

June literary celebration centers on religious faith

by Mark LaFrancis

Intertwined with the deepest roots in Southern soil, culture and character is the faith of the Southerner. During the 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration, June 1-3, that faith will be the focus. A panorama of religion in the South will be explored — from that of the Southeastern Indians to Methodist circuit riders, from Jews to Catholics, from Pentecostals to Episcopalians. On tap are serious lec-

tures and humorous remarks by noted authors and speakers, tours of historic homes, buildings and sites, a gospel choir concert, the play, "The Scopes Evolution Trial," and Robert Duvall's film, "The Apostle." The celebration also features the annual presentation of the Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award to Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Beth Henley of Los Angeles and historian David G. Sansing of The University of

Mississippi.

Entitled "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt," the celebration will be both informative and fun. "Our lectures and programs are once again high-quality and enriching," said Carolyn Vance Smith, co-chair and NLC founder. "There will be something for just about everyone." Most of the events are free, while others range from \$10 to \$30.

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The NLC is sponsored by Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Natchez National Historical Park and Alcorn State University. The event is partially funded by the Mississippi Humanities Council and the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development.

Presenters include:

- Thomas Berg of Samford University, Birmingham, Ala.
- James Blackwood of Memphis, Tenn., founding member of the Blackwood Brothers Quartet.
- Thomas Bonner of Xavier University, New Orleans, author of *The Kate Chopin Companion* and *William Faulkner: The William B. Wisdom Collection*.
- Will Campbell of Mt. Juliet, Tenn., author of *Brother to a Dragonfly*, *Providence* and *The Stem of Jesse*.
- Richard M. Cornelius of Bryan College, Dayton, Tenn., author of *Historical Tour of the Scopes Evolution: Trial Sites in Dayton, Tennessee*.
- Bernard Cotton, Donzell Lee, Alpha Morris and Rudolph Waters of Alcorn State University, Lorman, Miss., a panel discussion of the role of the African-American church in Southern history and culture.
- Allen Dennis of Troy State University, Troy, Ala., author of *Kemper County Rebel: The Civil War Diary of Robert Masten Holmes, C.S.A.*
- Marcie Ferris of Washington, D.C., former director of the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, Utica, Miss., and author of *Southern Jewish History, Vol. II*.
- Charles Hudson of the University of

Georgia, author of *The Southeastern Indians*.

•E. Grady Jolly of Jackson, Miss., Judge with the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

•Loyal Jones of the Appalachian Center at Berea College, Berea, Ky., and author of *Appalachia: A Self-Portrait* and *The Preacher Joke Book: Religious Anecdotes from the Oral Tradition*.

•Mimi Miller, preservation director of the Historic Natchez Foundation, Natchez, Miss., and author of *Great Houses of Natchez*.

•Albert Raboteau of Princeton University, Princeton, N.J., author of *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South*.

•Randy Sparks of the College of Charleston, Charleston, S.C., author of *On Jordan's Stormy Banks: Evangelicism in Mississippi, 1773-1876*.

•Clifton Taulbert of Tulsa, Okla., Pulitzer Prize nominee and author of *Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored* and *Eight Habits of the Heart*.

•Charles Wilson of the University of Mississippi, ed., *Religion in the South, New Perspectives on Southern Religion*.

For tickets and information, call 601-446-6345 or 800-647-6724 or visit the web site at www.colin.ec.ms.us/nlc.

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Church group
spreads message
with colorful friends

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Home of her own
Natchez woman
takes advantage of
home loan program

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Net gains
Finals set for Carver
Tennis Tournament

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The Natchez Democrat

June 4, 2000

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Speaker Adam David Miller of Berkeley, Calif., chats with William Ferris, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, at a literary celebration reception Saturday.

Literary Celebration welcomes special guests

By Emily Whitten
The Natchez Democrat

From television star Gerald McRaney to national humanities officials, a wide range of people attended this year's 10th annual Natchez Literary Celebration.

William R. Ferris, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, arrived in Natchez Friday to attend this year's celebration, whose theme was "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt. Ferris described the celebration as "a

unique mixture of education and cultural mission."

A native of the Walkway area, Ferris said he grew up visiting Natchez. He believes events like the NLC display Natchez's diverse history.

"Natchez has always been different than any other community and this celebration showcases that," he said.

Ferris worked for 18 years as the director for the Center for the Study of Southern



Culture at the University of Mississippi before taking his current position about two years ago. He has attended past Natchez Literary Celebrations and occasionally has been a speaker on the program.

Ferris was among those honored Saturday morning with a reception hosted by Shaggy B'Nai Israel. Also honored were the celebration's new advisory board and the first William Waver scholars.

Mississippi native McRaney also attended the reception. "It's been terrific," he said, of the celebration. "I've been absolutely won-

derful. I would like to something like this all over the state because Mississippi has such a rich literary heritage."

Events such as the literary celebration are the heart of a small town like Natchez, Ferris said. "Each year, it reminds the community of its rich heritage," he said.

As chairman for the National Endowment for the Humanities, Ferris said his role is to promote events such as the literary celebration. "I've been a strong believer in the development of place-based culture and the celebration of events like this," he said.

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Henley, Sansing accept NLC's annual Richard Wright awards.

By K. MILLER
Special to The Democrat

A literary congregation of some 200 people gave playwrights Both Henley and historian David Sansing standing ovations Saturday as each was presented the Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award.

The award is the highest honor bestowed by the Natchez Literary Celebration. The ceremony was dedicated this year to Temple B'Nai B'rith.

The 11th edition of the event concluded Saturday evening with a showing of Robert Derrall's film "The Avenue" and the play "The Scopes

Evolution Trial."

The theme for this year's celebration was "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt."

In accepting the Richard Wright award — Henley brought out passages from her plays to coincide with the theme.

"I was intimidated by the subject matter of this year's celebration," she said. "But I started reading my plays, and I found all of my characters have spiritual work."

She read two passages, the first from "Impossible Marriage" and the

second from "Signatures."

Henley lives in Los Angeles with her son Patrick. Her plays include "Crimes of the Heart" and "The Most Famous Character Contest," and she has been awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Drama.

She is also a native Mississippian who still calls Jackson home.

"It's funny," she said later. "When I'm in Los Angeles, I call Jackson home, and when I'm in Jackson, I say



Henley



Sansing

I have to go back home to Los Angeles."

Sansing, the second recipient of this year's award, is professor emeritus at The University of Mississippi.

Probably his most noted work among Mississippians is the Mississippi history textbook used in public and private school classrooms.

Sansing read an essay by local writer, "The Other Mississippi," in which

he said for every bad light that shines upon the state, there is a corresponding good light.

"For every despicable act, there are a million acts of kindness," he said. "For every act of violence, there is an act of hospitality."

Among those standing in line at the book signing following the presentation was actor Gerald McRaney.

McRaney grew up on the Mississippi gulf coast and has a home in Poplarville. He said he began visiting Natchez at age 5.

"My parents would bring me here,

and I remember it as a "to-go" job."

McRaney helped inspire the idea to expand the event into the Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration.

Celebration co-chairman Carolyn Yippee Smith said, the word "Natchez" will not be used for the event.

"There are so many film festivals out there," she said. "Ours is different. We want to celebrate the writers behind the film, so we're calling it the Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration. That way, we can celebrate the writers behind the films as well as those behind the books."



The Natchez

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Firefighters required to another blaze Thursday, 3A for having electrical equipment that was not approved for that location. Train plans to appeal as soon as possible, said Communications Director Poon Diaz. Titan has until June 11 to appeal to the full commission, if the three-

Dave Finck, who said the electrical appliances have been made.

A \$2,125 fine "in a drop in the bucket for Titan," said Paul Baxter, who was in his seventh day on the job when it was burned. "I could make that much in a week at Titan."

...ingering on an open burning inside. Details already belched out dust once that morning due to malfunctioning parts. Starke's decision said a 110-volt outlet, fluorescent light and shop light should not have been near the machine, but stepped short of saying the equipment ignited a dust cloud belched from the machine.

...safety level of electrical wiring around the bus-... hery mixer to prevent explosions," said Clyde Payne, director of OSHA's Jackson office. "That's not to say that the fixtures caused the explosion, but the electrical equipment should have been protected from belches by the machine."



The Natchez University Museum displays...

Portia Burton of the student group Civil Rights Connection talks with one of her chaperones, June Bradley, as Jennie Lawrence (far left) views historic photos on display at the NAPAC Museum Thursday during a Natchez Literary Celebration tour. Lawrence lives in Cincinnati, Ohio, and says she plans her vacations every year around the literary celebration schedule. Her sister, Evelyn Fleming, lives in Natchez.

Literary festival honors first Winter scholars

List of scholars, 3A
By ANGELIA MCKEY
The Natchez Democrat

Looking to honor a former governor with a lasting tribute, the Natchez Literary Celebration welcomes its first William Winter scholar this year.

Outstanding humanities division students and faculty members from Mississippi universities, community colleges and an area high school are guests at the annual celebration taking place this week in Natchez.

"We wanted to honor former Gov. William Winter with something that will live forever," said celebration Co-Chairman Carolyn Vance Smith. "Last year, at the closing ceremonies of the 10th anniversary celebration, the title was bestowed as a surprise to him. The scholars are chosen by their respective institutions and are obviously considered exceptional. This is our chance to honor them in some way."

Scholars are treated to a guided bus tour of historic, religious sites free of charge. The institutions allow their scholars to choose from the various activities offered at the celebration in which they wish to participate.

"I'm really an excited about being selected," said scholar Buck Foster of Mississippi State University. "Just being in Natchez is great. It has such a checkered past, and since I am a history major, I love it. Being chosen gives us an opportunity to other places and see other people at no cost - now I'll come back whether I am selected again or not."

Bill Childress, a history major from the University of Southern Mississippi, loves seeing so many of the South's influential people at one time. "Speaker" Will Carewell provided so much religious inspiration to me, and being able to see him is an honor," she said.

"I'm already becoming a teacher," said Libby Voss, Cathedral High School's faculty historian. Voss, who teaches 11th and 12th grade American history, government and economics, intends to use the knowledge acquired here to enhance her teaching techniques.

"This is the perfect year for me to be chosen to attend the Literary Celebration. Since I am a history major, I've been fascinated by the variety of the topics," she said.



"We wanted to honor former Gov. William Winter with something that will live forever."
CAROLYN VANCE SMITH, NLC CO-FOUNDER

Speaker links slaves' suffering to religious questions

Speakers trial plays on nap tonight, 3A
By ANGELIA MCKEY
The Natchez Democrat

The murder of four little girls in a Birmingham, Ala., church in 1963 and the suffering of slaves illustrate how the innocent have suffered, Albert Raboteau told participants at the Natchez Literary Celebration Thursday.

Raboteau, a native Mississippi, spoke on "The Meaning of Slave Suffering" at the Natchez Contemporary Center. This year's NLC theme is "The Sacred South: Stories from the Bible Belt."

"The meaning of human suffering has occupied the deepest meditation of the suffering as one of the central themes of Christianity," Raboteau said.

- Today's schedule***
- 9 a.m. Christianity in Southern Writing
 - 10:15 a.m. Film "Gaddy Will"
 - 11:30 a.m. Panel: "The Role of the African-American Church in Southern Politics and Culture"
 - 1 p.m. Ethics, Religion, and the Law
 - 2 p.m. "The Sappho Trail: The Trail That is Still Being Told"
 - 3:15 p.m. "Current Legal Thinking about the Issue Surrounding the Sappho Trail"
 - 4 p.m. Dinner, Natchez Redoubt-Evils Hotel (\$25, followed by a free program, "Natchez Green Beloved Church: Southern Gospel Music"
 - 8:15 p.m. Two concurrent events at different locations: "The Sappho Trail" at Adams County Courthouse; "Wherey Court Rover \$15.00. The "Apostle" Natchez Convention & Visitor Bureau Theater.
- *Events take place at Natchez Community Center unless noted.

This, he said, "touches the universal, dimensions common to all human experience: the deep river of our common humanity."

Raboteau reminded the audience of a

factful day in 1963, when a bomb exploded at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, killing four young girls. Raboteau said the event sparked an outrage echoed with the cry, "My God, we're not even safe in church."

In a sermon at the girls' funeral, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. reflected upon the suffering of the innocent.

Raboteau said the relationship of slave to owner sometimes inspired the fear of equality for the contented slaves after they became "brothers and sisters in the Lord" with their white owners.

Following the program, NLC participant Axen White said he enjoyed the speech. "I liked what he said about if you gave a slave religion then he could be looked upon as your equal," White said. "The reality kept on the historical facts of religion and slavery."

Keep it together: Microsoft offers witnesses to counter breakup plan page 3A



Wired teachers
Gates Foundation gives Mississippi \$1M to train educators on computers

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Tax overhaul
State House votes to rework income tax, but bill has a long way to go

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Girl talk
Local youth learn new techniques at basketball camp

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The Natchez Democrat

June 1, 2000

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U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss., speaks with **Thomson last Wednesday at Leroy "Boss" Smith** **talks with David Brantley and William White at a** **reception at Eight for the Natchez Literary Celebration.**

Conference honors role of religion in literature

Schedule of events at
By KERRY WHIFFLE
The Natchez Democrat

U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran finds this year's theme for the Natchez Literary Celebration apt for a conference set in the South.

"This year the celebration takes a look at one of the region's most important institutions — and its impact on literature — with the theme, "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt."

"People seem to take religion a lot more seriously in the South," said Cochran. R-

Miss., who will help inaugurate this morning at the opening session of the conference at the Natchez community center.

"When you move into a community, that's the first question people ask — "What church do you go to?" Cochran said with a laugh.

From lectures and films to plays and music performances, the Natchez Literary Celebration has something for everyone.



Most events are either free or low-cost and will take place at several locations around town.

The headquarters for the event is the new Natchez community center on the corner of Franklin and Wall streets.

NLC founder and co-chairman Carolyn Vance Smith expects several hundred people at this week's celebration, which is in its 11th year.

And while many are coming from throughout Mississippi and the South, Smith encourages local residents to come as well.

Much of the funding for the celebration comes from agencies in southeast Mississippi.

"There will be recent research of much interest to people — whatever their church or synagogue — to get a broad picture of where we have been spiritually and where we are today," Smith said.

Cochran was among the guests Wednesday morning at a reception at Eight for members of the Mississippi Historical Council.

See Literary, 3A

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Today's events*

- 8 a.m.: Veterans and Honorifics
- 8:30 a.m.: "Southern Religious Beliefs and Customs: An Overview."
- 10:40 a.m.: "Religious Beliefs of the Southeastern Indians."
- 11:30 a.m.: Book signing
- 11:45 a.m.: Lunch, Carnegie House Restaurant at Barton Hall 2020, with this program afterwards "Southern Religious Honor in the Human Condition."
- 1:30 p.m.: "Religious Beliefs in Mississippi."
- 3 p.m.: "The Meaning of Slave Slavery"
- 4 p.m.: Book signing
- 4:45 p.m.: "MARC's 25th Anniversary Celebration," a reception and tour at the Natchez Museum of Afro-American History and Culture (312)
- 8:30 p.m.: Concert by the Holy Family Catholic Church Choir, with songs afterwards, "Sonder Moments, uplifting Times."



Literary

Continued from 3A

The celebration is sponsored by Copiah-Lewisville Community College, the Natchez National Historic Park, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and Alcorn State University.

In addition to lectures by noted authors and scholars, this year's celebration offers two special

celebration events: a performance of "The Scopes Evolution Trial," a play based on the court records of the 1925 trial in Dayton, Tenn., and a showing of the Robert Donald film "The Apocryf."

Both will take place on Friday and Saturday nights.

The celebration will also recognize

two noted writers this year, recipients of the Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award. Honorees are playwright Beth Henley, author of "Crimes of the Heart" and "Miss Fanshawe," and David G. Simons, a professor of history emeritus at the University of Mississippi and author of several books, including

"Mississippi, 1540 to the Present."

Next year, the literary celebration arrives earlier — but with an added focus.

The Feb. 21-23, 2001, event is expanding to include a focus on Southern films and screenwriting. The theme will be "Flesh, Fiction and Film: the Genesis of the South."



The Natchez Literary Celebration

Sponsored by
Copiah-Lincoln Community College
Natchez National Historical Park
Mississippi Department of Archives and History
Alcorn State University

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GOOD NEWS!

The University of Mississippi has approved

Continuing Education Units

for attendance at the

11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration, June 1-3, 2000!
THE SACRED SOUTH: WRITINGS FROM THE BIBLE BELT

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CEU registration opens at 8:15 a.m., Thursday, June 1, 2000.
Programs begin at 9 a.m., Thursday, June 1, 2000.

CEU cost is \$10, payable at the door.

Make check payable to The University of Mississippi.

For program lineup, check out the web: www.colin.cc.ms.us/nlc

DAILY LECTURES ARE FREE.

SPECIAL MEALS, A PLAY, A TOUR, AND A CONCERT ARE LOW-COST.
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The 11th annual Natchez
Literary Celebration presents

*The
Sacred
South:*
Writings from
the Bible Belt



June 1-3, 2000  Natchez, Miss.

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The 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration presents

The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt

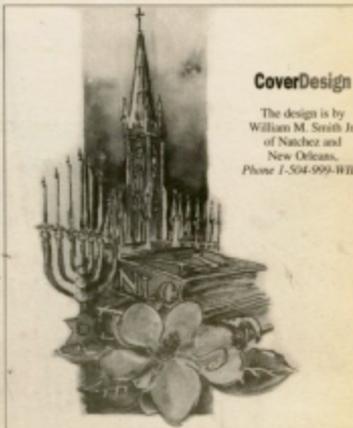
Welcome to the celebration ...

The Natchez Literary Celebration has been called by official evaluators "Mississippi's most significant annual conference devoted to literature, history, and culture."

Sponsored by Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Natchez National Historical Park, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and Alcorn State University, the Literary Celebration

annually presents a theme-based lecture series enhanced by films, music, plays, exhibits, book sales, book signings, awards ceremonies, tours, and social events.

This year, as mankind enters a new century and a new millennium, the conference will explore the spirituality of the South, past, present, and future, using the theme, "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt."



CoverDesign

The design is by William M. Smith of Natchez and New Orleans. Phone 1-504-999-7111.

ConferenceTips

► Free and low-cost events:

Much of the conference is free, thanks to support from the Mississippi Humanities Council and other agencies. Ticketed events are low-cost. Tickets to certain events are sold out; others are available at the registration desk at NLC headquarters and at the Natchez Ticket Office, Natchez Convention and Visitor Bureau, 640 S. Canal St.

► NLC Bookshop:

A customized bookshop selling books and other items related to the 2000 Natchez Literary Celebration is situated in the lobby of the Natchez City Center, June 1-2. This shop, directed and managed by Eastern National Parks and Monuments Association, features current titles by 2000 NLC speakers as well as related books. Proceeds benefit the NLC.

► Transportation:

Bus transportation is provided as part of the religious structures tour, a ticketed event, Sat., June 3, 2-6 p.m. Historians will be on board to provide commentary; ticket-holders are encouraged to ride the buses, which will leave Trinity Episcopal Church immediately after a lecture by Mary Warren Miller, which begins at 1:30 p.m. June 3. The buses will return to Trinity Church at the end of the tour.

SpecialGuests

William Winter Scholars

(The most outstanding humanities division students and faculty members in Mississippi educational institutions for 1999-2000)

- Alcorn State University, Lorman: Sandra Davis, student, and Donzell Lee, faculty
- Cathedral School, Natchez: Ben Tillman, student, and Libby Voss, faculty
- Coahoma Community College, Clarksdale: Nicholas Howard, student, and Karen Done, faculty
- Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Natchez: Jessica Rogers, student, and Jan Pickle, faculty
- Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Wesson: Jenny Riley, student, and Casey Hardison, faculty
- Delta State University, Cleveland: John Lack, student, and Terry Everett, faculty
- East Central Community College, Decatur: Dustin Addy, student, and Leonard Barrier, faculty
- Hinds Community College, Raymond: Brooke Sellers, student, and Lara Scales, faculty
- Mississippi Delta Community College, Moorhead: Aaron White, student, and Ellen

Steeby, faculty

- Mississippi State University, Starkville: Buckley Foster, student, and D. Lynn H. faculty
- Mississippi University for Women, Columbus: Rhonda Smith, student, and Ja Hinton, faculty
- University of Mississippi, Oxford: Angel Caryn, student, and Mary Stuckey, faculty
- University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg: Jill Childress, student, and Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, faculty

Other special groups

- Copiah-Lincoln Community College Board of Trustees
- Elderhostel participants
- High school students enrolled in the Civil Rights Connection, Syracuse, N.Y.
- Mississippi educators receiving 19 hours Continuing Education Units
- Mississippi Humanities Council member
- Mississippi Bar members receiving 5.5 Continuing Legal Education units
- Mississippi Community College Deans Association

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Opinion

The Natchez Democrat

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Our Opinion

Begin new week with good news ...

Good morning and good Monday. With only one day left in the Natchez mayor's race, the campaigning is still going strong. Tomorrow voters will head to the polls to make their decision. Regardless of your choice, we urge every registered voter to exercise their right to vote. We'd like to pause this morning to remember some of the good news from our community last week.

▶ The week began with another successful, community-wide Memorial Day celebration. We thank each of the volunteers that get out each year and participate in making the event such a success. Their hard work pays off and keeps the memory of those who served our country alive.

▶ This year's Natchez Literary Celebration was

splendid, as always. But this year's special theme and new location helped make this year's event one of the best ever. Co-chairmen Carolyn Vance Smith, Jim Barnett, Emma Blissett and Bob Dodson all deserve our thanks for making the event so special.

▶ As rain fell Sunday, we hoped the much-needed moisture will be enough to help our area farmers. With crops already in the field, the dry weather was threatening to affect crop yield and quality, which corresponds to a blow to the economy. Only time will tell if the rain is enough to salvage the crops, but we hope the cloudy skies do indeed have a silver lining.

▶ Congratulations to the Copiah-Lincoln Community College's baseball team. The Wolves – including four Natchez area players – had an excellent showing at the National Junior College Athletic Association's Division II World Series. Although they didn't make it to the championship game, we think their solid performance was impressive before a national audience.

We hope your week is filled with lots of good news for you and your family.

Speak out

We encourage you to share your opinion on this or other topics. Submit your letter to the editor to The Democrat by:

- E-mail: stacy.graning@natchezdemocrat.com
- Fax: (601) 442-7315
- Mail: P.O. Box 1447, Natchez, Miss. 39121

• Or in person: 503 N. Canal St., Natchez.

All letters must be signed by the author and must include a telephone number for verification purposes. For more information, call 448-5172 ext. 238.

Monday, June 5, 2000

The Conventio

A parable for our times

By Robin Miller
Features Reporter

My friend Will Campbell came to mind week before last, thanks to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Now this isn't a judgment on any of the convention's decisions made this summer. It's simply that one of its decisions reminded me of Will.

Not that I really had to be reminded of him. I did see him three weeks ago at the Natchez Literary Celebration, after all.

And I will always admire him.

Still, a certain decision, a particular decision, a particular decision made by the convention put one of Will's works in the forefront of my thoughts. Peachtree Publishers released it in 1968.

It's a novel called *The Conventio*.

I know the title has to grab a few people's attention.

The Conventio. Will is talking about a Baptist convention here, but it isn't the Southern Baptist Convention. It's a futuristic story, being that it was written in 1968 and takes place in 1984. The convention in question here is the Federal Baptist Convention.

Of course, the Federal Baptist Convention sounds awfully familiar. It's the largest Protestant denomination in the nation. Its conservative and moderate factions are always in constant battle. And it meets once a year in a big city - Chicago in this instance - to issue all kinds of statements, rhetoric and such.

And to elect its next president. It's the convention's presidential election that sets the novel's dramatic stage. This is where the story's twist comes, this story that Will, himself, labels a parable.

And Will is one of the few writers, if not the only writer, I know that could have pulled off this piece with such eloquence. That's not saying the edge isn't sharp. Believe me, Will knows his subject.

He knows the emotions that escalate in the authorizations of such a convention, and he writes his parable not to anger but to provoke thought.

Anger is provoked, and it will be inevitable for some readers, then so be it. Maybe it's because the story hits home.

Because Will knows the story of the convention. He was once a part of it, having been ordained a Southern Baptist Minister at age

17.

This happened in 1943 in the southwest Mississippi community of East Fork. Will has written about it. Readers will find this part of his story in his 1977 memoir *Brother to a Dragonfly*.

Brother to a Dragonfly is still in print; *The Conventio* isn't, but I suspect it can be found on at least one shelf in the Rapides Parish Library system.

Back to Will. He was ordained, went to Louisiana College then was shipped off to the Pacific for World War II. He graduated from Yale Divinity School, took a job as minister of a Southern Baptist church in North Louisiana, then left.

