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MDAH

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
ARCHIVES & HISTORY

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

MDAH Repatriates Native American Ancestors in Continued Commitment to Tribal Partners

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) has repatriated the remains of 95 Native American Ancestors and 1,500 lots of funerary objects to the Chickasaw Nation from sites across northern Mississippi. “We continue to work closely with Tribal representatives and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in our commitment to the repatriation of Native American Ancestors and cultural objects currently held in the care of MDAH,” said Katie Blount, director of the agency. Throughout the process of repatriation, MDAH prioritizes transparency, respect, and connection to the original inhabitants of Mississippi lands. In 2021, MDAH transferred the remains of 403 Native Americans and 83 lots of burial objects to the Chickasaw Nation.

Atomic Alert!: Confronting ‘The Bomb’ in the New Atomic Age Exhibit

In September, the Two Mississippi Museums unveiled *Atomic Alert!: Confronting ‘The Bomb’ in the New Atomic Age*, a free traveling exhibition designed by Overland Traveling Exhibits. The exhibition explored the history of the Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) established to prepare Americans for the perils of the new Atomic Age.

In August 1945, in the waning days of World War II, the United States dropped two atomic bombs on cities in Japan. Four years later, the Soviet Union tested its first atomic weapon, and the Cold War began. Nuclear testing made its way to Mississippi through the detonation of two nuclear devices outside of Hattiesburg. The first test, Project Salmon, occurred in October 1964, and roughly two years later, Project Sterling followed, which used a smaller bomb in the cavity left by the first blast.

The exhibition put a special focus on the educational and volunteer programs of the FCDA, which encouraged the building of bomb shelters, the establishment of neighborhood wardens, and taught children to “duck and cover.” *Atomic Alert!* included a striking artistic interpretation of the impact of a nuclear blast, featuring the silhouette of a bomb roughly the size and shape of the bomb dropped in World War II.

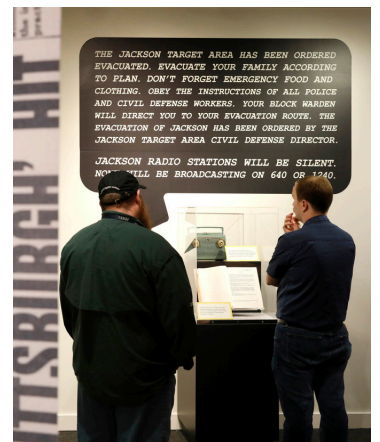
Visitors can immerse themselves in the era with Mississippi artifacts that tell the story of the state’s response to nuclear threat, including stocking civil defense hospital supplies. Other exhibit artifacts include a Geiger counter used to detect ionizing radiation on objects at ground level and a booklet that instructed families who did not have designated shelters on how to construct a shelter within their home. *Atomic Alert!* was developed, designed, built, and toured by Overland Traveling Exhibits and independent Atomic Age Scholar Michael Scheibach. Founding institutions for the exhibition include the Historical and Cultural Society of Clay County in Moorhead, Minnesota.



Atomic Alert! exhibit.



MDAH employee, Tiffanie Herron, attending *Atomic Alert!*



MDAH employees attending *Atomic Alert!*

Elbert R. Hilliard, Former Director of MDAH, Dies

Former director of MDAH, Elbert R. Hilliard, died on March 17, 2024. He became the fifth director of MDAH in 1973, after starting with the agency in 1965. He retired in 2004 after thirty-nine years of public service. Hilliard was named director emeritus of MDAH and continued to support the work of the department. MDAH director Katie Blount said, “Under his leadership, MDAH grew to be a multifaceted historical agency with a national reputation for excellence. His work had a profound impact on the effort to preserve, interpret, and promote Mississippi History.”

Hilliard worked with the Mississippi Legislature to make the State Antiquities Law one of the strongest preservation laws in the country. An avid historian and preservationist, he initiated a grant program to benefit historic properties around the state, including courthouses, schools, museums, and other sites.

Under his leadership, MDAH established a records management program for cities and counties. Hilliard oversaw the funding efforts for the construction of the state-of-the-art William F. Winter Archives and History Building, which was dedicated in 2003.

