

Public History

at Middle Tennessee State University

Vol. 5 No. 2

Spring 2012



Archaeological Exhibit: Life at Wynnewood



The rich archaeology of Castalian Springs will be exhibited to the public when Wynnewood State Historical Area reopens in summer 2012, more than four years after a devastating tornado nearly demolished the site. The Wynnewood archaeological exhibits (eventually there will be two) were developed through the collaborative efforts of MTSU public history graduate students, Dr. Brendan Martin (History), Dr. Kevin Smith (Sociology and Anthropology), and the Wynnewood State Historic Area, which is owned by the Tennessee Historical Commission and managed by Bledsoe's Lick Historical Association (BLHA).

Although most famous as a Mississippian mound site, the area has a complete archaeological record that makes it ideal for the interpre-

Students in the spring 2012 Museum Essentials course at Wynnewood State Historical Area

tation of the complexities of the region's prehistory and history. In 1828, A. R. Wynne and two partners built Wynnewood, a stage-coach inn. Wynne bought out his partners in 1834 and turned the inn into his family home. Wynnewood remained in the family until the 1970s. The archaeological collaboration began last fall, when Dr. Martin's Museum Management Seminar researched historical context, providing the platform for the next phase of exhibit development. This spring, members of a new team from Dr. Martin's Museum Essentials course assumed professional roles, as appropriate to their skills, to produce the first of the new exhibits.

continued

Inside

New Students.....2, 3

NCPH photos.....2

Strickland Scholar.....3

Life in the Bottoms3

Alumni Spotlight4

News from the Centers
.....6

Conference Presentations
and Awards8

Department of History
MTSU Box 23
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Elizabeth Lambert
Newsletter Editor

Unlock the Past The Key to Your Future

New Graduate Students

Master of Arts in History, Public History concentration

Heather Adkins
B.A., Tennessee Technological University

Hobart Akin
B.A., University of Tennessee-Knoxville

Ashley Armstrong
B.A., University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa

Mason Christensen
B.A., Pennsylvania State University

Mark Elam
B.A., MTSU

Savannah Grandey
B.S., MTSU

Jezel Cipra Huston
B.A., Tennessee State University

Rachel Knapp
B.A., Slippery Rock University

Rachel McCreery
B.A., MTSU

Benjamin Morrill
B.A., University of Northern Iowa

Mark Mullen
B.A., MTSU

Wynnewood...

Working under Dr. Martin and Amber Clawson, a Ph.D. student who served as project director, the team applied museology theory and design concepts to produce “Life at Wynnewood,” a modern and inclusive exhibit for the historic log home. Students spent many hours on-site working with Wynnewood staff and volunteers as well as the BLHA collection. In June, the spring team will install the exhibit, which focuses on how the people of Wynnewood fostered a growing community in rural middle Tennessee during the tumultuous nineteenth century. The exhibit significantly enhances the visitor experience at Wynnewood by introducing diverse perspectives through historic material culture. For instance, the story of enslaved life and that of freed African Americans in the area greatly expands the site’s historical interpretation. The artifacts, supplied by BLHA and Dr. Smith, have never before been displayed in public. Although designed and built to last, the exhibit does not alter any interior space.

Amanda Schaffer, interpretation coordinator, enjoyed “getting to work with that amazing site, being a part of bringing it back to life for the public, and getting to work with such a diverse group of people who brought so many different talents and specialties to the project.” While updating the tour script, Amanda worked directly with state employees and volunteers. Project historian Lauren Baud researched the African American community and found the lack of resources challenging. Ultimately, she found quality sources that provided glimpses of family, work, and spiritual

life at Castalian Springs. Said Baud, “Telling the African American story is something very close to my heart, so that part of my research this semester was very fulfilling.”

Once the exhibit process is complete, the student team will provide Wynnewood with a number of products that supplement site interpretation, including interdisciplinary lesson plans, site educational programming, and an updated tour script. Wynnewood is scheduled to reopen in July 2012.

The Public History program gives special thanks to Rick Hendrix, Wynnewood site director, for his continued dedication and assistance.

Team Members

Amber Clawson, Ph.D. student, project director

Lauren Baud, M.A. student, historian

Jessica White, M.A. student, exhibit designer

Derek Wright, M.A. student, exhibit fabricator

Mason Christensen, M.A. student, object curator

Hillary Dodd, B.A. student, object curator

Sara Beth Gideon, M.A. student, image curator

Rachel McCreery, M.A. student, standards-based education coordinator

Amanda Schaffer, M.A. student, interpretation coordinator

Morgan Byrn, M.A. student, interactive exhibit designer



Liz Smith and Julie Lenger McPike at the 2012 NCPH conference (above). Kristen Baldwin Deathridge (back to camera) talking with Bethany Hall at the 2012 NCPH conference (left).



