Center for Excellence in Historic Preservation
Middle Tennessee State University

CHP MTSU Center for Historic Preservation
History • Education • Architecture

Annual Report, 2013-2014

CHP assistants Denise Gallagher (r) and Amanda Barry (c) talk about the historic pump of Mt. Zion School, Gibson County, with school alumni and community leader Hollis Skinner.

As the Center for Excellence in Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University completed its 30th year of service to the State of Tennessee, the citizens of Tennessee, and Middle Tennessee State University, it also launched new agendas to ensure that the Center remains a nationally significant example of how higher education institutions can bring positive change and economic development to the many communities that they serve. The Center further serves as a model for MTSU administrators and faculty of how programs and projects geared to student connectivity to community needs and opportunities create sustainable vehicles for student success.

Assessing the Center 's Top Six Achievements for 2013-2014

1. **Fund, mentor, and graduate students according to schedule and place them into professional opportunities while continuing to recruit top talent to graduate program**.

   In the past academic year, M.A. graduate assistants Sara Beth Gideon, David Sprouse, Cassie Bennett graduated and have professional positions in Tennessee and North Carolina. Two of our past PhD graduates received tenure track positions, Dr. Kristen Deathridge at Appalachian State University and Dr. Ed Salo at Arkansas State University.

   We spent considerable funding on new PhDs, filling a large gap when the History Department reported that it did not have money to offer these students. In 2013-14, we funded and/or recruited the following:

   Aleia Brown, University of Northern Kentucky
   Jenna Stout, Western Carolina University
   Torren Gaston, North Carolina Central University
   Michael Fletcher, Middle Tennessee State University
   Brittany Walker, Art Institute of Chicago
   Noel Harris, Texas State University
   Marquita Reid, Florida International University

This exemplary 2013-14 record is a reflection of the Center for Historic Preservation's 2004 pledge to support the launch, growth, and sustainability of the PhD in Public History program at MTSU. Over the last 10 years, we have exceeded these goals to play an even greater role in the program than what was initially envisioned. Our primary contributions include:

- The direction to completion of 12 of the first 21 graduates of the program
- Recruitment of graduate students with outstanding promise
- The placement of those graduates in professional opportunities across the country
- The development of $5 million in external funding that is used, in part, to support stipends, projects, research, and office spaces for PhD students, such as the downtown Heritage Center
- Vibrant, reciprocal external institutional partnerships with the Alabama Historical Commission, National Park Service, the Library of Congress, and the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (NC)
- Expansion of CHP staff and faculty from three with PhD degrees (2 from College of William and Mary and 1 from Georgia Tech) to five with PhD degrees (2-William and Mary, 1-UCLA, 1-Chicago, 1-MTSU)

- Creation of The Heritage Center, a downtown facility that serves as classrooms and museum training laboratories for graduate students
- New digital humanities initiatives in partnership with MTSU Walker Library that give graduate students new publication and research opportunities
- Expansion of CHP programs and projects beyond Tennessee and into the South and Midwest in general, thus creating opportunities for PhD research and residencies.

At the end of 2013-2014 academic year, Dr. Stacey Graham was just returning from a three-week class for undergrads and graduate students in Rome, Italy. Her class represents part of the Center's enhanced agenda in international preservation, and her success will lead to new opportunities to take the Center's "brand," programs, and students to additional overseas learning and networking opportunities.

2. The completion and/or extension of contracts and alliances with the National Park Service, the Library of Congress, the Alabama Historical Commission, and the Tennessee Board of Regents.

Successful evaluations of the positive role that the Center has played as the management entity for the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area led to a week-long field visit from the NPS Regional Office in Atlanta, new funding, and the promise of additional funding in the next fiscal budget cycle. The success of the Heritage Area in leading successful community-centered initiatives across Tennessee is well recognized. Targeted projects in 2013-2014 included the Longstreet Headquarters museum in Hamblen County, the Hiwassee River Heritage Center in Bradley County, the Franklin battlefield reclamation initiative in Williamson County, and the Visitor Center Exhibit at the Parker's Crossroads Battlefield in Henderson County. The Center also leads the state effort in placing interpretive markers in all 95 counties, working in partnership on this key heritage tourism program with the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development and Commissioner Susan Whitaker.

In August 2013, the national board of directors of the Teaching with Primary Sources program of the Library of Congress met for the first time outside of D.C. in Nashville, at the request of the Library. This partnership continues to touch educators across Tennessee and connects the Center and MTSU to the Governor's education initiatives. Funding for FY15 has been secured.

Working with the Cherokee Nation, the Eastern Band of Cherokees, nine state agencies, and the National Park Service has been rewarding in

2013-2014 as the Center led the effort to further develop the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Along with publishing the first Tennessee-focused driving tour map of the Trail of Tears, the Center, led by historian Amy Kostine, also developed and installed new Trail of Tears interpretive centers in Bradley County and Giles County, Tennessee.

Contracts to work with nationally significant cultural resources in Alabama continued in 2013-2014 with the Civil Rights Movement project in Selma and a statewide Multiple Property Study of Alabama agriculture. These projects do not generate much new funding but they create unparalleled research and professional opportunities for MTSU students.

3. Designation of State Historian and new or enhanced partnerships.

In July 2013, Governor Bill Haslam designated the Center Director, Dr. Carroll Van West, as the Tennessee State Historian. This designation has led to additional travel and networking opportunities for the Center, and has significantly enhanced the image of the Center and of MTSU in heritage matters statewide. As requested, Dr. West provides guidance and advice to a range of state heritage concerns. Some of the new partnerships would include The Heritage Center hosting its first Humanities Tennessee exhibit and the successful role that the Center played in helping Chattanooga citizens and the University of Tennessee Chattanooga to find new ways to continue to preserve and enhance the historic Engel Stadium as a community heritage asset.

