



Common Bond

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation Newsletter

CHP Partners with Clinton Museum

In July of 2005, the Center for Historic Preservation began a partnership with the Green McAdoo Cultural Organization (GMCO) in Clinton, Tennessee, which is already reaping great rewards. With a generous grant from the federal government, the GMCO is working with the City of Clinton to rehabilitate the historic Green McAdoo School to house a civil rights museum. The museum will tell the story of the twelve students from Green McAdoo School who enrolled in the all-white Clinton High School in the fall of 1956. These Clinton students were the first African Americans to enroll in a white public school in the Southeast in the 20th century.

The center began the project by assisting in the school's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Under the leadership of Dr. Carroll Van West, the center team developed an interpretive plan in November 2005. MTSU Public History Ph.D. student Steve Hoskins, a fel-

low at the center, has been the point person for a CHP team, including Dr. Van West, Dr. Leslie Sharp, Melissa Zimmerman, and Rachel Martin, assisted by graduate students Kristen Luetkemeier and Lauren Nickas.

Key initiatives have included an institutional master plan, the first public interview with the original twelve Green McAdoo students for the city of Clinton and local media, the initial exhibit footprint, a new historical account of the events during the Clinton civil rights crisis during 1956–58, oral history accounts from the original twelve students, a National Historic District nomination survey, and assistance with public events and fundraisers for the GMCO. The center also coordinated consultation between the GMCO and Ralph Applebaum and Associates, Inc., a leading international museum design firm. The museum is planning an August 2006 opening.



Green McAdoo School, Clinton



Green McAdoo Cultural Organization Meeting, Clinton

Tennessee Rosenwald Schools Receive Funding

Three historic African American schools, each listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the Center for Historic Preservation, are the first in Tennessee to receive grant funding from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Rosenwald Schools Initiative. This special funding designated for schools in Tennessee was provided by the Chambers Family Fund of Denver, Colorado.

Lincoln Rosenwald School in Bledsoe County is a three-teacher school built in 1925. Located in Pikeville, it has been owned and operated by the Lincoln Alumni-Community Historical Association (LACHA) since 1991. The \$2,000 grant will be used to repair and reglaze windows and address safety concerns, allowing LACHA to expand its programs and partner with other local and regional organizations to interpret the region's African American and Depression-era heritage.

The Allen-White Rosenwald School in Whiteville was built 1918–1919 and remained in use until 1970. Now owned by El Canaan Baptist Church adjacent to the school, Allen-White School will be restored for use as a social, educational, recreational, and cultural center serving the entire community. The \$3,000 grant will be used to purchase building materials for the school's restoration.

Durham's Chapel Rosenwald School in Sumner County was opened in 1923 and is now owned and maintained by the neighboring Durham's Chapel Baptist Church. The building is used as a community center, but extensive work is needed

to stabilize the structure. The \$4,000 grant will be used to replace the building's deteriorated roof.

Rosenwald schools are part of the legacy of Chicago philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, the one-time president of Sears, Roebuck and Co. who gave more than \$4 million to the Rosenwald Fund from 1913 to 1932. Utilizing the latest trends in school design, the Rosenwald Fund provided seed money to help build over 5,300 schools for African Americans in communities across the rural south where none had existed before.

For the communities in which they were built, these schools are a testament to the value placed on education, with total contributions by African Americans actually exceeding Rosenwald dollars. School desegregation of the 1960s closed these schools and most gradually disappeared. Those that remain are landmarks of ethnic pride and identity. Many buildings continue to serve their communities as churches, community centers, and museums.



Allen White School, Whiteville

CHP Participates in MTSU Alternative Spring Break 2006

This spring the Center for Historic Preservation joined the entire MTSU community in supporting an Alternative Spring Break in Pass Christian, Mississippi, an area devastated by Hurricane Katrina in August 2005. The center's Dr. Leslie Sharp along with three other MTSU faculty members led 22 students in a service-learning spring break experience March 4–8.

Currently, about 1,600 students are attending classes in the town's remaining school building and about fifty FEMA trailers. At the school, MTSU helped with moving and refurbishing the playground equipment for the elementary students, planting trees and shrubs at the front of the trailers, and holding a career day for middle school children. The center served as a collection point for financial contributions, in-kind donations, and food supplies. In addition,

Linley Moreland, one of the center's research assistants, helped secure housing for the group.



Dr. Leslie Sharp and John Miller, an MTSU undergraduate recreation major, build the enclosure for the playground.

