebration was extended an extra day. Along with the Night of Culture, a National Day of Racial Healing program was held at the Two Mississippi Museums.

From the Foundation

The Foundation for Mississippi History supports and promotes the many initiatives of MDAH. This quarter, the Foundation highlights the following donors:

Margaret Ann Crigler Park

First Commercial Bank

Mississippi Arts Commission (Building Fund for the Arts Award supporting demolition and site preparation)

Walker Foundation

Mississippi Makers Fest

Nissan North America (Title sponsorship)

AT&T

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi

Capital City Beverages

Cathead Distillery

Clark Beverage Group, Inc.

Lucid Ink

Mississippi Arts Commission/National Endowment for the Arts

Mississippi Tent & Party Rental

Nancy and Ray Neilsen

StateStreet Group

Visit Jackson

Visit Mississippi

93.5 The Legend and Your Hometown
Country US96 Radio Stations

**Special Exhibit Hurricane Katrina:
Mississippi Remembers, Photographs
by Melody Golding**

Horne LLP (Title Sponsorship)

Message from the Director



Children enjoy playing a game outside the Two Mississippi Museums.

For the Two Mississippi Museums to prosper, our downtown Jackson neighborhood must flourish, too. This is the impetus behind our efforts to transform the blighted city block adjacent to the Two Mississippi Museums into a park. Luckily, we have many partners who share our vision. The most recent support for the park was a \$225,000 grant from the Mississippi Arts Commission's Building Fund for the Arts. (See page 6.) With this help—and the help of many others—we plan to cut the ribbon on Margaret Ann Crigler Park by the end of next year. The park will include lush natural landscapes, children's play areas, an entertainment stage, and quiet spots for reflection or fellowship with friends.

Among those most excited about the possibilities the new park represents are the educators in the Museum of Mississippi History and Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. They serve as guides for our most important visitors—the school groups who travel to the capital city from towns and cities across the state to learn the important stories of our past. Having spent a few hours in what former Gov. William F. Winter dubbed “the state's largest classroom,” they are often abuzz with ideas and are eager to spend time in a beautifully curated natural environment.

Significant gifts from partners helped us fund the William and Elise Winter Education Endowment, which ensures the field trips are available to all school children without regard to economic circumstances. Similarly, we hope significant gifts from partners will create this beautiful park so school children's experiences in the capital city are memorable for generations to come.



Katie Blount

Katie Blount
Director
Mississippi Department of Archives and History

New Hurricane Katrina Exhibit Marks 20th Anniversary of Storm, Tells Story of Mississippi's Resilience

Hurricane Katrina: Mississippi Remembers, Photographs by Melody Golding is a new temporary exhibit at the Two Mississippi Museums. On display March 8 through November 7, the exhibit tells the story of Mississippians' resilience in the aftermath of the catastrophic storm through photographs by Golding, a photographer, author, and artist from Vicksburg.

The exhibit also features Hurricane Katrina-related artifacts from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History's Historic Objects Collection. With the exhibit comes a slate of programming at the Two Mississippi Museums related to the 20th anniversary of the deadly storm.

Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Mississippi-Louisiana coastal border August 29, 2005. The storm's 125-mph winds and 30-foot storm surge left a swath of devastation—lives lost, families displaced, homes and businesses submerged or destroyed.

Although the world was captivated by stories emerging from New Orleans and the Louisiana coastline, Mississippi's plight was barely mentioned by national and international media. So, Golding, who was already a Red Cross volunteer assisting storm victims, began documenting the Mississippi Gulf Coast aftermath.

"It is an incomplete visual recording of the Mississippi coastline, all of which was very nearly wrung of life and hope after the storm," Golding said. "These images radically simplify what really happened. My goal in capturing them was to convey the essence of the hurricane's destruction."

HORNE, a Ridgeland-based professional services firm that has been a supporter of the Two Mississippi Museums since 2017, is the title sponsor of the Hurricane Katrina exhibit. The firm also played an integral role in managing Katrina recovery by overseeing federal disaster relief funds and ensuring compliance with funding requirements.



Sam Butz, director of exhibits, installs framed images for the new exhibit, *Hurricane Katrina: Mississippi Remembers, Photographs by Melody Golding*.



Melody Golding

"Sponsoring this exhibit is an honor," said Rusty Butcher, CEO and managing partner of HORNE. "Hurricane Katrina changed the landscape of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Mississippi businesses, and the lives of nearly every Mississippian, including everyone at HORNE."

