

---

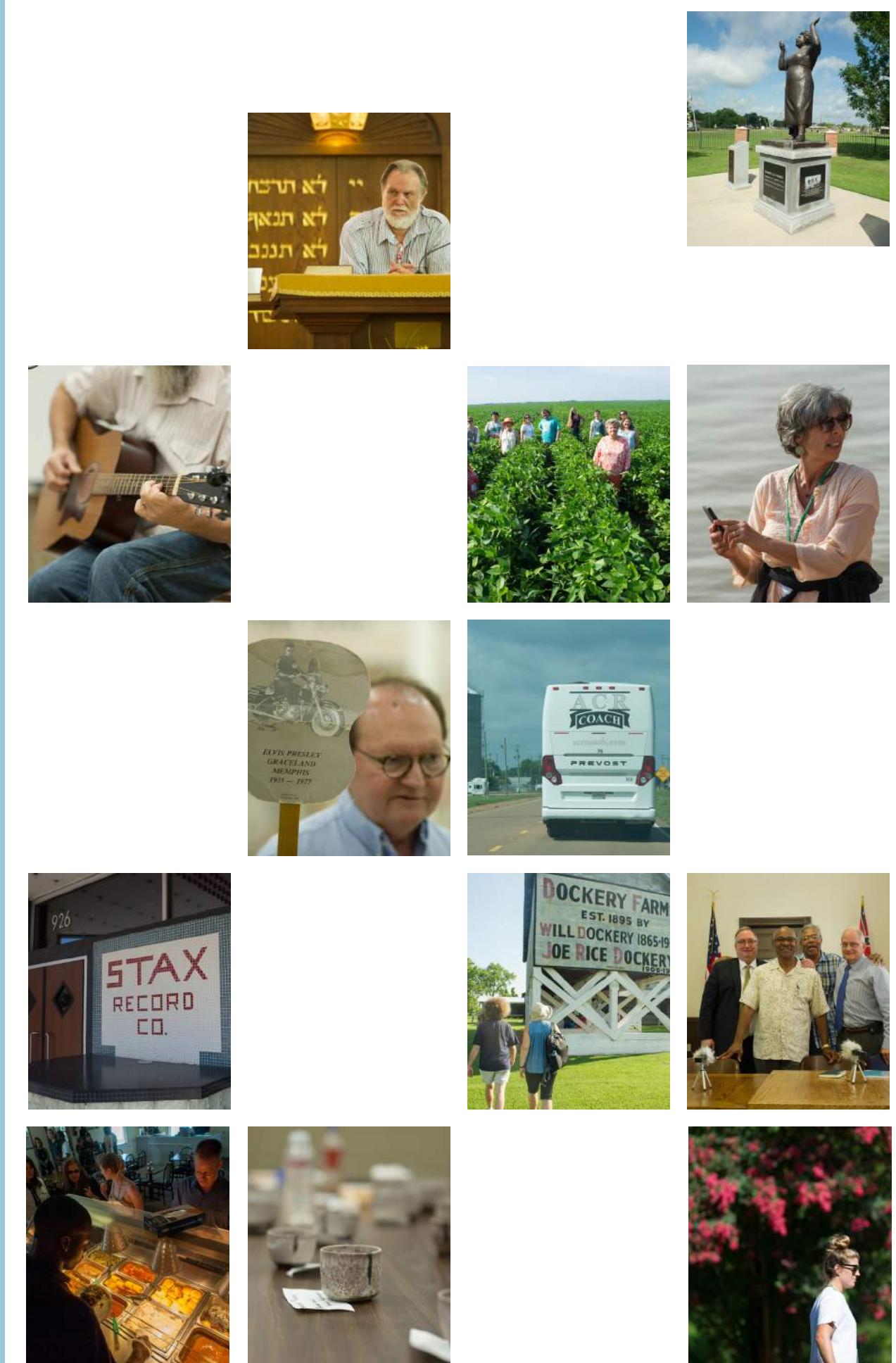
*the*

# MOST SOUTHERN PLACE ON EARTH



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	DIRECTOR'S NOTE
8	SCHEDULE OF EVENTS
10	OPENING RECEPTION
12	DAY 1
20	DAY 2
32	DAY 3
42	DAY 4
54	DAY 5
64	DAY 6
74	PARTICIPANT YEARBOOK
76	EVALUATIONS
78	STAFF
81	THANKS





## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

DR. ROLANDO HERTS

*Flat, dull land Delta.  
Take me home to the land I know.*

*Cotton an' rice wavin' in the wind.  
Mississippi River movin' right slow.*

*'Cross bayou bridge,  
Ride the levee -  
"Look out now 'fore you fall!"  
Brown grasshoppers singin' and buzzin'  
On mean wild weeds so tall.*

*Jump! Fly!  
Black Boy run,  
Makin' symphony with the sun.*

*Tastin' sweet dirt,  
A rare rich cake.  
Catfish a-plenty silhouette Grand Lake,  
That laps lazy banks of Mississippi loam.*

*Flat, dull land Delta:  
Home.*

This marks the seventh year that The Delta Center for Culture and Learning has offered “The Most Southern Place on Earth” workshop through generous support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Many past workshop scholars can attest: this powerful workshop offers experiences that are intellectually enriching and personal; experiences that provoke deep thought, that inspire a desire to engage with and express authentic feeling, and that engender a passion to imbibe local knowledge and share lessons learned from the region that the National Park Service calls “the cradle of American culture.”

This year also marks a leadership transition with a blend of preserved traditions and heroic innovations. Our “Most Southern” scholars continue to follow in the proverbial footsteps of their predecessors, immersed in Mississippi Delta culture and history over six intensive days of experiential, place-based learning. This quite effective pedagogical framework for the workshop was crafted by Dr. Luther Brown, former director of The Delta Center, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Humanities’ Landmarks of American History and Culture program. As the current director of The Delta Center, I, too, am following in footsteps of my predecessor. Indeed, the well-established path of the “Most Southern” workshop continues to transform our scholars, as this portfolio reflects through photographic and textual narratives that communicate “the power and the poetics of place.”

Dr. Brown describes the Mississippi Delta as “a place of paradox and contrast.” As a son of the Delta, my personal experiences square with Dr. Brown’s analysis. I spent

formative years in Eudora, Arkansas, roughly 20 miles from an old two-lane bridge that once spanned the Mississippi River over to Greenville, Mississippi, the “Queen City of the Delta.” The Delta is a physical and cultural geography that transcends state lines, as impressionistically conveyed in the poem above that I wrote as a youth. It was a seemingly endless landscape that was simultaneously “dull” and full of life, a place that was both “mean” and ugly yet achingly beautiful, a state of mind dripping with painful sorrow and lonesomeness yet teeming with excitement about the possibilities of freedom and self-expression.

Being immersed in primary source material regarding the paradoxical, contrasting nature of the Mississippi Delta figures prominently in the “Most Southern” workshop. Arguably, this is a key ingredient in the mystical formula that leaves our scholars transformed and even transfixed to such a degree that they find themselves returning to the region again and again.

During the workshop, our scholars visit one of the legendary crossroads where Robert Johnson may or may not have sold his soul to the devil, as well as one of the gravesites where he may or may not have been laid to rest. They go to Ruleville, the home of voting rights and racial integration icon Fannie Lou Hamer who lived a mere five miles from her archenemy, the staunch segregationist Senator James O. Eastland, their two social milieu totally different and separate yet entirely co-dependent.

They engage in a life-altering panel discussion at Tallahatchie County Courthouse, the site of fourteen-year-

old Emmett Till's murder trial and learn firsthand how Till's tragic death sparked the Civil Rights Movement. They learn how the Mississippi River created the Delta and how the Great Flood of 1927 destroyed it, as well as launched the Great Migration of African Americans to Chicago and other urban centers in the North.



Another key ingredient is the Delta's creativity, as well as the region's cultural diversity. "Most Southern" workshop scholars learn why the Mississippi Delta is known as "The Birthplace of America's Music" and the home of the Blues, entering places where innovators Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Charley Patton, Ike Turner, B. B. King, and Bessie Smith once were. They hear directly from descendants of Jewish and Chinese immigrants who came to the Delta, experiencing vestiges of their influence, as well as understanding the influence of Lebanese, Italians, Native Americans, African Americans, and others by reading the "invisible landscape."

They learn stories of historic Mound Bayou, a black town founded by former slaves and hailed by President Teddy Roosevelt as "The Jewel of the Delta." They visit renowned museums that pay homage to the region's enduring creativity and cultural diversity, including the National Civil Rights

Museum, the Stax Museum of American Soul Music, and the B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center.

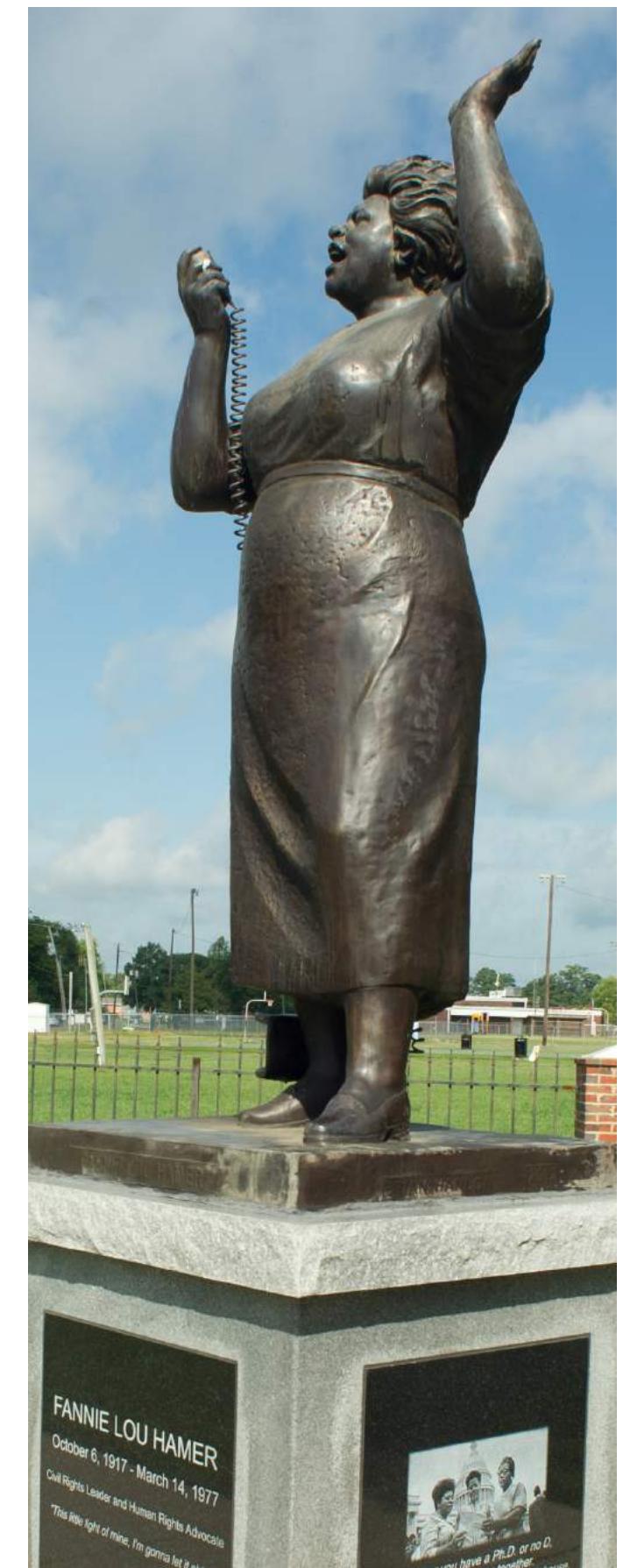
Perhaps the most powerful ingredient of all is the strong bond that scholars forge with each other, with presenters, and with The Delta Center. They are encouraged to experience the Delta and the workshop as a multifaceted, interactive text through readings, music, food, film screenings, oral histories, the built environment, and interactions in the field and the "travelling classroom" that travels Blues Highway 61 and the Emmett Till Memorial Highway, among other storied Delta roads.

