

Annual Report, 2022-2023  
The Center for Historic Preservation  
Middle Tennessee State University



August 29, 2023



## **Origins and Background**

The Center for Historic Preservation was established in 1984 as MTSU's first Center of Excellence and one of the nine original centers at the Tennessee Board of Regents universities. In 1989, the CHP received accomplished center status and in 1991 it became a full-time research and public service institute while continuing to shape MTSU academic programs by supporting and directing undergraduate and graduate students in research and experiential learning opportunities. In 2001, it became the administrator of the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, a partnership unit of the National Park Service. In 2008, the Center took on the Tennessee administration of Teaching with Primary Sources, a program of the Library of Congress, and have since served classroom educators with primary source-centered workshops and materials. In 2012, the Center began a long-term partnership with the National Park Service to document properties associated with the National Historic Trails program. In 2013, Center director Dr. Carroll Van West was appointed the Tennessee State Historian.

Center programs and projects strongly support the general legislative mandates implemented by state officials when they created Centers of Excellence in 1984. These are: (1) utilize present educational resources more effectively to achieve a genuine excellence in a specific field; (2) support the economic development of the state; (3) enhance the intellectual, cultural, and social climate of Tennessee citizens; (4) improve the research base of the state; and, (5) encourage institutions to increase support for educational and research activities from external sources.

The Center meets these mandates through projects and programs that focus on the heritage development--the identification, research, preservation, interpretation, and promotion--of our historic environment. Through its varied resources, and its partnerships at local, state, and national levels, the Center responds to the requests, needs, and concerns of communities, individuals, agencies, and organizations, both governmental and not-for-profit, working towards historic preservation goals.

Working within state, regional, and national partnerships, the Center for Historic Preservation focuses its efforts on heritage area development, rural preservation, heritage education, and heritage tourism through diverse, inclusive preservation practice and programs. Consistent with the MTSU Academic Master Plan to enhance research and public service, the Center supports efforts to improve the education and quality of life for all Tennesseans. The Center enhances citizens' sense of place, pride, and identity through the interpretation and preservation of the historic sites, landscapes, and historical narratives that comprise the Tennessee experience.

To complement MTSU Academic Master Plan's goals, the Center for Historic Preservation uses multiple community-centered projects to teach selected courses in the History Department. It provides crucial teaching and funding for the PhD. in Public History. The Center is a primary conduit for training and placement of MA students in public history and plays a significant role in directing MA theses and PhD dissertations in that program. By offering graduate research assistantships in addition to internships and other opportunities for both undergraduates and graduates, the CHP provides multidisciplinary and applied working experiences and fosters a research culture for faculty, staff, and students.

## **Impacting the Nation**

The Center prides itself in preparing MTSU students to gain the experience they need for their careers. Graduate Research Assistants from the Center upon graduation are always nationally competitive and work for history and design firms, government agencies, non-profits and

colleges and universities. They create their own success but the Center provides an invaluable platform for their training, especially in our community-anchored programs in rural communities and African American communities. These graduates from the Center are constantly taking our message of reciprocal community engagement to every section of the nation. Five Center-supported GRAs presented poster sessions at the 2023 Annual Meeting of the National Council of Public History. This year Center director Dr. Carroll Van West directed to completion four PhDs in Public History along with six MAs in History students at MTSU.

MTSU students clearly benefit from being involved in the Center's national projects and programs. In 2022-2023, CHP Programs Manager Amy Kostine and Dr. West worked with PhD student Alexis Matrone and in partnership with the National Trail of Tears Association on the **Missouri Trail of Tears Interpretive Plan**, funded by Missouri Humanities Council via a grant provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the American Rescue Plan and the NEH Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan initiative. Several different groups of graduate students worked with Kostine, Dr. West, and Research Professor Dr. Stacey Graham on high potential historic sites and segments assessments for properties along the **Trail of Tears National Historic Trail** in Tennessee. Like two other graduate students before, Morgan Condrey spent two summer months at the **Butte National Historic Landmark** in Montana on the Ethnic Community History Center located at B'nai Israel Synagogue. PhD students Abby Coomes and Kate Hughes worked with Fieldwork Coordinator Savannah Grandey Knies on the nomination of the **Gardner Farm of Lowndes County, Alabama**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The farm is part of the **Selma-to-Montgomery National Historic Trail**.



Amy Kostine and Alexis Matrone discuss a Trail of Tears exhibit with staff of Maramec Springs Park in Missouri.

Other national projects involved Center faculty and staff. In Orange County, Florida, the Center developed a heritage assessment of the historic **Plymouth Elementary School**, the county's oldest standing African American school, for the Plymouth Community Improvement, Inc., a non-profit community center that owns the building. Dr. West also worked with faculty from Prairie View State University in Texas to produce an assessment of the historic **Chatmon Juke Joint**, part of the Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area, in Glen Allan, Mississippi.



Plymouth Elementary School, Apopka, FL.



Chatmon Juke Joint, Glen Allan, MS

## Addressing the needs of Tennessee communities and neighborhoods

As Tennessee emerged from the pandemic, communities, governments, and property owners reached out to the Center in record numbers for assistance on their history and historic preservation needs. At Tennessee's southeast corner, the Center worked with property owners to carry out a detailed research report on the **Hildebrand House, Polk County**, that documents a Cherokee family's prosperity and perseverance through the adversity and division of removal. Nearby, the Center also worked with the U.S. Forest Service about the "Lessons Learned" project--the lessons being those learned when the agency mistakenly damaged a Trail of Tears segment to the Fort Armistead National Historic Landmark at **Tellico Plains, Monroe County**.

At Tennessee's southwest corner, Dr. Antoinette van Zelm researched Emma J. Griggs (1872-1948), a teacher and administrator who worked closely with her husband, the Baptist minister, writer, and orator Sutton E. Griggs. She created the **Griggs Business and Practical Arts College in Memphis** in his memory, the last in a long line of schools that she administered in Nashville and Memphis. The Memphis property owner then worked with the Tennessee Historical Commission to place the school in the National Register. Savannah Grandey Knies worked with property owners to add valuable information of the National Register-listed home of **Rev. Nettie Rogers**, an influential minister and Civil Rights leader in Memphis.

Between the two corners of the state, the Center carried out many other projects and programs. In Chattanooga, PhD student Stefanie Haire, Savannah Grandey Knies and Dr. West collaborated on a multi-paneled exhibit about the forgotten African American photographer **Horace Brazelton**. The exhibit opened at Ruby Falls in the summer of 2023. Research Fellow Maia Council worked with Dr. West to produce a research report on the **Stringer Ridge Cemetery**, an abandoned pauper cemetery in Chattanooga, for its landowner, the Trust for Public Lands. Council carried out a similar research report for the Friends of Shelby Park on the **Naval Reserve Building and Shelby Park**, an East Nashville landmark. Graduate students worked with Dr. West on a heritage development plan for the **Bell Buckle School** in Bedford County, while another group of graduate students, under the direction of Heritage Center director Laura Holder, prepared exhibit panels for **Cemetery School in Rutherford County**.



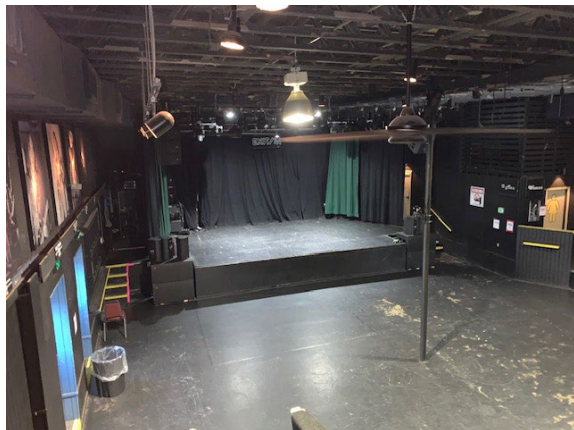
Horace Brazelton exhibit at Ruby Falls, Chattanooga



Historic Bell Buckle School

Savannah Grandey Knies worked with Dr. West to place two important but very different Tennessee landmarks in the National Register of Historic Places. **Nashville's Exit/In** is a

premier venue for contemporary music, one of the three most important music clubs in the nation. **Dyersburg's Bruce High School** is not nationally known but has been vitally important to the African American community of Dyer County and West Tennessee for generations.



Exit/In, Nashville



Bruce High School Gym, Dyersburg

In Crossville, Dr. West and MTSU graduate students prepared a heritage development plan for the National Register-listed **Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum**, part of the nationally significant Cumberland Homesteads settlement built during the New Deal of the 1930s. As part of the Center's heritage tourism efforts, Laura Holder and Dr. West worked with graduate students to install an exhibit about MTSU's Murphy Center, with a focus on the music concerts that took place there from 1972 to 1992, at the **Rutherford County Visitor Center**.

The Center also kept Governor Bill Lee's directive about assistance to Tennessee's underserved communities as a priority. In addition to projects listed in this report in Benton, Polk, and Monroe counties, Dr. West led a group of graduate students to carry out research and planning for the future restoration of the historic **West Gaines School in Lawrenceburg**. Dr. West and Savannah Grandey Knies also worked with the **Cannon County School Board** to curate and store trophies and other historic objects and photos at several rural schools as they closed their doors.



West Gaines School, Lawrenceburg



Trophy Case, Short Mountain School

**Providing Leadership for Tennessee's  
Civil War Era History: The Tennessee  
Civil War National Heritage Area**



The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area continued to tell the “whole story” of America's greatest challenge, helping communities preserve and share their powerful stories of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Leveraging federal, state, local and private funding, we provided leadership and support to organizations across Tennessee, creating opportunities for education, interpretation, preservation, and economic development.

After the National Park Service (NPS) closed our previous cooperative agreement and established a new one in FY 2022, we developed an extensive narrative and financial report that documented the TCWNHA's previous 14 years of collaborative subaward partnership projects, free professional services projects, student projects, and Heritage Center initiatives. The report was very well received by the NPS Southeast Regional Office. In addition, based upon the Heritage Area's extensive track record of success working with partners across the state and the valuable contributions of Heritage Areas to communities across the nation, our federal funding was increased from \$436,000 to \$500,000 this year.

From creating a digital archive for the R.H. Boyd Company to new digital and walking heritage tours (*Rutherford County Courthouse Museum Tour*, *In the Footsteps of Notable Women*, and *Walking the Square* among others) as well as the development of a Heritage Development Plan for the historic Cemetery School in Murfreesboro and interpretive markers in Spring Hill, we elevated the visibility of both the Heritage Area and our heritage tourism partners.

The Heritage Area's professional services program, which places MTSU faculty, Heritage Area staff, and MTSU graduate students at on-ground projects across Tennessee at no-cost to property owners, was particularly active in 2022-2023. The largest project involved working with multiple land owners in Bedford County for a heritage development plan for the National Register-listed **Singleton-Chapman property** (c. 1790, 1840) and the nearby Emancipation-era black community of **Union Ridge**. The story involved the white Singleton family and descendants of the Singletons' enslaved families. White Singletons fought in the Civil War for the Confederacy while black Singletons self-emancipated and joined the U.S. Colored Troops. yet after the war the two sides joined to keep farms active and productive and jointly celebrate their families and history every summer.



Residents share stories with Heritage Area staff and students at the Singleton-Chapman House.

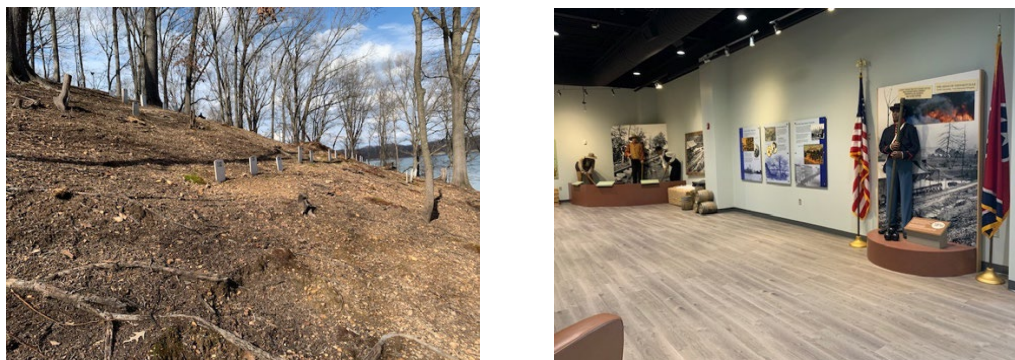


The Singleton-Chapman project reflects the Heritage Area's involvement in the National Park Service theme "from Civil War to Civil Rights." Another similar project moved from the planning to the restoration process within the historic footprint of the Battle of Franklin in 2023. The restoration and creation of the **Merrill-Williams House Cultural Center** concerns a historic African American residence built after the 1864 battle but along the Battle of Franklin's main Federal line of defense right in the heart of the historic Natchez Street neighborhood. The Heritage Area and the African American Heritage Society (AAHS) of Williamson County are partners on the project. This year's work involved the historic preservation process and gaining approval for the restoration plans from appropriate city agencies. The property's future as a neighborhood cultural center has unrivaled potential to tell stories of the community's trials, triumphs, and transformation, and to serve as a heritage tourism venue for African American history in Franklin.