Left forever.

It didn't take long for Will to become disillusioned by church ministry. Those who truly needed his help were on the outside of the church's safe confines.

So he quit to join black school girls in their National Guard escort to Central High School in Little Rock. He quit, too, to march with civil rights workers.

He later ministered to the other side. That's as in Ku Klux Klansmen, saying God loves people on both sides, because God loves people.

True, he has made enemies along the way. It's why he lives in the small town of Mount Juliet, Tenn., instead of his native East Fork.

Threats still linger

Too many threats were made on his life during the civil rights days. Threats still linger today, but they aren't as thick.

Still, Will doesn't claim to have a ministry. Others will try to label him as some sort of minister to the people, but Will turns his back on such talk.

He simply says he has lived a life. His life touches people along the way. The types of people he touches probably wouldn't be a pretty bunch to some of his brethren in the convention.

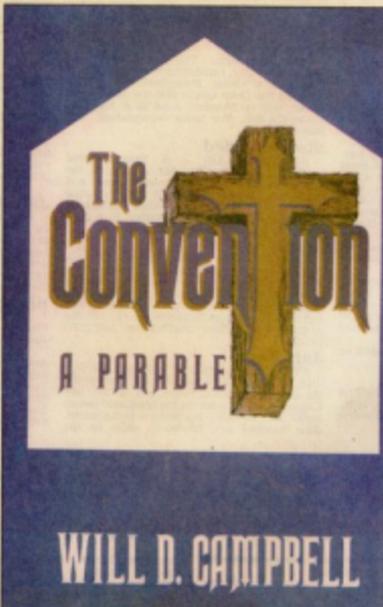
His lineup of friends includes black radicals, poor rural white country music stars, senators and convicted murderers.

I'm proud to say that he calls me a friend.

Which is why, I suppose, it was only natural for Will to take center stage in my mind while reading of the Southern Baptist Convention's actions.

As I said, there is a twist in *The Conventio*.

The story begins with Dorcas Rose McBride, a rural



Author Will D. Campbell

Mississippi woman whose church has chosen her and husband Exoil as messengers to the Federal Baptist Convention.

Dorcas, Will writes, carries Scripture not in a briefcase or on cassette but in her heart. Dorcas is conservative in her beliefs, but not because anyone has told her to be.

Her belief is founded on faith, as are her actions.

But something happens during the convention. Her husband is injured by thoughtlessness of some conventioners.

No apologies are offered. It's at that point Dorcas is exposed to humanity's dark side.

She sees the storm churning within the convention. People are discussing everything but what needs discussing. It's much like state legislatures when the subject of budget comes up. Everything else seems to be more important than the issue at hand.

And when such subjects as ministry, missions, faith and ways to share the gospel with others pop up at the convention, the only issue that's suddenly of an importance is women's role in the church.

This issue somehow finds its way into the convention's presidential election. Moderates are

battling against conservatives, called fundamentalists in this text.

Same old story.

But here's the twist. Heading the moderate side are a couple of women who would like to see women in the ministry. They are, of course, told no.

Leaders on the fundamentalist side are made ministers, staunch in their belief that the Bible should be interpreted literally.

The moderate women, meantime, meet Dorcas. She is pure in their eyes, yet her conservative beliefs go against everything for which they stand.

Still, she is a woman. And she is conservative.

So the moderates nominate her for president. After standing witness to what's happened so far at the convention, Dorcas accepts.

Imagine the dilemma. A woman has been nominated for the presidency. Fundamentalists can think on only one reason to oppose her - she's a woman. Yet there never really has been anything written in the Bible against a woman being president of the convention.

Perhaps because nowhere in the Bible is there mention of the Federal Baptist Convention.

And there is no way the mentalists can oppose women according to her because she is the very most what they believe.

So fundamentalists who in an awkward position will look foolish if they ban moderate ministers, will look equally as foolish if they do not.

And no matter how conservative Dorcas Rose McBride be, they will not stand for the thought of the Federal Baptist Convention being led by a woman.

So they resort to nominating Billy English for the presidency. He was once the biggest Fundamentalist in gospel music, though he's now little washed up he is a name. A big name.

And he's a man.

The election roars like ocean's waves. No one has this much havoc in the Federal Baptist Convention. Even the president of the United States becomes involved.

A few thoughts

And in the end, well, the user won't be revealed here, or few thoughts.

For in the end, Dorcas is the same person, strong in mind and stature, gentle in spirit, family is her main concern. Her foster children back home on small Mississippi farms she shares with her husband.

One of those children is a black girl, and Dorcas demands to adopt her, but negotiations prevent that.

So Dorcas does what she her pure faith keeping motives track.

Because in the end, Dorcas' strongest qualification for president of the Federal Baptist Convention has nothing to do with being pastor of the largest Southern Baptist church in the largest city nor does it have anything to do with politics.

And it definitely has nothing to do with gender.

No, Dorcas' strongest qualification is an exemplary integrity.

Just decency.

Dorcas' faith is just that. People recognize it, and understand it.

Will once told me Southern Baptist officials read his when it was first released. I tossed it, others made it their business to tell Will how much appreciated it.

I know I appreciate it. I do. I care all of Will's works, by the way, include some books, many of them nonfiction accounts on people, history, race in the South.

Yes, I appreciate Will's work. I hope others will, too.

Features reporter Robin Miller
e-mail: robin@tbtoweb.com

Footnotes

Constitution-Journal and from the Oval Office, with appreciations from William Styron, David Halberstam, Ellen Douglas, Mike Espy, William Winter, Ed Yoder, Will Campbell, Donna Tartt, Rick Bragg, Paul Greenberg, Deborah Mathis, Linton Weeks, Michael Skube, the President of the United States and other.

Duke book

The politics of David Duke, a former Ku Klux Klan leader and reputed neo-Nazi, has been a profound effect on one

848-8234 or by visiting the website www.usnc.org/duke.

Publishing

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. - Two veteran journalists have formed a new venture publishing works by individual authors, corporations and nonprofit organizations. The name of the company is Hart Horse Publishing and it is headquartered in Brentwood.

Pulitzer Prize winner Wendell Berry, former New York Times Southern Book Club and member of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, and Jack Hurst, a long nationally syndicated journalist and historian, will also release a select number of print that have enduring appeal targeted at bookshelves.

Hurst and Berry are both authors

Ford book

UNICE Richard Ford, a Mississippi native now widely recognized as a major American writer, is the focus of a new collection of essays edited by Dr. Hazy Gaugliardo, an English professor at Louisiana State



Perspectives on Richard Ford

Century," the 25th annual Faulkner and Yoknapatawpha Conference will be held at the University of Mississippi, Oct. 1-5.

The Center for the Study of the Center Culture and Institute for

of the conference, contact the Institute for Contracting Studies, P.O. Box 579, The University of Mississippi, University, Miss. 38677-0579; telephone (662) 915-7282; fax (662) 915-5130; e-mail caudies@olemiss.edu.

Remembering Willie

Remembering Willie (University of Mississippi Press, of

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Remembering Willie

Remembering Willie (University of Mississippi Press, of

Bookends

atches Literary Festival

Authors David Sansing, Beth Henley recognized

By Robin Miller
Features Editor

NATCHEZ, Miss. — There is a story of the time when David Sansing was placed in the unlikely position of chauffeur.

Then again, maybe it was likely, considering the identity of Sansing's neighbor of that seemingly long ago time.

Nevertheless, this story somehow came to mind while attending the Natchez Literary Celebration, June 13.

It begins with the Pike County Arts Council. Pike County is a mostly rural area often judged in the southeast corner of Mississippi, right above Tangipahoa Parish. The arts council called Sansing because it couldn't get in touch with author Willie Morris.

"Don't think the council didn't try, I know it to be true, because my friend Gwen Porter said it was so."

She was the person who told me this story. She was also a strong force for the Pike County Arts Council for quite a number of years.

Mrs. Porter was a force in anything to which she gave her time. I always thought she addressed her as "Mrs. Porter," that's how I will always know her.

She was an English teacher at South Pike High School, which, of course, starts in the south part of the county. She loved reading more than anything, and when she had free chance, she appreciated talking to authors, behind the books she also loved.

Especially Mississippi authors. So when time came for the arts council to honor Willie, Mrs. Porter immediately began trying to make contact. This was long before she spent time in Pike County, but the way Mrs. Porter laughed while telling the story made me wish I was there.

The arts council tried every way to get in touch with Willie Morris, she said. It tried calling him, but he wouldn't answer his telephone. It tried writing him, but he never answered his correspondence.

"We even tried sending him an envelope with a pencil in it," Mrs. Porter said. "We included a card that said, 'Check you or no.'"

The council still heard nothing from him.

Finally someone told the council to call David Sansing. Willie was writer-in-residence at the University of Mississippi in Oxford at the time, and Sansing was his neighbor.

Sansing was, and is, Mississippi's foremost historian, having written, among other works, the Mississippi history textbook used in the state's public schools.

The council did as instructed and sent a few clippings about Willie in the magazine. His mail stayed piled, unopened at the front door for one thing, and he kept his telephone in the refrigerator, so as not to be bothered by it ringing.

Sansing said he'd be glad to stop next door, and upon doing so, Willie said he'd be glad to speak at the Pike County arts event.

Avoid somehow, some way, Sansing became Willie's chauffeur, driving the six cars from Oxford to McComb in Pike County, sitting through the program, then taking Willie on what would be an all-night drive across town to the home of Dr. Vernon Holmes.

Willie and Holmes had been friends for years. The short trip took all night, because Willie decided to visit for awhile.

A while reached into the next morning. Sansing became weary, knowing that at some time he'd have to make that long drive up on U.S. Interstate 55 back to Oxford, so he found his way to a back bedroom, crawled into a bed and slept.

Willie and Holmes were still talking when Sansing awoke. Wright had already broken, and tomorrow was now today. It's more than probable that Sansing didn't have any could keep a discussion going all night between the two. Sure they

were friends, but Willie and Holmes had to march home in common.

They were Mississippians; they understood the terrain. They were also, in their own ways, champions of civil rights issues. Willie had been editor of Harper's magazine in New York. At 33, he was the youngest such editor ever at that magazine. He'd also written several books, and he often traveled to Holmes' house to devote time to his work.

He developed the idea for write one novel, *Good Old Boy* and the *Witch of Yazo*, while staying with Holmes and began work on another. Then, he eventually finished *Papa* but was never satisfied with it.

It was somewhat earlier this week that *Papa* will be released in 2001. The *Good Old Boy* book, meanwhile, was dedicated to Holmes' granddaughter, Lynn Covington.

Maybe time was slower at Holmes' house than in Oxford, who knows? Mrs. Porter didn't give me the whys or ways behind the story, I can only guess that much.

Holmes, meanwhile, was a McComb physician who served 24 years on the Mississippi State Board of Health. He was the only person to serve two full 12-year terms. One of these intermissions was during Gov. Ross Barnett's administration.

There's a reservoir named for this governor. It stretches north of Jackson.

She was also nominated for an Academy Award for writing the screenplay of *Crimes of the Heart*. The film version stars Diane Keaton, Jessica Lange and Sissy Spacek. The film, "Miss Firecracker," stars Holly Hunter.

Henley says she is happy to be in Natchez. She said after her last journey makes a trip from her Los Angeles home to her hometown of Jackson at least twice a year.

"It's funny," she says. "When I'm in Los Angeles, I talk about going home to Jackson and when I'm in Jackson, I'll talk about going home to Los Angeles." She says she will be coming later at a book signing in the basement of the temple. For now, she reads, acting out each character.

And her act seems a tough one to follow, especially by a retired Ole Miss history professor.

But there follows Sansing, reading his essay "The Other Mississippi," and the audience is spellbound. Maybe even more so by this than Henley's performance.

Became Sansing, speaks of her home, their Mississippi. Yet any southerner in the room is able to relate.

Gerald McCarney certainly does. Most people would know him as television's "Major Dad," but here he's in the role of a regular person, someone who's interested in southern literature.

Next year, though, it will include not only literature but film as well. The name will change, too, from the Natchez Literary Celebration to Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration.

McCarney had his hand in this change. He and former Natchez Mayor Ruth Brown have been working on it.

"I've been coming to Natchez for 10 years, and I've been captivated by the place since," McCarney says. "When (actress with) Betty and I were dating, we'd come here, and we became friends with Ruth and her wife."

Brown wanted to find a way for Natchez to attract more film industry. He and McCarney, along with a few other people, decided to link film to the literary celebration.

"We'll be celebrating the writers behind the film," says Carolyn Vance Smith, celebration chairman. "And we're moving the date up from June 15 to February so we can get schools involved."

Yet even McCarney isn't looking that far

in Chicago and moved to Paris, where he died in 1960.

It was an event listening to Mississippi author Will Campbell tell his first impressions of Wright's work. It was here in Natchez, in fact, that he met Henley.

Will is a friend. Mrs. Porter introduced us. He isn't ready for a part of this story even as much as I'd like him to be.

But he was standing on this podium two years ago, a recipient of the Richard Wright Award for Literary Excellence at the Natchez Literary Celebration.

Henley says she is happy to be in Natchez. She said after her last journey makes a trip from her Los Angeles home to her hometown of Jackson at least twice a year.

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Melinda Martinez • Page Designer

Floydwright Beth Henley signs a copy of her play *Crimes of the Heart* at a book signing after being presented the Richard Wright Award for Literary Excellence at the Natchez Literary Celebration.

It. Willie and Holmes sitting at the doctor's kitchen table, Sansing crawling into bed somewhere in the back of the house.

He doesn't question the state and the doctor. It wouldn't amount to anything any way.

He knows this is an all-nighter, and somehow he's managed to get himself rope in for the long haul.

But think about it now. Think about what an experience that was, one that can never be repeated.

The conversation that night was more than likely faded by a certain amount of drink, true. But even then that conversation had to be richer than most heard around any kitchen table today.

Sansing was trying to do at least a little of it. And I think of all this as I listen to him, as I look at the old Mississippi history book in my hands.

Mississippi: Its People and Culture. It's called an eighth grade history teacher in McComb gave it to me. I don't recall her name.

The education beat was one of my duties while working at the newspaper, which is how I met Mrs. Porter.

Which is also how I met Mrs. Porter. And now I think of Mrs. Porter while opening the battered cover of this history book, looking a bonus of one-day students who ever used it.

"If you ever meet Sansing, you need to get him to sign the book," she told me. So now I have it. And so is he. I find him standing alone at the edge of the temple basement after the program. I tap his shoulder and sign his face brightly upon seeing the bonus of one-day students who ever used it.

"That was my first book," he says, taking it from under a pen in his coat pocket. "You don't know what an honor it is to sign this."

And you, sir, don't know what an honor it is to meet you. Because I know your story about you, one told to me by a special teacher.

She said you awoke the next morning, shared Willie away from Holmes' table and drove him back to Oxford.

Just as you will find your way back to Oxford this evening.

Without Willie.

Feature reporter Robin Miller's e-mail address is rmiller@earthlink.com.



Melinda Martinez • Page Designer

David Sansing, professor of history emeritus of the University of Mississippi, was a recipient of the Richard Wright Award for Literary Excellence. Sansing is Mississippi's foremost historian. Among his works is the Mississippi history textbooks used in the state's public schools.

He was also nominated for an Academy Award for writing the screenplay of *Crimes of the Heart*. The film version stars Diane Keaton, Jessica Lange and Sissy Spacek. The film, "Miss Firecracker," stars Holly Hunter.

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Kevin Cooper

Managing editor

Caller offers 'healing' idea, building name

Telephone calls pour into newspapers like gravel out of a dump truck. And occasionally, tucked beneath the complaint calls, wrong numbers, advice and other common gravel, are some real gems.

One of those gems reached my desk the other day.

"It's time for the healing to begin," the caller said.

I — as usual — was lost.

In a few short sentences, the caller — who wanted to remain anonymous — spelled out a plan that may help our community get past some of the animosity left in the wake of the recent municipal election.

"What's the name of the new community center on Franklin Street?" the caller asked.

Fumbling through my feeble mental Rolodex, I plucked out a few names.

Natchez City Center.

Natchez Community Center.

The old Service Motor Company Building.

Finally, I admitted my ignorance.

"Actually, I'm not sure exactly what it's supposed to be called," I said.

Delight oozed from the other end of the telephone.

"Exactly my point," the caller said.

"Nobody knows what to call it, so why don't we give it an official name."

I granted in agreement.

"Let's name it in honor of Butch (former Natchez mayor Larry L. "Butch" Brown)" the caller said.

Perhaps at this point I should add that the caller was hardly a Brown supporter, in fact the person has long been one of Brown's biggest, most vocal critics.

Nonetheless the caller was able to separate his personal feelings for Brown long enough to realize how effective Brown was at getting things changed in Natchez.

The caller admitted that Brown almost single-handedly fought to bring millions of federal dollars into Natchez.

Those funds helped do such things as stabilizing the crumbling bluffs which our city rests upon and transforming several LUMPs, or Large Unused Municipal Properties, into usable buildings all over town.

The community center — or whatever it's called — became a reality after Brown and the Natchez Board of Aldermen saw the need for such a structure after the city sold the old convention center to the school district.

The sale left the city without a medium-sized place for public get-togethers.

As the caller said, Brown and the aldermen were always good at making the best of what they had.

And that's how the community center was born. Someone in the previous city administration realized the need and saw the solution in the rough, unused Service Motor Company building.

Months later, it became a reality.

The building was christened by a great Natchez tradition — the annual Natchez Literary Celebration.

The significance of the new building and Brown's work on it weren't lost on the anonymous caller.

Does the name begin to pay the ex-mayor back for his work in office?

Probably not, but as the caller said, "He deserves at least that."

Will the idea please everyone?

Certainly not.

As anyone who saw the results of the election can see, the community was split on the popularity of Brown.

Will the idea float with the public?

Only time will tell.

But the caller has managed to get the idea out there for now.

And the telephones at the newspaper keep on ringing.

Kevin Cooper is managing editor of *The Democrat*. He can be reached at (601) 445-3541 or by e-mail at kevin.cooper@natchezdemocrat.com.

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NATCHEZ LITERARY CELEBRATION

"Since it began in 1990, supported by a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council, the Literary Celebration has attracted more than 1,000 people each year." So says Natchez Literary Celebration founder Carolyn Vance Smith of Natchez. "All of them love to read, and they share the joy of books."

"Lectures, concerts, exhibits, films, book signings, tours of historic homes and buildings, and much more. That's what is in store for those who attend this year's Literary Celebration in the historic river city of Natchez, Mississippi," Smith said.

Celebrating its eleventh anniversary from June 1 to June 3, 2000, the literary conference will again use a broad theme for more than a dozen lectures and presentations. The 2000 theme, "The Sacred South: Writings From the Bible Belt," will be both explored and enjoyed, Smith said.

"We'll have nationally known writers and scholars as well as other exciting entertainment this year," she said. "We're expecting a huge crowd."

The cost of each year's literary and cultural event is very low, Smith said, because of the hard work from the sponsoring agencies, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Natchez National Historical Park, Alcorn State University, and the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development. "We are very grateful for generous grants from the Mississippi Humanities Council," she said.

"Because of this, plus widespread volunteerism, we can keep our lectures free," Smith said. "And we price all meals, tours, concerts and other special activities at low cost."

Presented each year in early June, the Natchez Literary Celebration features about a dozen lectures by nationally known scholars and writers, enhanced by related tours, book signings, exhibits, films, plays, readings, concerts, entertainments and meals.

Since the beginning, many people have returned each year for

EXPLORES WRITINGS FROM THE BIBLE BELT



the Celebration, including The Honorable William F. Winter, former governor of Mississippi and longtime president of the Board of Trustees for the Department of Archives and History. "We are so grateful to him for his service each year as the Celebration's Director of Proceedings," Smith said.

"The Literary Celebration has proven that people respond by attending top-quality conferences devoted to literature, history and the arts," Smith continued.

According to Dr. Allen Dennis, chairman of the history department at Troy State University in Alabama, one of many who attend each year, "The Natchez Literary Celebration is unique among humanities programs because it always has so much to offer those who visit the City of Natchez." Dennis continued "It is by far the best program I have been part of during many years of involvement in humanities programs in Mississippi and elsewhere."

The conference has won many awards, including the Governor's Award for Tourism Achievement; a Cultural Olympiad award for outstanding programming from the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games; Most Outstanding Festival or Event in Mississippi from the Mississippi Tourism

Commission; and the Public Humanities Achievement Award from the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Each year's conference deals with some general aspect of Southern history. Some of the noted speakers have been writers Eudora Welty, Margaret Walker Alexander, William Styron, Willie Morris, Ellen Douglas, Ernest Gaines, Elizabeth Spencer, Nikki Giovanni, Myrtle Evers-Williams, and Maya Angelou; Richard Wright scholar Michel Fabre of Paris; and historians Robert V. Remini, David Sansing, William Scarborough, John D.W. Guice, Jay Gitlin, John Bassingame, Michael Wayne, and Douglas Lewis.

Special events have included the dedication of the mansion Melrose and the House of William Johnson to the National Park Service, concerts by the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, filming of the conference by Mississippi Educational Television, and tours of nationally important historic houses.

One of the results of each NLC is the bringing together of various constituencies; young and old, male and female, scholar and student, the highly educated and the under-educated, the African-American and the Caucasian.

"Indeed, the Celebration is

one of the few places in the Deep South where Blacks and Whites gather in large numbers with a common goal: to rejoice over books," Smith said.

"The Literary Celebration definitely lives up to its name each year," she said. "It is a true celebration which brings people together from all walks of life, people who share the love of reading and the love of books." ☉

THE 11TH ANNUAL NATCHEZ LITERARY CELEBRATION FEATURES PROGRAMS BY:

- * Thomas Berg (Sanford University)
- * James Blackwood (Memphis, Tennessee)
- * Thomas Bonner (Xavier University)
- * Will Campbell (Mt. Juliet, Tennessee)
- * Richard Cornelius (Bryan College)
- * Allen Dennis (Troy State University)
- * Marcie Colleen Ferris (Washington, D.C.)
- * Steven K. Green (Washington, D.C.)
- * Charles Hudson (University of Georgia)
- * E. Grady Jolly (U.S. Fifth Circuit Judge)
- * Loyal Jones (Berea College)
- * Mary Warren Miller (Historic Natchez Foundation)
- * Alpha Morris (Alcorn State University)
- * Bernard Cotten (Alcorn State University)
- * Donzell Lee (Alcorn State University)
- * Rudolph E. Waters (Alcorn State University)
- * Albert Raboteau (Princeton University)
- * Randy Sparks (College of Charleston)
- * Clifton Taulbert (Tulsa, Oklahoma)
- * Charles Reagan Wilson (University of Mississippi)

*****and much more*****

Natchez Literary Celebration ready to roll

Special to The Democrat

Readin', Ritin' and Rejoicin'! That's what the "Three R's" stand for in Natchez, Miss.

So says Natchez Literary Celebration founder and co-chairman Carolyn Vance Smith of Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Natchez.

"Since it began in 1990, the Literary Celebration has attracted hundreds — sometimes thousands — of people each year," Smith said. "All of them love to read and rejoice over books."

Cost of each year's three-day literary and cultural event is very low, Smith said, because of the hard work from the four sponsoring agencies, Copiah-Lincoln, the Natchez National Historical Park, the Mississippi Department of Archives and Records and Alcorn State University. "We are also grateful for generous grants from the Mississippi Humanities Council and corporate and business donors," she said.

"Because of this, plus widespread volunteerism, we can keep our lectures free," Smith said. "And we price all meals, tours and other special activities at low cost."

Conference co-chairmen with Smith are Bob Dodson, superintendent of the NNHP; Jim Barnett of the MDAH and Emma Blissett of Alcorn.

The Celebration annually features about a dozen lectures by nationally known scholars and writers, enhanced by related tours, book signings, exhibits, films, plays, readings, concerts, entertainments and meals.

"The Literary Celebration proves that people hunger after top-quality conferences devoted to literature, history and the arts," Dodson said.

And top-quality it is, according to Dr. Charles Lowery, chairman of the history department at Mississippi State University, one of many who attend each year.

"The Natchez Literary Celebration is unique among humanities programs," Lowery said. "It is beyond question the best program I have been part of during many years of involvement in Mississippi and elsewhere."

"It is remarkably successful for several reasons: the richness of its humanities content, the happy choice of program participants, and the virtually flawless execution of a carefully planned program."

The conference has won many awards, including the Governor's Award for Tourism Achievement, a Cultural Olympiad award for outstanding programming from the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, the Most Outstanding Festival or Event in Mississippi from the Mississippi Tourism

The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt

► June 1-3

► For ticket information or questions call (601) 446-6345 or 800-647-6724 or write to NLC, 640 S. Canal St., Natchez, Miss. 39120



The Natchez Democrat's Kelly Cooper
Historic Christ Church in Church Hill will be featured as part of a tour of religious structures offered during the upcoming Literary Celebration.

