



The Most Southern Place on Earth

Music, Culture and History in the Mississippi Delta

PRESENTED BY THE DELTA CENTER FOR CULTURE AND LEARNING
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JULY 2014

welcome to
THE MOST SOUTHERN PLACE
ON EARTH
workshop

JULY 2014

presented by
The Delta Center for Culture and Learning

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dear Colleague,

The Mississippi Delta is simultaneously a unique place and a place that has influenced the American story like no other. This paradox is summed up in two simple statements. Historian James Cobb has described the Delta as “The most Southern place on earth.” At the same time, the National Park Service has said “Much of what is profoundly American- what people love about America- has come from the Delta, which is often called ‘the cradle of American culture.’”

This is the Mississippi Delta: a place of paradox and contrast, a place described by Will Campbell as being “of mean poverty and garish opulence.” A place that has produced great authors yet continues to suffer from illiteracy. A place that has produced great wealth for a few but persistent poverty for many. A place of privilege for some and disadvantage for others. A place that has pro-

duced powerful political leaders, both for and against segregation. A place in which apartheid has been replaced by empowerment. A place of unquestioned artistic creativity that has given the world both the Blues and rock ‘n’ roll, and is also home to Charley Pride, Conway Twitty, Bobby Gentry, Sam Cooke, Mose Allison and B. B. King. This is the Mississippi Delta, a microcosm of America, The most American place on earth.

The Delta has played an enormous and much undervalued role in the American story. It has given the world much in terms of music, literature, journalism, political action, foodways, and even sports heroes. It is the ancestral home of many Americans who today live in metropolitan areas like Detroit or Chicago or Oakland. It has played an important role in changing America’s attitude towards human and civil rights. At the same time, many Americans do not really know where the Mississippi Delta is, and places far from the Delta now claim its rightful title to being the “birthplace of the



Blues.”

The National Endowment for the Humanities has made it possible for you to explore the Mississippi Delta. You will learn the stories that have given this place such a unique flavor, a mystique unlike any other place in America. You will learn about Charley Patton, the Father of the Delta Blues, and Robert Johnson, who may or may not have sold his soul to the devil in return for guitar virtuosity. You will learn about Senator James O. Eastland, powerful advocate for segregation, and Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, sharecropper and equally powerful advocate for integration, who lived five miles from each other in totally different and separate worlds that were entirely co-dependent on one another. You will learn the tragic story of fourteen year old Emmett Till, and how his lynching sparked the civil rights movement. You will learn the stories of Mound Bayou, founded by former slaves as an all-black enclave, and called by President Teddy Roosevelt “The Jewel of the Delta.” You will learn how the Mississippi River created the Delta and how the great flood of 1927 destroyed it. You will learn about how waves of Russian Jews, French and Germans, Lebanese, Italians and Chinese immigrated to the Delta. You will learn about the clearing of the wilderness, the arrival of railroads, cotton, plantations, sharecropping, small towns, the Blues and Gospel, and the Great Migration to the North, East and West.

Most importantly, you will learn about sense of place as you study the place itself as a text. We will learn history where it happened as we move across the Delta, stopping at sites that tell stories. We will read what has been called “the invisible landscape,” the hidden landscape of stories from the past, as we learn about events that transpired in particular places and how they changed America

While doing these things, you will also have the opportunity to taste Delta foods, from fried catfish and okra and barbecue to fried dill pickles and maybe even Kool-Aid pickles if you are bold enough. And of course you will listen to the music of the Delta, the Blues of Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, Son House, Charley Patton, and Willie Brown, the people who wrote the music that was made even more famous by Ike Turner, Eric Clapton, the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin, among others.

You will also learn from the Delta’s landscape, the vast sweep of flat, fertile ground that continues today to produce an agricultural bounty, formerly based on cotton, and now based on corn, soybeans and rice.



You will also have the opportunity to visit some of our nation's great museums, including the National Civil Rights Museum, the Stax Museum of American Soul Music, and the brand new B.B. King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center.

Finally, you will work with your colleagues to discover how other places, including your own, can be read as texts, and how you can return to your own place to teach others how to read their place as text.

By the end of the workshop, you will understand how the Mississippi Delta can be both "the most Southern place on earth," and "the cradle of American culture." If you are like most people, you will return home with stories that you will tell your classes for the rest of your life. And you will gain new respect for the power and the poetics of place.

Let me end with some information about the Delta Center and workshops. We were funded through the NEH Landmarks program in 2009 and 2010, and again in 2012, 2013. You can also

see online the outline of our workshop on the music and musicians of Mississippi, and the syllabus for a class we offer Delta teachers. The Music workshop was funded by NEH through the Mississippi Humanities Council. We have also presented two versions of what we call "The Three R's of the Mississippi Delta: Roads, Rivers and Railways," with support from the National Geographic Society and the Mississippi Geography Alliance, and we often present short workshops for local teachers on various subjects. The Delta Center is currently the manager of the new Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area, a link to the National Park Service. We work regularly with people from all over the country, and increasingly from other countries, to help them learn the Delta's stories.

Sincerely,

Luther Brown

Director of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University

THE MOST SOUTHERN PLACE ON EARTH JULY WORKSHOP ITINERARY

	Sunday, July 13	Monday, July 14	Tuesday, July 15	Wednesday, July 16	Thursday, July 17	Friday, July 18	Saturday, July 19
8:00 AM	Introduction to the Workshop and overview of the week and role of staff	Bus to Greenville	Dockery, the Crossroads, and Fannie Lou Hamer's gravesite, with Dr. Edgar Smith	Tour of Mound Bayou	Bus ride to Memphis with stop at the Clarkdale Greyhound Station		
9:00 AM		Discussion of the Delta Chinese	Bus ride to Indianola	Emmett Till and <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> with Henry Outlaw	Cotton Museum	Guest Scholar: The Delta in Diaspora	
10:00 AM		Greenville's Black Backyard	BB King Museum				
11:00 AM	Arrival & Check-In	Lunch	Discussion of the Delta Jews	Charles McLaurin	Stax Museum of American Soul Music	Discussion	
12:00 PM	<i>Lake's Kiss: The Legacy of Cotton</i>	Flood of 1927 Museum		Lunch	Lunch at the Four Way Grill	Lunch	Curriculum/ Lesson Plans Due
1:00 PM		Bus	Bus	Bus to Sunner			
2:00 PM	Discussion led by Reggie Barnes, former Superintendent, West Tallahatchie Co. Schools	Lunch	Guest Scholar: Religious and Cultural History of the Delta, Charles Reagan Wilson	Panel Discussion of Till Case	National Civil Rights Museum	Make your own Molojo & Wrap-Up	
3:00 PM				Bus to important sites in the Till story	Peabody Hotel		
4:00 PM	Reception at the Martin and Sue King Railroad Museum, Cleveland	Bus		Emmett Till Intrepid Center and bus to Little Zion Church			
5:00 PM	Levee break site at Mounds Landing and Great River Road	Levee break site at Mounds Landing and Great River Road	Guest Scholar: The Origin and Evolution of the Blues	Dinner	Bus ride home, with discussion		
6:00 PM	Free Time	Catfish Supper at Leo's at the Levee	Dinner				
7:00 PM				Open Mic - Tell us about your plans to use the knowledge you are gaining	Dinner		
8:00 PM	Bus home				Po Monkey's Lounge	Dinner	
9:00 PM							

Sunday 13th July
Welcome to the Delta!

8



4pm - 6pm

Reception at Martin and Sue King Railroad Station, Cleveland

As two “conductors”, Asa Atkinson and James Marquis, operated the intricately detailed train setup, workshop participants met Dr. Luther Brown, the Delta Center Director, Lee Aylward, the Program Associate for Education and Community Outreach, and Heather Miller, the Program Associate for Projects. Enjoying wine, soft drinks, and a plethora of homemade refreshments, Delta Center staff and participants alike briefly shared their professional backgrounds with each other. The President and Provost of Delta State University were also in attendance.

Special thanks must go to Kelli Carr of Cleveland/Bolivar County Tourism, Lee Aylward and Heather Miller of the Delta Center, the Parlor Purlers knitting group of the Calvary Episcopal Church and especially their Warehouse working group, Rachel Tate and Gregory Cole, Barbara Levingston, The Nehi Bottling Company of Cleveland, and Cecil’s Package Store and its owner Turner Woods, who provided the food and beverages.