Restoration underway at Merrill-Williams House, Franklin

A third project with a long interpretive arc is at **Johnsonville State Historic Park**, which is managed by Tennessee State Parks. Johnsonville was a major U.S. Army base on the Tennessee River from 1863 to 1865. Part of its garrison consisted of USCT units. It was the site of a major battle in late 1864, when Confederates under the command of Gen. Nathan B. Forrest destroyed warehouses and boats but could not dislodge the base. After the war the town hosted a large African American population and continued as a river town until World War II when the Tennessee Valley Authority created Kentucky Lake, which displaced most of the town. In its very early years, the Heritage Area prepared the park's National Register of Historic Places nomination. In 2022 park officials asked the Heritage Area to expand the nomination to include properties that they had uncovered and restored, especially the AME Cemetery, which contained hundreds of black burials but only a few headstones. That request has led to new research and planning including new exhibits for the visitor center.



AME Cemetery and Visitor Center exhibits, Johnsonville State Park

Another Tennessee State Park project is underway at **Port Royal State Park**, where park officials have been restoring the historic Masonic Hall and Store (1859) for several years. The building stands at an important transportation crossroads in the Civil War and Reconstruction periods. The Heritage Area carried out an investigation of the property fifteen years ago as park officials explored the building's conversion and restoration. Recently the Heritage Area funded MTSU PhD student Amanda Smith to work with the park on the store and its contents before it is opened to the public in the summer of 2023.



Masonic Hall at Port Royal State Park



In Rutherford County, the Heritage Area joined with the Rutherford County African American Heritage Society for a planning process with the owner of the National Register-listed **Riverside Farm** and the public interpretation of the property's extant historic slave dwelling. The owner is making the farm a commercial business but wishes to show respect to the story of the enslaved and later tenants at the property.



The slave dwelling/kitchen at Riverside Farm is one of the best preserved in Rutherford County.

CHP Assistant Director Dr. Antoinette van Zelm led graduate students in the development of an interpretive pamphlet on the historic **Moore Century Farm** (1870), one of the early African American farms to be established in Benton County after the Civil War. The brochure followed up on a Heritage Area report on the property's significance in 2016. Dr. van Zelm led another graduate student team to create an interpretive plan and digital history project for the **Addison Museum**, part of the historic Buchanan Log House historic site in Davidson County. This project also was a follow up on an earlier Heritage Area report from 2011.



The Heritage Area's Murfreesboro headquarters is the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County, which interprets the 1862 Battle of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County's rich and storied history. The Heritage Center welcomed over 2,000 visitors in person; hosted a variety of heritage and civic organization meetings; and created and uploaded four new digital tours to our free PocketSights mobile tour app. We began development of an on-site digital laboratory for graduate research assistants to gain valuable archival and digital processing skills. The Heritage Center also provided a location to process two extensive historic site collections: **the Matt Gardner Homestead**, a Reconstruction-era African American farm, and **Stony Point**, one of the earliest stone houses in the state with an extensive history that spans the Revolutionary War through World War II. Using these two collections, staff and students are in the final stages of development for a new permanent exhibit titled "Two Families, Two Revolutions," which chronicles how these two families, one white and one black, built farms and community institutions that nurtured and inspired later generations into the present.

The Heritage Area's professional services program also provided on-site assistance and studies for a range of public and private properties across Tennessee, including the **Mossy Branch Road log house** near Morrison; the National Register-listed **Beechwood Hall** Manor house in Williamson County; the National Register-listed **Wessyngton Plantation** in Robertson County; the National Register-listed **St. Mark United Primitive Baptist Church** in Spring Hill; and **Springfield Plantation Cemetery** in Murfreesboro. Dr. West also wrote the introduction for a history of **Zion Cemetery**, a National Register-listed African American property in Memphis, and spoke at the book's release at Rhodes College in Memphis. Staff continued to provide assistance for the statewide Civil War Trails program as well as the very popular Tennessee Civil War exhibits at the Welcome Centers across the state's interstate highway system. Assistant Director Dr. Antoinette van Zelm and Fieldwork Coordinator Savannah Grandey Knies also researched and developed an expansion about the USCT veterans of Franklin County for the history exhibit at the **Townsend Cultural Center** in Winchester.



Wessyngton Plantation, Robertson County



St. Mark United P.B. Church, Spring Hill

The Heritage Area had three major subgrants: (1) Metro Nashville Historical Commission and Parks to fund a master plan for preservation and expansion of the National Register-listed Fort Negley Park, part of the Battle of Nashville and built in part with labor from escaped slaves and free blacks; (2) Tennessee State Museum's Traveling Trunk program on the Reconstruction period that traveled to schools across the state; and (3) Nashville Public Television for the documentary, "Education: the Key to Freedom," on the development of African American schools and colleges in both pre- and post-Civil War Tennessee. It premiered in February 2023 and has been distributed statewide through the NPT/PBS app and website.

### **Historic Preservation of Tennessee's Farms and Open Spaces**

In 2022-2023, the Tennessee Century Farms Program certified 43 new farms located in 34 different counties across the state. Bailey Brothers Farms, a Pioneer Century Farm founded in 1788 in Greene County, was the oldest farm certified in 2022-2023. The farm's original 320 acres "on the waters of Little Gap Creek" remain intact. The family donated 10 acres for Baileyton High School (now Baileyton Elementary School) and in 1942 funded an auditorium at the school, where many community activities have taken place. We welcomed Bailey Brothers Farms and all the new farms on our Tennessee Century Farms Facebook page.



Donald Norrod Farm (1913), Overton County



Ogg Farm (1871), Weakley County

### Planning for the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the American Revolution in Tennessee

Dr. West in 2022 served as the chair of the Tennessee 250th Commission and completed a second round of public meetings, from Knoxville to Franklin to Memphis. At the beginning of 2023, the commission elected him as emeritus chair, and planning for the budget and events of the commission continues. The Center will open its own 250th exhibit, "Two Families, Two Revolutions," at the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County in fall 2023.



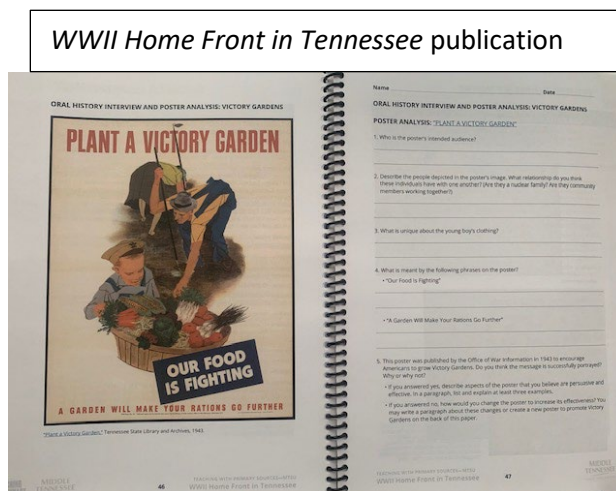
Crowd gathers for fall 2022 public forum on the 250th in Shelby County. DAR and SAR chapters from throughout the region attended.

### Best Practices for Tennessee Educators

Teaching with Primary Sources – MTSU, the Tennessee affiliate of the Library of Congress's nationwide education outreach consortium, continues to connect with educators statewide. TPS-MTSU held in-person events across Tennessee, while maintaining a variety of virtual elements. This hybrid approach helps to maximize our reach and allow educators the flexibility to participate in ways that work for them.

In 2022-2023, much of the programming centered on the Center's publication, *WWII Home Front in Tennessee*, authored by Dr. Colbi Hogan. This new curriculum explores our state

history from the impact of New Deal programs that prepared us for the war effort through the social, political, and economic changes of in the immediate post-war years. The curriculum consists of four units with historical essays, primary source-centered activities, and resource guides. The activities utilize Library of Congress primary sources such as the Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information collections and the Veterans History Project, while primary sources from other local archives, such as those at the MTSU Albert Gore Research Center, are used to complement them.



Throughout the year our major partners were the Tennessee Historical Society, the East Tennessee Historical Society (ETHS), and the Discover Tennessee History collaborative. We supported the THS' Tennessee History Day program with webinars, resources, and mentoring. With ETHS we offered content-based webinars and workshops on such topics as the New Deal and World War II Home Front. Workshops took place at Norris Dam State Park in Norris, Cumberland Mountain State Park in Crossville, Fort Negley Park in Nashville, and the Medal of Honor Museum in Chattanooga. We provided both support and content to the Discover TN History webinar series, which is available through the TPS-MTSU YouTube channel.

The TPS Civil Rights Fellowship, a partnership with TPS programs at Mars Hill University and the University of South Carolina, held an Atlanta conference on the modern civil rights movement. It not only featured lectures and presentations but also included tours of key historic sites and museums in Atlanta. Center staff also presented a poster session on the TPS Civil Rights Fellowship at the National Council of Social Studies conference in Philadelphia.

We continue to offer regular webinar programming through our popular "Digging In" series, based on the monthly newsletter, and the Discover Tennessee History series, shared among our major partnering organizations. Both series are ongoing and help build regular content for the TPS-MTSU YouTube channel, where educators can watch videos after-the-fact and still receive professional development credit. TPS-MTSU, assisted by MTSU graduate students, also continued to add new material to its Web site ([library.mtsu.edu/tps](http://library.mtsu.edu/tps)) through primary source sets, lesson plans, newsletters, and tools.

## External Funding, 2022-2023

Library of Congress: World War II Homefront	\$84,944.75
Missouri Humanities Council: Trail of Tears Plan	\$56,085.00
National Park Service: Tennessee Civil War NHA	\$500,000.00
National Park Service: National Trails	\$31,609.00
U.S. Forest Service:	\$34,350.71
National Park Service: WWII Homefront Book	\$88,300.00

**Total: \$795,289.46**

## Center for Historic Preservation Staff

Dr. Carroll Van West, Director and Professor  
 Dr. Antoinette van Zelm, Assistant Director  
 Dr. Stacey Graham, Research Professor  
 Amy Kostine, Programs Manager  
 Kira Duke, Education Outreach Manager  
 Savannah Grandey Knies, Fieldwork Coordinator  
 Laura Holder, Heritage Area Manager  
 Dr. Crystal de Gregory, Research Fellow (to 10/1/22)  
 Maia Council, Research Fellow (after 10/1/22)  
 Noha El-bobou, Research Fellow  
 Alexandria Lingle McMahan, Executive Assistant  
 Krystal Marin, Interim Administrative Assistant

## Graduate Research Assistants, 2022-2023

Madeline Artibee, PhD student  
 Morgan Condrey, MA student  
 Abby Coomes, PhD student  
 Kate Hughes, PhD student  
 John Lodl, PhD student  
 Alexis Matrone, PhD student  
 DeLisa Minor Harris, PhD student  
 Steph McDougal, PhD student  
 Taylor Means, MA student  
 Abby Mullis, MA student  
 Amy NeeSmith, MA student  
 Ellie Smith, MA student  
 Paul Springer, MA student

## Center for Historic Preservation Benchmarks, 2022-2023

### Major Reports, National Register Nominations

Council, Maia, and Carroll Van West. *Stringer Ridge Cemetery Heritage Assessment, Hamilton County, Tennessee*. For Trust for Public Lands. January 2023.

Council, Maia. *Naval Reserve Building and Shelby Park Research Report*. For Friends of Shelby Park and Metro Nashville Parks. June 2023.

Graham, Stacey, Antoinette G. van Zelm, Carroll Van West, Savannah Grandey Knies and graduate students. *The Chapman-Singleton House, New Hope Baptist Church Cemetery, Union Ridge Cemetery, and Hord Chapel A.M.E. Church, Bedford County, TN*. For property owners. June 2023.

Holder, Laura S. *A Preliminary History of the Huff House, Rutherford County, Tennessee*. For property owner Lanier Smythe, Cambridge, MA. July 2022.

Holder, Laura S. *Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area Performance Progress Report: FY 2008 – FY 2021*. National Park Service, Atlanta Regional Office. Fall 2022.

Knies, Savannah Grandey. *Bruce High School, Dyersburg, Dyer County, Tennessee. National Register of Historic Places Form*. Tennessee Historical Commission. May 2023.

