

MISSISSIPPI HISTORY NEWSLETTER

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Cover photo:

A moonshine still on loan from the Museum of the Mississippi Delta



Eric Foner pictured with Felecia M. Nave, president of Alcorn State University; MDAH director Katie Blount; and Birdon Mitchell, Jr., pastor of Zion Chapel A.M.E. Church in Natchez.

Hiram Revels Celebration

More than 200 people turned out on February 11 at the Old Capitol Museum to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the historic election of Hiram Revels as the first African American elected to the U.S. Congress.

Eric Foner, DeWitt Clinton Professor Emeritus of History at Columbia University, talked about the significance of Revels's election in the Old House Chamber. On January 20, 1870, the Mississippi legislature convened in the same room and elected Revels to the U.S. Senate, where he was seated on February 25, 1870.

"The greatest lesson of Reconstruction is that rights, even when inscribed in the Constitution, can never be taken for granted," said Foner. "If the election of Hiram Revels and hundreds like him seemed to augur a permanent change in our democracy, the subsequent abrogation of those rights in the South, with the acquiescence of the rest of the nation, reminds us that, to alter a celebrated observation of Martin Luther King, Jr., 'the arc of the moral universe' does not always 'bend toward justice.'"

Foner's 1988 book *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877* was a groundbreaking survey of the Reconstruction era.

After Revels left the U.S. Senate, he was appointed president of what is today Alcorn State University, the first public land grant college for African Americans in the nation.



Three descendants of Hiram Revels—Charles Woodson, Melissa Waldon and Harold Woodson—and one descendant of Governor James L. Alcorn—Dabney Coors—traveled from as far away as San Francisco to attend.



Vintage matchbooks provided inspiration for *Mississippi Distilled* coasters, which will be offered as gifts to exhibit visitors. Five designs will be available, each one featuring a vintage drink recipe on one side and a story from the exhibit on the other.

The design of this “Three-Mile Limit” coaster parallels a matchbook cover from the Rising Sun Club that was located in Greenwood. The matchbook is on loan from Tom Henderson and will be featured in the exhibit.

Mississippi Distilled: Prohibition, Piety, and Politics to Open March 21

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History will open *Mississippi Distilled: Prohibition, Piety, and Politics*, an immersive exhibition exploring the state’s tumultuous relationship with alcohol from the colonial period to today. The exhibit will run March 21–November 1, at the Two Mississippi Museums—the Museum of Mississippi History and the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum—in Jackson.

“Prohibition in Mississippi was about more than outlawing alcohol,” said Pamela D. C. Junior, director of the Two Mississippi Museums. “This amazing exhibit shows how women’s rights, alcoholism, poverty, and religion came together at a critical moment in history and continue to impact Mississippi to this day.”

Fascinating artifacts, enticing stories, and surprising images from prehistory to Prohibition will take visitors on a journey that begins with ancient alcohols and the science of spirits through the social problems that led to the Temperance Movement and its role in efforts to expand voting rights for women but not African Americans, end lynching, enact child labor laws, and prevent domestic violence.

Visitors will walk through a saloon façade to learn about unregulated alcohol in the Mississippi Territory. Medicines and original nineteenth-century prescriptions document how whiskey was used to treat everything from the common cold to heart disease and diabetes.

After the wide-spread use of alcohol during early statehood, Mississippians began to fight against alcohol and the social problems it helped fuel. In 1908, Mississippi passed statewide Prohibition—twelve years before national Prohibition became law. The Wettest Dry State gallery depicts the next fifty-eight years in a state where alcohol was supposedly banned and features stories of moonshiners, blues players, bootleggers, lawmakers, gamblers, and enforcement officers.

Mississippi Distilled closes by highlighting the current system of local option elections that keep Prohibition alive in many Mississippi counties. Stories from today’s alcohol industry round out the exhibition.

The exhibit is made possible with the support of Southern Beverage Company, Inc.