FIGURE ABOVE RIGHT

Dr Luther Brown and the two conductors inspect the running train.

FIGURE BELOW RIGHT

The train motors through the beautifully designed set, amidst the lively conversations of the participants.







Monday 14th July:
*The River, Creator and
Destroyer of the Delta*

8am - 11am

FAR ABOVE

Participants watch on as Dr. Luther Brown introduces the workshop and informs them on the content of the week ahead.

Introduction to the workshop and overview of the weekend and role of Staff

Dr. Brown, a scientist by training, told us that he received his Master's and Doctoral Degree from Ohio State University. He came to Delta State University, the geographic center of the Mississippi Delta, 14 years ago. His mission was to found the Delta Center for Culture and Learning. The Center's goal is to promote the importance of the Delta by highlighting its cultural and historical significance.

We learned that the Mississippi Delta is now a National Heritage Area, which is essentially a legal linkage between a geographic area and the National Parks Services. Throughout his career, Dr. Brown has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Considering the input of community members throughout the Delta, Dr. Brown led the creation of the Management Plan for the National Heritage Area, a document that is mandated by the National Parks Services.

Next, all program staff introduced themselves, including Andy Tan-Delli Cicchi and Anna Mukamal, the documentarians. As a fun twist, participants were asked to form pairs and introduce each other. The documentarians furiously scribbled the content of these introductions for a “trivia game” that will take place each remaining morning of the workshop. Interestingly, this group is composed of Blues-lovers and lifelong learners, librarians and elementary school principals, American history experts and even a homemade pound cake specialist. Needless to say, the participants were amazingly diverse and unfailingly dynamic.

The morning session concluded with a brief overview of the week’s activities and a “mock quiz” developed by Dr. John C. Willis and adapted by Dr. Brown. Fittingly, the answer to all of the following is “The Mississippi Delta” (*quiz on following page*).

Lunch

11am - 12pm

Many of the workshop participants had lunch at the Senator’s Place, where we enjoyed pulled pork, grilled and fried chicken, cornbread, and a variety of vegetables—not to mention some truly Southern sweet tea.

LaLee’s Kin: the Legacy of Cotton

12pm - 1:30pm

LaLee’s Kin: the Legacy of Cotton is a film that chronicles Delta life in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It has two storylines—the impact of the pervasive poverty in the Delta and the poorly structured, poorly funded public school system in which black children received an inadequate education. These storylines are portrayed by Laura Lee, an illiterate black woman raising her grandchildren and great grandchildren, and Reggie Barnes, the former superintendent of the West Tallahatchie county school system.

FIGURE BOTTOM
Participants watch LaLee’s Kin, and Academy Award nominated documentary on Delta life in the late 90s and early 2000s.



WHERE IN AMERICA?

1. What Southern region was still 90 percent swampy wilderness in 1860?
2. In what Southern region were two-thirds of the members of the 1880 merchant class born outside the United States?
3. What Southern region is called “home” by many citizens in Gary, Detroit, Ypsilanti, Flint, Chicago, Oakland, New York, and other major US cities?
4. In what area did African Americans own two-thirds of the farms in 1990?
5. What Southern region is widely known as The Birthplace of the Blues (and also gave birth to Rock ‘n’ Roll)?
6. What southern region had more lynching than any other in the years between 1870 and 1930?
7. In what region did 90 percent of the acreage lie within 5 miles of railroad tracks by 1906?
8. In what southern region did Chinese immigrants own most of the grocery stores during the 20th century?
9. What region has been called by the National Park Service “The Cradle of American Culture” and by James Cobb “The Most Southern Place on Earth?”

Discussion led by Reggie Barnes, former Superintendent, West Tallahatchie County Schools

Monday 14th July:
The River, Creator and Destroyer of the Delta

Reggie Barnes was the Superintendent of West Tallahatchie County Schools from 1994 until 2001. Barnes expanded on thoughts about his time in this position, and his informed perspective of the film. He talked of the challenges facing the education system in his county, describing the need for pragmatic, unconventional responses. He says, “You run into a brick wall, and you know there’s glory behind it. So when you can’t get through, you try other things. You go around.”

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Viewing education as paramount to overcoming the oppressive cycle of poverty in the Mississippi Delta, Barnes is clearly a man who lives by strong principles. He is known for passing out T-shirts with one of his favorite quotes: “It’s all about attitude. If you can believe it, you can achieve it.” He told us that as Superintendent, his goal was to show the students that they can be anything they want to be—as long as the teachers, the administrators, and the policymakers work together. Barnes challenged the participants not only to identify the students in their school communities that have extra needs, but also to earnestly try to ameliorate those issues standing in opposition of academic success and social growth. Barnes pressed the teachers, “How can you go home at night and not think of the eight year old child whose bathroom is a five gallon bucket? You must turn it around for them.”

*“We mold these
children into
what they
become. It is on
us.”*

REGGIE BARNES
Former Superintendent of West
Tallahatchie County Schools

Michele Krauthamer, a principal of an all girls’ high school in New York, captured the general sentiment of the participants when she asked Barnes, “Where are the lawyers?” - crystallizing the general frustration that such injustices could be so fundamentally immovable in the Delta.



FIGURE LEFT
Reggie Barnes talks passionately,
ardently and provocatively on the
education issues that the Delta is
challenged with.

WELCOME TO THE TRAVELLING CLASSROOM

After lunch on June 23rd, participants boarded the workshop's charter bus. The bus is referred to as the "travelling classroom" by Dr. Brown. Bus rides between locations were always engaging, participants either watching films related to the day's theme, listening to the "song of the day" or simply listening to Dr Brown's narration of their travels.





Levee Break Site at Mounds Landing and Great River Road

On the bus ride to the levee, participants learned about the flood that broke the levee in 1927, with the screening of “Fatal Flood”. The film detailed the tensions that emerged in the event of and aftermath of the Great Flood. Participants were intrigued by the story of the Percy family’s role in the response to the flood, and the African-American narrative that paralleled events. The film included multiple eye witness accounts.

The flood itself was the one of the largest and economically destructive natural disasters in US history. At the levee, participants learned that, surprisingly, the floodwater didn't go over the height of the levee. Instead, it went under the foundation of the levee and this is what caused it to crumble. The water rose too fast and with too much volume, crevassing the levee. We also learned that the Mississippi River is a commercial mode of transfer for heavy goods. The participants seemed surprised that the question is not whether or not the levee will break again; rather, it is when the levee will crevasse again.

Monday 14th July:

The River, Creator and Destroyer of the Delta

4:30pm -6pm

FIGURE ABOVE

Micah Richardson, a teacher from Seattle who interestingly lived in the Societ Union in his youth, looks out over the levee.





Monday 14th July

The River, Creator and Destroyer of the Delta

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TOP RIGHT

One of the Delta's favorite dining institutions, Leo's at the Levee:



6pm - 7pm

Dinner at Leo's at the Levee

After the bus ride, the group drove to Leo's at the Levee, a restaurant near Rosedale, Mississippi. Here, the participants enjoyed a plentiful buffet of crisp catfish, coleslaw, hush puppies and floury fries. The evening was punctuated by a sharp change in weather, rolling thunderstorms and sweeping rains introducing the participants to the other side of Delta's climate.

BOTTOM RIGHT

The buffet dinner, consisting of catfish, coleslaw, hush puppies and fries.