Knies, Savannah Grandey, and Danielle O'Brien. *Cemetery School, Murfreesboro, Rutherford County, Tennessee. National Register of Historic Places Form*. Tennessee Historical Commission. September 2022.

Knies, Savannah Grandey, and Carroll Van West, Kate Hughes, Alexis Matrone, Tori Peck, Abigail Coomes. *Gardner Farm (Robert and Mary), Lowndesboro, Lowndes County, Alabama. National Register of Historic Places Form*. Alabama Historical Commission. April 2023.

Knies, Savannah G., Antoinette van Zelm, Jessica Hanson, Abby Jo Mullis, and Abigail Coomes. *Riverside Farm, Rutherford County, Tennessee: Heritage Assessment and Interpretation Plan*. For property owner and Rutherford County African American Heritage Society. July 2023.

Knies, Savannah Grandey. "The Significance of Evangelist Nettie B. Rogers." For Memphis Interdenominational Fellowship, Inc., and the Tennessee Historical Commission. June 2023.

Kostine, Amy M. *Missouri Trail of Tears National Historic Trail Interpretive Plan*. For Missouri Humanities Council and the National Trail of Tears Association. December 2022.

Kostine, Amy M., Carroll Van West, and Savannah Knies. *El Rancho de las Golondrinas Historic District, Santa Fe County, New Mexico, National Register of Historic Places Nomination*, New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office. 2022.

Kostine, Amy M., and Alexis Matrone. *Hildebrand House, Polk County, Tennessee: Historical Context*. For property owners. June 2023.

- Kostine, Amy M., Carroll Van West, John Jones, Olivia Pugh, Stephen Simmons. *Brainerd Mission Cemetery High Potential Site Assessment*. National Trails-National Park Service. January 2023.
- Kostine, Amy M., Carroll Van West, John Jones, Olivia Pugh, Stephen Simmons. *Brown's Ferry Tavern High Potential Site Assessment*. National Trails-National Park Service. January 2023.
- Kostine, Amy M., Stacey Graham, Alexis Matrone, Stephen Simmons, Abby Hikade. *Shellsford Baptist Church Cemetery High Potential Site Assessment*. National Trails-National Park Service. January 2023.
- Kostine, Amy M., Stacey Graham, Bryan Gilley, Caleb Williams, and Lindsey Wood. *Andrew Jackson's Hermitage High Potential Site Assessment*. National Trails-National Park Service. May 2023.
- van Zelm, Antoinette G., Alexis Matrone, and Robert Kurtz. *Daniel Williams's House (also known as the Old Wright Homeplace), Dickson County: Site Report*. For property owners. August 2022.
- van Zelm, Antoinette G. *Emma J. Griggs: A Lifelong Commitment to African American Education in Nashville and Memphis*. For J.S. Real Estate, Memphis, Shelby County. August 2022.
- van Zelm, Antoinette G., and Savannah Knies. *The Robinson House (also known as the Green House), Coffee County, Tennessee: History and Building Documentation*. For property owners. August 2022.
- van Zelm, Antoinette G., Abigail Coomes, and Bethany Hollingsworth. *The Moore Family Farm Brochure*. Benton County. April 2023.
- van Zelm, Antoinette G., Amy NeeSmith, and Katrina Zarelli. *History and Interpretive Plan for the Addison Museum at the Buchanan Log House, Nashville, Tennessee*. For Buchanan Log House Chapter, APTA, Davidson County. June 2023.
- West, Carroll Van, Clelly Johnson, and Alexis Matrone. *Bell Buckle School: Heritage Development Plan*. For Friends of Historic Bell Buckle School, Inc. January 2023.
- West, Carroll Van. *Chatmon Juke Joint Heritage Assessment, Glen Allan, Mississippi*. For Prairie View State University and Mississippi Delta National Heritage Area. January 2023.
- West, Carroll Van, and graduate students. *Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum Heritage Development Plan, Crossville, Tennessee*. For Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum Association. January 2023.
- West, Carroll Van, Savannah Grandey Knies, and Jen Ruch. *Exit/In, Nashville, National Register of Historic Places Nomination*, Tennessee Historical Commission. January 2023.

West, Carroll Van, and Savannah Grandey Knies. *Plymouth Elementary School, Apopka, Florida, Heritage Assessment*. For Plymouth Community Improvement, Inc. June 2023.

West, Carroll Van, Savannah Grandey Knies, Paul Springer, DeLisa Minor Harris, and Kat Zarelli. *West Gaines School, Lawrenceburg, Heritage Assessment*. For West Gaines Alumni Association. May 2023.

### **Reviews, Exhibits, Digital History**

Duke, Kira, and Stacey Graham, editors. *Teaching with Primary Sources – MTSU Web site* (www.mtsu.edu/tps). Murfreesboro: Center for Historic Preservation, 2022-2023.

El-bobou, Noha, Taylor Means, John Lodl, and Abby Mullis. *Digitization of Stony Point, Hawkins County, Archival Records*. For property owner and Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County. May 2023.

Haire, Stefanie, Savannah Grandey Knies, and Carroll Van West. *Horace Brazelton Exhibit*. Ruby Falls, Chattanooga, Tennessee. June 2023.

Holder, Laura S. *Explore Historic Murfreesboro: A Walking Tour*. PocketSights mobile tour. Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County.

Holder, Laura S. *Historic Rutherford County Courthouse Tour*. PocketSights mobile tour. Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County.

Holder, Laura S. *Walking the Square – Downtown Murfreesboro Historic Tour Script*. Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County.

Knies, Savannah Grandey, and Antoinette van Zelm. *United States Colored Troops of Franklin County Exhibit, Townsend Cultural Center*. January 2023.

van Zelm, Antoinette G. *Center for Historic Preservation Web site Update and Redesign*. Murfreesboro: Center for Historic Preservation, 2022-2023.

van Zelm, Antoinette G. Book Review of Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller, *The Northern Home Front During the Civil War* (2023), in *Civil War Book Review* 25 (Winter 2023).

West, Carroll Van. *Montana Historic Landscape website*. For Preserve Montana and Montana State Historic Preservation Office. 2022-2023.

West, Carroll Van, and Laura S. Holder: *Murphy Center: Music Traditions for 50 Years Exhibit*. Rutherford County Visitor Center, Murfreesboro. September 2022.

West, Carroll Van. Book Review of *Old Santa Fe Today: A History and Tour of Historic Properties, 5th Edition*. *New Mexico Historical Review*, April 2023.

### **Professional Papers, Presentations, and Workshops**

Duke, Kira. "Engaging the Long Arc of the Civil Rights Movement." 2022 TPS Professional Learning Conference, Atlanta, Georgia. July 2022.

Duke, Kira, and Nancy Schurr. "New Deal and WWII in Tennessee Webinar." Virtual presentation in partnership with the East Tennessee Historical Society and with funding from Tennessee Humanities. February 2023.

Duke, Kira. "Perspectives on Tennessee History." Discover Tennessee History Conference, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, Tennessee. July 2022.

Duke, Kira. "Teaching WWII Through a Local Lens." National Council for History Education Conference. Salt Lake City, Utah. March 2023.

Graham, Stacey, and Robert Spinelli. "The African American Material Culture of Death in Middle Tennessee: A Digital Project." Death & Society IV Conference. York, United Kingdom. September 2022. Also Redesigning Deathcare Conference. Melbourne, Australia (virtual). October 2022.

Graham, Stacey. "Thinkers of the European Enlightenment." Tennessee Council for History Education Conference. Nashville, Tennessee. September 2022.

Kostine, Amy M., and Jill Jenson. "NPS National Trails High Potential Historic Sites and High Potential Route Segments Protocol." National Trail of Tears Conference, Cherokee, NC. September 2022.

Kostine, Amy M., and S. Danielle Shelton. "Partners, Preservation, and the Power of Place." Second Annual Cherele Bolin Henderson Lecture, East Tennessee Historical Society, Knoxville, TN. May 2023.

West, Carroll Van. "Roundtable Discussion: Teaching with Primary Sources in a Challenging Environment." Library of Congress TPS Meeting, Philadelphia, PA. December 2022.

### **Teacher Curricula & Workshops**

Duke, Kira. "Perspectives on Tennessee History." Discover Tennessee History conference, Nashville, Tennessee. July 2022.

Duke, Kira, and Stacey Graham. "Digging In with TPS-MTSU Webinar Series." Virtual presentations connected with the TPS-MTSU newsletter. August 2022 – April 2023.

Duke, Kira, Stacey Graham, and Nikki Ward. "Building a National History Day Project Using the Library of Congress Webinar." Virtual presentations with Tennessee Historical Society. August 2022.

Duke, Kira, Nikki Ward, Natalie Sweet, Kelly Wilkerson, Christopher Grisham, Lisa Oakley, and Hobart Akin. "Discover Tennessee History Webinar Series." Virtual presentations. September 2022 – March 2023.

Duke, Kira, and Nancy Schurr. "New Deal and WWII in Tennessee Webinar." Virtual presentation in partnership with the East Tennessee Historical Society and with funding from Tennessee Humanities. February 2023.



- Duke, Kira. "Building a National History Day Project Using the Library of Congress." With Tennessee Historical Society. Harrogate, Tennessee. July 2022.
- Duke, Kira. "World War II and the Tennessee Homefront." With Norris Dam State Park. Rocky Top, Tennessee. September 2022.
- Duke, Kira, and Stacey Graham. "Virtual Book Club: How to Hide an Empire." Virtual Sessions. October 2022 – March 2023.
- Duke, Kira, and Stacey Graham. "Places Tell Stories: Community Formation and Resilience around Fort Negley." With Fort Negley. Nashville, Tennessee. February 2023.
- Duke, Kira. "A New Look at 8<sup>th</sup> Grade History." With East Tennessee Historical Society and Knox County Schools and with funding from the TPS Midwest Regional Grant Program. February 2023 – June 2023.
- Duke, Kira. "New Deal, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and Homefront Stories." With Cumberland Mountain State Park and Cumberland Homesteads Tower Museum in partnership with the East Tennessee Historical Society and with funding from Tennessee Humanities. Crossville, Tennessee. April 2023.
- Duke, Kira, and Stacey Graham. "Places Tell Stories: WWII in Tennessee." With the National Medal of Honor Heritage Center. Chattanooga, Tennessee. May 2023.
- Duke, Kira. "Researching, Collecting, and Remembering WWII." With the East Tennessee Historical Society and with funding from Tennessee Humanities. Knoxville, Tennessee. June 2023.
- Holder, Laura S. "Reconstruction, Jim Crow, and Everything In Between." Leadership Franklin History Day. September 2022.
- West, Carroll Van. "The New Deal Era in Tennessee." TPS/ETHS Teacher Workshop, Cumberland Mountain State Park. April 2023.
- West, Carroll Van. "Tennessee on the National Stage." Discovering Tennessee Teacher Workshop, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville. July 2022.

### **Professional Recognitions and Service**

#### de Gregory, Crystal

Black Heritage Advisory Committee, Tennessee State Parks  
 Board Member, Tennessee Historical Society  
 Advisory Board, Fisk Portal to Rosenwald Collections, Mellon Foundation, Fisk University

#### Duke, Kira

Tennessee Council for History Education State Coordinator  
 Discover Tennessee History Consortium Member

#### Holder, Laura S.

Secretary, Battle of Franklin Trust Executive Committee  
 Board Member, Battle of Franklin Trust Board of Directors

Advisory Board Member, Franklin's Charge, Inc. Board of Directors  
Grants Committee, African American Heritage Society of Williamson County

van Zelm, Antoinette G.

MTSU President's Commission on the Status of Women  
Southern Association for Women Historians (SAWH), President

West, Carroll Van

Tennessee State Historian, appointed 2013  
Emeritus Chair, Tennessee 250th Commission, appointed 2023  
National Historic Landmarks Committee, National Park Service  
Board of National Advisors, National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Board of Advisors, Oak Ridge Atomic Energy Museum, Oak Ridge  
Board Member, Zion Cemetery Restoration Association, Memphis.  
Board Member, Shiloh Community Restoration Foundation (AL)  
Manuscript Reviewer, Journal of Slavery and Data Preservation  
Manuscript Reviewer, University of Tennessee Press

# T<sup>SHELBYVILLE</sup> TIMES-GAZETTE

(/)

MAIN MENU



Log in (/login.html)

Subscribe (/subscribe/)

Search



## Preserving the historic Bell Buckle School



(<https://gc1.creativecirclecdn.com/shelbyville/original/20220912-210153-old%20BB%20school.png.jpg>)

A 1960s yearbook photo of the old high school before it burned down in 1972.



Posted Tuesday, September 13, 2022 12:05 am

By **ZOË HAGGARD** - zhaggard@t-g.com

Many in the Town of Bell Buckle are hoping to renovate the historic Bell Buckle School into a community center all while preserving the school’s long history.