"Most Southern" workshop scholars also are challenged to assume a critical intersectional lens as they engage, learning how socially constructed human identities have coalesced to shape systems of power, privilege, and oppression in the past and in the present, in the Delta and in their own communities. To quote James Cobb, author of The Most Southern Place on Earth, "As socioeconomic disparity and indifference to human suffering become increasingly prominent features of American life, it seems reasonable to inquire whether the same economic, political, and emotional forces that helped to forge and sustain the Delta's image as the South writ small may one day transform an entire nation into the Delta writ large."



I invite you to continue to explore the NEH "Most Southern" workshop website to learn more and to view portfolios like this one from our past workshops. You also may view blog posts featuring images and videos from the June and July 2016 workshops. The blogs are a new addition to the workshop toward enhancing our efforts to provide and preserve educational resources from the "Most Southern" workshop for our scholars, as well as to continue The Delta Center's legacy of stimulating and engaging creativity, learning, and reflection in and about the Mississippi Delta region.

*Rolando Herts, Ph.D.  
Director  
The Delta Center for Culture and Learning  
Delta State University*



## SUNDAY

## MONDAY

## TUESDAY

## WEDNESDAY

## THURSDAY

## FRIDAY

## SATURDAY

Begin	End	July 10	July 11	July 12	July 13	July 14	July 15	July 16
7:30	8:00							
8:00	8:30							
8:30	9:00							
9:00	9:30							
9:30	10:00							
10:00	10:30							
10:30	11:00							
11:00	11:30							
11:30	12:00							
12:00	12:30							
12:30	1:00							
1:00	1:30							
1:30	2:00							
2:00	2:30							
2:30	3:00							
3:00	3:30							
3:30	4:00							
4:00	4:30							
4:30	5:00	Reception at Martin and Sue King Railroad Museum, Cleveland	Levee break site at Mounds Landing	Guest Scholar: Religious and Cultural History of the Delta: Charles Reagan Wilson	Dinner	Bus to important sites in the Till story	Peabody Hotel	
5:00	5:30							
5:30	6:00							
6:00	6:30	Catfish Supper at Airport Grocery Blues Performance by Terry "Harmonica" Bean	Dinner	Open Mic: Tell us about your plans to use the knowledge you're gaining	Dinner	Bus Ride home with discussion	Dinner	
6:30	7:00							
7:00	7:30							
7:30	8:00							
8:00	8:30							
8:30	9:00							
9:00	9:30							

S  
C  
H  
E  
D  
U  
L  
E

# OPENING RECEPTION



The workshop opened with a reception at the Railroad Heritage Museum in downtown Cleveland, MS. Upon arrival, participants mingled with their fellow teachers in excitement for the week ahead.

Top: Dr. Rolando Herts giving a welcome to workshop participants

Bottom Left: Sign at the Railroad Heritage Museum

Bottom Right: Participants Paul Bach and Thomas Priddy with Bill LaForge, President of DSU

# day 1

## The River: Creator and Destroyer of the Delta



Introductions 8:00am-12:00pm

LaLee's Kin 1:00-3:00pm

Reggie Barns 3:00-4:00pm

Levee break site 4:00-6:00pm

Airport Grocery Catfish Dinner 6:00-8:00pm

## INTRODUCTIONS



The workshop began with co-directors Dr. Rolando Herts and Lee Aylward speaking to the group about what to expect of the week. Dr. Herts gave a presentation focused on intersectionality and using place as text.

Intersectionality, as defined by Dr. Herts, is the conjunction of multiple identity markers such as race, class, and gender. He challenged participants to view the content in the coming week through an intersectional lens, and to think critically about how multiple identities would impact the experiences of those living in the Delta. Additionally, he challenged the teachers to think about how an intersectional lens would impact how they interpret the information that they encountered. He also discussed using place as text, which means being able to use landscapes, artifacts, and even speakers as primary documents to gain historical knowledge. Because the workshop is largely experiential, participants are expected to search for historical truths about the Delta

through the places visited and the stories told by the people who live here.

After the opening presentations, participants got into pairs and groups of three where they introduced themselves and learned more about one another. The participants then introduced their partners to the entire group based on the conversations they had with them. The Robertson scholars documented “fun facts” about each participant that would be quizzed each morning throughout the rest of the week.

Some fun facts about the group include: One teacher got to go camping on the Great Wall of China (Michael Ko- Seattle, WA). One teacher once played flag football with Tom Brady (Heather-Marie Mahoney). One teacher also served in the Army and was on duty in Berlin the day the wall came down! (Thomas Priddy- Sutter Creek, CA).

# LALEE'S KIN

---

## REGGIE BARNES



After a lunch break at The Senator's Place, a local soul food restaurant, participants viewed the Academy Award-nominated documentary, *LaLee's Kin: The Legacy of Cotton*. The film follows the stories of LaLee, the matriarch of a poor family in the region, and Reggie Barnes, the superintendent of West Tallahatchie School District. The film seeks to shed light on systemic issues found in the Delta such as poverty, failing schools, and all of the problems that come along with these.

In the film, LaLee's daily struggles are chronicled while the school district, under

the leadership of Reggie Barnes, works to improve its ITSB scores in order to avoid the threat of state takeover. Now retired, former Superintendent Barnes came to speak to participants about the film and the issues presented. He said that although some progress has been made, Mississippi and the Delta still have work to do to create better schools for children in the region.

Many participants said that both the extreme poverty faced by LaLee and her family in the film and the issues discussed by Mr. Barnes reminded them of the power of education to overcome cyclical poverty.



## the Traveling Classroom

One of the core features of the Most Southern Place on Earth workshop is the "traveling classroom". Whenever participants are on the bus traveling around the Delta, they are immersed in experiential learning. This ranges from watching films, to listening to blues

music, guest speakers, or firsthand stories of the Delta told by workshop co-director, Lee Aylward. Because there is so much history and culture to learn about in the region, not a moment of learning time is wasted.



**"Levees are man's attempt to control the power of the river and it is cool to be traveling to the levee break site- where man lost that control of the river."**

*Daniel Warner | Memphis, TN*

---

## The Levee Break Site at Mounds Landing & Fatal Flood

---

Even to this day, the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 remains seared into history as the worst river flood and one of the worst economic devastations to ever occur in the United States. After months of heavy rains and rising river levels, the levee hit its breaking point on April 21, 1927. As the speed and volume of the water rose faster and faster, the foundation of the levee at Mounds Landing finally gave. The foundation crumbled and a cascade of water more than twice the volume of Niagara Falls ripped through the Delta and displaced nearly 200,000 black Americans. What it would leave in its wake would change the face of the Mississippi Delta forever.

The flood inundated 27,000 square miles of the lower river valley from Memphis to New Orleans, forcing high ground to serve as refugee camps for mostly black Americans. Where wealthy white planters assumed that the social order would restore once the river levels fell, black sharecroppers saw this as a means of wiping the slate of history clean and starting over. Many sharecroppers who could leave the Delta did, causing the flood to precipitate the Great Migration north.

As a defining event in Delta history, the Great Flood of 1927 was critical in introducing workshop participants to the Mississippi Delta. They boarded the traveling classroom and learned the story of the flood as well as its aftermath through the film *Fatal Flood*. The film gave participants a deeper understanding of the site they were about to visit, as it detailed the magnitude of the flood's damage as well as the complex social and political implications that followed in its wake.

Upon arriving at the site of the infamous levee break at Mounds Landing, participants were met with a starkly different scene than witnessed in the film. The bus carried them over the grassy levee, which was speckled with grazing cattle, and as they stepped off the bus they were embraced by sunshine and a warm breeze off the calm river. Being that the levee break site veered from what many expected, many voiced their surprise that the river could cause so much damage and discussed their own experiences with the Mississippi River. Others took time either to walk around the shore of the river, or gather around Lee to hear more about how, in the present day Delta, the question isn't if the levee will break again, but *when*.

# AIRPORT GROCERY

## *catfish dinner*



After departing from the levee, participants headed back to Cleveland, Mississippi for dinner at Airport Grocery for their first Taste of the Day, fried cat fish. In addition to catfish, dinner included hush puppies, coleslaw, and green beans. Both the food and hospitality provided by Airport Grocery offered a true immersion in southern food and culture.

While participants enjoyed their meals, they were also treated to a live performance by renowned Delta blues musician, Terry "Harmonica" Bean. Having recently returned from being on tour, Mr. Bean has been extremely devoted to keeping alive older styles of blues music for current and future generations.



# Day 2



Delta Chinese 9:00-10:00am

Black Graveyard 10:00-11:00am

The Delta Jews 11:00-12:00pm

Flood of 1927 Museum 12:00-12:30pm

Dr. Charles Wilson 3:00-6:00pm

Bill Abel 8:00-9:00pm

# DELTA CHINESE

There is a rich history of immigration in the Mississippi Delta region. After the Emancipation Proclamation, many farms in the South still needed labor and began to travel overseas to recruit immigrants to work the land.

The recruitment of immigrants to sustain the agricultural life in the South is how many Chinese ended up in the Delta region. In 1869, "Arkansas River Valley Immigration Company" sent ships to China to bring recruits. In spite of the Chinese Exclusion Act that sought to restrict immigration into the

United States, the population of Chinese in the Delta flourished, growing from 183 in 1900 to 1,200 in 1960. After years of living in the region, they noticed that there was a lack of grocery stores and many Chinese families began to open

grocery stores in the black and white areas of town. Not only did they make their livelihoods in the grocery business, many also lived and made their homes in the back of their stores.

The Chinese occupied a unique space in the Delta society because they were not viewed as black or white but somewhere in between. In a landmark Supreme Court case from Rosedale, MS

called *Gong Lum v. Rice*, the Court held that the State had the right to exclude non-white children. After this, many Chinese either attended the black schools or set up their own "mission" schools in Delta towns

On Tuesday, the traveling classroom made a trip to Greenville, Mississippi to visit the Chinese cemetery. A well-kept cultural landmark, the cemetery houses the deceased family members of the Delta Chinese. Upon arriving at the cemetery participants were greeted by Mrs. Catherine Tom Wong, one of the few remaining descendants of Chinese immigrants in the Delta. She spoke of her own experiences growing up Chinese in the Delta, as well as the importance of the cemetery to Greenville's Chinese community. Although the Chinese population in the region has largely decreased, many Chinese return to the region to pay respects to their loved ones.