9am - 11am

Discussion of the Delta Chinese and Greenville's Black Graveyard

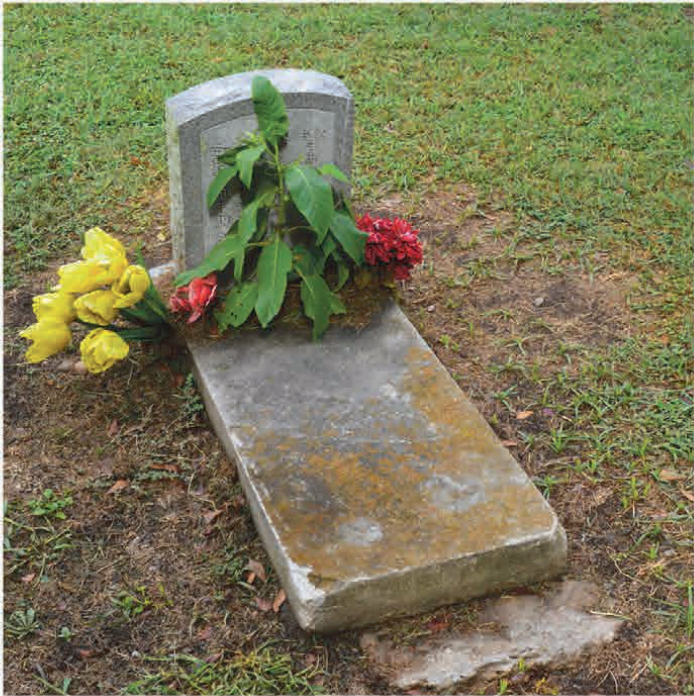
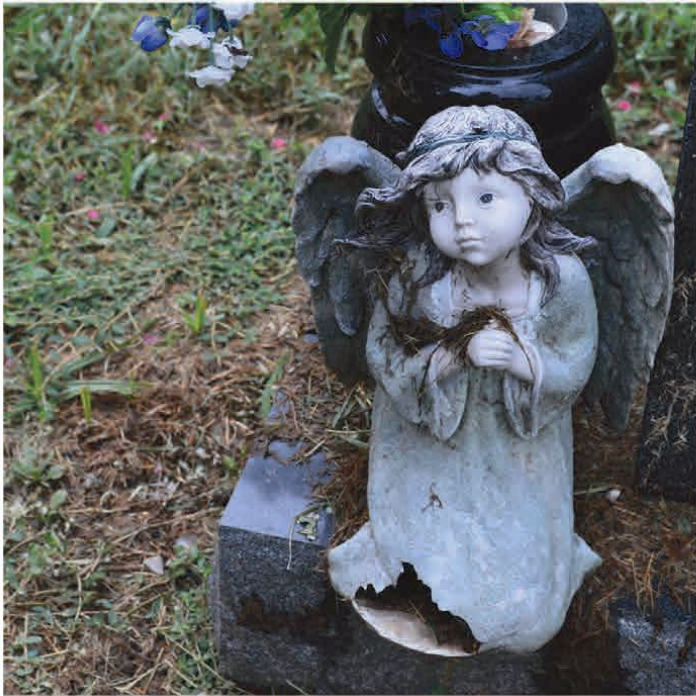
FIGURE TOP RIGHT

Participants explore the beautifully maintained Chinese cemetery. The cemetery was created because the Chinese could not be buried in either the black or the white cemeteries.

Cathy Wong is a Chinese resident of Greenville, Mississippi, the largest town in the Delta. She says that she is born and raised Delta. From Wong, we learn that there aren't many Chinese left in Greenville. Back in the time of yellow fever, Delta Chinese couldn't be buried in a white cemetery or a black cemetery. They couldn't go to the public schools either; they had their own Chinese schools. Wong tells us that all of the Chinese parents work in grocery stores, especially in black neighborhoods (since they couldn't work in white neighborhoods). They lived in the back of the grocery stores because they weren't allowed to live in a house.

Back when Wong was born, Chinese weren't allowed to be born in the hospitals. She was born in a smaller clinic in Hollandale, while her brothers and sisters were born in Catholic hospitals. Wong's grandfather moved from town to town to assist Chinese immigrants in setting up their grocery stores. After World War II, lots more Chinese started coming over because China was an American ally in the war. Then, in the late 40s, the Chinese could begin to go to schools and colleges in the Delta.

Wong says that when she was growing up in the segregated south, she didn't know whether to go to the black or the white water fountain or section of the movie theater. So, she didn't go to either. In the dawn of desegregation, they became a part of the new order. This reflects the fact that although immigrants and minority groups were not originally legally accounted for in the Delta society, they eventually became a part of it.



TOP
Participants wander around the graves of the Chinese Cemetery in Greenville, Mississippi.

BOTTOM LEFT
A statuette of an angel decorating one of the graves in the Chinese Cemetery.

BOTTOM RIGHT
A grave in the Chinese Cemetery. The graves are well-maintained, often replenished every week with fresh flowers.



Wong says that there were Chinese men in the 20s and 30s that married or cohabited with Chinese men. In fact, she says, a gentleman who was half black and half Chinese asked if he could be buried in the Chinese cemetery. Of course, that is permitted now. The number of deaths per year is dwindling in the Delta because the number of Chinese in the Delta is dwindling.

In the cemetery, the headstones have inscriptions in Chinese as well as English. These epitaphs state information, such as family lineage and death date, about the deceased. These tombstones began to be made here in the 1920s. On the gates of the cemetery, a poem about the beauty of life is inscribed in Chinese.

After hearing Wong's experiences as a Chinese woman growing up in the Delta, participants disembarked the bus and explored the New Chinese Cemetery as well as the African American Cemetery. Participants seemed troubled by the fact that while the Chinese Cemetery burial grounds were well-maintained, the African American Cemetery had overgrown grass and seemed almost abandoned. This observation is illustrative of the class differences that have characterized the Delta for the past few decades.

Discussion of the Delta Jews

Cleveland is a very ecumenical community. This point was reflected in *Delta Jews*, a film that participants watched about the experience of Jews in the Delta throughout time. Featuring first-person narration from Jewish religious leaders, Jews and non-Jews alike, the film cemented the idea that the Delta is not homogenous in a religious sense. Rather, its religious diversity makes it a complex and reflective microcosm of America as a whole. The film also established the fact that Jews were scattered across the Mississippi Delta, working as peddlers and integrating into the already-existing Southern society.

Participants visited the Hebrew Union Temple in Greenville, built in 1906 and adorned with exquisite stained glass shipped from St. Louis. The physical building is available not only to the Greenville Reform Jews, but also to Christians during the summer for Vacation Bible School. Participants seemed surprised that Morgan Freeman lives in the Delta and comes into town frequently. Dr. Brown says that Freeman is a very nice guy; he nominated Freeman for an honorary doctorate from Delta State University. He says that Freeman spoke to each student individually on the day of the university's graduation.

Participants met Benji Nelken, a dedicated historical preservationist, at the Hebrew Union Temple. They explored the Temple museum as well as the museum of the Flood of 1927. Nelken tells the participants that this temple was actually chartered before the city of Greenville. He says that many non-Mississippians are befuddled by the fact that there are Jews in the state. He explains that in the early 20th century, many Jews were peddlers looking for opportunity. Many of them spread their goods around the Delta until they had



Tuesday 15th July:

Immigrant Stories

enough money to open a storefront.

Nelken told participants that due to outsourcing of industry, Greenville lost 10,000 people in the last census. The town is now working to develop the tourism industry. The Temple has a general attendance of 50-75 people for the High Holidays. He said that the Jews in the South were Jewish, but they were also Southern. Some Jews opposed Civil Rights for African Americans because it disturbed the Southern "way of life." By the same token, Jews were restricted from Mississippi country clubs. However, others were opposed by white supremacists because they fought for Civil Rights. Many rabbis supported Civil Rights, but many of the rabbis were from the North. Some of them even lost their jobs because their active support for the movement put their congregation in jeopardy.

FIGURE TOP RIGHT

Benji Nelken, a member of the Jewish congregation talking to Charles Grossman, an American history teacher from Minnesota.

12pm - 12:30pm

Flood of 1927 Museum

The Flood of 1927 Museum, located adjacent to the Jewish Temple, provided excellent closure to Monday's discussion of the disaster and visit to the site of the broken levee. Participants saw a life-size escape boat model, watched a short film dedicated to the subject, and examined other artifacts related to the flood.



TOP
 Congregation member Benji Nelkin discusses the Jewish history of the Delta.

BOTTOM
 Participants Sarah Yadali (left) and Debbie Kaufman (right) examine with great interest the exhibits of the 1927 Flood Museum.

MIDDLE LEFT
TASTE OF THE DAY
 Tuesday's "taste of the day" had two parts. The first was a Chinese fortune cookie, tying into the day's theme of immigrant stories.

MIDDLE RIGHT
TASTE OF THE DAY
 The second "taste of the day" was Kim's pork rinds and chicken crackling, a fine example of cultural exchange and integration in the Delta.



Tuesday 15th July:
Immigrant Stories

3pm - 5:30pm

ABOVE

Charles Reagan Wilson demonstrates his collection of religious fans, which were used to provide ventilation in churches.

