

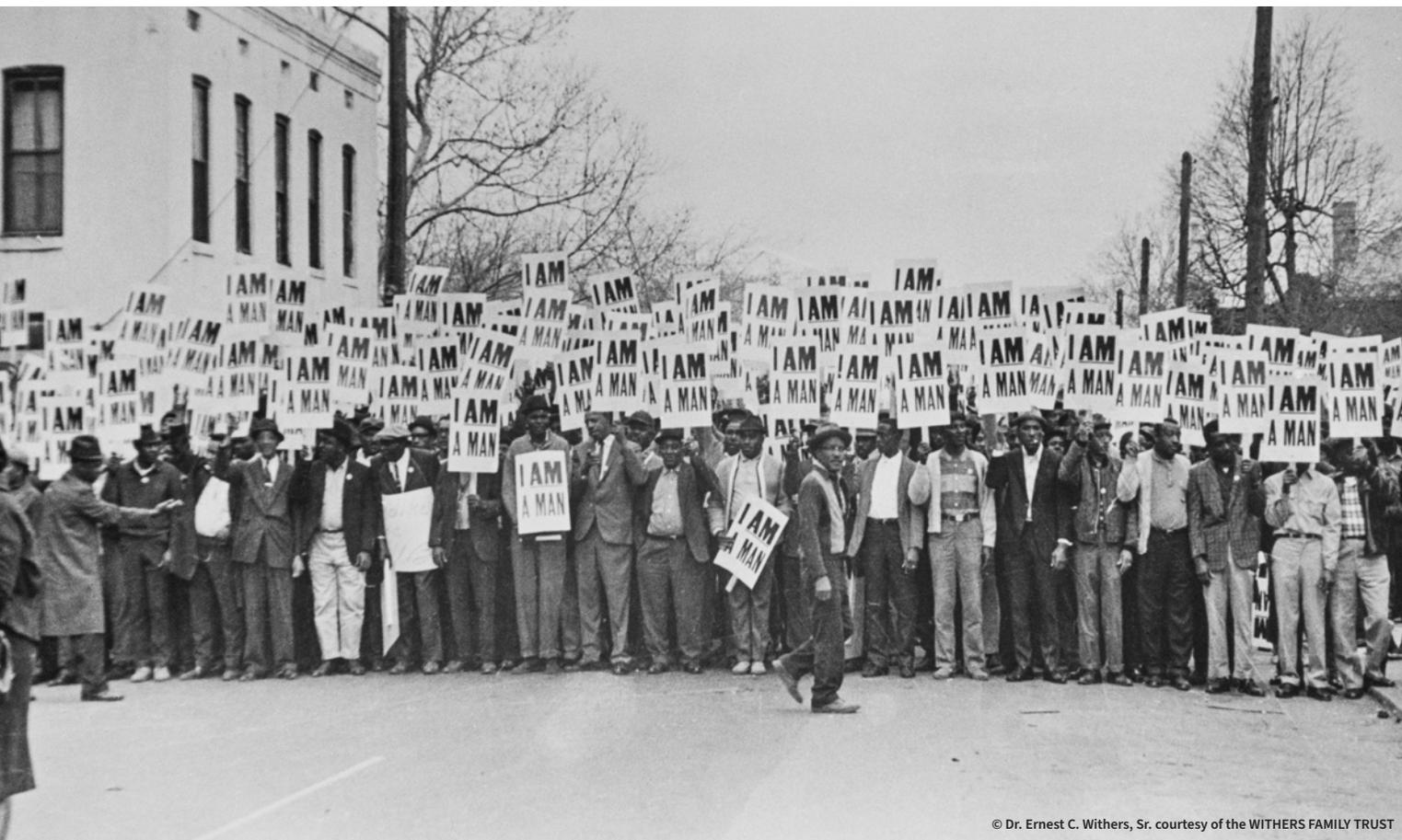
MISSISSIPPI HISTORY NEWSLETTER

MDAH
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
ARCHIVES & HISTORY

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In Memoriam



Clockwise from top left: Governor William F. Winter in 1971, with Myrlie Evers in 2013, and with MDAH staff in front of the Two Mississippi Museums in 2017.

