

Public History

at Middle Tennessee State University

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Spring 2015

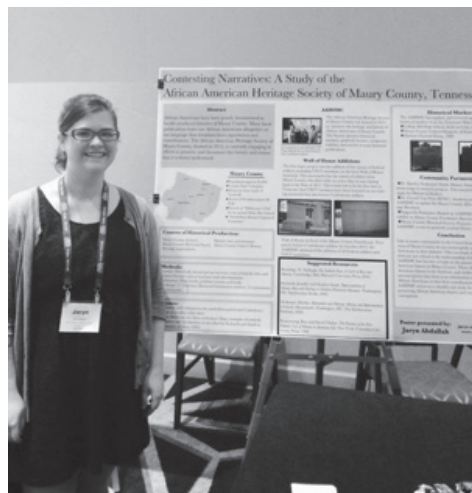


NCPH comes to Nashville: History on the Edge

On April 15–18, the National Council on Public History (NCPH) convened in Nashville for its annual conference. This year’s theme was History on the Edge. MTSU faculty, graduate students, and alumni played a major role in conference organization and participation. **Dr. Brenden Martin** served as the chair of the Local Arrangements Committee, which organized tours and offsite workshops to give conference attendees an in-depth look into Nashville’s rich history. Martin’s graduate assistant, **Rachel Lewis**, drafted descriptions of the tours, wrote the “History of Nashville” for the program, and worked diligently to ensure this year’s conference was a success. **Dr. Susan Knowles**, Center for Historic Preservation and **Bob Beatty**, American Association for State and Local History, also served on the Local Arrangements Committee. **Dr. Rebecca Conard** moderated a panel session and served on the Task Force on Sustainability along with graduate student **Angie Sirna**, who also served on the New Professional and Graduate Student Committee. **Dr. Van West** served on the Program Committee. **Dr. Kathryn Sikes** served as a session facilitator, and **Dr. Martha Norkunas** participated in a panel session. MTSU alumni **Jeff Sellers** (M.A. 2010) and **Elizabeth Goetsch** (M.A. 2010) led walking tours of downtown Nashville. Ph.D. candidate **Liz Catte** served as one of the conference’s official photographers.



Erica Bettross presenting her poster



Jaryn Abdallah with her poster



Brad Miller, presenting on an NCPH panel

Inside

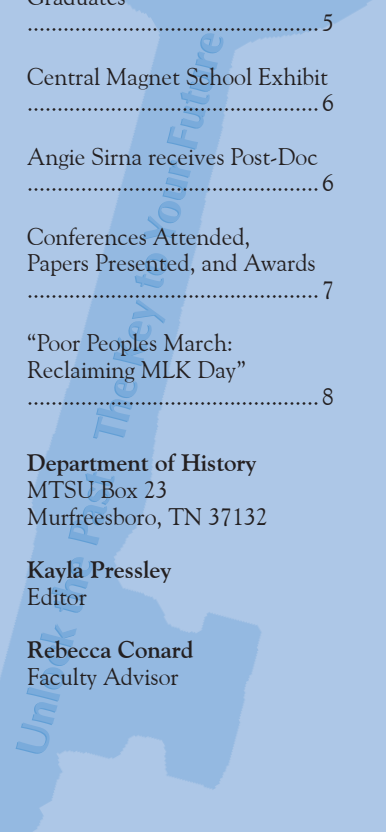
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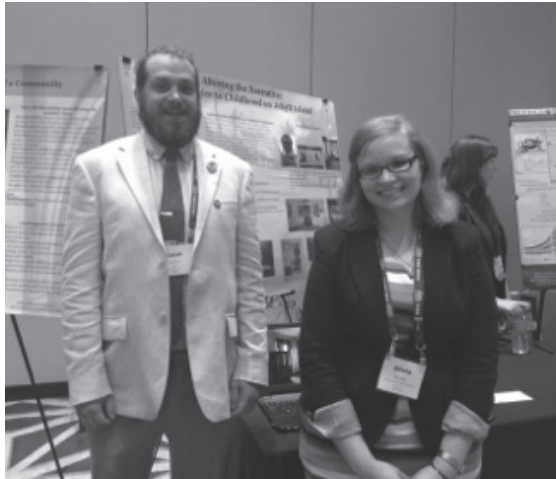
Rebecca Conard
Faculty Advisor

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NCPH comes to Nashville: History on the Edge

(continued from page 1)



Caleb Knies and Lane Tillner presenting their poster



Dr. Bren Martin, right, talking with conference attendees at the MTSU Public History booth.