On Wednesday, Friends of the Historic Bell Buckle school invited Van West, director of the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University, to examine the building’s potential.

“This is something with potential,” said West. “What you all are talking about is what the state government likes to hear. It’s not just a museum; it’s something for the community that would have multiple uses, and it contributes to heritage and tourism.”

**The school then and now**

Walking into the oldest section of the school, built in 1926, you’ll find mint green walls with peeling paint, concrete floors, original light fixtures and door frames, and even a few blackboards remaining on the wall.



Many in the Bell Buckle community hope to turn the old school into a community center.



As they walk around, a few alumni reminisce about where their typing classroom or home-economic classes used to be back in the 1960s and 70s.

Long-time Bell Buckle resident Nita Carroll even remembers where her desk was in one of the back classrooms.

“I don’t know why I sat on the front row,” Carroll said with a laugh. “I remember I was sitting there when we received the news JFK was shot.”

The school, which is now owned by the town, used to extend all the way out to the north lawn of Bell Buckle Park in a section of building that was built in the early 1950s.

To see this school preserved and used as a community center would mean a lot...especially since most of the school building was destroyed on April 17, 1972, in a fire.

Carroll said that although the reason for the fire is unknown, she recalls that there was a meeting at the school that night. Kids played in the gym. “It could’ve been kids down there smoking, could’ve been an electrical fire. I don’t know that they ever determined what it was.”

She was a sophomore at the time of the fire. She said she was able to get to her locker after the fire where she salvaged a few report cards and books, but that’s all. A

fter the school burned, the students from Bell Buckle then had to finish the school year in the Wartrace High School building. Soon students from Bell Buckle, Deason, Normandy, and Wartrace were all attending one school.

“We started splitting their building,” Carroll recalled. “They met in the morning, and we met in the afternoon. Then, the next year, the first class of Cascade all went there, while the little ones came here.”

Not much history remains on the school in the Bedford County Archives.

A snapshot from an Agricultural-Industry Survey from the Tennessee Valley Authority in 1934, briefly offers a little picture of the school in its early days:

“Bell Buckle High School. Enrolled 281 pupils, 200 elementary and 81 high school; 25% travel 2 miles or more, 33%, 1 mile or less than 2 miles. There are 8 teachers, 4 high school and 4 elementary. Has 14 class rooms and auditorium, brick building. Good repair and up-keep. Seats are good. Electric lights. Hot-air furnace. Water pumped to pressure tank by automatic pump, drink from fountain. Sanitary toilets, septic tanks. Water tested for bacteria, 1930, O.K.”

One Bedford County Quarterly magazine writes, “The first six grades are still held in the renovated building at Bell Buckle, although a final solution to the whole school problems has not yet been settled.”

After some “controversy,” a new \$25 million building was built between Wartrace and Bell Buckle in 1974, with students moving in in September of 1976. It was named Cascade High School after Cascade Springs. The 1920s two-story part is the only part that remains of the old school.

“The wood in the ceiling looks good,” Carroll remarks as she peers up with a flashlight in the room that used to be her first-grade classroom.

Carroll said she would love to see the building become a community center and a place for people to put their school memorabilia.

“It goes way back. It’s more than just wanting to fix it up,” said Carroll, who had siblings and aunts and uncles who attended the school. “I dream about this place.”

The building stopped being used as a school in 1976, according to Bell Buckle Mayor and Bell Buckle School alumni Ronnie Lokey. For about 20 years it was used as a maintenance garage for the town.

### **Funding the project**

Today, the large windows are blocked up while several walls are knocked down.

Because the building was altered so much, this could prove to be a hindrance in getting on the National Historic Register, according to West. But listing it in the national register isn’t the end-all-be-all for getting grants from the state.

“Really the pertinent agency for you all would be the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development and then Tennessee Department of Tourist Development,” said West.

There are a lot of positives going for the building, according to West. They have a 501c3, a group of support from their Facebooks group, location in a public park, and accessible parking.

Mark King, who’s helping to lead Friends of the Historic Bell Buckle, added that the building has already been asbestos-abated.

West said they could pursue a heritage development plan, versus a historic preservation plan, since they are restoring it as a community space instead of a museum. This is called adaptive reuse—which is when an old building in the community that has meaning gets a new purpose, according to West.

For now, while the group develops a plan moving forward, alumni are recalling bits and pieces of the building’s history.

Mayor Lokey graduated in 1967 after going to the school all 12 years. He recalled how his first-grade teacher, Miss Vance, played the piano beautifully. “And she did that at the end of the day most of the time. I guess it sent us home in a good mood every day. Beautiful lady.”

Dwight Woodlee, who graduated in 1969, agreed it was strange to see his old high school crumbling and dilapidated.

“But we’re going to try and fix that and make sure that it gets some recognition,” he said.

And even though the high school side is completely gone, the older side still has meaning. “For those like Dwight and Ronnie, they went the whole 12 years. This area means as much to them as the high school side,” said King.

## Comments

NO COMMENTS ON THIS ITEM PLEASE LOG IN TO COMMENT BY CLICKING HERE (/LOGIN.HTML? REFERER=%2FSTORIES%2FPRESERVING-THE-HISTORIC-BELL-BUCKLE-SCHOOL%2C67363)

---

LOCAL

# Black History Preservationists Fundraising for 264 Natchez St.



by Clint Confehr  
October 2, 2022



The African-American Heritage Society is raising money to create a heritage center, and so Moe Better BBQ and Fish is at Limestone Baptist Church, 1613 W. Main St., Franklin, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 8. Photo by Clint Confehr

From staff reports

FRANKLIN, TN — Money is needed to renovate a Natchez Street house for a heritage center run by the African American Heritage Society here, so Maurice



Pope is volunteering his culinary talents again.

“We were able to raise about \$20,000 in the matter of seven hours” last year when money was raised to buy the Merrill-Williams House, Pope said recalling proceeds from the sale of scrumptious comfort food prepared by his Moe Better BBQ and Fish business.

Pope cooks meat that others donate to the cause of revealing local history because, as AAHS members said when forming the society two decades ago, “We have a story to tell.”

For that cause, the public is invited to Limestone Baptist Church, 1613 W. Main St., from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 8. All proceeds from the sale of fish, BBQ, chicken plates and sandwiches will go toward renovation of the Merrill-Williams House. With a bake sale there, dinner and dessert will be easy as pie. The event includes a car show, entertainment for children and a silent auction.

Still, the attraction is Moe Better BBQ and Fish: the latter being a wild whitening fish from Argentina that’s 14 percent protein and cooked in Pope’s special batter; the former being a combination of pulled pork and chicken.

Pope explains: well-seasoned meat is marinated; smoked over a cherry wood fire; and cooled overnight to set the flavor as the meat is relaxed and becomes tender. “It’s not only mouthwatering, it’s tender, and juicy,” he said. Pope’s slogan: “You don’t need no teeth to eat this meat.”

Cherry wood “gives the meat a pretty color,” he said, warning against over-smoking meat so the seasoning flows through it. Pope donates his talent to raise money for an African-American heritage center where people may learn local history.

Purchased for \$610,000, the Merrill-Williams House at 264 Natchez St. is “in the architectural stage,” the AAHS announced Sept. 24. Society leaders have been interviewing architects and engineers for the renovation. “The fundraiser on the 8th is to solely benefit the African American Society’s continuing efforts to renovate the house.”

It's at a pivotal intersection within the Natchez Street Historic District. The house is about a third of a mile west of the Carter House, 1140 Columbia Ave. That well-known Civil War building is a significant place for the Battle of Franklin in 1864. Built in the late 1800's, the house at 264 Natchez St. was saved from gentrification last year, AAHS has reported. Its land has been zoned for two homes. A previous owner received calls from people interested in redeveloping the property for two homes.

While fundraising to buy 264 Natchez St., State Historian Carroll Van West, director of the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, said the first resident of the house was an enslaved man, a family servant of a slave trader in Franklin. The gift was in-lieu of the recipient's decades in bondage. West said the house is so important that he's assigned MTSU graduate assistants to focus on developing a heritage center there. Once the Merrill-Williams House becomes a heritage center, visitors will be told "what's good about the South ... not denying where we have gone down wrong roads in the past," West said.

The Merrill-Williams House is a mile northeast of Limestone Baptist Church on West Main Street at Downes Boulevard where Moe Better BBQ and Fish will be sold Saturday.

## El Rancho De Las Golondrinas Under Consideration For Inclusion In State Register Of Cultural Properties

Submitted by Carol A. Clark on October 6, 2022 - 8:17 am



### NMHPD News:

The New Mexico Historic Preservation Division (NMHPD) is excited to announce that El Rancho de las Golondrinas, a living history museum that spans around 230 acres in Santa Fe County, is under consideration to be added to the State Register of Cultural Properties.

The state's Cultural Properties Review Committee will meet at 1 p.m. Friday, Oct. 14 to vote on the property's nomination, and decide whether to recommend that it be forwarded to the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places for listing.

As a living history museum, El Rancho de las Golondrinas is dedicated to interpreting early Hispano life in Northern New Mexico through historic and reconstructed complexes of buildings and landscapes.

Homesteads on the site represent building forms and construction methods prevalent in 18th- and 19th-century New Mexico, including a torreón (defensive tower), and a placita (enclosed courtyard), along with houses, chapels, mills, traditional stores, and farm buildings, each built of adobe, log, or frame construction.

Special festivals and weekend events offer visitors an in-depth look into the celebrations, music, dance and many other aspects of life in the Spanish, Mexican, and Territorial periods of the Southwest. Through architecture and activities, this property provides valuable insight into how early Spanish and Hispanic settlers might have lived.

The nomination was prepared by Amy Kostine, Savannah Knies, and Carroll Van West from Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

The meeting will be held in-person at the Bataan Memorial Building, at 400 Don Gaspar Avenue in Santa Fe, and virtually on Zoom. For more information, visit CPRC's meeting [agenda](#).

*As New Mexico's State Historic Preservation Office, NMHPD is tasked with nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places. Properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places may qualify for certain benefits, including state and federal preservation grants for planning and rehabilitation and federal and state investment tax credits.*

<https://www.abqjournal.com/2559403/el-rancho-de-las-golondrinas-soars-to-national-registry-recognition.html>

## El Rancho de las Golondrinas receives acclaim as a historic ranch and living history museum

By Adrian Gomez / Journal Arts and Features Editor

Dec 22, 2022



Several horse drawn wagons around a barn at the El Rancho de Las Golondrinas near Santa Fe. The site was to the National Register of Historic Places. (Eddie Moore/Journal)

For 50 years, El Rancho de las Golondrinas has been a New Mexico treasure.

As of Dec. 5, the living museum is now part of the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District. The site is also recognized on the State Register of Cultural Properties. "It's an incredible affirmation of the work we do and, to receive this news during our 50th anniversary, is very special for us and the people of New Mexico," said Daniel Goodman, museum director. "This has been a three-year project with the hard work put in by staff, the board and the people at Middle Tennessee State University, who donated their time in preparing the nomination." It is a significant cultural landscape, historic ranch and currently a living history museum. The ranch was located strategically on the Camino Real – the Royal Road – that extended from Mexico City to Santa Fe. It provided goods for trade and was a place where the caravans that plied the road would stop on their journey to or from Santa Fe. It was also a paraje, an official rest stop for travelers on the Camino Real. Las Golondrinas has 34 historic buildings on 500 acres in a rural farming valley just south of Santa Fe. The museum opened in 1972, and is dedicated to the history, heritage and cultures of 18th-and 19th-century New Mexico. Original buildings on the site date from the early 1700s. Goodman said the workers at Las Golondrinas are the keepers of a largely underrepresented history.



em031022d/living/Daniel Goodman is the museum director of the El Rancho de Las Golondrinas near Santa Fe.

Photo shot Thursday March 10, 2022. (Eddie Moore/Albuquerque Journal)  
Eddie Moore|Albuquerque Journal

Daniel Goodman is the museum director of the El Rancho de Las Golondrinas near Santa Fe. (Eddie Moore/Journal)

"Our focus is on the everyday lives of New Mexicans," he said. "We share this history through the interpretation of the cultural landscape, its buildings and traditions. As a living history museum, guests come to not only see the real thing, but to experience the real thing." The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation.

Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a program to coordinate and support efforts to identify, evaluate and protect America's historic and archaeological resources.