He served as the secretary-treasurer of the Mississippi Historical Society for forty-four years, from 1973 to 2017. He also served as editor-in-chief for the Journal of Mississippi History throughout his thirty-one years as department director. Brother Rogers, secretary-treasurer for the Society, said, “Mr. Hilliard’s long record of public service is an example for every public official in the state. He dedicated his career to promoting the preservation and understanding of Mississippi history. He will be remembered not only for his achievements, but also for his personal rectitude, humility, and generosity.”



Elbert Hilliard and Charlotte Capers.



Elbert Hilliard with a sign from Whitfield Hospital.



Elbert Hilliard with his wife, Claire Hilliard.



Elbert Hilliard at his desk.



Spence Flatgard Re-elected President to MDAH Board of Trustees

Spence Flatgard of Ridgeland was re-elected as president of the MDAH board of trustees during its regular meeting in Jackson on January 19, 2024.

Members of the MDAH board serve six-year terms and must be confirmed by the state senate. Other members are Carter Burns of Natchez, TJ Taylor of Madison, Reginald Buckley of Jackson, Nancy Carpenter of Columbus, Mark Keenum of Starkville, and Betsey Hamilton of New Albany.

MDAH is the second-oldest state department of archives and history in the United States. The department collects, preserves, and provides access to the archival resources of the state, administers various museums and historic sites, and oversees statewide programs for historic preservation, state and local government records management, and publications.

Flags From Mississippi: Emblems Through Time Exhibit

Flags From Mississippi: Emblems Through Time opened on March 9, 2024, at the Two Mississippi Museums. The exhibit featured 20 flags made from a variety of fabrics, such as wool and silk, and has rarely shown state, national, and military flags. Some were sewn by hand. Highlights included an original Magnolia flag, adopted in 1861 as the first official flag of Mississippi, that was saved by conservators after it became severely fragmented.

The exhibit also included military flags and battle flags captured during the Civil War. Visitors witnessed the First National Flag of the Confederacy, commonly known as the Stars and Bars, which was seized by Samuel Loring Percival Ayers of the *USS Pensacola* at Vicksburg on July 4, 1863. Another highlight was a reproduction of the 5th Heavy Artillery Regimental flag of the United States Colored Troops, an African American regiment formed in Vicksburg that fought in the Battle of Milliken's Bend.

A flag officially adopted by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians in 1994 displayed symbols expressing resilience, progress achieved in the face of adversity, and Choctaw political ties spanning the last 500 years with Mississippi, the United States, Spain, and France.



MDAH employees at *Flags From Mississippi*.



MDAH *Flags From Mississippi*.

Lanterns on the Levee Original Manuscript Donated

The estate of William Alexander Percy donated the original handwritten manuscript of Percy's 1941 autobiography and bestseller, *Lanterns on the Levee: Recollections of a Planter's Son*, to MDAH. Born May 14, 1885, in Greenville, Percy was a Harvard Law School graduate, poet, and owner of Trail Lake Planting Co. In *Lanterns on the Levee*, Percy reflects on pivotal events such as the devastating Mississippi River flood of 1927, as well as the profound societal transformations that occurred in the South during the Progressive Era, World War I, and the Great Depression. Percy died on January 21, 1942, in Greenville at age 56. The donation consisted of nine handwritten notebooks of the manuscript of *Lanterns on the Levee*, in addition to sheet music with Percy's poetry set to musical compositions, and four letters from Percy to Gerstle Mack, biographer of Paul Cezanne. While the collection is being processed, researchers who want to view the manuscript may request access by contacting the archival curator at the William F. Winter Archives and History Building.

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben Elected to MDAH Board of Trustees

At its July 2024 board meeting, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, the fifth democratically elected chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, was elected to the board of trustees of MDAH. Chief Ben is the first Native American and member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians elected to the board. A lifelong resident of the Pearl River community, Chief Ben has a fifteen-year record of public service and leadership to the Choctaw Tribal government, including eight years as the Tribal Council representative for the Pearl River community. He was elected as Tribal Chief in July 2019 and re-elected in 2023. He also served on the Mississippi State Flag Commission, which oversaw the selection of the new state flag that includes a symbol of native territory before statehood.



Chief Cyrus Ben

“Chief Ben brings an excellent background of public service and leadership experience,” said Spence Flatgard, MDAH Board of Trustees president. “MDAH will benefit greatly from his expertise and dedication. We are thrilled to have him on our board.”

