



The Most Southern Place on Earth

Music, Culture and History in the Mississippi Delta

PRESENTED BY THE DELTA CENTER FOR CULTURE AND LEARNING
FUNDED BY THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

JUNE 2014

welcome to
THE MOST SOUTHERN PLACE
ON EARTH
workshop

JUNE 2014

presented by
The Delta Center for Culture and Learning

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portfolio by Anna Mukamal and Andrew Tan-Delli Cicchi
Robertson Scholars Duke University 2017

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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 A place in which apartheid has been replaced by empowerment.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.

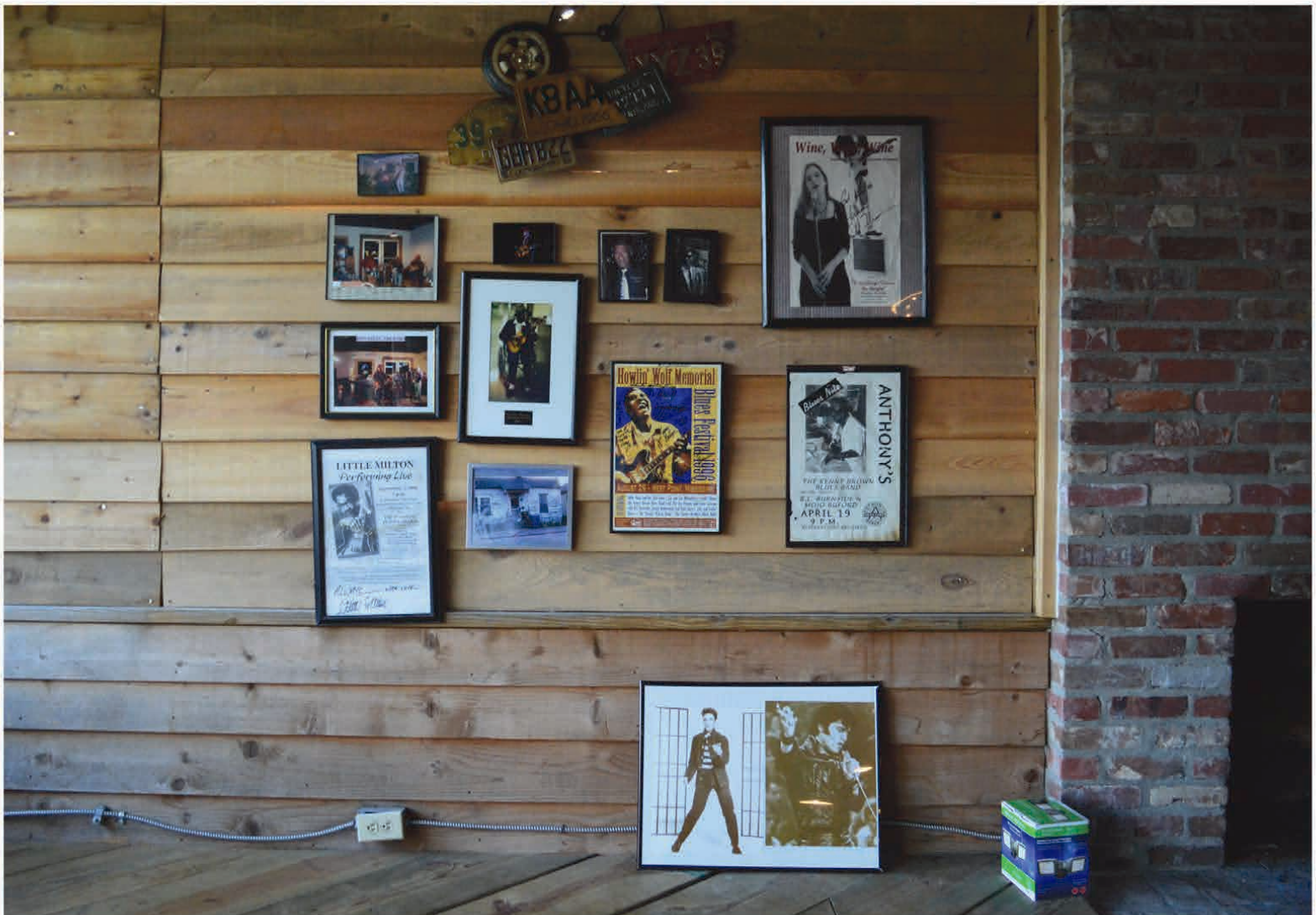
Let me end with some information about the Delta Center and workshops. We were funded through the NEH Landmarks program in 2009 and 2010, and again in 2012, 2013. You can also