Many graduate students from the history program also participated in conference panel and poster sessions, as well as working groups. Posters were presented by **Lindsay Hager**, “A United Neighborhood’: Exploring an African American Community and Century Home”; **Caleb Knies** and **Lane Tillner**, “Altering the Narrative: Giving Voice to Childhood on Jekyll Island”; **Erica Bettross**, “Building a Cornerstone: Interpreting Place in the Development of Community”; **Jaryn Abdallah**, “Contesting Narratives: The African American Heritage Society of Maury County Tennessee”; **Rachel Finch** (M.A. 2011), and **Thomas Flagel**, “Story, Space, and Place: Developing Interpretation of the Franklin Battlefield through Spatial Technology”; and **Denise Gallagher**, “Gentrification Studies: What Can Public Historians Contribute?”

Graduate student presenters on panel sessions included **Aleia Brown**, **Ashley Bouknight**, and **Joshua Crutchfield**, “Making Space for Activists: Public History in the Age of Ferguson”; **Susan Knowles** (Ph.D. 2011), **Zada Law**, **Ken Middleton**, Digital Librarian, Walker Library, and **Lydia Simpson**, “Triangulation: Joining Scholarship, Primary Sources, and Spatial

Visualization to Map the African American Landscape of the Civil War”; **Dr. Norkunas**, “Grassroots Public History Activism: Adding the Names of Black Union Soldiers to the War Monument in an Old Southern Town”; **Kristen Baldwin-Deathridge** (Ph.D. 2012), “More Than a Job: Challenges in Developing and Maintaining a Public History Career”; **Bob Beatty**, “Bringing Art into Public History: Opportunities, Challenges and Interdisciplinary Approaches”; and **Aleia Brown**, **Ginna Foster Cannon**, **Brad Miller**, and **Teresa Prober**, “Unbounded Partnerships: Community Based Preservation.” **Josh Howard**, **Elizabeth Catte**, and **Angie Sirna** also presented in working groups. **Howard** presented in “Free, Separate, Uncertain: Can Public History Play?”; **Catte** presented in “Teaching Public History through International Collaborations”; and **Sirna** presented in “After the Administrative History, What Next?”

MTSU was a Patron Level supporter with major contributions from the Public History Program, the Office of the Provost, the College of Graduate Studies, and the College of Liberal Arts. ↗

Public History in International Perspective

In conjunction with the NCPH conference, **Dr. Conard** organized a session at MTSU on an international perspective of public history. **Dr. Serge Noiret**, president of the International Federation of Public History, led an informal roundtable conversation on recent developments in the growth of public history degree programs and institutional structures internationally. Attendees enjoyed dessert while Noiret spoke on the expanding geographic reach of public history,

the founding and goals of the International Federation of Public History, new public history degree Programs in Europe and the U.K., and plans for the 2016 IFPH conference in Bogota, Columbia. ↗



Dr. Serge Noiret (picture courtesy of @sergenoiret twitter)

Keeping up with Recent Graduates

Jaryn Abdallah (M.A. 2015) is the museum educator at the President James K. Polk Ancestral Home in Columbia, Tenn. **Olivia Beaudry** (M.A. 2015) is the archivist at the Mike Curb Archives. **Beth Cavanaugh** (M.A. 2015) is an archivist III at the Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA). **Candace Cupps** (M.A. 2014) is an archivist at the History Center in