Chief Ben holds a bachelor’s degree from Mississippi College and an associate’s degree from East Central Community College.

Reverend Reginald Buckley Elected to MDAH Board of Trustees



Reverend Reginald Buckley

At its December 2024 board meeting, Reverend Reginald Buckley of Jackson was elected to the board of trustees of MDAH. “Reverend Buckley has a wealth of pastoral and leadership experience,” said MDAH board president Spence Flatgard. “I am thrilled he agreed to join our Board. MDAH will benefit greatly from his insight and enthusiasm.” At a meeting of religious leaders convened by MDAH in 2022 through a Lilly Endowment Inc. grant, Buckley outlined plans of the General Missionary Baptist State Convention of Mississippi, Inc. (GMBSC) to make capital improvements to Huddleston Memorial Chapel at historic Natchez College—a historically Black college open from 1884 to 1989. This preservation project is now supported, in part, by the Lilly Endowment grant. Lilly Endowment awarded the grant to the Foundation for Mississippi History through its Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative, a nationwide effort to help museums and other cultural institutions improve the public’s

understanding of the role of religion in the U.S. and the beliefs and practices of diverse religious communities. Buckley has served as a pastor at Cade Chapel Missionary Baptist Church since 2007 and became senior pastor in January 2015. He is president of the General Missionary Baptist State Convention of Mississippi and has served as chairman of the board of trustees for the Mississippi Baptist Seminary. Buckley has served on the board of directors for the Hinds County Economic Development Authority, was a W.K. Kellogg Fellow, and was a member of the inaugural class of the Mississippi Black Leadership Institute.

Foundation for Mississippi History Changes Leadership

At its March meeting, the Foundation for Mississippi History board elected Jonathan Lee as chair and Pat Biglane as vice-chair. Jonathan Lee is a senior vice president and senior principal of member performance at Vizient Incorporated. His current civic engagements include the Fondren Renaissance Foundation, the Mississippi Center for Justice, the Mississippi Symphony Foundation, and the One Percent Commission that oversees the expenditure of funds generated by local option sales tax for infrastructure improvements for the city of Jackson. He had previously served as vice-chair of the Foundation. Pat Biglane is President & CEO at Concordia Bank & Trust Co. He has served on boards for the Natchez-Adams County Chamber of Commerce, Boys & Girls Clubs of both Mississippi and Louisiana, Natchez Inc. Economic Development Authority, Historic Natchez Foundation, Natchez Colored Troops Monument Committee, and other organizations.

MDAH Announces New Director of the Eudora Welty House & Garden

MDAH named Sara Nordin the new director of the Eudora Welty House & Garden (EWHG) in Jackson, Mississippi. The EWHG museum is the home of acclaimed author Eudora Welty, who wrote numerous award-winning fiction and essays. The EWHG opened to the public in 2006 and has drawn visitors throughout the state and across the world. Nordin earned her bachelor's degree from Auburn University, where she studied art history and design. Her career has included roles in high-end hospitality management at the historic Roosevelt New Orleans hotel and cultural education and programming at the Kentuck Knob, a Frank Lloyd Wright house museum. In 2023, Nordin began her career at MDAH as the director of visitor experiences at the Two Mississippi Museums. She supervised front desk operations, coordinated volunteers and group tours, and spearheaded strategic enhancement of visitor engagement.

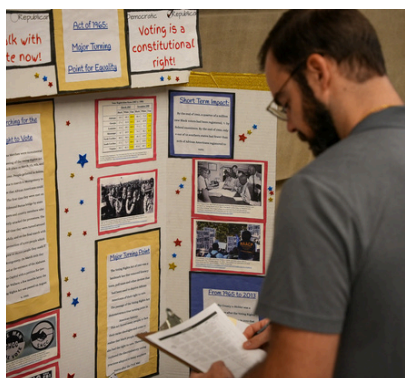
Joy-Ann Reid Speaks at Medgar Wiley Evers Lecture Series



Author Joy-Ann Reid and moderator Ebony Lumumba.