## 158th anniversary of Battle of Nashville celebrated with new Civil War driving tour

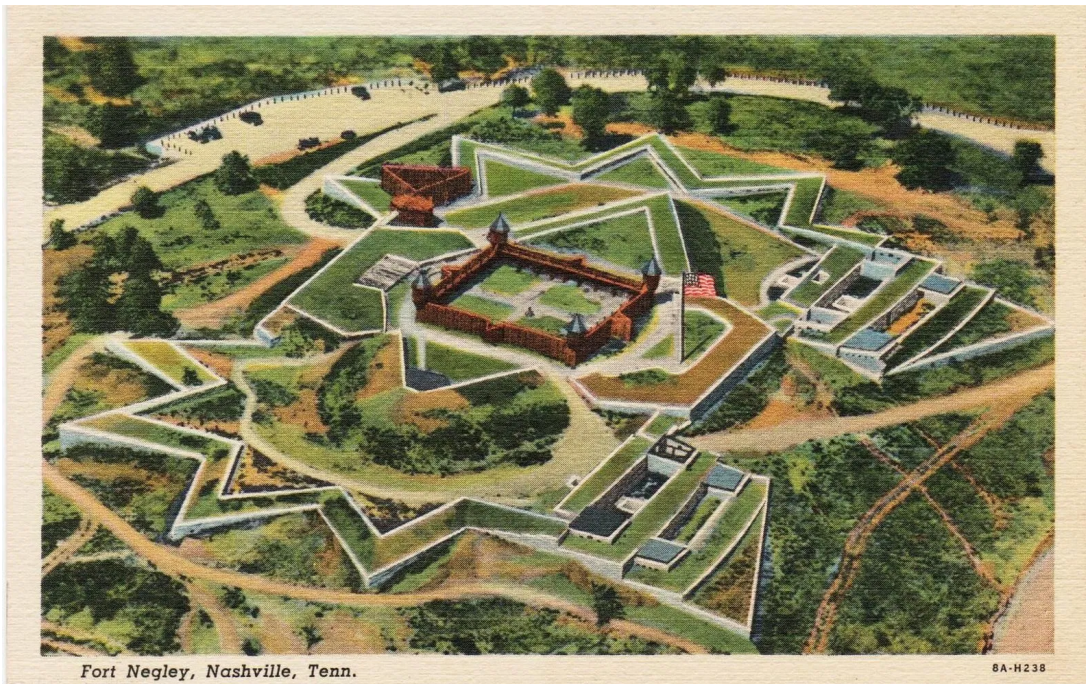
by Kat Gerasimenko

Thu, December 15th 2022, 6:45 AM CST



*On the heels of the 158th anniversary of the Battle of Nashville, Nashville Sites has commenced a new Civil War driving tour featuring sites like Fort Negley and the Surrender of Nashville on Thursday. (Photo: Nashville Sites)*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (WZTV) — On the heels of the 158th anniversary of the Battle of Nashville, Nashville Sites has commenced a new Civil War driving tour featuring sites like Fort Negley and the Surrender of Nashville on Thursday.



Fort Negley, Nashville, Tenn.

8A-H238

Other stops on the tour include Granbury's Lunette, Shy's Hill, and the Nashville Peace Monument. Attendees can go on the tour in-person or virtually on their mobile devices.

"Nashville was in a unique position throughout the Civil War. It was also the site of battle that effectively ended the Confederate Army of Tennessee," says Dr. Mary Ellen Pethel, Nashville Sites Executive Director.

The tour is sponsored by Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, whereas the script was written by MTSU graduate student Marley Abbott and Belmont University student Caroline Tvardy.

This is one of five driving tours launched by [NashvilleSites.org](https://NashvilleSites.org) in 2022.

*Get reports like this and all the news of the day in Middle Tennessee delivered to your inbox each morning with the [FOX 17 News Daily Newsletter](#).*



# Black History blossoms at Rutherford County Historic Courthouse Museum: 'We're trying to preserve our history'

*Museum is free seven days a week*



**Scott Broden**

Murfreesboro Daily News Journal

February 2023

---

Museum includes history of integration of schools

County Commissioner Chantho Sourinho would like to see museum include history of Laotian refugees

Museum board plans expansion

County Commissioner Allen McAdoo says 'museum should be for everyone'

---

***Correction:*** *Mary Watkins is a 1964 graduate of Holloway High School and has served as a non-board member volunteer with Bradley Academy Museum and Cultural Center. A previous post of this story had incorrect information.*

***Note:*** *This is the first in a series of stories highlighting Black History Month in Rutherford County.*

Black history has an important place inside the Civil War era Rutherford County Courthouse.

"It's not segregating it," said Allen McAdoo, who has served on the elected Rutherford County Commission since 1978. "I like that the courthouse is displaying history. You can learn from history. You can learn from mistakes, so you don't make them."

Artifacts that honor Black civil rights leaders, and mention "Slavery in the land of the free" and "The free Black community" share space within the Rutherford County Historic Courthouse Museum in downtown Murfreesboro.

The free interior museum displays that include Black history are a contrast to the exterior courthouse grounds and an outside wall that honor Confederate heritage. The outer grounds, for example, include descriptions that praise Confederate cavalry Gen. Nathan

Bedford Forrest for his raid to liberate Confederate citizens being held prisoner by the occupying Union Army. The exterior grounds, according to a proclamation by the county government, is considered to be part of the museum.

Historic Courthouse Museum Commission member Mary Watkins is pleased with Black history being on display inside the building and hopes to expand with similar efforts on the exterior grounds.

"We're trying to preserve our history and document it and bring it to the forefront," said Watkins, the president of the African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County.

Watkins and others want to go beyond recognizing Black History Month in February through an annual presence at the museum. She joined a commission that has established a free museum that also includes artifacts about Native tribes who lived in the county prior to the United States' westward expansion into Tennessee. The museum mentions many of the pioneers who settled in Rutherford County, and offers numerous artifacts about the local people and history.

**Madelyn Scales Harris:** Murfreesboro vice mayor adds to family legacy

## **Museum includes history of integration of schools**

Former Rutherford County Mayor Bill Ketron proposed the creation of the museum as part of the renovation work for the courthouse and appointed the members of the historic courthouse museum commission.

The historic courthouse museum offers exhibits about school integration. This includes a football letterman jacket from Holloway High School. Holloway had served Black students during the Jim Crow segregation era. The Holloway students in the 1960s transferred to Central High School, which previously served only white students prior to desegregation.

The exhibit about school integration includes a Central High football team letterman jacket donated by Ketron. He also donated a football with the signatures from Central's 1970 state championship team.

"Over 12 members of the team got Division I scholarships," said Ketron, adding that Central's boys basketball team placed third in the state.

Bringing all the talent and energy together from the Black and white communities at

Central also contributed to the school having state championships for the band and debate team, Ketron said.

During his term as mayor from September 2018 to August 2022, Ketron pursued using part of the courthouse for the museum because of vacated staff offices, which were moved into the renovated former Rutherford County Judicial Building across the street.

"It was an opportunity to bring tourism back downtown and to help our local merchants in our downtown area," said Ketron, who majored in history and political science as a 1976 graduate of Middle Tennessee State University. "If you forget your history, then you're doomed to repeat it."

In addition to the museum, the courthouse that opened in 1859 continues to provide spaces for the county mayor, trustee and finance director offices, as well as meeting rooms for the Rutherford County Commission, committees and other governing boards.

"It's one of the few antebellum courthouses still working," Ketron said.

**Seeking higher education grants:** Former Mayor Bill Ketron accepts \$85K job at MTSU to boost research funding goals

## **What about history of other groups?**

Although the museum has recognized local Black history, there are other minority groups yet to have their stories told at the courthouse.

County Commissioner Chantho Sourinho said he'd like to see the museum include a display about the refugees from Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia who came to Rutherford to flee from civil wars in Southeast Asia. A native of Laos, Sourinho previously had come to Murfreesboro in the 1970s to pursue a graduate degree at MTSU. He helped his mother, Sada Sourinho, relocate in 1980 to Rutherford County, and assisted other refugees moving here and adjusting to life in Middle Tennessee.

The mother and son also helped a Buddhist monk she met at a refugee camp settle here, and they soon founded a Buddhist Temple in 1981 for the Laotian refugees that started out at a three-bedroom house on Kings Highway in Murfreesboro. The congregation moved to the existing temple on Old Nashville Highway near an overpass for state Route 840.

People from Japan also have had significant presence in the county, Sourinho said. This includes Japanese-based companies with operations in Rutherford County, such as the

Nissan automobile factory that opened in 1983 in Smyrna.

Museum Chairman Bill Jakes agreed that he'd like to see a display that talks about the Laotian refugees and other groups. He recalled growing up when the Laotian Buddhist Temple opened near where Jakes attended McFadden School.

"I think that is an important part of the story about our community," Jakes said. "I think that the members of the museum commission want to tell these other stories that include the other ethnic groups who have helped create the Rutherford County that we know today."

## **Museum board plans expansion**

The commission has plans for an exhibit that's focused on dairy production in the works for an industry that's had a presence for over 100 years in the county, Jakes added.

"For many years, our town has been known as a Civil War destination," Jakes said. "With this museum, we have a chance to tell other important details of history, like dairy production or Black history."

Jakes credits the museum work of Rutherford County Archivist John Lodl and Carroll Van West, director of the Center for Historic Preservation at MTSU.

"They are the trained professionals who have created the museum we see thus far," said Jakes, adding that West's MTSU students also have been involved. "I think those two guys deserve a majority of the credit for what we have today."

To expand, the museum will need more space, and that could include using other yet-identified buildings on the historic Rutherford County Courthouse Square in Murfreesboro, said Jakes, who's also a real estate broker with an office in the city's downtown area.

"We need artifacts that tell the story and are museum worthy," Jakes said.

McAdoo, who serves as chairman of the county commission's Property Management Committee, wants the courthouse museum to show the history of all people in Rutherford County.

"I think that museum should be for everybody," McAdoo said.

**Elected officials since 1978:** Allen McAdoo provides steady leadership to Rutherford

## County Commission

*Reach reporter Scott Broden with news tips or questions by emailing him at [sbroden@dnj.com](mailto:sbroden@dnj.com). Follow him on Twitter @ScottBroden. To support his work with The Daily News Journal, sign up for a digital subscription for all dnj.com stories.*

## About free museum

**Name:** Rutherford County Historic Courthouse Museum

**Location:** Center of courthouse Square in downtown Murfreesboro

**Rooms on first floor with exhibits:** five

**Hours of operation:** Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**Who to contact for more information or to donate or loan**

**artifacts:** Rutherford County Archives by calling 615-867-4609

**Board of directors for museum:** Chairman Bill Jakes, a real estate broker with office in downtown Murfreesboro; former Rutherford County Mayor Bill Ketron; County Mayor Joe Carr; County Commissioner Pettus Read; John Lodl, the county archivist; Greg Tucker, the county historian; Carroll Van West, director of the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University; Murfreesboro Vice Mayor Bill Shacklett, an operator of downtown family business, Shacklett's Photography; Marty Luffman, a Smyrna representative; Mary Watkins, president of the African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County; and Carol White, a leader with the Rutherford County Historical Society

(<https://www.loc8nearme.com/tennessee/murfreesboro/rutherford-county-historical-society/6449499/> )

**Source:** *Rutherford County government website*

## LOCAL

# Historic courthouse excludes Black history: 'We feel like the whole story needs to be told'

*Existing markers exclude 'enslaved' description*



**Scott Broden**

Murfreesboro Daily News Journal

Published 5:04 a.m. CT Feb. 23, 2023 | Updated 8:50 a.m. CT Feb. 27, 2023

---

## Key Points

Marker about enslaved people has backing of county mayor

Enslaved faced forced labor from both sides of Civil War

Efforts to honor Black soldiers who served in Union

History of enslaved should be told: 'If we turn a blind eye to those facts, we do ourselves a disservice'

---

**Note:** *This is the second in a series of stories highlighting Black History Month in Rutherford County.*

Black historian Mary Watkins seeks a marker near Confederate monuments to honor the enslaved sold at the Rutherford Courthouse grounds.

Watkins and others serving on the African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County and the Rutherford County Historic Courthouse Museum Commission hope to balance the story of the grounds that include a statue of a soldier to honor those who fought for the Confederacy.

"We feel like the whole story needs to be told that took place in Rutherford County," said Watkins, who's president of the society and a member of museum commission. "We want to make sure the African American aspect is told."

The goal for the marker builds on efforts that include displays on Black history that are on the first floor of the historic courthouse museum that opened November 2021.

Watkins foresees the proposed marker being on the right side of the sidewalk when people face the west side of the courthouse, which opened in 1859 a couple of years before the Civil War. The proposed location would sit opposite from an existing marker that touts the "Beginning of a Legend." This marker describes Confederate cavalry Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest's raid July 13, 1862, of the Union Army occupied Civil War era courthouse in the "Battle of Murfreesboro."

The raid led to the capture of over 1,000 Union prisoners, liberation of local residents locked up at the county jail by federal officials for being disloyal to the Union and promotion of Forrest to brigadier general, according to historical records and the marker that's one of three focused on him on the courthouse grounds and an exterior wall on the east-side entrance of the building.