Guest Scholar: Religious and Cultural History of the Delta: Charles Reagan Wilson

After lunch, the participants gathered back at Gibson-Gunn Hall for a lecture held by guest speaker Charles Reagan Wilson—a Professor of Southern Culture and the Director of the Center of Southern Studies at the University of Mississippi. Wilson built upon the day’s theme of immigrant stories in his discussion of religion and culture in the Delta. The participants learned about the religious denominations that populate the Delta in the past and the present. Wilson emphasized the fact that the Delta is a particular microcosm of the South. Though commonly perceived as a specifically Protestant place, the Delta also houses great religious diversity. Wilson said, “diversity has always been there in the Delta. You might have to look for it, but it’s always been there.”

A witty and eloquent intellectual, Wilson described the specific properties of evangelism and fundamentalism before detailing their unique manifestations in Southern Protestantism. He described the South as an inherently religious place, tracking the influence of

religion on prominent figures in Delta history. The writings of William Faulkner and the activism of Fannie Lou Hamer serve as just two examples of this. Participants were fascinated by Wilson's diverse collection of religious fans. They then enjoyed various recordings of religious songs. The lecture finished with a viewing of Bill Ferris' documentary film, "Two Black Churches", which follows the identities, practices and approaches of congregations in Vicksburg, Mississippi and New Haven, Connecticut. The participants were intrigued by the mystic demonstrations of Reverend Isaac Thomas, a church leader depicted in the film.



FIGURE LEFT
Bill Abel shows and plays one of his homemade instruments for the enthralled audience.

The History of the Blues with Bill Abel

7:30pm - 9pm

If beard size correlates with musical talent, Bill Abel trumps all. A Blues musician from Belzoni, Mississippi, Abel truly does do it all. It is no coincidence that his latest album is called "One-Man Band." Participants were impressed by his collection of handmade instruments, made of materials as diverse as driftwood from the Mississippi River. The collection of homemade diddley bows and cigar box guitars—all for sale—was viewed and appreciated by all.

Abel tells us that he usually doesn't play any Charley Patton music in public—it's too hard for him, he says (yeah right!), but he agreed to do some of it for the workshop. The quality of Abel's voice seems to seize the audience, capturing their attention even after a

Tuesday 14th July:

Immigrant Stories

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FAR ABOVE RIGHT

Magazines featuring the blues from around the world, illustrating the far-ranging appeal and impact of the genre upon the world.

long day of traveling, touring, and tasting. His genuineness and soulful musicality are palpable, though he is pleasantly modest. Abel claims that the Blues appeal to people all over the world because the themes are universally relatable. However, he clarifies that the feeling, style, and mood of the Blues varies geographically. For instance, the Mississippi Delta Blues differ significantly from the Blues of heritage. It couldn't exist without them. He Chicago. According to Abel, the Mississippi Delta Blues are about African American heritage. It couldn't exist without them. He explains that someone who sings about picking cotton, but doesn't actually pick cotton, is not singing the truth. The authenticity of the Blues seems to be what has made it a timeless part of American music culture.

FAR RIGHT

Abel's collection of homemade string instruments. These instruments are made from a variety of materials, from cardboard box to driftwood







Wednesday 16th July:

*The Blues: American Roots Music
and the Culture that Produced it*

7:30am - 10am

FIGURE TOP

Dockery Farms, often called the "birthplace of the blues" and the intermittent home of blues icon Charley Patton, being photographed by Stephen Miguez, a teacher from Redmond, Washington.

Dockery, The Crossroads, and Fannie Lou Hamer's Gravesite, with Dr. Edgar Smith

In a short video at Dockery Farms narrated by B.B. King, participants learned that Dockery is at the heart of the Delta, just a few miles up the road from Delta State University. Willie Brown and Son House worked in the fields by day and played the Blues at Dockery by night after. Charley Patton, the father of the Delta Blues, was a professional musician who was eventually kicked out of Dockery because he didn't work in the field enough. He made cash money, though, rather than credit payable at the company store. Charley Patton traveled all over the U.S., but his home and source of inspiration was the Delta.

Dr. Brown narrated the process that occurs up until and inside a cotton gin. He also explained the history of Will Dockery, who, as did most Delta residents and U.S. farmers in general, lived and died for cotton.

Dr. Edgar Smith, who grew up in the 30s and 40s in the Mississippi Delta, began pick-

ing cotton when he was five years old. He was paid two dollars per 100 pounds of cotton. He had to pick the cotton as quickly as possible to make as much money as possible, so he learned not to mind the puncturing of his fingertips. He stopped picking cotton when he was 11 or 12 years old because his family moved to Vicksburg. Dr. Smith passed around a branch of cotton so participants could see it and feel it in its natural state.

Between Dockery Farms and Ruleville, participants stopped at one of the Delta's "cross-roads", sites where it is mythically held that you can trade your soul with the Devil. It is rumored that it was here blues legend Robert Johnson traded his soul for incredible blues-playing abilities.



FAR LEFT
A statue dedicated to Fannie Lou Hamer, with the Ruleville water tank in the background.

At the Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden, participants learned about the civil rights struggle from the perspective of a SNCC member and a woman. Fannie Lou Hamer had a very difficult time registering to vote. She was responsible for helping to create the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in 1964.

The arrival of the Mississippi Freedom Democrats was disturbing to Lyndon Johnson because it proved that black people, contrary to what Mississippi representatives were saying at the time, did want to vote.

Hamer was an incredibly brave woman. She had been beaten almost to death while trying to register voters in rural Mississippi. She gave her street address on national television to prove that she would not be terrorized by people who opposed civil rights for blacks. Lyndon Johnson, increasingly disturbed, cut off Fannie Lou Hamer's airtime by calling an emergency speech about the war in Vietnam.

The Fannie Lou Hamer Memorial Garden features her gravesite, a life-size statue of her, a gazebo, and the corresponding Mississippi Blues Trail marker.

Wednesday 16th July:

The Blues: American Roots Music and the Culture that Produced it

10am - 12:30 am

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B.B. King Museum

Participants unloaded from the bus to visit the B.B. King museum in Indianola. The state-of-the-art museum building features a variety of exhibits, as well as a gift shop. It is a 15 million dollar institution, which is evident from the elaborately designed space.

Participants watched a 12-minute film about B.B. King, the King of the Blues, shortly after learning that the museum is unique in that B.B. King himself assisted in its development. The film emphasized the concept that the Blues were not written. Instead, they were born, rooted in life experiences, dealing with hardship and joy alike.

A museum curator told us that Mississippi is a very creative bunch of people; many Lifetime Achievement Award winners are Mississippians even though the state represents only one percent of the U.S. population. An introductory film about B.B. King taught participants that there would be no Usher, no Beyoncé without King. He was the best ambassador, Eric Clapton said, for Blues music and black music.

After this, participants were guided around the museum, which chronologically tracked King's rise from extremely humble beginnings picking cotton. One of the most striking and poignant qualities for the participants was this humility he demonstrated throughout his career, once remarking that he would trade a large portion of his fortune for just a single photograph of his mother. Participants learned about the vast impact of his music, from his amusing first gig, advertising Pep-ti-kon on local radio, to the volumes of BB King fans in the present day, from places as distant as Scandinavia and the Mediterranean.

FIGURE RIGHT

An exhibit showcasing a range of blues guitars, some of them belonging to BB King and other blues legends, and their relevance to different blues styles.





Wednesday 17th July:

The Blues: American Roots

Music and the Culture that

Produced it

2pm - 5pm

34

Guest Scholar: The Origin and Evolution of the Blues

In a creative musical lecture, blues musician David Evans traced the development of Blues music over time. The participants seemed to especially enjoy Robert Johnson's "Big Road Blues", as the twanging of Evans' voice snapped theory into practice.

Clad in a short-sleeved button-up shirt and a straw colored beret, Evans' style of singing was raw and authentic. The clacking of his fingers on the guitar strings sometimes overshadowed his voice, reinforcing the idea that Blues music is less about the lyrics and more about relating to human emotion.

Evans' performance was not only entertaining, but also informative. He taught participants that Blues players would perform gospel music if they were asked to do so—after all, they were making a living out of their music.