Strickland Scholar

The History Department was pleased to welcome Strickland Scholar **Dr. Marla Miller** in March. Miller is professor of history and director of public history at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst. She is the author of two award-winning books and numerous articles that have established her as a leading scholar of working women and material culture in early New England. *The Needle's Eye: Women and Work in the Age of Revolution* (2006) was awarded the Millia Davenport Prize of the Costume Society of America. Miller's latest book, *Betsy Ross and the*

Dr. Marla Miller chats with Ph.D. students Angie Sima and Abby Gautreau.

Making of America (2010), was a 2011 finalist for the Cundill International Prize in History awarded by McGill University.

In addition to the lecture, Dr. Miller graciously met with students and faculty for informal sessions to discuss *Betsy Ross and the Making of America* and Miller's subsequent exhibit *Betsy Ross: The Life Behind the Legend*, which was presented at the prestigious Winterthur Museum in Delaware. ↗

Life in the Bottoms

The Bottoms in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, was an African American neighborhood largely demolished during a mid-1950s urban renewal project in the city's fifth ward, the end product of which was the construction of Broad Street and, ultimately, a new civic center. The Bottoms got its name because each spring Lytle's Creek, a small stream in the area, overflowed its banks and flooded much of the ward. Established shortly after the Civil War as formerly enslaved African Americans flocked to town, the Bottoms has all but vanished from the physical landscape. City Hall, Linebaugh Library, and the commercial structure that formerly housed Shoney's Restaurant are just a few of the buildings that now rest on land that once was the Bottoms.

This May, students and faculty from the Public History program, in cooperation with community scholars associated with Bradley Academy Museum, worked to capture what remains of the neighborhood in memory—through oral histories and in historic photographs and memorabilia. The 2012 Maymester

experience produced transcribed oral histories and a processed collection of photographs and digital images. The scanned and donated images will be available at Bradley Academy, the Rutherford County Archives, and MTSU.

On May 29, poet and social activist **Nikki Giovanni** spoke at a community gathering, presenting “Something called progress killed my grandmother’: Urban Renewal and African American Neighborhoods.” Before Giovanni's talk, students participating in the field school read selections from oral histories.

The search to “find” the Bottoms was an attempt to better understand the history of Murfreesboro's African American community, a topic that has received less than full attention in the past but in recent years has become the focus of the Public History program's annual Maymester experience. A more complete account of the field school will appear in the Fall 2012 newsletter. ↗

New Graduate Students

Doctor of Philosophy in Public History

Virginia Cannon
B.A., Harvard
M.L.S., Vanderbilt University
M.B.A., Columbia University

Elizabeth Lambert
B.A., University of Tennessee
M.A., Middle Tennessee State University

Jessica Ruppert French
M.S., Long Island University–Brookville
B.A., Georgetown University

Alumni Spotlight

MTSU's 100th Anniversary: A Time for Reflection

Celebration of the University's Centennial (Traditions of Excellence) was an opportunity to revisit nearly 40 years of the Public History program at MTSU through the eyes of its first crop of preservation students. In 1973, the History Department added two experimental courses: Historical Archaeology, Preservation, and Restoration and Problems in Colonial America: Colonial Society-Williamsburg, the department's first field school. The success of these courses built upon an emerging trend in historical scholarship that emphasized professional, hands-on training as a vital component of the skill sets used by historians seeking career opportunities in historic preservation. In 1976, the History Department began offering the Master of Arts in History with a concentration in Historic Preservation; it added an emphasis in Historic Preservation to its Doctor of Arts program in 1981. Dr. James Huhta was appointed the first director of the Center for Historic Preservation (CHP) in 1984, which not only facilitated the training of students but also provided professional services to local communities and historical organizations as a Center of Excellence.

The scope and reputation of the public history offerings at MTSU grew in the 1980s with the addition of courses in museum studies, material culture, and archival management. In 1991, the Master of Arts in History with an emphasis in Public History replaced the previous degree program and acknowledged the variety of specialized training offered by the department. This redefinition coincided with the creation of the Albert Gore Research Center in 1993 and the Center for Popular Music, established in 1985. The History Department's latest contribution to the field was the creation, in 2005, of the first doctoral program with public history as a major field of study, the Ph.D. in Public History.

