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Formers' Corner

Marquita Reed-Wright earned her PhD in Public History at MTSU in 2018, with a dissertation on using popular culture as a tool in examining the Black Power movement. Today she works as collections manager and archivist for the National Museum of African American Music (NMAAM), which opened in Nashville in January 2021 with a re-grand-opening on June 19, 2021 (Juneteenth). She credits her work as a graduate research assistant at the Center for Historic Preservation with an approach to public history that values a focus on the community, especially as "no story is too small to tell." Her work at the NMAAM embodies this approach as it weaves the stories of the many different contributions of various musicians, producers, and workers into the better-known stories. Watch the video [here](#).

Scholars and Partners

Center Moves to Core Historic Campus at MTSU

In late July 2021, the Center for Historic Preservation moved to its offices in the first floor of Peck Hall, the primary classroom building of the College of Liberal Arts. The move is a historic moment in the story of MTSU's first Center of Excellence. In 1984, the Center's first home was the seven rooms in the top floor of the Vaughn House, a two-story American Foursquare-styled brick house on East Main Street. Here began the tradition of Center graduate assistants working closely and in tandem with faculty and staff—the lack of space meant that there was really no other choice.



Graduate Research Assistants cutting up at the Harrison House in 2003.

Program expansion led to the first Center moves. From 1995 to 1996, I launched the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* project in two cramped adjoining rooms in a portable double-wide in the center of campus. From 1997 to 1998 that project finished and the Tennessee Rural African American Church Survey began in the Black House, a brick bungalow that stood next to the Vaughn House on East Main Street. Within a year, that arrangement changed again as the Center kept its Vaughn House offices but moved the rest of staff and faculty to the Harrison House, another brick bungalow across the street.



Graduate Research Assistants gather for a new academic year at the Black House in 2017.

There matters remained in place for another five years, until 2005 when the Center entered a period of relative office space stability with offices located in the two brick bungalows, the Harrison House and the Black House, facing each other on East Main Street. Another tradition also began—the act of dodging East Main Street traffic as students, faculty, and staff moved between the two houses.

There's the history of the physical space of the Center for Historic Preservation. Some 37 years after its establishment, it finally found a home in the core historic campus of Middle Tennessee State University. Thanks to former Dean of the College of Liberal Arts Karen Petersen for making that move happen—it can only be good for everyone involved, and especially for MTSU students.

But the move also comes with a good bit of sadness. I never really wanted to leave the Black House—imagine all of the sorting and packing this summer—because it was a space where interaction and discussions with students were so easy to accomplish. We were all in it together, for better or worse, and it was often worse with the accumulated grime, critters, and some said even ghosts that inhabited the Black House. But to me, it was a space where magic often happened—the success of the major book projects, the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* and the *History of Tennessee Arts*, is directly tied to the Black House. The success of the PhD in Public History program is also tied to that building—two dozen of my PhD students worked daily from there. Many students considered it a haven—not in its comfort but in the fact that they felt valued, safe, and supported there. Those relationships are the ones that mean the most to me today and the ones that will mean the most to the success of the Center and the historic preservation field in the future.

Come see us in the new digs at Peck Hall. It might take a year or two to recreate the academic atmosphere of our two East Main Street houses—an environment we are committed to recreating—but no longer do you have to dodge cars on East Main Street to visit!—*Dr. Carroll Van We* Graduate Research Assistants gather for a new academic year at the Black House in 2017. *st. Director*

Leaders

Dorothy Williams Potter Scholarship

For more than a generation, the *Dorothy Williams Potter Scholarship for American Historic Preservation* has generously supported MA and PhD students who are Graduate Research Assistants at the Center. The Tennessee Society Colonial Dames XVII Century established the Scholarship in honor of Mrs. Potter, who is the society's Honorary President.



Dorothy Williams Potter and Scholarship recipient Sherry Teal in 2015.

A native of Chattanooga, Dorothy Williams Potter is best known for her deeply researched publications of primary sources related to Tennessee's early history. She received a certificate of merit from the Tennessee Historical Commission for *Passports of Southeastern Pioneers, 1770-1823* (1982), a compilation of travel documents issued to migrants and travelers to the Mississippi Valley.

"What can be more meaningful than providing for Historic Preservation students who are dedicating their lives toward this endeavor? It is a privilege to support this Scholarship," Potter remarked recently.

Since the Potter Scholarship was first granted in 1995, recipients have included Dr. Bob Beatty, president of the Lyndhurst Group, a history consulting firm; Dr. Tiffany Momon, an assistant professor of history at Sewanee: The University of the South; Sherry Teal, an architectural historian with New South Associates; and Stefanie Haire, a historic preservation planner with the Southeast Tennessee Development District.

PhD student Meggan McCarthy is the current Scholarship recipient. With a Master's degree in art history from Florida State University, McCarthy came to the Center to pursue her PhD in public history. Her research addresses the problems and potential of historic house museums. She already has developed case studies from Center projects in Selma, Alabama, along with Franklin and Nashville, Tennessee.

Please support Mrs. Potter's contributions to the Center's work across the South. Donations to the Scholarship fund are welcome and can be made [online](#).—*Dr. Antoinette G. van Zelm, Assistant Director*

Upcoming

Fall Semester (Online)—*TPS-MTSU Virtual Book Club*, featuring *A History of the World in 6 Glasses*, by Tom Standage, with two synchronous meetings in early October and early December and an online discussion thread.

September 9 (Online)—*Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU Workshop*, "Digging in with TPS-MTSU: Labor" Webinar.

September 14 (Online)—*Discover Tennessee History Webinar Series*, "Discover Tennessee History Day."

September 29 (Nashville)—*Tennessee Council for History Education Conference*, Scarritt Bennett Center.

October 12 (Online)—*Discover Tennessee History Webinar Series*, "Beyond the Battles: Tennessee Civilians Through Soldiers' Eyes."

October 14 (Online)—*Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU Workshop*, "Digging In with TPS-MTSU: First Industrial Revolution" Webinar.

October 16 (Columbia)—Center for Historic Preservation Fall 2021 Cemetery Preservation Mtg. Nebo Church and Cemetery. More details will be posted soon at <https://www.mtsuhistpres.org/resources/cemetery-resources/>.

October 28-30 (Murfreesboro)—Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU Workshop, TPS Civil Rights Fellowship: Trials and Triumphs: Reconstruction and Jim Crow" Workshop in partnership with the University of South Carolina and Mars Hill University.

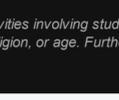
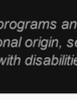
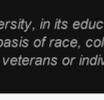
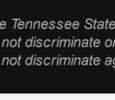
November 3 (Knoxville)—*Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU Workshop*, "The First Industrial Revolution" Workshop.

November 9 (Online)—*Discover Tennessee History Webinar Series*, "Investigating History: Museum Escape Room Strategies for the Classroom."

November 11 (Online)—*Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU Workshop*, "Digging In with TPS-MTSU: Landmark Supreme Court Cases" Webinar.

December 9 (Online)—*Teaching with Primary Sources—MTSU Workshop*, "Digging In with TPS-MTSU: Teaching with Artifacts" Webinar.

December 14 (Online)—*Discover Tennessee History Webinar Series*, "Tennessee 225: Artifacts are Primary Sources Too."



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