Additional Hurricane Katrina-related programming at the Two Mississippi Museums includes gallery talks, school programs, special panel discussions, and personal stories of Mississippians. *Hurricane Katrina: Mississippi Remembers* was created by MDAH curatorial staff in partnership with Golding.

American Idol Finalist Headlines 2025 Makers Fest

Country music singer and *American Idol* finalist Colin Stough will headline the 2025 Mississippi Makers Fest. Nissan is the title sponsor of the event that is set for Saturday, May 10, at the Two Mississippi Museums, and will feature musical performances, food, and an arts festival—all free to the public.

More than fifty vendors, food trucks, and beverage carts will be located outside the museums. Handcrafted pottery, paintings, charcuterie boards, jewelry, and more will be sold by local vendors. There will also be a special area for children to make crafts and enjoy other activities.

Stough, whose sound is a distinctive mix of Southern rock distortion and pure-country style, will share the stage with American folk rock band HAPPY LANDING, blues artist Jamell Richardson, and bluegrass band BTJ Trio.

Nissan's generous support covers free admission to the museums and the musical performances. "Nissan is a proud supporter of Mississippi Makers Fest, bringing friends and neighbors together to celebrate the immense creativity of the Magnolia state," said Chandra Vassar, chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion officer for Nissan Americas and president of the Nissan Foundation.

See the full list of Mississippi Makers Fest sponsors on page 2 in the Foundation for Mississippi History section.



American Idol finalist Colin Stough



Education Department team members Al Wheat, Kari Baker and Bently Cochran display Silver Award certificate for MDAH Digital Snapshots.

MDAH Wins SEMC Awards



MDAH Museums Division staffer Tori Rice displays Silver Award certificate for the Mississippi Makers Fest poster.



Staffers Sarah Grantham and Drew Gardner hold Bronze Award certificate for the Two Mississippi Museums Family Guide.

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) is the recipient of three 2024 Southeastern Museums Conference (SEMC) Awards. During the recent SEMC awards luncheon in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, MDAH was recognized with the following:

- Silver Award in the poster category for the Two Mississippi Museums 2024 Makers Fest Poster.
- Silver Award in digital education over \$10,000 budget category for MDAH Digital Snapshots—exhibits designed to introduce to a broader audience lesser-known, selected collections from the MDAH Digital Archives.
- Bronze Award in the gallery guides category for the Two Mississippi Museums Family Guide.

Award winners were listed in the Fall 2024 edition of "INSIDE SEMC," a digital publication of the Southeastern Museums Conference.

Program Highlights



Zena Howard from Perkins&Will, the architect firm selected to design the Vicksburg interpretive center, provided an update on the MDAH project during *History Is Lunch*.



Visitors ride on a trackless train at the Governor's Mansion during Christmas by Candlelight Tour.



Visitors participate in a painting program celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Eudora Welty House & Garden.



Amy Bluemel of the Chickasaw Nation shares traditional stories at the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians.



John Perkins, minister and author, speaks during National Day of Racial Healing, which was a part of an extended MLK Weekend Celebration at the Two Mississippi Museums, sponsored by FedEx.



Former NFL player Roy Curry speaks after a screening of *Always a Winner: Roy Curry, A Quarterback Ahead of His Time* at the Two Mississippi Museums.

FedEx-Sponsored MLK Weekend Celebration Drew 2,000-plus to Two Mississippi Museums

With FedEx's support, the Two Mississippi Museums welcomed more than 2,000 visitors for a four-day celebration of learning, community engagement, and artistic performances.

The extended weekend featured gallery talks by Freedom Rider Hezekiah Watkins, on-campus voter registration from the Elections division of the Mississippi Secretary of State's Office, and performances themed on the Voting Rights Act of 1965 during the MLK Night of Culture.

On Tuesday, January 21, which was designated National Day of Racial Healing, lunch was served to guests who attended panel discussions—one celebrating the life and ministry of John Perkins and another highlighting how philanthropy can drive transformative change in communities. Other sponsors for the January 21 event were the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, which spearheaded the National Day of Racial Healing initiative, the Foundation for the Mid South, Alluvial Collective, and the Perkins Family.



Freedom Rider Hezekiah Watkins talks to museum visitors who came during the MLK extended weekend celebration.



Students recite speeches from civil rights activists during the annual MLK Night of Culture.

