MTSU Center for Historic Preservation
2008-2009 Annual Report

MTSU graduate students who worked on the Buford Pusser Museum project, McNairy County, with Dwana Pusser and Renee Moss of the Pusser Museum
INTRODUCTION, ROLE, SCOPE, AND MISSION

The Center for Historic Preservation (CHP) at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) was established in 1984 as the university’s first Center of Excellence and one of the nine original centers at the Tennessee Board of Regents universities. In 1989, the CHP received accomplished center status and in 1991 it became a full-time research and public service institute while continuing to shape MTSU academic programs by supporting and directing undergraduate and graduate students in research and experiential learning opportunities. In 2001, it became the administrator of the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area (Heritage Area), a partnership unit of the National Park Service and the only National Heritage Area managed by a university unit. Heritage Area staff and projects work seamlessly with proven CHP initiatives to substantially enhance the effectiveness of statewide Civil War preservation programs. In 2008, it took on the Tennessee administration of Teaching with Primary Sources, a program of the Library of Congress, which has impacted K-12, college, and museum educators.

The Center meets its goals and objectives through projects and programs that focus on the heritage development—the identification, research, preservation, interpretation, and promotion—of our historic environment. Through its varied resources, and its partnerships at local, state, and national levels, the Center responds to the requests, needs, and concerns of communities, individuals, agencies, and organizations, both governmental and not-for-profit, working towards historic preservation goals.

Working within state, regional, and national partnerships, the Center for Historic Preservation focuses its efforts on heritage area development, rural preservation, heritage education, heritage tourism, ethnic diversity, and internet-based databases. Consistent with the MTSU Academic Master Plan to enhance research and public service, the Center supports efforts to improve the education and quality of life for all Tennesseans. The CHP enhances our citizens’ sense of place, pride, and identity through the interpretation and preservation of the historic sites, landscapes, and historical narratives that comprise the Tennessee experience.

To complement the MTSU Academic Master Plan’s goal of creating experiential learning, the Center for Historic Preservation uses multiple field projects to teach selected courses in the History Department. Faculty and staff provide crucial infrastructure for the Ph.D. in Public History, financially supporting 5 doctoral students as graduate assistants in 2008-09 while teaching 3 required doctoral-level courses. The Center remains the primary
conduit for professional training and placement of M.A. students in public history and plays a significant role in directing M.A. theses in that graduate program. By offering graduate assistantships in addition to internships and other opportunities for both undergraduates and graduates at its offices, the CHP provides interdisciplinary and applied working experiences and fosters a research culture for faculty, staff, and students. The Center’s training expertise will continue to extend to national audiences through its considerable involvement in the National Preservation Conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, scheduled for Nashville in October 2009.

The programs and projects of the CHP coincide with the general legislative mandates implemented by TBR/THEC when the Centers of Excellence were created in 1984. These are: (1) utilize present educational resources more effectively to achieve a genuine excellence in a specific field; (2) support the economic development of the state; (3) enhance the intellectual, cultural, and social climate of Tennessee citizens; (4) improve the research base of the state; and, (5) encourage institutions to increase support for educational and research activities from external sources.

EVALUATION OF CENTER ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS, 2008-2009

In its sixth year as a CHP initiative, Building Local Capacity has benefited towns and institutions across Tennessee. Its goal is to assist groups and officials to identify and use their heritage assets for sustainable community and institutional development, often through the strategies of adaptive reuse and sustainable tourism. MTSU students, under the supervision of CHP staff, are provided with practical on-the-job training and resume-building experiences across Tennessee. Graduate students worked with CHP staff to inventory and assess the conservation needs of the Buford Pusser House and Museum in McNairy County and to develop exhibits for the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County. Student teams also researched and prepared heritage development reports for the Tanner Rosenwald School in Cocke County, the proposed Grundy County Museum in Tracy City, and the Cowan Railroad Museum in Franklin County. A specialized report on Trail of Tears resources in Bradley County was prepared for the Cleveland/Bradley County Chamber of Commerce and local heritage groups who are working on a long-term plan to interpret and restore key

MTSU public history graduate students Amanda Hall (L) and Katie Merzbacher (R) flank Newport citizens who assisted the Cocke County African American history resource survey. The project is part of a regional effort to improve sustainable tourism in the Smoky Mountain gateway communities.

