

MISSISSIPPI HISTORY

NEWSLETTER

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Welty Painting Installed at Visitors Center

The giant mural of the state fair painted by Eudora Welty eighty years ago and discovered in the basement of her house in 2004 has been installed at the Eudora Welty House Education and Visitors Center. While known for her writing and photography, Welty had an interest in all the arts, including painting. “She took lessons from Marie Hull, and we were surprised when we didn’t find more paintings,” said Mary Alice White, Welty’s niece and former director of the Eudora Welty House. “However, we were *not* expecting to find one of her paintings in the old coal bin.”

The mural, titled “Mississippi State Fair,” merges rural landscape and fairground excitement. Men, women, and children eagerly crowd the foreground. One woman carries a jar of preserves. Another holds up a quilt. Ducks, chickens, and other livestock mingle with cotton candy and balloons as one person consults a map and another reads a book of poems.

“Welty was interested in the state fair for both its dramatic and pictorial possibilities,” said her biographer, Suzanne Marrs. “You see it in her writing and her photography.”

Eric Hays of Sustainable Solutions found the painting while cleaning out the basement



MDAH director of exhibitions John Gardner (standing) directs the installation of the mural.

during renovations. Christine Young, a conservator in Nashville, cleaned the painting. Robin Dietrich, curator of exhibitions at the Mississippi Museum of Art, examined the mural, which was done on two 4-foot-by-7-foot wood panels, and determined that Welty used house paint for it. Dietrich placed the

mural’s creation as circa 1930.

In 2009 as part of the celebration of the 150th Mississippi State Fair, the Museum of Art featured Welty’s photographs of the fair and the mural in the exhibit “Merriment on the Midway.” “Miss Welty’s mural en-

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Longtime Choctaw Chief Phillip Martin Dies at Age 83

Phillip Martin, a longtime chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, died Feb. 4 in Jackson at age 83. As chief, Martin oversaw the tribe’s rise from widespread poverty with the opening of casinos and other businesses on tribal lands outside Philadelphia.

Chief Martin worked closely with the MDAH to preserve and interpret the history of Native Americans in Mississippi.

Under his leadership, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians was an active partner with MDAH in

developing the award-winning exhibit “Mississippi 1500-1800,” which explored the period of earliest contact between



Native Americans and Europeans in Mississippi. The exhibit opening, held at the Old Capitol in 1997, was supported by generous funding from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Phillip Martin was born March 13, 1926, at the Indian hospital in Philadelphia, the third of six children. Following the death of his father in a hit-and-run, Martin went to a boarding school in North Carolina.

After high school he served for a decade in the Air Force.

Martin began his career in tribal governance in 1957 and was elected chief in 1979. In 1981 he persuaded Philadelphia officials to issue bonds to bring the American Greetings company to the Pearl River Reservation. During his 28-year tenure the Choctaws constructed an industrial park and the \$750 million Pearl River Resort.

MDAH Completes \$500,000 Film Digitization Project

The Department of Archives and History has completed a half-million-dollar digitization project for one of its most significant and heavily used resources, the WLBT Newsfilm Collection. The collection is an important documentary source on the civil rights movement in the South from 1954 to 1971

The WLBT Newsfilm Collection was used in the award-winning documentaries *Eyes on the Prize* and *The Murder of Emmett Till*. The collection has also been used by the FBI and the state attorney general's office in civil rights cases.

The collection includes footage of such nationally significant events as the arrival of the Freedom Riders, the Capitol Street Boycott, and

James Meredith's enrollment at the University of Mississippi, as well as civil rights leaders Stokely Carmichael, Medgar Evers, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Martin Luther King.

"Scholars are beginning to use this collection as a source for research on other social and political events of the 1950s and 1960s, such as the Vietnam War, the women's movement, and the space program," said Elaine Owens, whose Image and Sound section handled the digitization project.

The film was shot on location in Jackson and surrounding areas by WLBT news crews and donated to MDAH in 1980. Only about 10 percent of the film and videotapes produced by local broadcast stations 1950-75 survives in public institutions. The vast majority was discarded when the stations transitioned from film to videotape.