In 2024, Joy-Ann Reid spoke at MDAH's annual Medgar Wiley Evers Lecture Series. Reid, a *New York Times* bestselling author, political commentator, and host of MSNBC's *The ReidOut*, discussed her latest book *Medgar and Myrlie: Medgar Evers and the Love Story That Awakened America*, with event moderator Ebony Lumumba, chair of the English department at Jackson State University. *Medgar and Myrlie: Medgar Evers and the Love Story That Awakened America* traces the lives and legacy of civil rights icons Medgar and Myrlie Evers, situating Medgar Evers's assassination as a catalyzing moment in American history. "MDAH is excited to welcome journalist and author Joy-Ann Reid to Mississippi to deliver the 2024 Medgar Wiley Evers Lecture," said Katie Blount. "This will be the first lecture in the series to focus on the historic accomplishments of Medgar and Myrlie Evers." The Medgar Wiley Evers Lecture Series was established in 2003 to honor the legacy of civil rights leader Medgar Evers, one year after Myrlie Evers made an extraordinary gift to the people of Mississippi when she presented the Medgar and Myrlie Evers papers to MDAH.

Students Compete in Annual Mississippi History Day Competition at Two Mississippi Museums



MDAH employee, Sam Butz at Mississippi History Day.

MDAH hosted the 2024 Mississippi History Day (MHD) competition at the Two Mississippi Museums in April. The competition drew middle and high school students from across the state. MHD, the state's National History Day (NHD) affiliate, is a cross-curriculum program focusing on in-depth research and critical analysis. While the program's basis is in history, students presented topics related to a variety of subjects, such as science, arts, mathematics, foreign language, and culture. The event encourages students to conduct primary and

secondary source research through archives, digital archives, libraries, museums, and historic sites. Sixty-three students competed in thirty-seven projects at MHD, having advanced from the regional competition to the state event. Students participated in one of five categories, organized in two separate divisions, Junior Division (grades 6-8) and Senior Division (grades 9-12). The categories have individual and group options, except for the paper category. First and second place finishers in each group at MHD qualify for the NHD National Contest.

Inaugural Fellow Chosen for Religion in Mississippi History Research Fellow



Religion in Mississippi History Fellow, Summer King.

Summer King, a graduate student at the University of Mississippi, was selected as the inaugural fellow for the Religion in Mississippi History Research Fellowship. King used archival holdings at MDAH to research the spread of Pentecostalism to interracial congregations during Jim Crow segregation. “My research will shed light on Bishop Charles Harrison Mason and his work in starting an interracial Pentecostal movement in Mississippi during the earliest part of the twentieth century and the height of the Jim Crow legislation,” said King.

This fellowship was established by MDAH’s Religion Initiative and funded through Lilly Endowment Inc., the fellowship seeks to encourage research regarding the role of religion in Mississippi history.

2024 Eudora Welty Fellow Named



Eudora Welty Fellow, Gabrielle Bowden.

Gabrielle Bowden, a doctoral student at the University of Mississippi, was named the Eudora Welty Research Fellow for 2024. Bowden used archival holdings in the Eudora Welty Collection housed at MDAH to research the influence of Welty’s travel in Ireland on her 1951 publication “The Burning.”

“In theme and style, ‘The Burning’ feels distinctly Irish; its dark, grotesque, modernist humor reflects the style of Irish contemporaries like Joyce,” said Bowden

Established in 2010 by MDAH and the Eudora Welty Foundation, the fellowship seeks to encourage and support research of the Eudora Welty Collection by graduate students.

2024 Evers Research Fellow Named



Medgar and Myrle Evers Fellow, Keon Burns.

Keon Burns, a dual doctoral candidate in history and Africana studies at Pennsylvania State University, was named the Medgar and Myrle Evers Research Fellow for 2024. Burns examined the records and correspondence of Medgar Evers during his time as Mississippi field secretary for the NAACP, among other archival collections at MDAH. Burns gained insight into the role of Black businesspeople, particularly grocery store owners, and their impact as grassroots activists during the Civil Rights Movement.

The Medgar and Myrle Evers Research Scholars Program is a collaboration between MDAH and the Medgar and Myrle Evers Institute. The program seeks to nurture upper-level graduate students and faculty scholars at the beginning of their academic careers to increase their life-long interest in history, and promote continued academic and public appreciation of Medgar and Myrle Evers’s life and works, the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi, and the struggle for human rights.



Mississippi Civil Rights Museum Places in 2024 USA Today Best History Museum Contest

The Mississippi Civil Rights Museum placed fourth in USA Today's 10 Best Readers' Choice Travel Awards contest for Best History Museum in the United States. The Mississippi Civil Rights Museum placed among twenty prestigious American museums, such as the Heinz History Center, the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, the National Air and Space Museum, and the Cincinnati History Museum among others.