Railroad Museum in Franklin County. A specialized report on Trail of Tears resources in Bradley County was prepared for the Cleveland/Bradley County Chamber of Commerce and local heritage groups who are working on a long-term plan to interpret and restore key
Cherokee sites in the county. The CHP worked with those same partners to produce a countywide driving tour of Trail of Tears and Cherokee historic sites. In Tennessee, students and staff produced National Register nominations for Centennial Park in Nashville, the Glover House in Gallatin, the Abston Garage in Oliver Springs, and a comprehensive National Register Multiple Property Nomination for community resources in Gatlinburg. Graduate students, faculty, and staff collaborated on a comprehensive National Register Multiple Property Nomination for properties and sites associated with the nationally significant U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study in Macon County, Alabama. This study has explored one of the most controversial events in the history of American medicine. It has involved many community members as well as experts from Tuskegee University and Auburn University.

The CHP has focused many of its activities on how the state’s heritage assets can be used to enhance the quality and quantity of life in Tennessee. Its strategy has been to make conservation goals and economic development needs work together. For example, CHP and Heritage Area staff and MTSU graduate students continued their cooperative efforts with the Commissioner of Tourist Development and UT’s Institute for Public Service to conduct sustainable tourism workshops in Gatlinburg, Franklin, and Baxter. A doctoral student, Heather Bailey, has focused her dissertation research on sustainable tourism in Tennessee. She carried out a successful professional residency with the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, which has become a national leader in the new sustainable tourism field.

The Center’s National Register assessment of the impact of U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study on rural African American communities in Macon County, Alabama, has involved faculty and staff from MTSU, Tuskegee University, and Auburn University as well as Center staff and graduate students.
The **Tennessee Century Farms Program** is the oldest of the Center’s statewide efforts. In 2008-2009, it expanded partnerships and documented and honored historic family farms in new ways. A documentary film series, produced in cooperation with the Heritage Area and MTSU Audio-Visual Services, was launched in October. This first feature told the story of the McDonald Craig Farm of Perry County, which is one of only four Century farms founded by emancipated slaves and still within the hands of descendents. The premier was held at the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County and attended by the Craig family, friends and officials from Perry County, as well as representatives of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture and MTSU. Complimentary copies of the DVD were sent to every county library in Tennessee and were provided to cable access channels and others on request.

“Pioneer Century Farms” is a new designation first offered in 2008 and recognizes farms that were founded before or in the year 1796 when Tennessee became a state. Forty Pioneer Century Farms were included in a booklet produced by the Center to honor these farms at the successful statewide Farmland Legacy Conference held in October. Governor Phil Bredesen presented the farm owners with the booklets and special certificates designed by the CHP. The Tennessee Farmland Legacy Conference focused on many topics of concern and interest to farmers. The Tennessee Department of Agriculture, the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development, the Land Trust for Tennessee, Tennessee Farm Bureau, the Lyndhurst Foundation, the Center for Profitable Agriculture, and the CHP sponsored the meeting. Several of these partners continue to meet regularly as the Farmland Preservation Committee to plan, sponsor, and provide workshops and materials to assist farmers, planners, government officials, and nonprofits in making informed choices that affect farm families, the economy, and the agricultural landscape of Tennessee.

The Century Farms Program and the Land Trust for Tennessee intensified their efforts to inform farmers of the benefits of conservation easements. To date, eight Century Farms have placed property in the Land Trust. The Center also provided information and consultation on a Conservation Plan for Williamson County that the Land Trust prepared in 2008.

Fifty-five farms were certified this year and press releases were sent to local newspapers for each farm. The twice-yearly newsletter was mailed to 1600 people in July and December of 2008. In addition to distributing applications and information at conferences and workshops, around 70 requests for application packets were received via e-mail and phone this year. The Century Farm Web site is regularly updated and a new section was developed and published for the Pioneer Century Farms. Archived newsletters as well as the current issue are now
linked from the Web site and the application in Word document format may now be completed online and printed by the farm owner. Caneta S. Hankins, the Century Farms director and Michael T. Gavin, the Heritage Area preservation specialist co-authored the *Barns of Tennessee* that was published by the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association in February of 2009. A number of Century Farmers provided photographs for this publication.

Donahue Bible, a Century Farm owner and local historian, speaks at the Civil War Trail dedication of the Bridgeburner Marker in Greene County. The Heritage Area works closely with local communities and the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development in this key sustainable tourism initiative.