## GREENVILLE'S BLACK CEMETERY

Following the Chinese cemetery, participants crossed the street to walk through the neighboring Black cemetery. Within the cemetery's overgrown grasses and smattering of crooked gravestones lies the grave of renowned bear hunter and sportsman, Holt Collier. Born a slave circa 1846 on the Plum Ridge Plantation in Mississippi. Collier killed his first bear at age 10, and would eventually come to kill over 3,000 bears in his lifetime -- more than Davy Crockett and Daniel Boone combined.

At the cemetery, Lee explained to participants how Collier's reputation as an extremely skilled bear hunter was so famed that he was asked by Major George

M. Helm to serve in President Theodore Roosevelt's famous Mississippi Bear Hunt of 1902. Collier captured the bear for the president to kill, but when the president arrived he famously refused to shoot the helpless bear. This was erroneously portrayed in the press by a cartoonist who depicted the bear as a cub, igniting the phenomenon of the "Teddy Bear".

It was difficult for participants to read all of the names and dates on other grave sites within the cemetery, as the cemetery is privately owned and often not well kept. Lee also discussed how this has caused controversy, as some believe it sends the wrong message about the Black community in Greenville.

Adjacent to the Greenville synagogue, in the oldest structure in downtown Greenville, the 1927 Flood Museum helped deepen participants' understanding of the Great Flood.

The Great Flood of 1927 was one of the defining moments in the Delta's history. The levee which protected the region from the Mighty River broke and the Delta was flooded from south of Cleveland all the way to Vicksburg. This flood and its aftermath left the people of the region in turmoil as they attempted to recover their Delta.

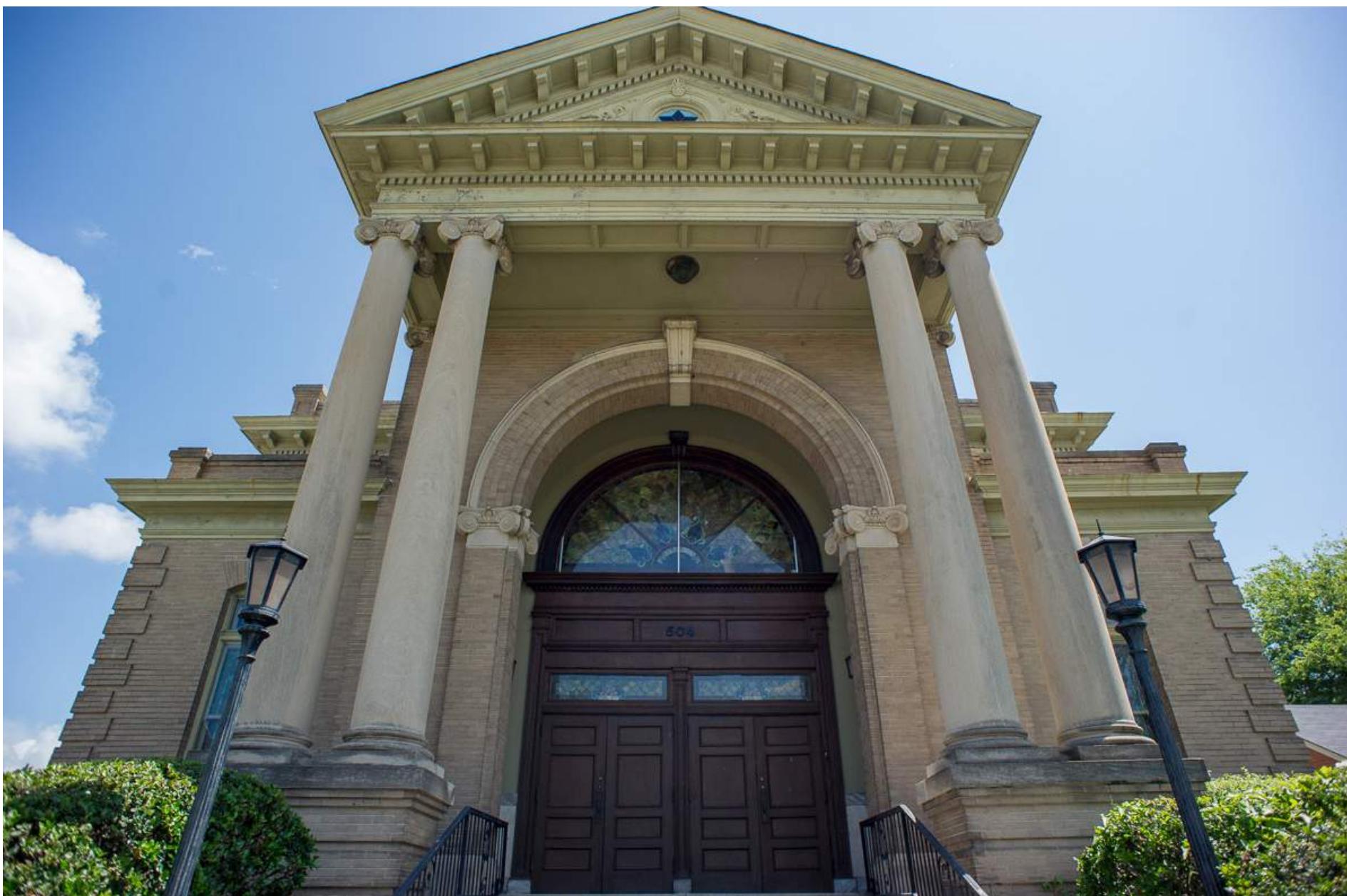
The Flood also complicated race relations in the region because many African-Americans who worked on plantations viewed the Flood as a sign from God that



## 1927 FLOOD MUSEUM

their freedom had finally come. They began to migrate out of the region, sparking the Great Migration that would span decades to come. Additionally, the Flood inspired many Blues songs that depicted the despair and hope caused by the disaster.

Filled with such artifacts as original canoes used in the aftermath of the flood, the museum focused on how the flooding impacted the city of Greenville in particular. In addition to a short film playing, there were original newspaper clippings recounting the magnitude of the damage. Though participants were in the small museum for a short time, it gave them more exposure and points of view regarding the disaster.



# Delta Jews

Although many expect the Delta's religious community to be dominated by Protestant Christianity, the region is religiously diverse. There are Protestants, Catholics, and even a rich Jewish heritage.

Jewish people in Mississippi mostly immigrated from Eastern Europe and upon arrival they made their living as traveling peddlers. Eventually, they found a home here in the Delta and became storeowners, were elected as local government officials, and attended white schools. In a film participants watched, *Delta Jews*, many of the Jewish people said that they identified more with their Southern identities than their Jewish identities. Even though Jews across the country were very supportive of the Civil Rights Movement and Jews in the Delta were among the first to hire African-Americans to work in their stores, Jews in the South were hesitant to accept the movement because it would upset the Southern "way of life". Some Jews were also afraid of rising anti-semitic sentiments in Europe and the U.S. and wanted to remain neutral during the movement.

After watching the film, *Delta Jews*, participants were able to visit Hebrew Union Temple. This synagogue in Greenville, MS was built in 1906. Temple Vice President, Benji Nelken met participants in the sanctuary for a discussion on the history of the beautiful house of worship. He explained that the church was a Reformed Jewish congregation, he spoke to his personal experience growing up as a Jew in the Delta, and he also explained some of the architecture found in the synagogue.

Mr. Nelken then gave participants free time to explore the museum located in the back of the temple. The museum houses artifacts that tell the story of Jewish history and heritage in the Delta. Some items included a Torah from the Holocaust, photos of Jewish families in the region, as well as t-shirts that embraced the Southern Jewish heritage with the phrase, "Shalom y'all".

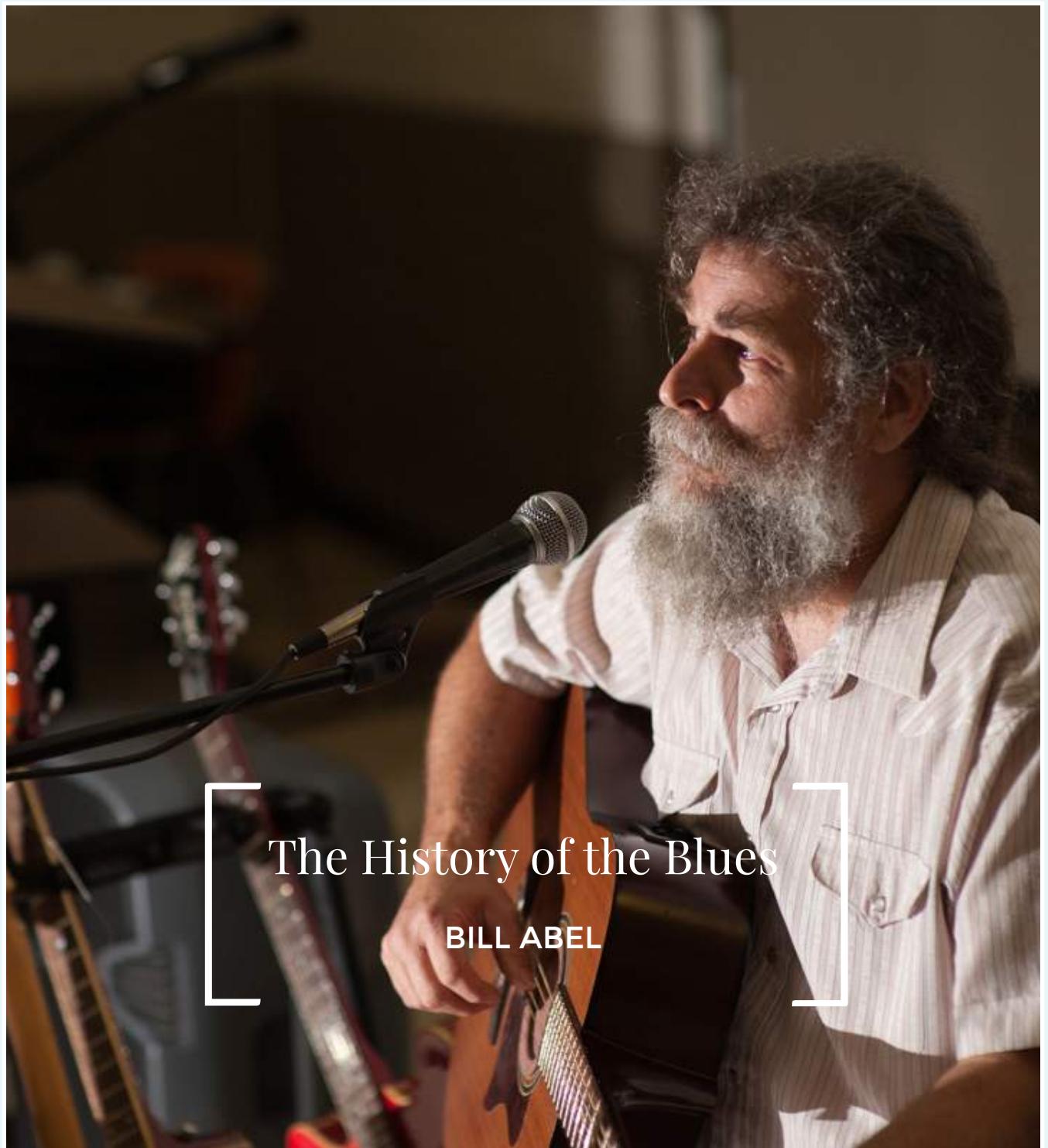


# CHARLES WILSON

After returning from lunch, participants delved into the history of religion in the Delta and how religion has influenced the evolution of rock and the Blues. Guest scholar Charles Wilson, former professor at the University of Mississippi and former Director of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture discussed how evangelism dominated southern culture. He went on to describe how evangelicalism values conversion and religious experience more so than following literal interpretations of the Bible. This emphasis on conversion resulted in the common occurrence of Bible verses "transcending the church doors and being found on the kitchen table." Gospel bled into many cultural realms, especially into gospel music which later influenced the Blues. Moreover, William Faulkner, famous Delta author, infused biblical characters into his writing, not because he was religious, but because this pervasive religious culture "was just there."