USA TODAY 10 Best Readers' Choice Awards first nominated the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum in the fall of 2023. The online contest ran January 15 through February 12, with contest rules allowing the public to vote online for one nominee per category, per day.

Mississippi Civil Rights Museum Wins Tripadvisor's® 2024 Travelers' Choice® Award

The Mississippi Civil Rights Museum has been recognized in Tripadvisor's® Travelers' Choice® Awards for 2024. The award honors businesses that consistently earn great reviews, placing them among the top ten percent of listings around the world on Tripadvisor.

As the world's largest guidance platform, Tripadvisor has unparalleled authority with travelers and diners. This award is based on genuine feedback from anyone in the community who has visited and left an authentic, firsthand review on Tripadvisor over a twelve-month period, making it a valuable and trustworthy designation of great places to visit.

"We are honored to be included among travelers' favorites this year," said Michael Morris, director of the Two Mississippi Museums—the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum and Museum of Mississippi History. "While we're grateful to all our visitors, this recognition also reflects the commitment of our staff, donors, and members who support work to tell Mississippi's stories."

MDAH Receives Three Southeastern Museums Conference (SEMC) Awards

During the recent SEMC award luncheon in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, MDAH was recognized with the following awards:

- Silver Award in the poster category for the Two Mississippi Museums 2024 Makers Fest Poster.
- Silver Award in digital education over \$10,000 budget category for MDAH Digital Snapshots—exhibits designed to introduce to a broader audience lesser-known, selected collections from the state agency's Digital Archives Collection.
- Bronze Award in the gallery guides category for the Two Mississippi Museums Family Guide.

SEMC is a nonprofit membership organization, is an association of museums, museum staff, independent professionals, and corporate partners. They focus on the Southeastern United States. "These resources created by our staff and partners allow visitors to immerse themselves in Mississippi's history and culture and empower people and communities to tell their own stories," said director Katie Blount. The poster and family guide were submitted to the SEMC Publication Design Competition, which rewards excellence in graphic design in southeastern museum publications. The MDAH Digital Snapshots were an entry in the SEMC Technology Competition that recognizes effective design, accessibility, creativity and pride in work, and recognition of institutional identity. The MDAH Digital Snapshots are developed in partnership with the University of Southern Mississippi's Digital Humanities Center.



Foundation for Mississippi History Awarded \$225,000 for Margaret Ann Crigler Park

The Foundation for Mississippi History was awarded \$225,000 by the Mississippi Arts Commission for the construction of Margaret Ann Crigler Park in Jackson. The foundation is one of twenty organizations in Mississippi awarded a Building Fund for the Arts grant for 2025.

Margaret Ann Crigler Park will be adjacent to the Two Mississippi Museums and will include a large open green space, an outdoor stage, and a natural play area for children. A new anchor on the city's museum trail, a walking and biking trail that connects the museums at LeFleur's Bluff to museums downtown, Crigler Park will feature Mississippi's native foliage.

Plans for Margaret Ann Crigler Park align with the original layout for Jackson from 1822, which included public green space on alternating blocks. Only two of the original parks remain: the Old Capitol Green and Smith Park. MDAH has selected Perkins&Will, a national architecture firm that specializes in park design, to develop Crigler Park. The park will be open to the public every day from dawn until dusk.

MDAH Hosts Windsor Ruins Programs in Port Gibson

On December 3, MDAH hosted a community engagement program titled "The Untold Stories of Enslavement at Windsor" in Port Gibson. The program was funded by a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council, with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The featured speaker, Hasan Kwame Jeffries, an associate professor of history at The Ohio State University, explored the historical context of the 19th-century cotton boom that led to the establishment of the Windsor plantation. Jeffries also addressed the challenges of uncovering and presenting the narratives of enslaved individuals in historical interpretations of sites like Windsor.



Hasan Kwame Jeffries speaking at MDAH program, The Untold Stories of Enslavement at Windsor.



Community members attending MDAH program, The Untold Stories of Enslavement at Windsor.