The **Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area** is the CHP’s largest statewide program. Strong reciprocal partnerships form the foundation of its success. Staff provided leadership and support to organizations across the state, creating community-based opportunities for education, resource conservation, and tourism. Heritage Area partnerships empower residents and communities to become effective stewards of their resources. Maximizing this year’s $465,621 in federal appropriations, the Heritage Area’s projects fulfilled education and interpretation goals, enhanced preservation efforts, and promoted economic development.

The Heritage Area provided collaborative partnership support for several key projects. It worked closely with Knoxville groups and the University of Tennessee’s Archaeology Center to conduct surveys of two important properties, the Third Creek site and Fort Higley. The City
of Knoxville, non-profit groups, and local foundations plan to develop Fort Higley as a major battlefield park. The Heritage Area partnered with MTSU’s media center to produce a new audio tour of the Parker’s Crossroads Battlefield. It also assisted two other media productions, the introductory film for the Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center in Townsend and the “Tennessee River Runs Through it” DVD project for Middle and West Tennessee counties.

The Heritage Area also led the planning for the June 2009 Franklin’s Charge Symposium in Williamson County and Davidson County. It supported Civil War and Reconstruction conferences in Murfreesboro (the Stones River Symposium, which featured historians Barbara Fields, William Freehling, and Bob Hunt) and Greeneville (the Andrew Johnson Bicentennial Symposium, which featured historians Paul Bergeron and Eric Foner). Together with the MTSU history department, it sponsored the national meeting of the Society of Military History, which took place in Murfreesboro. The Heritage Area also co-sponsored the Memphis meeting of the influential Mississippi River Parkway Commission, an influential multi-state organization that had not met in Tennessee in many years.

The Heritage Area also continued its program of assisting communities with interpretive materials and driving tours, including a tour of historic African American sites in Franklin. The Heritage Area is a primary partner in the Tennessee Civil War Trails program, which is funded by the Tennessee Department of Transportation and local matching grants and administered by the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development. Heritage Area historians and MTSU graduate students help to research texts and find images for the markers, which will total 300 across the state once the program’s initial phase is completed in 2011.

The contribution to the Civil War Trails program is part of the Heritage Area’s commitment to the Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission. Center director Carroll Van West is the co-chair of the commission and the Heritage Area provides leadership and support to this important state project.

**Heritage Education**

Heritage education remains a foundation program for the CHP. Following MTSU’s Academic Master Plan, the CHP continues to provide student-centered, experience-based educational opportunities for undergraduate, masters, and Ph.D. candidates as it serves Tennessee and southeastern communities and institutions. Ph.D. students received research funds and extensive CHP instruction for their research projects, which included a DVD film for the Mississippi Blues Trail; research and expansion of the Tennessee Century Farms Program; sustainable tourism research in Cocke, McNairy, and Sevier counties; and historic resource surveys in Gatlinburg and surrounding Appalachian communities.

The CHP’s new Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) program, brought to the state in 2008 by Senators Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker and Congressman Bart Gordon, has touched teachers and students across Tennessee. This three-year program,
funded at $600,000 for three years, is an important partnership with the Library of Congress. It emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills by using primary sources provided via the Internet from the vast collections of the Library of Congress. The program fits squarely into the CHP’s mission of encouraging education from a wide variety of sources, from music to art to architecture to letters to diaries to newspapers to film.

The Library has provided key training for Center staff involved with the project. Center director Carroll Van West serves on the Library’s Teaching with Primary Sources Advisory Committee. CHP Research Professor Stacey Graham has crisscrossed the state, providing workshops and training from Blountville to Memphis. Graham has built in-state support from partners such as National History Day, administered by the Tennessee Historical Society, and the education programs of the East Tennessee Historical Society in Knoxville. She also has worked with MTSU’s educational technology center to produce two one-hour video productions on Teaching with Primary Sources that have been viewed by classrooms in Tennessee and Alabama. The program has launched its own website (www.mtsu.edu/tps) and provides a monthly online newsletter for educators.

The Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County—a partnership between the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, Main Street Murfreesboro, MTSU, the City of Murfreesboro, and Rutherford County Government—continues to be a key laboratory for heritage education training and programming. MTSU undergraduate and graduate students provide all sorts of interpretive and education experiences for residents, classrooms, and visitors. The Heritage Center’s Community Heritage Lecture Series gives graduate students a chance to educate and interact with local residents about their research projects.