Dr. Wilson displayed his collection of church fans and explained how these were jointly used for businesses to advertise their goods.

Drawing upon the strong oral traditions and call-and-response traditions in Southern baptist churches, Wilson explained how this region contributed largely to the prominent civil rights activists, entertainers, politicians, and lawyers that came out of the south. Churches also often served as the only places that black Americans could be treated like first class citizens. Whites made sure to segregate churches, because the last thing powerful elites wanted was for poor white and black Baptists to get together and vote. This resulted in all black churches, which ironically allowed leadership qualities to have an institutional place to thrive.



## The History of the Blues

BILL ABEL

### GUEST SPEAKER

*Bill Abel, Local Blues musician*

"As a music teacher and musician, it was really special and profound to hear someone talk about the Blues with such a deep love for it." -Kate Marquez, Chicago, IL



Some participants were so engaged in the performance that they decided to create front-row seats right on the floor of the classroom.



Mr. Abel brought a large selection of handmade instruments that he allowed the teachers to play on after the performance.

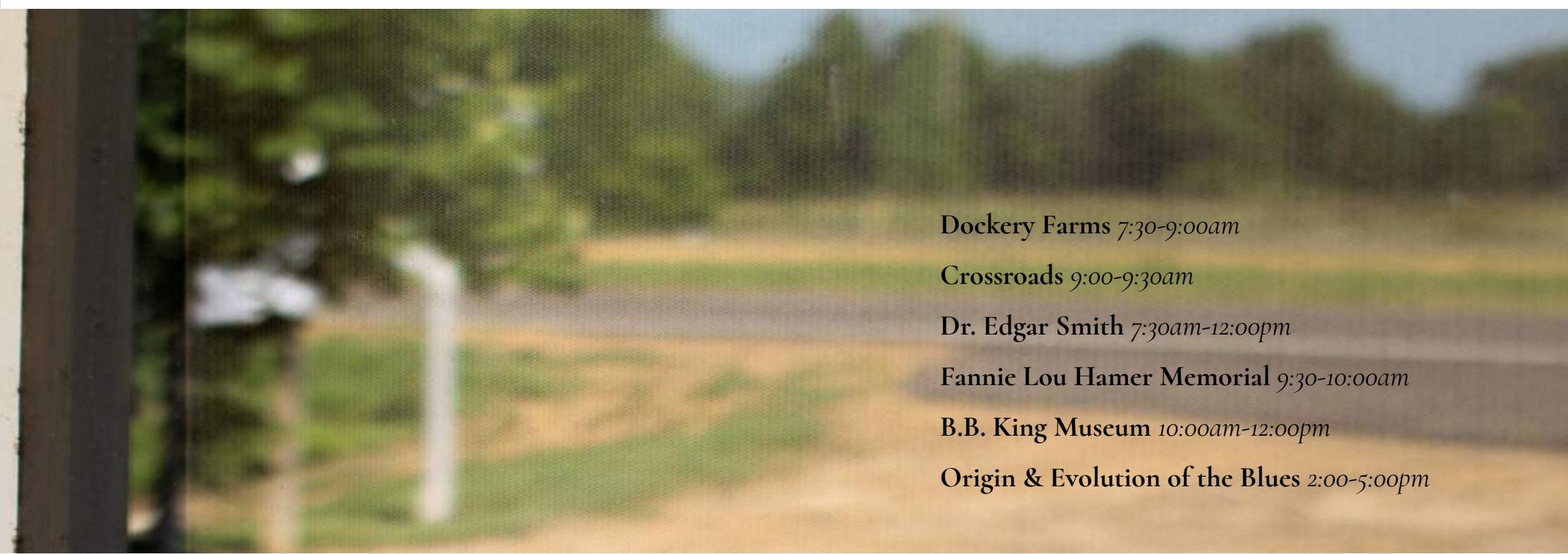
Participants were able to attend an evening event with local Blues musician, Bill Abel. Mr. Abel has been playing the Blues ever since he was a teenager, and growing up in the Delta has given him a unique perspective on the Delta Blues in particular. "I'm not a Blues scholar" he confessed at one point to the group, "I'm just a guy who grew up here in the Delta. I learned about this music from listening to a local radio station." As Abel played he also made sure to discuss the difficult

history and legacy of the Blues. He discussed how even though blues is one of the most beautiful music styles, it was birthed from turmoil and suffering. The Blues is tied to the legacy of slavery and sharecropping and he did not shy away from this reality. He charmed the group as he played his favorite Blues selections and explained the significance of the bluesmen he was honoring.



Welcome to

# Day 3



Dockery Farms 7:30-9:00am

Crossroads 9:00-9:30am

Dr. Edgar Smith 7:30am-12:00pm

Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial 9:30-10:00am

B.B. King Museum 10:00am-12:00pm

Origin & Evolution of the Blues 2:00-5:00pm

# DOCKERY Farms

Participants boarded the bus early Wednesday morning, first stopping at the famous Dockery Farms. Only seven short miles from Delta State University, Dockery Farms is known to be both the quintessential Delta plantation as well as the likely birthplace of the blues. It earned its latter claim to fame by being home to Charley Patton (often dubbed the "Father of the Blues") for more than 30 years. Learning from musician and fellow Dockery resident Henry Sloan, Patton crafted his distinct sound and influenced musicians like Howlin' Wolf, Willy Brown, Tommy Johnson, and Roebuck "Pops" Staples -- all within Dockery's impressive 40 square miles.

While Dockery embodies the Delta plantation in many ways, its services and management style made it unique. While most plantations relied exclusively on sharecropping for labor, Dockery Farms jointly employed hourly workers. The Farms also had a reputation of treating their workers fairly and justly, regardless of their

race. They offered such services as vaccination against regional diseases and insurance for their laborers, in addition to helping many save enough money to farm on their own elsewhere.

The Dockery's management philosophy proved fruitful. When participants arrived at Dockery, they were able to explore a fraction of what once held Dockery's own US Post Office and telegraph office, blacksmith shop, commissary, gas station, multiple churches and more. The Farms were so successful at their peak that they also had their own Dockery railroad terminal, complete with a full time ticket agent. The seed house, upon which is painted the famous Dockery Farms sign, still stands at the entrance and welcomes visitors in to this stakehold of the Delta.

After leaving Dockery, participants were able to stand at a rural crossroads site, similar to the crossroads where Blues legend Robert Johnson allegedly sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for otherworldly Blues talent.



# FANNIE LOU HAMER

## *memorial garden*

After leaving the crossroads, participants made way to Ruleville, Mississippi, home of famed civil rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer. Born and raised as a sharecropper on the nearby Marlow Plantation, Hamer only discovered that she had a constitutional right to vote after she became an adult. After attempting to register to vote and being consequently evicted from her home by the plantation manager, Hamer became an outspoken civil rights activist. She poured herself into her activism, later becoming a distinguished member in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee as well as in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

On the bus ride to the Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden, participants watched the broadcast that grabbed the attention of the nation as Fannie Lou Hamer spoke to millions at the 1964 National Democratic Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. She represented the integrated Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in opposition to the segregated Democratic Party, urging them to racially integrate. Her compelling, unscripted words were broadcasted nationwide, proclaiming that, "If the Freedom Democratic Party is not seated now, I question America." This call to action frightened President Lyndon Johnson, as it had the potential to endanger his presumptive nomination. This drove President Johnson to interrupt her speech with an emergency press conference concerning the war in Vietnam. While

Hamer's bid was initially unsuccessful, Fannie Lou Hamer's work eventually led to the integration of the Democratic Party and ultimately precipitated the Voting Rights Act of 1964.

Hamer later founded Freedom Farms in Ruleville, Mississippi, which is now home to the Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden. Hamer's headstone is surrounded by a garden that encloses a gazebo and a life-sized bronze statue paying tribute to Hamer's activism on behalf of the black community. When the statue was unveiled in October 2012, the monument was one of only four life-sized statues of black American women in the United States.

On the bus ride after the memorial garden, guest speaker, Dr. Edgar Smith shared that he and Hamer had been friends, and he read to participants a letter that she had written him during her lifetime. She thanked him for sending monetary and material support to her and other activists working to register African Americans to vote. Fannie Lou Hamer said in the letter, "I've lasted a long time behind the beatings I got in jail but it is catching up with me fast. My whole body sometimes is sore, but I am going to work until my Days are done." A powerful piece that demonstrated her ability to speak simply but powerfully, participants were able to experience a primary document from a civil rights legend.



---

**"I am sick and tired of being sick and tired."**

---



# B.B. King

The next stop was Indianola, Mississippi- hometown of the King of the Blues.

The workshop made a stop at the late bluesman's museum to learn more about the life and legacy of B.B. King. Participants watched an introductory film on B.B. King which emphasized that the Blues are not written, they are born out of life experience- struggle, turmoil, and even triumph.

Participants were guided through the museum by guest speaker and friend of B.B. King, Dr. Edgar Smith, who informed teachers that King assisted in the design and creation of the museum.

The museum began with the early life of Riley King who lost his mother at a young age and spent his childhood in the sharecropping system. Later exhibits tracked how "Blues Boy" or "B.B." King



initially gained popularity on the "Chitlin circuit", a series of music venues that were safe for Black artists and musicians. After time playing on the circuit, King gained fame and popularity and went on to win many accolades including Grammy awards, Lifetime Achievement Awards, and honorary doctorates from many universities.

B.B. King took the world by storm with his easily identifiable guitar style and his passion for his fans. Eric Clapton even said, "He was the best ambassador for Blues music and Black music."

After exploring the museum, participants were able to go outside to pay respects to the late bluesman at his memorial site located on the museum grounds. B.B. King passed away in 2015, a great loss to music, the Delta, and the world.