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 JUNE WORKSHOP ITINERARY

	Sunday, June 22	Monday, June 23	Tuesday, June 24	Wednesday, June 25	Thursday, June 26	Friday, June 27	Saturday, June 28
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 Clarksdale Greyhound Station	
9:00 AM			Discussion of the Delta Chinese	Bus ride to Indianaola	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	B.B. King Museum, Charles McLaurin	<i>60 Minute</i> segment		
11:00 AM	Arrival & Check-In	Lunch	Discussion of the Delta Jews			Sex Museum of American Soul Music	Discussion
12:00 PM		<i>Labe's King: The Legacy of Cotton</i>	Flood of 1927 Museum	Bus	Lunch	Lunch at the Four Way Grill	Lunch
1:00 PM			Bus	Lunch	Bus to Sunner		Curriculum/ Lesson Plans Due
2:00 PM		Discussion led by Reggie Barnes, former Superintendent, West Tallahatchie Co. Schools	Lunch	Guest Scholar: The Origin and Evolution of the Blues	Panel Discussion of Till Case	National Civil Rights Museum	Make your own Mojo & Wrap-Up
3:00 PM						Peabody Hotel	
4:00 PM	Reception at the Martin and Sue King Railroad Museum, Cleveland	Bus	Guest Scholar: Religious and Cultural History of the Delta, Charles Reagan Wilson		Bus to important sites in the Till story		
5:00 PM		Levee break site at Mounds Landing and Great River Road		Dinner	Emmett Till Intrepid Center and bus to Little Zion Church	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	The History of the Blues with Bill Abel		Po'Monkey's Lounge	Dinner	
9:00 PM							



Sunday 22nd June
Welcome to the Delta!

4pm - 6pm

FIGURE ABOVE
Participants enjoy finger food, cheer
and conversation at the reception

Reception at Martin and Sue King Railroad Station, Cleveland

As two “conductors”, Eddit Causey and Larry Howard, 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 First Lady 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.





Monday 23rd June:
*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.”



FIGURE LEFT

The quiz developed by Dr. John C. Willis and adapted by Dr. Brown.

All the answers to the quiz are

“The Mississippi Delta”.

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?”

Monday 23rd June:

The River, Creator and Destroyer of the Delta

11am - 12pm

Lunch

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.

12pm - 1:30pm

LaLee's Kin: the Legacy of Cotton

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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.

1:30pm - 4pm

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

*“If you dream it,
you can achieve
it.”*

REGGIE BARNES
Former Superintendent of West
Tallahatchie County Schools

Reggie Barnes was the Superintendent of West Tallahatchie County Schools from 1994 until 2001. We were lucky to hear his thoughts about his time in this position, and his informed perspective of the film. He told us, “I was fortunate in that I never considered myself a renegade. But, by God, if that's what it took to get running water in the 1990s, that's what I was going to be.” His motivation was, and still is, this creed: “Come hell and high water, every child has the right to learn.” 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' narrative clearly reflected the following idea, published in James C. Cobb's book, *The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Regional Identity*:

“Writing in 1964, Howard Zinn suggested that the embattled South represented not the antithesis but the “essence” of American society and could therefore function effectively as a mirror “in which the nation can see its blemishes magnified.” If one accepts Zinn's argument, as the “South's South” the Delta actually functioned as a mirror within a mirror, capturing not just the South's but the nation's most controversial traits in mercilessly sharp detail.”





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 23rd June:

The River, Creator and Destroyer of the Delta

4:30pm -6pm

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BELOW

Participants walking out from the levee break site.







TOP (previous page)

Dr. Brown discusses the impact of the 1927 levee break with the workshop.

BOTTOM (previous page)

A perspective of the river from the levee.

TOP LEFT

Clusters of bushes planted in the water near the levee.

TOP RIGHT

Eighth grade US History teacher Susan Mitchell admiring the view.

MIDDLE RIGHT

Participants walk through majestic greenery as they make their way to the levee.

BOTTOM

The workshop bus waits whilst participants get final snapshots of the scenery.

Monday 23rd June

The River, Creator and Destroyer of the Delta

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6pm - 7pm

TOP NEAR RIGHT

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

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. This was followed by a rich black bottom pie, and an entertaining discourse on blues legend Robert Johnson by restaurant chef Leo McGee.