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Aldermen to consider center rates

Other aldermen business, 3A

By KERRY WHIPPLE

The Natchez Democrat

Arthur Brown says he can't afford to hold a Christmas party in the Natchez Community Center because extra expenses have driven the **Natchez** cost too high.

Brown told the board of aldermen Tuesday he believes the city should revamp its rate structure for the center. "If you are part of the rich it begins to add up," Brown said, noting in addition to his \$500 rental fee he would also have to pay for event insurance and rental on tables and chairs.

"It becomes not affordable," Brown said. He asked if aldermen could do "some reworking ... to make it more accessible to people who are part of the 'not rich.'"

Ward 2 Alderman Ricky Gray asked if the board could meet with Natchez tourism department officials to discuss the rental rates.

"I suggest we look into this matter," he said. "This is a community center for the people."

Ward 3 Alderwoman Sue Stedman said she would set a date for a meeting.

The community center, completed this spring, is located in a renovated car dealership across the street from the site of the future convention center downtown. The first event hosted there was June's three-day Natchez Literary Celebration.

"If (the community center) cannot be utilized at a reasonable rate then we have defeated our purpose," Ward 4 Alderman Theodore "Bubber" West said.

But Tourism Director Walter Tipton said he thought the city intended the community center to complement the convention center as an additional meeting facility.

Center

Continued from 1A

Tipton said the community center — and eventually the convention center — are available to anyone in the community who wants to rent them at competitive rates.

"I don't think the rates we're charging are out of line," Tipton said. "But I'm also open for alternatives if that's what they want to do."

Tipton said just turning the electricity on at the community center, especially during the summer, costs about \$250 per day.

Tipton estimated Brown would spend about \$5 per person to host 200 people at the party.

"We think that's a bargain," Tipton said.

In fact, the community center's \$500 rental rate is half that of the old convention center, which the city sold to the Natchez-Adams School District last year.

Ward 5 Alderman David Massey said the community center is more affordable than some other alternatives for meeting spaces in the city.

"We want to make it as affordable as we possible can," Massey said in the finance committee meeting before the regular meeting. "We also want to break even."

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Play reenacts 1925 trial on evolution

Special to The Democrat

Take a school teacher, a noted orator, a defense attorney, a monkey and the law. Add religion, reporters and a small town. Mix together. Bake for eight days in a crowded courtroom. When it's over, you have the Scopes Evolution Trial in Dayton, Tenn.



In 1925, William Jennings Bryan, a world-renowned statesman and orator, and Clarence Darrow, one of America's leading defense attorneys, argued the case of a teacher, John T. Scopes. He was charged with violating a state law which prohibited teaching the theory of evolution in public schools.

Beliefs of evolutionists and creationists collided in that courtroom in July 1925, and the resulting case was nicknamed the "Monkey Trial." In the end, Scopes was convicted of teaching evolution. The Tennessee Supreme Court later overturned the conviction on a technicality, and Scopes was vindicated by the Supreme Court in 1968.

Based on actual court records of that trial is an original play, called "The Scopes Evolution Trial." It will be presented twice at 8:15 p.m. today and Saturday in the Chancery Courtroom of the Adams County Courthouse. The play is part of the 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration, which uses the theme this year of "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt."

Tickets are limited. They cost \$15 each and are available for both performances by calling Natchez Ticket Office, 446-6345.

2000 William Winter Scholars:

- ▶ Alcorn State University, Lorman: Sandra Davis, student, and Donzell Lee, faculty
- ▶ Cathedral School, Natchez: Ben Tillman, student, and Libby Voss, faculty
- ▶ Coahoma Community College, Clarksdale: Nicolas Howard, student, and Karen Done, faculty
- ▶ Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Natchez: Jessica Rogers, student, and Jan Pickle, faculty
- ▶ Copiah Lincoln Community College, Wesson: Jenny Riley, student, and Casey Hardison Pevey, faculty
- ▶ Delta State University, Cleveland: John Lack, student, and Terry Everett, faculty
- ▶ East Central Community College, Decatur: Dustin Addy, student, and Leonard Barrier, faculty
- ▶ Hinds Community College, Raymond: Brooke Sellers, student, and Lura Scales, faculty
- ▶ Mississippi Delta Community College, Moorhead: Aaron White, student, and Ellen Steeby, faculty
- ▶ Mississippi State University, Starkville: Buckley Foster, student, and D. Lynn Holt, faculty
- ▶ Mississippi University for Women, Columbus: Rhonda Smith, student, and Jane Hinton, faculty
- ▶ University of Mississippi, Oxford: Angela Caryn, student, and Mary Stuckey, faculty
- ▶ University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg: Jill Childress, student, and Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, faculty

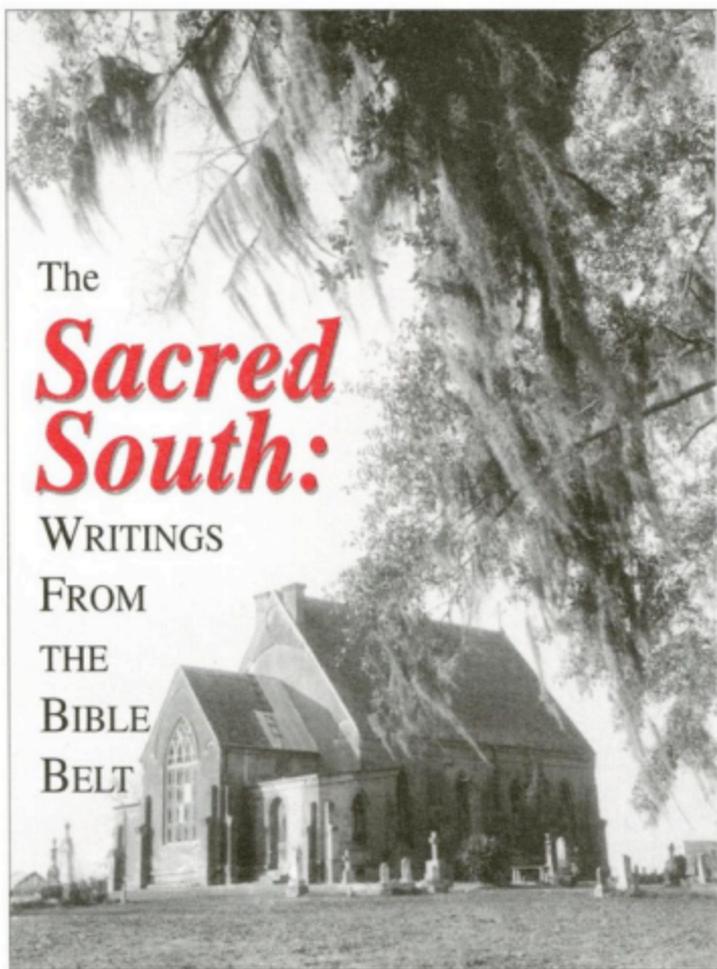
Our Regrets

In the May 28 edition of *The Democrat*, the last name of Rachel Leona Hughes was omitted in the weddings calendar. Her wedding to Stephen Francis Accilli will take place at 2 p.m. on Saturday at St. Mary Basilica. We regret the error.

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The Natchez Literary Celebration

Presents



The

Sacred South:

WRITINGS

FROM

THE

BIBLE

BELT

*Photograph (c. 1933) by Eudora Welty of Christ Episcopal Church,
Church Hill, Mississippi*

June 1-3, 2000
Natchez, Mississippi

Lectures - Concerts - Exhibits - Films
Booksignings - Meals
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And Much More - All Free or Low-Cost



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Atlanta, GA	\$ 155.00	\$ 155.00
Bakersfield, CA	\$ 303.00	\$ 283.00
Baltimore, MD	\$ 198.00	\$ 145.00
Boston, MA	\$ 235.00	\$ 259.00
Buffalo/Niagara Falls, NY	\$ 198.00	\$ 238.00
Charleston, SC	\$ 178.00	\$ 193.00
Chattanooga, TN	\$ 142.00	\$ 172.00
Chicago, IL	\$ 145.00	\$ 204.00
Cincinnati, OH	\$ 146.00	\$ 157.00
Cleveland, OH	\$ 168.00	\$ 198.00
Dallas/Ft. Worth, TX	\$ 155.00	\$ 113.00
Dayton, OH	\$ 143.00	\$ 200.00
Denver, CO	\$ 207.00	\$ 251.00
Detroit, MI	\$ 176.00	\$ 200.00
El Paso, TX/Las Cruces, NM/Juarez, MEX	\$ 207.00	\$ 135.00
Fresno, CA	\$ 291.00	\$ 295.00
Ft. Lauderdale/Hollywood, FL	\$ 199.00	\$ 169.00
Harrisburg, PA	\$ 198.00	\$ 224.00
Hartford/Springfield, MA	\$ 235.00	\$ 225.00
Houston, TX	\$ 147.00	\$ 97.00
Indianapolis, IN	\$ 146.00	\$ 173.00
Jacksonville, FL	\$ 168.00	\$ 196.00
Kansas City, MO	\$ 145.00	\$ 141.00
Knoxville, TN	\$ 188.00	\$ 189.00
Las Vegas, NV	\$ 254.00	\$ 177.00
Lexington, KY	\$ 151.00	\$ 169.00
Los Angeles, CA	\$ 254.00	\$ 239.00
Louisville, KY	\$ 139.00	\$ 173.00
Madison, WI	\$ 169.00	\$ 189.00
Memphis, TN	XXX	\$ 158.00
Miami, FL	\$ 196.00	\$ 169.00
Milwaukee, WI	\$ 173.00	\$ 177.00
Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN	\$ 166.00	\$ 238.00
Nashville, TN	\$ 151.00	\$ 163.00
New Orleans, LA	\$ 158.00	XXX
New York, NY	\$ 200.00	\$ 211.00

CITY	INTO MEMPHIS	OUT OF NEW ORLEANS
Newark, NY	\$ 203.00	\$ 211.00
Oakland, CA	\$ 280.00	\$ 263.00
Oklahoma City, OK	\$ 152.00	\$ 109.00
Omaha, NE	\$ 169.00	\$ 204.00
Ontario, CAN	\$ 283.00	\$ 252.00
Orange Co., CA	\$ 287.00	\$ 275.00
Orlando, FL	\$ 187.00	\$ 151.00
Philadelphia, PA	\$ 195.00	\$ 238.00
Phoenix/Scottsdale, AZ	\$ 253.00	\$ 222.00
Pittsburgh, PA	\$ 165.00	\$ 200.00
Portland, OR	\$ 287.00	\$ 264.00
Raleigh/Durham, NC	\$ 173.00	\$ 220.00
Roanoke, VA	\$ 165.00	\$ 211.00
Rochester, NY	\$ 195.00	\$ 229.00
Sacramento, CA	\$ 283.00	\$ 263.00
Salt Lake City, UT	\$ 253.00	\$ 227.00
San Diego, CA	\$ 254.00	\$ 242.00
San Francisco, CA	\$ 286.00	\$ 217.00
San Jose, CA	\$ 291.00	\$ 274.00
Seattle, WA	\$ 287.00	\$ 208.00
Spokane, WA	\$ 284.00	\$ 274.00
St. Louis, MO	\$ 139.00	\$ 173.00
St. Thomas, VI	\$ 315.00	\$ 318.00
Syracuse, NY	\$ 200.00	\$ 238.00
Tampa/St. Pete/Clearwater, FL	\$ 191.00	\$ 130.00
Toledo, OH	\$ 166.00	\$ 200.00
Tucson, AZ	\$ 232.00	\$ 230.00
Tulsa, OK	\$ 147.00	\$ 109.00
Washington, DC	\$ 198.00	\$ 193.00
White Plains, NY	\$ 203.00	\$ 238.00
Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, PA	\$ 207.00	\$ 216.00
Wilmington, NC	\$ 184.00	\$ 193.00

SPECIAL NOTES:

- *Each fare is one-way only. To get round-trip air, add the two segments.
- *If you wish to travel only one-way, add \$25 to the fare.
- *Tickets are fully refundable until ticketed.
- After ticketed, \$75 per ticket fee will apply.

Airline requests are normally ticketed about 1 month prior to excursion date. Airline tickets will be sent along with boarding documents at 3-4 weeks prior to your excursion.



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William Winter Scholars

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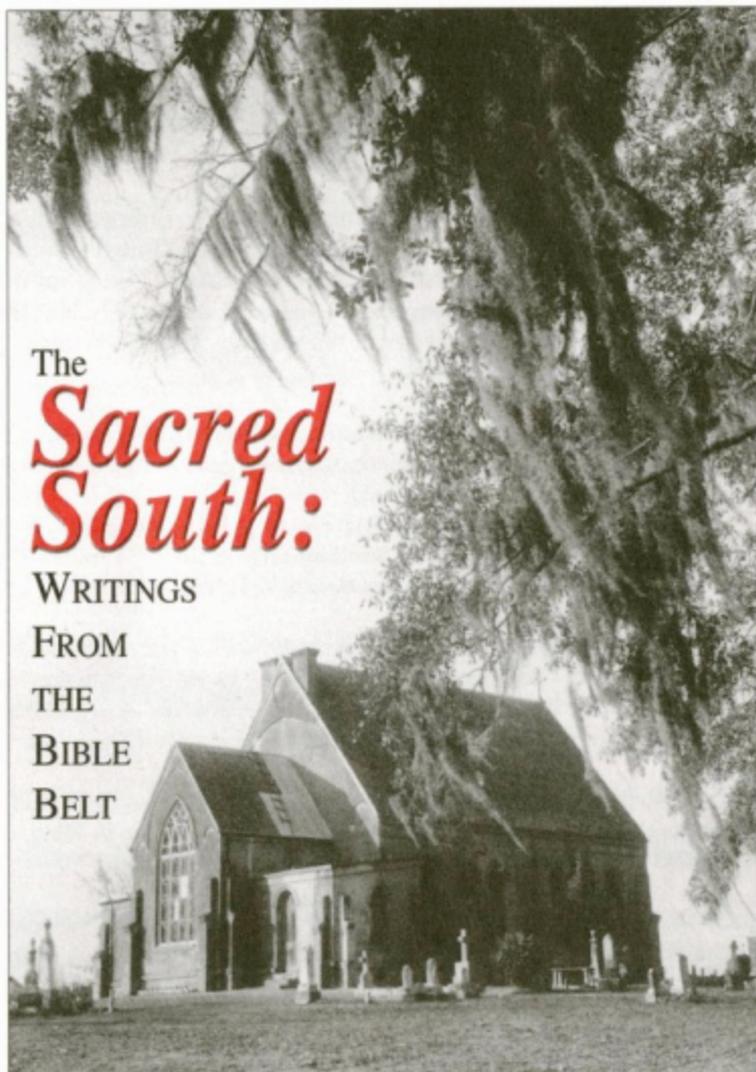
Richland



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The Natchez Literary Celebration

Presents



The
***Sacred
South:***

WRITINGS
FROM
THE
BIBLE
BELT

Photograph (c. 1933) by Eudora Welty of Christ Episcopal Church, Church Hill, Mississippi

June 1-3, 2000
Natchez, Mississippi

2000 part 2
page 1

The 11th Annual Natchez Literary Celebration presents

The Natchez Literary Celebration, winner of an Olympic Award, the Governor's Award, and the Mississippi Tourism Award, has been called by official tourism evaluators "Mississippi's most significant annual conference devoted to literature, history, and culture."



THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 2000

9 a.m. Welcome and Introductions

Harrell Garman, president, Copiah-Lincoln Community College; Clinton Brittain, president, Alcorn State University; and Larry "Beak" Brown, Mayor of the City of Natchez. M.C. co-chairmen Carolyn Vance Smith, Copiah-Lincoln; Robert Douglas, NCCFP; James E. Barrett Jr., MIAAF; and Emma Blizadek, Alcorn. Director of Proceedings: William Winters, president, MIAAF board of trustees.

9:15 a.m. "Southern Religious Beliefs and Customs: An Overview," Charles Reagan Wilson, University of Mississippi, Oxford, Ind., *Religion in the South, New Perspectives on Southern Religion*

10:45 a.m. "Religious Beliefs of the Southeastern Indians," Charles Hudson, University of Georgia, Athens (The Southeastern Indians)

11:45 a.m. Lunch, Carriage House Restaurant at Station Hall (SH), with four program afterwards, "Southern Religious Homes," Lloyd Jones, retired director, Appalachian Center, Berea College, Berea, Ky. (Appalachian, A Self Portrait and The Preacher John Book: Religious Anecdotes from the Oral Tradition)

1:00 p.m. "Religious Beliefs in Mississippi," Randy Sparks, College of Charleston (S.C.) (104 Jordan's Survey Books: Evangelicalism in Mississippi, 1793-1870)

3 p.m. "The Meaning of Slave Suffering," Albert Raboteau, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J. (Slave Religion: The "Bible" as Revolution in the Antebellum South)

4:45 p.m. "NAPAC's Youth Anniversary Celebration," a reception at the Natchez Museum of Afro-American History and Culture, a work in progress (500)

8:15 p.m. Concert by the Holy Family Catholic Church Choir, with remarks afterwards, "Southern Moments: Uplifting Times," Clifford Toubert, Tulsa, Okla. (More Open a Day When We Were Colored, Eight Nights of the Heart) (110)

The Sacred South: WRITINGS FROM THE BIBLE BELT

Sponsored by Copiah-Lincoln Community College, the Natchez National Historical Park, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and Alcorn State University, the Celebration annually presents a theme-based lecture series enhanced by films, music, exhibits, book sales, book signings, tours, field trips, workshops, and

discussion sessions.

This year, as mankind enters a new century and a new millennium, the 11th annual conference explores the spirituality of the South, past, present, and future.

Welcome to the Celebration!

FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 2000

9 a.m. "Christianity in Southern Writing," Thomas Brainer, Xavier University (The Slave Option Companion, and William Faulkner: The William B. Enoch Collection)

10:15 a.m. "God's Will," a film documentary of the life of Will Campbell by the University of Alabama Public Broadcasting System, with introduction and comments by Will Campbell, Sr., Jublet, Tenn. (Brother in a Drapery, Providence, and The Son of Jesus)

11:30 a.m. "The Role of the African-American Church in Southern Politics and Culture," a panel by Bernard Cottler, Donald Lee, and Alpha Morris, chaired by Reddick Waters, Alcorn State University, Lorman, Miss.

2 p.m. "The Negro Trade: The Trade That Is Still Being Traded," Richard M. Cottrell, Bryan College, Dayton, Tenn. (Ministerial Day of Negro Population Trial Site in Dayton, Tennessee and ed., Selected Orations of William Jennings Bryan)

3:15 p.m. "Current Legal Thinking about the Issues Surrounding the Negro Trade," a discussion led by Thomas E. Berg, Sanford University, Birmingham, Ala.; Warren K. Green, Legal Director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Washington, D.C.; and Edward L. Larson, University of Georgia School of Law, Athens, chaired by U.S. 10th-Circuit Judge E. Grady Kelly, Jackson, Miss.

4 p.m. Dinner, Natchez Parkhouse Edna Hood (EH), followed by a film program, "Money: Great Methodist Church, Southern Gospel Music," remarks and concert, Alan Dennis, Troy (Ala.) State University (Kemper County Rebel: The Civil War Diary of Walter Monroe Holmes, C.S.A.), and James Blackwood, founding member of the Blackwood Brothers Quartet, Memphis, Tenn.

8:45 p.m. Two concurrent events at different locations:

"The Negroes Evulsion Trial," a play by Gale Johnson, Dayton, Tenn., based on the court records of the trial in 1819 in Dayton, Tenn., at the Adams County Courthouse Chancery Court Room (515)

"The Apostle," a film starring Robert Davall, Francis Foxworth, Billy Bob Thornton, and Miranda Richardson, Natchez Convention and Visitor Bureau theater. Introduction by Will Campbell (free)

SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 2000

9 a.m. "Shalom, Y'all: An Exploration of Jewish Life in the American South," Marvin Cohen Frenkel, former director of the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, UMass, and now of Washington, D.C. (Southern Jewish History, Vol. 45, at Temple B'Nai Israel)

10 a.m. Reception hosted by Temple B'Nai Israel, honoring Natchez Literary Celebration Advisory Board members

10:30 a.m. Richard Wright Literary Excellence Awards ceremony (free), conducted by John D.M. Galus, University of Southern Mississippi, with remarks by the award winners.

Both events, Los Angeles (Times of the River, The Miss Riverkeeper Contest, and Imposition: Harney)

David G. Sanning, The University of Mississippi (Mississippi: 150 in the Past and Present, Characterizing Mississippi, a Mississippi Studies Textbook, and Natchez: An Illustrated History)

Autograph party to follow, Temple B'Nai Israel

1:00 p.m. "Ethnic Religious Structures in Southwest Mississippi," Mary Warren Miller, Historic Natchez Foundation, a Trinity Episcopal Church (Vital House of Natchez) (free)

2-4 p.m. "Religious History, Religious Structures," a guided tour (500) of religious sites in Southwest Mississippi, departing from Trinity Episcopal Church 8:45-by with commentary, refreshments at Alcorn State University, and stops at:

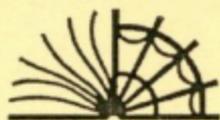
Christ Episcopal Church, Church Hill, Miss. (1820)
Everard Mound (Southeastern Indians ceremonial site, 1800)
Oakland Memorial Chapel, Alcorn State University, Lorman, Miss. (1850)
Oakland Plantation, Church Hill, Miss. (built in 1841 by Chase Church leaders)

8:15 p.m. Repeat of two concurrent events presented Friday, June 2
"The Negroes Evulsion Trial," a play, Adams County Courthouse Chancery Court Room (515)

"The Apostle," a film starring Robert Davall, Francis Foxworth, Billy Bob Thornton, and Miranda Richardson, Natchez Convention and Visitor Bureau theater. Introduction by Will Campbell (free)

2000
page 2

Book It!
Natchez
Literary
Celebration



The

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South:***

WRITINGS FROM THE
BIBLE BELT

June 1-3, 2000
Natchez, Mississippi

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Play - Exhibits - Tours
Booksignings
Awards presentation
And much more*

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MISSISSIPPI

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Mississippi Humanities Council.

For information and tickets:

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www.colin.cc.ms.us/nlc

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Mississippi Department of Archives and
History, the Natchez National Park
Service and Alcorn State University.*

Book It!
Natchez
Literary
Celebration



The

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WRITINGS FROM THE
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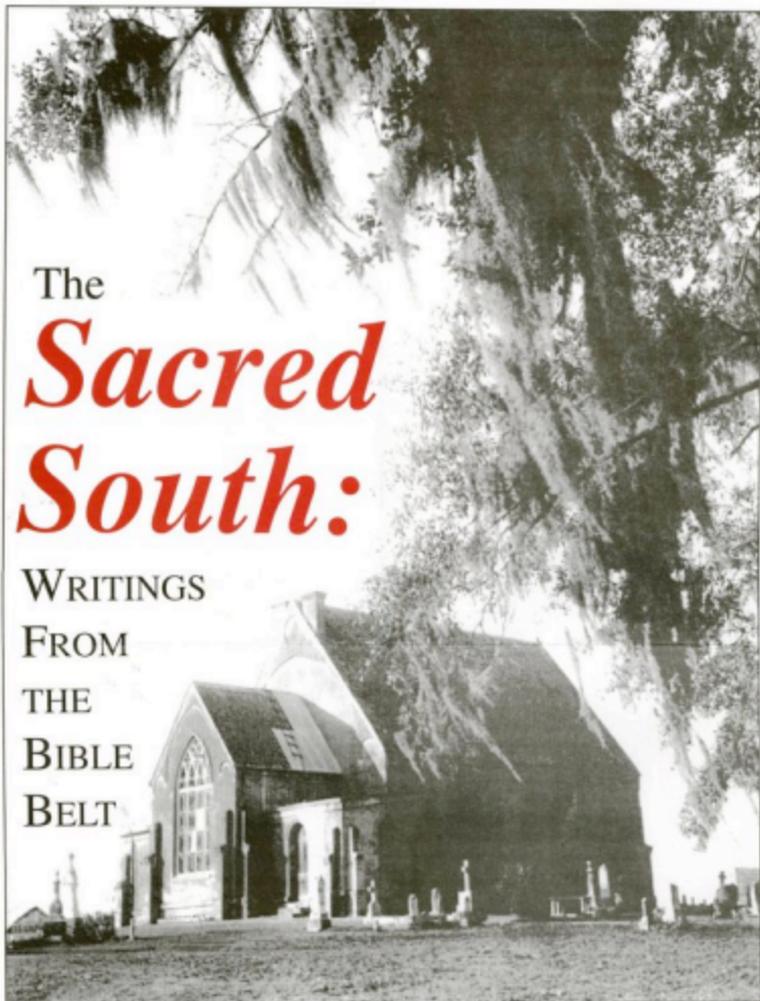
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History, the Natchez National Park
Service and Alcorn State University.*

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The Natchez Literary Celebration

Presents

2000 part 2
page 5



The *Sacred South:*

WRITINGS
FROM
THE
BIBLE
BELT

Photograph (c. 1923) by Endora Wely of Christ Episcopal Church, Church Hill, Mississippi. Photograph selected from Country Churchyards to be released by the University Press of Mississippi in May 2000. Photograph from the Endora Wely Collection - Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

June 1-3, 2000

Natchez, Mississippi

Headquarters: Natchez City Center, 215 Franklin St.