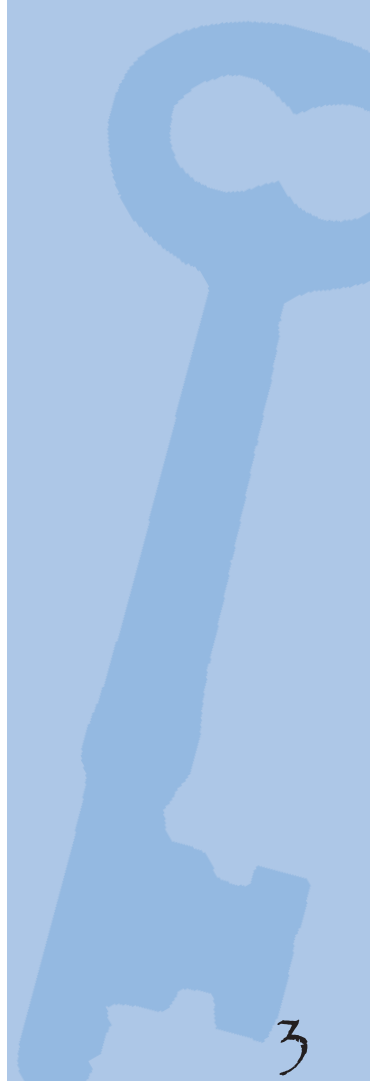
Diboll, Texas. **Elaura Highfield** (M.A. 2014) is the museum program coordinator at the Tennessee Agricultural Museum in Nashville. **Rebecca Robinson** (M.A. 2014) is an archival assistant at the Williamson County Archives and Museum. **Danielle Ullrich** (M.A. 2015) is the registrar and education coordinator at Belmont Mansion in Nashville. ↗

Alumni Gathering at NCPH



At the Alumni Gathering pictured L-R: Jessica French, Michael Birdwell, Rebecca Conard, Tara White, Patricia Mooney-Melvin, Perky Biesel, Pippa Holloway

More than fifty alumni, current students, and friends of the Public History Program took a break from the NCPH conference and gathered at the historic Glen Leven Farm on April 16. The alumni gathering at NCPH was cosponsored by the MTSU Public History Program and the College of Graduate Studies. Attendees enjoyed conversation over light refreshments and hors d'oeuvres. This event provided a break from the hustle and bustle of the conference, and allowed multiple generations of MTSU alumni and current students to meet each other and discuss their work. ↗



New Graduate Students

M.A. in History, Public History concentration

Joseph Diate
B.A., History, Middle Tennessee State University

Erica N. Durnell
B.A., History, Montevallo University

Kelly Ann Herbert
B.S., Art Education, Middle Tennessee State University

Julie Anne Maresco
B.A., State University of New York at New Paltz

Steve Thanh Phan
B.A., University of Northern Colorado Gettysburg Semester, Gettysburg College

Nick Reed
B.A., History, University of North Georgia

Altayeb S. Sarheed
B.A., History, Middle Tennessee State University

Ardis (Redford) Tilson
B.S., Sociology, Middle Tennessee State University

News From the Centers

Center for Historic Preservation

Each year, the CHP provides graduate students and staff with a forum to learn about each other's research and to prepare for conference presentations in front of a friendly audience. They schedule four or five research presentations—commonly known as “table talks”—each semester in the classroom at the Heritage Center downtown. The table talks take place during lunch time, so everyone can bring a lunch and share ideas in a casual atmosphere.

The table talks are a great way for the CHP to fulfill both the research and mentoring aspects of its mission. This academic year, students presented on a variety of topics. In the fall, **Aleia Brown**, **Michael Fletcher**, and **Torren Gatson** talked about their experiences at the Jekyll Island Field School during the 2014 Maymester. Brown and Gatson discussed the oral histories they collected, and Fletcher shared findings from his fieldwork searching for cemeteries on the island. Later, **Amanda Barry** provided an overview of her internship with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C., including her research on the Baltimore elementary school attended by Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. (She also got kudos for best table talk title—“Miss Barry Goes to Washington.”)