MDAH Hosts Vicksburg Project Community Engagement Sessions

MDAH hosted two community sessions to introduce the public to a new interpretive center being planned in conjunction with the Vicksburg National Military Park. The project is a collaboration of the MDAH, the Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park & Campaign (FOV), and the National Parks Service at the Vicksburg National Military Park.

"From these sessions, the public will have opportunities to learn about the partnership project, our goals, and engage with us as we move forward with the development of the new center," said Megan Bankston, Vicksburg project manager at MDAH. The new interpretive center in Vicksburg has a projected 2028 opening.

Grand Village of the Natchez Indians

MDAH plans to revitalize the current facilities at the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians site in Natchez, MS. The site will preserve both the history of the Natchez people and where they are today, and the history of the site after the Natchez left. Work continues on both the new building and the exhibit design. MDAH received the exhibit schematic design package from the Ralph Appelbaum (RAA) team in late August and is continuing to review it with our Tribal partners and scholar advisors. Initial theme and content edits are underway with their guidance. RAA has also resumed branding work following the new site name—Natchez Tribal Cultural Center. Architect Eley Guild Hardy continues to move through design development, with 50% DD completion reached at the end of September.



Renderings of the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians update



New Roofs and drains on Carpenter Hall.



Construction of the steward's porch.

Historic Jefferson College

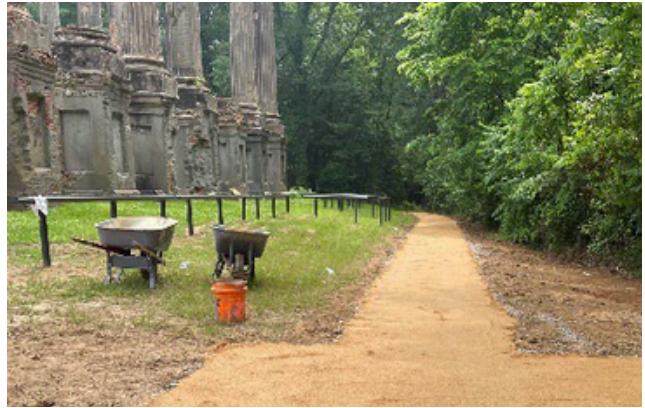
Historic Jefferson College is the birthplace of Mississippi's statehood in 1817. Established in 1802, the school was the first institution of higher learning chartered in the Mississippi Territory. It is currently closed to visitors during MDAH's rehabilitation of the eight buildings on campus for use as an interpretive center and preservation field school. The center will share pivotal stories in American history with a focus on cotton, slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. Roof replacement and associated repairs on Prosperie and Carpenter Hall were completed in June of 2024 in anticipation of the upcoming interactive center and historic field school, where students from across the country can gain hands-on experience in preservation trades. Materials for phase 2 of the roof work have begun on site, which include the rebuilding of the Steward's porch, and addressing the roofs on the East and West Wings. Initial meetings on the emergency repairs to the President's House began in September with architects Shafer Zahner Zahner. After additional building inspection and review with the contractor and Historic Preservation staff, the maintenance shed rehabilitation will not take place due to extreme material deterioration and structural damage. The shed will be demolished as part of the phase 2 work.

Windsor Ruins

Windsor Ruins, one of Mississippi's most iconic places, is the historic site of Windsor plantation, where twenty-nine enormous columns were left standing after a fire in 1890. Now, there are twenty-three full columns and five partial columns at the site. MDAH completed stabilization work on the columns in 2023. Throughout 2024, Windsor Ruins has undergone massive improvements. Site work included restoration of the surviving capitals, installation of a walking path around the perimeter, a rail system, and new interpretive signage.



New walking path and rails at Windsor Ruins.



New walking path and rails at Windsor Ruins.

Vicksburg Interpretive Center

The Vicksburg Civil War Visitor Center will be a new interpretive museum connecting tourists, history buffs, and students with a pivotal chapter in American history. The Vicksburg Civil War Visitor Center is a state of Mississippi project, administered by MDAH. The center will explore the Vicksburg campaign and its legacy and impact on the America we know today. The museum will engage visitors in a way that will bring the stories and history of Vicksburg to life. MDAH, Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign, and the Vicksburg National Military Park have been collaboratively working on the partnership project since the summer of 2023. Staff continue to work on completing the acquisition of two properties and an undeveloped land parcel for the future Vicksburg Interpretive Center. Ongoing contract negotiations with Perkins & Will (P&W) were finalized in August, and the contract was sent to DFA for approval. Following the program phase kick-off led by P&W in late June, the partners spent the summer months developing the building program in regular meetings with P&W. A final