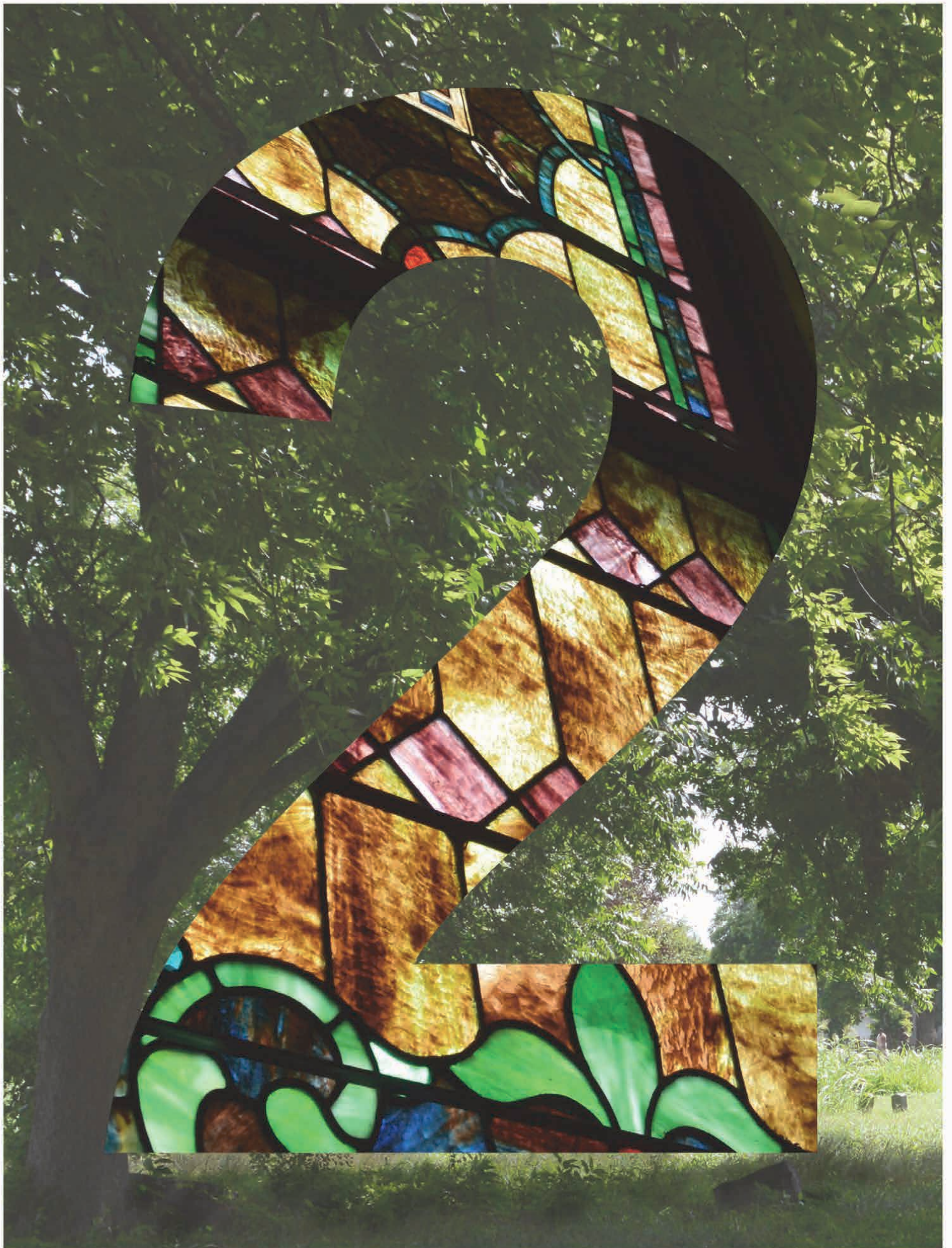
TOP FAR RIGHT

A generous helping of black bottom pie.

BOTTOM RIGHT

The beautiful, vintage exterior of Leo's at the Levee.





Discussion of the Delta Chinese and Greenville's Black Graveyard

9am - 11am

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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 our 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.

FIGURE RIGHT

A grave in the Chinese cemetery. The cemetery was created for early Delta Chinese who could not be buried in either the black or white cemeteries.







FIGURE TOP

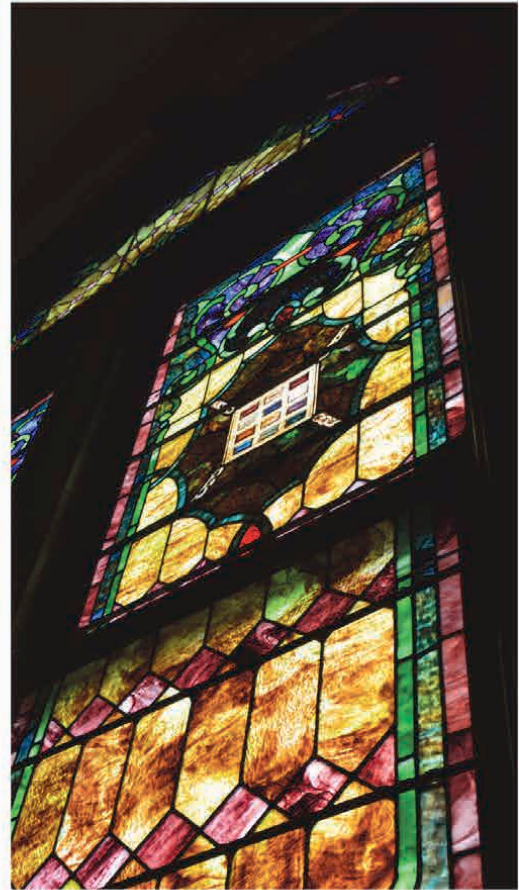
Guide Cathy Wong talking to participants at the Chinese Cemetery.