These duplexes made from shipping containers are in Langa Township, Cape Town, South Africa, which was one of the townships discussed by Abby Gautreau in her table talk.

This semester's line-up has featured a beautifully illustrated “armchair tour” of South Africa by **Abby Gautreau**. She provided plenty to think about with her analysis of township tourism in South Africa, which is a key topic in her dissertation. **Joey Bryan** previewed a talk on nostalgia and railroads in advance of the graduate student history conference at Louisiana State University. He demonstrated how the rise of the automobile in the early twentieth century fueled the railroad industry's use of nostalgia to compete for travelers.

Still to come, **Denise Gallagher** will preview her portfolio. She will include insights from her ongoing thesis research on gentrification in the neighborhoods of Orange Mound (Memphis) and the Nations (West Nashville). Finally, **Aleia Brown** and **GINNA FOSTER CANNON** will be joined by **Brad Miller**, **Teresa Prober**, and **Pat Cummins** to preview “Unbounded Partnerships: Community-Based Preservation,” their National Council of Public History conference roundtable.

Check Southern Rambles, chpblog.org, for posts by the CHP's graduate research assistants. ↗

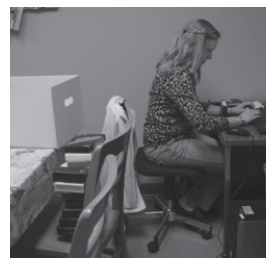
- Antoinette van Zelm

Center for Popular Music

The Center for Popular Music (CPM) welcomed two public history graduate assistants this spring semester: **Olivia Beaudry** (M.A.) and **Dixie Johnson** (M.A.).



Dixie Johnson working on the Southern Girls Rock and Roll Camp Collection



Olivia Beaudry working on the Lance LeRoy Collection

Johnson has taken the lead on organizing, processing, and making accessible the Southern Girls Rock and Roll Camp Collection (SGRRC). The CPM has been the repository for the camp's business records, promotional materials, products made by the campers, and Showcase videos since 2003. Johnson has worked with the SGRRC parent organization, YEAH!, in collecting materials in order to complete the collection. She has inventoried and arranged materials, and has begun securing funds for the collection. In addition, Johnson has worked on the David Jasen selection, a large collection of materials belonging to ragtime and jazz author, researcher, and collector David Jasen of Queens, N.Y. Johnson has helped with recording, inventorying, and checking books against holdings. She also helped install the “Western Swing Exhibit” located in the CPM reading room.

News From the Centers



The "Western Swing Exhibit" put together by grad assistants Olivia Beaudry and Dixie Johnson

Olivia Beaudry completed an initial inventory of the Lance LeRoy Collection of personal papers and manuscripts. Lance LeRoy was the manager of several country music artists, including Lester Flatt and Jimmy Martin. Beaudry recorded collections into the archive and cataloged materials. She completed processing the Jesse Austin Morris Collection of Western Swing materials, a large collection created by Jesse Morris, editor of *Western Swing Monthly*. The collection includes 23 linear feet of manuscripts and 6 linear feet of photographs, as well as sound recordings, artifacts, and more. Beaudry designed and installed two exhibits in the CPM reading room, the "Bluegrass Guitar Exhibit" using materials from the center's collections, and the "Western Swing Exhibit" using Morris' materials. In addition to these projects, Beaudry contributed to the American Vernacular Music Manuscripts project, a collaboration between the CPM and the

American Antiquarian Society. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, this project digitized and made accessible unique, handmade American music manuscripts from the 1730s through 1910. Beaudry standardized digital images and entered metadata into catalog records. ↗

- Rachel Morris

The Albert Gore Research Center

The Albert Gore Research Center (AGRC), said goodbye to director, Jim Williams at the beginning of the year. Williams, who had been the Center's director since 2008, is now the executive director of the National Churchill Museum at Westminster College in Fulton. Williams' leadership brought many important changes at the AGRC, including its designation as the University archives, creation of an endowment for the Margaret Lindsley Warden Library for Equine Studies, acquisition of former Congressman Bart Gordon's papers, and a Congressional digital records project. Later this summer, interim director Dr. Mary Hoffschwelle will turn over the reins to the AGRC's new director, Dr. Louis Kyriakoudes. He comes to MTSU from the University of Southern Mississippi, where he was the director of the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage and professor of history.