Mississippi Distilled Events

- Opening reception with a Roaring Twenties theme, Friday, March 20, 6 p.m.
- Mississippi Mixology, a discussion of cocktail history and demonstrations of popular recipes, Thursday, April 30, 5:30 p.m.
- Homebrew demonstration on Saturday, July 11, noon.
- Sounds of Prohibition, a mix of live performances with the history of juke joints and other drinking establishments, Thursday, September 24, 6 p.m.
- Monthly gallery talk topics will include Stories from the Still, What’s Brewing in Mississippi?, Behind the Scenes, and Agitate, Educate, Legislate!



Nearly \$3M in Preservation Grants Awarded

The MDAH Board of Trustees recently awarded nearly \$3 million for the Community Heritage Preservation Grant program to seventeen preservation and restoration projects. The Community Heritage Preservation Grant program, authorized and funded by the Mississippi Legislature, helps preserve and restore historic properties. Over the life of the program the department has awarded more than \$51 million to 314 projects.

- Natchez Institute**, Natchez, Adams County—\$243,375
- Temple B’Nai Israel**, Natchez, Adams County—\$286,384
- Corinth Coliseum**, Corinth, Alcorn County—\$116,006
- Attala County Courthouse**, Kosciusko, Attala County—\$226,536
- Cleveland Police Station**, Cleveland, Bolivar County—\$53,474
- Millsaps Hotel**, Hazlehurst, Copiah County—\$254,131
- F.B. Woodley Elementary School**, Hattiesburg, Forrest County—\$102,400
- Morning Star School**, Edwards, Hinds County—\$280,000
- Scott Ford House**, Jackson, Hinds County—\$30,025
- Kemper County Courthouse**, DeKalb, Kemper County—\$288,000
- John W. Boddie House**, Tougaloo, Madison County—\$142,819
- Spain House**, Tupelo, Lee County—\$63,364
- Old Water and Light Plant**, Holly Springs, Marshall County—\$151,086
- Marks Rosenwald School**, Marks, Quitman County—\$198,315
- Senatobia High School**, Senatobia, Tate County—\$250,000
- Union County Courthouse**, New Albany, Union County—\$196,560
- Woodville Town Hall**, Woodville, Wilkinson County—\$91,944

On the recommendation of the Mississippi National Register Review Board, the U.S. Department of the Interior approved adding the following to the National Register of Historic Places:

- **Mount Olive Historic District**, Mount Olive, Covington County
- **Southwest Midtown Historic District**, Jackson, Hinds County
- **Upper Midtown Historic District**, Jackson, Hinds County
- **Rolling Acres Historic District**, Vicksburg, Warren County



New Historic Preservation Division Director Named

Barry White is the new director of the Historic Preservation Division, which administers the National Register of Historic Places, Certified Local Government program, Mississippi Landmark program, and the Historical Marker program. White oversees archaeology, architectural history, and preservation of the state’s historic properties and sites. He received his BA and MA in applied anthropology with a focus in historic preservation from Mississippi State University.

“It is a privilege to lead this division to develop and implement programming for the identification, documentation, and preservation of cultural resources throughout our state,” said White.

White began his career with MDAH in 2013 as a local government assistance coordinator. Since then, he has held multiple positions, such as the Mississippi Department of Transportation and MDAH liaison, and most recently, the deputy director of the Historic Preservation Division.

White has seven years of historic preservation experience. As deputy director, he worked carefully with the division to identify and advocate for cultural resources, promote preservation of the state’s historic schools and colleges, and partner with communities to create historic preservation programs and development initiatives.

“The most satisfying projects for us are the ones that help Mississippians promote their local historic resources to tell their own stories,” said White.

Program Highlights



Christmas by Candlelight Tour



A Tribute to the King at the Old Capitol Museum



MLK Night of Culture at the Two Mississippi Museums



History Happy Hour at the Two Mississippi Museums



Teddy Bear Tea at the Old Capitol Museum



6,000 attend MLK Weekend at the Two Mississippi Museums

MDAH Surveys Architecture of Slavery in Natchez



Slave quarters at The Grove plantation near Natchez

The Historic Preservation Division of MDAH is working to uncover the histories of slave life in Mississippi through the Natchez Outbuilding Survey, a partnership between MDAH and the Historic Natchez Foundation.