Evans taught the participants about the melodic and rhythmic character of Blues music. A "riff" is a pattern that is repeated and repeated throughout a song; it is a basic building block, or an identifying music feature, of a song. Some people know some songs by their characteristic riffs. This was especially common in constructing songs in the Northern Mississippi Delta and the hill country.

FIGURE RIGHT

The charming and idiosyncratic David Evans in mid-tune, educating the participants on blues music from a more theoretical perspective.





Wednesday 16th July:
*The Blues: American Roots
Music and the Culture that
Produced it*

5pm - 6:30pm

35

Open Mic – Tell us about your plans to use the knowledge you are gaining

At the Open Mic event, Dr. Brown introduced participants to available online curriculum for the Mississippi Blues Trail (<http://www.msbluestrail.org/Curriculum>). The curriculum was designed to fit the 4th and 10th grade benchmarks, but is very flexible and can be adapted to a variety of grade levels.

The Mississippi Blues Trail curriculum—funded by the Mississippi Blues Foundation—is composed of units such as Music and Meaning, Cotton, Transportation, Civil Rights, and Media. It was created not only to show students how Blues music originated, but also how it continues to affect modern music and culture. Students who study this curriculum will be exposed to geography, history, and social studies, among other disciplines. It provides a creative, interdisciplinary option for participant teachers to share with their home communities.

FAR TOP LEFT

Participants Terry Gammell and
Caitlin Petrizzi (right) take notes
and discuss.

FAR BOTTOM LEFT

TASTE OF THE DAY

Wednesday's "taste of the day" was
hot tamales, a dish of Latin American
heritage and a local favorite in
the Delta. Hot tamales are steamed,
wrapped corn husks filled with
spicy meat filling.





Tour of Mound Bayou

Thursday 17th July:
The Story of Emmett Till

On the way to Mound Bayou, the bus drove through Merigold, MS, largely a bedroom community with just a few businesses. Participants heard about crop-dusting fields and post-WWII German Prisoner-of-War camps.

7:30am - 9:30am

Mound Bayou, MS is the oldest all-black municipality formed under Jim Crow segregation. There are virtually no employers in Mound Bayou. The story is complicated, and it starts in 1825 in the time of slavery. A wealthy man named Robert Owen was traveling around the U.S. espousing a utopian ideology. He bought a town—New Harmony, Indiana—and intended to establish a utopian society. In a radical change from the norm, Owen made the choice to employ children only after the age of 10 (as opposed to five) and employed them for 10 hours instead of 12. Owen thought that children become what they are based on their social experience, not based on their lineage—this is socialism. Basically, he believed that if society allows one to lead a good life, he will lead a good life. Though Owen did hold slaves, he promoted education and welfare for all his employees. The Montgomerys, a black slave family, even became quite wealthy.

37

Here, participants saw the Taborian Hospital. Opened in 1942 with T.R.M Howard as its first chief surgeon, the hospital was one of the first modern medical facilities that was owned and operated by African-Americans.

Participants then enjoyed a short video clip about juke joints and how they are passing away. The clip featured Dr. Brown as a college professor who researches Po'Monkey's.



FAR LEFT
The bank building of Mound
Bayou, now boarded up.

Dr. Brown explained the questionable etymology of the word “juke,” which is a derivative of “jook”. The spelling of the word changed after the invention of the juke box.

Po’Monkey’s, an old sharecropper’s shack in Merigold, MS, is the most famous building in the Mississippi Delta. It has been featured in National Geographic, Esquire and the New York Times. At times, there have been 75 people in the Lounge. Po’Monkey’s is owned by a white farmer who inherited the land back in the time of plantations, and that white farmer allowed Mr. Willie Seaberry to live there. Seaberry’s (or Po’Monkey’s) personal space is a very small room, and the rest is public space. Po’Monkey’s is not a business, and he’s just doing it to be kind to invite people into his home and have parties. Po’Monkey is a farmer by day and a prince by night. Participants zealously took photos (and selfies) with the overall-clad Po’Monkey. This is a place that played a very significant role in the formation of American music culture.

Emmett Till and To Kill a Mockingbird with Henry Outlaw

Dr. Henry Outlaw, a scholar who has devoted much time to an oral history of the Emmett Till case, shared with the participants the fictional part of the story of Emmett Till, and the factual part of the story. He described the cultural scene in the Mississippi Delta in 1955—a segregated South, Elvis Presley rising to fame, the death of Albert Einstein—the Delta was undergoing a tremendous change. Outlaw quoted William Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom!* to paint a picture of the Southern consciousness of the time period.

Outlaw described the Emmett Till case as the murder that changed America. It played the role of the spark that catalyzed the civil rights movement. In 1955, the year of the murder, Till was 14 years old. As Outlaw outlined a timeline of the factual events in the Till case, it became clear that the certainties of the case were, and still are—well, uncertain. This suggests the unfortunate idea that this young man served as a scapegoat for the pervasive Southern anti-black sentiment.

Outlaw then proceeded to explain how Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* is connected to the Emmett Till case. The community dynamics play an important role in the outcome in the novel as well as in the Till case—the fictional and the factual, respectively. Through excerpts from the novel, Outlaw explained how breaking a “rigid and time-honored code of our society” occurred both in the Till case and in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. In the novel, we have a small, rural town in Alabama, and in the Emmett Till case, we have a small, rural town in Mississippi. Yet in both cases, the jury failed to do its job. In both cases, the outcome was racially motivated. In both cases, so critical in the civil rights struggle, a life was lost due to hatred and fear.





FAR RIGHT

Charles McLaurin talks passionately and powerfully on his experiences with the civil rights movement. The speech moved many participants, who gave an enthusiastic standing ovation at its conclusion.

Guest Scholar: Charles McLaurin

75-year old Dr. Charles McLaurin grew up in Jackson, Mississippi in an environment in which racism was rampant and segregation was a way of life. He later served in a segregated Army reserve unit, eventually getting involved in the civil rights movement.

The Mississippi civil rights movement began for McLaurin as he attempted to enter the State Fair. He was told that the fair was for white folk, and was warned that he would be arrested. He stayed in a Jackson City prison overnight, where Medgar Evers bailed him out in the morning. Participants listened in rapt attention as McLaurin told the story of other civil rights leaders who faced a similar fate.

He talked of the fear instigated by racial tension he experienced as a youth, while working a job in which he was allowed and not allowed to perform certain tasks because of his race. Blacks represented 40 percent of the population, yet white people who opposed civil rights for blacks impeded them from being fairly represented politically. This is one of the reasons that McLaurin went to meet Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1962 in Jackson, Mississippi, where King was giving a speech. McLaurin joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and set up workshops about his experiences around Jackson.

McLaurin explained the frustration of having the numbers to elect civil rights supporters into office, but lacking the political power to do so. There is a certain powerlessness that arises from this paradox. In 1965, the passage of the Voting Rights Act began to make McLaurin's efforts worthwhile. For Mississippi blacks like McLaurin, the civil rights journey was a tear-stained trek from powerlessness to empowerment. The speech ended with a rapturous standing ovation from the participants.

WONG'S GRO. & MKT.

EXIT





2pm - 4pm

Panel Discussion of Emmett Till Case

The 60-minute film was supplemented by a PBS video as the bus drove participants towards important sites in the Emmett Till case. The film covered more details about the case, including Till's family history.

FIGURE ABOVE

The Emmett Till Panel from left to right: Bruce Smith, Lee Aylward, Dr. Henry Outlaw, Wheeler Parker, Luther Brown, Dale Killinger, Lent Rice, Senator David Jordan, Jim Powers

In Sumner, MS, participants saw the courthouse where the Till trial took place. Afterwards, they gathered at the Emmett Till Interpretive Center, a new exhibit dedicated to reclaiming the case. A panel presentation greeted the participants. The panel was composed of: Dale Killinger, an FBI agent in charge of the case; Bruce Smith, the son of one of the prosecutors who tried to put the murderers in jail; Jim Powers, the man who put up the first marker on the Freedom Trail and is involved with immigrants' rights in Mississippi; Henry Outlaw, a scholar who collaborates with Dr. Brown; Wheeler Parker, Emmett Till's older cousin; Lent Rice, a retired FBI agent; Senator David Jordan from Greenwood, Mississippi; and Luther Brown, the director of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning at Delta State University.

