

# Black History Month

## Black History Month Programs

### Old Capitol Museum

On Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout February, from 9 to 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. to noon at the Old Capitol Museum of Mississippi History, Jackson, fourth-through ninth-grade students may attend a **program** and take an **interpretive tour** of the museum, learning about the contributions of African Americans to Mississippi history. Reservations are required. For more information call 601/ 576-6920. *Funding provided by BellSouth.*

### Historic Jefferson College

During February local and regional classes of first- and fourth-graders will make field trips to Historic Jefferson College, Washington, to learn about HJC's African American craftsman **Nathan Bennett and the African prince Ibrahima**, who was captured and became a slave. For information call 601/ 442-2901.

## Notable Women

from MDAH compiled list of notable women of Mississippi

**Ruby Pearl Elzy** (1908-1943), an African American soprano who sang on Broadway for years (as Ruby Elzy Jones), was born in Pontotoc, Mississippi. She attended Rust College and Ohio State University and received a Rosenwald fellowship to the Julliard School in New York. She made her debut on Broadway in 1930. She was well known for her role as Serena in productions of

Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, which she performed more than 800 times between the opera's 1935 premiere and her death in 1943. In December of 1937 Elzy sang at the White House for Eleanor Roosevelt. Elzy is buried in the Pontotoc City Cemetery; her childhood home is at 169 W. Bolton St., Pontotoc.

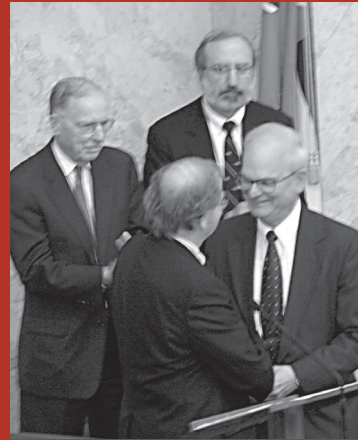
## Mississippi History NOW

*Mississippi History NOW's* February feature is an article on the **WPA Slave Narratives** by Professor Neil R. McMillen. McMillen writes of the interviews with ex-slaves conducted from 1936 through 1938 by the Federal Writers' Project, a unit of the Works Progress Administration. McMillen, author of *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow*, and professor emeritus of history at the University of Southern Mississippi, suggests that a careful reader "approach these old records with an open mind, with a good foundation in United States history, and with a recognition that human experience varies widely."

Narratives from slaves who lived in Mississippi are linked to the *NOW* Web site, <http://mshistory.k12.ms.us>.

**MHS**  
**Annual Meeting**  
**March 3–5 Jackson**  
**Call 601/576-6849**

## Hilliard Honored



Elbert R. Hilliard (right front) is congratulated January 12 by Representative Sid Bondurant, principal author of House Concurrent Resolution 10 honoring Hilliard on the occasion of his retirement. Looking on are (left) William F. Winter, MDAH Board president, and (right) new MDAH director H. T. Holmes. During the presentation Hilliard received several standing ovations.

## New Books

In *Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America*, Fergus M. Bordwich argues that it was the Underground Railroad and not the civil rights movement that was this country's first racially integrated, religiously inspired campaign for social change. David Levering Lewis, author of the two-volume biography of W. E. B. DuBois, writes, "*Bound for Canaan* recaptures this grand, edifying history of the first black migration to freedom with the insightfulness, comprehensiveness, and narrative vigor the subject demands." From HarperCollins's Amistad Series, \$29.95.

*The Reconstruction of Southern Debtors: Bankruptcy After the Civil War*, by Elizabeth Lee Thompson, tells how the Bankruptcy Act of 1867 helped shape the course and outcome of Reconstruction. In this first study of the operation of the 1867 Act,

Thompson challenges previous works that maintained that 19<sup>th</sup>-century southerners uniformly opposed federal bankruptcy laws as threatening extensions of federal power. Because most beneficiaries were propertied white men, the Act served to stabilize the postwar economic—and thus social and political—power of the sector that included leading secessionists. From the University of Georgia Press, cloth, \$39.95.