FIGURE RIGHT

Dale Pohl, an artist who now teaches in Mississippi, taking impressions of Chinese lettering.

FIGURE FAR RIGHT

Stained glass in the Jewish Sanctuary.



Wong says that there were Chinese men in the 20s and 30s that married or cohabited with Chinese women. 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 had 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 was 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 cemetery marked the gravesite of Holt Collier, the guide who led the legendary bear hunt in which Teddy Roosevelt refused to shoot a chained bear. This gave rise to the ubiquitous children's toy, the "teddy" bear.

Discussion of the Delta Jews

Cleveland was 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 was 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 said that Freeman is a very nice guy; he nominated Freeman for an honorary doctorate from Delta State University, and mentioned 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 told the participants that this temple was actually chartered before the city of Greenville. He said that many non-Mississippians are befuddled by the fact that there are Jews in the state. He explained 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



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.

12pm - 12:30pm

Flood of 1927 Museum

FIGURE TOP RIGHT

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

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.

FIGURE RIGHT

The exterior of the 1927 Flood Museum, located adjacent to the Jewish Temple





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

3:30pm - 5:30pm

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.”

FAR ABOVE LEFT

Professor Charles Reagan Wilson demonstrates his collection of religious fans, with principal Alexander Phillips watching on.

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.



Tuesday 24th June:

Immigrant Stories

8pm - 9pm

ABOVE

Bill Abel addresses the audience before he launches into another rollicking blues tune.

The History of the Blues with Bill Abel

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 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.

Tuesday 24th June:

Immigrant Stories



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FAR ABOVE LEFT

A magazine of the Blues, printed in Italian, illustrating the far-ranging appeal and impact of the genre upon the world.

FAR LEFT

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



TOP
Participants examine photographs at the Jewish Synagogue in Greenville, Mississippi.

MIDDLE
Midday grass at the African American cemetery, down the road from the Chinese Cemetery in Greenville, Mississippi

BOTTOM 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.

BOTTOM 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.



Wednesday 25th June:

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

7:30am - 10am

30

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

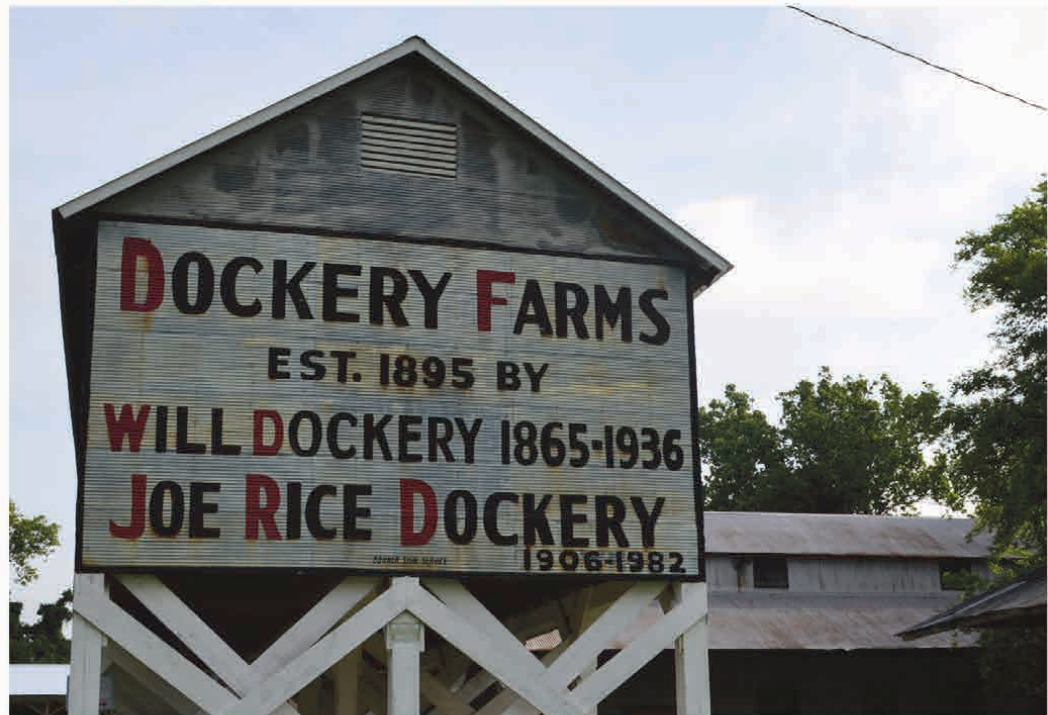
In a short video at Dockery Farms narrated by B.B. King, participants learned that Dockery is at the heart of the Delta, just a few miles up the road from Delta State University. Willie Brown and Son House worked in the fields by day and played the Blues at Dockery by night after. Charley Patton, the 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 picking 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.

FIGURE RIGHT

Dockery Farms, often called the "birthplace of the blues" was the intermittent home of blues icon Charley Patton.



