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Graduate students are busy researching the history of Amis Farm in Hawkins County after a visit last fall.

From the Director

The spring of 2020: will we ever forget it? Tornadoes that damaged, or even worse, destroyed the homes and businesses of our former graduate students in Nashville, then Jonesboro. Then COVID-19 impeding the Nashville and Jonesboro recovery and suddenly stopping the efforts in face of a far greater danger. Too many hesitant, uncertain officials when certainty and decisiveness were called for. A shuttered but not quiet university where classes and projects continue, just in a different way.

The [Center for Historic Preservation](#) is lucky in that all of our spring projects were launched before March 8. Some of our eagerness was seasonal—you know how I love fieldwork in the winter. Then my late July 2019 broken ankle had stopped so much of my fall fieldwork; finally I was released from medical care on January 15. I was biting at the bit to hit the ground. So we did, with one memorable three-day period finding us from Parker's Crossroads to Charleston (TN) and all points in between. Two new booklet projects launched. TPS--MTSU teaching workshops everywhere. Five different Chattanooga-area projects underway. Cemetery workshops planned. New Trail of Tears exhibits. An exciting new project outside of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Multiple trips to Rogersville and wonderful new projects underway for the forthcoming 250th of the American Revolution.

Then the university took the right steps: ending all in-person classes and stopping all travel. By March 23 we entered a new normal, one that extends at least into the early summer. The response from our current students was exactly as I expected: what do we do next, let's keep moving forward. And we are. We finally closed our campus offices completely on Friday, April 3. We are working from home as are our graduate assistants. We have all of the fieldwork to translate into reports, nominations, and exhibits. We are doing what we came here to do: to make a difference; to learn all that we don't know from the endless reservoir of experience and stories shared by the communities and citizens we serve. Never hesitate to reach out in these different times with your questions and your needs. We will do what we can, and patiently wait for days when once again we can walk on your ground, listen carefully, shake your hand, and begin on the projects that give us all opportunity, ideas, and, most importantly, hope.--*Dr. Carroll Van West*

Online Resources

The Center has a lot of great online resources that you can access from your home offices. Our [digital humanities page](#) on our Web site provides a wealth of material about community preservation across the state over the years ([Southern Places](#)) and about key aspects of Tennessee's history, including the Civil War ([Shades of Gray and Blue](#) and [Landscape of Liberation](#)) and the Jim Crow era ([Trials, Triumphs, and Transformations](#)).

We have several [online preservation guides](#) that can be used as a preliminary step until on-site meetings and consultations can be arranged again. You might even want to take a look at our [Intro Guide to Cemetery Cleaning](#) to get you ready for next fall (our Clarksville workshop is rescheduled for October 16, fingers crossed). And, anytime you want to know what we have done in the past in your neck of the woods, consult our [Partnership Projects Database](#) and search by county.

On the education front, you can access a variety of [lesson plans](#) created by Teaching with Primary Sources--MTSU and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area. The latest [TPS--MTSU newsletter](#) is full of excellent ideas for this stay-at-home period (and you can give them some feedback via this [questionnaire](#)). Teaching resources related to the 2020 [woman suffrage centennial](#) are also available.

If you have fieldwork withdrawal symptoms, take a look at [Revisiting Montana's Historic Landscape](#) or [Southern Rambles](#). Visit one of our wonderful Century Farms virtually by following the [Tennessee Century Farms Facebook page](#), where we are currently introducing the new farms certified so far this year. If you need a boost, check out our Pets of the CHP series on our [Facebook page](#) or on [Instagram](#). Finally, if you are beginning to lose steam while working from home, see these [great tips](#) from National Trails Program Coordinator Amy Kostine.

We remain available via e-mail (histpres@mtsu.edu) or phone (615-898-2947).--
Common Bond editors



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