Recent National Register Work

Center staff, working with and supervising graduate assistants and students, regularly prepare individual, district, and multiple property nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. The Tennessee State Review Board approved the following CHP-prepared nominations:

Approved September 2005

Barrs Chapel, Henry County
Cates Farm, Rutherford County
Christ Temple AME Zion Church, Jefferson County
Craig Farm, Perry County
Durham's Chapel Church, Cemetery, and School, Sumner County
Green McAdoo School, Anderson County
United Sons and Daughters of Charity Lodge Hall, Hardeman County

Approved January 2006

Bodenham (Colored) School, Giles County
Bridgeforth High School, Giles County
Harlinsdale Farm, Williamson County
Moore Family Farm, Hawkins County
Original Church of God, Giles County

New Year, New Offices

After 21 years, the Center for Historic Preservation has moved completely out of the Vaughn House. Staff of the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area (TCWNHA), a program of the CHP, moved next door into the Black House at 1417 East Main in early January. From 1997 to 1999 the Black House served as the editorial office for Dr. Van West, Dr. Connie Lester, Anne-Leslie Owens, and Margaret Binnicker while they worked on the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* and carried out the Rural African American Church Project. The Black House will provide five TCWNHA staff offices and work space for up to ten students and fellows. The Center for Historic Preservation offices will remain in the Harrison House at 1416 East Main.



CHP and TCWNHA staff held a Black House cleanup day on January 11.

Meet Our New Faces

Elizabeth Moore joined the staff of the Center for Historic Preservation in April as the coordinator of field projects. As a recent CHP fellow, she researched and wrote National Register of Historic Places nominations for five churches and schools in Giles County. In addition, she completed a Fentress County survey and is currently completing design guidelines and a survey of several neighborhoods in Franklin.



Moore completed her master's in architectural history and earned a certificate in historic preservation at the University of Virginia in 2005. Her thesis, "Richmond, Virginia's African American High Schools: The Architecture of the Washington-DuBois Debate, 1923–1938," focused on the physical representation of early twentieth-century trends in African American high school education. A native of Clanton, Alabama, she received her bachelor of arts degree from Vanderbilt University in 2003.



Kevin Cason

Kevin Cason is the 2006 recipient of the Dorothy Williams Potter Exchange Scholarship for historic preservation. The Tennessee Society, Colonial Dames XVII, Century, established the DWPES grant in 1995 to preserve American heritage by supporting a student at the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation. Cason, a native of Tullahoma, is completing his first year in the MTSU Ph.D. in Public History program.

This spring, **Ashley Tate** joined us as a graduate assistant working for the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area. Tate has a B.A. in journalism and mass communication from the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill and is a graduate student in public history at MTSU. A native of Gastonia, N.C., she previously worked as a public relations manager for the Girl Scout Council of Cumberland Valley in Nashville.



Ashley Tate

Partnerships

Tennessee Century Farms Publications and Web Site

Holding on to the Homestead: A Guide to Programs, Services, and Options for Tennessee's Farmers is an online resource available at the CHP Web site. The publication was compiled and edited by Nancy Adgent, formerly of the CHP and now an archivist with the Rockefeller Archive Center in Sleepy Hollow, New York, and Caneta Hankins, director of the Tennessee Century Farms program. Other sponsors are the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Cumberland Region Tomorrow, Central Basin Resource Conservation and Development District Council, Greater Nashville Regional Council, and the Land Trust for Tennessee. To date, nearly 1,500 printed copies have been distributed across the state.

A new Century Farm Web site will be up and running soon. Kevin Cason, a Ph.D. student in Public History, is working his way through nearly 1,000 files representing all 95 counties. Cason is the Tennessee Century Farms intern, a position sponsored jointly by the CHP and the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

Arts Center of Cannon County

Working with Evan Hatch, folklorist at the Arts Center of Cannon County, Ph.D. candidate Brian Dempsey developed and implemented an accession/registration program for a recently donated folk art collection. Brian also contributed

original research pertaining to the collection. His "White Oak Basket-Making in Cannon County, Tenn.: From Survival to Folk Artistry" will contribute to an upcoming basketry exhibit at the Arts Center.



Brian Dempsey and Evan Hatch at the Arts Center of Cannon County.

African American History and Culture Conference

On February 8, the Center for Historic Preservation and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area joined with other organizations and individuals in celebrating 25 years of research, publishing, and learning through the Conference on African American History and Culture. This annual event is cosponsored by Tennessee State University and the Metropolitan Nashville Historical Commission. The CHP and the TCWNHA have been supporters and contributors

for several years. Anne-Leslie Owens has served on the planning committee since 1999 and staff members Dr. Van West, Caneta Hankins, and Michael Gavin have all presented in past years.

This year's anniversary edition of the conference featured three musical performances of jazz and song and three scholarly presentations. Dr. Leslie Sharp shared her research on artist and educator Frances E. Thompson. Anne-Leslie Owens along with assistants Lauren Grisham and Liene Rozentale compiled the commemorative booklet which contains a short history of the conference and lists of supporters, planning committee members, profiles, and presentations from 1981 to 2006.



