

Focus on the Humanities

July 2009 - Mississippi Humanities Council Newsletter

(Visit our web site at www.mshumanities.org to learn more about us.)

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TOURING MISSISSIPPI THROUGH MARCH 2010

Clinton	May 30 to July 14, 2009
Southaven	July 18 to Aug. 30, 2009
Natchez	Sept. 5 to Oct. 20, 2009
McComb	Oct. 24 to Dec. 8, 2009
Hazlehurst	Dec. 12 to Jan. 19, 2010
Long Beach	Jan. 23 to March 11, 2010

**A Most Mobile Nation:
A mobile people in a vast land;
Some of us were here already;
Some of us came hoping for a better life,
Some of us came in chains.
And all of us are still in motion.
We all have Journey Stories...**

JOURNEY STORIES is a compelling Smithsonian exhibition that examines the intersection between modes of travel and Americans' desire to feel free to move. The story is diverse and focused on immigration, migration, innovation and freedom. It is accounts of

immigrants coming in search of promise in a new country; stories of individuals and families relocating in search of fortune, their own homestead, or employment; the harrowing journeys of Africans and Native Americans forced to move; and, of course, fun and frolic on the open road. The Mississippi Humanities Council is pleased to bring this captivating exhibit to Mississippi.

JOURNEY STORIES EVENTS IN MISSISSIPPI

Southaven, M.R. Davis Public Library – July 18–August 30, 2009

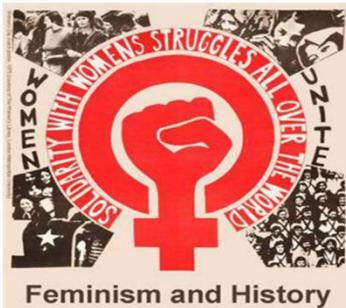
- Saturday July 18, Ceremony and Grand Opening of Exhibit, including reception, antique car show and music, M.R. Davis Public Library
- Tuesday July 21, Iron Horse: Trains across America, program and display, Dr. Mike Condren, MRD Library, 2 p.m.
- Wednesday July 22, The Railway Children, family movie, MRD Library, 2 p.m.
- Thursday July 23, Arts and Crafts: Make Your Own Boxcar, children's activity, MRD Library, 2 p.m.
- Sunday July 26, Walking Tour of Edmondson Cemetery, starts at cemetery, 2–5 p.m.
- Wednesday July 29, Journey Down the Yellow Brick Road, "The Wizard of Oz," family movie and time capsule activity, MRD Library, 2 p.m.
- Thursday, July 30, Gone With the Wind, movie viewing and discussion, MRD Library, 6–9:45 p.m.
- Saturday August 1, Trail of Tears, Dr. Robert Connolly, MRD Library, 2 p.m.
- Wednesday August 5, The Cotton Quilt, an arts and crafts activity for pre-schoolers and kindergarteners presented by the Memphis Cotton Exchange, MRD Library, 10:30 a.m.
- Saturday August 8, Mississippi – The Birthplace of America's Music, Dr. Jim Brewer, MRD Library, 3 p.m.
- Thursday August 13, The Yellow Fever Epidemic and Other Epidemics of 1899, Dr. Deanne Nuwer, MRD Library, 7 p.m.
- Friday, August 14, The Yellow Fever Epidemic and Other Epidemics of 1899, Dr. Deanne Nuwer, Presentation for those in the medical field, MRD Library, 11 a.m.
- Saturday August 15, African Treasures, Traditions and Cultures, Bonnie Jamerson: national storyteller, educator, administrator, MRD Library, 2 p.m.
- Saturday August 22, Harriett Tubman Journeys into a Sharecropper's Dinner, family dinner theatre, MRD Library, 6:30 p.m. (registration required)
- Thursday August 27, What is Cotton: From Field to Fabric, a cotton-processing activity presented by the Memphis Cotton Exchange for students grades K–5, MRD Library, 10:30 a.m.
- Thursday August 27, Cotton of Our Lives, objects lesson in the history of the cotton exchange for students grades 4 –8, presented by the Memphis Cotton Exchange, MRD Library, 1:30 p.m.
- Friday August 28, The Cotton at the Exchange: The Journey of Cotton, an activity for students grades K–5, presented by the Memphis Cotton Exchange, MRD Library, 10:30 a.m.
- Friday August 28, Memory and History, activities for students grades 6–8 presented by the Memphis Cotton Exchange, MRD Library, 1:30 p.m.

Sunday August 30, Musical Journey Through Mississippi Folklore, family participation event with Andy Cohen and Larkin Bryant, MRD Library, 2:30 p.m.
Sunday Aug. 30, Final Day of Exhibit

Journey Stories is part of the *Museum on Main Street*, a collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the Federation of State Humanities Councils. Support for *Museum on Main Street* has been provided by the United States Congress.