This edition of the newsletter welcomes alumni who established their careers as public historians during a time when the field was coming into its own. Their reflections offer unusual opportunities for current students to think about their future careers by reading these short profiles of lifelong public historians. ↗

Norman Burns

*executive director,
Maymont Foundation*

In 1986, Norman Burns was in his second year of graduate school at MTSU with a full academic and teaching load as a GTA. That summer, he had finished cataloging the papers of Albert Gore Sr. through a University-sponsored internship. He says that despite the stress that comes with being a GTA, he and his colleagues found plenty of time to enjoy the activities celebrating the Diamond Anniversary of MTSU. "There was something special about being a GTA in the History Department during the anniversary," he says. "More than a significant milestone institutionally, it was a



personal beacon to a potential pathway that lay ahead."

Burns says that reading about MTSU's 100th anniversary rekindled those feelings of excitement and made him take stock of his career goal to make history relevant and engaging to the public.

Burns is now executive director of the Maymont Foundation in Richmond, Virginia. Maymont is a 100-acre historical, zoological,

and botanical estate remarkable in that it is an admission-free public attraction with diverse program areas and exhibitions appealing to audiences of all ages. It is visited by over half million people annually.

continued

Congrats
to Our Recent
Graduates

Spring 2012

**M.A. in History,
Public History
concentration**

Meghan Fall

Kelsey Fields

Leigh Ann Gardner

Amanda Pitt-Reed

Ashley Brown

Mary Leslie Crouch

**Ph.D. in
Public History**

Kristen Baldwin
Deathridge

*Dissertation: From
Sacred to Secular:
Adapting America's
Religious Spaces*

Jane Davis

*Dissertation: Archives
and Historic Buildings:
A Perfect Match or
a Disaster Waiting to
Happen?*

“I could not have imagined roles like these 25 years ago coming out of MTSU with an M.A. in history,” says Burns, “but the same skill set for researching and placing content in the proper context as a historian is just as important in the business environment as in the academic.” Burns notes that his ability to research, analyze, and interpret information while utilizing critical thinking and entrepreneurial practices was learned through liberal arts and not business school: “The public history profession, out of necessity and to its benefit, has become more business-like while maintaining the flexibility, adaptability, and creativity that comes with nonprofit operations that focus on collections and education. MTSU afforded me this learning experience that I have adapted to the competitive world of nonprofit management.”

Burns calls his MTSU experience the catalyst for his 25-year active involvement in “historical administration, education, preservation, fundraising, and cultural heritage tourism through service on various boards, committees, and task

forces for local, state, regional, and national museum organizations and cultural tourism agencies.” He is a council member of the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH); a council member of the Virginia Association of Museums; treasurer of the Capital Region Land Conservancy; and a member of the board of directors of the Richmond Metropolitan Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Richmond Parks Advisory Board, and the Mayor’s Tourism Commission. He is a longtime reviewer for the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a peer reviewer for the NEH Challenge Grants Panel, a surveyor for the Museum Assessment Program (MAP), and a visiting committee peer reviewer for the American Association of Museums Accreditation Program. Says Burns, “One of my proudest service opportunities was on the MTSU National Alumni Association board of directors from 2006 [to] 2009. ↗

Carol Roberts

*director of Preservation Services
Tennessee State Library and Archives*

Carol Roberts received her M.A. in History with a concentration in Historic Preservation from MTSU in 1985. Her earlier training and experience as a junior high and high school history teacher reflect her commitment to education, and by pursuing graduate training she hoped to expand her career opportunities while developing skills that could be used to facilitate teaching outside the classroom. Carol found the preservation track at MTSU appealing because it allowed her to explore new avenues for teaching through material culture while building on her strengths in the field of education. Carol has worked for the Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA) since 1986, beginning as a documents conservator tasked with the care and preservation of the state’s historic government documents. She became director of Preservation Services in 1998, and, in addition to her role at TSLA, she engages in a variety of outreach work in local communities. She is a visiting instructor for the ETSU Master of Arts in Liberal Studies program in archival conservation. Her conservation assistance to historical organizations following natural disasters has made her an expert in the field of disaster preparedness, and she routinely teaches workshops on the topic through LYRISIS, a nonprofit organization of

over 1,700 member libraries. The Collections Management course at MTSU recently welcomed Carol as visiting lecturer on the management of archival collections. Carol will be attending many Civil War sesquicentennial events, and she nurtures her passion for local history through her contributions to the Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and the Encyclopedia of Appalachia.