program report was completed in early September and sent to a cost estimator for an initial estimate of full construction cost, loosely based on the competition submitted a conceptual building design. MDAH and the partners are working with P&W to right-size the project budget and scope. Gallagher & Associates (G&A) has completed the pre-design and alignment phase and shifted to exhibit concept development. In conjunction with the final alignment deliverable, MDAH staff department's mission and vision. Additional MDAH and Vicksburg National Park Service staff have joined the regular meetings with G&A to provide input on content and design.



New walking path and rails at Windsor Ruins.

MDAH PROJECTS AND GRANTS

National Endowment for the Humanities Awards 1 Million to MDAH for Natchez Center for American History

MDAH was awarded \$1 million by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) through an Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grant for the Natchez Center for American History (NCAH) project at Historic Jefferson College (HJC) in Washington, MS. NCAH is a \$20 million project that includes two components: a preservation field school and an interpretive center that will share powerful stories of the rise and fall of Mississippi's cotton kingdom era. NCAH will cultivate a strong workforce through the preservation field school, where high school and college students will gain skills critical to helping Mississippi's economy thrive.

MDAH Preservation Field School

In June, MDAH held its first preservation field school for students from Mississippi State University's (MSU) Master of Fine Arts in Historic Preservation program. MSU has been a major partner in the development of the field school, offering expertise about the historic trades. The inaugural session of the preservation field school demonstrated the feasibility and the potential success of continued field schools at the site. HJC is currently closed to visitors during MDAH's restoration of eight buildings on the campus for an interpretive center.



Outdoor tent used for field school workshop.



Instructor Nick Conner teaching MSU students.



Close-up of the millwork instruction.

Library of Congress Awards MDAH \$100,000 Grant to Expand Primary Source Education in Mississippi

MDAH received a \$100,000 grant from the Library of Congress to expand primary source education at some secondary schools in the state. The MDAH Programs and Communication Division education staff will lead the project in collaboration with Teaching Primary Sources (TPS) Mississippi. TPS Mississippi is part of the Library of Congress TPS Consortium, which helps educators enhance students' critical thinking, analytical skills, and content knowledge using the organization's collection of millions of primary sources.

"We are grateful to the Library of Congress for their support of this project," said Kari Baker, MDAH director of education. "With their teachers' guidance, students will grow in their understanding of how to analyze, comprehend, and interpret primary sources, which are firsthand accounts such as letters, images or articles from the time of an event."

The grant-funded project runs from October 1 to September 30, 2025. During that time, middle and high school students in the Jackson metropolitan area will engage in project-based learning through primary source research in the classroom, allowing them to develop confidence and proficiency in both creating and interpreting research-based projects. Additionally, educators will gain professional development to implement primary source instruction through various resources, including a free teacher workshop at the Two Mississippi Museums.

MDAH Awards \$3.4M in Community Heritage Preservation Grants

At its regular meeting on January 19, the board of trustees at MDAH, awarded over \$3.4 million on behalf of the Community Heritage Preservation Grant program, authorized and funded by the Mississippi Legislature, which helps preserve and restore historic courthouses and schools in Certified Local Government communities and other historic properties.

"The Legislature has saved hundreds of significant Mississippi properties through this program," said MDAH director Katie Blount. "The Department of Archives and History is grateful for the Legislature's support and pleased to be able to help preserve these local treasures."

The grant awards are as follows:

Angelety House, Natchez, Adams County-\$142,161
Exterior, doors, windows, roof and gutter repairs

Carroll County Courthouse, Carrollton, Carroll County-\$243,291
Interior and exterior restoration; windows, doors, and cupola repairs

Masonic Building and Courthouse, Okolona, Chickasaw County-\$171,977
Door and window restoration

Okolona Elementary School, Okolona, Chickasaw County-\$170,755
Window restoration, interior and lighting repairs

Harriette Person Memorial Library, Port Gibson, Claiborne County-\$274,931
Roof and decking repairs

GM&O Railroad Depot, Quitman, Clarke County-\$65,010
Door and window restoration, interior and exterior repairs