Status of Women: An Evolving Paradigm

Feminist: "... each and every politically and socially conscious woman or man who works for equality within or outside the movement, writes about feminism, or calls her- or himself a feminist." (*Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future*, Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards)



Dr. Gemma Beckley, professor and chair of the Rust College Department of Social Work and self-described feminist, delivered the 2009 Cora Norman Lecture, sponsored by the Mississippi Humanities Council.

Initiated in 1997 to honor Dr. Norman, who served as the founding executive director of the Mississippi Humanities council until her retirement in May of 1996, the purpose of the lecture series is to explore the impact of the humanities in Mississippi. Beckley presented her address, "Evolving Educational and Cultural Paradigms: Women in China, South Africa and the U.S. South," at two venues: Rust College during an inaugural symposium celebrating the life of another Mississippi feminist, Ida B. Wells, and at Mississippi University for Women during a quasiquintennial celebration of the founding of the MUW, known first as the Mississippi Industrial Institute and College.

Beckley's lecture explored definitions of feminism, the impact of education on shaping a culture of women's activism, politically and socially, in the southern U.S., China and South Africa, and the evolving paradigm of feminism. [Click here](#) to read the entire article.

First Volume of *Ethnic Heritage in Mississippi* Available Once Again

As the second volume of *Ethnic Heritage in Mississippi* is nearing completion, the University Press of Mississippi has announced that the original volume, published in 1992, will now be available through Lightning Source, a print-on-demand service. Though it has been out of print for some time, we still receive requests for copies or information about the original book. The first volume, edited by Barbara Carpenter, contained chapters on ethnic groups in the state, beginning with Native Americans, and a general survey of the coming of Europeans, Africans and others, along with a photographic essay on contemporary groups and is often used as supplementary material in classrooms. Volume

II, in process at the moment, will cover more recent developments in the 20th century and up through the present. Shana Walton is editor for Volume II.

President Obama nominates James Leach to head the NEH

President Barack Obama has nominated James Leach to serve as Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Leach served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for the state of Iowa for 30 years. He founded and co-chaired the Congressional Humanities Caucus, which is dedicated to advocating on behalf of the humanities in the House of Representatives and to raising the profile of the humanities in the United States. The Caucus works to promote and preserve humanities programs and commissions such as the Historical Publications and Records Commission. Mr. Leach and his co-founder, Rep. David Price, received the Sidney R. Yates Award for Distinguished Public Service to the Humanities from the National Humanities Alliance in 2005.

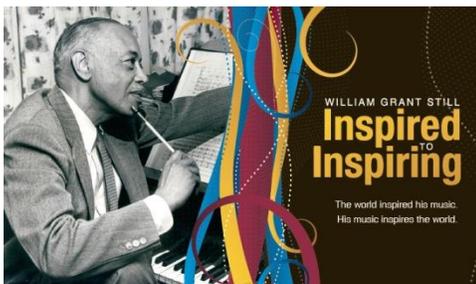


During his tenure in Congress, Mr. Leach also served as Chairman of the House Committee on Banking and Financial Services (1995–2001), a senior member of the House Committee on International Relations and Chairman of the Committee’s Subcommittee on Asian and Pacific Affairs (2001–2006). In addition, Mr. Leach is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Vice Chairman of the Century Foundation’s Board of Trustees and has served on the boards of the Social Sciences Research Council, ProPublica, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Kettering Foundation. Since leaving Congress in 2007, he has taught at Princeton University and served as the interim director of the Institute of Politics at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government.

President Obama said, “I am confident that with Jim as its head, the National Endowment for the Humanities will continue on its vital mission of supporting the humanities and giving the American public access to the rich resources of our culture. Jim is a valued and dedicated public servant and I look forward to working with him in the months and years ahead.”

“President Obama has chosen a strong advocate for the humanities,” said Deborah Watrous, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Humanities Council. “Mr. Leach understands the power of the humanities to enrich our lives and foster the habits of mind that make us informed citizens and strengthen our democracy.”

New Natchez Foundation to Stage William Grant Still Tribute Conference



The Mississippi Symphony Orchestra will perform the work of Mississippi native William Grant Still as part of an inaugural conference in Natchez Nov. 19, 2009. The conference, titled “Music and the Arts: Still Our Only Future,” will launch a foundation which will

foster music and the arts in schools. The conference is also a tribute to Still, a pioneer in the field of American classical music. Conductor Crafton Beck will direct the MSO in the first performance of “The Afro–American Symphony” by Still in its entirety. This symphony was the first work by an African American to be played by a major American orchestra in the United States (1931). The tribute concert is open to the public and begins at 8 p.m. For information and tickets, contact William Grant Still Music at 928–526–9355 or by email at wgsmusic@bigplanet.com. The conference will also feature lectures and recitals, as well as the “William Grant Still: Inspired to Inspiring” touring exhibited, sponsored in part by the Mississippi Humanities Council. Details for the conference are also posted at www.williamgrantstill.com.