Before participants explored Dockery for itself, Dr. Brown explained that although there was a railroad connected to the Farms, it only connected some people to the outside world—white people. This reflects the paradigm that the Delta is full of paradoxes.



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. Dr. Brown has done many tours that had people who were present at the Democratic National Convention.

FAR LEFT

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

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.

Fannie Lou 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 air-time 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 25th June:

The Blues: American Roots

Music and the Culture that Produced it

10am - 12:30 am

32

For Mississippi blacks like McLaurin, the civil rights journey was a tear-stained trek from powerlessness to empowerment.

B.B. King Museum and Dr. Charles McLaurin

Participants unloaded from the bus to hear Dr. Charles McLaurin in the old gin room of 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.

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.

McLaurin told us about how blacks were denied the right to vote because whites denied them a proper education, administered unfair literacy tests, and outright intimidated them. 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.

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



TOP
Charles McLaurin, an esteemed civil rights activist, addresses the group.

MIDDLE
The exterior of the BB King Museum in Indianola, Mississippi.

LEFT
Wheeler Parker shares some of his knowledge of BB King and the blues.

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.



2pm - 5pm

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.

FIGURE RIGHT

Participants watch on with interest as blues musician David Evans explains the intricacies of the blues genre.

Clad in a short-sleeved button-up shirt and a straw sunhat, 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. Towards the end of the performance, Evans even yodeled for the participants.



Wednesday 25th June:
*The Blues: American Roots
Music and the Culture that
Produced it*

7pm - 8:30pm

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

At the Open Mic event, Jennifer Jameson introduced participants to available online curriculum for the Mississippi Blues Trail (<http://www.msblustrail.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.

Participants then brainstormed curriculum ideas based on their respective areas of expertise. They shared resources with each other for lesson plans, primary source documents, lectures, and other teaching supplements.

FAR TOP LEFT
Participant Steve Franks, a passionate aficionado of the blues, plays a number for the workshop.

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

On the bus ride tour of Mound Bayou, participants discussed the Emmett Till story. The story has been written about exhaustively, but the fact is that there is no final truth. What you're left with, Dr. Brown says, is a different kind of truth—on the one hand, a myth. What is interesting is that 50 years after Emmett Till's death, the case is still being discussed.

The bus drove through Merigold, MS, largely a bedroom community with a few small businesses. Participants heard about crop-dusting fields and post-WWII internment camps.

Mound Bayou, MS is the oldest all-black municipality formed under the Reconstruction Act of 1867. There are virtually no employers in Mound Bayou. The story starts in 1825 in the time of slavery. A wealthy man named Robert Owen came to Merigold around the U.S. espousing a utopian ideology. He bought a town—Merigold, Mississippi—and intended to establish a utopian society. In a radical charter, Owen made the choice to employ children only after the age of 10 (and he only employed them for 10 hours instead of 12). Owen thought that children's moral values are based on their social experience, not based on their lineage—this is a radical idea. He believed that if society allows one to lead a good life, he will be a good person. Though Owen did hold slaves, he promoted education and welfare for all. The Montgomerys, a black slave family, even became quite wealthy.

Participants enjoyed a short video clip about juke joints and how they were used as a place for the community to gather.



Thursday 26th June:
The Story of Emmett Till

The clip featured Dr. Brown as a college professor who researches Po'Monkey's. 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.

FAR ABOVE
Po' Monkey's, arguably the most

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



Dr.
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“I am not a historian by any stretch, but it’s interesting to me how stories grow and change.”

PROFESSOR HENRY
OUTLAW

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.

Before lunch, participants watched a 60 Minutes segment about Emmett Till’s murder. The video clip focused on an interview with Till’s cousin, Wheeler Parker, then 12 and now 62. Parker visited the workshop, also speaking on the panel presentation later in the afternoon. The film showed the shocking images of Till’s corpse as well as footage of his open-casket funeral, as well as the repercussions of national horror caused by his death.

FAR RIGHT

Professor Henry Outlaw comparing and contrasting the death of Emmett Till with the



EMMETT TILL
INTERPRETIVE CENTER



Thursday 26th June:

The Story of Emmett Till

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.

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: an FBI agent in charge of the case; the son of one of the prosecutors who tried to put the murderers in jail; 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; 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 of 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 about the oral history project that Henry Outlaw did about the case. Finally, the panel participants fielded questions from the workshop participants.

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FAR RIGHT

Deltan landscape one the way to the Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center.



4pm - 6pm

Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center and Little Zion Church

At the Emmett Till Historic Intrepid Center, participants watched a film about Sonny Boy Williamson. On the bus, Dr. Brown played the song of the day, "The Death of Emmett Till". 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, Kool-ickles, at the site.

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



TOP

TASTE OF THE DAY

Dan Hoppe, a US history and government teacher, enjoys a koolickle. Koolickles, a favorite of Delta children, are pickles soaked in Kool-Aid and sugar.