Brad Miller and **Evan Spencer** have completed their second year as AGRC graduate assistants. Their work on the AGRC exhibition "Warriors with Words and Faith," in collaboration with graduate assistant colleagues **Sarah Calise** and **Casey Gymrek**, was featured in the last issue of this newsletter. Spencer will return to the AGRC this summer to work on the Bart Gordon Papers. The AGRC is also pleased to announce that Gymrek's "Teaching History through Archives" lesson plans are now available for teachers on our website at <http://gorecenter.mtsu.edu/education.shtml>. ↗

- Dr. Mary Hoffschwelle

Congratulations to our Spring 2015 Graduates

Ph.D.

Amber M. Clawson
B.S., Appalachian State University; M.A., College of Charleston
"Building Tennessee: The McAdams Family Trade and Identity in the Southwest Backcountry"

Abigail R. Gautreau

B.A., Randolph-Macon Women's College; M.A., Oxford University
"The Past is Political: Race, Cultural Landscapes, and the Case for Community Driven Heritage in Selma, Alabama, and South Africa"

Angela R. Sirna

B.A., West Virginia University; M.A., West Virginia University
"Recreating Appalachia: Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, 1922-1972"

M.A.

Jaryn Elizabeth Abdallah

Thomas J. Anderson

Olivia M. Beaudry

Beth Christina Cavanaugh

Danielle Marie Ullrich

New Exhibit Premiere at Central Magnet School

This spring, Dr. Brenden Martin's Essentials of Museum Management class completed an exhibit project, entitled *A Legacy of Learning*, at Central Magnet School (CMS). Martin's son, a student at CMS, was the inspiration for the project. He commented to Martin that CMS students knew very little about their school's past, let alone that the site had been home to five other educational institutions dating back to 1841. The site had served as the campus for Union University (1841-1873), Tennessee College for Women (1907-1946), Central High School (1944-1972), and Central Middle School (1973-2010). Furthermore, the site was the first home of Linebaugh Library, then housed in the Eaton House, from 1948-1953.

Members of Martin's class conducted original research, interviewed community members, designed six wall panels, used a large material culture collection to fill two trophy cases with exhibits on the site's history, and developed



Pictured L-R: Chloe Castillo, Kate Sproul, Bradley Boshers, Haley Seger, Sarah Calise, Callie Lopeman, Olivia Beaudry, Graham Henderson, Ethan Morris, Casey Gymrek, Dixie Johnson, Charlie Dahan, and Dr. Brenden Martin

cultural landscape tours and educational packets. Additionally, team members organized a public program for CMS students in which former members of Central High's Black Student Union talked about the sit-in they organized in 1971 to protest school discrimination.

Team members included historian **Kate Sproul**, archivist **Olivia Beaudry**, curators **Charlie Dahan**, **Dixie Johnson**, and **Bradley Boshers**, exhibit designer **Sarah Calise**, exhibit fabricator **Graham Henderson**, media specialist **Haley Seger**, educators **Chloe Costilla** and **Callie Lopeman**, public relations coordinator **Casey Gymrek**, and project director **Ethan Morris**. For more information, take a look at the team's website: <http://cmsexhibit.wix.com/central-exhibit>. ↗

Angie Sirna Receives Post-Doc



MTSU Alum Angie Sirna

Angie Sirna will spend the 2015-2016 academic year researching and writing an administrative history of Stones River National Battlefield. She will be research associate to principal investigator Dr. Rebecca Conard. The fifteen-month project is being funded by the National

Park Service (NPS). Administrative histories are useful documents for NPS managers because they help identify recurrent management issues and past controversies to better guide future decisions

and community relations. In March, Sirna successfully defended her dissertation, "Recreating Appalachia: Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, 1922-1972."