Find an MHC–Supported Humanities Program in Your Area

Click this [link](#) to find a humanities program occurring in your community.

\$5,000 Grant Available for Gulf Coast Photographers



The New Orleans Photo Alliance (NOPA) will award one \$5,000 grant annually to a photographer residing in a Gulf Coast state, including Mississippi. Both emerging and established photographers are eligible to apply. Subject matter for a proposed project is not limited to the Gulf Coast region. NOPA will accept grant applications through Sept. 1, 2009, with a winner announced during the PhotoNOLA festival in December 2009. Grants will come from the Michael P. Smith Fund for Documentary Photography (MPS Fund), established by NOPA to honor the legendary New Orleans photographer Michael P. Smith. For submission guidelines and to download an application form, visit www.neworleansphotoalliance.org/grants/MPS_Fund/index.php.

Applications Invited for ‘Picturing America’ Conference in Chicago

The Newberry Library, a leading humanities research library, has received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to host conferences to support teachers in using the *Picturing America* (<http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/>) materials developed by NEH to bring masterpieces of American art into classrooms and libraries nationwide. Conferences will be held in October 2009 and April 2010. Although the application deadline for the October conference has passed, applications will be accepted through Oct. 1, 2009, for the April 2010 conference. The purpose of the conferences is to support teachers in the development of lesson plans using images from the *Picturing America* program. The conference will include a visit to the Art Institute of Chicago and a walking tour of Chicago’s Loop to model ways for teachers to use



George Washington (Lansdowne portrait) by Gilbert Stuart, oil on canvas, 1796

local resources in their own communities. The program includes presentations by distinguished scholars and sharing of resources in workshop formats. For more information and to apply to participate, visit www.newberry.org/scholl/picturingamerica/conferenceinfo.html. Teachers who participate will receive a stipend, and funds are available to defray the cost of travel and lodging. Secondary-level (grades 9–12) history, language arts and art teachers and secondary-level librarians whose schools have already received *Picturing America* grants are eligible to apply. No more than two participants per school will be accepted.

Hinds County Bar Association Supports MHC Family Reading Program

The Mississippi Humanities Council has received a grant from the Hinds County Bar Association (<http://www.hindsbar.com/>) to support the MHC Family Reading Bonds and the Luciérnagas programs. These family literacy programs model good reading aloud skills and discussion techniques that stimulate interest and knowledge of the books' content—helping foster a lifelong love of learning through reading, with a unique emphasis on substantive content and exploration of ideas and concepts with parents and their children. The programs present history, cultural values and literature in enjoyable ways and relaxed settings. Participants experience animated story telling and open-ended questioning that lead to meaningful conversations, thus assisting families in moving from basic, functional reading to thoughtful literacy. The Hinds County Bar Association grant

William Grant Still Traveling Exhibit Continues Its Tour



“William Grant Still: Inspired to Inspiring,” is a traveling exhibit sponsored through a collaborative partnership between the Mississippi Arts Commission, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the Mississippi Humanities Council and the Mississippi Library Commission. Consisting of eight free-standing fabric panels, the exhibit celebrates the life and work of Woodville native, William Grant Still, who was known as the “Dean of American Negro Composers.” Still wrote more than 150 compositions before his death in 1978. Famed conductor Leopold Stokowski called him “one of our greatest American composers” and the LA Times recognized him as “our great resident composer” in 1956. The exhibit will

travel the state, with 13 stops scheduled through November 2009. The scheduled locations and dates are as follows:

- July 06–July 31 Millsaps College/Jackson
- Aug 06–Sept 02 Forrest County Public Library/Hattiesburg
- Sept 07–Sept 30 Lafayette County & Oxford Public Library/Oxford
- Oct 05–Oct 30 Alcorn University (JD Boyd Library)/Lorman
- Nov 18–Nov 22 William Grant Still Conference/Natchez

For more information, contact 662-820-3021.

What We're Reading

A new feature of the Mississippi Humanities Council e-newsletter...a roundup of what staff, board and friends of the humanities are reading:

David Morgan, MHC Project Specialist: *Jimmie Rodgers: The Life and Times of America's Blue Yodeler*, the definitive biography of the "Father of Country Music" by Nolan Porterfield.

Barbara Carpenter, MHC Executive Director: For fun: *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, by Michael Chabon, a remarkable detective novel, dealing with crime and murder, a Jewish mafia, a messiah who has run out of miracles; the book smacks of Dashiell Hammett, John Updike and Orson Scott Card in its blend of alternate history and magical realism with murder, conspiracy theory, and perhaps the wildest cast of characters outside of John Irving. Basing the plot on the shred of idea that FDR had proposed bringing the Jews to Alaska rather than Israel following WWII, Chabon weaves a dark comedic fantasy thriller so erratic in plot and mesmerizing in its language (richly larded with Yiddish phrases) that one almost sees a film noir playing in the back of the head as the words pass before the eyes. A delightful, at times disturbing, always thought-provoking summer read.