Mississippi Arts Commission Awards \$225,000 for Margaret Ann Crigler Park

The Mississippi Arts Commission has awarded a \$225,000 Building Fund for the Arts grant to the Foundation for Mississippi History for the Margaret Ann Crigler Park project in Jackson.

The park, which is under construction, will be adjacent to the Two Mississippi Museums. The park will feature the state's native foliage and will include a large open green space, an outdoor stage, and a natural play area for children.

It will be a new anchor on the city's museum trail, a walking and biking trail that connects the museums at LeFleur's Bluff to museums downtown. Katie Blount, MDAH director, said the project will expand capacity for public programming that contributes to a vibrant arts and culture landscape in the community.

Plans for Margaret Ann Crigler Park align with the original layout for Jackson from 1822, which included public green spaces on alternating blocks. Only two of the original parks remain: the Old Capitol Green and Smith Park.

The first \$1 million for the project was donated by retired businessman Noble T. Crigler, and the park will be named after his late wife, Margaret Ann Crigler. The Mississippi Legislature has provided \$3 million for the project, and the remaining funds will be raised privately.



From the Digital Archives

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson was among those discussing voting rights in the documentary, *The Defenders: How Lawyers Protected the Movement*.

Watch the film on the MDAH YouTube channel. See full interviews at: <https://da.mdah.ms.gov/series/mdah/s2977>

From the Collection

In observance of Women's History Month, MDAH highlights Mississippi artists and changemakers.

This quilt, created by master quilter Hystercine Rankin, is entitled *After My Father's Funeral*. The quilt depicts Rankin's grief-stricken family moving by mule-drawn wagon after the racially charged murder of her father. The quilt is on display at the Two Mississippi Museums.



From the Collection

This t-shirt that reads “Miss Katrina ... Power that rises above the Storm” was given to all Electric Power Association hurricane relief crew members who worked to secure blankets and pillows for Jackson residents in response to Hurricane Katrina. The Category 3 hurricane devastated Mississippi on August 29, 2005.

Visit the Two Mississippi Museums to learn more about Hurricane Katrina at our limited-time exhibit, *Hurricane Katrina: Mississippi Remembers, Photographs by Melody Golding*, in observance of the 20th anniversary of the storm's landfall in the state. The exhibit is sponsored by HORNE.

MISSISSIPPI HISTORY NEWSLETTER

A Publication of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Mississippi Department of Archives and History
P.O. Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205-0571

Mississippi History Newsletter
Shelia Byrd, editor

For a free subscription to the newsletter or to submit news, call 601-576-6923 or email info@mdah.ms.gov

Contents © 2025 Mississippi Department of Archives and History
Katie Blount, director

In This Issue

- MDAH Wins Awards at SEMC
- Updates on Makers Fest
- MDAH Events
- Sneak Peeks of Katrina Exhibit

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Jackson, MS
Permit No. xxx

In Memoriam

Lynn Crosby Gammill, 1936-2024, instrumental in historic preservation relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina, MDAH Board of Trustees member for twenty-two years, founding member of the Foundation for Mississippi History Board of Directors, served as chair of the Governor's Mansion committee.

Mike Gemmill, 1943-2024, a member of the Jefferson Military College Alumni Association, provided anecdotal information to MDAH about his time at the institution that was established as Jefferson College, adding context to preservation efforts. Gemmill served on the Natchez Historical Society Board.

Liz Ford, 1938-2024, Mississippi Gulf Coast preservationist who supported preservation and revitalization projects in downtown Pascagoula, the Round Island Lighthouse and the old Pascagoula High School.

Mark Your Calendar

Hurricane Katrina Gallery Talk

Thursday, April 3, 11 a.m.

The program will highlight the powerful new exhibit, *Hurricane Katrina: Mississippi Remembers, Photographs by Melody Golding*, and the unprecedented impact of the 2005 disaster on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. A panel of local journalists recounts the storytelling challenges encountered while reporting on the storm.

History Happy Hour: Mississippi Blues

Thursday, April 24, 6 p.m.

Join us at the Two Mississippi Museums for a blues-themed program, featuring live music, flash tours on Mississippi blues musicians, food and a cash bar.

Mississippi Makers Fest

Saturday, May 10, 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Country music singer and "American Idol" finalist Colin Stough will headline Mississippi Makers Fest—a free music, food, and arts festival sponsored by Nissan. The annual event will take place at the Two Mississippi Museums.