The existing markers have no mention of the enslaved being sold on the courthouse grounds, said Watkins, who grew up in the county's rural Walter Hill community north of Murfreesboro.

"I know my ancestors had a big part in making Rutherford County what it is," said Watkins, adding that all of her great grandparents were enslaved.

**'We're trying to preserve our history':** Black History blossoms at Rutherford County Historic Courthouse Museum

## **Existing markers exclude 'enslaved' description**

The existing markers offer little mention of Black history other than the names of those killed serving the U.S. military in wars or as law enforcement officers, said Watkins, who grew up in Rutherford County during the Jim Crow segregated era of the South and many other parts of the country.

Watkins is a 1964 graduate of Holloway High School, which served Black students prior to desegregation. She recalled the courthouse also being segregated. Black residents, for example, had to go down exterior steps on the west side of the courthouse to use basement bathrooms. Drinking fountains were also separate.

One of the markers on the courthouse grounds facing East Main Street mentions that the former Union University where Central Magnet School is located had "Northern soldiers camped on the grounds, and by the war's end a number of freed people had taken shelter within the walls."

The U.S. Army soldiers were present at Union University from 1863 to 1865, said Carroll "Van" West, the Tennessee State historian and fellow member with Watkins on the historic courthouse museum commission.

"The freed people would have been either self-emancipated slaves or slaves freed after Emancipation Proclamation," said West, who's also director of Middle Tennessee State University Center for Historic Preservation. "The phrase freed people is often used instead of the official term of the time, 'contraband,' which meant property that become the spoils of war, and prior to the end of slavery in 1865 the U.S. Supreme Court defined slaves as property."

West has assisted Watkins and others in gathering information for the proposed marker to show notices about sales and auctions of the enslaved in Murfreesboro.

"From the primary sources I have read, some were at the courthouse, some at the Market-house, which was on the courthouse square," West said.

One of the notices promotes a sale of nine Black people, consisting of a man, women, boys and girls on Oct. 15, 1860, "at the Market-house in Murfreesboro." This notice was published on Sept. 26, 1860, in The Murfreesboro News, a newspaper that after a merger became The Daily News Journal.

**Confederate reckoning:** MTSU student leaders renew push to remove Nathan Bedford Forrest's name from ROTC building

## **Marker about enslaved people has backing of county mayor**

Historic courthouse museum commission chairman Bill Jakes supports efforts to balance the history on display on the grounds that currently include monuments and markers about Confederate heritage.

"We do need something honoring the African American community in Murfreesboro," Jakes said. "Our town was literally built on the backs of slave labor. They played an important part in this town's history since its beginnings. We have all these monuments to the Civil War and beyond. I just think it's time the town honors the sacrifices of the African American community."

Rutherford County Mayor Joe Carr said he supports a marker about the enslaved being sold to provide more balance on the courthouse grounds as long as it's historically accurate and



"I don't think editorial comment is necessary or appropriate for a historic marker," said Carr, who won his seat as the Republican nominee for mayor Aug. 4.

Carr said he'd like to locate the proposed marker by the main location of where the enslaved were sold. This could be by the historic well on the north side of the courthouse grounds, he said.

"We want to make sure we have this right," Carr said.

**Confederate monuments:** Sam Davis, a slave-owning soldier mythologized as a 'Boy Hero'

## **Enslaved faced forced labor from both sides of Civil War**

The Union Army also sought work from the enslaved, said Jakes, who's also a real estate broker with an office in downtown Murfreesboro. His historic collection includes a letter from Union Gen. Bull Nelson to Silas Tucker of Smyrna to order that salves be sent to Murfreesboro to help fortify the city after the raid by Forrest's Confederate cavalry.

Although other Civil War statues of Confederate generals came down in other cities, Jakes views the statue on the Rutherford County Courthouse grounds as honoring the local soldiers who lost their lives in the struggle.

"It's just dedicated to the commoners," Jakes said.

**Courthouse grounds statue:** Protesters, petition call for removal of Confederate monument in Murfreesboro

## **Efforts to honor Black soldiers who served in Union**

In addition to a marker to honor the enslaved people, Watkins and others with the African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County are researching local Black men who served in the Union Army during the Civil War in hopes of honoring them at the courthouse or another downtown location. Similar efforts took place in Franklin in neighboring Williamson County.

In October 2021, Franklin celebrated the addition of a statue that stands on the historic square honoring the Black enslaved men who enlisted in the U.S. Colored Troops, a segregated part of the Union Army during the Civil War.

Watkins and the society also seek a downtown Murfreesboro marker on Maple Street near Vine Street to honor the Black business district that once existed there.

The society in recent years has worked to put up other Tennessee historical markers, including two in the downtown area:

Holloway High School where Watkins attended a campus serving Black students during the segregation era;

Vaughn Street and South Highland Avenue for Mary Ellen Vaughn, founder in 1920 of the Murfreesboro Union, the city's first African American newspaper; a civil rights leader seeking political opportunities for African Americans in Rutherford County; and founder and operator of the Vaughn Training School in 1933 for African American adults.

## **History of enslaved should be told: 'If we turn a blind eye to those facts, we do ourselves a disservice'**

The efforts of Watkins and others to include a marker about the enslaved on the courthouse grounds also has the support of Vincent Windrow, pastor at Olive Branch Church in Murfreesboro.

"Mary Watkins is on fire for the truth, and I appreciate her for her efforts," said Windrow, who wants the courthouse grounds to provide history that goes beyond the Confederate monuments and markers.

"It's simply not enough to highlight one group's activities and one group's victories, and not highlight the pain and sufferings it caused other people," said Windrow, who's also a retired associate vice provost at MTSU. "If we turn a blind eye to those facts, we do ourselves a disservice. We want to know why we are where we are."

The history on the courthouse grounds should present the truth and avoid cherry picking about the life of a Confederate leader such as Forrest, Windrow said.

Forrest, for example, was a slave trader in Memphis before becoming a great Confederate general, Windrow said.

"I really think that Forrest's supporters do him a disservice by not telling his full story," Windrow said. "He was a great leader. Yet at the same time, he was involved in some atrocities against other humans, particularly Black people."

**Column by Vincent Windrow** As my retirement from MTSU looms, I'm hoping we can address some critical issues | Opinion

## 'There's more to the story'

History should provide the complexity of what happened, Windrow said.

"The truth should not be weaponized to demonize someone," Windrow said. "I'm not interested in demonizing Forrest. I'm not interested in deifying him either."

Markers about local Black history and the enslaved should be included in the whole story about Rutherford County, Watkins said.

"It's a part of American history," Watkins said. "There's more to the story. That's what we want people to realize."

*Reach reporter Scott Broden with news tips or questions by emailing him at sbroden@dnj.com. Follow him on Twitter @ScottBroden. To support his work with The Daily News Journal, sign up for a digital subscription.*

## About free museum

**Name:** Rutherford County Historic Courthouse Museum

**Location:** Center of courthouse Square in downtown Murfreesboro

**Rooms on first floor with exhibits:** five

**Hours of operation:** Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

**Who to contact for more information or to donate or loan**

**artifacts:** Rutherford County Archives by calling 615-867-4609

**Board of directors for museum:** Chairman Bill Jakes, a real estate broker with office in downtown Murfreesboro; former Rutherford County Mayor Bill Ketron; County Mayor Joe Carr; County Commissioner Pettus Read; John Lodl, the county archivist; Greg Tucker, the county historian; Carroll Van West, director of the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University; Murfreesboro Vice Mayor Bill Shacklett, an operator of downtown family business, Shacklett's Photography; Marty Luffman, a Smyrna representative; Mary Watkins, president of the African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County; and Carol White, a leader with the Rutherford County Historical Society

(<https://www.loc8nearme.com/tennessee/murfreesboro/rutherford-county-historical-society/6449499/> )

*Source: Rutherford County government website*

## **Forrest history at courthouse excludes controversy**

The Rutherford County Historic Courthouse markers that praise Confederate cavalry leader Nathan Bedford Forrest include one attached to a wall by the east entrance of the building from "The Daughters of the Confederacy" and dates back to July 13, 1912.

Confederate markers that arrived decades later, include a low to the ground stone monument dedicated May 2011 from the Sons of Confederate Veterans. The nearly 12-year-old monument includes a small logo etching in the shape of the Confederate flag with words: "The Cause for Southern Independence."

None of the markers mention the controversial background of Forrest:

had been a successful slave trader in Memphis prior to the Civil War; faced an investigation of the Fort Pillow Massacre on April 12, 1864, involving his Confederate troops killing rather than capturing Union soldiers, including 195 deaths out of 305 Black soldiers, according to a 1989 historical report from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Division of Archeology. being named as the KKK's first grand wizard before he advocated in 1869 for the white supremacist terrorist insurgency group to disband.

## **Windrow's MTSU efforts to remove Forrest from campus**

Vincent Windrow, pastor at Olive Branch Church in Murfreesboro, is a 1990 graduate of Middle Tennessee State University. He had been the founding president of an NAACP branch at the campus when he and others were successful in advocating for the administration in 1989 to remove a 600-pound medallion display of Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest attached to MTSU's Keathley University Center.

"I think it was very unwelcoming, not just to Black students but to all students," said Windrow, who's also a retired associate vice provost at MTSU.

Forrest, who died in 1877, had no history as a student with an MTSU founded in 1911, Windrow said.

"Higher education is about higher learning, and higher learning is about higher doing," Windrow said. "In short, we do better when we know better."

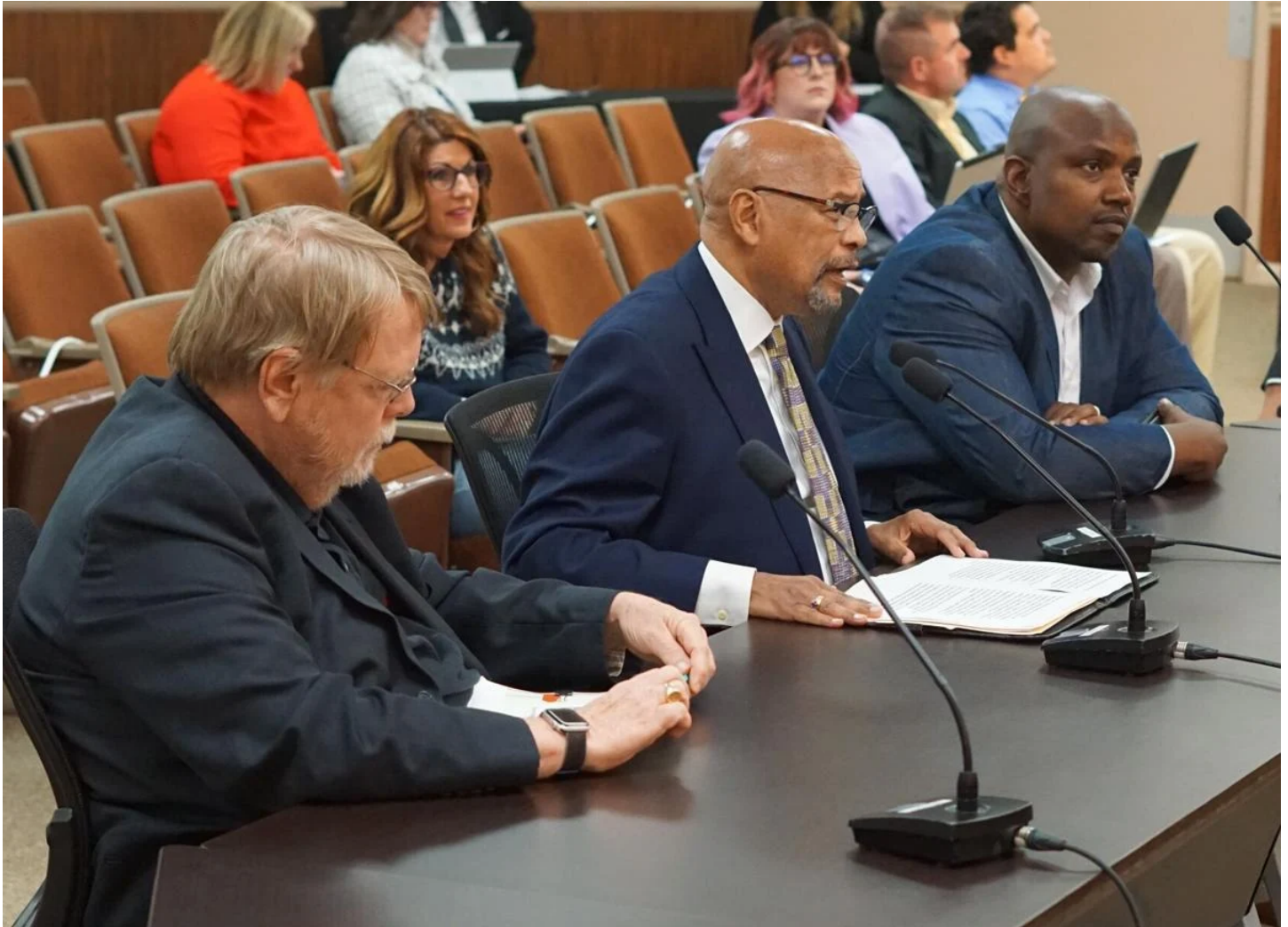
The Forrest name, however, continues to be on display on the ROTC building despite the MTSU administration asking state officials to allow for the removal of the Confederate cavalry leader's name.