---

**THERE'S A SADNESS TO ALL KINDS OF MUSIC IF YOU WANT TO HEAR IT. THERE'S ALSO HAPPINESS TO IT IF YOU WANT TO HEAR IT.**

**B.B. KING**

---



## ORIGIN & EVOLUTION OF THE

# BLUES

DR.  
DAVID  
EVANS

When participants returned from lunch, they were greeted by well known ethnomusicologist Dr. David Evans, from the University of Memphis. He began his musical lecture by explaining the emergence of the blues out of the historical and social landscape from which it was born. He explained how the blues originated as a response to the Great Migration, Jim Crow segregation policies, and widespread racial violence and lynching that reached a peak during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to Evans, these factors drove black Americans to develop a new spirit of

individualism. Some felt that the major social institutions such as family and church were not as strong under the weight of radical social change, causing individuals to rely increasingly on themselves. Evans asserted that this need for self reliance and individualism manifested in the emergence of the Blues within black music. As an individualized response to oppression, the lyrics focus on deeply personal experiences such as romance and heartbreak, labor and exhaustion, and migration and poverty.

Evans also explained the Blues' connection to gospel and crossover genres such as jazz and soul Blues, actually showing them with examples on his instruments. Participants watched as he

often wove his lecture between speech and music. He also engaged the audience by showing them examples of famous songs by Delta Blues legends such as Robert Johnson, Charley Patton, Son House, and more. He illustrated distinctive characteristics that differ between artist as well as between regions, finishing his lecture by tracking the evolution of blues along the Diasporic lines that brought the Blues into cities with the Great Migration.



# day 4

## The Story of Emmett Till

Tour of Mound Bayou 7:30-10:00am

Charles McLaurin 10:00am-12:00pm

Panel discussion of Emmitt Till case 1:00-4:00pm

Emmitt Till Historical Intrepid Center 4:00-5:00pm

Bryant's Grocery 5:00-5:30pm

Little Zion Church 5:30-6:00pm

Po' Monkey's Lounge 8:30-til

# Tour of Mound Bayou



Thursday started off with a ride to Mound Bayou, Mississippi. As told by its welcome sign, Mound Bayou is the “oldest U.S. all black municipality.” Founded by former slaves, this town was intended to truly achieve an equal standard of living for black Americans -- without integration.

Incorporated in 1887 by Isaiah Montgomery and Benjamin Green, Mound Bayou was an all-black town founded based on utopian ideals. The land was cultivated by former slaves and sustained by blacks who left the sharecropping system to live in this new town. During its peak, Mound Bayou was home to a bank, three schools, over forty businesses, six churches, a train station, a library, a public library, among other things

**“Mound Bayou is unlike any other city ... this is the best [layout] of a city in this region and it was drawn by ex-slaves.”**

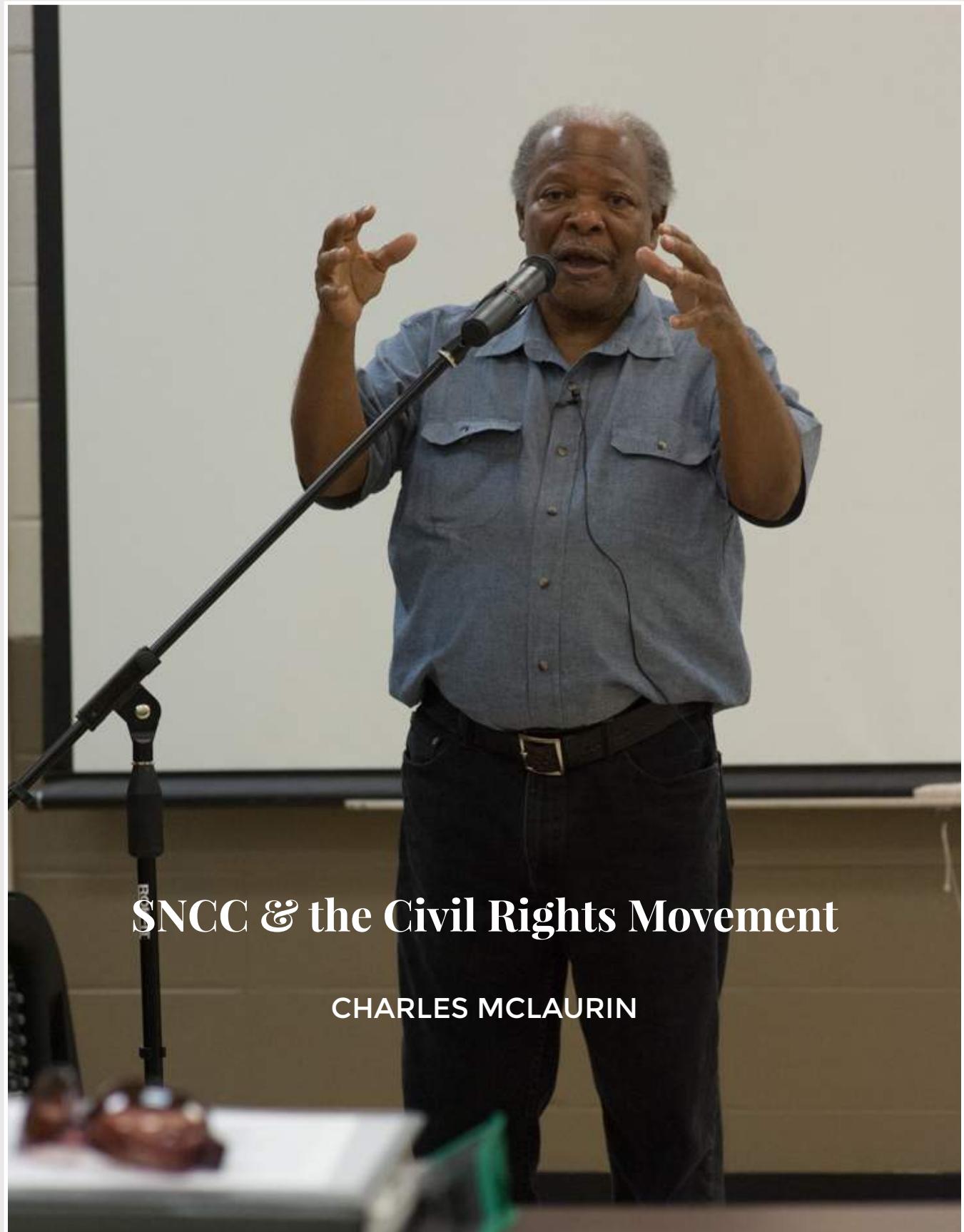
*-Mayor Johnson*

necessary for a thriving town. Mound Bayou had become the black-owned and operated utopia that its founders had imagined. The municipality was so successful that it was visited and praised by Booker T. Washington and Theodore Roosevelt. Because of a weak economy during the first World War, the town’s population and prosperity declined.

In Mound Bayou, Mayor Darryl R. Johnson spoke to participants about the history of Mound Bayou, as well as the projects that he and others envision for the town. Among these are a center dedicated to studying the health disparities found in African American communities compared to white communities, as well as a

hydroponics system to bring healthy food to the people of Mound Bayou. While driving through the city of Mound Bayou, participants stopped at its beautiful, but now unoccupied Taborian Hospital. Founded by the Knights of Tabor (a black insurrectionist slave group), Mayor Johnson explained how it was once the only hospital to be completely staffed with black doctors and nurses.

The group also made a stop at one of the Mississippi Freedom Trail markers that is also found in Mound Bayou.



## SNCC & the Civil Rights Movement

CHARLES MCLAURIN

In 1961, Charles McLaurin attended a mass meeting at the Masonic Temple in Jackson to see and hear a speech by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Inspired by Dr. King, the next day McLaurin joined the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee or SNCC, and took part in boycotts, sit-ins, picket demonstrations and voters registration drives in Jackson, Mississippi. Early in 1962, McLaurin, was recruited to participate in an intensive training program preparing for a massive voter registration campaign in the Mississippi Delta. McLaurin and two other SNCC organizers [Landy McNair and Charlie Cobb] came to Ruleville, in Sunflower County to mobilize black leadership, hold meetings on voter registration and to get persons 21 years and older to the court house in Indianola in an attempt to become registered voters. After the first organized bus trip to Indianola, McLaurin met Fannie Lou Hamer, who had a beautiful singing voice, and was very outspoken. These were the attributes that caught the attention of the national Civil Rights leadership.

In 1963, McLaurin served as campaign manager for Fannie Lou Hamer in her bid for Congress from the second congressional district. In 1964 McLaurin was a MFDP [Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party] Delegate from the Delta to the National Democratic Party Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. McLaurin also directed

the 1964 COFO [Congress of Federated Organizations] Freedom Summer Project in Sunflower County. During the Freedom Summer Project, McLaurin and Mrs. Hamer became close friends and worked together, until her death in 1977, on many social and political projects in Mississippi.

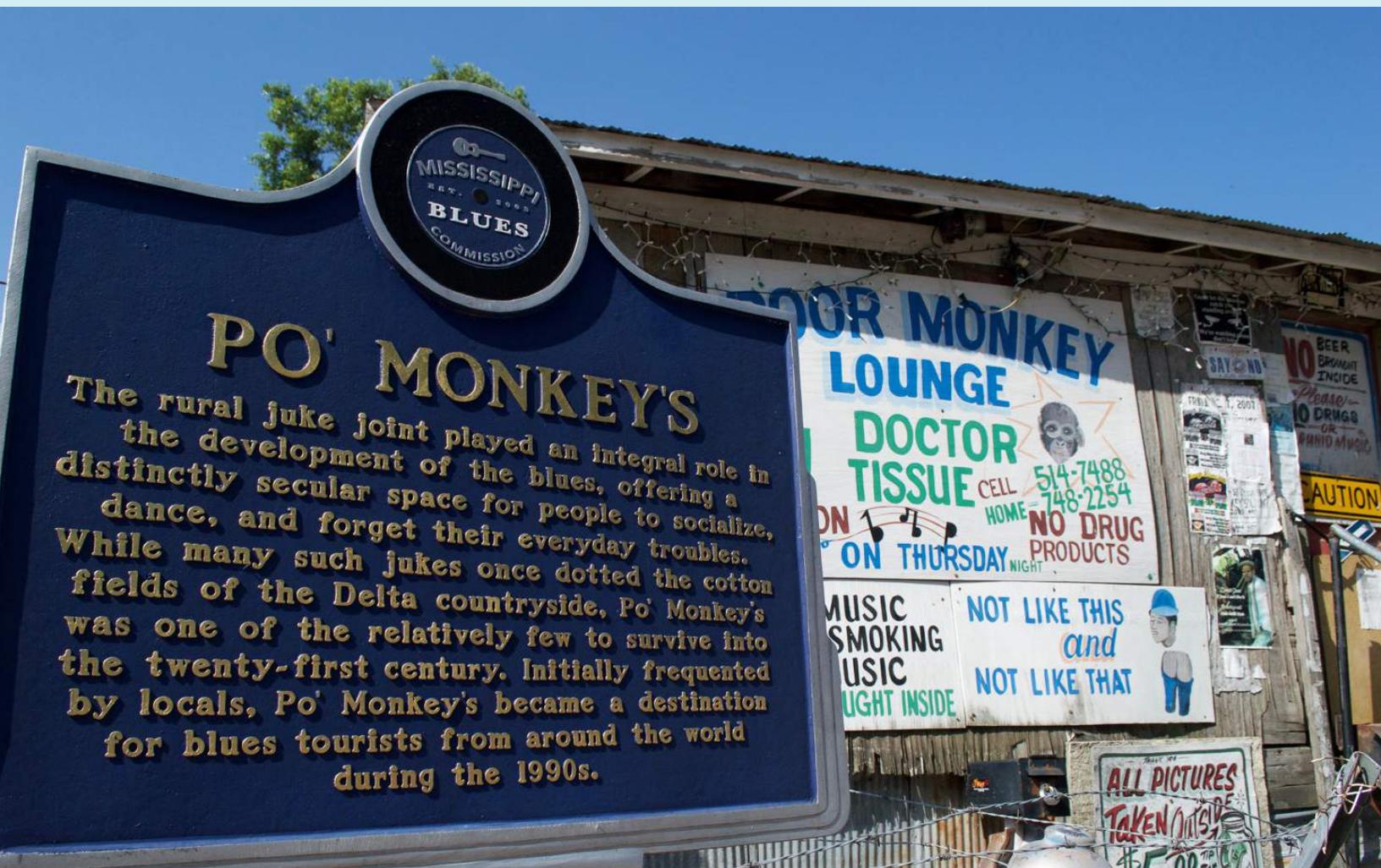
McLaurin was arrested and jailed more than 30 times for his voter registration efforts and for refusing to obey Jim Crow segregation laws in Mississippi.