Earlice Taylor of the Tennessee Cultural Heritage Preservation Society with Elizabeth Moore and Lauren Nickas of the CHP at the African American History and Culture Conference in Nashville on February 8.

Franklin Survey Project

Working with the Franklin Planning Department and the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County, CHP's historic preservation fellow Elizabeth Moore is undertaking a survey of the city of Franklin and a project to revise and update the city's historic district design guidelines. The survey results are being entered into Franklin's Geographical Information System (GIS). Both the survey information and the design guidelines will be available to the public on the city's Web site.

Tennessee Preservation Trust

The Center for Historic Preservation assigned graduate assistant Bud Alley to the Tennessee Preservation Trust to help with statewide preservation needs. Alley is working on the upcoming statewide conference and the development of a newsletter and Web site. He has 40 years of business experience as a founder of several packaging firms and has an M.B.A. from Augusta State in Augusta, Georgia.

Partnerships continued on page 5

African American Preservation Alliance Conference

The African American Preservation Alliance will hold its annual conference August 3–5 in Memphis. The group, formerly the Southeast Regional African American Preservation Alliance, is a coalition of statewide African American preservation networks and organizations. The alliance exists to raise public awareness of the importance of preserving African American cultural heritage and historic places across the nation.

The African American Preservation Alliance’s principal partners in the 2006 conference are the Tennessee Cultural Heritage Preservation Society and the Memphis Landmarks Commission. The Center for Historic Preservation and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area are assisting the Memphis sponsors by developing the conference program.

Blount County Feasibility Report

The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area has established an ongoing partnership with the Smoky Mountain Convention and Visitors Bureau, community representatives, and residents from Blount County in an effort to plan for future growth. The TCWNHA is currently finalizing a county-wide feasibility study that recommends local, state, and federal options that will enable the county to sustain economic development while conserving its unique cultural heritage, rural character, natural resources, and living landscapes.



Blount County

Tennessee Cultural Heritage Preservation Society (TNCHPS)

Established in 1997, TNCHPS is a statewide service organization headquartered in Memphis. Its mission is to identify, protect, and enhance African American contributions to Tennessee history, culture, and architecture through historic preservation, cultural conservation, and education. A member of the African American Preservation Alliance, TNCHPS will cohost the 2006 conference. CHP graduate assistant Lauren Nickas is assisting in the creation of the conference program and is designing a tabletop display for the society.

Mark Your Calendar

Staff from the Center for Historic Preservation will be at the following events. We look forward to seeing you.

Tennessee Preservation Trust Conference and Main Street Summit

“Vintage Buildings Make Vibrant Communities”

East Tennessee History Center
Knoxville, Tennessee

April 20–22

www.tennesseepreservationtrust.org

African American Preservation Alliance Conference

“Keeping Our Eyes on the Prize”

University of Memphis, Holiday Inn
Memphis, Tennessee

August 3–5

E-mail nancyjane.baker@memphistn.org

for more information.

CENTER FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION



Box 80, MTSU
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
(615) 898-2947
(615) 898-5614 (fax)
histpres@mtsu.edu
<http://histpres.mtsu.edu>

Carroll Van West, Director
Caneta S. Hankins, Assistant Director
Anne-Leslie Owens, Public Service Coordinator
Leslie N. Sharp, Research Professor
Nancy Smotherman, Executive Aide
Betty Johnson, Secretary

TENNESSEE CIVIL WAR NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



Box 80, MTSU
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
(615) 898-2947
(615) 898-5614 (fax)
civilwar@mtsu.edu
<http://histpres.mtsu.edu/tncivwar>

Carroll Van West, Director
Laura Stewart Holder, Manager
Michael T. Gavin, Preservation Specialist
Antoinette G. van Zelm, Historian
Melissa Zimmerman, Program Coordinator
Rachel Martin, Fellow

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY

Center for Historic Preservation

Box 80
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

2-25400

Spotlight on CHP Assistant Lauren Nickas Spends Thanksgiving . . . with Elvis?



Research Assistant Lauren Nickas poses at the gates of Mini-Graceland.

Most people visit their grandma for Thanksgiving; Lauren Nickas' family visited a Roanoke, Virginia, attraction known as Mini-Graceland. As a native Memphian, Lauren thought she had experienced Elvis mania to its fullest. (Her mother refuses to go downtown during Elvis Week because that many Elvis impersonators in one place make her a little nervous.) What Lauren found in Roanoke was a kitsch-culture extravaganza that makes Elvis swinging leg clocks seem kind of subdued. Mini-Graceland includes an Elvis statue, musical-note gates, and dollhouse-sized replicas of various sites including the mansion and Elvis' birthplace in Tupelo, Mississippi. Lauren notes that the site is in need of some maintenance but is well worth a visit if you are ever in the neighborhood or are an Elvis fan or a roadside architecture enthusiast.

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