"What does that mean for ROTC students, particularly those ROTC students of color, to be in that building named in honor of someone who would have traded them like livestock and dehumanize them," Windrow said.

## Franklin aldermen mostly support adding markers for lynching victims

By Coleman Bomar • Staff Writer

Mar 15, 2023



Carroll Van West (from left), Kenneth Hill and Lamont Turner speak to BOMA about proposed markers memorializing African American lynching victims.

Coleman Bomar

At a work session Tuesday, the Franklin Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BOMA) discussed erecting three markers memorializing African American lynching victims from Reconstruction and Jim Crow era Williamson County.

The Williamson Remembers Committee — consisting of community members such as Franklin Tomorrow Executive Director Mindy Tate, African American Heritage Society President Alma McLemore, Franklin Mayor Ken Moore and Chris Williamson of the Fuller Story — advocates for one marker to be placed in Franklin's square and two near Bicentennial Park. Attorney Julian Bibb and the Rev. Kenneth Hill, pastor at Shorter Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, co-chair the committee.

Hill, alongside Center for Historic Preservation Director Carroll Van West and Lamont Turner, a community advocate, spoke to the aldermen to gain input and support for the initiative.

“These markers would serve as a reminder and generate conversations about the inhumane treatment of Franklin’s African American citizens,” Hill said. “If we don’t reckon with the pain, we’re not grappling with our history in an honest way. The relevance of this history is a measure of a people’s humanity.”

At-large Alderman Brandy Blanton agreed the markers would be an important addition to Franklin’s historical narrative.

“A few years ago, we started really trying to uncover and tell a more balanced story, and I think this is the next obvious step for us to continue to balance the scales of that,” she said. “I think about people who I went to high school with who I heard say they never felt comfortable at the square or they never felt comfortable in the places I just assumed were shared by all.”

At-large Alderman Gabrielle Hanson was opposed to erecting the markers.

“You have to think about everybody who’s lost a life at the hand of someone else,” she said. “Maybe it was someone who abused their child, and the child died, does that mean their life is diminished, and it wasn’t special enough to go on a placard?”

“We’ve lost a lot of people to things that weren’t right, and we continue to lose people to things that aren’t right even today, and it’s not fair to represent a handful and not represent all. I think this is going to create a bigger chasm in our community.”

She went on to claim that the markers represented “a false narrative behind social justice.”

Drafts of texts on the markers recount the factual history behind Williamson County’s many lynchings.

For example, the beginning of the second marker reads:

*“In the summer of 1868, a series of documented racially motivated terror killings happened in Williamson County. On July 19, local Ku Klux Klan members lynched an African American, William Guthrie, for allegedly assaulting Mary Ezell, a White woman. Next, unidentified African American residents killed John Ezell, Mary’s brother, who they believed was guilty of Guthrie’s lynching. The Klan escalated the violence by lynching three victims in August.”*

While aldermen voiced varying opinions on the markers, Hill, West and Turner were still “encouraged” after the meeting.

“We want to stimulate that conversation because there are other people in the community who have those same thoughts,” Turner said. “The only way we flush [those thoughts] out is by servicing [people], bringing them out and becoming a better community.”

The next step for the Williamson Remembers Committee is to receive input from the Civil War Historical Commission, and afterward, BOMA will vote on whether to allow the markers.

## Tags

Franklin Board Of Mayor And Aldermen African American Lynching Victims Williamson Remembers Committee  
Civil War Kenneth Hill Mindy Tate Ken Moore Chris Williamson Brandy Blanton Gabrielle Hanson

---

**Coleman Bomar**

Staff Writer

# CHATTANOOGAN

CHATTANOOGA'S SOURCE FOR LOCAL BREAKING NEWS

## Trailblazing African American Photographer Celebrated This Summer

Monday, May 22, 2023



This summer, the remarkable life and contributions of *Horace Brazelton (1877 – 1956)* are the subject of a public exhibit titled, “*Through the Lens: The Life and Legacy of Horace Brazelton.*” Curated by historian *Stefanie Haire*, the exhibit, hosted by *Ruby Falls*, shares the groundbreaking career and empowering community leadership of *Brazelton*.

Exhibit admission is free and open to the public *June 7 – Sept. 15* at *Ruby Falls* in the circa 1929 castle. *Ruby Falls* tickets are not required to visit the exhibit. The exhibition is open from *8 a.m. – 8 p.m.*

---

As the first African American to open a professional photography studio in Chattanooga, Horace Brazelton’s prolific career photographing middle-class Black communities across the region spanned the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 1904 to 1956. His camera lens captured countless portraits of Black families and individuals, as well as Black church, professional and civic groups, at a time when access to photography was limited, and mass media frequently portrayed African Americans unfavorably and inaccurately.

The exhibit features Brazelton’s artistic merits as a nationally recognized, award-winning portrait photographer whose work embodied the humanity of the people he depicted, as well as his considerable endeavors as a community leader. During the era of Jim Crow laws in the South, Brazelton supported and invested in Black Chattanoogaans. As a proponent of civic responsibility, Brazelton facilitated voter registration drives and voter participation, encouraged property ownership to support community



stability, established Black history remembrances, and championed small business development and economic growth in the Black business district located on East 9th Street, now called Martin Luther King Boulevard, and in the surrounding area.

Drawing on several years of extensive research, historian and exhibit curator Stefanie Haire presents the exhibition that examines the roots of Brazelton's legacy through his portrait photography and community contributions. Her ongoing research has been in partnership with the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University and Picnooga (Chattanooga Historical Society), with contributions by Bessie Smith Cultural Center, the Library of Congress, the African American Cemetery Preservation Fund, Presbyterian Historical Society, Walden's Ridge Civic League, Dr. Earnestine Jenkins, River City Company, Emory University, the Chattanooga Public Library, and the Southeast Tennessee Development District.

"These photos capture more than just simple moments in time, but rather represent hundreds of lives who helped build Chattanooga, and the memory of their legacies," said Stefanie Haire, historian and curator of the exhibit. She adds, "the largest body of Mr. Brazelton's portraits remains in private family collections or are now difficult to locate."

"Ruby Falls is honored to host this exhibit," said Hugh Morrow, Ruby Falls president and CEO. "Horace Brazelton was truly a talented artist, remarkable entrepreneur and committed community leader. We are delighted and humbled to share his story and contributions."

[Learn](#)[Visit](#)[Preserve](#)[Our Work](#)[SEARCH](#) [DONATE](#)[JOIN](#)

NEWS

# American Battlefield Trust Honors Preservation Champions with Leadership Awards During Annual Conference

*Robert Clutsam*

## Leading battlefield preservation organization recognizes the efforts of Dr. Carroll Van West and Tennessee Wars Commission

Mary Koik, (202) 367-1861 x7231

Colleen Cheslak-Poulton, (202) 367-1861 x7234

### June 27, 2023

**(Franklin, Tenn.)** — At the culminating banquet of its 2023 Annual Conference in Franklin, Tenn., the American Battlefield Trust recognized two top battlefield preservation advocates with the organization's annual preservation leadership awards. Dr. Carroll Van West, state historian and longtime director of the Middle Tennessee State University Center for Historic Preservation, received the State Preservation Leadership Award and the Tennessee Wars Commission received the Brian C. Pohanka Preservation Organization Award. These leaders were recognized for their efforts in helping advance history and preservation in the Volunteer State.

“Our work to preserve, inspire and educate requires passion and dedication from individuals from every corner of the nation,” said Trust President David Duncan. “The preservation leaders we recognized in Franklin are a strong representation of the hard work and commitment that it takes to advocate for our history and our hallowed grounds.”

For more than two decades, the Trust has used its awards program to recognize individuals and groups for their unwavering support in protecting tangible links to our history. From historians and National Park Service personnel to lawmakers and local preservation groups, the Trust has been honored to recognize the efforts of these advocates through the years. Despite a myriad of backgrounds, Trust award recipients have ensured their work will have lasting contributions to historic preservation.

The Tennessee Wars Commission was presented with the Trust's Brian C. Pohanka Preservation Organization Award in recognition of its work in advancing the study of military history in Tennessee. The state organization has successfully worked to preserve, protect and restore battlefields and historic sites in Tennessee related to conflicts in the 18th and 19th centuries — including the French and Indian War, Revolutionary War, Mexican-American War, War of 1812 and the Civil War. Together, the Trust and the Tennessee Wars Commission have saved hundreds of acres across the state and worked to administer grants related to interpretation and restoration work. The award is named after the late Brian Pohanka, a lauded historian and a founding member of the modern battlefield preservation movement.

“Bringing people closer to Tennessee’s wartime stories, and the many perspectives they encompass, provides pathways to understanding the great depth of the Volunteer State’s past,” said Tennessee Wars Commission Program Director Nina Scall. “It is an honor for the Tennessee Wars Commission to be recognized by the American Battlefield Trust — who we’ve partnered with on numerous occasions — for the extensive work we partake in to protect and uplift these precious pieces of Tennessee’s military heritage.”



Trust President David Duncan presents the Brian C. Pohanka Preservation Organization Award at the Trust's 2023 Annual Conference. *Buddy Secor*

Additionally, Dr. Carroll Van West was presented with the Trust's State Preservation Leadership Award, for his work in championing Civil War history and preservation in Tennessee. As the gubernatorially appointed state historian, Dr. Van West has been a strong voice for preservation across Tennessee. Currently he leads the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University, highlighting the power of place to younger generations. "Understanding the Civil War is fundamental to Tennessee history," said Van West. "Preserving the places and stories associated with a time that changed America forever is always worth fighting for."

Earlier in the week, **during a press conference at Nashville's Fort Negley**, the Trust presented Mayor John Cooper and Jeneene Blackman, president of the African American Cultural Alliance, with its Preservation Legacy Awards in recognition of their longstanding work on behalf of that important site. Continuing its recognition of preservation champions, the Trust paid tribute to novelist **Robert Hicks**, and former Executive Director of the Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association **Mary Ann Peckham** during the weekend.

The American Battlefield Trust is dedicated to preserving America's hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization has protected more than 56,000 acres associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War across 155 sites in 25 states. Learn more at [www.battlefields.org](http://www.battlefields.org).

###

*The American Battlefield Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations to the Trust are tax deductible to the full extent allowable under the law. Federal Identification Number (EIN): 54-1426643.*

© 2023 American Battlefield Trust

AREA SNAPSHOTS

# AREA SNAPSHOTS: student discusses history, garden tour on the way

**Tracy Thornton**

Jul 14, 2023

## History major to give public lecture

At 7 p.m. Wednesday, July 19, the B'nai Israel Cultural Center at 327 W. Galena St., will host a presentation by Morgan Condrey, a master's student in public history at Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation.

Condrey is fulfilling a two-month internship with the Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives, working with Butte's Jewish community to transform the B'nai Israel Temple into a cultural center.

She will be highlighting her work as a public historian and how she has completed community-based projects in different spaces. During her presentation, she will share examples of how Butte has participated in public history and how everyone can get involved in preserving local and family history.

The lecture is free, but contributions to the Cultural Center are welcome.

---

# The Tennessee Tribune

LOCAL

## New Roof Planned for Old School



by **Clint Confehr**  
August 3, 2023



Proceeds from the sale of surplus government property are seen as a prospective source of funds to pay for a new roof on West Gaines School where Black students were educated in Lawrenceburg before desegregation. Plans continue to make it a community center. File photo

*By Clint Confehr*

LAWRENCEBURG, TN — A new roof is proposed for West Gaines School, closed since integration, now seen as a prospective community center with help starting on the county level.

“We don’t want to give them something that’s not dried-in and just going to deteriorate,” Lawrence County Executive David Morgan said late last week, adding, “We’re still trying to figure out some of the deeding issues.”

From 1937 to 1964, West Gaines School was where Black students were educated here during segregation. Thereafter, it was used for public offices and storage. Now, it needs stabilization. Advocates for its reuse as an educational center have been working toward that for years.

With community and local leaders’ support, West Gaines School Community Center Inc. President James Wallace and Morgan are working to protect the building. That includes budgetary steps toward transfer of several pieces of surplus government property by sale or gift.

