Professor Michael Tomlan, of Cornell University, came to MTSU this summer to teach the graduate course Current Issues in Public History Practice. The course focused on sacred places and preservation. Tomlan also presented “Why Historians and Preservationists Avoid Religion,” a community lecture, at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Murfreesboro.

Tomlan wears many hats, including director of the Historic Preservation Planning Program at Cornell, project director for the National Council of Preservation Education, advisor to the Global Heritage Fund, and president of Historic Urban Plans Inc. Tomlan has also consulted on projects for the World Heritage Fund, the J. Paul Getty Trust, and numerous other national and international projects.

Tomlan made the most of his time in middle Tennessee by visiting historic religious buildings and by hosting a few of his colleagues in Murfreesboro. Students in Tomlan’s class this summer benefited from his experience and connections as they learned about a topic not otherwise offered at MTSU. Tomlan was considerate enough to tailor his lectures to the interests of the students. One of them, Elizabeth Smith, said, “As part of the Visiting Scholars program, Dr. Tomlan gave me the opportunity to explore areas of interest in religious history that I was curious about, as well as a chance for networking that has really helped me in my plans for a career after my years as a student.” The conversations were stimulating and the class was one of those rare ones in which students rarely regretted running overtime.

In April, the National Council on Public History (NCPH) held their annual conference and meeting in Louisville. Many students and faculty members from MTSU attended the conference. Working from research conducted as a part of last fall’s Public History Seminar, seven graduate students put together a poster session presentation of their work on the African American cultural landscape at Stones River National Battlefield.

Kristen Baldwin Deathridge, Dollie Boyd, Elena DiGrado, Elizabeth Goetsch, Ashleigh Oatts, Carolyn Powell, and Elizabeth Smith used images from the research to create a poster as well as a slide show to relate some of the history of the landscape of Stones River National Battlefield and those who lived on that land. The session was titled “Uncovering Cemetery: A Cultural Landscape Project.” Participating in the

NCPH continued on back page.
Elizabeth Smith Interns in Seneca Falls

Elizabeth Smith, an M.A. graduate student, interned this summer with the National Park Service (NPS) at the Women’s Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, New York. Through July and early August, Smith traveled to different NPS archives and offices to look over correspondence, planning materials, management plans, and other documents. She researched items relating to major trends within the park and any controversy it has faced, along with the history of the park’s management. The internship took Smith to NPS and non-NPS archives in Seneca Falls, Waterloo, and Oswego, New York; Boston; Harpers Ferry, West Virginia; Washington, D.C.; and Denver.

Ph.D. Residencies

During the 2007-08 academic year, eight of our Ph.D. candidates completed yearlong residencies working in a variety of public history positions.

Kevin Cason worked to preserve and organize the archival materials and photographs at Cedars of Lebanon State Park. He also developed a guidebook to assist other state parks in the preservation of records and photographs according to archival standards.

Brian Dempsey assisted the Mississippi Blues Commission in its efforts to create a Heritage Trail for tourists hoping to discover the Delta Blues. Brian also worked closely with Angela Smith, another Ph.D. student, to develop a documentary film focusing on the Blue Note Café, a juke joint in Bentonia, Mississippi.

Brian Hackett taught in the History Department at MTSU, teaching a U.S. survey course and an undergraduate public history course. His public history course culminated with an exhibit, “Heritage Clues,” developed by his students. The project highlighted lost or forgotten elements of local history.

Tom Kanon developed a guide to the Tennessee Historical Society collections housed at the Tennessee State Library and Archives. He also evaluated the collection’s finding aids to determine how to bring them up to DACS and EAD standards.

Harry Klinkhamer worked for the Forest Preserve District of Will County, near Chicago, to develop an interpretive plan for the district’s historic Riverside Farm. His interpretive plan will help to guide the district in planning public programs, establishing preservation initiatives, and managing future development.

Ed Salo served as the senior historian working for Brockington and Associates on the Combahee Ferry Mitigation Project in South Carolina. His work provides the historical context for this archaeological site, a National Register nomination, and five interpretive products, including a multimedia program.

Jane Townes completed a survey of the historical resources in Bedford County, Tennessee, related to civilian life during the Civil War and Reconstruction. She also developed a relational database that documents all associated historic sites with photographic evidence and GIS data.

Tara White taught American Studies courses in the Cooperstown Graduate Program. Working with Professor Gretchen Soren as her mentor, Tara gained invaluable experience teaching in the nation’s premier museum studies program.

Mr. Barnett Goes to Washington

Master of Arts graduate student Ray Barnett had a joint internship this summer with the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum (NASM) and the Smithsonian Museum Conservation Institute (MCI).

At MCI, Barnett researched and evaluated the techniques, cleaning materials, and methods used in restoring the three Saturn V rockets in the Smithsonian’s collection. The Saturn V is the rocket that was used to launch seven Apollo missions to the moon. The three rockets are currently on loan to the Kennedy Space Center, the U.S. Space and Rocket Center, and the Johnson Space Center. Barnett reviewed reports filed by the companies that conducted the restoration and repair of the rockets, duplicating some of their methods to test their effectiveness on similar materials. The goal of his project is to help determine the optimal course of action for materials analysis and to recommend the best course for halting degradation and for future restoration of these materials.