Carol encourages current public history students to explore the interdisciplinary nature of their work by participating in workshops and electives that can also assist them in achieving their career goals. In an example from her own career, Carol explains that experimenting with architectural drawing as a student has been incredibly valuable to her both as she preserves architectural materials and evaluates new facilities for historic collections. She also advises students to start nurturing professional affiliations and connections early in their careers in order to make the lifelong working friendships that often provide essential foundations for new opportunities and education. ↗





Jessica Reeves facilitates a Centennial Memory Capsule recording session with two MTSU undergraduates at the AGRC.

News from the Centers

Albert Gore Research Center

Several graduate students from the Public History program have assisted with MTSU Centennial projects this year at the Albert Gore Research Center (AGRC). **Jessica Reeves** coordinated the Centennial Memory Capsule, which is based on the national Story Corps model. She, **Derek Wright**, and **Charles Nichols** recorded about 300 forty-minute, two-person conversations between people with MTSU connections: alumni, staff, students, faculty, retirees, and others. Taken together, this collection represents a snapshot of life at MTSU during the Centennial year and also reveals the many ways that people in the University community are connected. Before he graduated last year, **Layton Carr** (M.A., 2011) did much of the work that allowed the AGRC to complete a cellphone historical tour of the oldest part of campus, featuring clips from the hundreds of oral histories in our collections (gorecenter.mtsu.edu/tour.shtml). **Heather Adkins** scanned many of the early bulletins and catalogs from Middle Tennessee Normal School and State Teachers College so that the AGRC can add them to its website for genealogists and other researchers.

In other news, **Michael Fletcher** (M.A., 2011) continues to develop the democracy simulation game that the AGRC hopes will be a model for using computer technology to simulate historical events and teach about episodes such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964

while meeting its educational outreach goals. **Natalie Goodwin** (M.A., 2011) is employed at the AGRC as an archives technician. She is processing closed casework files in the Gore Papers in anticipation of their opening in the years ahead.

With funds allotted by the Provost's Office, the AGRC now has support for graduate assistants. Working in close partnership with the Public History program, we hope to expand the program's capacity to educate archives professionals and provide practical experience in the processing of large collections. All of this work is closely supervised by AGRC archivists **Jim Havron** (M.A., 2009) and **Donna Baker**, our recently appointed university archivist. ↗

Center for Popular Music

Graduate assistants in the Center for Popular Music (CPM) made excellent contributions to public programs, collection processing, and a myriad of other tasks and projects during 2012.

Abby Hathaway researched, produced, and mounted an exhibit of original music for Linebaugh Public Library in partnership with the traveling exhibit *A Fine Romance: Jewish Songwriters, American Songs, 1910–1965*. She also researched, digitized, and mounted an exhibit for the CPM reading room: *All the Bells and Whistles: The Railroad in American Music*. Abby processed the Herbert Smith Minstrel

continued

Collection, wrote a finding aid, and cataloged materials from the collection. She also produced the research guide “Materials Related to the American Civil Rights Movement in the Collections of the Center for Popular Music” to guide students and scholars to primary and secondary resources on the subject in the center’s holdings. Finally, Abby cataloged a total of 567 pieces of original sheet music using MARC-based cataloging in the CPM in-house database.

Rachel Morris processed and updated the Gene Jones Collection of jazz, ragtime, and

Broadway materials. She also processed and created a finding aid for the Osmond Brothers Family Collection and posted it on the CPM website. Rachel accessioned over ten collections, including reboxing and inventorying and often performing immediate preservation maintenance on items. In addition, Rachel created an exhibit of sample archival holdings for the reading room, provided reference assistance to researchers, and assisted in grant preparations.

Everyone on the CPM staff wishes Rachel and Abby well. ↗



Center for Historic Preservation research assistants and students from Dr. West’s Seminar in Historic Preservation at Cragfont, Sumner County.

CHP Research Assistants Work Widely

The Center for Historic Preservation’s research assistants continue to be major contributors to projects, reports, and exhibits across Tennessee and the nation. **Sara Beth Gideon** developed a postcard exhibit on display at the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County for Murfreesboro’s Bicentennial. **Jessica Bandel** continues to provide research assistance for Nashville Public Television and other collaborative partnerships of the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area. **Amy Kostine’s** work with the National Park Service and the Hiwassee River Heritage Center in Bradley County will result in a Trail of Tears driving tour and markers. Research assistants **Cassie Bennett, Amber Clawson, Jessica French, Leigh Ann Gardner, Abby Gautreau, David Sprouse, Julie Warwick, and Jessi White** have been working on surveys, reports, and National Register nominations at Cragfont in Sumner County, McKenzie in Carroll County, Rosemark in Shelby County, Allendale Farm in Montgomery County, Sabine Hill in Carter

County, Oak Hill Farm in Tipton County, Bate House in Sumner County, and American Baptist College in Nashville. While working on their residency and dissertation projects, Ph.D. assistants **Kristen Baldwin Deathridge, Rebecca Duke, Katie Merzbacher O’Bryan, and Cassie Sade Turnipseed** have completed fieldwork and projects in Alabama, Kansas, Minnesota, South Carolina, and Mississippi.