After more than 20 years on the front of the Civil Rights movement. McLaurin now makes his home in Indianola, currently employed as Assistant Public Works Director for the City of Indianola.

McLaurin spoke to participants about his involvement in the movement and discussed the importance of nonviolence while recognizing its limits as a strategy for effective change. He spoke about other issues such as contemporary voting rights, black pride, and the need for continued action in civil rights.

Workshop co-director Lee Aylward introduced McLaurin as a “foot-soldier for freedom” and after his powerful, energetic, and moving speech, participants agreed that the title was fitting.

# PO' MONKEY'S LOUNGE: *the last rural jook house in the delta?*



After leaving Mound Bayou, participants got to see Po Monkey's in the daylight before they would be returning later that evening. Also along for the ride was Wheeler Parker, cousin of Emmett Till, who later spoke on the panel at the Tallehatchie County Courthouse in Sumner. Mr. Parker reminisced about the juke joints that he frequented on Saturday nights in his youth, even mentioning that he and Emmett Till were at a juke joint in Greenwood the night Till was kidnapped.

Before walking around the exterior, which was clad with signs and flyers, participants listened to Lee explain on the bus how shotgun shacks just like this one used to be lined up side by side, going on for miles. These shacks were inhabited by sharecroppers, and turned into jook houses on Saturday nights since sharecroppers had no means of getting into town in order to let loose after hard weeks of labor. Participants learned that these houses were initially called "jook" houses after the West African definition of the word, meaning "wicked." While there was no wickedness in jook houses, jooks were places to release inhibitions, where the alcohol flowed, and where the music moved all in attendance. Jook houses were only referred to as "juke joints" after the invention of the juke box. While some urban juke joints have endured, Po' Monkey's may be one of the last standing rural jooks.

The Delta Center is devastated to announce the passing of Mr. Willie Seaberry (Po' Monkey). A long time friend of the Delta Center, Mr. Seaberry meant a lot to the staff and we are sad to lose a man who was important to the Mississippi Delta and to many others across the world.



# THE STORY OF EMMETT TILL

Emmett Till (1941-1955) visited the family of his great uncle Moses Wright in the Mississippi Delta during the summer of 1955, when he was just fourteen years old. Till had never been to the Delta before, and displayed his inexperience with the racist culture of the Jim Crow South when he whistled at white shopkeeper Carolyn Bryant at her family store in Money, Mississippi. A few days later, he was kidnapped and lynched by Carolyn's husband, Roy Bryant, along with her brother-in-law, J.W. Milam, and a suspected six other men. After beating and torturing the boy, the men shot him in the head and dumped his body into the Tallahatchie River. The body was found and a murder trial ensued, centered in the town courthouse of Sumner, Mississippi. Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam were tried by an all-white jury and found to be not guilty. However, the two men subsequently confessed to the murder in a widely read interview with LOOK magazine. According to U.S. double jeopardy law, they could not be tried a second time; no one ever faced punishment for Till's murder.

Many historians view the Emmett Till trial as central to the genesis of the Civil Rights Movement; his mother's

decision to display his mangled body in a public, open-casket funeral in Chicago sparked international outrage at the treatment of African-Americans in the United States. In 2004, the FBI opened the Till investigation, under the jurisdiction of civil rights law, to determine who else may have aided Bryant and Milam in committing the murder. The investigation produced a more detailed account of the crime, but no additional persons were tried or charged.

Workshop participants were able to listen to a panel of speakers featuring Simeon Wright and Wheeler Parker, both of whom were with Emmett Till at the Bryant grocery store and the night he was abducted and killed. The panel also featured Lent Rice, a retired FBI agent who worked on the case when it was opened in 2004, Dale Killinger, the FBI agent assigned to the case when it opened in 2004, and Mississippi State Senator David Jordan.

In addition to speaking about the Till case, the panel also spoke about contemporary civil rights issues. Simeon Wright spoke about how he believes the criminal justice system is still broken, more than sixty years after the trial. The panel also challenged teachers to teach the story of Emmett Till to their students and to remember that education is one of the most important weapons for social change in this country.



Left to right: Simeon Wright and Wheeler Parker, cousins of Emmett Till

# *the* Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center



Pictured above is the Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center, a memorial museum that is a point of local pride in the town of Glendora, MS.

What was once an old cotton gin has now been converted into a memorial museum that has a variety of exhibits conveying the Town of Glendora and its connection to the horrific kidnapping, murder, and unfair trial of 14 year old Emmett Till. One display even exhibited a replica of Till's funeral, complete with casket and mangled mannequin.

The museum is the centerpiece of Glendora's cultural tourism, housing a comprehensive history of the area as well as critical events in the civil rights movement that occurred there. While other unjustified murders of black Americans occurred within miles of Till's, his remains the most famous. Participants learned of one incident that occurred just months after Till's murder at a local gas station. A friend of J.W. Milam went to a gas station and after a black worker, Clinton Melton, filled the tank completely, the enraged and drunken customer insisted that he only wanted \$2 of gas, not a full tank. The customer, Elmer Kimbell threatened to kill Melton. He returned ten minutes later and shot Melton dead.

# Bryant's Grocery



Pictured above is Simeon Wright at Bryant's Grocery holding an issue of Look Magazine which contains the confessions of Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam.

Following the Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center, participants stopped at the original site of the Bryant's Grocery. Although now overgrown with kudzu, the site once held the store that sparked a chain of events leading to the brutal killing of Emmett Till. On August 24, 1955, Emmett Till, along with his cousins and uncle went to Bryant's Grocery in Money, Mississippi. The store was owned by Roy Bryant and his wife Caroline, who was working in the store during Till's visit. As Till was exiting Bryant's Grocery, he whistled at 21-year-old Caroline Bryant and he and the others quickly left to go home. This event would be the reason Roy Bryant and his half-brother, J.W. Milam, abducted and murdered Emmett Till several nights later.

Bus to Memphis, Greyhound Station 7:30-10:30am

Cotton Exchange Museum 10:30am-11:00am

Stax Museum of American Soul Music 11:30am-12:00pm

National Civil Rights Museum 1:00pm-4:30pm

Peabody Hotel 4:30pm-5:30pm



## Clarksdale Greyhound Station



Top Left: Mayor Bill Luckett addresses the group  
Bottom Left: Participants listen to Mayor Luckett speak about contemporary Clarksdale  
Right: Greyhound bus station sign

On the bus ride to Memphis, the group stopped in Clarksdale, Mississippi to visit the Greyhound bus station. Participants were able to see the difference between what were once “white” and “colored” waiting rooms. The group was met by Bill Luckett, the mayor of Clarksdale who is also an actor, attorney, and business partner of Morgan Freeman’s. He spoke about Clarksdale and how tourism has recently increased. People are coming from all over the globe to experience Clarksdale, a city rich with Blues history and heritage.



Once reaching Memphis, participants' first stop was at the Memphis Cotton Exchange Museum. This cultural and historical museum is located on the historic trading floor of the Mississippi Cotton Exchange at 65 Union Avenue, where the wealthiest planters and most powerful elites once conducted high scale business at the center of the global cotton economy.

Participants were first welcomed into the museum with a short film detailing the history and evolution of the crop that dominated the South, both economically and socially. Following the film, they meandered through the interactive exhibits, took pictures with the one ton bail of cotton, and gained a deeper understanding of what is really meant by "cotton is king." There were multiple tactile exhibits that allowed participants to engage in learning about such things as the lost trade of cotton classing and about the technological advancements in cotton production today. The children's exhibit also allowed the teachers to test their strength at lifting a sack full of cotton, getting a glimpse of what it would be like to have to haul cotton.

# •62• ALLENBERG COTTON COMPANY

# THE COTTON MUSEUM



# STAX

Welcome to Soulsville USA! As one of Lee's favorite museums in the Delta, the Stax Museum engulfed participants in the history and evolution of southern Soul music, as well as that of the famous Stax Records. From Otis Redding to Carla Thomas to Albert King, some of the most famous southern Soul musicians scored hit after hit at Stax Records. Founded in 1959 under the previous name of Satellite Records, the Memphis enterprise quickly began carving its legacy in pop culture. The name was changed to Stax in 1961 following the first national distribution of one of their singles. In response to a complaint from a record company in California that also went by the name of Satelline Records, co-owners and siblings Jim Stewart and Estelle Axton realized they needed a new, unique name for their label. They decided to combine the first parts of their last names and from that point on, the company would be known forevermore as Stax Records.

Between the years of 1962 and 1967, Stax found itself with all the ingredients to allow them to grow from a regional label to a household name. What made it especially unique was the adjoining Stax Record Shop which was primarily run by Estelle Axton while Jim Stewart was in the recording studio. This shop served as a hangout for local teenagers as well as a place for Stax to see what sold and what didn't. Unlike other record shops, which often made you buy full records before listening to them, Axton welcomed passersby to browse and listen to records without pressuring customers to buy at all. She would even place speakers right outside of the door to welcome people into the store. This contributed greatly to the success of Stax, as they would often play artists' singles in the store to gauge customers' responses, jointly using the shop as a means for musical experimentation.

Following the death of Otis Redding, Stax Records most renowned recording artist, the company faced the beginning of its downfall. Many factors contributed to this, including the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the subsequent race riots across the country. While Stax Records no longer exists as a record label, the music lives on in all of us. The museum offered participants a glimpse into the magic of the Stax legacy that shaped American music.



# *the* NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM



Participants spent the rest of their time in Memphis at the National Civil Rights Museum. Located at the former Lorraine Motel, the site of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination in 1968, the museum took participants on a powerful journey through the black American struggle. The exhibits spanned all the way from the dehumanizing bondage of African slaves to the Jim Crow era to the Montgomery Bus Boycott to the Black Power Movement.

Before entering the museum, many participants stopped outside of the Lorraine Motel to speak with an activist who has been protesting the National Civil Rights Museum for over 28 years. She believes that Dr. King would have wanted the money used to upkeep a museum to be spent helping the poor and oppressed. This conversation caused many participants to think critically about the museum as they walked through.