Barnett continued on page 3
**Beyond the Plantation Opens at Oaklands**

In recent semesters, graduate students in Dr. Brenden Martin's Museum Studies courses conceived, researched, designed, and installed a permanent exhibit at Oaklands Historic House Museum. The exhibit, "Beyond the Plantation: Slavery, Emancipation, and Oaklands," opened May 1, 2008. The project was a yearlong cooperative effort that included Oaklands, the Rutherford County Archives, and the MTSU Public History program. The exhibit explores the lives of African Americans associated with the site both in slavery and in freedom.

From the beginning, students set out to tell the story through the experiences of black men and women who lived on the Maney plantations in Tennessee and Mississippi. Students examined census records, pension applications, war claims, tax records, oral histories, photographs, material culture, maps, and archaeological evidence. The exhibit reveals a variety of responses to emancipation that affected families for generations. The exhibit also traces changes on the landscape showing how much of modern Murfreesboro developed within the boundaries of the plantations owned by the Maneys and Murfrees.

The project succeeded in providing the first substantial public interpretation of African Americans associated with the site. More important, it gave the students an experiential learning project to enhance their portfolios and showcase their professional skills.

---

**Documenting the Mississippi Blues Trail**

Brian Dempsey, having just completed his residency, earned one of the new Provost Writing Fellowships to help him complete his dissertation. The dissertation evaluates the use of blues culture in Mississippi heritage tourism promotion. Dempsey contextualizes the efforts as the state works toward a blues-tourism economy. Some of the major issues covered by Dempsey's research include cultural commodification, shared authority, and the creation of new historical narratives.

As a part of his dissertation, Dempsey is making a documentary film called *Refuse to Fold: The Blue Front Cafe and Mississippi Heritage Tourism*. According to Dempsey, "The documentary film uses the Blue Front Cafe [in Bentonia, Mississippi] and the personal narrative of owner Jimmy Duck Holmes as a case study.

In this way, Jimmy's story becomes the focal point within a larger discussion of the somewhat abstract set of issues." Dempsey, along with his brother Brandon and Angela Smith (Ph.D. student) have conducted fieldwork interviews and filmed key sites.

It remains uncertain at this time if the film will form a chapter or an addendum to Dempsey's dissertation, but documentary filmmaking is a new and distinctive option for the Public History program at MTSU.

---

Barnett continued from page 2

For the complementary project at the NASM, Barnett worked with Amanda Young, curator of the Early Manned Space Flight-Suit Collection. The collection is housed in a hermetically sealed vault at the Paul E. Garber Preservation, Restoration, and Storage Facility. Among other items, this collection contains the twelve complete Apollo space suits that have been on the moon. Barnett helped to oversee the transfer of the collection into its new vault. Although the suits are not now on display, Barnett worked with Young to develop mannequins for the future display of some of the suits.

By working on these projects for the Smithsonian Institute, Barnett was able to do archival research and technical analysis and also gain some curatorial experience. Barnett hopes he will be able to work on the Saturn V rockets as the basis for his thesis.
Alumni Spotlight

In Memoriam: Pete LaPaglia

MTSU alumni Pete LaPaglia passed away of cancer at his home in Murfreesboro on June 10. LaPaglia earned his B.A. ('66) and M.A. ('72) from MTSU and went on to work as, among other things, chief curator of the Tennessee State Museum, director of seminars and workshops at the American Association for State and Local History, cofounder of the Jekyll Island Management Institute for the Southeastern Museums Conference, and founder of his own museum consulting firm, LaPaglia and Associates.

LaPaglia had a sharp sense of humor as well as a deep commitment to the museum profession. He was a good friend of the MTSU Public History program, and we will miss him very much. He leaves behind his wife, Jane, two children, Michael and Laura, their spouses, one grandchild, Leo, and all of those who knew and appreciated him.

A scholarship has been established in his name at the Southeastern Museums Conference for the Jekyll Island Management Institute. Memorial gifts may be sent to the Peter S. LaPaglia JIMI Scholarship Fund, Southeastern Museums Conference, P.O. Box 9003, Atlanta, GA 31106-1003.

Whatever happened to...?

Please let us know where you are and what you are doing: cbmartin@mtsu.edu.

Editor: Brenden Martin, Director of Public History

NCPH continued from front page

poster session proved to be a valuable way for these students to discuss their research with a variety of professionals.

Elizabeth Goetsch also presented “Historic Preservation Causing Conflict in a Community: The Harvey House in Belen, New Mexico.” Goetsch said that presenting was an invaluable experience: “While it may have been a bit nerve-wracking, I am glad I did it. Presenting my research at NCPH gave me a better understanding of what it means to share knowledge and research. It was interesting to see what others were researching and doing throughout the world and engage members in their thoughts of what I was doing. The variety of insight was remarkable.”

MTSU, a Tennessee Board of Regents university, is an equal opportunity, nonracially identifiable, educational institution that does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. AAO01-0808