Lectures by Scholars and Writers * Play * Exhibits * Films
Tours of Historic Religious Sites * Booksignings
Awards Presentation * Free or Low Cost

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the South's Warmest Welcome
MISSISSIPPI

This event is sponsored by Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Natchez National Historical Park and Alcorn State University, and is partially funded by the Mississippi Humanities Council and the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development.



AN UPDATE!

From

The Natchez Literary Celebration

Note the location for headquarters
and new telephone numbers
for tickets and information.

The

Sacred South

WRITINGS FROM THE BIBLE BELT

June 1-3, 2000

Headquarters:

Natchez City Center

Corner of Wall & Franklin Streets
Natchez, Mississippi



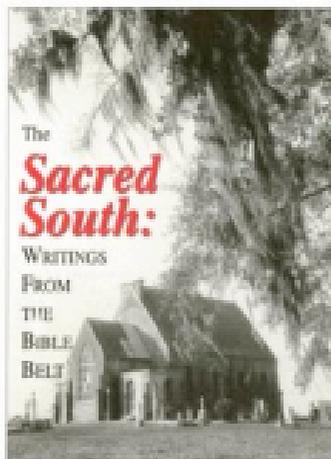
New telephone numbers:

1-601-446-6345

1-800-647-6724

The Natchez Literary Celebration

Presents



Photographs: 1988 by Barbara Wiley of Christ Episcopal Church,
Church Hill, Mississippi

June 1-3, 2000
Natchez, Mississippi

Lectures - Concerts - Exhibits - Films
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The 11th Annual

Natchez Literary Celebration
"The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt"

PRESENTS

A CONCERT

By The Holy Family Catholic Church Gospel Choir
Directed by Alvin Shelby
Natchez, Mississippi

AND

"SOMBER MOMENTS: UPLIFTING TIMES"

A Presentation by
Clifton Taulbert
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Pulitzer Prize nominee and author of *Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored*, *The Last Train North*, *Watching Our Crops Come In*, *Eight Habits of the Heart*, and *Little Clay and the Porch People*

8:15 P.M., Thursday, June 1, 2000
Holy Family Catholic Church
Natchez, Mississippi

Book sale/and book signing honoring Mr. Taulbert to be held in
the parlor on the first floor immediately following the program.

2000 part 2
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11th Annual Natchez Literary Celebration

**CAROLYN VANCE
SMITH
NATCHEZ, MS**



11th Annual Natchez Literary Celebration

**MARION SMITH
NATCHEZ, MS**

ADMIT ONE - \$10

137

Natchez Literary Celebration

Concert by Holy Family Choir and

Program by Clifton Taulbert

8:15 p.m., Thurs., June 1, 2000

Holy Family Catholic Church

Corner of Orange Avenue and St. Catherine St.

ADMIT ONE - \$25

104

Natchez Literary Celebration

Dinner (cash bar) with Program of
Gospel Music

6 p.m., Fri., June 2, 2000

Radisson Natchez Eola Hotel

110 North Pearl Street

ADMIT ONE - \$30

85

Natchez Literary Celebration

Guided bus tour of historic religious sites

2-6 p.m., Sat., June 3, 2000

Departing from and returning to

Trinity Episcopal Church

301 South Commerce Street

ADMIT ONE - \$10

104

Natchez Literary Celebration

Natchez Association for the Preservation
of Afro-American Culture

10th Anniversary Reception and Tour

4-6 p.m., Thurs., June 1, 2000

NAPAC Museum, corner of Wall and Main Streets

ADMIT ONE - \$15

Natchez Literary Celebration

Introduction and Play,

"The Scopes Evolution Trial"

8:15 p.m., Sat., June 3, 2000

Chancery Courtroom, Adams County Courthouse

Corner of Wall and Market Streets

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The Natchez Democrat

Wednesday, February 16, 2000

Serving Natchez, Waltha and the Miss-Low

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Natchez, Mississippi

50 cents

Literary Celebration organizers unveil plan to marry event with Southern film festival

By STACY GRANTING
The Natchez Democrat

Actor Gerald McRaney may have found a way to marry his "two great loves."

In Natchez Tuesday, McRaney helped announce the new Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration, which debuts in 2001.

"I have two great loves," he told an audience of nearly 50 community leaders gathered at the receiving

services. "One is film ... the other is Mississippi."

A native Mississippian, McRaney said he has long been a fan of Natchez - "The loveliest town in the South" - and that "it was his help to promote the concept of a film festival in Natchez. Besides, he joked, if he can eventually land more film companies to make movies in Mississippi, "I don't have to go so far from home to work anymore."

More than two years in the making, the first film celebra-

tion will take place in 2001 at the highly acclaimed Natchez Literary Celebration expands to embrace cinema and film.

"We're simply going to 'marry' our conference a little bit," said Carolyn Vance Smith, who helped build the conference 11 years ago. "If that is the way so many people begin - doing as well as hearing" - that the combination of a film festival with the existing literary celebration was deemed a natural fit by the organizers, who include English-Lincoln Community College, the Natchez

National Historical Park, Mississippi Department of Archives and History and Alcorn State University.

And while Smith admits she was a bit overwhelmed when Brown first suggested the partnership - "Markus and I want to call on the Bureau for Christmas and Smith said, 'So don't I want you to do something,'" she joked - a meeting with executives at Disney studios in California opened her eyes to the possibilities.

See Film, B4



2000
page 3 part 2

Film

Continued from B4

"They were extremely supportive," she said. "And, they said, 'We don't want you to do another film festival when we want you to do it celebrate the writers of film."

And, as Brown said, the Natchez concept - with chief supporter McRaney in the lead - had already taken its first concrete, concrete meeting with Disney executives instead. "We spent two weeks" with the chairman of Disney studios and two film people - and when we left them we knew we had the authority of a hit. The deal was to come back and with the community ... that is marry the film festival to the literary celebration may be a workable idea."

With that, the partnership was cemented and co-sponsors began to develop a program that will allow lower prominent use of film in the celebration.

While many of the past celebrations have included films, the new Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration will look to diversify film as an art form, particularly films by Southern writers, or set in the South, or even spring, in Smith said, "Southern stories."

Paul Nelson, a New Orleans based event organizer and promoter, will work with the celebration to first raise, help to network and develop the film aspects. Smith said tentative plans include trying to produce a film at the beginning of the festival and wrap-up of the film festival event with a showing of a film.

The festival will also be expected to last February to early March to accommodate schools and students.

More details about the birth of will come later, Smith said.

The Natchez Democrat

Sunday, December 5, 1999

Serving Natchez, Vidalia and the Miss-Low

www.natchezdemocrat.com

Natchez, Mississippi

\$1.50

City officials optimistic about support for film festival

By KERRY WHIPPLE
The Natchez Democrat

"If it's not on the page, it's not on the stage."

That message from film producers gives a group of Natchez officials hope that the city will be able to establish a Southern film festival, most likely named to the current Natchez Literary Celebration, held each June.

While plans are still preliminary — the literary celebration steering committee would have to give its approval — "there is great potential, great enthusiasm," said Carolyn Vance Smith, one of the founders of the literary celebration.

Smith, along with Mayor Larry L. "Butch" Brown, Visitors Services Coordinator Connie Thornton and

Convention and Visitors Bureau Public Relations Director Laura Godfrey, met with a group of about 60 film producers, talent agents and directors last week at a Los Angeles reception hosted by the Mississippi Film Commission. They also met separately with Disney Studios executives and actor Gerald McRaney.

Brown said the response to the idea of a film and literary festival was positive.

"The first thing Gerald McRaney said is that we don't want to take something that had a very good purpose and turn it into a media festival," he said.

What would set Natchez's festival apart from "about

300 other film festivals," Smith said, is the educational angle.

**"If you don't have
a good writer,
you don't have
a good film."**

CAROLYN VANCE SMITH
MANAGER, LITERARY
CELEBRATION 661-704-4499

Natchez's festival would continue the literary celebration's tradition of holding seminars and workshops that allow writers to discuss their craft, she said.

The film festival would also draw on what the literary celebration draws on — the state's long history of talented writers.

"If you don't have a good writer, you don't have a good film," Smith said.

Brown said the media executives' support puts a solid reputation behind the idea of the literary and film festival.

"I think if you have the support of these media executives it sends a message to the industry and the Screen Writers Guild," he said.

Although city officials haven't yet asked for it, that support could also turn into dollars behind the film festival.

And the celebration would draw more tourists, Brown said, especially those focused on filmmaking and writing.

Smith plans to meet with the literary celebration steering committee this week to present plans for the addition of the film aspect.

If the committee approves the idea, the film and writers celebration would still be a year and a half to two and a half years away, she said.

1991

The NLC began
June 1991, Co-Lit
and the National Post
Service began the
Natchez Literary
Celebration, which in
its 10 years, has won
national cultural
awards and attracted
internationally famous
writers and lecturers.



Special Collector's Edition * 8-Weeks, Dec. 3, 1999

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Start off your week with good news

With the Christmas season now in full swing we'd like to pause to remember some of the good news from our community last week.

■ Hats off to the organizers of all three Christmas parades that rolled through the Miss-Lou this weekend. And fortunately parade participants from all three were lucky enough to get good weather in which to perform. Such beautiful displays should warm the Christmas spirit in all of us.

■ Behind all of the glitz and glamour of the parades, dozens of other folks are working to make Christmas a little better for those in our community who aren't as fortunate. Several programs – from the Natchez Junior Auxiliary's Angel Tree to the Salvation Army's many holiday efforts to the Children's Christmas Tree Fund – offer ways in which we can all volunteer our time and our resources to make the holiday special for someone else. Please help these and other such programs in whatever way you can.

■ Natchez Police haven't had to use the city's new daytime curfew law since it was begun Nov. 1. Regardless of whether the lack of teens on the street can be attributed to the threat of the new law or simply the cooler temperatures, it's still encouraging that less children seem to be roaming the streets. We hope it's a trend that continues.

■ City tourism leaders headed to Los Angeles this week in an effort to garner support for a proposed Southern film festival that may be produced in conjunction with the highly-successful Natchez Literary Celebration. The plan may bring one more jewel to the cultural crown of Natchez.

We hope your week is filled with lots of good news for you and your family.

Opinion

The Natchez Democrat

Monday, December 6, 1999

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The Natchez Democrat

Wednesday, December 15, 1999

Serving Natchez, Vidalia and the Miss-Less

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50 cents

Board delays awarding bid for community center work

By KERRY WHIPPLE
The Natchez Democrat

Construction on the city's new community center could be slightly delayed because bids on the project came in over what officials hoped to budget.

The lowest base bid turned in for the project was \$561,252, with options for additions and deductions.

But in preliminary plans for the entire convention center complex, the mayor and board have said they hoped the community center would cost about \$500,000.

"We want the architects to evaluate (the bids) and make sure all of them fit the specifications," said Mayor Larry

L. "Buck" Brown. "And we'll look at some options for financing."

Brown said the board may call for meeting later this month to resolve the issue so that construction isn't delayed long.

The community center, to be located in the post-World War II Service Motor Co. building on Franklin Street, is one third of the convention center complex. The complex also includes a new convention center and a renovated city auditorium.

The contract for construction of the community center

is 120 days, Brown said that would push completion to April 1 if a bid had been awarded Tuesday.

"We want the architects to evaluate the bids and make sure all of them fit the specifications."

Mayor Larry L. "Buck" Brown

"We want to get it up as soon as possible," he said.

The city is authorized to sell bonds for up to \$12 million for the entire project.

Preliminary plans have called for the city to spend about \$9 million on the convention center, to be located on a block between Main and Franklin and Canal and Wall streets, and about \$1.5 million on the renovation of the city auditorium.

Wagoner & Associates are architects for both the community center and auditorium, and are joining with H&H Architects of Jackson to design the convention center.

The board of aldermen also agreed to a construction management agreement with Capobianco Construction Co. of Water Valley.

Under the agreement, Capobianco will manage the general contractor for the convention center construction and the city auditorium renovation.

"We believe it will bring the city some savings," City Attorney Walter Brown said.

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The 11th Annual Natchez Literary Celebration presents:

The Sacred South:

WRITINGS FROM THE BIBLE BELT

June 1-3, 2000 - Natchez, Mississippi

The award-winning event includes lectures by authors and scholars; the play, "The Scopes Trial"; films; tours; book signings; exhibits and much more. Most events are free or low-cost.



For information and tickets: For statewide travel information
call 1-800-WARMEST
The Scopes Trial and
MISSISSIPPI
www.colin.cc.ms.us/nlc

This event is partially funded by the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development and the Mississippi Humanities Council. Sponsors are Cypress-Lincoln Community College, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Natchez National Historical Park and Alcorn State University.

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March 17

Tenth Annual Krewe of Killarney St. Patrick's Day Parade
Annual rolling parade beginning in front of St. Mary's Basilica (Main
Street) and continues to the Bluff. 601-442-4895

March 25-26

12th Annual Natchez Powwow
Food, arts and crafts, and inter-tribal general dancing.
601-446-6502 or 800-647-6724.

April 8-9

Spring Flea Market
Pat Bond at 601-445-8201.

April 14-16

Natchez Bluffs Blues Fest
Celebrates the Blues! Includes performances in local clubs
Friday night and public performances in
Memorial Park on Saturday. 601-442-2888.

April 30-May 27

Natchez Open Arts Festival
10th Anniversary! Margaret Martin Performing Arts Center.
For ticket information call the
Natchez Ticket Shop at 601-446-6343 or 800-647-6724.

May 3-7

Joe Fortunato Classic Golf Tournament
Proceeds donated to scholarship fund for local scholar athletes.
Kick-off Reception May 5th, play May 6 & 7th.
Duncan Park Golf Course. 601-445-0042.

May 14

Arts in the Park
Arts, music, food and a sidewalk chalk contest.
Held from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. in Memorial Park. 601-442-2929.

May 19-20

Miss-Lou Relay for Life
Raising money for the American Cancer Society.
Vidalia side Riverfront.
6 p.m. Survivor Reception/7 p.m. - 7 a.m. Relay.
Cindy Dillon 601-446-1436 or Kathy Prosser 601-445-2679.

May 20

St. Jude Benefit Golf Tournament
A four player scramble to benefit St. Jude Hospital.
Kret Blanton 601-442-2999.

May 26-27

Adams County Sheriff's Rodeo
For more information call the
Adams County Sheriff's Department 601-442-2752.

June 1-3

Eleventh Annual Natchez Literary Celebration
"The Sacred South: Writings From the Bible Belt"
601-446-1298

June 2-4

AMSOUTH Cancer Tennis Tournament
601-445-1589.

June 7-11

Natchez Little Theatre presents "South Pacific"
Rogers & Hammerstein's musical of WWII soldiers stationed
on a Pacific island. Natchez Little Theatre.
For reservations call 601-446-6345 or 800-647-6724.

Thursday, February 17, 2000

SCIVES.

OUR OPINION

Literature, film fest a 'natural evolution'

Gerald McRaney's native Mississippi accent takes over when he offers this wisdom: "If it ain't on the page, it ain't on the stage."

Simply put, but profound in terms of realizing the importance of writers in the making of great plays or great films.

And, aptly put when trying to better explain the link between literature and film that has led to the creation of the Natchez Literary and Cinema Celebration.

Set to begin in 2001, the celebration is an expansion of the highly acclaimed Natchez Literary Celebration. And while film has long been a part of the festival, a new focus on linking what McRaney describes as "what has become the major art form of the 20th Century and probably will be the major art form of the 21st Century" and the enduring classics of literature – from good writing to good storytelling – is a natural evolution.

The Natchez Literary Celebration, under the adept leadership of Carolyn Vance Smith, has brought national praise to Natchez and delighted and enlightened the thousands of attendees each year. In addition, it has set a new standard for literary studies and celebrations by weaving a uniquely Southern bent through all it does.

The cinema celebration has the same potential for greatness – by celebrating Southern writers, Southern actors, even Southern stories.

More important, by building on an existing success, the cinema festival can easily find its niche and its market ... adding yet another dimension to the popularity of Natchez.

Ultimately, this new celebration could put Southern talents on the forefront – of the page, the stage, even the sound stage ... and in the national spotlight once again.

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Co-Lin, Alcorn moving ahead on multi-million dollar project

By ANGELIA McKEY
N-Sights staff

On several fronts, the future of Copiah-Lincoln Community College's Natchez Campus looks bright.

The reason: Co-Lin and Alcorn State University have developed a partnership to spend upwards of \$20 million in the next three years on new facilities, staff and programs.

Groundwork has been laid for the construction and development of a fine arts center to be jointly owned by Co-Lin and Alcorn.

In addition, Alcorn is seeking money for a building to house its business school.

Both projects have been approved by the Mississippi Institutes for Higher Learning and funding - about \$16 million - is being sought from the Mississippi Legislature this session.

"It is rare that a community college and university work so closely to plan, build, and operate a facility," said Natchez Dean Ronnie Nettles.

"We are very committed to the fine arts facility in Natchez," said Dr. Clinton Benson, president of Alcorn State. "We think this is very novel to have a university and a community college working together as partners."

The expenditure by Alcorn would be another in a series of projects in Natchez financed by the school, which is based in Lorman.

Most recently, Alcorn built the dormitories across from Co-Lin. Co-Lin shares space in the dormi-



N-Sights staff photo

Representatives from Co-Lin meet recently with local legislators to discuss the proposed fine arts center and other legislative issues. From left are State Sen. Bob Dearing, D-Natchez behind Dr. Paul Johnson, dean of the college; Michael Tanner, Co-Lin business manager; Dr. Howell C. Garner, Co-Lin president; State Rep. Andrew Ketchings, R-Natchez, and Natchez Attorney Walter Brown, a former state legislator.

tories.

Alcorn, along with other institutions for Higher Learning in Mississippi, are engaged in a racial diversification effort as the result of a federal court order about four years ago (the *Ayers* case) that stipulated the state's traditionally black and traditionally white universities denied minorities an equal chance at a quality education.

In addition, the two schools are planning to initiate a two-plex-two program to allow Natchez students a chance to transfer to Alcorn for bachelor's degrees in

education and business.

Alcorn already offers a master's in business administration.

"Our MBA program got off to a good start. In three years, our enrollment has been excellent," Brinson said. The master's program at Alcorn has about 60 students enrolled, but classes are being held in the nursing classrooms.

The \$10 million business administration school is scheduled to be built next to the Cora Bahart School of Nursing.

Legislation to construct, equip, and furnish the proposed fine arts

center is being considered by the Mississippi House and Senate.

Legislation also has been submitted to change state law to allow the two schools to jointly own and operate the fine arts center, which would be the first project its kind.

State Sen. Bob Dearing, D-Natchez, has introduced the plans to the Senate, which State Rep. Andrew Ketchings, R-Natchez, is heading up the effort in the House.

A committee with representatives from Alcorn and Co-Lin is working with the architect and personnel from the State Bureau

for Buildings and Grounds, to develop preliminary plans for the center.

"It is likely the facility will have a 600-seat auditorium with enhanced lighting and sound, a tiered classroom for lectures and small recitals, two or three multi-use classrooms, an exhibit area, office space, art classrooms/studios, and a staging area for catering," Nettles said.

Nettles adds, "For Co-Lin, the facility will allow us to expand our current course offerings and develop courses in other areas like art. We will also have a location to conduct graduation exercises and host the popular Natchez Literary Celebration."

"The fine arts facility is a continuation of our partnership with Copiah-Lincoln to seek more educational opportunities in Natchez," Brinson said.

Dr. Howell Garner, Co-Lin president, said, "The Fine Arts project is on track to be completed sometime in the year 2003, barring unforeseen circumstances. We are certainly excited about this new facility and about the prospect of adding more fine arts courses, performances and productions to our current offerings at the Natchez campus."

Brinson said he believes the project will put Natchez on the map in terms of fine arts programs and education, and will provide an economic shot in the arm to the region by employing staff and instructors, attracting audiences, other educators, and possibly business.

NLC to showcase religions

N-Sights staff

Intertwined with the deepest roots in Southern soil, culture and character is the faith of the Southerner.

During the 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration, June 1-3, 2000, in Natchez, Miss., that faith will be the focus. A panorama of religion in the South will be explored - from "Hill of the Southeastern Indians to Methodist circuit riders; from Jews to Catholics, from Pentecostals to Episcopalians.

On tap are serious lectures and humorous remarks by noted authors and speakers, tours of

historic homes, buildings and sites, a gospel choir concert, the play, "The Scopes Evolution Trial," and Robert Duvall's film, "The Apostle."

The celebration also features the annual presentation of the Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award to Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Beth Henley of Los Angeles and historian David G. Sansing of The University of Mississippi.

Entitled "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt," the celebration will be both informative and fun.

"Our lectures and programs are once again high-quality and

enriching," said Carolyn Vance Smith, co-chair, and NLC founder. "There will be something for just about everyone."

Most of the events are free, while others range from \$10 to \$30.

The NLC is sponsored by Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Natchez National Historical Park and Alcorn State University. The event is partially funded by the Mississippi Humanities Council and the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development.



Co-Chairs for the 2000 Natchez Literary Celebration are, from left, Bob Dodson, superintendent of the Natchez National Historical Park; Carolyn Vance Smith, of Co-Lin; Emma Blissett, of Alcorn State University, and James Barnett, of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

City gets MDOT grant to add two buses to transit fleet

By KERRY WHIPPLE
The Natchez Democrat

The City of Natchez may have two new buses by the end of next month thanks to a grant from the Mississippi Department of Transportation.

The buses, each about \$80,000, will be smaller versions of the bright green "poodle buses" used for city buses, said Natchez Mayor Larry L. "Butch" Brown. The city hasn't decided whether the new buses will replace the city's now-impoverished fleet, which have been in service for about five years, Brown said.

Natchez Senior Citizen Multi-Purpose Center Director Sabrina Bentley, who also oversees the city's transit system, said aldermen Tuesday that the buses could be delivered by the end of May.

The end of the project has grown less complicated for the city since new ones, Bentley said, that the city could decide to sell them and make at least as much as the city paid for them.

Natchez

The new buses will be slightly smaller than the green buses but will have an improved braking system — something Brown said will help if buses use steep roads like Silver Street and Roth's Hill Road, which is scheduled to be rebuilt.

In other business Tuesday, the board:

■ Accepted the city's audit report from independent auditor Billy Gilson.

Gilson told aldermen in their finance committee meeting prior to the regular board meeting that the audit was clean with the exception of "historical record-keeping of fixed assets."

The finding is not related to current record-keeping, Gilson said. It refers to older assets — including buildings such as city hall, which need to be re-evaluated. The records of the city are in great order, he said. "I applaud the mayor and board of aldermen and city clerk and her staff, and in

particular the department heads."

Alderman Sam Stedman said the process of reappraising some of the city's older public properties could be lengthy and expensive. "We've got to go back and establish a basis for

properties at the time they were built," she said. "It is expensive, it's very time-consuming, and it's not going to come cheap."

■ Awarded bids for furnishings — including chairs and tables — at the new

community center on Blankenship's of Natchez for \$17,972.96. The community center is scheduled to be completed next month. The first room there will be the Natchez Literary Celebration in June.

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The 11th Annual Natchez Literary Celebration presents:

The Sacred South: WRITINGS FROM THE BIBLE BELT

June 1-3, 2000 - Natchez, Mississippi

The award-winning event includes lectures by authors and scholars; the play, "The Scopes Trial"; films; tours; book signings; exhibits and much more. Most events are free or low-cost.



For information and tickets:
1-601-446-6345
1-800-647-6724
www.colin.cc.ms.us/slc

This event is partially funded by the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development and the Mississippi Humanities Council. Sponsors are Capital-Louisiana Community College, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Natchez National Historical Park and Alcorn State University.

