

Focus on the Humanities

June 2014



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

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Freedom Summer 50th Anniversary Events Planned Across the State

2014 marks the 50th anniversary of Freedom Summer 1964, when hundreds of northern college students, most of them white, joined with local African Americans in communities across Mississippi to register voters, conduct Freedom Schools and promote civil rights.

As a result of Freedom Summer, some of the barriers to voting have been eliminated and Mississippi now has nearly 1,000 Black state and local elected officials. In fact, Mississippi has more Black elected officials than any other state in the union. While the Freedom Summer of '64 made profound changes in the state of Mississippi and the country, much remains to be accomplished.



The Mississippi Humanities Council has awarded grants to support several public programs commemorating the sacrifices and the accomplishments of those civil rights workers, and exploring the social and political changes their efforts put into motion. Please visit our [calendar](#) page for details about upcoming programs supported with our grants.

Director's Message: The Humanities and the Legacy of Freedom Summer



Next week, our board will gather in Philadelphia, Mississippi for its annual summer retreat. While much of our time will be spent discussing MHC programs, our budget and future direction, our decision to hold the meeting in Neshoba County was not a coincidence. This summer marks the 50th anniversary of Freedom Summer, a seminal moment in the histories of both Mississippi and the United States. Elsewhere in this newsletter you will read about the many Freedom Summer commemorations the MHC is helping sponsor around the state. That summer's darkest moment took place in Neshoba County when three civil rights workers – James Chaney, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman – were abducted and brutally murdered by members of the Ku Klux Klan. During our retreat, we will visit the places in Neshoba where this ugly history unfolded. We will also hear about the efforts of local citizens,

black and white, to confront and overcome this legacy.

My hope is that our tour of Philadelphia will inspire us to think about the potential of the humanities to bring about racial reconciliation and progress in Mississippi. Indeed, since the earliest days of the Council under the leadership of Cora Norman, the MHC has been in the forefront of our state's dialogue about race. The MHC has long been an advocate of facing our often difficult history and addressing its lingering effects. By looking at the past critically and with clear eyes, and using civil discourse to discuss our differences, we can work together to find a common way forward.

I saw this first hand when I visited Holly Springs back in April. For three years, we have funded a “Behind the Big House” program put on by Preserve Marshall County. The program involved bringing in Joseph McGill, who has dedicated himself to calling attention to the history of slavery by spending the night in existing historic slave quarters. His project has been featured in *Smithsonian Magazine* and other places. In Holly Springs, his visit corresponded with spring Pilgrimage, and Preserve Marshall County put together a tour of three different local slave dwellings with Mr. McGill and students from Rust College and Ole Miss acting as docents. People could tour the grand antebellum homes and then tour the slave dwellings behind them.

It's a complicated, difficult history, but one we must confront and understand.

It was a wonderfully rich program, but what made it inspiring was the impact it has had on Holly Springs. Local tourism brochures mention Pilgrimage and “Behind the Big House” as a single event. The message is that you can't understand the history of either antebellum homes or slave quarters without understanding the other. Learning about the experience and hardships of the slaves who often built those grand homes does not negate the beauty and historical significance of the “big houses,” while we must not overlook the cruelty and injustice that made this lifestyle possible. It's a complicated, difficult history, but one we must confront and understand. Thanks to the support of the MHC, they are doing that in Holly Springs. In fact, a group of citizens were so inspired by the program last year that they created an interracial discussion group called “Gracing the Table” that seeks to bridge the racial barriers in town through fellowship and civil dialogue. “Behind the Big House” shows the power and potential of the humanities to help transform our state.

In several days, you may be receiving our summer fundraising appeal, which includes the story of “Behind the Big House” and two other Council programs that are having a real impact around the state. If you would like to help us continue and expand this work, please consider a donation. Thank you for your support of the public humanities in Mississippi.



Take Note: Changes Announced in MHC Grants Programs, Forms

The Mississippi Humanities Council’s [grants program](#) has undergone several changes. While the types of projects the Council funds remains unchanged, new forms and application requirements are being introduced. Key changes include:

- Proposals must be delivered to the MHC office (in person or via the mail) by 5 p.m. on deadline dates. The Council will no longer accept applications postmarked by the published deadline dates.
- Deadlines for Regular Grants will now be May 1 and Sept. 15 (formerly, the deadlines were April 15 and Sept. 15).
- Applicants must consult with MHC’s executive director or assistant director regarding project viability before submitting an application.