4. Design and Launch new digital humanities initiatives.

In 2013-14, the Center began to long overdue work to revamp and enhance its website and its social media outreach. A new Facebook page was created for the Tennessee Century Farms program in February 2014; already it is the most "liked" page of all of the Center's social media efforts. The Center also made significant headway in the redesign of its major online Tennessee Century Farms database, a process that will continue in 2014-2015.

Clearly, however, the most significant news lies in the new partnership with the James J. Walker Library at Middle Tennessee State University. This new alliance, instigated by Library Dean Bonnie Allen and Dr. West in the spring of 2013, has yielded the "Southern Places" digital humanities collection and then the TBR-funded "Trials and Triumphs" Tennesseans search for Citizenship, Community, and Opportunity." The "Trials and Triumphs" site is rich in potential for scholars and for educators and

students. Just released in the summer of 2014, the site represents the Center as its best: not only contributing its own substantial research but embracing the research and collections of scholars and institutions from across the South that provide new insights into the years between the Civil War and World War II.

5. **Continue the Center's enviable record in working with students, communities, citizens, and officials on heritage projects that make a difference, both culturally and economically. These field projects and publications in 2013-14 include:**

Heritage Tourism Plan, Owingsville, KY
Museum Development Assessment, Rowan County NC
Historic Structure Assessment, Marble Springs State Historic Site, Knox County
Heritage Development Plan, West Bemis (Rosenwald) School Report, Madison County,
Heritage Development Assessment, Engel Stadium, Chattanooga
Historic Structure Report, Kansas Rosenwald School. Sumner County
Historic Structure Assessment, Trenton Rosenwald School and Mt Zion School, Gibson County
Flagg Grove School Exhibit Plans and Plan, Haywood County
East Tennessee Marble Industry, National Register Multiple Property Nomination with two additional nominations, Knox and Hawkins counties
Historic Structure Report, Cragfont, Sumner County
Rutherford County African American Cemetery survey (2014, ongoing into 2015)
Historic Cemetery Assessment, Columbia, Maury County
Installation of Longstreet and Parker's Crossroads exhibits, Hamblen and Henderson counties
Historic Structure Report, Clay-Kenner House, Hawkins County: White
Winchester Utilities Booklet, Franklin County

6. **Incorporating the American Democracy Project into the Center for Historic Preservation**

One of the most promising developments in 2013-14 was the Provost-led effort to align the work of the American Democracy Project, and its on-campus leadership of a wide range of citizen engagement issues, with the work and programs of the Center for Historic Preservation. The process began in the spring of 2014 and already by the end of the 2013-14 academic year, the Center's doctoral assistants were presenting papers and participating in workshops at ADP meetings. This new alliance will

yield much more in 2014-15. It also gives the Center an invaluable new tool to connect with students and to contribute in new ways to student success at MTSU.

Looking at Projects and Opportunities in 2014-15

In addition to the on-going work with Teaching with Primary Sources, the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, and the American Democracy Project, the Center's students and staff are already working with citizens and officials on key heritage development projects across the Mid-South. These community-driven projects include:

- Nolensville School Heritage Development Plan, Williamson County
- Maury County Civil Rights Driving Tour
- Commissary Building, Skyline, AL, National Register nomination
- Grand Ole Opry House National Register nomination, Nashville
- National Register nominations of historic cemeteries, Macon County, AL
- National Register nominations of historic churches in Selma, AL
- Heritage Plan for Prairie Mission School, Wilcox County, AL
- Shelbyville historic districts report, Bedford County
- Constitution Day at MTSU and Murfreesboro
- Belle Meade Historic Structure Report, Nashville
- McLemore House Museum Plan, Franklin
- Glenmore Historic Structure Report, Jefferson County
- Completion of Trail of Tears Survey in Nine States
- Publication of Selma Civil Rights Movement driving tour
- Publication of Masonry Preservation Guidebook for Trail of Tears
- Publication of Log Preservation Guidebook for Trail of Tears
- New enhanced exhibits on Rutherford County history at The Heritage Center in downtown Murfreesboro

The Center is already discovering that 2014-15 will be a year of programming, projects, and research across the state and region. There will be more to come!

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

2013-2014 External Funding and Grants

Alabama Historical Commission Alabama Agriculture National Register Multiple Property Submission	$12,000
Tennessee Civil War 150th Commission For research and support	$18,000
Tennessee Board of Regents (7/1 to 5/31/14) Separation and Exclusivity: Tennessee's Jim Crow Era website Partnership with MTSU Walker Library	$59,994
National Park Service, Long Distance Trails (9/1 to 5/31/15) Historical Survey of Extant Properties on Trail of Tears	$60,000
Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Across Tennessee	$140,000
Tennessee General Assembly Direct appropriation for Center of Excellence	$170,000
National Park Service, National Heritage Areas (to 12/31/14) Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area	$384,000
Total (approximate):	**$843,994**

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, 2013-2014

Dr. Carroll Van West, director
Rachel Martin, assistant director
Dr. Stacey Graham, research professor
Dr. Mary Evins, research professor
Dr. Antoinette van Zelm, programs manager
Katie S. Randall, fieldwork coordinator
Kira Duke, educational specialist
Cindy Duke, executive aide
Debbie Sager, secretary

Grant-dependent positions:
Laura Holder, National Heritage Area federal liaison
Leigh Ann Gardner, National Heritage Area interpretation specialist
Amy Kostine, Trail of Tears historian
Rachel Finch, Heritage Area researcher
Dr. Susan Knowles, Digital Humanities Initiatives