*Watching Jim Crow: The Struggles Over Mississippi TV, 1955-1969*, by Steven D. Classen, describes the era when local stations blocked broadcasts about integration, telling audiences that the content of the *Today Show*, for example, was "network news . . . representing the views of the northern press." Classen shows how African Americans successfully transformed two local Jackson TV stations, WLBT and WJTV, in the 1950s and 1960s. From Duke University Press, paper, \$21.95.

## MHC To Honor NOW Site

The Mississippi Humanities Council will honor its 2004 award winners at the annual Awards Dinner on February 4, 2005, at 6 p.m. at the Hilton Jackson, according to Barbara Carpenter, executive director. The public is invited. At the dinner the Mississippi Historical Society will be recognized with the Chair's Award for its *Mississippi His-*

*tory NOW* Internet publication, a project supported by numerous individuals, corporate sponsors, foundations, the Department of Education, MHC, and MDAH. MHS president Donna Dye and *NOW* project director Peggy Jeanes will accept the award. For information about the Council or the awards dinner, call 601/432-6752.

## Montgomery Studies Project Launched

The Isaiah T. Montgomery Studies Project has been established to encourage and produce political, economic, and cultural studies related to Isaiah T. Montgomery, co-founder of Mound Bayou in Bolivar County and the only black delegate to the Mississippi Constitutional Convention of 1890. Montgomery's speech at the Convention, in which he endorsed the Constitution, has been republished by the Project.

The publication, *What Answer? Speech in Support of Franchise Committee Report, Mississippi Constitutional Convention, 1890*, makes the speech available to scholars and students. The Project also plans to collect other Isaiah T. Montgomery documents and to begin a cultural study of Montgomery's house in Mound Bayou. For more information, email Matthew Holden, Studies Project president, ITMPProject@aol.com.

## Grand Village Archaeology Programs

The 2005 bi-monthly archaeology programs at the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians open with a **slide talk by Robert C. Dunnell on Tuesday, February 1, at 6:30 p.m. entitled "Prehistoric Pottery of the Central Mississippi Valley."** Dunnell has conducted archaeological investigations for the National Park Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Smithsonian Institution. He will also bring pottery examples for discussion. Admission is free, and light refreshments will be served. For information, call 601/446-6502.

## Suggestion Box

The MDAH Historic Preservation Division is developing priorities and objectives for fiscal year 2005 Historic Preservation Fund-assisted programs. Suggestions and comments from the public in regard to proposed priorities, objectives, and projects are invited. Please address correspondence to Kenneth H. P'Pool, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, P. O. Box 571, Jackson, MS 39205.

## Glover Moore

Dr. Glover Moore, professor of history at Mississippi State University 1936-1977 and former president of the Mississippi Historical Society, died November 9, 2004, at 93. A meticulous scholar and inspiring teacher, Moore served as mentor and guide to countless students and historians. He is credited with building the graduate history program at the university. He was the author of numerous scholarly publications, most noted among them *The Missouri Controversy, 1819-1821*, published in 1953 and still regarded as the authority on the complex issues that were settled temporarily by the Missouri Compromise. He received many awards and honors during his life, including a volume published by his students, *Southern Miscellany: Essays in*

*Honor of Glover Moore*. In 1989 the Mississippi Historical Society honored Moore through the creation of a prestigious prize awarded to the master's thesis in Mississippi history that is judged as the most outstanding of the previous year.

## Sid F. Graves

Sid Graves, longtime director of the Carnegie Public Library in Clarksdale and founder of the Delta Blues Museum and the Tennessee Williams Festival there, died on Sunday, January 9, 2005. He had also served as director of the South Mississippi Regional Library System in Columbia, Mississippi, and as president of the Mississippi Library Association and had received numerous awards for his work, including the Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts. As director of the first museum devoted to blues music in Mississippi, Graves used his engaging personality to communicate his passion for the music and built a national community of supporters. He is also remembered in Clarksdale for raising enough money to keep the library open on its regular schedule during a year when no funding was available. In addition to his enthusiasm for books, music, and people, Graves was an amateur poet and worked at that craft daily.