MIDDLE

The exterior of the Emmett Till Interpretive Center

BOTTOM LEFT

Outside the fated Money Store, the location at which Emmett Till whistled at Carolyn Bryan. In the present day, the location has been unused for some time.





Friday 27th June:

The Civil Rights Movement

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.

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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.

FIGURE RIGHT

Participants explore the interior of the Clarksdale Greyhound Station, in particular the differences between the segregated bathrooms



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



TOP

Robyn Wallace, a seventh grade English teacher in South Carolina, examines an exhibit on the Blues in the Cotton Museum.

BOTTOM LEFT

Charles Grossman, a teacher at the Breck School in Minnesota, tries his hand at lifting a bag of cotton in one of the museum's interactive exhibits

BOTTOM RIGHT

A fine roll of yarn, one of the materials produced in the cotton production line.





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.

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.

Friday 27th June:

The Civil Rights Movement

11am - 12:30pm

FIGURE ABOVE

The renowned billboard of Stax Records, now a museum for soul music.



Friday 27th June:

The Civil Rights Movement

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. 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 TOP

The storefront of the Four Way Grill

FIGURE BOTTOM

TASTE OF THE DAY

The taste of the day was fried chicken, catfish or turkey with macaroni and cheese, fried okra, green beans, cabbage and peach cobbler for dessert.





National Civil Rights Museum

1:30pm - 4:30pm

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.

FIGURE ABOVE
Statues of officers in tear gas masks
responding to the civil rights pro-
tests of the 60s.

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.

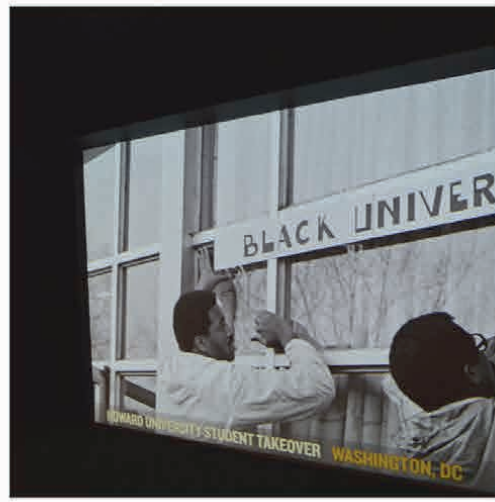
Peabody Hotel

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.





previous page

The angle of the shot that James Earl Ray took to assassinate Martin Luther King Junior, as participant Noah Lawrence contemplates

TOP (left to right)

A booklet describing the intersection of the arts and civil rights; English teacher Beth Duley watches a film excerpt; photo slides of the various civil rights movements around America

MIDDLE

Eighth grade social studies department head Janet Morford reads an exhibit on segregation laws

BOTTOM LEFT

The front door of the Peabody Hotel



Guest Scholar: The Delta in Diaspora

Saturday 28th June:
The Delta in Diaspora

9am - 12pm

Joining the workshop for the beginning of the last day was Dr. John B. Strait, Associate Professor of Geography at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. Dr. Strait presented on “The Delta in Diaspora...there and back again: Geographic Perspectives on the 20th Century Engine of American AND World History”. Dr. Strait has a son named Prezley, a daughter named Memphis, and a dog named Booker T.—clearly, he has a passion for this geographic area, both professionally and personally.

Dr. Strait explained that migration means one thing, but Diaspora means completely another thing. Migration means just going to one place and staying there, while Diaspora means to connect spiritually with a place—as Richard Wright, in his autobiography *Black Boy*, implied in a quotation that Dr. Strait shared about culture blooming in new soil. The term “Diaspora” comes from the Greek for “spreading seeds”. The Diaspora is usually perceived to be ethnically collective (and forced, as in not voluntary) because of its original use in relation to Hebrews in the Old Testament. In the Hellenistic world, though, the term referred to a mass migration. So, Dr. Strait uses “Diaspora” to mean the people who left, the process, and what results from this. According to Dr. Strait, Diaspora includes: an extraordinary mass-migration, a relocated ethnic collective, and a scattering of cultural seeds. The emphasis is on outcome of cultural germination and development, not on the physical movement itself.

Dr. Strait introduced participants to several books, articles, and resources on the topic; these provided an overview of the lecture. He discussed “pull factors” driving Diaspora, such as perception of equal opportunity, labor demand, and geographic mobility as psychological freedom. Chicago was an example, serving as a manufacturing center for U.S. steel and stock yards and a land of unparalleled opportunity for blacks.