For the upcoming MHC FOOD project: Michael Pollan, *In Defense of Food*, and Barbara Kingsolver, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*. Though very different, both authors take a look at the crisis of food, obesity, world hunger, health and nutrition, environmental and ethical aspects of production and distribution of food, personal choices and responsibility. Pollan's mantra of "Eat real food, not a lot, mostly vegetables" pulls one up short; Kingsolver's family's year-long attempt to eat only what they themselves produce makes the issues very real and personal. Summertime with its abundance of vegetables is perhaps just the right time to begin thinking in this direction, when homegrown tomato sandwiches and fresh butterbeans make Pollan's rule less of a hardship. I recommend all three.

Anna Kline, MHC Office Manager: *The Old Man and Me* by Elaine Dundy. Great book! Very cleverly written...very entertaining! Her writing is so descriptive and vibrant. Written when Dundy was living in England in the early 1960s, she tackles the American girl in London, a bit older but certainly no wiser. Honey Flood (if that's her real name) arrives in London with only her quick wits and a scheme. To get what she wants, she'll have to seduce the city's brightest literary star, no matter how many would-be bohemians she has to charm, how many smoky jazz clubs she has to brave, or how many Lady Something-Somethings she has to humor. But with success within her reach, Honey finds that in making the Soho scene, she's made a big mistake.

Carol Andersen, MHC Assistant Director for Programs: *Little, Big* (subtitled *The Fairies' Parliament*) by John Crowley is the epic story of the Drinkwater family and their

relationship with the mostly obscured world of Faery. It is set in and around their eccentric country house, called Edgewood, in New England somewhere north of "the City" (a version of New York City). The story is dreamlike, quiet and meandering, spanning a hundred years of the intertwined family trees of the Drinkwaters and their relations – from the turn of the 20th century to a sparsely-described dystopian future America ruled by a sinister despot. The magical elements are subtle rather than overt, with only occasional glimpses of the fairies themselves, although their presence is felt throughout.

Next MHC Grant Deadline Sept. 15, 2009

Sept. 15, 2009, is the next regular grant application deadline for proposals greater than \$1,500 and up to \$7,500. The next minigrant deadline will be Oct. 15, 2009, for proposals up to \$1,500. Please note the minigrant deadlines changed at the beginning of 2009. Deadlines are now Jan. 15, April 15, July 15 and Oct. 15. Applications must be submitted for deadlines occurring a minimum of eight weeks before a funded program could begin. The current maximum request amount for minigrants is \$1,500. Application guidelines and forms are available at www.mshumanities.org.

MHC Welcomes Your Support

Mississippi Humanities Council programs are engaging, inspiring and free of charge. Your gift makes a big difference to our mission of cultivating an understanding of our history and culture throughout the state. You help us enrich peoples' lives through programs incorporating history, literature, music, politics, philosophy and other humanities-based disciplines that illuminate the human condition. Thanks to your support, we are able to serve all Mississippians: all ages, all geographic areas of the state, all walks of life.

A small gift of \$25 will purchase two books for children participating in the Mississippi Humanities Council's [Family Reading Bonds](#) program.

A larger gift of \$250 will fund a lecture in a school classroom, local library or civic club, by a member of the Mississippi Humanities Council [Speakers Bureau](#).

A \$2,500 contribution will underwrite a six-week [Family Reading Bonds](#) series, part of the Mississippi Humanities Council's literacy program.

A gift of any amount can support any one of our ongoing programs:

- [Oral History Projects](#)
- [Lecture Series](#)
- [Smithsonian Exhibits](#)
- [Public Humanities Awards](#)

The humanities are vital to each of us – to our self-awareness, our understanding of the past and our vision of the future. The Mississippi Humanities Council has been bringing the insights of history and culture into people's lives since 1972. The Council celebrates and preserves our diverse cultural heritage, creates public dialogue on issues that matter and enriches the education we offer our children. The Council depends on public support. The MHC will appreciate your financial help. To donate online, please visit <http://www.mshumanities.org/Donor/Donations.asp> . Or call 601-432-6752.

Correction

Mississippi Humanities Council board member Dr. Ricki Garrett was awarded a UMI Dissertation Award by the 2009 Council of Historically Black Graduate Schools for her 2008 doctoral dissertation, for which the title and advisor were incorrectly listed in an earlier edition of *Focus on the Humanities*. The correct title is “Women Trustees: Finding a Voice for Their Unique Perspective in the Governance of Higher Education.” Garrett’s advisor was Dr. Walter A. Brown.



Disclaimer

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