Parker began by telling his version of what happened in 1955 at the convenience store where Emmett Till's life changed forever when he whistled at Carolyn Bryant. Then, participants heard the current version of the FBI's truth. From the standpoint of who saw and did what, race relations didn't play as much as a role as they did in other writings. We learned that the entire incident took place within five weeks, and heard more background information about one of the prosecutors. We also learned more from the insightful perspectives of Senator Jordan and Lent Rice. Finally, the panel participants fielded questions from the workshop participants.



FIGURE BELOW LEFT
Participants gather outside the
Emmett Till Intrepid Center in
Glendora, Mississippi.

The Emmet Till Historic Intrepid Center, Money Store and Robert Johnson's Gravesite

4pm - 6pm

At the Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center, participants watched a film about Sonny Boy Williamson. Then, the bus stopped in Money, MS at the ruins of Bryant's grocery, where Emmett Till whistled at Carolyn Bryant. Participants enjoyed the Taste of the Day, Koolickles, at the site, prompting a wide spectrum of reactions.

As the last stop on the ride home, the bus stopped at Robert Johnson's gravesite.

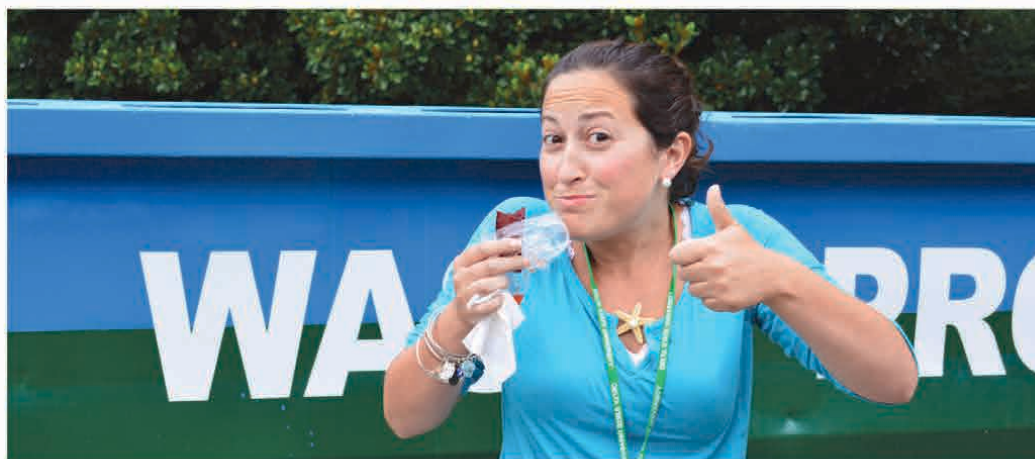


FIGURE BELOW LEFT
TASTE OF THE DAY
Jessica Besnoff, a teacher from Mas-
sachusetts, tries koolickles. Koolick-
les are a favorite delicacy of Deltan
children - pickles marinated in
Kool-Aid.



*"When I leave this town
I'm 'on' bid you fare... farewell
And when I return again
You'll have a great long story to tell"*

...FROM "FROM TOWN UNTIL LATE" BY ROBERT JOHNSON

This memorial marker is placed at the base of this old pecan tree as was Robert Johnson himself, prior to his burial nearby. In accordance with the account of eye-witness Mrs. Rose Eskridge, as told to historian Stephen C. LaVere.



**PRIVATE
PROPERTY**
NO TOLK REMOVED OR
PROPERTY
VIOLATED WILL BE
PROSECUTED





7:30am - 9:30am

Bus ride to Memphis and the Clarksdale Greyhound Station

Friday's topic was an amalgamation of the Great Migration, Cotton, and Blues music. On the bus ride to Memphis, Tennessee, participants got the chance to stop in Clarksdale to visit the Greyhound Bus Station, which is refurbished to look like it would have looked in the era of Jim Crow segregation. Now serving as more of a rest stop, the station featured 1950s décor, including retro-style lettering denoting the entrances, restrooms, and ticket areas.

FIGURE RIGHT

Allen Barksdale, a teacher from Atlanta who leads his school's jump band with homemade band instruments, plays the guitar at the Greyhound Station.

On the remainder of the bus ride, Dr. Brown played the film "Goin' to Chicago" about the experiences of people who move away from Mississippi to other parts of the country, particularly Chicago.

9:30 am - 11am

Cotton Museum

Memphis was founded as an early shipping area for cotton and slaves in the 1880s. Upon arrival to the Cotton Museum, participants refamiliarized themselves with the texture and feel of cotton. They listened to a curator introduce the museum, which has been restored to its 1936 appearance.

The museum exhibits are located on the floor of the cotton exchange. One side of the museum focuses on the history of cotton, and the other on the science and application of cotton. Exhibits include a 500-pound bale of cotton at the entrance, a collection of cotton dresses for the Maid of Cotton pageant, and various video installations. Participants also browsed the gift shop, purchasing tiny bales of cotton to show their students. Overall, the museum reinforced the idea that cotton is an extremely versatile crop that is used for a plethora of purposes.



TOP LEFT

The delightfully decorated entrance sign welcoming visitors to the Cotton Museum.

TOP RIGHT

A basket of cotton in its raw form, before the primary stages of production.

BOTTOM

Patrick Wagner, a teacher and city councilman from Iowa, looks with interest at the exhibits in the Cotton Museum.



Friday 17th July:

The Civil Rights Movement

11am - 12:30pm

FIGURE ABOVE

The entrance of Stax

Records, now a museum for soul

music.

Stax Museum of American Soul Music

After leaving the museum, the bus passed by the area of Aretha Franklin's birth before heading to the next site: the Stax Museum of American Soul Music in Memphis. Stax also includes a music academy and a preparatory school. Participants enjoyed an introductory video in a state-of-the-art cinema. The video featured such icons as B.B. King, Aretha Franklin, and Ray Charles. It explained the origins and style of soul music, tracing its development from gospel, R&B, Motown, and country music.

Stax Records was unique in its time because it incorporated black and white musicians who lived in the neighborhood. Blacks and whites made music together at Stax, forming a family. One musician said that Stax was so busy making music and having fun, that it didn't even realize the impact it was making. Participants learned that if Martin Luther King, Jr. hadn't been assassinated in Memphis, then Stax Records would still be in operation today. Unfortunately, following the tragedy, black talent stopped coming through the door. The company began to feel less like a family and more like a company. Finally, Stax went bankrupt in 1974. Yet musicians say that it was, and still is, living in the people that made it what it was.



FIGURE TOP
The storefront of the Four Way
Grill



In addition to the film, the museum featured a full-scale replica of a gospel church, artifacts from concerts and other performances, and a “dance floor” complete with a disco ball. There was even a jam-packed live performance room.

12:30pm - 1:30pm

Lunch (Four Way Grill)

After leaving the museum, participants sat down for some soul food at the Four Way Grill in Memphis, the last place where Martin Luther King Junior publicly ate at. Options included catfish, fried chicken, and turkey and dressing. The boisterous dining room was full of chatter as participant after participant made it through the buffet line.

FIGURE RIGHT
Fried catfish, one of the lunch
options at the Four Way Grill.
The other options were fried
chicken and turkey & dressing.



National Civil Rights Museum

After lunch, participants explored the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis. After viewing a series of photographs, participants watched a short overview film about civil rights. Then, they dispersed throughout the entirety of the large museum. Highlights of the exhibits include a room dedicated to the history of segregation, an explanation of the landmark *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) case, a recording of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a Dream" speech, an account of various Freedom marches, and even artifacts about the gay rights movement. One room was dedicated to Dr. King's last speech, the "Mountaintop" or "Promised Land" speech, during which he claimed that he didn't fear any man. Participants then saw the very room that Dr. King was assassinated in the Lorraine Motel.

The National Civil Rights Museum also features a cinema room that chronicles the efforts of modern-day civil rights activists battling human trafficking, injustice in the education system, and lesser rights for immigrants. Another wing of the museum, across the street, focuses on James Earl Ray, Dr. King's assassin.

Friday 18th July:

The Civil Rights Movement

1:30pm - 4:30pm

51

FIGURE BELOW

Evan Boylan, a teacher from California with an interest in the Blues, looks at a mural at the National Civil Rights Museum



“...the Negro’s great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen’s Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice.”