The project is a study of nineteenth-century structures built adjacent to grand houses, such as kitchens, smokehouses, agricultural buildings, medical offices, slave quarters, and other buildings.

The Natchez Outbuilding Survey is just one of the new initiatives launched by MDAH to expand interpretation and improve visitor experiences to historic sites in the Natchez area, including the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians, Historic Jefferson College, and Windsor Ruins.

“We are discussing these outbuildings in a meaningful way to dive deeper into the history of slavery in Natchez,” said Jennifer Baughn, MDAH chief architectural historian. “The buildings must talk to us because there is no one left from that era who can tell us their story.”

Natchez was the location of Forks of the Road, one of the largest slave markets in the U.S. The city was also home to what surveyors have termed “suburban villas,” built by wealthy planters who acquired their fortunes from cotton cultivation and slave labor. These homes were the epitome of the sophisticated Southern lifestyle. The slaves who toiled in these homes lived and worked in service buildings that were detached from the main house.

“It is important for these buildings to be acknowledged and documented so the public can learn more about nineteenth-century life in Mississippi,” said James Bridgforth, MDAH National Register assistant coordinator.

MDAH staff have recorded architectural information for existing outbuildings on sites in Natchez, such as Auburn, D’Evereaux, and Melmont, and surrounding

areas. Architectural historians examine the floor plans of slave outbuildings, the locations of windows and doors, circulation patterns between the outbuildings and main house, and lines of sight between buildings.

“It was very intentional that the landscape of most of these outbuildings would have been designed as a control mechanism for slave owners to supervise their slaves,” said Baughn. “Most outbuildings would be surrounded by a courtyard in a U-shaped area or within the line of sight of the main house.”

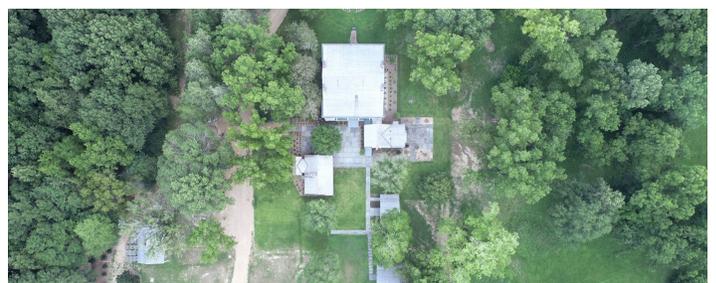
Researchers estimate the city has more than 200 existing slavery-related sites, likely the largest concentration in the nation. The survey will continue in two phases to document and study outbuildings for future interpretation, preservation, and scholarship about the Natchez slave pilgrimage tours and the history of slavery in the state.

Once the photographs, floorplans, and descriptions of the buildings are complete, they will be compiled into a multiple property listing submission to the National Register of Historic Places.

“We have all this history basically in our backyard,” said Meredith Massey, MDAH Certified Local Government coordinator. “As historians, we are finding things that fit into the puzzle of these outbuildings like the video game Tetris. We hope to tell the larger significant story of slavery in the deep South.”



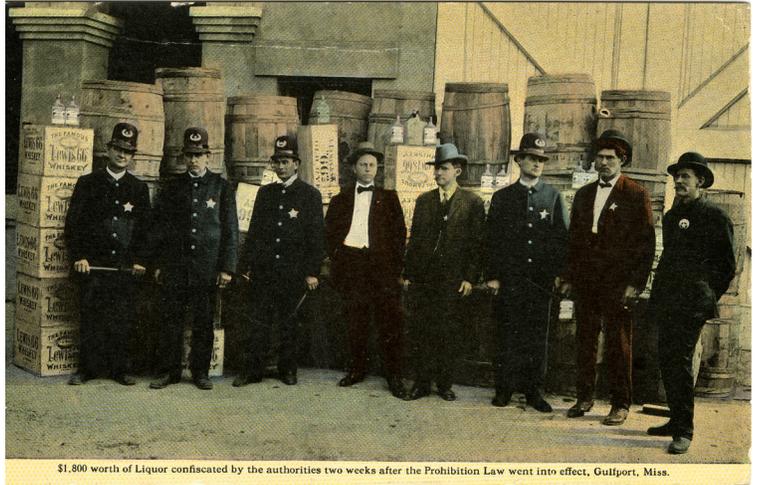
Dairy at Auburn, a suburban villa in Natchez