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The Natchez Democrat

April 26, 2000

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City asks for state OK on long-term leases

By KERRY WHITTLE

The Natchez Democrat

Natchez officials will introduce legislation today to get approval for long-term leases on several properties along the riverfront downtown.

City Attorney Walter Brown said the long-term lease approval gives the city some leverage in negotiating with potential developers, specifically with anyone interested in putting a hotel across from the new convention center.

"This is another tool for us to develop properties along the riverfront," Brown said.

The legislation is needed because the mayor and board of aldermen normally aren't allowed to enter into leases longer than their term of office.

The local and private legislation will allow the city to enter leases on the properties listed - the potential hotel site, the area on either side of Roth Hill Road, the old Isaac Jones lot along the river, and two Krosson Picnic sites on top of the hill and one under the hill - for no more than 40 years. The Krosson Picnic Factory lots were donated to the city by the Krosson family.

Mayor Larry L. "Boss" Brown said he and other city officials have been negotiating seriously with two possible hotel developers for the site between Canal and Broadway streets across from the convention center site.

Natchez

"We have two ongoing discussions with two developers," he said. "Hopefully we'll be able to make a choice by next month."

In other convention center news, architect Johnnie Weycaster updated aldermen on the three convention center-complex projects - the convention center itself, the renovation of the city auditorium and the community center.

Weycaster said he expects the community center to be completed in time for its first major event, the Natchez Literary Celebration in early June. "I estimate it's about 95 percent complete," Weycaster said.

The community center is located in the old Service Motor Co. building on Franklin Street, across from the convention center site.

The board is scheduled to receive bids on construction for the auditorium in mid-May, Weycaster said.

And as for the convention center, the last building on the site will be able to come down soon. The accounting firm Switzer, Hopkins and Minge will begin moving today from its building on the site to a new building across the street, Weycaster said.

He said the scheduled completion for the convention center would likely be at least by summer 2001.

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Alcorn joins NLC as co-sponsor

Special to The Democrat

Alcorn State University has become the fourth co-sponsor for the Natchez Literary Celebration, an annual conference which has won numerous national and regional awards.

"Alcorn State University is proud to become a co-sponsor," said Emma Blissett, Alcorn English instructor who will serve as one of four co-chairmen. "Doing so helps the university to further realize a meaningful relationship with the communities surrounding it."

Blissett said the partnership fits well with Alcorn's mission. "The NLC provides an entity that allows the Alcorn family to tie its roots with those southern traditions emphasized through literary and cinematic vehicles," Blissett said.

The NLC this year will be June 1-3 with the theme, "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt." Lectures, films and related events will explore the influence of spirituality on fiction, non-fiction, drama, poetry and other written works.

"I'm very pleased that Alcorn State University is joining the NLC as a partner," said Dr. Howell C. Garner, president of Copiah-Lincoln Community College. Co-Lin founded the literary celebration in 1990 and is a co-sponsor along with the Natchez National Historical Park and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Co-chairmen with Blissett are Carolyn Vance Smith, NLC founder and former Co-Lin instructor and public relations director; Bob Dodson, superintendent of the historical park; and Jim Barnett of the Department of Archives and History.



Photo courtesy Copiah-Lincoln Community College

Natchez Literary Celebration co-chairmen are, from left, Bob Dodson, superintendent of Natchez National Historic Park; Carolyn Vance Smith, NLC founder; Emma Blissett, Alcorn English instructor; and Jim Barnett, Department of Archives and History.

"We welcome Alcorn as a full partner in this celebrated literary event," Garner said. "It just makes sense that we would use this opportunity to work together with our sights toward even more opportunities in the future."

Alcorn will assist in several ways, including funding, sponsoring a panel of Alcorn professors who will discuss "The Role of the African-American Church in Southern Politics and Culture," hosting a tour of historic Oakland Chapel at Alcorn's main campus in Lorman, and providing individuals to help during the celebration.

Also, Alcorn President Dr. Clinton Bristow will participate in opening ceremonies.

For many years, Alcorn and Co-

Lin have worked together on other activities, and the two institutions are planning the creation of a fine arts center at the Natchez campus.

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Eudora Welty's Country Churchyards

■ Book of photography from the 1930s goes on sale Friday

By Lori Herring

Clarion Ledger Staff Writer

If the role of the artist is to filter the chaos of reality into digestible bites of life, Eudora Welty has given us whole seven-course meals via her stories and novels.

Over the years, her writing has matured and fed us with insight, irony and humor. Welty's role as wordsmith is unassisted.

Her new book of photographs, *Country Churchyards*, showcases Welty in another role in which she is no stranger: photographer.

Her gift for storytelling, her mischievous eye, and her interest in life's temporality are all recorded in this WP&E collection of cemetery images, gleaned from the same group of photos that comprise the previously published *Photographing One Time, One Place*.

"I think the photographs are a kind of parallel activity with her fiction," said Suzanne Marrs, longtime friend of Welty's, and archiver of Welty's photographs at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. "In her fiction, you see a concern with the power of time, the shortness of time, with the need to live fully in the urgency of time's power."

The photographs do seem tangential to Welty's fiction, and in this regard, editors from University Press of Mississippi have selected passages from her writings to accompany the photos.

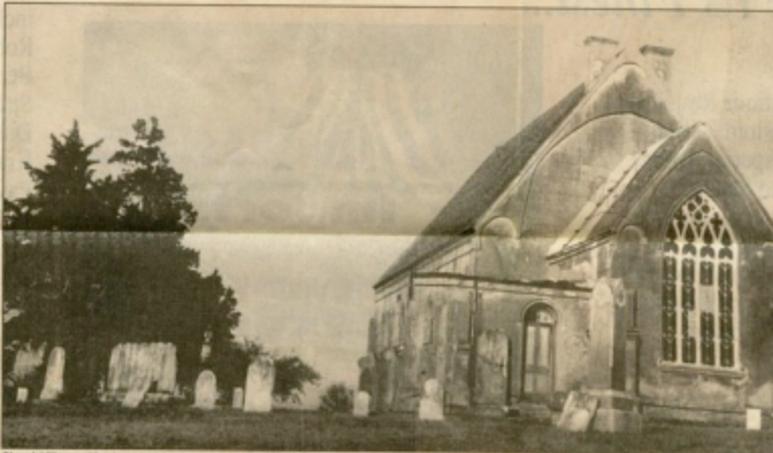
"(Welty) would say that the same impulse stimulates artists, whether the artist is taking pictures or writing fiction," said Baxter Cole, another long-time friend of Welty's and University Press instigator of the book. "Welty is a writer whose camera was often with her. She took pictures of what we would say are ordinary things — but like her fiction, they're magical."

The photographs exude a sense of something not visible except by perception. Beautiful and luminous, they give Welty's readers a look at the world through her lens.

"What comes through to us here and in her fiction is a sense of reverence for life's mysteries, death being one of those," wrote another esteemed Southern writer, Elizabeth Spencer, in *Abundance of Angels*, the introduction to *Country Churchyards*.

"Her wonderful eye catches, just as her fiction does, the reverent as well as the ironic," Spencer added later by telephone.

Observe the many images of statuary



Church Hill, near Natchez, 1935-36



Undiscovered monument, 1935-36

angels, vigilant and earnest in watch over the dead. See images of churches become organic with the landscape of death, one in particular points toward heaven from Earth like a trail marker or roadway sign: Straight ahead.

Consider, too, the images of babies asleep on concrete pillows of tombs;

images of statuary animals looking wide-eyed at the camera in expressions of surprise; and awe.

"It's a beautiful book," said Patti Carr Black, former director of the Old Capitol Museum, a division of the department of Archives and History, where the collection of Welty's manuscripts and photos now resides. "It's very quiet and very lovely."

"But I must add that people who know Eudora will also find it fun. She took photos of the monuments that struck her as amusing or ironic in some way. It's a cultural study."

As Spencer notes in her introduction, the question "Where do you bury?" is loaded with cultural and familial significance, and Welty's art, ever-vigilant in its symbolism of the South, shows us cemeteries in Jackson, Beaudin, Port Gibson, Utica, Madison County, Crystal Springs, Vicksburg, Rodney, the Natchez Trace area and Church Hill.

"These kind of stereotypical cemetery emblems express a kind of Southern inlaid she seemed to seize upon," said Cole. "You may think, Why did she take this picture? But you read the pictures carefully, and you know."

Country Churchyards (University Press of Mississippi, \$35 hardback, \$15.00 limited) will be in stores Friday.



Port Gibson cemetery monument, Graeme, post-1936



Port Gibson cemetery monument, "Mutt," 1935-36



The church, and its role in Southern history and writings, are explored throughout the upcoming Natchez Literary Celebration, which is themed "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt." Below, stained glass windows such as this one are found throughout Trinity Episcopal Church, which will host a lecture about the role of religious structures in the history of southwest Mississippi. Historic Christ Episcopal Church in Church Hill, above, is one of those historic structures, and it will be open for touring as part of the upcoming literary festival.

Sacred history

Annual Literary Celebration offers chance to explore religious structures' role in Southern history, writings

From staff reports

The South's history is firmly rooted in its architecture — its homes, its buildings, its sense of place. So it's no surprise in a culture that embraces religion that religious structures — from churches to Indian burial mounds — should form the cornerstones of history and learning.

Several of those structures will be highlighted in the upcoming Natchez Literary Celebration, set for June 1-3 with the theme, "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt."

Inside the lecture hall, people will hear programs by nationally known writers and scholars. Outside the lecture hall, those programs will be enhanced by visits to related sites and buildings.

"The Natchez area is full of wonderful physical resources which always enrich the conference theme," said Carolyn Vance Smith, founder of the Celebration. "This year, more than ever, many of these resources will be used."

Headquarters this year is the newly renovated Natchez City Center, 215 Franklin St. Lectures will take place there during the daytime June 1 and June 2, 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Away from headquarters, the following sites, all of

which relate to the conference theme, will be used:

- Holy Family Catholic Church, corner of St. Catherine Street and Orange Avenue, a 19th-century structure; 8:15 p.m., June 1, a concert by the Holy Family Choir and a program by Pulitzer Prize nominee Clifton Taulbert of Tulsa, Okla.
- Temple B'Nai Israel, 213 S. Commerce St., a location on Judas in the South by Marcie Cohen Ferris, the Richard Wright Literary Excellence Awards ceremony and honoring playwright Beth Henley and historian David G. Sansing; 9-11:30 a.m., June 2
- Trinity Episcopal Church, 301 S. Commerce St., a lecture about historic religious structures in Southwest Mississippi by Mimi Miller of Natchez; 1:30 p.m., June 2
- A tour of Emerald Mound (Southeastern Indians' ceremonial mound, 1400); Christ Episcopal Church (1820) and Richard Plantation (1848, built by founder of Citrus Church, both at Church Hill; and Oakland Memorial Chapel (1830) at Alcorn State University, Lorman; 2-6 p.m., June 3

Most programs are free. Tickets for the concert and program on June 1, for the play on June 2 and June 3, and for the tour on June 3 are available by calling 1-601-446-6345 or 1-800-647-6724.



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BLUFF CITY "WHERE THERE'S A WILL, THE PEOPLE PERISH."

Mrs. Carolyn Vance Smith
11 Du-Lin Circle
Ox-Fit Community College
Natchez, MS 39120

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



albert raboteau



clifton taubert

SPIRITUALITY OF THE SOUTH TO BE EXPLORED DURING THE 11TH ANNUAL NATCHEZ LITERARY CELEBRATION, June 1-3, 2000

Spirituality of the South will be explored both inside the lecture hall and outside it during the 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration, June 1-3, 2000. The theme of this event is "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt."

With headquarters at the newly

renovated Natchez City Center, 215 Franklin St., the conference lectures are free. Meals, a concert, a play, and a tour away from the City Center are low cost.

Copresenters of the conference are Alcorn State University, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and Natchez National Historical Park.

"We are delighted to offer a top-quality mixture of a dozen programs by writers and musicians from Natchez and Southwest Mississippi as well as writers and educators from across the country," said Emma Blissett, Celebration co-chairman of Alcorn State University.

One June 1, at 3 p.m., is a free lecture by Dr. Albert Raboteau, a native Mississippian who is now a Princeton University professor. His talk, "The Meaning of Slave

Suffering," will be at the City Center. Raboteau is author of *Slave Religion: The "Bible" Institution" in the American South*.

That afternoon, the Natchez Museum of African-American History and Culture will host a 10th Anniversary Open House, tour, and reception at the museum, 301 Main Street. The cost is \$10.00.

On June 1, at 8:15 p.m., the Holy Family Catholic Church Gospel Choir, directed by Alvin Shelby, will present a gospel concert. It will be followed by a program featuring Clifton Taubert of *Tuba*, Pulitzer Prize nominee and author of *Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored* and *Eggs Madon of the Heart*. This event is \$10.00.

On June 2, at 11:30 a.m., four Alcorn educators will present a

free panel discussion called "The Role of the African-American Church in Southern Politics and Culture." On the panel are Dr. Bernard Cannon, Dr. Donald Lee, Dr. Alpha Morris, and Dr. Rudolph Watson.

On June 3, from 2-4 p.m., a tour of four historic religious sites will take place, one of which is Historic Oakland Memorial Chapel on the campus of Alcorn State University at Lumban. Other sites to be visited are Christ Episcopal Church and Richmond Plantation at Church Hill and Donald Mound near the Natchez Trace Parkway.

Tickets are still available for the concert/program June 1 (\$10), the tour June 3 (\$30), a play June 2 and June 3, "The Scopes Evolution Trial" at the Adams County Courthouse (\$15), a

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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
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ROGER F. WICKER
MISSISSIPPI

May 11, 2000

Mrs. Carolyn Smith
270 Foster Mound Road
Natchez, Mississippi 39120-9065

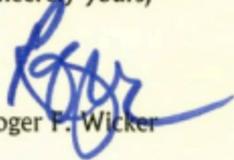
Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for stopping by my office during your visit to Washington. I am glad we had the chance to visit. I appreciate your taking time to share your comments and concerns with me regarding issues of importance to the Mississippi Humanities Council, as well as the upcoming Natchez Literary celebration.

I hope our paths cross again soon. In the meantime, please call on me if I can ever be of assistance.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,


Roger F. Wicker

RFW/bta

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The Natchez Democrat

May 9, 2000

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City prepares open house for new community center

By KERRY WHIFFLE

The Natchez Democrat

Area residents will have a chance to view the new community center — the Natchez City Center — at an open house Wednesday.

The \$480,000 renovation of the old Service Motor Co. building — a 1946 Buick dealership — is scheduled to be finished, having any final touch-ups, today, said Walter Tipton, director of

Natchez

for Natchez Office of Tourism Management.

"That's what we call just in time," he said.

Architect Dan Dillard of Waycaster & Associates said the community center is "substantially complete," although there may be some additional items needed, such as paint touch-ups.

The city center will be the first finished product in a three-part Convention Center Complex. The Natchez Board of Aldermen voted late last year to borrow \$12 million in bond funds for the community center, renovation of the Natchez City Auditorium and construction of a new downtown convention center.

The board of aldermen has begun to

advertise for bids for the auditorium renovation and expects to let bids on convention center construction later this summer.

Tipton said the public is invited to the open house to tour the city center.

"This is something we're doing to introduce the community to that facility so that people who are interested in visiting it can see

quickly," Tipton said.

The first scheduled event in the city center is the Natchez Literary Celebration, which will be held June 1-3.

Tipton said 10 other events are already scheduled, including a food and home craft show in July and two wedding receptions.

Anyone interested in reserving the Natchez City Center should call 480-6343.

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ON THE RIVER

Natchez Literary Celebration ready to roll

Special to The Democrat

"Readin', 'Ritin' and Rejoicin'!" That's what the Three R's stand for in Natchez. So says the Natchez Literary Celebration founder and co-chairman Carolyn Vance Smith of Copiah-Lincoln Community College in Natchez.

"Since it began in 1990, the Literary Celebration has attracted hundreds — sometimes thousands — of people each year," Smith said. "All of them love to read and rejoice over books."

Cost of each year's three-day literary and cultural event is very low, Smith said, because of the hard work from the four sponsoring agencies, Copiah-Lincoln, the Natchez National Historical Park, the Mississippi



The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt

► June 1-3

► For ticket information or questions call (601) 445-6245 or 800-647-6724 or write to NLC, 640 S. Canal St., Natchez, Miss. 39120

Department of Archives and Alcorn State University.

"We are also grateful for generous grants from the Mississippi Humanities Council and corporate and business donors," she said.

"Because of this, plus widespread volunteerism, we can keep our lectures free," Smith said. "And we prize all meals, trains and other special activities at low cost."

Conference co-chairmen with Smith are Robert Dodson, superintendent of the NNHP, James Barnett of the MDAH and Emma Blissett of Alcorn.

Presented each year in early June, the Natchez Literary Celebration features about a dozen plays, readings, concerts, entertainments and meals.

"The Literary Celebration proves that people hunger after top-quality conferences devoted to literature, history, and the arts," Dodson said.

And top-quality it is, according to Dr. Charles Lowery, chairman of the history department at Mississippi State University, one of many who attend each year.

"The Natchez Literary Celebration is

unique among humanities programs," Lowery said. "It is beyond question the best program I have been part of during many years of involvement in Mississippi and elsewhere.

"It is remarkably successful for several reasons: the richness of its humanities content, the happy choice of program participants and the virtually flawless execution of a carefully planned program."

The conference has won many awards, including the Governor's Award for Tourism Achievement; a Cultural Olympiad award for outstanding programming from the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games; the Most Outstanding Festival or Even in Mississippi from the Mississippi Tourism Commission; and the Public Humanities Achievement Award from the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Each year's conference deals with some general aspect of Southern history. Some of the noted speakers have been the writers Eudora Welty, Margaret Walker Alexander, William Styron, Willie Morris, Ellen Douglas, Ernest Gaines, Elizabeth

Spencer, Nikki Giovanni, Myrtle Evers-Williams and Maya Angelou; the Richard Wright scholar Michel Fabre of Paris; and the historians Robert V. Remini, David Searing, William Scarborough, John D. W. Grace, Jay Griffin, John Blassingame, Michael Wayne and Douglas Lewis.

Special events have included the dedication of the mansion Melrose and the House of William Johnson to the National Park Service, concerts by the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra and tours of nationally important historic houses.

One of the results of each NLC is the bringing together of various constituencies: young and old, male and female, scholar and student, the highly educated and the under educated, the African-American and the caucasian.

"Indeed, the Celebration is one of the few places in the Deep South where blacks and whites gather in large numbers with a common goal: to rejoice over books," Smith said.

"The Literary Celebration definitely lives up to its name each year," she said. "It is a true celebration which brings people together from all walks of life."

Historic

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Calendar of Events



Co-chairs of the Habitat for Humanity Birdhouse Auction, Fay Bright (left) and Kathy Bedenbaugh, report that they have received around 450 handmade birdhouses for the event, which takes place during the Hammond Heritage Festival May 7 (see page 24).

pieces are based on emotional responses to events in my life. I specifically use qualities of nurturing, guarding and protection. By assigning three-dimensional forms to represent emotional situations, I am able to create a 'language' in which to make my work."

Migl, one of the gallery's newest artist members and a recent Division of the Arts Artist Mini-Grant winner, will present an exhibition titled, "Spiritual Journey: Seeing the Unseen." This exhibit displays works which I painted since my move from Houston, Texas, to Baton Rouge in July 1999," says Migl. "That move was sandwiched between other major changes in my life and life-style which required serious reflection and direction. I approached the canvas as the inner sanctum, seeking, through my art, expressions of wisdom beyond words. This body of work is the result of that search—to see what was not seen, to have revealed what was hidden."

Lewis, a sculptor and an artist member from Lafayette, will exhibit his most recent figurative sculpture. He is a 1999-2000 Division of the Arts Fellowship winner.

All are invited to attend the show's free opening reception on Wednesday, May 31, from 7 pm to 9 pm. 1442 City Park Avenue. (225) 383-1470.

May 30: HISTORICAL COMMEMORATION: Confederate Memorial Day, St. Francisville, La.—An honor guard and period music will accompany this wreath-laying ceremony honoring the memories of those buried at the Locust Grove cemetery, who include Sarah Davis, daughter of former President Zachary Taylor and wife of Jefferson Davis. 2 pm–3 pm. (888) 677-2838.

May 31: CRAFTS DEMONSTRATION: Nautical Knots, Plaquemine, La.—Visitors are invited to get knotted at the Plaquemine Lock State Historic Site.

Techniques will be demonstrated for tying a variety of knots vital to life on the river in days gone by. Samples created during this program may be taken home. 10 am–noon. (877) 987-7158.

Pencil these in:

June 1–3: LITERATURE: Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt, Natchez, Miss.—Of all the entwined roots Southerners send into the soil of their homeland, the root of faith goes perhaps the deepest. During the eleventh annual Natchez Literary Celebration, that faith will be the focus. A panorama of religion in the South will be subjected to the spotlight of scholarship—from that of the Southeastern Indians to Methodist circuit riders, from Jews to Catholics, and from Pentecostals to Episcopalians.

Serious lectures and lighthearted programs by noted authors and speakers, tours of historic homes and sites, a gospel choir concert, a play entitled *The Scopes Evolution Trial* and Robert Duvall's film *The Apostle* are among events planned. Most events are free, others range from \$10 to \$30. Some twenty presenters include:

- Thomas Berg, Samford University,
- James Blackwood, founding member of the Blackwood Brothers Quartet,
- Thomas Bonner, Xavier University, author of *The Kate Chopin Companion* and *William Faulkner: The William B. Wisdom Collection*,
- Will Campbell, author of *Brother to a Dragonfly*, *Providence* and *The Stem of Jesse*,
- Richard M. Cornelius, author of *Historical Tour of the Scopes Evolution: Trial Sites in Dayton, Tennessee*,
- Bernard Cotton, Donzell Lee, Alpha Morris and Rudolph Waters of Alcorn State University, in a panel discussion of the role of the African-American church in Southern history and culture,
- Marcie Cohen Ferris, former director of the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience and author of *Southern Jewish History, Vol. II*,

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- Mary Warren Miller, preservation director of the Historic Natchez Foundation and author of *Great Houses of Natchez*,
- Clifton Taulbert of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Pulitzer Prize nominee and author of *Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored*,
- Charles Reagan Wilson of the University of Mississippi, editor of *Religion in the South, New Perspectives on Southern Religion*.

For a full schedule, or for tickets, call (800) 647-6724 or visit www.colin.cc.ms.us/nlc.

June 3: Music: Blueberry and Jazz Festival, Covington, La.—This Saturday will be a big one for lovers of all things sweet in St. Tammany Parish. For when you combine six great regional jazz and blues masters with the heavenly blueberry-based concoctions of local cooks, you can be sure you will see more than a few blue-stained grins in this crowd. And if you have never tasted blueberry beer, this is your chance!

This year's lineup consists of:

- Noon: St. Paul's Jazz Band;
- 12:30 pm: Big Daddy "O" and Hut;
- 1:30 pm: Timothea;
- 3 pm: Coffee;
- 4:45 pm: Karen Williams;
- 6:15 pm: Lenny McDaniel;
- 8 pm: this year's headliner, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown.

All day, Bogue Falaya Park is also the venue for all manner of food, fine arts and crafts booths and children's activities. Ensuring that no sense goes undernourished, a fine arts area will show off some of the stars of Covington's extraordinary arts community. Visitors can peruse some

of the paintings, sculpture, pottery, home furnishings and decorative arts that have drawn arts lovers to the vibrant St. Tammany town for years.

Advance tickets cost \$8; \$10 at the gate, with all proceeds benefiting the St. Tammany Art Association. (504) 892-8650. ♦



Photograph of Christ Episcopal Church, Church Hill, Mississippi, by Eudora Welty circa 1933. Selected from *Country Churchyards*, to be released by the University Press of Mississippi this month. Photograph from the Eudora Welty Collection —Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Opinion

The Natchez Democrat

Celebration a chance to earn education credits

For the first time ever, the Natchez Literary Celebration, June 1-3, 2000, has been approved for both lawyers and educators to earn necessary in-service education credits for attending lectures and other events.

Lawyers may earn 5.5 continuing legal education credits for attending sessions on June 2, while educators may earn 19 hours of continuing education units for attending sessions June 1-3.

We are delighted to be able to offer this golden opportunity to Mississippi lawyers and teachers. They won't have to leave southwest Mississippi to satisfy their professional educational requirements.

The Celebration's theme this year is "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt." Several sessions on June 2 relate to the Scopes evolution trial in Dayton, Tenn., where beliefs of evolutionists and creationists collided in 1925.

Many lawyers are interested in this subject because it is highly relevant today. Several recent court cases have been based on this trial and its findings.

Educators are interested in the entire program because the sessions bring them close to writers, scholars and up-to-the-minute research that they can take back to their classrooms.