TOP

An exhibit on Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”. The exhibit is a full-size jail cell, with excerpts of the speech projected on the wall.

MIDDLE

The exterior of the Lorraine Hotel; the wreath marking the spot where Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.

BOTTOM LEFT

Amy Leslie, a teacher from Washington State, listens to one of the museum’s audio exhibits.



Peabody Hotel

4:30pm - 5:30pm

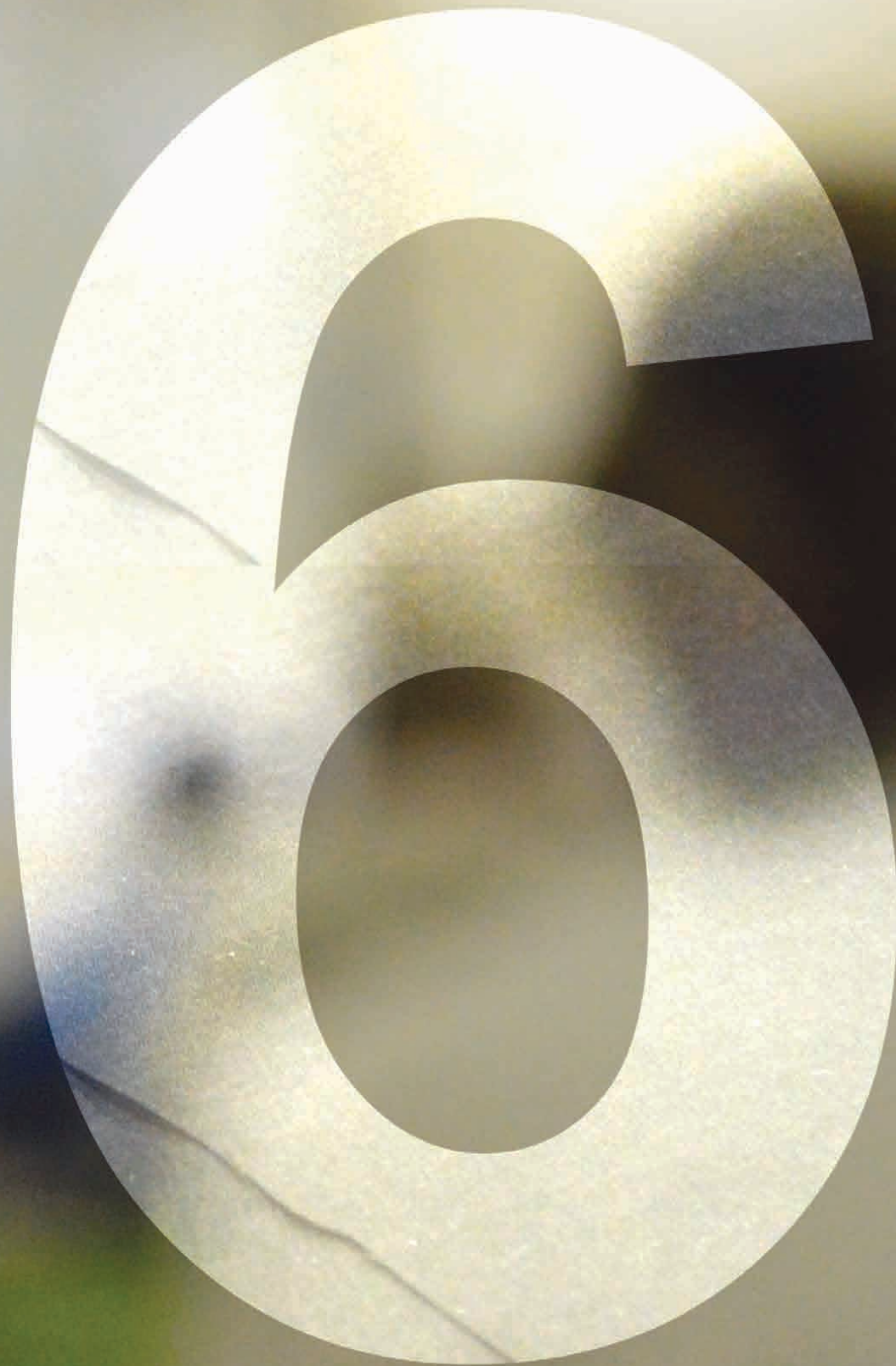
As the last stop on the Memphis tour, participants watched the famous ducks swim in the lobby fountain of the Peabody Hotel. As David Cohn writes, “The Mississippi Delta begins in the lobby of the Peabody Hotel in Memphis and ends in Vicksburg in Catfish Row.” The Peabody is where the Delta elite met their bankers and cotton buyers. The ornate hotel lobby was full of spectators for this unique and time-honored tradition.

The bus back to Cleveland saw participants watch “Respect Yourself”, a film on the birth of Soul music in Memphis and the ultimate demise of Stax Records. The participants also tried the taste of the day, which was barbeque pulled pork.

FIGURE ABOVE LEFT
One of the ducks in the Peabody
Hotel fountain, taking a short rest
before the grand performance.



FIGURE BELOW LEFT
TASTE OF THE DAY
Friday’s “taste of the day” was bar-
beque pulled pork, with barbeque
sauce, a favorite throughout the
Delta.





Guest Scholar: The Delta in Diaspora

Saturday 19th July:
The Delta in Diaspora

Joining the workshop for the beginning of the last day was Dr. Robert Luckett, director of the Margaret Walker Center, an archive and museum “dedicated to the preservation, interpretation and dissemination of African-American history and culture” at Jackson State University. Dr. Luckett was born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi, to parents closely connected to social justice and civil rights. Following their lead, Dr. Luckett is a civil rights historian. He explained that the civil rights has an intrinsic connection to the Great Migration as it inherently is an expression of an activist sense.

Dr. Luckett introduced participants to several books, articles, and resources on the topic; these provided an overview of the lecture. He specifically recommended two books within the historical discipline that are integral to understanding the Mississippi emigration – John Dittmer’s “Local People” and Charles M. Payne’s “I’ve Got the Light of Freedom”. Examining the migration through a wider lens, Dr. Luckett also recommended Isabel Wilkerson’s Pulitzer Prize-winning “The Warmth of Other Suns”. He then introduced his five key arguments for the Great Migration which were derived from Wilkerson’s study; 1) that the migration was less of “poor black people forced out of the South” and more an instance of African-Americans being conscious agents; 2) the migration was not an isolated event but the entire twentieth century; 3) the migration was not simply limited to the channel of the South to Chicago; 4) the migration being about smaller, subjective and individualized narratives instead of simply a faceless narrative of the masses; and 5) the migration needs to be viewed as one of many chapters in the wider African diaspora.

FIGURE LEFT
Dr. Luckett answers questions
from the participants, as they discuss “The Delta in Diaspora”



FAR TOP RIGHT

Participants take notes during Dr. Lockett's lecture.

As a means to explain the Delta diaspora, Dr. Lockett contextualized the Great Migration with a history of civil rights in America, touching upon key events such as DW Griffith's "Birth of a Nation", Booker T Washington's death or the Williams v. Mississippi court case that generated or maintained racial tensions.

During a break from the lecture, participants enjoyed the Taste of the Day—pound cake and spicy fried chicken. Both foods are culinary foods treasured in the Delta. Pound cake is high in sugar content, and sugar acted as a preservative to keep the food fresh without a refrigerator.

After the Taste of the Day, Dr. Lockett concluded his lecture. He fielded questions from the participants about civil rights, particularly on the contemporary issues of civil rights in the South. Dr. Lockett stressed the relevance and pertinence of today's race relations discussions. This point that was reiterated by participant Renee Melendez, who described her extended family's harsh consternation when learning that she, as an African-American woman, was going to attend a workshop in the South. The participants then discussed various ways in which these lessons could be brought into the classroom.

FAR BELOW RIGHT

TASTE OF THE DAY

Saturday's taste of the day was fluffy pound cake and spicy fried chicken.



Make Your Own Mojo and Wrap Up

The “Make Your Own Mojo” activity is what Dr. Brown likes to call the “capstone experience” of the entire workshop. Fittingly, as a wrap-up activity, it involves physically “tying everything up” inside a bag of mojo.