Aerial photograph showing Wyolah plantation, including outbuildings, near Church Hill in Jefferson County

From the Archive

This postcard from the Cooper Postcard Collection, showing a 1909 photograph, is featured in *Mississippi Distilled*. The title reads: “\$1,800 worth of Liquor confiscated by the authorities two weeks after the Prohibition Law went into effect, Gulfport, Miss.”



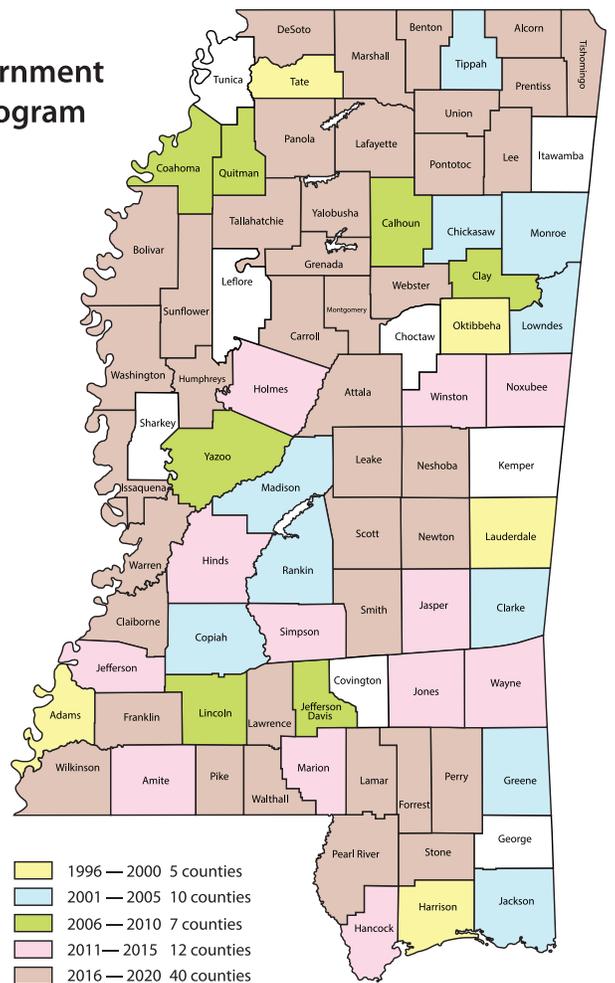
\$1,800 worth of Liquor confiscated by the authorities two weeks after the Prohibition Law went into effect, Gulfport, Miss.



From the Collection

Mississippi Distilled features alcohol containers of various types, including this one-gallon, stoneware whiskey jug from 1900. The words “Vic. Trolio, whiskies, Canton, Miss.” are stenciled on the surface.

Local Government Records Program



Since 1996, Mississippi counties and cities have been required by law to keep government records in compliance with guidelines established by MDAH. Counties were given the option, through the law, to add a \$1 fee to the fees already charged for filing documents. Though the program took hold slowly, with only 15 counties participating after the first decade, it has grown tremendously in recent years—to 74 counties in the first quarter of 2020.

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Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Eric Foner
at the Old Capitol Museum

Mark Your Calendar

Bettye Jolly Lecture

Thursday, March 19, 2020, 4:30 p.m.

New York Times best-selling novelist and poet Ron Rash will speak at the Eudora Welty House & Garden in Jackson. A book signing and reception will follow.

Medgar Wiley Evers Lecture Series

Thursday, May 7, 2020, 6 p.m.

Princeton University professor Eddie Glaude Jr. will deliver the 2020 Evers Lecture at the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson.

Mississippi Makers Festival

Saturday, May 9, 2020, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.

Held on the Entergy Plaza at the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson, this festival will feature Mississippi artisans, live music, make-and-take activities, food trucks, and local breweries.