Hattiesburg City Hall, Hattiesburg, Forrest County-\$99,200
Interior repairs, HVAC, and security upgrades

Hinds County Courthouse, Jackson, Hinds County-\$410,715
Roof repairs

Jefferson Davis County Courthouse, Prentiss, Jefferson Davis County-\$182,118
Roof repairs

Spain House, Tupelo, Lee County-\$110,936
Interior restoration and repainting

Greenwood Fire Station #1, Greenwood, Leflore County-\$237,450
Masonry repointing, HVAC, and electrical upgrades

Tennessee Williams House, Columbus, Lowndes County-\$158,423
Front porch repairs and repainting

Old Salem School, Macon, Noxubee County-\$159,538
Structural stabilization, masonry repointing, and general repairs

Quitman County Courthouse, Marks, Quitman County-\$188,008
Exterior repairs and window restoration

The grant awards continued:

Sharkey County Courthouse, Rolling Fork, Sharkey County-\$368,000
Courtroom restoration

Drew Rosenwald School, Drew, Sunflower county-\$368,000
Roof, masonry, door, and window repairs, and electrical upgrades

Senatobia High School, Senatobia, Tate County-\$260,000
Window restoration, classroom, east and west hallway repairs

Grant awards are paid on a reimbursable basis upon the successful completion of the entire project or at the time of pre-established phases of the project. Prior to application, all buildings must have been designated Mississippi Landmarks. Only county or municipal governments, school districts, and nonprofit organizations granted section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service may submit applications.

To become a Certified Local Government, a community must adopt a preservation ordinance establishing a preservation commission in accordance with federal and state guidelines. Once the commission has been established, an application for CLG status may be made to the National Parks Service through the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. MDAH works closely with local government officials and citizens to help them create and manage a workable local historic preservation program.

MDAH Awards More Than \$97,000 in Preservation Grants Statewide

MDAH has awarded grants totaling more than \$97,000 to eight preservation projects in seven Certified Local Government (CLG) communities across the state. The scope of work for awarded projects ranges from professional assessments, as with the evaluation of three National Register-listed buildings for future use by the City of New Albany, to more advanced phases of rehabilitation, as with the Lundy House project in Lexington.

“We are pleased to partner with these communities in 2024,” said deputy director of Historic Preservation Meredith Massey. “The projects mainly focus on rehabilitating historic buildings and conducting professional assessments and surveys, as well as technological upgrades that benefit CLG communities.” The 2024 grants are:

Aberdeen, \$10,000.00, High Street Community Center professional assessment.

Aberdeen, \$10,000.00, second Neuberger Library rehabilitation.

Greenwood, \$10,000.00, Confederate Memorial Building and Greenwood Carnegie Library professional assessments.

Hattiesburg, \$18,000.00, Historic Site Management Tool map viewer upgrades.

Lexington, \$13,000.00, Lundy House rehabilitation.

New Albany, \$12,558.10, Benjamin F. Ford School, old police station, and light, gas, and water building professional assessments.

Ocean Springs, \$15,000.00, historic guidelines and district updates.

Woodville, \$9,400.00, Polk’s Meat Market rehabilitation.

The Certified Local Government program is a federal-state-local partnership designed to assist local governments in dealing with diverse preservation needs through funding and technical assistance. CLG communities may apply for annual grants to undertake preservation projects of importance to the community. Grants may be used for such diverse projects as the restoration of historic buildings, preparation of nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, education programs, publication of local design guidelines, and marketing tools for historic resources.

MDAH Volunteers

During 2024, MDAH volunteers served a total of **5,216** total hours. The labor value of this service is **\$174,683.84** based upon the Independent Sector's current value placed on a volunteer hour of \$33.49. There were a total of **77** individual volunteers.

Volunteers served within two divisions of the department:

Archives and Records Services: 465 hours

Museum: 4,751 hours

MDAH Division Statistics

Archives and Record Services Division for Fiscal Year 2024

Onsite patrons: 1,309

Offsite inquiries answered: 11,556

Items digitized: 15,435

Electronic assets processed (gigabytes): 252

Museum Division Visitation for Fiscal Year 2024

Eudora Wetly House & Garden: 6,108

Governor's Mansion: 3,997

Grand Village of the Natchez Indians: 16,109

Old Capitol: 6,261

Two Mississippi Museum: 83,188