MDAH was awarded a \$227,000 Save America's Treasures grant through the U.S. Department of the

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MDAH Volunteers Honored

MDAH held its annual luncheon honoring volunteers at the Old Capitol Inn on February 8, 2010. Attending active volunteers—those serving twelve or more hours

in 2009—worked at sites such as the Eudora Welty House, Manship House Museum, and Old Capitol Museum, as well as in the Museum and Historic Preservation divisions.



Front row, l-r: Carol Busbee, Joyce Ellis, Doris Gibson, Carolyn Jones, Eudora Welty House education coordinator Meemie Jackson, Ann Bittick, Betty Henry, Bettye Jolly, Buena Lee Huff, Old Capitol Museum education historian Maura Johnson; (back row) MDAH director H.T. Holmes, Old Capitol hostess Ruth Cole, Museum Division director of education Stacey Everett, Manship House director Marilyn Jones, Ouida Atkins, volunteer services coordinator Elizabeth Coleman, Beverly Fatherree, Eudora Welty House special projects coordinator Katie Hamm, Lee Anne Bryan, Martha Blount, Carol Kerr, Caroline Hoff, Mike Koskie, Clytice Gardner, and Museum Division director Lucy Allen.



Front row, l-r: Jeanette Waits, Sandra West, Elaine Moss, Fran Thomas, Laura Magee, Margarita Niewald, Alabel Wiser, Janet Clare Smith, Laurean Reynolds, Marion Miles, Museum Division assistant director of collections Nan Prince, Museum Division outreach coordinator Renika Quinn, archaeologist Patty Miller-Beech; (back row) Gilly MacMillan, Sister Simmons, Fred Miles, Megan Russ, Harold Webster, Leo Niewald, Bernie Lieb, Tish Machado, Coleman Lowery, Old Capitol Museum director Clay Williams, Eudora Welty House director Karen Redhead, and Mick Wright.

Scanning of Genealogical Resource Completed

Two volunteers from the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU) have completed scanning of the Enumeration of Educable Children collection, a valuable research tool for people conducting family history research on Mississippi ancestors.

Eugene and Connie Hughes have worked in the Winter Building in Jackson since September of 2009 as part of a joint project between the GSU and MDAH. The Hugheses have completed more than 230,000 scans. The GSU will process and index the images for MDAH within the next year. The digitized collections will be made available online through the department Web site.

The Enumeration of Educable Children was a state census begun in the nineteenth century

to document the number of children ages five to eighteen in various counties. It includes the names and ages of the children and, beginning in 1885, their parents or guardians. Some families who were missed by the state or federal census taker may be listed on the Enumeration of Educable Children. The dates for these records vary by county but can range from the 1850s to the 1950s.

“Right now patrons have to know the county in order to search for a relative in these lists,” said Anne Webster, chief reference librarian. “When the index is completed they can search by name, and that is incredible.”

Upon completing the Enumeration of Educable Children scans the Hugheses have moved



A World War I Statement of Service card for Fox Conner, born in Calhoun County, Mississippi, and later chosen by General John J. Pershing to be the chief of operations for the American Expeditionary Force in France during WWI. Conner was also a mentor of a young Dwight Eisenhower.

on to World War I statement of service cards. These cards provide specifics about a WWI veteran’s service and can be used

to request additional information from the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri.

Budget Cuts Force Saturday Closing at Manship House

Effective March 1, 2010, the Manship House Museum will no longer be open Saturdays. Museum Division director Lucy Allen proposed the closing to the MDAH board of trustees in reaction to budget concerns.

To meet professional requirements, the museum must be staffed with at least two people each Saturday. In addition, an on-site security officer to insure



the safety of the visitors and staff has to be present.

Special programming and

events will continue on select Saturdays throughout the year.

The Manship House Museum interprets the daily life of a middle-class family of the Victorian era. The carefully restored house showcases the exquisite graining and marbling of Charles Henry Manship (1812–1895), as well as many of the family’s original

furnishings. Guided tours of the Manship House are offered free of charge Tuesday through Friday. Throughout the year the museum offers living history demonstrations, workshops, youth programs, and other events.