Credits for CLE have been approved by



Top of the Morning
Carolyn Vance Smith

the Mississippi Commission on Continuing Legal Education, a part of the Mississippi Supreme Court. Credits for CEU have been approved by the Institute for Continuing Studies at The University of Mississippi.

Cost for lawyers seeking CLE credits is \$75.

This cost covers CLE fees as well as a special session on ethics, which will be at 1 p.m., June 2, led by Michael Harrington, chairman, Department of Philosophy, The University of Mississippi. The fee also covers admission to an original play by Gale Johnson of Dayton, "The Scopes Evolution Trial," at 8:15 p.m., June 2.

Lawyers will also attend other sessions of the Literary Celebration June 2, all of which are open free to the public. At 2 p.m. is a lecture by Richard M. Cornelius of Bryan College in Dayton, on "The Scopes Trial:

The Trial That Is Still Being Tried."

At 3:15 p.m. is a panel discussion, "Current Legal Thinking about the Issues Surrounding the Scopes Trial," by U.S. Fifth Circuit Judge E. Grady Jolly of Jackson; U.S. District Judge David C. Bramlette of Woodville; Thomas E. Berg of Cumberland School of Law, Samford University, Birmingham, Ala.; and Steven K. Green, Legal Director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Washington, D.C.

The play, which has been performed for years in the Dayton Courthouse, will take place at 8:15 p.m. both June 2 and June 3 at the Adams County Courthouse. Cast members are from Dayton.

Cost for educators seeking CEU credits is \$25. This cost covers CEU fees and admission to the play at 8:15 p.m., either June 2 or June 3.

To register for credit, checks must be made out to Natchez Literary Celebration and sent to P.O. Box 894, Natchez, MS 39121. Lawyers must include their bar number. People may also register by calling 601-446-1213 and paying by credit card.

Since space is limited, advance registration is recommended.

Carolyn Vance Smith of Copiah-Lincoln Community College is co-chairman of the Natchez Literary Celebration.

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*The 11th Annual
Natchez Literary Celebration presents:*

The
Sacred South:
WRITINGS FROM THE BIBLE BELT

June 1-3, 2000 - Natchez, Mississippi

The award-winning event includes lectures by authors and scholars; the play, "The Scopes Trial"; films; tours; book signings; exhibits and much more. Most events are free or low-cost.



For information and tickets:

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Headquarters: Natchez City Center, 215 Franklin St.

Sponsors are Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Natchez National Historical Park and Alcorn State University.

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ultimate penalty for ultimate crimes. Others were freelance, lynchings mostly designed to keep the black populace in order. But in 1923, the Florida legislature decided that the new-fangled electric chair, used to great effect in other states, would be the twentieth-century way to dispose of criminals. They duly consigned the gallows to history.

The electric chair was first used on August 6, 1890, at Auburn Prison in New York, to execute William Kemmler for hacking his girlfriend, Matilda Ziegler, to death with an ax. In another one of those pieces of fragmented appropriateness, Kemmler and Ziegler lived in Buffalo, then called "the Electric City of the Future."

At the time, George Westinghouse, inventor of AC, and Thomas Edison, champion of DC, waged a sort of industrial war over their different philosophies of electricity. Edison, trying to protect his DC electrical utility businesses, sought to prove that AC was dangerous. So in the 1880s, he had his assistants perform "demonstrations" in which they'd sit a bunch of dogs and cats on a big metal plate wired to a thousand-volt AC generator and electrocute them.

For his part, George Westinghouse refused to sell equipment to the New York prison system and even funded appeals for Kemmler on the grounds that electrocution was "cruel and unusual punishment." Yet it was a Westinghouse AC generator—bought on the sly by third parties probably instigated by Edison, who was himself anti-death penalty—that killed Kemmler.

Having declared the noose out of fashion, Florida, too, embraced the chair. Yet, like all killings in the name of justice in the South, electrocution had its racial element. From 1924 to 1961, two thirds of the 196 men who died in the electric chair were black. In 1972 the Supreme Court decided that the death penalty had been applied arbitrarily and unfairly, and so struck it down. Other states scrambled to rewrite laws that would kill people less cruelly in the gas chamber or with lethal injection. But not Florida. Florida clung to the chair

like a drunk to the curb, and in 1979, when the courts allowed states to recommence capital punishment, the state strapped down a white man, John Spenkelink. He was given a couple of shots of whiskey, then the state executed him in front of thirty-two witnesses. It was not quick; it took three jolts to kill him.

Here is the story: Florida has executed white men for killing white men; Florida has executed white men for killing white women; Florida has executed black men for killing white men, or white women, or black men. Florida has never executed a white man for killing a black man—or woman.

THE PICTURES ARE IN COLOR: Tiny Davis's ash-gray face is uncovered, showing patches of skin the hue of bruised violets. His eyes are black and empty, and dark blood stains his chin, his neck, and his chest. Lawyers for Thomas Provenzano, next on the governor's to-die list, displayed the thirty-five millimeter shots to demonstrate the



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WRITINGS FROM THE
BIBLE BELT

June 1-3, 2000 - Natchez, Mississippi

Lectures by authors,
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*This event is partially funded by the Mississippi
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Archives and History, the Natchez National
Historical Park and Alcorn State University.*

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The Natchez Democrat, Keith Stearns

Thomas C. Berg is reflected in a video camera Friday at the Natchez community center as he and other panelists at the Natchez Literary Celebration participate in a discussion on the continued controversy of the Scopes evolution trial. The literary celebration continues today.

Debate shows Scopes themes still alive

By R. MILLER

Special to The Democrat

The first session was called "The Scopes Trial: The Trial that is Still Being Tried." The session that followed only proved true the title of its predecessor.

Countless books have been written on the Scopes trial, which, in 1925, challenged Tennessee's anti-evolution law. The trial even inspired a play, "Inherit the Wind."

"But 'Inherit the Wind' isn't a historical account of the Scopes trial," said Richard Cornelius.

And, he added, the playwrights never intended it to be.

Cornelius, an English professor at Bryant College in Dayton, Tenn., was the speaker for the first afternoon session at the 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration. The second session, "Current Legal Thinking about Issues Surrounding the Scopes Trial," was manned by a panel of legal experts in the fields of religious speech and church and state law.

Both sessions coincided with this year's celebration theme of "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt." The celebration began Thursday and will conclude today with events scheduled in the Natchez community center. The highlights of today's lineup will be the presentation of the Richard Wright Literary Excellence Awards to playwrights Beth Henley and author and historian David Sansing. The ceremony will take place at 10:30 a.m. with a book signing to follow at Temple B'nai Israel.

Friday's afternoon sessions, meantime, generated questions and stirred some debate among audience members.

Cornelius provided history and background of the Scopes trial, explaining that it was

Today's schedule

- **9 a.m.:** Shalom, Val An Episcopist of Jewish Life in the American South, March 2000. Ferns, former director of the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, at Temple B'nai Israel, 203 South Commerce St.
- **10 a.m.:** Reception hosted by Temple B'nai Israel at the temple, honoring William R. Ferris, chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities.
- **10:30 a.m.:** Richard Wright Literary Excellence Awards ceremony, with remarks by the award winner; playwright Beth Henley and author and historian David G. Sansing, Temple B'nai Israel.
- **1:30 p.m.:** "Historic Religious Structures in Southeast Mississippi," Mary Warren Miller, Historic Natchez Foundation, at Trinity Episcopal Church, 301 South Commerce St.
- **2-4 p.m.:** "Religious History, Religious Structures," a guided tour of religious sites in Southeast Mississippi, departing from Trinity Episcopal Church (BEO), Steps at Emerald Island on the Natchez Trace Parkway; Christ Episcopal Church, Church Hill; Richard Plantation, Church Hill; Oakland Memorial Chapel, Alcorn State University, Lorman.
- **8:15 p.m.:** Two concurrent events: "The Scopes Evolution Trial," a play, Adams County Courthouse Chancery Court Room (315); "The Apollo," a film starring Robert Duvall, at Natchez Convention and Visitor Bureau theater.



engineered by members of the Dayton community. The defendant, John Thomas Scopes, hadn't actually taught evolution in his classroom and was hired to make a case for the American Civil Liberties Union.

The idea, Cornelius said, was for Scopes to be tried in a criminal and lose his case so it could be appealed to higher courts.

"That would have given them a chance to philosophize," Cornelius said. "You can philosophize better in the higher courts."

Scopes lost and was fined \$100. The Tennessee Supreme Court later overturned Scopes' conviction.

But arguments persist, even in modern-day Natchez.

Francis Thomas C. Berg and Steven K. Green gave arguments in the second session that showed not only is the Scopes controversy still alive, but it exceeds the realms of evolution versus creationism.

Green is legal director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State in Washington, D.C. He said the debate is unnecessary. "There is no reason to have to choose one side or the other," he said. "Many religions don't see a conflict between creationism and evolution."

Still, the religious concept of creationism should not be taught in schools, just as evolution shouldn't be taught as a world view.

"To teach one religious concept would be problematic," Green said.

Students of religious faiths other than Christianity are also in schools, Green said. A problem arises when only the Christian-based creationism is taught.

Berg, a religious speech expert who teaches at Sanford University in Birmingham, Ala., said religion should not be left out of schools all together.

"I'm more concerned with religion becoming irrelevant," he said.

U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals Judge E. Grady Jolly was the panel's moderator. He has first-hand knowledge of the evolution versus creationism argument as his landmark decision in Louisiana's Edwards vs. Aguillard case shut down a state statute requiring public schools to give evolution and creationism equal time in the classroom.

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Village grounds on Saturday and Sunday.

On March 11, 1700, explorers Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, with his brother, Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, and approximately fifty French soldiers arrived at the Natchez landing. They were greeted by the Natchez Indian war chief Tattooed Serpent

who existed during Iberville's first encounter with the Natchez natives. There will be leatherworking, cooking, tomahawk and musket demonstrations, as well as other colonial and Native-American activities and crafts of the 1700s. For more information, please call Jean Simonon at the Grand Village. (601)446-6502.

"Sacred South" Theme of Natchez Literary Celebration

Writers Will Campbell and Clifton Taulbert, musician James Blackwood, and historians Charles Reagan Wilson and Randy Sparks are just a few of the featured presenters scheduled for the June 1-3

Eleventh Annual Natchez Literary Celebration. In addition to speakers on the theme "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt," awards will be presented to playwright Beth Henley and historian David

U. S. Capitol building as it exists today, with a huge central dome and prominent wing pavilions.

The current architectural historian of the United States Capitol is William C. Allen, who began his career in the Historic Preservation Division of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

Sansing. A play, concert, film, and tours of local historic churches are scheduled. Events at NLC are either free or low-cost. For special event ticket information, please call 800/647-6724 or 601/446-6345.

wrote a history of the Episcopal Church in Louisiana and published articles in *Smithsonian* and *American Heritage* magazines. During World War II Betty Carter was a policy-level researcher for the Office of War Information and later head of a radio department. "Big" Hodding died in 1972, and their two sons served as editors, consecutively, of the *DDT*. In early 1980 the family sold the newspaper to its current owners. Betty Carter remained active in community service and devoted much time and energy to the Friends of Mississippi Educational Television, UNICEF, and other causes.

Celebration, which will be launched in 2001. A contingent from the industry is expected at the 2000 NLC, which is scheduled for June 1-3.

Carolyn Vance Smith, NLC co-chair, was elected to serve on the Mississippi Humanities Council, which also awarded the NLC with a \$6,500 grant to help with NLC expenses this year.

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LITERARY CELEBRATION GAINS NEW SPONSOR, LINKS WITH MOVIE INDUSTRY

The Natchez Literary Celebration reached two major plateaus during the past three months.

The first was gaining a fourth co-sponsor, Alcorn State University, which will join Co-Lin, the National Park Service and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. ASU's co-chair is Emma Blissett, instructor of English. ASU has committed financial and personnel resources to the literary celebration. Also, ASU will host a tour of the historic Oakland Memorial Chapel, and Dr. Clinton Bristow, ASU president, is scheduled to participate in the opening welcome. The college also will present a special panel, "The Role of the African-American church in Southern Politics and Culture."

The second plateau is a partnership between the NLC and the movie-producing industry to create *The Natchez Literary and Film*

Natchez Literary Celebration announces program for annual June event

Special to The Democrat

Intertwined with the deepest roots in Southern soil, culture and character is the faith of the Southerner.

During the 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration, June 1-3, 2000, in Natchez, that faith will be the focus. A panorama of religion in the South will be explored—from that of the Southeastern Indians to Methodist circuit riders, from Jews to Catholics, from Pentecostals to Episcopalians.

On tap at the event, called "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt," are serious lectures and humorous remarks by noted authors and speakers, a gospel-choir concert, the play, "The Scopes Evolution Trial," and Robert Duvall's film, "The Apostle."

A special program highlight is a tour June 2 of historic religious sites, beginning at Trinity Episcopal Church in Natchez (1822), the oldest church in the historic downtown. Other sites include Christ Episcopal Church (1820) at Church Hill, some of the oldest Episcopal congregation in Mississippi, and nearby Richard Plantation, built by the founders of Christ Church and now the home of Christ Church members Ruth and Michael Banks.

Other tour stops are at Emerald Mound (1400), the ceremonial site of the Natchez Indians, and Oakland Memorial Chapel (1890) on the campus of Alcorn State University, Lumban.

The celebration also features the annual presentation of the Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award to Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Bob Henty of Los Angeles and historian David G. Sansing of The

University of Mississippi.

"Our lectures and programs are once again informative, high-quality and fun," said Carolyn Vance Smith, co-chair and NLC founder. "There will be something for just about everyone."

Most of the events are free, while others range from \$10 to \$30.

The NLC is sponsored by Capital-Lincoln Community College, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Natchez National Historical Park and Alcorn State University. The event is partially funded by the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Presenters include: Thomas Berg of Sanford University School of Law, Birmingham, Ala.; James Blackwood of Memphis, Tenn., founding member of the Blackwood Brothers Quartet; Thomas Boone of Xavier University, New Orleans, author of "The Kate Chopin Companion" and "William Faulkner: The William B. Watson Collection"; Will Campbell of Miami Lakes, Tenn., author of "Brother to a Dragonfly," "Providence" and "The Sign of Jesus";

Richard M. Carnahan of Bryan College, Dayton, Tenn., author of "Historical Tour of the Scopes Evolution: Trial Sites in Dayton, Tenn."; Bernard Cotton, Dowell Lee, Alpha Morris and Rudolph Waters of Alcorn State University, Lumban, a panel discussion of the role of the African-American church in Southern history and culture;

Alan Dennis of Troy State University, Troy, Ala., author of "Kemper County Rebel: The Civil War Diary of Robert Munton Holmes, C.S.A."; Marcie Cohen

Farris of Washington, D.C., former director of the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, Urica, and author of "Southern Jewish History, Vol. II"; Steven K. Green, legal director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Washington, D.C.; Charles Hudson of the University of Georgia, author of "The Southeastern Indians";

E. Grady Jolly of Jackson, judge with the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, Legal Jones of the Appalachian Center at Berea College, Berea, Ky., and author of "Appalachian: A Self-Portrait" and "The Preacher (aka Book: Religious Anecdotes from the Oral Tradition)"; Mary Warren Miller, preservation director of the Historic Natchez Foundation, Natchez, and author of "Great Houses of Natchez";

Albert Rabotson of Princeton University, author of "Slave Religion: The 'Invisible Institution' in the Appalachian South"; Randy Sparks of the College of Charleston, Charleston, S.C., author of "The Jordan's Story Bible: Evangelicalism in Mississippi, 1773-1838"; Clifton Taulbert of Tulsa, Okla., Pulitzer Prize nominee and author of "Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored" and "Eight Miles of the Heart"; and Charles Reagan Wilson of the University of Mississippi, ed., "Religion in the South: New Perspectives on Southern Religion."

For tickets and information, call 1-601-346-6141 or 1-800-647-6724 or visit the web site at www.collec.ms.us/natchez.



The photograph of Christ Episcopal Church was taken about 1820 by Eadweard Mays. It is selected from "Country Churches," a book released in May by the University Press of Mississippi, and is from the Eadweard Mays Collection - Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Christ Church will be featured June 2 on a tour sponsored by the 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration.

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NATCHEZ LITERARY CELEBRATION

"Since it began in 1990, supported by a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council, the Literary Celebration has attracted more than 1,000 people each year." So says Natchez Literary Celebration founder Carolyn Vance Smith of Natchez. "All of them love to read, and they share the joy of books."

"Lectures, concerts, exhibits, films, book signings, tours of historic homes and buildings, and much more. That's what is in store for those who attend this year's Literary Celebration in the historic river city of Natchez, Mississippi," Smith said.

Celebrating its eleventh anniversary from June 1 to June 3, 2000, the literary conference will again use a broad theme for more than a dozen lectures and presentations. The 2000 theme, "The Sacred South: Writings From the Bible Belt," will be both explored and enjoyed, Smith said.

"We'll have nationally known writers and scholars as well as other exciting entertainment this year," she said. "We're expecting a huge crowd."

The cost of each year's literary and cultural event is very low, Smith said, because of the hard work from the sponsoring agencies, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Natchez National Historical Park, Alcorn State University, and the Mississippi Department of Economic and Community Development. "We are very grateful for generous grants from the Mississippi Humanities Council," she said.

"Because of this, plus widespread volunteerism, we can keep our lectures free," Smith said. "And we price all meals, tours, concerts and other special activities at low cost."

Presented each year in early June, the Natchez Literary Celebration features about a dozen lectures by nationally known scholars and writers, enhanced by related tours, book signings, exhibits, films, plays, readings, concerts, entertainments and meals.

Since the beginning, many people have returned each year for

EXPLORES WRITINGS FROM THE BIBLE BELT



the Celebration, including The Honorable William F. Winter, former governor of Mississippi and longtime president of the Board of Trustees for the Department of Archives and History. "We are so grateful to him for his service each year as the Celebration's Director of Proceedings," Smith said.

"The Literary Celebration has proven that people respond by attending top-quality conferences devoted to literature, history and the arts," Smith continued.

According to Dr. Allen Dennis, chairman of the history department at Troy State University in Alabama, one of many who attend each year, "The Natchez Literary Celebration is unique among humanities programs because it always has so much to offer those who visit the City of Natchez." Dennis continued "It is by far the best program I have been part of during many years of involvement in humanities programs in Mississippi and elsewhere."

The conference has won many awards, including the Governor's Award for Tourism Achievement; a Cultural Olympiad award for outstanding programming from the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games; Most Outstanding Festival or Event in Mississippi from the Mississippi Tourism

Commission; and the Public Humanities Achievement Award from the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Each year's conference deals with some general aspect of Southern history. Some of the noted speakers have been writers Eudora Welty, Margaret Walker Alexander, William Styron, Willie Morris, Ellen Douglas, Ernest Gaines, Elizabeth Spencer, Nikki Giovanni, Myrtle Evers-Williams, and Maya Angelou; Richard Wright scholar Michel Fabre of Paris; and historians Robert V. Remini, David Sansing, William Scarborough, John D.W. Guice, Jay Gitlin, John Basingame, Michael Wayne, and Douglas Lewis.

Special events have included the dedication of the mansion Melrose and the House of William Johnson to the National Park Service, concerts by the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, filming of the conference by Mississippi Educational Television, and tours of nationally important historic houses.

One of the results of each NLC is the bringing together of various constituencies: young and old, male and female, scholar and student, the highly educated and the under-educated, the African-American and the Caucasian.

"Indeed, the Celebration is

one of the few places in the Deep South where Blacks and Whites gather in large numbers with a common goal: to rejoice over books," Smith said.

"The Literary Celebration definitely lives up to its name each year," she said. "It is a true celebration which brings people together from all walks of life, people who share the love of reading and the love of books." ☉

THE 11TH ANNUAL NATCHEZ LITERARY CELEBRATION FEATURES PROGRAMS BY:

- * Thomas Berg (Samford University)
- * James Blackwood (Memphis, Tennessee)
- * Thomas Bonner (Xavier College)
- * Will Campbell (Mt. Juliet, Tennessee)
- * Richard Cornelius (Bryan College)
- * Allen Dennis (Troy State University.)
- * Marcie Cohen Ferris (Washington, D.C.)
- * Steven K. Green (Washington, D.C.)
- * Charles Hudson (University of Georgia)
- * E. Grady Jolly (U.S. Fifth Circuit Judge)
- * Loyal Jones (Berea College)
- * Mary Warren Miller (Historic Natchez Foundation)
- * Alpha Morris (Alcorn State University)
- * Bernard Cotten (Alcorn State University)
- * Donzell Lee (Alcorn State University)
- * Rudolph E. Waters (Alcorn State University)
- * Albert Raboteau (Princeton University)
- * Randy Sparks (College of Charleston)
- * Clifton Taubert (Tulsa, Oklahoma)
- * Charles Reagan Wilson (University of Mississippi)

*****and much more*****



The 11th Annual

Natchez Literary Celebration

"The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt"

PRESENTS

A CONCERT

By The Holy Family Catholic Church Gospel Choir

Directed by Alvin Shelby

Natchez, Mississippi

AND

"SOMBER MOMENTS: UPLIFTING TIMES"

A Presentation by

Clifton Taulbert

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Pulitzer Prize nominee and author of *Once Upon a Time When We Were Colored*, *The Last Train North*, *Watching Our Crops Come In*, *Eight Habits of the Heart*, and *Little Clift and the Porch People*

8:15 P.M., Thursday, June 1, 2000

Holy Family Catholic Church

Natchez, Mississippi

Book sale and book signing honoring Mr. Taulbert to be held in the parlor on the first floor immediately following the program.

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Sacred Space: Photographs from the Mississippi Delta



SOUTHERN
ARTS
FEDERATION

This Southern Arts Federation Folk Arts & Southern Culture Traveling Exhibit is made possible through the generous support of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

The Southern Arts Federation (SAF), founded in 1975, is a nonprofit, regional arts agency dedicated to providing leadership and support to affect positive change in the arts throughout the South. Composed of seven major departments — Arts Education, Folk Arts, Jazz, Performing Arts, Visual and Media Arts, Southern Arts Exchange/Special Projects, and Information Services — the organization works in partnership with the state arts agencies of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee; and is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, foundation and corporate sponsors, and contributions from member states. Arts Education, Multiculturalism, Indigenous Southern Arts, and Underserved Communities are SAF's four major priorities.



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NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE
ARTS

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The Natchez Democrat

June 1, 2000

50 cents

Mississippi's best community newspaper

www.natchezdemocrat.com



U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss., speaks with Theodore Lind Wednesday at Louis "Sam" Smith's home with David Stewart and William Winter at a reception at Eight for the Natchez Literary Celebration.

Conference honors role of religion in literature

Schedule of events, by
B. KERRY WHIPPLE
The Natchez Democrat

U.S. Sen. Thad Cochran finds this year's theme for the Natchez Literary Celebration apt for a conference set in the South.

This year the celebration takes a look at one of the region's most important institutions — and its impact on literature — with the theme "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt."

"People seem to take religion a lot more seriously in the South," said Cochran, R-

Miss., who will help welcome visitors this morning at the opening session of the conference at the Natchez community center.

"When you move into a community, that's the first question people ask — 'What church do you go to?'" Cochran said with a laugh.

From lectures and films to plays and music performances, the Natchez Literary Celebration has something for everyone.



Most events are either free or low-cost and will take place at several locations around town.

The headquarters for the event is the new Natchez community center on the corner of Franklin and Wall streets.

NLC founder and co-chairman Carolyn Vance Smith expects around hundred people at this week's celebration, which is in its 10th year.

And while many are coming from throughout Mississippi and the South, Smith encourages local residents to come as well.

Much of the funding for the celebration comes from agencies in southwest Mississippi.

"There will be recent research of much interest to people — whatever their church or synagogue — to get a broad picture of what we have been spiritually and where we are today," Smith said.

Cochran was among the guests Wednesday evening at a reception at Eight for members of the Mississippi Humanities Council.

See Literary, 14

Today's events*

- 8 a.m.: Breakfast and introductions
- 9:15 a.m.: "Southern Religious Beliefs and Customs: An Overview"
- 10:45 a.m.: "Religious Beliefs of the Southwestern World"
- 11:30 a.m.: Breakfast
- 11:45 a.m.: Lunch, Carnegie Theater Restaurant at Stanton Hall (200) with live program afterwards "Southern Religious Humor in the Human Condition"
- 1:30 p.m.: "Religious Beliefs in Mississippi"
- 2 p.m.: "The Meaning of Slave Suffering"
- 3 p.m.: Breakfast
- 4:45 p.m.: "SACRO" 75th Anniversary Celebration, a reception and tour at the Natchez Museum of Afro-American History and Culture (210)
- 8:15 p.m.: Concert by the Holy Family Catholic Church Choir with comedy afterwards, "Dorothy Manners: Lifting Eyes," Cotton Ballroom, 614½ Third Street, Church (210). (Beginning in July)

*Events in italics; community shows underlined.



