



COMMON BOND: A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2015

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Formers' Corner

The CHP is excited to continue our new series of "Where are they now?" profiles of former Center graduate assistants. The star of our second profile is David Sprouse, who graduated with a Masters in Public History in 2013. David currently works as a legislative researcher with the Tennessee General Assembly and a historian with Tennessee Valley Archaeological Research. He is also an independent consultant, often contributing to National Register nominations, and a writer at [The Other Century](#). Click on the image to watch the video.

Scholars

Graduate Students Share Their Work

To foster historical scholarship and encourage professional development, the CHP regularly gives its graduate research assistants an opportunity to share their research with colleagues and staff. Some preview upcoming conference papers before a friendly audience; just this semester, students have polished presentations for the Ohio Valley History Conference and the Slave Dwelling Project Conference.

The CHP's "table talks" also provide a venue for students to share projects they have completed during off-campus internships or fellowships. Two presentations this fall feature exciting new research completed during the most recent [summer institute](#) at the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA), which



A page from the account book

focused on the Lowcountry South. Amanda Barry, an M.A. candidate, analyzed the accounts kept by **Mary Ross** in the years before she married John Beale in 1762. Barry's path-breaking work recreates the consumer and cultural world inhabited by this elite young Charleston woman. Ph.D. student Torren Gatson has delved into the world of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century slavery in Charleston by focusing on slave badges, which were required by South Carolina law for any enslaved people who were hired out. Gatson's work sheds new light on the connection between these badges and questions of autonomy and agency, and he also highlights the craftsmanship associated with slave badges. CHP director Dr. Carroll Van West serves as visiting scholar for the MESDA summer institute, which will explore the Upper Chesapeake in 2016.--*Antoinette van Zelm*

kept by Mary Ross, from the Collections of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Old Salem, NC.



One of the slave badges from the Collections of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Old Salem, NC.



Visitors enjoy Family Archaeology Activity Day at the Heritage Center.

Partners

A New Partnership Explores Local Archaeology

The Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County is an example of a long-standing partnership between the Center for Historic Preservation, Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, Main Street Murfreesboro/Rutherford County, Rutherford County government, and the City of Murfreesboro. For eight years, these entities have worked

together to promote the community's rich past to residents and visitors alike.

In the past year, the Heritage Center has formed a new partnership with the **Rutherford County Archaeological Society** (RCAS). One of the missions of RCAS is to share and protect the archaeological and cultural resources of Rutherford County. The membership consists of professional archaeologists and local community members who all share a passion for archaeology, anthropology, Native American culture, and history. They meet at the Heritage Center the third Thursday of the month for a presentation by a speaker, and topics often address archaeological work done in the county or the region as a whole.

A recent highlight of this partnership was Family Archaeology Activity Day, held at the Heritage Center in September. RCAS had games, children's activities, artifact identification, and information on different archaeological sites across the state. The Heritage Center also participated by

offering scavenger hunts in the exhibit gallery. More than 150 people attended the event. Children were particularly engaged and enjoyed the numerous hands-on activities provided.

--Leigh Ann Gardner

Leaders

Recent High-Profile Recognition

CHP director Dr. Carroll Van West was honored to receive the MTSU Foundation's **Career Achievement Award**. An MTSU history professor since 1985, West was appointed state historian by Governor Bill Haslam in 2013. Long considered the height of recognition for exceptional professors at MTSU, the Career Achievement Award praised West's "outstanding career, devoted to the power of living stories past and present, which also speaks to his commitment to community building through the celebration of heritage." In his acceptance speech, West acknowledged the tremendous support his award nomination received from his current and former students.

On Constitution Day 2015, CHP graduate research assistant Aleia Brown served as the moderator of the "No Voice, No Choice: The Voter Registration Act at 50" panel featuring two legendary Civil Rights leaders, the Reverend James Lawson and the Reverend C.T. Vivian. After Lawson and Vivian accepted Dr. Mary Evins's invitation to come to MTSU on behalf of the **American Democracy Project**, she realized that Brown would be the perfect moderator as a representative of the new generation of African American scholars and activists. Prompted by Brown's insightful questions, Vivian and Lawson spoke eloquently for more than an hour before a full house. Brown, a doctoral student in Public History, is completing her residency at the Michigan State University Museum, where she is researching African American quilts. She has been a leader in exploring how museums can best respond to the Ferguson, Missouri, protest movement.



MTSU doctoral student Aleia Brown, left, listens intently while two titans of the civil rights movement, the Rev. C.T. Vivian, center, and the Rev. James Lawson, discuss present-day civil rights challenges in Tucker Theatre on Sept. 17, 2015. The leaders' discussion was part of MTSU's annual Constitution Day events. Photo credit: J. Intintoli, MTSU Creative and Visual Services.

Nashville Architecture: A Guide to the City, recently published by the University of Tennessee Press, documents the city's architectural transformation over two centuries. Written by Dr. Carroll Van West, this CHP collaboration with the **Metro Historical Commission of Nashville and Davidson County** and the **American Institute of Architects (AIA) Middle Tennessee** represents



years of research with former students and colleagues, including Tara Mielnik, Anne-Leslie Owens, Laura Rost, Scarlett Miles, Blythe Semmer, Jeanne Holder, Margaret Slater, Ophelia Payne, and others. Highlighting the city's magnificent landmarks, the book also reflects lesser-known but equally beloved sites, including banks, post offices, schools, and churches. More than 250 diverse properties are documented

through history and photographs, making *Nashville Architecture* a valuable resource for both scholars and visitors. Underscoring the guide's importance as Nashville continues to grow, West hopes "that the landmarks found here remain part of Nashville's tapestry for decades to come."--
Laura Holder

Upcoming

November 6: [Teaching with Primary Sources - MTSU Workshop](#), "Trials and Triumphs: The Search for Citizenship, Community, and Opportunity," National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis.

November 13: [Teaching with Primary Sources - MTSU Workshop](#), "Growth of a Slave Economy," Travellers Rest, Nashville.

November 19: [Teaching with Primary Sources - MTSU Workshop](#), "Economics and Culture in the 1920s," East Tennessee History Center, Knoxville.

December 3: [Teaching with Primary Sources - MTSU Workshop](#), "Primary Source Strategies for the Primary Grades," East Tennessee History Center, Knoxville.



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