Mojo is a power-containing object with West African roots. The things inside the pouch give the bearer of the pouch power over some aspect of his existence—power over money, your wife, your job, anything. This is common practice in Mississippi and in Louisiana. Makers of mojo were sometimes called “Witch Doctors” or “Two-Headed Men” (because one head was reputed to be in this world, and one in the next world).

Dr. Brown explained his own mojo, which includes a domino with a cat’s face drawn on it by a friend, a pearl, and a miniscule gold nugget. Each of these objects are not store-bought; rather, they hold special significance because of a related or connected experience. In this way, each small object in the bag of mojo represents, symbolizes, evokes something larger.

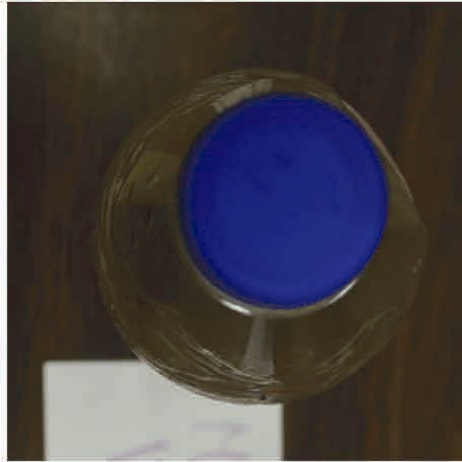
Participants wrote down everything they included in their mojo sacks on a scrap of paper so they could remember it after they tied it up. The yarn used to secure the mojo sacks was blue, of course, to represent the fact that all of the workshop’s learning experiences were tied up with the Blues.

Dr. Brown encouraged the participants to place the sack of mojo on their desks in their classrooms to help them remember what they learned in the Mississippi Delta. They are never to open the sack, as that will allow the magic to escape.

After making mojo, the participants completed post-surveys about the workshop experience and received their culminating certificates, capping an exhilarating and edifying week.

FAR BOTTOM LEFT
Participants eagerly crowd around
the mojo table, collecting materials
such as snakeskin, “comeback oil”,
rubble and river water.





Inside the Mojo

TOP (left to right)

Flowers from the Chinese cemetery; Pasta representing Delta Italians; Black eyed peas

SECOND ROW (left to right)

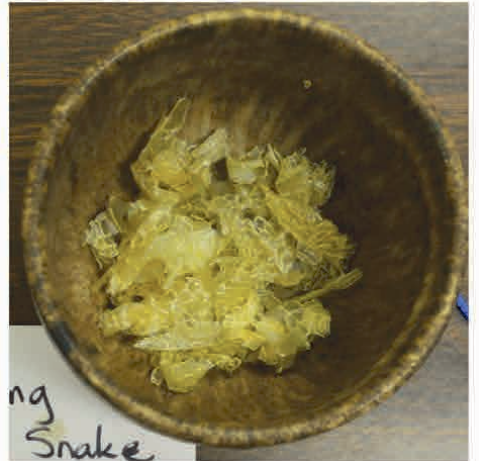
Red brick from Dockery Plantation; Pieces of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech; Gravel from Taborian Hospital in Mound Bayou

THIRD ROW (left to right)

Driftwood from the Mississippi River; "Muddy Waters"; Mortar from the Money Store

BOTTOM (left to right)

Pieces of Fanny Lou Hamer's Voter Registration form; Rice Farming



Inside the Mojo

TOP (left to right)
Cotton seeds; fragments of a record disk signifying the blues; Highway 61

SECOND ROW (left to right)
Matzo cracker representing the Delta Jews; Duck water, of the Peabody Hotel; Skin from a Crawling King Snake

THIRD ROW (left to right)
"BB King"; Tortillas representing Hispanics in the Delta; Cotton

BOTTOM
Mississippi River Water, Dr. Brown's "Comeback Oil"

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

This is my fifth NEH workshop and easily the best! You managed to blend place, people, history and culture into the BEST experience

Overall, I feel this workshop experience was truly informative, engaging and excellent. I learned so much more than I expected. Everyone was extremely knowledgeable, and the guest speakers and visiting the historical sites were truly memorable

This is super and I am returning with a wealth of information that will enrich my classroom

The wonderful readings and lectures/site visits combined immersed me in the "Delta experience" on a level I can't really imagine having any other way

Being in the places we discussed and seeing them/experiencing them in a multisensory way firsthand was powerful and important. Luther's extensive knowledge was .tremendously illuminating

I had very high expectations based on previous participants and my expectations were met or exceeded each day - thank you

This was an amazing workshop. I loved visiting the sites so that I have a visual understanding I found it moving to hear people on the front lines, like Wheeler Parker. I thought great attention was made to weave the experiences together



Participant Yearbook



Allen Barksdale



Amy Leslie



Angie Leedy



Brittany Fitzgibbon



Caitlin Petrizzi



Carol McGrew



Chris Goerlitz



Dana Hudson



Debbie Kaufman



Elizabeth Koperwhats



Erin Dalbec



Evan Boylan



Genevieve Misfeldt



Geoffrey Cobb



Giancarlo Malchiodi



Jesse Breite



Jessica Besnoff



Joe Thacker



Jolene Heinemann



June Satak



Kate Kokontis



Kathleen Bailey



Kelly Wilkerson



Ken Abrams



Linda Simpson

Participant Yearbook



Micah Richardson



Michele Krauthamer



Micky Miller



Patrick Wagner



Patricia London



Renee Melendez



Rob Fetters



Ron Eisenman



Ryan Srarrett



Sarah Yadali



Stephanie Oliver



Steve Miguez



Terry Gammell



Thomas Albright



Tia Shaffer Cowart

Evaluations

Activity	1	2	3	4	5	Average
<u>Sunday, July 13</u>						
Reception at the Railroad Museum		2	14	13	10	3.79
<u>Monday, July 14</u>						
Introduction		5	8	13	13	3.87
Discussion Session		6	4	15	14	3.95
Movie: <i>Lalee's Kin: The Legacy of Cotton</i>			1	11	27	4.67
Discussion led by Reggie Barns			3	13	23	4.51
Levee break site/ Delta and Pine Land		1	5	10	23	4.41
Leo's at the Levee (Catfish supper)			2	13	24	4.56
<u>Tuesday, July 15</u>						
Discussion of the Delta Chinese			8	14	17	4.23
Discussion of the Delta Jews		1	6	15	17	4.23
Greenville's black graveyard			6	19	14	4.21
Guest Scholar - Dr. Charles Wilson		8	13	9	9	3.49
Bill Abel, History of the Blues			2	12	25	4.59
<u>Wednesday, July 16</u>						
Dockery Farms and The Crossroads			2	9	28	4.67
Fanny Lou Hamer's gravesite			1	5	33	4.82
B.B. King Museum			3	12	24	4.54
Dr. Edgar Smith			1	11	27	4.67
Guest Scholar - Dr. David Evans		1	7	17	14	4.13
Open Mic	3	8	14	5	9	3.23
<u>Thursday, July 17</u>						
Tour of Mound Bayou		1	6	11	22	4.46
Emmett Till and To Kill A Mockingbird		2	9	12	16	4.08
Charles McLaurin				2	37	4.95
Panel discussion of Till Case				2	37	4.95
Sumner Courthouse		2	5	5	27	4.46
Emmett Till Intrepid Center		3	10	10	16	4
Bryant Store, Robert Johnson's gravesite			3	12	24	4.54
Po'Monkey's Lounge				1	38	4.97
<u>Friday, July 18</u>						
Bus ride to Memphis		1	8	17	13	4.08
Cotton Museum	2	2	6	15	14	3.95
Stax Museum		1	2	6	30	4.67
National Civil Rights Museum					39	5
Lobby of the Peabody		2	6	18	13	4.08
Bus ride home (Stax movie)			11	8	20	4.23
<u>Saturday, July 19</u>						
Guest scholar - Dr. John B. Strait			1	5	33	4.82
Mojo making			1	4	34	4.85

SPECIAL THANKS

The National Endowment for the Humanities
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Dr Luther Brown

Director of the Delta Center for Culture and Learning

Lee Aylward

Program Associate for Education and Community Outreach

Bill Abel

Wheeler Parker

Scott Baretta

Jim Powers

Reggie Barnes

Bruce Smith

David Evans

Edgar Smith

Dale Killinger

John Strait

Charles McLaurin **Margaret Mary White**

Benji Nelkin

Charles Wilson

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Duke 2017

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