William F. Winter, our Friend

Just before Christmas, we lost William F. Winter, former governor and a dear friend and leader of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

He served on our board of trustees for more than fifty years and was president for nearly that long. No one has had a greater impact on this department.



What I will remember about this extraordinary human being is more than his accomplishments. What I will remember is his humanity, the way he treated everyone in his life, the way he treated all of us—his warmth, his humor, his respect for everyone whose path he crossed.

I think about that every day, and I miss him, and I am grateful to have had the experience of knowing and working with him over so many years.

Katie Blount



Don Sturkey, courtesy University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library

***I AM A MAN* Photography Exhibition Showcases the Power of Protest in the American South, 1960–1970**

The special exhibition *I AM A MAN: Civil Rights Photographs in the American South, 1960–1970* at the Two Mississippi Museums features a wide range of images that captured key events of the Civil Rights Movement across the South.

The exhibit takes its name from the slogan used by striking sanitation workers in Memphis. First shown in Montpellier, France, at the Pavillon Populaire in 2018, the photographs in *I AM A MAN* document the hope and determination of the Civil Rights Movement in the face of oppression and violence.

William R. Ferris—Joel R. Williamson Eminent Professor of History Emeritus at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, former chairman of the National Endowment of the Humanities, and founding director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi—curated the original exhibition.

The exhibition's Mississippi focus includes photographs of James Meredith's integration

of the University of Mississippi in 1962, events surrounding the murder of Vernon Dahmer in 1966, and the Poor People's Campaign in 1968.

“These photographs are vessels of truth—truth about the courage of protestors who faced unimaginable violence and brutality,” said Ferris. “The photographs capture the quiet determination of elders and the angry commitment of the young, and they also remind us how far we have to go. Photographs taken in Mississippi underscore Governor William Winter’s remark that we are ‘halfway home, and a long way to go.’”

The seventeen photographers include Norman Dean, Doris Derby, Roland L. Freeman, Bruce Hilton, Robert Langmuir, Warren Leffler, James “Spider” Martin, Calvert McCann, Winfred Moncrief, Jim Peppler, Bruce Roberts, Art Shay, Don Sturkey, and Ernest C. Withers.

The *I AM A MAN* exhibit will run through August 21, 2021.



Nearly \$3M in Preservation Grants Awarded

The MDAH Board of Trustees recently awarded nearly \$3 million on behalf of the Community Heritage Preservation Grant program to eighteen projects. The Community Heritage Preservation Grant program, authorized and funded by the Mississippi Legislature, helps preserve and restore historic properties.

House on Ellicott's Hill, Natchez, Adams County—\$210,400

Natchez City Hall, Natchez, Adams County—\$157,056

Corinth Coliseum Theater, Corinth, Alcorn County—\$236,234

Chickasaw County Courthouse, Houston, Chickasaw County—\$226,677

G. L. Hawkins Elementary, Hattiesburg, Forrest County—\$35,200

Franklin County Courthouse, Meadville, Franklin County—\$144,388

Wechsler School, Meridian, Lauderdale County—\$277,154

(Old) Monticello Elementary, Monticello, Lawrence County—\$40,000

Stephen D. Lee House, Columbus, Lowndes County—\$25,600

Tennessee Williams House, Columbus, Lowndes County—\$35,000

Old Madison County Jail, Canton, Madison County—\$250,250

Marion County Courthouse, Columbia, Marion County—\$225,940

Isaac Chapel (Rosenwald School), Byhalia, Marshall County—\$268,744

Noxubee County Library, Macon, Noxubee County—\$200,044

Pontotoc County Courthouse, Pontotoc, Pontotoc County—\$239,753

Quitman County Courthouse, Marks, Quitman County—\$184,792

(Old) Vicksburg Library, Vicksburg, Warren County—\$103,370

Southern Cultural Heritage Foundation, Vicksburg, Warren County—\$89,056



Donor Story: Worth Thomas

The Worth Thomas Foundation's \$25,000 donation to the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum was inspired by Thomas's family history of activism and justice.

Thomas's first teacher was his mother, Bernice Cummings Thomas, who believed that every person should be involved in community work. Her position mirrored those of Thomas's grandfather, William C. Cummings, his great aunt, Ann Lou Cummings Jenkins, and his mentor, Obie Clark, each of whom fought for a better life for Black Mississippians.