In all of its activities, the Center consistently looks for opportunities to bring neglected topics, stories, and places to greater attention. Its Heritage Diversity program continues to focus on the Rural African-American Church Survey Project. Now in its twelfth year, the survey includes over 500 historic African-American churches. In Spring 2009, the Center director spoke at the dedication of a state historical marker celebrating the past of one of these special properties, Wilson County’s Williamson Chapel C.M.E. Church, which the Center had earlier listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

With historic African American schools, the CHP helped to develop a successful Lowe’s Foundation grant for the restoration of the Cairo Rosenwald School in Sumner County. Then in
the spring of 2009, CHP graduate students got a "hands-on" lesson in restoration by working on the school, in partnership with the Tennessee Preservation Trust.

Paul Hoffman, Katie Merzbacher, Catherine Hawkins and Amanda Hall at Cairo Rosenwald School

Center faculty, staff, and graduate students also developed a survey and assessment of Cocke County’s African American heritage resources. The report focused on various heritage development alternatives for the Tanner Rosenwald School. Local Clay County residents and officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture used a similar CHP heritage development report to secure a Lowe’s Foundation grant and federal funds for the restoration of the Free Hill Rosenwald School near Celina.

A major CHP initiative in the winter and spring of 2009 led to the publication of “Your Passport to Explore Cherokee Heritage,” a driving tour of key heritage properties in Bradley County. Working with multiple local and regional partners, the CHP helped to prepare the text and contributed to the design and printing of the brochure, which was distributed to thousands who attended the Cherokee Council meeting in Bradley County in April.

Through public programs such as the 2008 Stones River Symposium, the Heritage Area continued to emphasize stories of emancipation and Reconstruction. Its “Free at Last: Emancipation in Tennessee” exhibit continued to tour the state, with an extended stay at the Green McAdoo Cultural Center in Clinton. The Heritage Area also continued to assist the development of the Matt Gardner House museum in Elkton. MTSU students worked on other projects, such as the historic Townsend School in Winchester, while Center staff and graduate students conducted assessments of historic African American cemeteries in Franklin, Knoxville, and Jefferson counties.

The Center also sponsored the first Tennessee visit by Tanya Bowers, Director of Diversity for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Bowers spoke at the annual
Tennessee Preservation Trust meeting in Murfreesboro and later toured the historic Cemetery community of Rutherford County.

Creating and supporting **Research Databases** and other online information tools continue to grow as important Center initiatives. In partnership with the Tennessee Historical Society and the University of Tennessee Press, the CHP continues expansion of the online edition of the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*. This invaluable scholarly and education resource has received a total of 11 million hits since it went public over five years ago. The CHP continues as the editorial center for the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, the only quarterly professional journal for state and southern history. The Center also continues to expand its electronic publications through its website, the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area website, the Heritage Education Network, an Iron Furnace Trail website, the Teaching with Primary Sources in Tennessee website, and the Tennessee Century Farms website.

Keeping its commitment to student-centered learning, the Center maintains ties with a large, diverse, and accomplished network of alumni through a monthly electronic newsletter from the director, an annual MTSU reception at the National Trust for Historic Preservation conference, and the Center’s twice-yearly newsletter. The Center also produces the Tennessee Century Farm newsletter and the quarterly Tennessee Civil War Heritage Area Newsletter, which reaches a statewide and national audience. In keeping to its sustainable tourism goals, the Heritage Area took its newsletter to an all-electronic distribution in the summer of 2009.

The Center is working with Nashville-based partners and state agencies to help plan the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s National Preservation Conference, which comes to Nashville in October 2009. This date coincides with the date of the CHP’s 25th anniversary. The Center is hosting several events, workshops, and sessions during the meeting. It will be an outstanding opportunity for Tennessee residents to learn about best practices in historic preservation, as well as a showcase for the value and success of historic preservation in Tennessee. The Center has served as the coordinator of the Tennessee Scholarship program, assuring a wide variety of citizens can attend and learn from the conference.

With a major new book publication, the Center further expanded its national reputation in **Research and Publications**. *Barns of Tennessee*, written by the Center’s Caneta S. Hankins and Michael T. Gavin, is a major achievement. This comprehensive look at the barn types of Tennessee, as well as a history of the significance of this disappearing element of our rural landscape, will be a valuable reference book for years.

The Center director continues to serve as senior editor for the two primary statewide history publications, the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* and the online *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*. The Heritage Area historian continues editing publications and books reviews for the Southern Association of Women Historians. The Center’s record for articles and chapters published in peer-reviewed books and journals, as well as its number of papers and workshops at national professional meetings, contributes to the research culture at MTSU.