“They’re probably going to work through things so it may not cost the county anything,” Wallace said. “They’ve got some properties that they’ve got to get rid of, and so, they’d use that money to put a roof on it.”

The building on West Gains Street is about a 4-minute walk from Morgan’s office, less from where county commissioners meet.

West Gaines School Community Center Inc. has been accepting donations including Sunday offerings last month. The group has raised nearly \$20,000 for interior renovations and insurance, Wallace said. Morgan said the public-private project could lead to the property being: placed on a register of historic places; and established as a clubhouse for boys and girls, an after-school study hall, and a museum.

Leaders consulted with State Historian Dr. Carroll Van West, director of the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University, Wallace said. Based on remarks from the MTSU history professor and his staffers, Wallace said “The bones of the building are good. The gym part of the building is not hurt at all. It’s the front part of it that is in the worst state.”

Morgan said he believes at least three bids are required for any county contract over \$25,000.

“I’m estimating the roof is going to cost about \$40,000,” Morgan said. The county executive’s construction trades experience is as an electrician, so he offered a “layman’s estimate” for: “a metal roof; new soffits around the edges; and all the wood facia ... wrapped in aluminum. I’m assuming



they'll do some reconfiguring" of rooms.

Asked when that and the transfer might be completed, Morgan said his goal is to be done "before Oct. 1."

If that timeline works, the county executive, who's pastored a church in Lawrenceburg, said they "could have a Thanksgiving in there where all parties and different races come together to celebrate the fact that we're getting this project going."

Wallace said he hopes that the roof and building transfer will lead to the award of financial grants "specifically for things like this."

Clean-up crews recently improved the property, he said. "I think the county will see something happening and people will become enthused."

Community statesmen — including: immediate past County Executive TR Williams; Society American Nosherie proprietor Jason Grayson; parishioners at First Church and St. John's United Methodist Church; area residents who attended a fundraiser at Barry Hougues Park; and state Rep. Clay Doggett — are an indication of support for building renovation. Wallace said he spoke with state Rep. Kip Capley before the 2022 election and plans to reach-out again. Capley's district includes part of what Doggett represented before redistricting.

West Gaines School "was built for children and you want to keep that concept," Wallace said. "We haven't gotten there, but I'm very optimistic that we'll get there."

© 2023 Insightful coverage of Nashville and Middle, TN news.

Proudly powered by Newspaper by Automattic

CIVIL RIGHTS

## Lawrence County group working to save historic segregated school building

A campaign to restore West Gaines School raises funds to turn the relic of a segregated area into a museum

BY: **LONNIE LEE HOOD** - AUGUST 7, 2023 6:01 AM



📷 Grass and weeds grow just outside the doors of West Gaines School in Lawrence County. A group is raising money to restore the relic of Tennessee's segregated era and turn it into a museum. (Photo: Lonnie Lee Hood)

In parts of 410 West Gaines Street in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, sunlight and rainwater poured through holes in the roof, unchecked for years – until a new blue roof tarp was placed over the July 30 weekend. Moss and grass still grow over portions of the wooden floorboards,

and broken tiles hang from the ceiling. While other parts of the building are in better condition, members of the West Gaines School Community Center are organizing and fundraising to save the city's former segregated school and transform it into a museum and educational space.

The school opened in 1937 after an intense legal battle and closed when US schools were desegregated in 1964. During its 27 years in operation, Black children from Lawrenceburg attended elementary and junior high. There was a ball field, playground, gym and cafeteria – although former students say their books came secondhand from white schools.

James Wallace, a former West Gaines student and president of the organization working to restore the building, says it's important to preserve this part of Lawrenceburg's history, but the group is racing against time. The MTSU Center for Historic Preservation has helped the group draft a preservation plan as they apply for funding, but to receive it, ownership of the building must be turned over before the October grant deadline. Wallace, who is 67 and attended school at West Gaines until the fourth grade, said his organization has been working on the project since 2019.



📷 James Wallace, a former student of West Gaines School and president of the organization working to restore it, checks out the building in July 2023. (Photo: Lonnie Lee Hood)

“We’re the third group to try to do this,” Wallace said during a barbecue fundraiser the group held at a local church. “I think they waited the other ones out. We’ve got to be in this for the long haul.”

The school was originally slated to be built in 1931, but in April of that year a coalition of white citizens filed an injunction to prevent construction. In a quote from case documents included in the group's preservation plan, Derrick and his neighbors said they were “antagonistic to the erection and construction of a negro school” because it was “repugnant to all white inhabitants and property owners.” The case went all the way to the Tennessee Supreme Court, which ruled against Derrick in 1932. By that time, however, the program that

would've constructed the school had closed. From 1932 to 1937, the Lawrence County Board of Education planned the construction of three new schools, and West Gaines opened in the fall of 1937.

Wallace said the community center group has raised about \$20,000 so far, all of which will be used for renovations if they're able to secure the building's deed. According to the preservation plan, one of the most costly fixes and immediate fixes will be getting a new roof, but the building also needs new gutters, windows, exterior and interior paint, a series of inspections, landscaping, floor and ceiling repairs and more. The oldest portion of the school will be turned into a museum complete with displays, exhibits and educational material about local history.

"They got behind the Old Jail Museum; let them get behind this," Wallace said. "Not a place where we're incarcerated, but where we're educated. I think it's a project that's worth saving. A lot of people in the county feel the same way."

After West Gaines closed, the Lawrence County Board of Education used the building until the county's Human Resources department took control of it in 2008. Since abandoned, the county had sectioned the former gym into offices. This is part of the reason that Shirley Dennis, Wallace's older sister and fellow group organizer, said both kids and adults in Lawrenceburg no longer remember the school's history.

"[My nephew] had no idea what the school was," Dennis said. "I don't know if my kids knew what it was. My grandkids do now, but prior to this they didn't."

Dennis, 80, was among the group of Lawrence County students who attended segregated schools throughout their entire education. In high school, Dennis would arrive at the West Gaines location and ride a bus to Mt. Pleasant, more than 20 miles away. Students often got on and off the bus in the dark since the journey took about an hour each way.



📷 Empty since 1964, the West Gaines School building is in need of a new roof, new gutters and removal of overgrown grass and bushes. (Photo: Lonnie Lee Hood)

In their proposal, the group highlighted important Black educators in Tennessee history, including Principal Joe Thomas. Thomas was born in 1906 in Perry County, received a master's degree in educational administration from the historic Fisk University in Nashville and in 1938 was named principal of West Gaines. In 1940, he was elected president of the Tennessee Colored State Teachers' Association. Other prominent educators at the school included mother and daughter duo Vera Davis and Evilina Rhodes.

Mike Pilkinton, co-founder of [VisitLawrenceburgTN.com](http://VisitLawrenceburgTN.com), attended a West Gaines Community Center fundraiser and said it's refreshing to see more inclusivity in the city.

"We have The Farm community. We have the Amish community," Pilkinton said. "Why can't we also teach people about the Black community?"

In an email statement, Lawrence County Executive David Morgan said he expects the building's deed to be turned over to the West Gaines Community Center ahead of their October deadline.

"We anticipate deeding this historic property over to the West Gaines School Community Group in the very near future," Morgan said. "As work on this community project continues, more grant opportunities will be available to them. Preserving this important piece of Lawrence County history is something we can all get behind."



GET THE MORNING HEADLINES DELIVERED TO YOUR INBOX

SUBSCRIBE



REPUBLISH

Our stories may be republished online or in print under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. We ask that you edit only for style or to shorten, provide proper attribution and link to our web site. Please see our republishing guidelines for use of photos and graphics.



### LONNIE LEE HOOD

Lonnie Lee Hood is a queer Nashville-based writer covering justice, LGBTQ issues and more. They are an amateur roller-skater and live with their hedgehog, Noodle, and three-legged cat, Tom. They are writing a debut novel and have published poetry and sci-fi/fantasy short stories.

#### MORE FROM AUTHOR



Now more than ever, tough and fair journalism is important. The Tennessee Lookout is your watchdog, telling the stories of politics and policy that affect the people of the Volunteer State.

[DEIJ Policy](#) | [Ethics Policy](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)



Our stories may be republished online or in print under Creative Commons license CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. We ask that you edit only for style or to shorten, provide proper attribution and link to our web site.



Schedule 7

CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE ACTUAL, PROPOSED, AND REQUESTED BUDGET

Institution:

Miclle Tennessee State University

Center:

Historic Preservation

	FY 2022-23 Actual			FY 2023-24 Proposed			FY 2024-25 Requested		
	Matching	Appropri.	Total	Matching	Appropri.	Total	Matching	Appropri.	Total
<b>Expenditures</b>									
<b>Salaries</b>									
Faculty	\$105,103	\$58,983	\$164,086	\$125,943	\$53,904	\$179,847	\$128,462	\$54,982	\$183,444
Other Professional	\$158,716	\$59,005	\$217,721	\$159,744	\$94,728	\$254,472	\$162,939	\$96,623	\$259,561
Clerical/ Supporting	\$38,146		\$38,146	\$88,036		\$88,036	\$89,797		\$89,797
Assistantships	\$45,458		\$45,458	\$45,000		\$45,000	\$45,000		\$45,000
<b>Total Salaries</b>	<b>\$347,423</b>	<b>\$117,988</b>	<b>\$465,412</b>	<b>\$418,723</b>	<b>\$148,632</b>	<b>\$567,355</b>	<b>\$426,197</b>	<b>\$151,605</b>	<b>\$577,802</b>
Fringe Benefits	\$132,439	\$48,668	\$181,107	\$105,292	\$51,668	\$156,960	\$132,439	\$51,668	\$184,107
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>\$479,862</b>	<b>\$166,656</b>	<b>\$646,519</b>	<b>\$524,015</b>	<b>\$200,300</b>	<b>\$724,315</b>	<b>\$558,636</b>	<b>\$203,273</b>	<b>\$761,909</b>
<b>Non-Personnel</b>									
Travel	\$2,068	\$15,348	\$17,416	\$5,500		\$5,500	\$2,500		\$2,500
Software			\$0			\$0			\$0
Books & Journals			\$0			\$0			\$0
Other Supplies	\$1,003		\$1,003	\$2,118		\$2,118	\$8,500		\$8,500
Equipment			\$0			\$0			\$0
Maintenance			\$0			\$0			\$0
Scholarships	\$7,182		\$7,182	\$8,000		\$8,000	\$8,000		\$8,000
Consultants			\$0			\$0			\$0
Renovation			\$0			\$0			\$0
Other (Specify):			\$0			\$0			\$0
Printing of Supplies by Institution	\$25	\$2	\$27	\$282		\$282	\$300		\$300
Duplicating and Copy Costs	\$456	\$3,892	\$4,348	\$502		\$502	\$3,892		\$3,892
Printing Publications by Institution		\$3,090	\$3,090	\$3,000		\$3,000	\$3,000		\$3,000
Other Professional and Admin Serv		\$2,643	\$2,643	\$3,000		\$3,000	\$3,000		\$3,000
Telephone Local and Long Distance	\$2,725		\$2,725	\$3,000		\$3,000	\$3,000		\$3,000
Postal Charges	\$418		\$418	\$1,000		\$1,000	\$1,000		\$1,000
Freight and Shipping Charges	\$45		\$45			\$0			\$0
Advertising	\$35		\$35			\$0			\$0
Dues and Subscriptions	\$994		\$994	\$1,000		\$1,000	\$1,000		\$1,000
Conference Workshops	\$199		\$199	\$200		\$200			\$0
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		\$370	\$370			\$0	\$1,000		\$1,000
			\$0			\$0			\$0
			\$0			\$0			\$0
<b>Total Non-Personnel</b>	<b>\$15,151</b>	<b>\$25,344</b>	<b>\$40,495</b>	<b>\$27,602</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$27,602</b>	<b>\$35,192</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$35,192</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$495,013</b>	<b>\$192,000</b>	<b>\$687,013</b>	<b>\$551,617</b>	<b>\$200,300</b>	<b>\$751,917</b>	<b>\$593,828</b>	<b>\$203,273</b>	<b>\$797,101</b>
<b>Revenue</b>									
New State Appropriation		\$192,000	\$192,000		\$200,300	\$200,300		\$203,273	\$203,273
Carryover State Appropriation			\$0			\$0			\$0
New Matching Funds	\$521,351		\$521,351	\$525,279		\$525,279	\$593,828		\$593,828
Carryover from Previous Matching Funds			\$0	\$26,338		\$26,338			\$0
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$521,351</b>	<b>\$192,000</b>	<b>\$713,351</b>	<b>\$551,617</b>	<b>\$200,300</b>	<b>\$751,917</b>	<b>\$593,828</b>	<b>\$203,273</b>	<b>\$797,101</b>