Literary

Continued from 1a

The celebration is sponsored by Caplan-Lincoln Continuing College, the Natchez National Historic Park, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and Alcorn State University.

In addition to lectures by noted scholars and scholars, this year's celebration offers two special

nighttime events: a performance of "The Negroes' Evolution Trail," a play based on the court records of the 1925 trial in Davos, Tenn., and a showing of the Robert David film "The Apocryphal."

Both will take place on Friday and Saturday nights.

The celebration will also recognize

two local writers this year, recipients of the Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award. However are playwright Bob Stanley, author of "Citizen of the Heart" and "Miss Firecracker," and David G. Searcy, a professor of history professor at the University of Mississippi and author of several books including

"Mississippi, 1540 to the Present."

Next year, the literary celebration serves coffee — but with an added twist.

The Feb. 11-25, 2001, event is expanding to include a focus on Southern film and screenwriting. The theme will be "Race, Religion and Film: The Genesis of the South."

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Natchez Literary Celebration crowd first to see film on minister's life

By R. MILLER
Special to The Democrat

Someone asked Will D. Campbell not long ago, "Will, what do you know?"

He knows a lot, no doubt. Anyone sitting in the audience at the Natchez Community center Friday morning can bear witness to this.

Because they were the first to see the film "God's Will," a documentary on Campbell's life.

The film premiered at the 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration, one of several events that focused on the celebration's theme, "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt."



Campbell

And at the end of the film, Campbell was introduced to a standing ovation, after which he shared a thought.

Someone, he said, asked him about what he knows.

"After all my work in civil rights, religion and the books I've written, I will say one thing," Campbell said. "It's Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

Then he thanked the audience and sat down.

There was more applause, and audience members hurried to the back of the auditorium and into the lobby to buy Campbell's books. Campbell signed the books with a shaky right hand.

"I'm so impressed," said Sharon Coghlan of DeWitt, La. "He's lived an incredible life, and I'm impressed by how he sticks to New Testament

teachings."

Coghlan said she knew of Campbell before seeing "God's Will," having read his books.

"I came to the celebration today especially to meet him," she said.

And she did after patiently standing in line to get her book autographed.

Campbell took her book and signed it while posing for photographs, all the time talking about the film.

Mike Letcher was its producer. Letcher is the production manager at the University of Alabama Center for Public Television in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Letcher was introduced to Campbell through a mutual friend.

"Our friend works in a program

that brings rural schools together by providing them with books and other programs," Campbell said. "My friend came to me and said, 'Will, I know you'll be wary about this, but these are good people.'"

Campbell agreed to meet with Letcher and his film crew, and the meeting turned into a five-year project.

"I didn't know it was going to take that long," Campbell said. "But it was fun. They'd come and pick me up in the university van, and we'd ride all over Tennessee and Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama."

Those were places where Will worked as a Southern Baptist minister, civil rights worker, social philosopher and, these days, an author.

Campbell's 1977 book "Brother to a Dragonfly," was nominated for the National Book Award. Time maga-

zine also named it to its list of the books of the decade.

He has since written some 14 books; his most recent, "Soul Among Lions: Musings of a Bootleg Preacher," was released in April 1998.

And in 1999, the Natchez Literary Celebration presented the self-proclaimed bootleg preacher with its highest honor - the Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award.

Campbell now lives in Mount Juliet, Tenn., just outside of Nashville, where he farms the land and writes his books in a small cabin. He is a native of the East Fork community in Amite County, where he was ordained a Southern Baptist minister at age 17.

But as the film quickly points out, Campbell didn't keep his ministry for long, leaving the pulpit to work with civil rights groups.



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FEBRUARY CELEBRATION

... and at Natchez City Center, 215 ...
... (at Franklin) unless otherwise not-

THURSDAY
... and introductions
... these Beliefs and Customs: An
... Reagas Wilson
... gious Beliefs of the Southeastern
... edition

... at Carriage House Restaurant at
... followed by free program "Southern
... the Human Condition," Loyal Jones
... ous Beliefs in Mississippi," Randy
... aining of Slave Suffering," Albert

... iversary reception at the Museum
... History and Culture (\$10)
... rt by the choir at the Holy Family
... with remarks afterward, "Sonder
... Times," Clifton Taulbert (\$10)

FRIDAY
... ity in Southern Writing," Thomas

... IRE, a film documentary of the life
... of the Alabama Public Broadcasting
... casts afterward by Will Campbell
... Role of the African-American
... Politics and Culture," a panel of
... zard Lee and Alpha Morris, chaired

... es Trial: The Trial That is Still Being
... Connelias

... Legal Thinking about the Issues
... ceptus Trial," discussion led by
... Steven K. Greer, chaired by U.S.
... Grady Jolly

... atchez Radisson Eole Hotel (\$25)
... program, "Mossy Grove United
... Southern Music," remarks and co-
... and James Blackwood
... ceptus Evolution Trial (\$15) at the
... those Chancery Court Room
... ceptus at the Natchez Convention &
... er

SATURDAY
... at: An Exploration of Jewish Life
... by Marcie Cohen Ferris, at Temple
... Commerce St.

... in honoring National Endowment for
... man William Ferris, Temple 8'Nal

... rd Wright Excellence Awards cere-
... by winners Beth Hensley and David
... of book signings
... ric Religious Structures in South-
... rry Warren Miller, at Trinity Epis-
... Commerce St.

... us History, Religious Structures,"
... ces sites in southwest Mississippi
... ceptus Evolution Trial (\$15), Adams
... Chancery Court Room
... ceptus, Natchez Convention and Visi-
... information, call 446-6345 and 1-

Spirituality focus of literary gathering

By Sherry Lucas
Clifton-Ledger Staff

The 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration focuses on spirituality this weekend, studying the way it unites, divides and colors all the region's cultures.

The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt, Thursday through Saturday in Natchez, gathers scholars and writers to explore the religious beliefs of American Indians, African slaves, European settlers, fundamentalists, Jews and mainstemers. Performances during the event present the varied textures of religious expression in Southern music, and put the spotlight on the Scopes Trial and the still-raging evolution vs. creationism conflict it first tackled 75 years ago.

"This year, because we're entering a new millennium, we thought it would be appropriate to look at where we've been spiritually," event founder and co-chairman Carolyn Vance Smith said. Previous events have focused on such subjects as the river, the land and the Natchez Trace.

The celebration's ultimate goal is to provide a venue for book-lovers to come together, listen to the experts, and discuss ideas with each other.

"It humanizes books and it makes the written word exciting to have the author or have the scholar or have the playwright or have the musician there in person to explain and reveal what inspired him or her," Smith said.

The focus on the Scopes trial, with two lectures on Friday and performances of the 1997 play *The Scopes Evolution Trial* by Gale Johnson Friday and Saturday nights turns a keen eye on a debate that still runs like a current through Southern culture. The play, performed three years running at the annual Scopes Trial Festival in Dupton, Tenn., is taken from court transcripts, Johnson, the director and playwright,



Christ Episcopal Church, in Church Hill, is part of "Religious History, Religious Structures," a guided tour of religious sites in southwest Mississippi.

brings a cast of 7, supplemented by two people from Natchez, to perform scenes depicting the heart of the trial — the argument over including scientific experts as witnesses.

People come away with a very different view of orator William Jennings Bryan, who took the stand as an expert on the Bible, than that presented in the popular movie, *Inherit the Wind*, Johnson said. Humor and dignity come through in his words and, in the ripe interaction between Bryan and defense attorney Clarence

Darrow, "it's a draw as to who won that battle," she says.

Personal practices as well as the public forum are considered.

Marcie Cohen Ferris, former director of the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, will give an overview of the history of the Jewish South and close with a look at the Natchez Jewish experience — essentially, that history in a capsule. "It's the same story over and over again in every little town," said Ferris, noting the dwindling of members in Jewish congregations in many of the



South's smaller communities, as grown children sought economic opportunities in the cities.

The degree of acceptance or anti-Semitism varied from town to town. "In small towns, what really mattered, for white and black, Jewish and Protestant is that the people you know are the people you care about — those they knew, they considered poor and civic-minded — and the ones that didn't know, they feared and worried about," Ferris said. That happened during the Civil War, as well as during the civil rights era.

Additional highlights include a concert at the Holy Family Catholic Church followed by remarks from author Clifton Taulbert, the film documentary *God's Will* with comments by the Rev. Will Campbell, showings of *The Apostle*, starring Robert Duvall as a popular and colorful Pentecostal preacher and book-signings with Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award winners, playwright Beth Hensley and historian and author David G. Sansing.

The event is sponsored by Copiah-Lincoln Community College, the Natchez National Historic Park, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History and Alcorn State University.

Aut

By Leil Morrison
Clifton-Ledger Staff

Ellen Gilchrist that writing is coming up with words.

"You could re-creationally Fayetteville, Ar. to do is just write. Pretty soon, you're an retiree. You'll know who critic were. You're thing."

This from an imagination is independent the friend from ch appeared to her as she attended at a neighborhood.

"Whenever p or dying around pop up," she said. "I way one might from a neighborhood."

"And the other gym on a machine support what more fees was standing there you have to be standing there a black tie and Silence on the."

"I'm just bristling a character, laughing. 'I call the way you to vote joke.'"

"Should've gone Wickburg, she has nothing to do charming, sharp

Gilch

By JC Patterson
Special to The Clifton-Ledger

One of the most interesting of the absence of stories from Lake housing the fence going as an extended film.

With the ad Goss, Miss Elingher fifth — with her nights.

The Cal at

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Mississippi events

We gladly list events of statewide interest, as space allows. Submissions must reach us at least two months prior to the event date. All submissions must include a phone number. Mail submissions to Mississippi Events, Today in Mississippi, P.O. Box 7897, Jackson, MS 39284; fax to 601-923-5814; or e-mail events@today.com. All events are subject to change. Please call ahead to confirm dates and times before making plans to travel. Abbreviations: CVB, Convention and Visitors Bureau; CC, Chamber of Commerce.

- **Open Garden Invitation**, through August, West Point. Garden with more than 800 varieties of daylilies; peak bloom is first two weeks of June. Call Larry Higginbotham, (662) 494-0530.
- **Summer Film Series**, through August, Natchez. Educational films and videos featured weekly. Free. Grand Village of the Natchez Indians, (601) 446-6502; e-mail gvi@bkbank.com.
- **Magnolia State Bluegrass Festival**, June 1-3, Wiggins. Stone County Music Park. Admission. Call (601) 928-3831.
- **Natchez Literary Celebration**, June 1-3, Natchez. Conference to focus on literature, history and culture of the South. Free. Call Copiah-Lincoln Community College, (601) 446-1208 or 800-863-3259.
- **Mississippi Broiler Festival**, June 3, Forest. Nationally known entertainment,

- crafts and more. Admission. Clark Park, Scott County / Forest Coliseum. Call Forest Area CC, (601) 469-4332.
- **Mississippi Arts Fair for the Handicapped**, June 6-8, Biloxi. Cultural forum for citizens with disabilities. Free. Mississippi Coast Coliseum. Call South Mississippi Regional Center, (228) 867-1313.
- **Grenada Lake's Thunder on the Water**, June 9-11, Grenada. Entertainment to include Andy Griggs, The Rileys and Confederate Railroad. Call 800-873-2571.
- **Wisson's Founders Day**, June 10, Wesson. Arts and crafts, flea market, gospel performances, children's games, political speakers, parade, country-western street dance and more. Downtown. Call Wesson CC, (601) 643-8316.
- **Aquatic & Bog Plant Sale and Display**, June 10, Ridgeway. Lectures to include

- pond building. Free. The Crosby Arboretum, (601) 799-2311 or e-mail crosby@datastar.net.
- **Blueberry Jubilee**, June 10, Poplarville. Arts and crafts, blueberry products, storytelling festival, tours of USDA small fruit research station and more. Free. Downtown. Call Blueberry Jubilee Council, (601) 795-4224.
- **Rocking Chair Festival**, June 10, Thomastown. Crafts, food and rocking chair museum. Free. Downtown. Call Leake County CC, (601) 267-9231.
- **Second Saturday Art Walk**, June 10, Bay St. Louis. Gallery openings, extended shop hours, entertainment and more; 5-8 p.m. Old Town Bay St. Louis. Call (228) 467-6870.
- **Greenwood BalloonFest 2000**, June 13-18, Greenwood. Balloon glows, carnival midway, barbecue contest, NWA wrestling and Toby Keith in concert. Call 800-748-9064 or (662) 455-3298.
- **Gem and Mineral Society Annual "Rock" Show**, June 16-18, Gulfport. Custom-made jewelry and more. Free. Bice Pavilion. Call Harrison County Gem and Mineral Society, (228) 863-6312.
- **Raku Ceramic Demo and Class**, June 17, Jackson. Bruce Odell to teach. Admission. Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi Chimneyville Crafts Gallery, (601) 981-0019.

- **The Freemans in Concert**, June 23, Lake. The Sanctuary Worship Center, 7:30 p.m. Call (601) 775-3467.
- **Bay Fest**, June 23-24, Bay Springs. Music, crafts, food and contests. Free. Downtown. Call Town of Bay Springs, (601) 764-4112.
- **Hog Wild**, June 23-24, Jackson. Barbecue-cooking contest. Admission. Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum, (601) 354-6113.
- **Tomato Festival**, June 24, Crystal Springs. Farmers' market, flea market, children's activities, entertainment and food. Free. Downtown. Call Crystal Springs CC, (601) 892-2711.
- **Red Bluff Natural Area Creek Walk**, June 25, Hancock County. Senior Center Bob Braznek to lead plant identification tour through Catahoula Creek. Admission. The Crosby Arboretum, (601) 799-2311.
- **Natchez Bicycle Classic**, June 24-25, Natchez. Includes street dance. Free. Call Natchez CVB, (601) 446-6345 or 800-647-6724.
- **Patriotic Musical**, June 24-26, Columbus. Music and drama. Free. Trotter Convention Center. Call Columbus-Lowndes CVB, (662) 329-1191 or 800-327-2686.

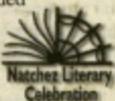
Continued on page 16

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Play reenacts 1925 trial on evolution

Special to The Democrat

Take a school teacher, a noted orator, a defense attorney, a monkey and the law. Add religion, reporters and a small town. Mix together. Bake for eight days in a crowded courtroom. When it's over, you have the Scopes Evolution Trial in Dayton, Tenn.



In 1925, William Jennings Bryan, a world-renowned statesman and orator, and Clarence Darrow, one of America's leading defense attorneys, argued the case of a teacher, John T. Scopes. He was charged with violating a state law which prohibited teaching the theory of evolution in public schools.

Beliefs of evolutionists and creationists collided in that courtroom in July 1925, and the resulting case was nicknamed the "Monkey Trial." In the end, Scopes was convicted of teaching evolution. The Tennessee Supreme Court later overturned the conviction on a technicality, and Scopes was vindicated by the Supreme Court in 1968.

Based on actual court records of that trial is an original play, called "The Scopes Evolution Trial." It will be presented twice at 8:15 p.m. today and Saturday in the Chancery Courtroom of the Adams County Courthouse. The play is part of the 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration, which uses the theme this year of "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt."

Tickets are limited. They cost \$15 each and are available for both performances by calling Natchez Ticket Office, 446-6345.

RELIGION AND THE LAW: THE 1925 SCOPES TRIAL AND ITS CURRENT IMPLICATIONS

A PART OF THE 11TH ANNUAL NATCHEZ LITERARY CELEBRATION Natchez, Mississippi

June 1-3, 2000

The CLE program on June 2, a unique experience, allows lawyers to satisfy their continuing legal education requirements while simultaneously enjoying cultural and historical pursuits.

The CLE program is a part of a three-day conference, June 1-3, sponsored by the 11th annual, Olympic Award-winning Natchez Literary Celebration. Theme of the conference is "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt." Much of the event is free; ticketed activities are low-cost. Lectures and other program components are by nationally known experts.

The CLE registration fee covers all costs of the legal education part of the conference. Information about other conference activities is available by phone 1-800-847-6724 or by web site, www.colin.cc.ms.us/nlc

Earn 5.5 hours of credit, including one hour of ethics credit.

Celebration headquarters
in historic downtown Natchez:
Natchez City Center
215 Franklin Street
Natchez, MS 39120

FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 2000

Introductions by U.S. District Judge David C. Bramlette, Woodville, Miss.; Miss. State Sen. Hob Bryan, Amory, Miss.; and former Miss. Gov. William F. Winter, Jackson, Miss.

1:00 p.m.: "Ethics, Religion, and the Law," by Michael Harrington, Chairman, Department of Philosophy, The University of Mississippi

2:00 p.m.: "The Scopes Trial: The Trial That Is Still Being Tried," by Richard M. Cornelius, Bryan College, Dayton, Tenn. (author of Historical Tour of Scopes Evolution Trial Sites in Dayton, Tennessee and ed., Selected Orations of William Jennings Bryan)

3:15 p.m.: "Current Legal Thinking about the Issues Surrounding the Scopes Trial," by Thomas C. Berg, Cumberland School of Law, Sanford University, Birmingham, Ala., and Steven K. Green, Legal Director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Washington, D.C. Discussion chaired by E. Grady Jolly, U.S. Fifth Circuit Judge, Jackson, Miss.

6:00 p.m.: Optional dinner at Radisson Natchez Eola Hotel @ \$25, with gospel music by Allen Dennis, Troy (Ala.) State University, and James Blackwood, founding member of The Blackwood Brothers Quartet, Memphis, Tenn.

8:15 p.m.: "The Scopes Evolution Trial," an original play by Gale Johnson, Dayton, Tenn., based on court records of the 1925 trial; at the Adams County Courthouse Chancery Courtroom; with introduction by Dr. Cornelius.

REGISTRATION

(Please duplicate this form as needed. Use one form per person. PLEASE PRINT. Thank you.)

Name: _____

Firm: _____

Address: _____

City, state: _____ Zip: _____

Work phone: _____ Fax: _____

Bar # _____

Please check what you desire:

_____ Registration fee for CLE units @ \$75

_____ Dinner June 2 @ \$25

Please pay one of two ways:

(1) By check, made out to Natchez Literary Celebration and sent to P.O. Box 894, Natchez, MS 39121. Please send this completed form with check.

(2) By calling Dee in Natchez at 1-801-446-1213 and using a credit card (MasterCard, Visa, or Discover)

THANK YOU!

CAROLYN WANCE SMITH
FOUNDER AND CO-CHAIRMAN
NATCHEZ LITERARY CELEBRATION
1-601-446-1208

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On the Natchez Campus calendar



Monday, June 12: Pre-registration for fall classes.
Monday, June 12-Friday, June 16: Kids College "Let's Go" Week.
Sunday, June 18-Friday, June 23: National competition for HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America). Natchez Campus has several students represented.
Monday, June 19-Friday, June 23: Kids' College "Adventures in Reading" Week, Vocational-Technical Center.
Monday, June 19: On-Line Speech class meets, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Community College Network room.
Monday, June 26-Friday, June 30: Kids College "Exploring Math and Science" Week, Vo-Tech Center.
Monday, Tuesday July 3, 4: Campus closed for Fourth of July holiday.

Macon Ridge seeking students' help

Summer students are asked to help in a survey by the Macon Ridge Economic Development Region.

Macon Ridge is hoping to attract a computer-related company to this region. However, Macon Ridge and the company are trying to determine if there is enough interest in possible jobs the company would offer. A survey has been placed on the Macon Ridge web site and students are asked to respond to the survey. There is no obligation on the part of anyone responding to actually apply for a job, said Macon Ridge executive director Buddy Spillers.

Spillers said the survey is designed to gauge interest level only. A high interest level could enhance Macon Ridge's chances of attracting the company to locate here, he said.

Individuals willing to help with the survey should log on to Macon Ridge's web site at www.maconridge.org and click on the large Job Seekers box at the bottom of the home page. Simply follow the directions.

News and Notes

Janice Priester Byrne, mathematics instructor, and **Juan Jones**, adjunct mathematics instructor, attended the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics in Chicago April 12-15. The highlight of the meeting was the release of the new standards.

... **Sue Savino** will transfer from her support position in the Vocational-Technical Center to a teaching position with the Office/Medical Systems Technology Program. Savino now coordinates the Institute for Learning in Retirement, Kids College, Special Interest Classes and handles other Vo-Tech duties. ... The **Willie Mae Dunn Library** will be open during the summer terms on Monday and Tuesday from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. ... **Carolyn Vance Smith**, founder and co-chair of the Natchez Literary Celebration, has been selected to serve on the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Keep in your prayers

Please keep in your prayers the family of **Judy Heard**, special populations counselor, whose mother, Wilma H. Wentworth, died May 30, 2000.



Robyn Martello instructs **Aaron Dodson** on how to use the Internet for research during a recent session of Kids College. Co-Lin this summer is sponsoring weeklong theme programs for youngsters.

Board approves new staff

Bobby Kerrigan, of Vidalia, has been hired as Technology Specialist at the Natchez Campus.

Kerrigan is owner of Kerrigan's Computers, and was an associate consultant with Computer Consultants. He is a graduate of Louisiana Business College.

He will replace **Dwayne Dunn**, who is transferring to the Wesson Campus.

The Co-Lin Board of Trustees approved the hiring at its regular meeting June 3.

The board also permitted the campus to seek an instructor for the Welder/Pipefitter program should the state approved funding.

Co-Lin is awaiting word on whether that program along with Commercial Truck Driving will be in next year's budget.

NLC has successful 11th season

The Natchez Literary Celebration this month completed another successful season, its 11th.

The theme was "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt," and included a variety of special programs, tours, presentations and awards. Co-Lin instructor **Jan Pickle** and student **Clayton Mercer** were selected as two of the William Winter Scholars. The scholarships are named in honor of former Gov. William Winter, who has been director of proceedings since the first Literary Celebration.

This year's program included presentation of the Richard Wright Literary Excellence Award to Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright **Beth Henley** of Los Angeles and historian **David G. Sansing** of the University of Mississippi.

One of the highlights was the attendance of actor **Gerald McRaney**, a Mississippi resident, who is a member of a multi-faceted committee working on the February 2001 program, which will be the first Natchez Literary and Film Celebration. Plans are to include film writers and films.

A contingent from Natchez, including McRaney and NLC co-chairman **Carolyn Vance Smith**, has discussed the new aspect of the celebration with movie executives in Los Angeles.

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The 11th annual
Natchez Literary Celebration
"The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt"

presents

"THE SCOPES EVOLUTION TRIAL"

A play written and directed by Gale Johnson, Dayton, Tenn.
Presented by The Tennessee Players, Dayton, Tenn.

Based on the Scopes evolution trial in Dayton, Tenn., July 1925

The issues raised during the trial are still largely unresolved:
science vs. religion, creation vs. evolution, and free speech vs. parental rights.

*Setting the stage for the play will be Dr. Richard Cornelius of Dayton,
the foremost Scopes trial expert.*

HAVE A GOOD TIME DURING THE PLAY!

Members of the audience are invited to "role play" during the performance as though they were in the Rhea County courthouse during the trial in 1925.
Easy directions will be provided.

Limited seating for two performances.

Choose from

8:15 p.m., Friday, June 2, 2000

or

8:15 p.m., Saturday, June 3, 2000

ADAMS COUNTY COURTHOUSE CHANCERY COURT ROOM
Corner of Wall and Market Streets, Natchez, Miss.

Tickets: \$15

Available at Natchez Ticket Office
Natchez Convention & Visitor Bureau
640 South Canal Street, Natchez, MS 39120
or by credit card
1-601-446-6345 or 1-800-647-6724

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ILR MEETING REMINDER

THURSDAY, MAY 11, 2000-10:00 A.M.-GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING. WE WILL ELECT OFFICERS AT THIS MEETING. THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF PROPOSED OFFICERS FOR THE JULY 1, 2000 TO JUNE 30, 2001 YEAR:

PRESIDENT: JOYCE BORUM (THIS YEAR'S V.P. WHO MOVES UP TO PRESIDENT).

VICE PRESIDENT: ANNE THORHILL (TO BE VOTED ON)

SECRETARY: MARJORIE KINDS (CONTINUING FROM THIS YEAR)

ASSOCIATE SEC.: ANNA PROCTOR (TO BE VOTED ON)
BOARD MEMBERS:

MARIE BOYD (CONTINUING)

RITA TEBBETTS (WILL BE VOTED ON)

SHERRY JOHNSON (WILL BE VOTED ON)

FRANK ROWE (OUTGOING PRESIDENT)

OUR SPEAKER WILL BE WALTER TIPTON, DIRECTOR OF TOURISM AND MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT. WE WILL ALSO HAVE JIM BARNETT TO SPEAK ON THE NATCHEZ LITERARY CELEBRATION. PLEASE COME TO THE MEETING AND BRING A FRIEND. WE WILL GIVE AWAY A FREE MEMBERSHIP FOR ONE YEAR.