She also has worked as a cultural resource specialist for the NPS. Research for the project will require substantial time at the park archives along with trips to the National Archives in Maryland, Philadelphia, and Atlanta. She will also conduct approximately fifteen oral histories and update the park's National Register for Historic Places nomination. The administrative history will build on the excellent work of MTSU public history students and graduate students from other universities who, in the past several years, have all contributed scholarship about the park's story. ↗

Conferences Attended and Papers Presented



Dr. Bren Martin and Erica Bettross with her award of Commendation for Best Educational Programming

Caleb Knies, Lane Tillner, and Erica Bettross attended the Tennessee Association of Museums Conference in Jackson, Tenn. on March 18-20. The presentation, “Capturing the Cornerstone: Giving Voice to a Place and its Community,” focused on their work in developing the “Cornerstone of the Community” exhibit for Dr. Braden Martin’s Essentials of Museum Management course. **Bettross** won an Award of Commendation for Best Educational Programming for the exhibit.



Brad Miller with his Phi Alpha Theta Award for best paper

The Phi Alpha Theta conference convened on February 28, where **Brad Miller** won Best Graduate Student Prize for his paper “Built for the Living: African American Funeral Homes across Tennessee, 1880s–1960s.”



Erica Bettross, Lane Tillner and Caleb Knies presenting at TAM

Amanda Barry and Joey Bryan presented at the Graduate Student Conference at Louisiana State University on March 20–21. Their panel was entitled “Nostalgia and Preservation: Community and Public History.” Bryan presented his paper, “Endurance of the Iron Horse: The Culture and Nostalgia of America’s Golden Era of Railroading.”

On April 2 at the George Wright Society biennial conference in Oakland, Cali., **Angie Sirna** presented “The Job Corps Program: Waging a War on Poverty in the National Parks, 1964–1969.” She based her presentation on case studies from her work at Catoctin Mountain Park, Cumberland Gap National Historic Park, and on fieldwork she completed at Mammoth Cave National Park last summer. George Wright Society fosters excellence in natural and cultural resource management in parks and protected areas. ↗

Rebecca Robinson Receives 2015 TCGS Graduate Student Thesis Award

Rebecca Robinson (M.A. 2014) was the first recipient of the new Tennessee Conference of Graduate Schools (TCGS) Graduate Student Thesis Award. Her thesis, “Many Things Honorable and Commendable Belonging to the Name: Ann Cochran Dixon, 1763–1857, and her Kin,” utilizes kinship analysis to reconstruct the life of an ordinary Scots-Irish frontierswoman who left no personal writings to narrate her own experiences. Using primary source material associated with Dixon’s husband and many of her consanguineal family members, some of whom participated in the American Revolutionary War, Robinson traced



Jackie Eller, Interim Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Vice Provost for Research; Rebecca Robinson; Donald Thomason, President, TCGS.

her subject’s life, and interpreted it in the contexts of Scot-Irish immigration and cultural practices, backcountry settlements in Pennsylvania, the Revolutionary War, trans-Appalachian migration, and the changing legal status of women with regard to property rights. The award, which carries a \$500 prize, was presented to her on February 24 at the spring meeting of the TCGS at Belmont University. ↗

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“Poor Peoples March: Reclaiming MLK Day”

The celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s birthday is customarily marked by a day of service and sacred remembrance of this trailblazer for civil rights and equality in America. Students **Torren Gatson** and **Joshua Crutchfield** were involved in organizing the “Poor People’s March: Reclaiming MLK Day.” On January 21, approximately 200 marchers from several different organizations marched from Meharry Medical College to Hadley Park in Nashville. At the conclusion of the march, organizers offered closing reflections and remarks. The organizers also fed marchers, children from the local community, and homeless people in the area. **Dr. Pippa Holloway** and graduate student **Lindsay Hager** also participated in the march. ↗



L-R: PhD student and march organizer Torren Gatson, MA student Lindsay Hager, and MA student and march organizer Joshua Crutchfield.



March participants on their way from Meharry to Hadley Park in downtown Nashville.