The Manship House is located at 420 East Fortification Street, Jackson. To learn more, call 601-961-4724 or email info@manshiphouse.com.

WELTY, continued from p. 1

thrilled our visitors,” said Betsy Bradley, director of the Mississippi Museum of Art. “The mural offers viewers vivid, colorful evidence of Miss Welty’s keen wit and humor that are typically

found in her writing.”

The painting is on permanent display in the Welty House Education and Visitors Center. Located at 1109 Pinehurst Street, the Education and Visitors

Center is open free of charge Tuesday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Tours of the Eudora Welty House are offered Tuesdays through Fridays at 9 and 11 a.m. and 1 and 3 p.m. by reservation.

Admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for students, and \$4 for groups of thirteen or more. For more information call 601-353-7762 or email info@eudoraweltyhouse.com.

NEWSFILM, continued from p. 2

Interior in 2006 to undertake the project to preserve the film and make access to the collection easier. The matching grant required MDAH to provide personnel and facilities as well as additional funds. MDAH staff inspected, cleaned, and repaired the original 16mm film before digitizing a portion of the collection.

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History collects and preserves the archival resources of the state, including official government records, books and manuscripts related to Mississippi history, personal papers, newspapers, newsfilm, audio recordings, photographs, and more. These materials are available to the public

free of charge at the William F. Winter Archives and History Building, on the corner of North and Amite Streets in downtown Jackson. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday. For more information call 601-576-6850 or visit www.mdah.state.ms.us.

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H.T. Holmes, director

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MARCH MDAH CALENDAR

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History Is Lunch Series

Noon–1 p.m., William F. Winter Archives and History Building
200 North Street
601-576-6850

Wednesday, March 3—producer Robbie Fisher and MPB director of content Jay Woods will present the film “The Gulf Islands: Mississippi’s Wilderness Shore.”

Wednesday, March 10—Historic Jefferson College historian Clark Burkett presents “Vintage Baseball.”

Wednesday, March 17—Delta State University English professor Elizabeth Sarcone talks about poet Pearl Rivers.

Wednesday, March 24—*Mississippi History Now* editor Peggy W. Jeanes discusses the

award-winning online publication for educators and history buffs.

Manship House Museum
420 E. Fortification Street
601-961-4724
info@manshiphouse.com

Thursdays and Fridays, March 4–April 30, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. *Growing up in Mississippi: 1857 to 1888*. Hands-on activities teach students K-4 what life was like for nineteenth-century children. Free of charge. Reservations required.

Old Capitol Museum
State Street at Capitol
601-576-6920
info@oldcapitolmuseum.com

Tuesday, March 16, 11 a.m. To kick off the new exhibit *Petitions, Protests, and Patriotism: Mississippi Women*

in Preservation, 1890–1950, Natchez Trace Parkway Association president Dot Ward will discuss Mississippian Roane Fleming Byrnes’s work to preserve the Natchez Trace. *Petitions, Protests, and Patriotism* will be on display through May 9. The exhibit features influential women in Mississippi who have led efforts to preserve the state’s invaluable cultural resources.

WASHINGTON

Historic Jefferson College
Highway 61 North
601-442-2901
info@jeffersoncollege.com

Saturday, March 6, 10–11:30 a.m. (ages 6–8) and 2–3:30 p.m. (ages 9–12). *EXPLORE! Sharks*. These ancient masters of the sea strike terror into the hearts of fishermen and swimmers all over the world. But

are they really so scary? \$10 pre-registration fee.

Friday–Sunday, March 19–21. Ladies’ Civil War Academy. Female reenactors in period attire will teach various skills and activities of the Civil War period to aid other reenactors in their historical impressions.

NATCHEZ

Grand Village of the Natchez Indians
400 Jefferson Davis Blvd.
601-446-6502
info@natchezgrandvillage.com

Saturday, March 27, 10 a.m.–8 p.m., and **Sunday, March 28**, noon–5 p.m. *Natchez Powwow*. Native American dancing, music, food, crafts, and jewelry, with members from Indian tribes across the nation. \$5 for adults, \$3 for ages 12 and under.