Beginning with an exhibit on the Atlantic slave trade, the museum chronicled

the oppression and resistance of black Americans. After the slave trade exhibit, the piece moves on to discuss the failure of Reconstruction and how this resulted in what would come to be known as the Jim Crow South. Defined by segregation and anti-black racial terror, this time period in American history is one that was painful for many African-Americans. However, the museum also discusses how Blacks resisted the segregation and terror through migration, protests, sit-ins, and other forms of civil activism. The Civil Rights movement portion of the museum focused on the two main iterations of the movement- nonviolent resistance as practiced by Dr. King and the Black Power movement focused on self defense as promoted by activists such as Stokely Carmichael and Malcolm X.

Full walls within the museum rolled original film of sit-ins turned violent, marches, speeches and more, plunging visitors into the realities of the Civil Rights Movement. In addition to having

interactive displays that catalogued resistance movements all over the country, the museum also had a full exhibit devoted solely to the plight for justice within Mississippi.

At the end of the museum, participants were able to see the motel room where Dr. King spent his last hours, as well as the balcony from which he was murdered. It was a powerful and humbling experience to witness this site. The lobby before the motel room had a screen which played Dr. King's last speech in which he hauntingly states, "Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!... Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord!"

---

**"I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!"**

***Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.***

---



# THE PEABODY HOTEL



The economic and geographical pinnacle of the Delta, the Peabody Hotel was the last stop in Memphis, and the last outing of the workshop. Swarms of people crowded the lobby of the hotel, waiting anxiously for the famous march of the ducks. Once participants squeezed their way to the balcony in hopes of getting a better view, the clock finally reached 5:00 PM and participants were welcomed to the hotel with a room-filling, "Ladies and gentlemen..." A certified duck master plunged into everyone's favorite tradition -- the March of the Peabody Ducks.

The tradition dates back to 1933, when then General Manager Frank Schutt returned from a weekend hunting trip in Arkansas. He, along with his hunting friends, thought it amusing to place three of their call duck decoys in the lobby's fountain. Proving to be a favorite among guests, the decoys were exchanged for five mallard ducks (one drake and four hens) which can still be seen today.

The ducks draw large crowds to the Peabody every day -- specifically around 11:00 AM and 5:00 PM, when the ducks are formally escorted to and from the lobby. This portion of the tradition wasn't started until 1940, when a bellman named Edward Pembroke volunteered as the caretaker for the ducks. He was dubbed the "Duckmaster" and trained the ducks to march from their penthouse home on the Plantation Roof to the lobby fountain via the elevator.

While the hotel was crowded, participants enjoyed seeing the famous duck march and exploring the extravagant clothing and gift stores surrounding the hotel's lobby. The glamorous Lansky's gave participants a glimpse into the lifestyles of the hotel's historic guests. They then boarded the bus and started the journey back to Cleveland after a long day of exploring the history of American society, music, and activism.

# The Delta in Diaspora

DR. JOHN B. STRAIT

## day 6 The Delta in Diaspora

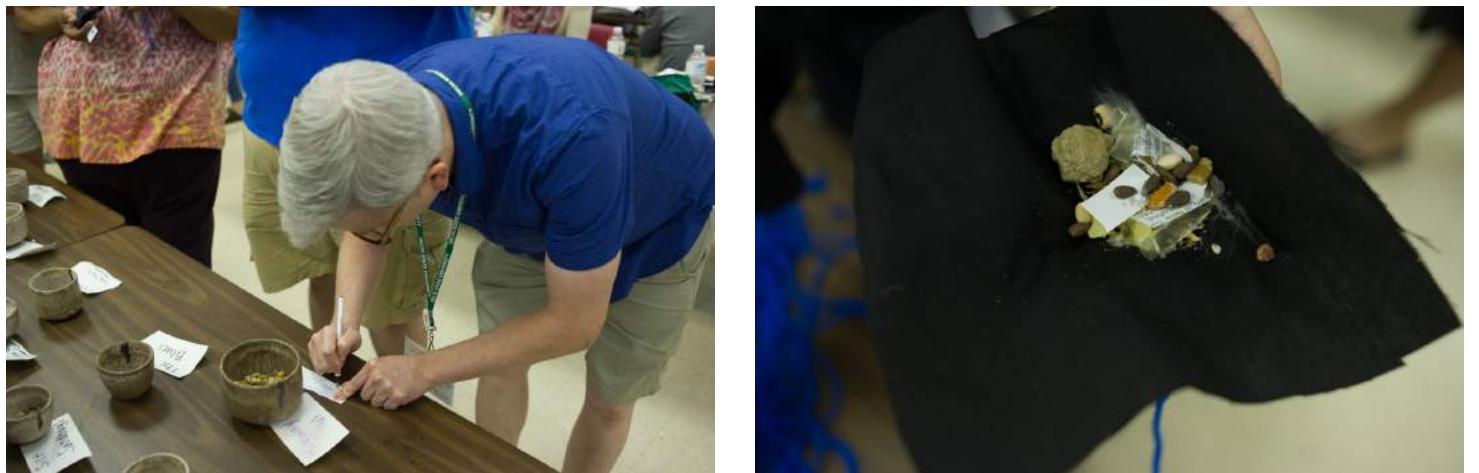


The final lecture of the workshop was delivered by Dr. John Strait, a scholar of geography at Sam Houston State University. His lecture discussed how the Blues and culture from the Delta dispersed throughout the rest of the country and the world. This dispersion of culture began in the early twentieth century at the time of the Great Migration. From 1910 to 1970, around six million African-Americans moved from the agrarian South to large cities in the West, Midwest, and North, namely, Chicago.

This migration changed the social, political, and cultural landscape of the country.

Dr. Strait went on to discuss specifically how religion and blues and soul music were different in the South and North and the cultural exchange that happened between the two regions. He explained that the American story is a story of people migrating and this story is reflected in the Great Migration and the spread of Delta culture throughout America.

# MAKE YOUR OWN MOJO



The “mojo” is a type of talisman that finds its origins in the folk magic of the Hoodoo spiritual tradition. The mojo exercise was to help participants remember their special week in the Mississippi Delta. Participants gathered various ingredients from the sites participants visited and discussions held during the workshop, wrapping them up into a small black bag. Participants wrote down all of the ingredients inside so that they would remember once the bag was tied with a blue piece of yarn representing the Blues and the Mississippi River.

Teachers were instructed to leave the “mojos” on their desks back home and each time a student asked what is in the bag, the teacher will once again be reminded of his or her magical experience in the Mississippi Delta. In addition to the mojo, teachers were offered signed photographic prints of Mr. Seaberry standing in front of Po' Monkey's, which were taken by photographer and communications specialist, Will Jacks.

# WRAP-UP

Right: Participants were visited by Delta State University mascot, the Fighting Okra!



Right: Participants presented workshop staff Will Jacks, Dr. Rolando Herts, and Lee Aylward with a donation to the Delta Center in memoriam Mr. Willie Seaberry