Research assistants also contribute to educational conferences, tours, and teacher workshops. At the Tennessee Association of Museums Conference in Memphis in March, Heritage Area staff and graduate assistants talked about the partnership with Lakeway Civil War Preservation Association to open the General Longstreet Headquarters Museum in Russellville. Joining the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, several research assistants were involved with the Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Signature Event at Shiloh in early April. Regularly, **Savannah Grandey** welcomes school groups and leads tours of downtown Murfreesboro from the Heritage Center, and **Ashley Armstrong** assists with teacher workshops across the state for the Library of Congress’s Teaching with Primary Sources across Tennessee program. ↗

Conference Presentations and Awards

Katie Stringer presented “Sensitivity and Awareness—Steps to Take for Successful Connections” at the Tennessee Association of Museums annual meeting in Memphis on March 22. Katie received the TAM scholarship and was recently awarded a dissertation research grant from the College of Graduate Studies and the Office of Research Services.

A number of graduate students presented at the regional **Phi Alpha Theta conference** hosted by MTSU on March 24.

Angie Sirna, Katie O’Bryan, Amber Clawson, Lauren Baud, and Cyrana Wyker presented a panel: “Interpreting Freedman Education in Rutherford County, TN.” **Katie O’Bryan** also presented a paper: “Gender, Politics, and Power: The Development of the Ladies Rest Room and Lounge in Rural America, 1910–1945.” **Morgan Byrn, Cyrana Wyker, and Lauren Baud** presented “Learning the Skills of a Professional Oral Historian,” and **Amber Clawson** presented “Wynnewood: An Archaeological Exhibit Collaboration.”

Kristen Baldwin Deathridge was an invited speaker at First Presbyterian Church of Murfreesboro’s bicentennial celebration in March. Her topic was the National Register of Historic Places. She also presented at the National Council on Public History’s (NCPH) annual meeting in Milwaukee in April as part

of the working-group session “How High the Moon, How Deep the Probe: A Fresh Look at Measures of Success in Public History Work.”

Susan Knowles (Ph.D., 2011) participated in the 2012 NCPH conference working group “Graphs, Maps, and Trees: Imagining the Future of Public Interfaces to Cultural Heritage Collections,” and **Ed Salo** (Ph.D., 2009) participated in the working group “How Much Is a Piece of the True Road Worth? Evaluating Historic Roadway and Preservation Value.”

Bethany Hall and **Zada Law** presented their work at the 2012 NCPH conference poster session with “GCI: Geospatial Cemetery Investigation.”

Elizabeth D. Smith (M.A., 2010) and **Julie Lenger McPike** partnered to present “Exploring New Frontiers: Cross-Border Collaboration in Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area” at the 2012 NCPH conference poster session.

Leslie Crouch and **Ashley Brown** coauthored “‘This Cruel War’: Rutherford County, Tennessee, Experiences the Civil War” for the Phi Alpha Theta Biennial Convention in Orlando.

Abby Gautreau presented a paper: “The Invention of Lying’: George Psalmanazar, the Society of Jesus, and the Truth about

Asia in the Seventeenth Century” at the Southeast Conference of the Association for Asian Studies in Greenville, South Carolina, in January.

Leigh Ann Gardner’s community lecture “We Are as Grand as We Want to Be: African American Mutual Aid Groups in Murfreesboro” at Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center on February 16 was featured as a *Daily News Journal* Black History Month event.

Lauren Baud and **Dallas Hanbury** received 2012 Thelma Jennings History Scholarships.

Katie Stringer and **Kristen Baldwin Deathridge** received 2012 Bart McCash History Scholarships.

Katie O’Bryan and **Kimberly Tucker** were awarded 2012-2013 Dissertation Writing Fellowships from the Office of the Provost. ↗

0512-824 / Middle Tennessee State University is an AA/EEO employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Executive Director of Institutional Equity and Compliance, Cope Administration Building 220, 1301 E. Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37132; (615) 898-2185. Additionally, the MTSU Title IX Coordinator designated to monitor and oversee Title IX complaints may be contacted at Sam Ingram Building, 2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd. Murfreesboro, TN 37132; (615) 898-5133; or at www.mtsu.edu/titleix/.

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of History
MTSU Box 23
1301 East Main Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37132