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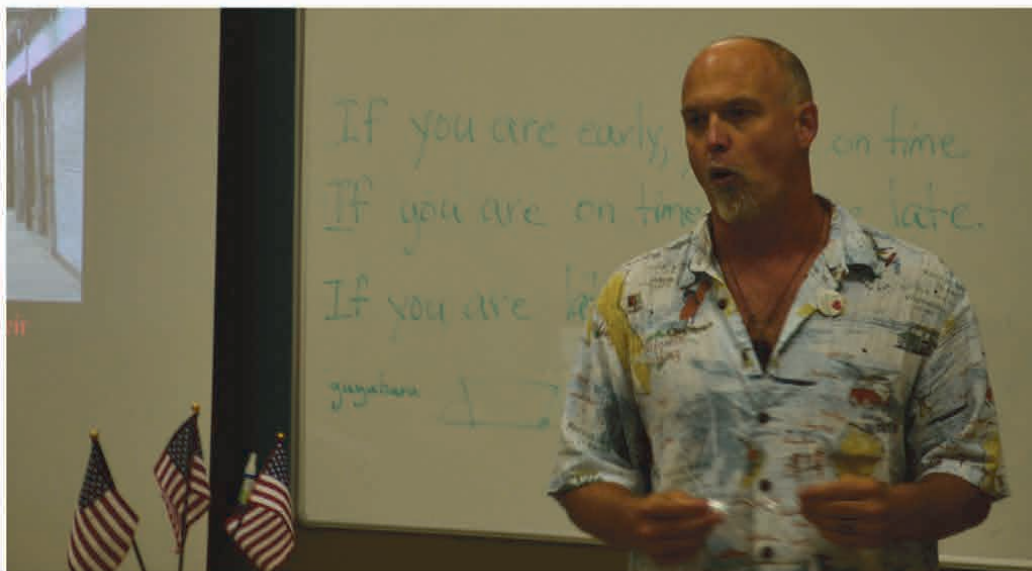


FIGURE RIGHT
Dr Strait discussing Nicholas Lemann's book "The Promised Land"; one of the recommended books for the workshop.



FAR RIGHT

TASTE OF THE DAY

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

During a break from the lecture, participants enjoyed the Taste of the Day—pound cake and fried chicken. Dr. Brown explained that it was important to remember the problems of traveling in the Jim Crow South. 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. Strait concluded his lecture. He spoke about Chicago's black institutions, as well as the cause and (especially) the effect of the Diaspora. His discussion included an analysis of the Pullman Porters and the psychology of regional opportunity, as well as the role of "Black Voices" from Chi-town. A particularly fascinating part of Dr. Strait's presentation was his focus on creative forms of Diaspora "Narration", such as oral traditions, journalism, artistic expression, and music. This meant that black celebrities—such as Duke Ellington and Richard Wright—emerged.

Next, Dr. Strait explained the impact of Diaspora on gender relations; he claimed that a post-migration feminine ideology developed due to the popularization of icons of female power, earthly wisdom and raw sexuality. Religion also changed the landscape of our country as revival and diffusion of evangelical Protestantism made the U.S. more spiritually Southern. Finally, Dr. Strait discussed the impact of Diaspora on American political attitudes and on musical expression.

In conclusion, Dr. Strait explained the concept of topophilia, or a sense of nostalgic loss of place. This pervasive phenomenon reflects the idea of the South (The Delta) as home. Popular songs by Blues musician Muddy Waters such as "My Home is in the Delta" (1963) and "Down Home Blues" are indicative of this melancholy, this spiritual connection to a faraway place.



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.

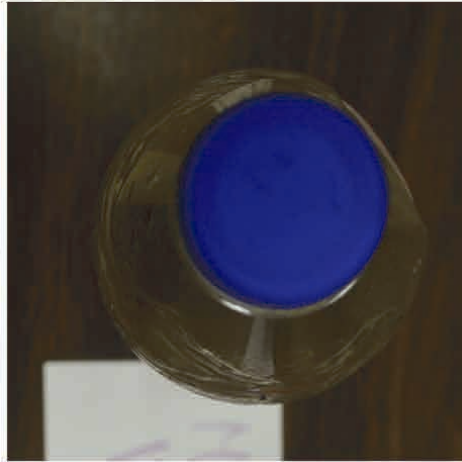
Participants wrote down everything they included in their mojo sacks on a scrap of paper so they could remember it after they tied it up. The yarn used to secure the mojo sacks was blue, of course, to represent the fact that all of the workshop’s learning experiences were tied up with the Blues.

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, ending an action-packed and unforgettable week.