***We still have space for Vicksburg on May 9 and New Orleans on June 7. Please make your plans asap!!!**

COPIAH-LINCOLN
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
30 CAMPUS DRIVE
NATCHEZ MS 39120

Thanks,
Sue

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Music at Trinity Church

One of the most significant aspects of the worship at Trinity Church is offered in the form of music. Music is considered a valuable and vital part of the worship experience here by adding to the richness of the liturgy. The choirs regularly offer the great music of the Church to the Glory of God within those historic walls at the Weekly Sunday services, special feast days, monthly traditional Anglican Choral Evensong, and concerts. The choirs are made up of highly trained and dedicated boys, girls, and adult volunteers of extraordinary dedication and sense of purpose. The choirs are affiliated members of The Royal School of Church Music. Since 1991 the Trinity Choir has presented annually the Advent Procession with Carols. This service is based upon those that have been sung at King's College, Cambridge University, England since 1918. This advent service has become a popular seasonal highlight in Natchez.

History of the Church

Trinity Episcopal Church was established in 1822. Construction began immediately on the present church building, thus making it the oldest Episcopal church building in the State of Mississippi. The first services were held in the almost completed building in the Spring of 1823. The original structure was in the Federal Style and had a large dome in the center of the roof. In 1838 the building was metamorphosed internally and externally into the Greek Revival Style. The Choir and Sanctuary area in the recessed chancel were added in 1853 and consecrated in February of 1884. The Parish House was completed in 1888 bringing to a close the use of the endowment of the church to house Sunday School classes.

The organizing convention of the Diocese of Mississippi was held here at Trinity. In 1836, the Diocesan Convention elected the first Bishop of Mississippi, The Rt. Rev. William Manor Green. He was Rector of Trinity Church at the time of his election to the Episcopate and remained so for two years while also serving as Bishop. The parish has maintained continuous life and worship since its founding and has played a significant role in the life of Natchez, the surrounding area, and the Diocese.

Arrangements for guided tours can be made through the
Parish Office - (601) 442-8422

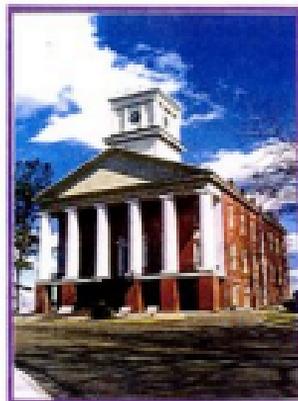


Trinity Episcopal Church Natchez, Mississippi

*Worshipping, Seeking, and Serving God
in the Anglican Tradition
since 1822*

Welcome to Natchez, and to Historic Trinity Church. You may be here as a visitor, a new or past member, a relative of a parishioner or friend. Whatever has brought you here, the Rector, Warden, Vestry and Staff of Trinity Church bid you welcome. The Clergy and Staff will be happy to be of service to you. Please feel free to call upon them at any time.

OAKLAND MEMORIAL CHAPEL



Oakland Memorial Chapel, constructed in 1830, is a famed landmark and the oldest building on campus.

ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY
ALCORN STATE, MISSISSIPPI 39068

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JIM C. BLOUGH
ATTORNEY

113 SOUTH CANAL STREET
NATCHEZ, MS 39120

TELEPHONE (601)446-6074
FACSIMILE (601) 442-0108

May 19, 2000

General Membership
The Mississippi Bar

Re: CLE in Natchez on June 2 during the 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration, June 1-3, 2000

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

We are writing to encourage you to participate in something unique and beneficial to all Mississippi lawyers. For the first time ever, the 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration, in cooperation with the Mississippi Center for School Law Research and Adams and Reese LLP, will sponsor 5.5 hours of approved credit for Continuing Legal Education seminars.

Leading these seminars will be U.S. Fifth Circuit Judge E. Grady Jolly, U.S. District Judge David C. Bramlette, Philosophy Department Chairman Dr. Michael Harrington of The University of Mississippi, Dr. Richard M. Cornelius of Bryan College, Dayton, Tenn., Thomas C. Berg of Cumberland School of Law, Samford University, and Dr. Steven K. Green, Legal Director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, Washington, D.C.

The seminars will take place in Natchez on the afternoon and evening of Friday, June 2, 2000, at Celebration headquarters, the newly refurbished Natchez City Center, 215 Franklin Street in historic downtown Natchez.

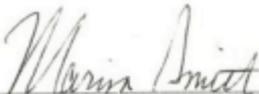
The Literary Celebration, sponsored June 1-3, 2000, by Alcorn State University, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Mississippi Department and Archives, and Natchez National Historical Park, is themed "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt."

At 1 p.m., June 2, the first seminar (for lawyers only) will focus on ethics, religion, and the law. From 2 p.m. until 5 p.m., other seminars will be for lawyers and the general public on the history of the 1925 Scopes evolution trial and current legal thinking about the trial and its repercussions.

At 8:15 p.m. June 2, legal education will continue with the performance of an original play based on the Scopes trial, which will be performed in the Adams County Courthouse. It was written by Gale Johnson of Dayton, Tenn., where the Scopes trial took place. You might be chosen to sit in the jury box!

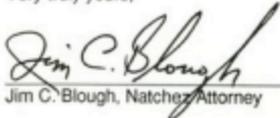
The full CLE agenda on June 2 is set forth in the enclosed brochure. Other portions of this year's Olympic Award-winning Literary Celebration, June 1-3, are available on the web at www.colin.cc.ms.us/nlc or by calling 601-446-6345 or 1-800-647-6724. The Celebration, which is free or low-cost, features outstanding lectures, films, meals, receptions, book signings, exhibits, and tours.

If you can't participate in all three days, we hope that you will take advantage of the exceptional CLE opportunity on June 2. Please see the enclosed brochure for registration information.



Marion Smith Natchez Attorney

Very truly yours,



Jim C. Blough, Natchez Attorney

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Cirque du Soleil Mississippi visit not so novel now

■ State has come far
in past decade

VICKSBURG—The guy who sat down next to us had just one question: "Do y'all know how long this lasts?"

My wife and I said we didn't. We'd just been seated ourselves in the magnificent theater custom built at Beau Rivage in Biloxi for Cirque du Soleil.

I sized the guy up as being, like us, from somewhere inland. He'd probably lost a couple of hundred dollars at the tables in the elegant complex's vast casino and been offered a "comp" ticket to the in-house show. He appeared eager to get back to the dice.

His agitation didn't abate as the lights went down and the fantastic blend of music, dance, flipping, dancing and swinging began. One or two acts into the 90-minute spectacular, he slipped out.

Cirque du Soleil didn't change that gambler, but it—and a lot of other things—are changing Mississippi.

Maybe a lot of us can't see it because we're so close, but Mississippi as the decade ends is not the state it was when the 1990s began.

Development of 30 or so casinos blended with a robust national economy have combined to more or less end the state's isolation from the rest of the world.

Yes, the Neshoba County Fair remains. Yes, governance in most counties is still conducted 90 percent of the time from a pickup and 10 percent of the time in a boardroom. Yes, putting a worm on a hook and pulling bream from the lake at a state park is a big and enjoyable vacation for those of us who would be snooty. The things that typify this state as rural and its people as uncomplicated remain. They're what make it great, if you ask me.

But a layer has been added. There are more options in education, in use of leisure time and even in selection of jobs.

First lady Pat Fordice and exhibit organizer Jack Kyle had a lot to do with it. *Palaces of St. Petersburg* and *Splendors of Versailles* events in Jackson demonstrated to the rest of the world—and, more importantly, to us—that Seattle, New York and Boston weren't the only cities that could effectively debut internationally touring art.

Communities large and small have added or placed new emphasis on the arts, on museums and on festivals ranging from literary weeks in Natchez and Oxford to the Elvis Presley Festival in Tupelo.

Communities large and

CHARLIE MITCHELL



Managing Editor
The Vicksburg
Post

small have also added meeting and convention facilities, notably Hattiesburg and Tupelo, but also Vicksburg and Natchez.

There's ballet and concerts, and Thalia Mara Hall in Jackson is host to traveling Broadway shows several times a year.

As for Cirque du Soleil, it's hard to say whether such a show would have landed in The Magnolia State absent events earlier in the decade.

I don't have a lot of prized possessions, but one of them is a matchbook cover I picked up when Harrah's opened the first casino-hotel in Mississippi in 1993.

It says, "Harrah's" on the front, of course, but my favorite part is the list of company locations on the back: Las Vegas, Reno, Lake Tahoe, Atlantic City, Vicksburg.

Since then, of course, Harrah's has expanded to other cities in Mississippi and elsewhere, but just seeing Vicksburg listed with resort destinations signaled something very different was going on.

It's not at all a put-down to say this, but Mississippi has not been a state where important things happened.

Hollywood is the epicenter of movies, New York for theater, Orlando for theme parks. Now moviemakers are common in the state and so are shows.

Bill Cosby, who previously had traveled to Mississippi only to offer words of encouragement to graduates of Rust College, now comes to the state to make money. He's done shows at Silver Star in Philadelphia and on the Gulf Coast this year.

Cirque du Soleil, based in Montreal, offers its clowns from Russia and fire-knife dancer from Tahiti in the capitals of Europe—and at *Beau Rivage in Biloxi, Mississippi!*

The new layer has not changed the fundamentals of the state. But it will eventually change the way Mississippians think about Mississippi. These days, everything no longer happens someplace else.

■
Write Charlie Mitchell at
The Vicksburg Post, Box
821668, Vicksburg MS
39182, or e-mail
(cmitchell@vicksburg-
post.com).



BOOK III!

The 12th annual
NATCHEZ LITERARY AND
CINEMA CELEBRATION

FICTION, FACT,
AND FILM:
THE GENIUS
OF THE SOUTH

FEB. 21-25, 2001
Natchez, Mississippi

Lectures and Film Reviews by
Nationally Known Scholars and
Writers plus
Screenings, Tours, Awards, Book
Signings, and More!

For statewide travel information
Call 1-800-WARMEST

The South's Finest Education
MISSISSIPPI

This event is partially funded by
the Mississippi Department of
Economic and Community
Development and the Mississippi
Humanities Council.

Sponsors are Copiah-Lincoln
Community College, Natchez
National Historical Park,
Mississippi Department of
Archives and History, and Alcorn
State University.

INFORMATION & TICKETS
1-601-446-6345
1-800-647-6724
www.colin.cc.ms.us/nlc

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DIO-GRAM

The Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi
P.O. Box 21107
Jackson, MS 39225-1107

May 2000

Phone: (601) 945-1954

FAC: (601) 354-3401

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

6th Annual Bishops' Barbecue

Join us for this delicious seasonal
Lots of Fun for the Entire Family!
Lots of Food & Music! ♦ Craft Fair!
No Boat Boat Races!

Location is beautiful Gray Center!
Saturday, May 20, 2000
Gray Center, Canton, MS
Tickets: \$10/adults & \$5/children
(available from local Wiltreya leaders)
A few rooms still open for Friday Night
Cost: \$35/person ♦ Call (601) 859-0541

Whatever Floats Your Boat...

This is your chance to compete in the first Annual "Not-a-boat-Float" at the Bishops' BBQ, Gray Center, May 20, 2000. The Bishops will judge & award trophies to the best of the boats that aren't boats! Rules & regulations have been mailed to all church offices, or you can look in the March edition of *The Mississippi Episcopalian*! For more information, contact Richard Lawrence (Gray Center) at (601) 859-4063, or rlawrence@earthlink.net.

Craft Space Available at BBQ

That's right, the bishops want all talented Episcopalians to join together at the Bishops' BBQ and display your crafts for fun and profit! Booth space will be available at the Bishops' BBQ, Gray Center, May 19-20, 2000. Mark your calendars now, and make plans to join hundreds of your fellow Episcopalians! A booth reservation form has been delivered to each church office.

Items Wanted for

Bishops' Barbecue Auction!

The Barbecue is right around the corner, and it's not too early to donate items for the annual auction to benefit the Gray Center! If you have an item to donate, please contact one of these individuals in your convocation! Central: Fonda Brady, 601-957-6986; Coast: Annette Rand, 228-864-7921; Delta: Mary Dent Deaton, 662-453-6537; -CR- Eleanor Failing 662-867-4195; Northern: Dawn Lee, 662-234-8767; Old River: St Wilkenson, 601-868-0070; Sowathee: Fred & Sissie Wile, 601-483-6054; Tombigbee: David Sparks, 662-642-0251. Don't hide your talents, your time, or your condo!

You are cordially invited to an

Open House
John Massey Allen
Episcopal Diocesan House
Friday, June 16, 2000
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
118 North Congress Street
Jackson, Mississippi

NOTICE

PENDING APPROVAL OF THE STANDING
COMMITTEES AND BISHOPS OF THE
CHURCH, THE CONGREGATION OF
THE REV. DUNCAN M. GRAY, III
AS BISHOP CONVOYATOR WILL TAKE
PLACE ON JUNE 17, 2000, AT
11:00 A.M.
AT THALLA MARIA HALL
(THE MUNICIPAL AUDITORIUM)
IN THE CITY OF JACKSON.

GRAY CENTER INFO!

Is your group or business looking for a retreat or a meeting away from home? If so, please consider the Duncan M. Gray Conference Center! Located ten miles north of Canton, Gray Center is available for day only, weekend or mid-week meetings, conferences, retreats and/or camps. For more info on rates and schedules, call Wayne Wilson, Executive Director, at (601) 859-1556 or e-mail Gray Center at graycenter@ecumst.org. Look up info. on the Gray Center web site at: www.graycenter.org.

* Copier Up for Grabs!

The diocesan office wants to find a home for a Xerox 5062 Copier - free of charge to someone who will pick it up. This heavy duty copier collates, staples and makes double-sided copies. Too large for our new office, the copier has not been in use for one year. The copier had been under a service contract with Xerox until the move and had been regularly maintained. Our hope is that a church or a charitable agency might have a need for this copier. For information, contact Brian Ponder at (601) 948-5954, or brian.ponder@ecumst.org.

A Prayer for the Diocese

O God, by your grace you have called us in this Diocese to a goodly fellowship of faith. Bless our Bishop and other clergy, and all our people. Grant that your Word may be truly preached and truly heard, your Sacraments faithfully administered and faithfully received. By your Spirit, fashion our lives according to the example of your Son, and grant that we may show the power of your love to all among whom we live; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Ever wonder if the Episcopal Church has structure to it?

The structure of the Episcopal Church can be likened to a pyramid. At its base are the approximate 7,500 congregations that form the grassroots. Going up the pyramid are the 109 dioceses, the geographic units of which each congregation is a part. A bit further up the pyramid are the nine provinces, the geographic units of which each diocese is a part. At the top is the national church with all of its departments and programs that offer support to all of those entities that make up the pyramid.

In many respects, it is an inverted pyramid. The congregations are really at the top and create the need for each of the structures beneath them.

This is a somewhat simplistic design for the Church's structure. In fact, there are many seminaries, organizations, agencies, committees, commissions, and more that make up The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America (DFMS), commonly known as the Episcopal Church.

The 11th Annual

Natchez Literary Celebration

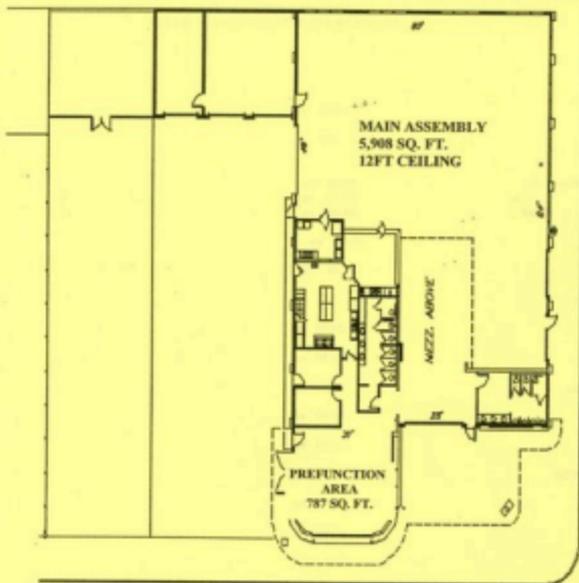
The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt, June 1-3, 2000; Natchez, Mississippi; Featuring Lectures - Concerts - Exhibits - Films - Book Signings - Meals - Tours of Historic Homes and Buildings - and Much More - All Free or Low-Cost!!
For more information and/or tickets, call (601) 446-6345 or 1-800-647-6724. Visit www.colin.cc.ms.us/alc.

Send information for publication in the Dio-gram to: Dio-gram, P.O. Box 21107, Jackson, MS 39225-1107, or e-mail brian.ponder@ecumst.org. Deadline for submission is the 15th of the month prior to publication.

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NATCHEZ COMMUNITY CENTER

FLOOR PLAN & RENTAL INFORMATION



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FROM THE DIRECTOR
GALE JOHNSON
DARTON, TENN.

Welcome to the Natchez Literary Celebration's production of "The Scopes Evolution Trial," based on the court transcript of the 1925 Scopes trial in Dayton, Tenn. In 1925 the Butler Bill was passed in Tennessee, making it unlawful to teach a theory which denies the story of the Divine Creation of man as taught in the Bible. The Scopes trial was the result of a decision by the ACLU to test the validity of this law.

Tonight you will see only a portion of the trial in which lawyers argue the admissibility of scientific evidence and the use of experts as witnesses, William Jennings Bryan takes the stand, and in the concluding scene, John Scopes is sentenced.

The issues raised during the trial are still largely unresolved: science vs. religion, creation vs. evolution, and free speech vs. parental rights. We hope you will wrestle individually with these issues and be inspired by the eloquence and passion of the foremost trial of the 20th century.

(over)

The Adams County Courthouse

The Adams County Courthouse was built in 1825 and is the oldest courthouse building in the state. As originally constructed, the courthouse was a Federal style, two-story, brick building surmounted by a cupola. One of the first alterations to the building was the application of exterior stucco in the nineteenth century, probably between 1850 and 1855. During this Greek Revival period, many Federal style buildings received a stucco coating that was then scored to look like stone, a popular exterior finish for Greek Revival buildings. The building was remodelled in 1925 by Natchez architect/builder William Stietenoth, using new windows, doors, cornices, and columned porches.



The 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration
"The Sacred South:
Writings from the Bible Belt"
June 1-3, 2000

PRESENTS

The Tennessee Players in
The Scopes Evolution Trial
(Scenes 5, 7, and 8 of an original play
by Gale Johnson, Dayton, Tennessee)

Adapted from the trial transcript of the case of
The State of Tennessee vs. John Thomas Scopes

8:15 p.m., Friday, June 2, 2000
and

8:15 p.m., Saturday, June 3, 2000

Adams County Courthouse Chancery Courtroom
Natchez, Mississippi

The Natchez Literary Celebration is sponsored by
Coppah-Lewis Community College,
Natchez National Historical Park,
Mississippi Department of Archives and History,
and Alcorn State University.

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MR. & MRS. MARION SMITH
270 Foster Mound Rd
Natchez MS 39120-9065



New Building, cont'd

my life have been associated with this department. . . Now, as we begin a new century, the role of this Department looms larger than ever. It is here that so much of the story of Mississippi's past is preserved for future generations. It is the record of all of us and all of our forebears who settled and built and sustained this place called Mississippi."

Presiding at the groundbreaking, MDAH director Elbert R. Hilliard said, "No one has ever been more dedicated to the Department of Archives and History than has our Board president, the Honorable William F. Winter. He has been my mentor, friend, and co-worker in helping preserve the state's history. I know that you would agree with me when I say that he demonstrates those qualities of leadership that could well be emulated by every public servant and that our most outstanding governors have been those governors who know and appreciate our state's history."

"When this building is complete, the state of Mississippi will have one of the finest state archival facilities in the country," said Lieutenant Governor Amy Tuck during the ceremony. "And we will have the people of Mississippi to thank for it. This outstanding facility is being built because you all spoke up and said we needed it. The new Archives and History Building will stand for generations as a symbol of Mississippians' deep interest in our history. This regard for our heritage is one of our state's greatest strengths."

Mississippi History Preservation Conference April 28-29, Greenwood. Call the Mississippi Heritage Trust, 601/636-5010.

Eleventh Natchez Celebration June 1-3

The 2000 Natchez Literary Celebration is scheduled for June 1-3 with the theme "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt." Program speakers will include Randy Sparks, the author of a forthcoming volume on religion in the Mississippi, the second volume in the *Heritage of Mississippi* Series, sponsored by the Mississippi Historical Society. Other offerings at the June Celebration will be a play based on the 1925 Scopes trial, a performance of the Holy Family Catholic Church Choir, and a performance of southern gospel music by Allen Dennis, Troy State University, and James Blackwood, famed gospel music singer. Special guest Will Campbell, author/preacher/activist, will introduce a new documentary about his life entitled "God's Will." For more information, call 601/446-6345 or 800/942-6724 or visit the NLC website at www.natchezlit.org.

The MDAH Historic Preservation Division is preparing a Comprehensive Statewide Historic Preservation Plan for Mississippi for the years 2000-2004 and invites public comment. To order a copy, phone 601/359-6955 or email msshpo@mdah.state.ms.us.

Civil War Songs To Be Performed

Jim Woodrick, MDAH Civil War historian, and reenactor Tim Waltman will perform Civil War music of the North and the South at 12 noon on Monday, April 3, at the Manship House Museum, Jackson. The program is free, and the public is invited. Call 601/961-4724 for more information.

Conference for the Book April 7-9

The Seventh Oxford Conference for the Book will be held at the University of Mississippi April 7-9, featuring readings, lectures, and discussions by eminent authors, a roundtable lunch, and a party honoring conference participants. Acclaimed fiction writers on hand will include novelists Rick Bragg, Robert Olen Butler, Connie May Fowler, William Gay, Barry Hannah, Jeffrey Lent, Lewis Nordan, and Darcy Steinke; nonfiction writers John M. Barry, Peter Applebome, and Anthony Walton; and poets Anglea Ball, Brooks Haxton, and Claude Wilkinson. A special session, "Homage to Willie Morris's South," will be presented on Friday, April 7, by University of Mississippi professor Ted Ownby. The conference is open to the public free of charge. To assure seating space, those interested in attending should preregister. Reservations and advanced payment are required for the cocktail party on Friday (\$25) and brunch on Sunday (\$15). To register, call the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, 662/232-5993. Conference posters, illustrated with Mildred Nungester Wolfe's portrait of Willie Morris, are available for \$10 each, plus shipping and handling. To order, call 800/390-3527.

To celebrate PRESERVATION WEEK, May 14-20, order a kit with free poster and tips on promotion. Call the NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION, 202/588-6141.

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MISSISSIPPI

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What's New...

May 1, 2000



New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, Estill, Mississippi (c. 1918)

Natchez Literary Celebration Focuses on "Sacred South"

The 11th annual Natchez Literary Celebration, June 1-3, 2000, will explore the spirituality of the South, past, present, and future.

The theme of the conference is "The Sacred South: Writings from the Bible Belt," with



Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Rodney, Mississippi (c. 1867-68)

scholars and writers scheduled to discuss religious beliefs of Native Americans, slaves, Jews, fundamentalists, and others.

There will also be relevant theater productions, historic-site tours, awards presentations, and lectures.

MORE

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Elbert R. Hilliard, Director



Civil War relics

Identify Family Heirlooms

A series of weekend programs, "Personal Treasures: Their Identification and Care," will be held at the Old Capitol Museum over the next two months. Raid your attic for historical materials, and let the experts tell their stories.

- May 5-6: archaeological artifacts
- May 19-20: photographs, books, maps, and other paper items
- June 9-10:

Positions Available

textiles

- June 16-17: military items
- June 23-24: architectural elements and household furnishings

All workshops are held 10-3 Fridays and Saturdays in the Senate Chamber.

*The 11th Annual
Natchez Literary Celebration presents:*

The ***Sacred South:***
WRITINGS FROM THE BIBLE BELT
June 1-3, 2000 - Natchez, Mississippi

The award-winning event includes lectures by authors and scholars; the play, "The Scopes Trial"; films; tours; book signings; exhibits and much more. Most events are free or low-cost.



For information and tickets:

1-601-446-6345

1-800-647-6724

www.colin.cc.ms.us/nlc

Headquarters: Natchez City Center, 215 Franklin St.

Sponsors are Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Natchez National Historical Park and Alcorn State University.

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