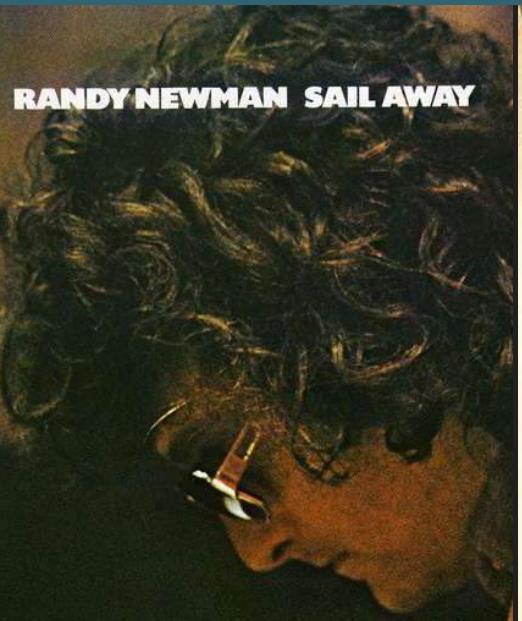


# SONG OF THE DAY



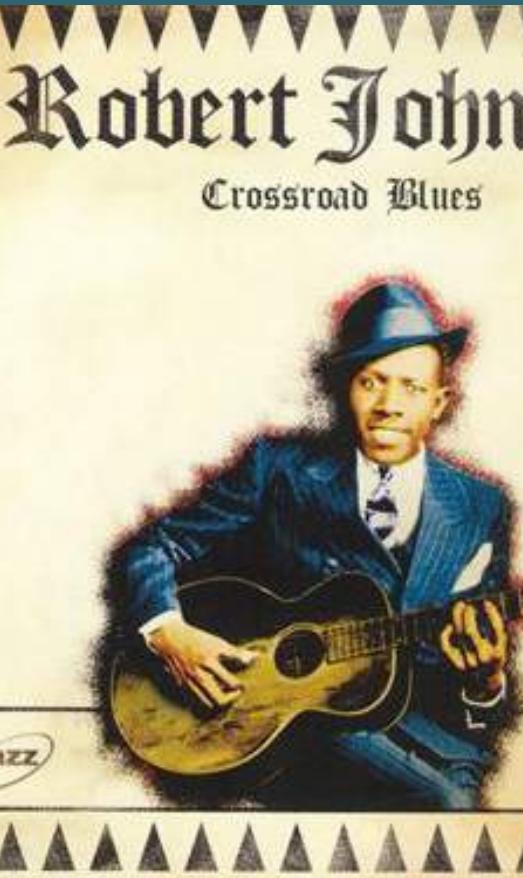
**MONDAY**

“When the Levee  
Breaks”  
by Memphis Minnie &  
Kansas Joe McCoy



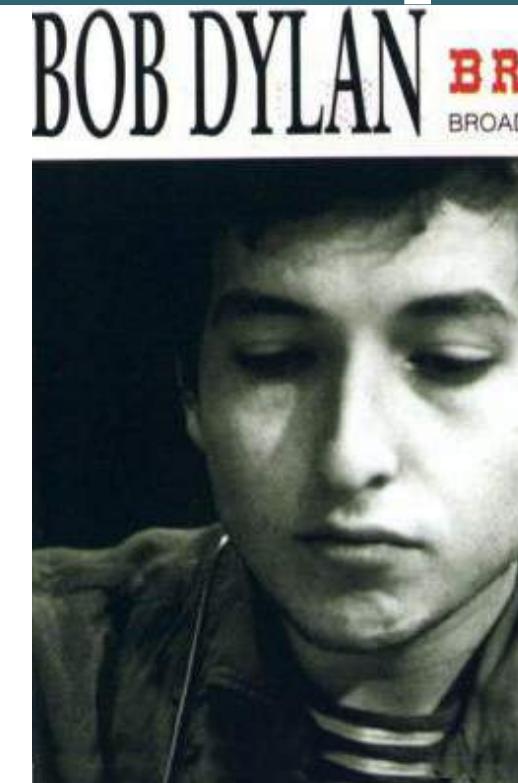
**TUESDAY**

“Sail Away”  
by Randy Newman



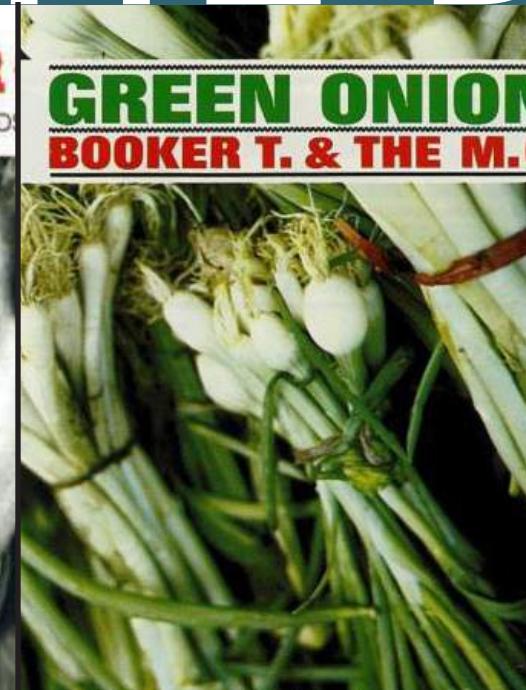
**WEDNESDAY**

“Crossroad Blues”  
by Robert Johnson



**THURSDAY**

“The Death of Emmett  
Till”  
by Bob Dylan



**FRIDAY**

“Green Onions”  
by Booker T. & the  
MG's



**SATURDAY**

“Sweet Home Chicago”  
by Robert Johnson

# TASTE OF THE DAY



## MONDAY

Catfish Supper at  
Airport Grocery



## TUESDAY

Kim's Fried Pork Rinds  
& Cracklins



## WEDNESDAY

Hot Tamales



## THURSDAY

Koolickles  
(Kool-Aid Pickles)



## FRIDAY

Soul Food  
Central BBQ in  
Memphis, TN



## SATURDAY

Fried Chicken &  
Pound Cake



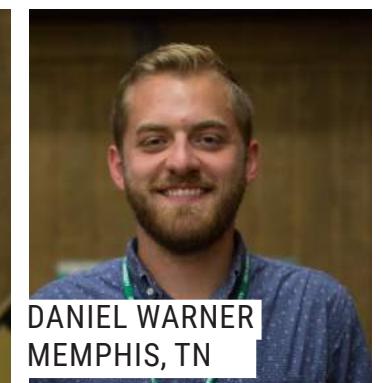
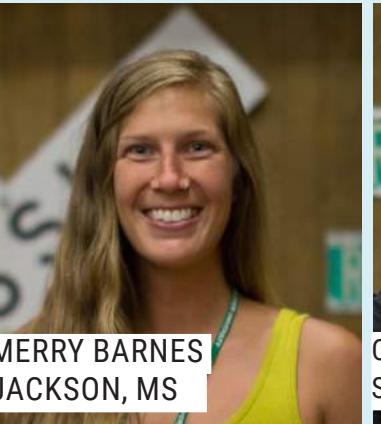
**36 TEACHERS**

**20 STATES**

**1 DELTA**

PASADENA	CALIFORNIA
SUTTER CREEK	CALIFORNIA
HOLLYWOOD	FLORIDA
CHICAGO	ILLINOIS
DEERFIELD	ILLINOIS
PINGREE GROVE	ILLINOIS
WICHITA	KANSAS
BOWLING GREEN	KENTUCKY
BATON ROUGE	LOUISIANA
LOWELL	MASSACHUSETTS
MEDFORD	MASSACHUSETTS
SOMERVILLE	MASSACHUSETTS
FORT WASHINGTON	MARYLAND
POTTERVILLE	MICHIGAN
CLEVELAND	MISSISSIPPI
HERNANDO	MISSISSIPPI
JACKSON	MISSISSIPPI
MABEN	MISSISSIPPI
RIDGELAND	MISSISSIPPI
HARRISONVILLE	MISSOURI
RYE	NEW HAMPSHIRE
MT. LAUREL	NEW JERSEY
SANTA FE	NEW MEXICO
ASTORIA	NEW YORK
BROOKLYN	NEW YORK
COMMACK	NEW YORK
NEW YORK	NEW YORK
CHARLOTTE	NORTH CAROLINA
RALEIGH	NORTH CAROLINA
CANAL WINCHESTER	OHIO
McMINNVILLE	OREGON
MEMPHIS	TENNESSEE
SEATTLE	WASHINGTON

# PARTICIPANT yearbook



# EVALUATIONS

ACTIVITY	1	2	3	4	5	Average
Reception at the Railroad Museum	1	2	6	12	12	3.97
Introduction	0	1	6	9	17	4.27
Discussion session	0	1	5	6	19	4.39
<i>LaLee's Kin: The Legacy of Cotton</i>	0	1	1	8	24	4.62
Discussion led by Reggie Barns	0	0	9	7	18	4.26
Levee Break site/Delta and Pine Land	0	0	1	8	25	4.71
Airport Grocery (Catfish supper)	0	0	2	5	27	4.74
Terry "Harmonica" Bean	1	0	2	8	23	4.53
Discussion of the Delta Chinese	0	0	5	9	20	4.44
Discussion of the Delta Jews	0	0	3	11	20	4.50
Greenville's Black graveyard	0	0	4	11	19	4.44
Guest Scholar: Dr. Charles Wilson	0	0	5	8	20	4.45
Bill Abel, History of the Blues	0	0	1	5	26	4.78
Dockery Farms and the Crossroads	0	0	0	7	27	4.79
Fannie Lou Hamer's Gravesite	0	0	1	4	29	4.82
B.B. King Museum	0	0	1	7	26	4.74
Guest Scholar: Dr. David Evans	0	3	8	7	15	4.03
Tour of Mound Bayou	0	0	2	7	24	4.67
Charles McLaurin	0	0	0	3	30	4.91
Panel discussion of Till case	0	0	0	1	33	4.97
Emmett Till Intrepid Center	0	2	5	12	14	4.15
Bus Ride to Memphis	0	1	3	11	17	4.38
Stax Museum	0	0	2	3	28	4.79
Cotton Exchange Museum	0	7	4	11	11	3.79
Lunch at Central Barbecue	0	0	5	12	16	4.33
National Civil Rights Museum	0	0	0	7	26	4.79
Lobby of the Peabody	0	2	8	8	15	4.09
Bus Ride home (Stax movie)	0	2	2	9	20	4.42
Guest Scholar: Dr. John B. Strait	2	4	3	8	17	4.00
Mojo making	1	0	4	4	25	4.53

"Absolutely incredible. This is one of the best trips I have ever taken and I cannot wait to come back to the Delta."

**"This entire week has been one of the most important and meaningful events in my 31 years of life."**

"The outstanding staff utilized music, food, stories, and anecdotes as well as presentations."

**"I cried at least twice every day of the workshop. I felt every emotion possible- sorrow, joy, anger, confusion, and enlightenment."**

"These were once in a lifetime experiences"

**"The opportunity to hear firsthand accounts of historical events from eyewitnesses is invaluable."**

**"[The staff] combined professionalism and efficiency with genuine warmth and a sense of fun."**

"Absolutely incredible. This is one of the best trips I have ever taken and I cannot wait to come back to the Delta."

**"I left everyday wanting more"**

"I would recommend this workshop to teachers, Americans- all people, really."

**"I'm walking away from the Mississippi Delta a better person- a bigger person- than the one I was when my plane first touched down in Memphis."**

"Lee's energy, passion, and community connections made this workshop possible. She went above and beyond..."

# Meet Our Team

**Dr. Rolando Herts**

Director,  
Delta Center



**Lee Aylward**

Program  
Associate for  
Education &  
Community



**Heather Miller**

Program Associate  
for Projects



**Will Jacks**

Media &  
Communications  
Specialist



**Trey Walk**

Duke '19



**Kyra Exterovich-Rubin**

UNC-Chapel Hill '19

Robertson Scholars  
Workshop Documentarians

## ABOUT THE DELTA CENTER

The mission of The Delta Center for Culture and Learning is to promote greater understanding of Mississippi Delta culture and history and its significance to the world through education, partnerships, and community engagement.

The Delta Center is an interdisciplinary program that focuses on the humanities and social sciences as they relate to the Delta. The Delta Center advances Delta State University's participation in promoting and celebrating the unique heritage of the Delta while also addressing the longstanding social, economic, and cultural challenges that inhibit regional advancement. The Delta Center has fulfilled this role since its inception and continues to do so by:

Serving as management entity for the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area, a cultural heritage and economic development partnership between the people of the Mississippi Delta and the National Park Service;

Housing the International Delta Blues Project, which comprises the International Conference on the Blues, a Blues Studies program, and a Blues Leadership Incubator promoting economic development and entrepreneurship related to Blues tourism and the creative economy;

Hosting "The Most Southern Place on Earth: Music, Culture and History of the Mississippi Delta," a Landmarks of American History and Culture workshop funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities which brings K-12 educators to the Delta for a week-long educational and cultural immersion experience; and

Working throughout the Delta region and nationally with cultural, educational and tourism organizations, local, state and federal agencies, and visiting college classes and groups from around the country and the world, providing information, expertise, and experiential learning and partnership development opportunities.

The Delta Center is located in Ewing Hall, Suite 130, at Delta State University. We welcome visitors regularly and *enthusiastically* . . . come by and see us!



As a part of this workshop, all participants were required to create lesson plans or other reflection materials based on the workshop course content.

These materials have been uploaded at the workshop website page:  
<http://deltacenterforcultureandlearning.com/neh-workshop/lesson-plans/>

For more information, please visit the Most Southern Place on Earth website:  
<http://deltacenterforcultureandlearning.com/southern-place-workshop/>

Or contact the Delta Center for Culture and Learning staff via e-mail:

Dr. Rolando Herts: [rherts@deltastate.edu](mailto:rherts@deltastate.edu)

Mrs. Lee Aylward: [laylward@deltastate.edu](mailto:laylward@deltastate.edu)

Mrs. Heather Miller: [hmiller@deltastate.edu](mailto:hmiller@deltastate.edu)

Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed on this website do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

# Special Thanks

**The National Endowment for the Humanities**  
Sponsor

**Dr. Rolando Herts**  
Director of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning

**Lee Aylward**  
Program Associate for Education and Community Outreach

**Bill Abel**  
**Reggie Barnes**  
**Terry "Harmonica" Bean**  
**David Evans**  
**Darryl Johnson**  
**Dale Killinger**

**Bill Luckett**  
**Charles McLaurin**  
**Benji Nelken**  
**Wheeler Parker**  
**Edgar Smith**  
**Lent Rice**

**John B. Strait**  
**Charles Reagan Wilson**  
**Simeon Wright**  
**Cathy Wong**

## Guest Speakers

**Heather Kovarik Miller**  
Program Associate for Projects

**Will Jacks**  
Media & Communications Specialist

**Kyra Exterovich-Rubin**  
Portfolio Author and Documentarian  
Robertson Scholar  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Class of 2019

**Trey Walk**  
Portfolio Author and Documentarian  
Robertson Scholar  
Duke University, Class of 2019

*in memoriam:*  
**Mr. Willie Seaberry**  
**"Po' Monkey"**