FAR 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)

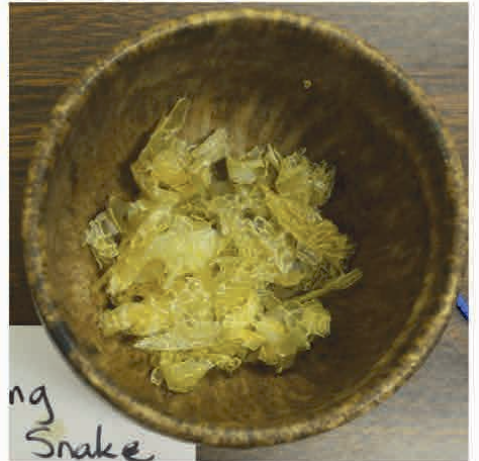
Red brick from Dockery Plantation; Pieces of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech; Gravel from Taborian Hospital in Mound Bayou

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

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

Being from Wisconsin and a child in the 1940s, I wasn't aware of so many of the historical events other than what was minimally mentioned in school. I've grown as an educator and personally from this workshop

The totality of the experience was what was useful - I felt I received a wealth of information from a range of experiences. These experiences included museums, lectures, on-bus lectures, etc. The workshop gave me further appreciation and enlightenment regarding the blues, Civil Rights and local history

Everything was amazing. The Emmett Till panel was mind blowing, and I can't imagine a better history lesson. Bill Abel did a great job of teaching blues history. Luther's tours on the bus were phenomenal

The immersive experience, coupled with the aesthetic presentation of the content really benefitted the process of understanding the Delta - these included the cinematic presentations, the auditory musical aspects and the kinesthetic aspects of touching, literally, the sites and artifacts of the Delta

Thank you for changing my life, my outlook on the Delta and (possibly) making me a Delta resident

Thank you so much for a week that I will never forget! It has changed not only my teaching perspectives but my life!!! I stayed in the Delta for two weeks after our workshop! I just couldn't get enough



EVALUATIONS

Activity	1	2	3	4	5	Average
<u>Sunday, June 16</u>						
Reception at the Railroad Museum		3	2	13	18	4.28
<u>Monday, June 17</u>						
Introduction			4	9	23	4.53
Discussion Session			5	11	20	4.33
Movie: Lalee's Kin: The Legacy of Cotton			1	10	25	4.67
Discussion led by Reggie Barns		1	2	5	28	4.67
Levee break site/ Delta and Pine Land			4	6	26	4.44
Leo's at the Levee (Catfish supper)			5	10	21	4.44
<u>Tuesday, June 18</u>						
Discussion of the Delta Chinese		1	4	13	18	4.33
Chinese cemetery		1	4	8	23	4.47
Discussion of the Delta Jews		1	7	9	19	4.28
Greenville's black graveyard		1	2	13	20	4.44
Guest Scholar - Dr. Charles Wilson		4	7	10	15	4
Bill Abel, History of the Blues		1		6	29	4.75
<u>Wednesday, June 19</u>						
Dockery Farms and The Crossroads				4	32	4.89
Fanny Lou Hamer's gravesite			2	3	31	4.81
Charles McLaurin			1	2	33	4.89
B.B. King Museum			4	1	31	4.75
Guest Scholar - Dr. David Evans	1	2	8	11	14	3.97
Open Mic	1	2	5	9	19	4.19
<u>Thursday, June 20</u>						
Tour of Mound Bayou			3	7	26	4.64
Emmett Till and To Kill A Mockingbird	1	3	5	11	16	4.06
Panel discussion of Till Case					36	5
Emmett Till Intrepid Center	1		7	10	18	4.22
Bryant Store, Robert Johnson's gravesite	1		2	6	27	4.61
Po'Monkey's Lounge				5	31	4.86
<u>Friday, June 21</u>						
Bus ride to Memphis			5	9	22	4.47
Cotton Museum	1	2	5	9	19	4.19
Stax Museum				3	33	4.92
National Civil Rights Museum					36	5
Lobby of the Peabody		7	6	8	15	3.86
Bus ride home (Stax movie)		1	3	9	23	4.5
<u>Saturday, June 22</u>						
Guest scholar - Dr. John B. Strait			5	14	17	4.33
Mojo making		2	1	1	32	4.75

PARTICIPANT YEARBOOK



Alexander Phillips



Alice Davidson



Alice Thompson



Ariana Dumpis



Beth Duley



Blair Daniels



Bridget Wilmot



Callen Taylor



Charles Grossman



Chris Fuller



Dale Pohl



Dan Hoppe



Dan Rhoades



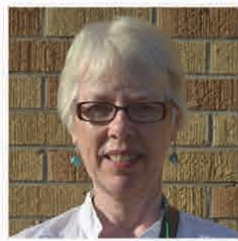
David Strausbaugh



Dicetra Davis



Emily Allen



Gretchen Anderson



Jackie Lacy



Jackie Mercer



Jane Phillips



Janet Morford



Joe Deffner



Julia Brotherton



Kelley Graves



Laura Koritz

PARTICIPANT YEARBOOK



Lesley Thomson



Liz Pipkin



Noah Lawrence



Rachel Halper



Robyn Wallace



Sandy Brown



SheKishma
Richardson



Steve Franks



Susan Mitchell



Tahiri'h Pleasant



Tara Ann Carter



Tara Wooley



Valerie Cichy



Vanessa Armstrong

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Edgar Smith

Dale Killinger

John Strait

Charles McLaurin **Margaret Mary White**

Benji Nelkin

Charles Wilson

Henry Outlaw

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Duke 2017

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