Cummings, the son of enslaved parents, lived to age 87, primarily in a rural area of Itawamba County near Fulton. He was a farmer, an evangelist, a veteran, and an educator—occupations that emphasized the values of selflessness and servant-leadership that he instilled in his children. "He wanted equal opportunity for all, along with the right to fully participate in the political process as a voter," Thomas said.

Cummings and his sister, Ann Lou Cummings Jenkins, were fired from their jobs at the Fulton Negro School in retaliation for their civil rights activism. They were undeterred. "They helped me understand that 'No' should never be the final answer when there is injustice," Thomas said. While in his early years, Thomas traveled the state with Obie Clark, who served as first vice president of the Mississippi NAACP. This work exposed him to state and national leaders.

Thomas hopes his donation will inspire his children and grandchildren to leave a legacy of social action as well. A plaque on the donor wall reads "Alijah, Justice, Whitley, and Worth Thomas." Pictured: Thomas with grandchildren, Justice and Alijah.

To learn more about giving opportunities, contact Laney McDonald at 601-576-6767 or lmcdonald@mdah.ms.gov.

Program Highlights



Michael Vinson Williams, University of Texas El Paso professor, discusses Medgar Evers's life for #UnderTheLight.



I AM A MAN Opening at the Two Mississippi Museums



MLK Free Weekend at the Two Mississippi Museums



Kristen Burton, a curriculum specialist at the World War II Museum, discusses teaching with oral histories at the MDAH virtual Fall Teachers Workshop.



Author Ron Rash discusses his book *In The Valley* for the #WeltyAtHome book club.



Artifact Washing Day at the Two Mississippi Museums



Veterans Day at the Two Mississippi Museums

Eudora Welty House & Garden Awarded \$10,000 Grant to Expand Garden Programming and Create Audio Tour

The Eudora Welty House & Garden received a \$10,000 grant to preserve and promote heirloom flowers and trees at the historic site. The grant from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust will fund production of an audio tour for visitors to the garden and programs to teach sustainable gardening practices.

The audio tour will feature quotes from Welty's letters and fiction, music, and nature sounds from the garden. Guests will be able to access the audio tour with their mobile phones as they stroll through the garden.

"We are excited to offer visitors an audio tour of the Welty garden," said Katie Blount, director of MDAH. "To hear Mary Alice Welty White read her aunt's words about the flowers she and her mother nurtured adds an intimacy to the garden tour, which is closer now to the experience of walking through her house."

Master Gardener Susan Haltom (pictured) will deliver the audio narrative about the garden's flowers and plants. The grant funding will also allow staff members to host a series of workshops encouraging home gardeners to appreciate, plant, and propagate



pollinator-friendly heirloom ornamentals. In addition, the grant will cover some costs for specialized floral landscaping for the Welty Garden.

The Welty Garden was planted in 1925 by Eudora's mother, Chestina, and served as a creative retreat for Welty and a source of inspiration for her writing. Restored and cultivated by a group of volunteer gardeners named the "Cereus Weeders" in honor of Welty's night-blooming cereus plant, the Welty Garden is one of only two public botanical gardens in the state.



Nancy Bristow Wins Historical Society Award for Best Book on Mississippi History

A book about the tragic 1970 shooting deaths of James Earl Green and Phillip Gibbs at Jackson State College (now University) has won the Mississippi Historical Society's award for best Mississippi history book of 2020.

Nancy Bristow was given the Book of the Year Award for *Steeped in the Blood of Racism: Black Power, Law and Order, and the 1970 Shootings at Jackson State College* published by Oxford University Press. "As Mississippi and the nation continue to wrestle with the damaging legacies of racism and violence, it is fitting that *Steeped in the Blood of Racism* has won this honor," said Chuck Westmoreland, Delta State University history professor and chair of the book prize committee.

Bristow is chair of the history department at the University of Puget Sound. She teaches twentieth-century US history, with an emphasis on race, gender, and social change.

"This project has meant a great deal to me, because it is a story that is not mine, but which I believe so deeply others need to know," said Bristow. "I consider this an honor earned by those who kept this story alive for decades and decades."