The Center’s role in providing **Academic Support** to the goals of MTSU focuses on support for the university’s nationally recognized programs in historic preservation and public history. The CHP and its major nationally associated programs, the National Park Service’s Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area and the Library of Congress’s Teaching with Primary Sources, provide students with professional supervision and expert instruction, as well as resources including reference materials, computer equipment and software, and office space.
to enable them to successfully complete assigned projects and their own research efficiently and on schedule. The laboratory created by the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County gives students opportunities to have “real-world” learning experiences in developing museum exhibit designs, exhibitions, interpretive tours, and heritage education materials.

The Center prides itself in creating a research culture that involves faculty, staff, undergraduates from multiple disciplines, and Master’s and Ph. D. students in public history and leisure and recreation. The synergy between research, education, and public service equips students to compete well in positions across the nation.

The Center director also directed to completion the Ph.D. degrees of Steven Hoskins and Edward Salo, the second and third graduates of this new degree program. The Center provided financial aid and research assistance to five additional Ph.D. students in the past year.

The CHP director taught three graduate classes in the MTSU Public History Program: American Architectural Survey, Seminar in Historic Preservation, and the Essentials of Historic Preservation and Cultural Resource Management. He also served on multiple Ph.D. and M.A. committees. The Heritage Area historian also has been involved with the training and professional residency of two doctoral students in 2008-2009. The CHP research professor also taught an upper division class in medieval history and a survey class in world history.

Faculty and Staff of the Center for Historic Preservation, 2008-2009
Director: Dr. Carroll Van West
Assistant Director: Caneta S. Hankins
Research Professor: Dr. Stacey R. Graham
Heritage Area Manager: Laura S. Holder
Center Services Manager: Anne-Leslie Owens
Heritage Area Preservation Specialist: Michael T. Gavin
Fieldwork Coordinator: Elizabeth H. Moore
Heritage Area Historian: Dr. Antoinette G. Van Zelm
Heritage Center Coordinator: Jennifer Butt
Executive Aide: Cindy Duke
Secretary 2: Ann Hendrix

Ph. D. Graduate Assistants
Heather Bailey, Kevin Cason, Brian Dempsey, Spurgeon King, Susan Knowles

M.A. Graduate Assistants
Megan Akerstrom, Catherine Hawkins, Paul Hoffman, Jason McClanahan, Katie Merzbacher, Ashleigh Oatts, Lauren Pate

Undergraduate Assistants/Volunteers
Sara Beth Gideon, Mary Moore, Christina Runkel
Center for Historic Preservation Benchmarks, 2008-2009

Peer-Reviewed Books, Articles, Chapters, Reviews


Major Research Reports, National Register Nominations, Exhibits


West, Carroll Van, Elizabeth Moore, and Julie Lenger, contributors. The University of Tennessee Campus Heritage Plan. Knoxville: University of Tennessee, February 2009.


Professional Presentations and Workshops


Teacher Curricula and Workshops


Hankins, Caneta S. Teaching with Primary Sources. Anderson County Teacher Workshop, Clinton, February 2009.


Professional Recognition

Hankins, Caneta S.

Tennessee Century Farms Program Coordinating Committee: Chair.
Rogana Project Reviewer, National Trust of Northern Ireland, Ulster-American Folk Park, Ireland.
Tennessee Farmland Legacy Committee, Advisor.
Holder, Laura S.

Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association: Advisory Board Member.
Mississippi River Natural and Recreational Corridor: Advisory Board Member.
Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission: Committee Member.

Owens, Anne-Leslie.

Tennessee Preservation Trust: Ex-Officio Board Member.
Tennessee Preservation Trust Conference, Murfreesboro, April 2009: Chair.

van Zelm, Antoinette G.

SAWH (Southern Association for Women Historians): Executive Council and Chair, SAWH Mentoring Committee
H-NET: H-SAWH Listserv: Book Review Editor and Publications Committee

West, Carroll Van.

National Trust for Historic Preservation: Board of Advisors.
Library of Congress: Teaching with Primary Sources Advisory Committee.
Center for Great Plains Studies, University of Nebraska: Associate Fellow
Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission: Co-Chair
National Trust Nashville Conference Planning Committee: Co-Chair
Mississippi River Natural and Recreational Corridor: Executive Committee
Tennessee Historical Society: Senior Editor, Tennessee Historical Quarterly
Tennessee Historical Society/University of Tennessee Press: Editor in Chief,
   Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture Online Edition
University of Tennessee Press: Peer Reviewer of Manuscripts
Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association: Advisory Board Member
Arkansas University System: Peer Reviewer of History Graduate Programs