Applications should always be made on forms downloaded from the [MHC website](#), since the forms are updated periodically.

The MHC grants program seek to fund projects that stimulate meaningful community dialogue, attract diverse audiences, are participatory and engaging and apply the humanities to our everyday lives. Grants may be used to support public humanities programs, exhibits, the planning of larger projects, and the development of original productions in film, television, radio or online resources. The MHC also offers special grants to support oral history projects around the state.

Minigrant deadlines (up to \$2,000.00) deadlines are January 15, April 15, July 15 and October 15.

Regular grant deadlines (\$2,001.00–\$7,500.00) deadlines are May 1 and September 15.

Tunica Museum Hosts Final Leg of ‘The Way We Worked’ Exhibit

The Way We Worked, a Mississippi Humanities Council–sponsored Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit, opened at its final stop on a six–site tour of Mississippi May 17 at the Tunica Museum, located off Highway 61, across from Paul Battle Arena in Tunica.

The exhibit, adapted from an original exhibition developed by the National Archives, explores how work became such a central element in American culture by tracing the many changes that affected the workforce and work environments over the past 150 years. The exhibition draws from the Archives’ rich collections to tell this compelling story. Why, where and how do



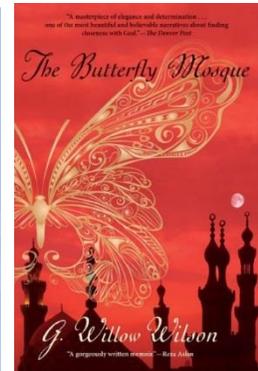
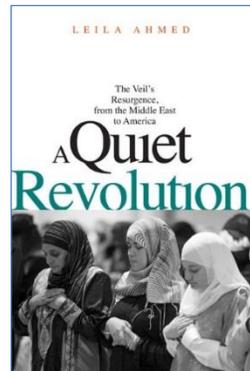
we work? What value does work have to individuals and communities? What does our work tell others about us?

This exhibit is free and open to the public and will be available for viewing at The Tunica Museum on Tuesdays through Saturdays during regular visitation hours through Tuesday, July 15. Events associated with the exhibit may be found on the MHC website [calendar](#).

Muslim Journeys Discussion Series Continues June 12 and July 10

Two discussions remain in the Mississippi Humanities Council's Muslim Journeys reading and discussion series. The series uses books that explore the American Muslim experience to help public audiences become more familiar with the people, places, history, faith and cultures of Muslims around the world and within the U.S.

The next discussions will be June 12 featuring *A Quiet Revolution: The Veil's Resurgence, from the Middle East to America* by Leila Ahmed; and July 10 featuring *The Butterfly Mosque* by G. Willow Wilson. Discussions take place from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the Foundery at Galloway United Methodist Church, Jackson. Participants must provide their own books, either borrowed from a library or purchased. Although helpful, reading each book is not required to participate in the discussions.



Funding comes from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Library Association.

Humanities Calendar Offers Diverse Public Programs

Our calendar page is updated weekly with humanities events all over Mississippi. Even better, most events are free and open to the public. Delve into the experience of being Muslim in America in the ongoing book discussion series, *Muslim Journeys*. Turn back the clock 150 years and examine the music, firearms, food and battle implements of the Battle of Brice's Crossroads at a three-day sesquicentennial commemoration. Contemplate the legacies of the Civil Rights Movement at the University of Southern Mississippi's Freedom Summer 1964–2014 Conference. Attend the *Disparities in Mississippi: Moving toward Reconciliation between Black and White Physicians in Mississippi* symposium to hear how black and white health professionals are working together on Mississippi's health problems. Keep coming back to our Calendar page; there will always be new events added each week for you to attend. Click this [link](#) to find details about these and other humanities programs occurring in your community.

Next MHC Grant Deadline July 15, 2014

July 15, 2014, is the next MHC mini-grant application deadline for proposals for amounts up to \$2,000. Application guidelines and forms are available on the MHC website. Mini-Grant deadlines are January 15, April 15, July 15 and October 15 each year. Mini-Grant applications must be submitted a minimum of 8 weeks before the proposed program begins. Please note that several updates have been made to the Mississippi Humanities Council Grant Guidelines and to the grant application forms. It is essential that applicants use current forms, available on the MHC website.

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](#)

To donate online, visit <http://www.mshumanities.org/Donor/Donations.asp>. Or call 601-432-6752.



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