Bristow delivered a lecture for the MDAH *History Is Lunch* series, which can be seen at mdah.ms.gov.

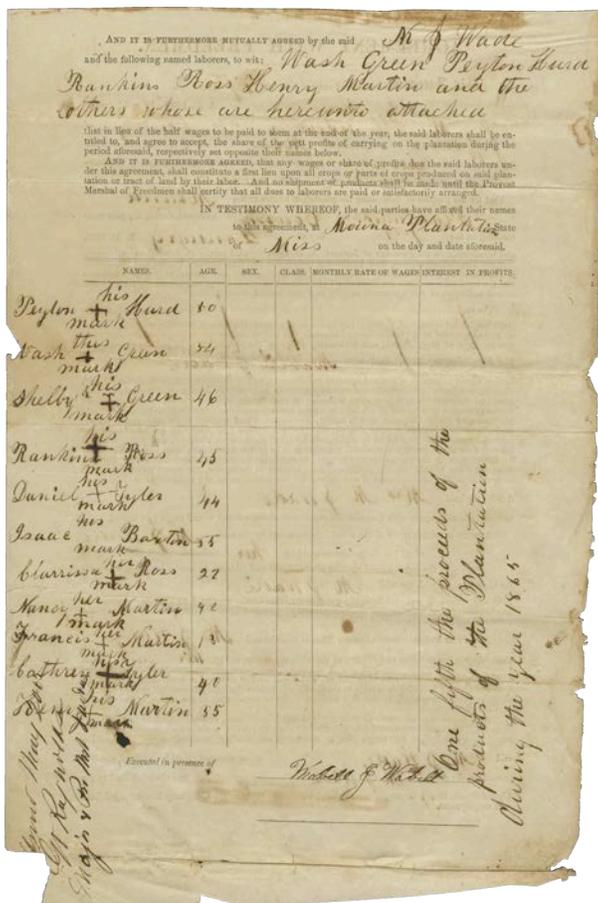


From the Collection

Featured in *Mississippi Distilled: Prohibition, Piety, and Politics*, this silver spoon dates to 1914–18. Spoons like this were used to hold sugar cubes suspended over a glass of absinthe liquor. The drinker would pour ice-cold water over the cubes to sweeten the drink and lower its alcohol concentration. The handle is stamped with the words “Extra Blanc.”

From the Archives

An original 1865 contract between 11 formerly enslaved workers on the Mound Plantation in Jefferson County and its owner, Mabell Wade. The agreed-upon terms were “one fifth the proceeds of the products of the plantation during the year 1865.” Each worker is named in the document and signed with a mark of X. *From the Chamberlain Collection*



Archival Collections

3,000 maps and broadsides

3,719 manuscript collections

2,602 photo collections

6,150 films

123 terabytes born-digital and digitized material

9,875 videos

2,100 audio recordings

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In Memoriam

Meredith Anding Jr., 1941–2021, member of the Tougaloo Nine, civil rights activist, US Air Force veteran, and educator

Wendell “Hobdy” Bryan, 1922–2020, longtime board member of the Amory Regional Museum

Samuel O. McGahey, 1939–2021, MDAH chief archaeologist from 1986 to 2002, author of *Mississippi Projectile Point Guide AR (Archaeological Report) No. 31*, and US Army veteran

Virginia Alice (V. A.) Patterson, 1938–2021, First curator of the Manship House Museum and former executive director of the Craftsmen’s Guild of Mississippi and VSA Mississippi

William F. Winter, 1923–2020, Fifty-eighth governor of Mississippi, past president of MDAH Board of Trustees, past president of the Mississippi Historical Society

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Mark Your Calendar

Beth Ann Fennelly

Thursday, April 22, 2021, 5 p.m.

Through a partnership with the Millsaps College Visiting Writer’s Series, Mississippi Poet Laureate Beth Ann Fennelly will speak at the Eudora Welty House and Garden in Jackson. A book signing and reception will follow.

Mississippi Distilled: Prohibition, Piety, and Politics **Runs through June 26, 2021**

Visit this exhibition at the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson to explore the state’s tumultuous relationship with alcohol throughout its history.

I AM A MAN

Runs through August 21, 2021

This exhibition at the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson features photographs of key events of the Civil Rights Movement across the South.