

MISSISSIPPI HISTORY NEWSLETTER

MDAH
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF
ARCHIVES & HISTORY

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Two Mississippi Museums archaeology staff: Meg Cook, Jessica Walzer, Robert Warren, Arianna Kitchens, and Sarah Durham

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Judge Anderson Steps Down

The day in 2007 when Judge Reuben Anderson joined our board of trustees was the beginning of a delightful and fruitful relationship for the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. We quickly learned to rely on his wise counsel.

Judge Anderson believes wholeheartedly in the project of the Two Mississippi Museums and was an essential partner in accomplishing the fundraising and community building it required. We watched with awe, again, when he stepped up in 2020, a year of the pandemic and tumultuous racial protests, to lead the Commission to Redesign the Mississippi State Flag. His stature and inclusive manner helped guide the selection of a flag that the public endorsed overwhelmingly in a statewide vote. Judge Anderson decided to step down from the board effective this month, having served eighteen months as president.

We will miss Judge Anderson’s leadership, but we know we are better than when he joined us. We look forward to working with our new board president Spence Flatgard.



Katie Blount
Director
Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Katie Blount



Transparency, Respect, Connection
The Mississippi Department of Archives and History proactively engages in repatriation and disposition of Native American Ancestors and cultural items in compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).
We emphasize *transparency, respect, and connection* to the original inhabitants of Mississippi lands.

MDAH NAGPRA website

MDAH Completes Largest Repatriation of Native American Ancestors in State History

MDAH has transferred the remains of 403 Native Americans and eighty-three lots of burial objects to the Chickasaw Nation. This is the largest return of human remains in Mississippi history and the first for MDAH.

“This repatriation is a huge milestone for our institution and our Tribal partners,” said MDAH director Katie Blount. “We are committed to the repatriation of human remains and cultural objects in the department’s archaeological collections.”

Since the nineteenth century, archaeological excavations have unearthed hundreds of the ancestral remains of people who once inhabited the state and whose cultures continue today. The passage of the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) gave Native populations the right to claim ancestors and cultural objects in the care of institutions receiving federal funds.

MDAH worked closely with Tribal representatives and the National NAGPRA Program to transfer these human remains over the course of more than two years.

MDAH sought guidance in preparing the remains for reburial, which will take place later this year.

“The Chickasaw Nation has developed a strong working relationship with MDAH as a result of this repatriation,” said Amber Hood, director of Historic Preservation and Repatriation, The Chickasaw Nation. “Caring for our ancestors is extremely important to us, and we appreciate the dedication and transparency their staff has shown throughout the consultation process.”

“It is important to remember that these are people, buried with items with strong cultural ties to their communities, the same way that people today might be laid to rest wearing a wedding band,” said Meg Cook, MDAH director of archaeology collections. “While these artifacts inform the archaeological record, it is our ethical and legal obligation to see that they are returned.”

MDAH is thankful for its volunteers, who handsewed muslin bags that were used to carefully wrap each individual with their belongings. This material was purchased partly with funds from a National NAGPRA Program grant.

MDAH has created a new website (pictured above) that prioritizes the repatriation of human remains and cultural items in the department’s archaeological collection. Visit <https://nagpra.mdah.ms.gov/>.

“Caring for our ancestors is extremely important to us, and we appreciate the dedication and transparency [MDAH] staff has shown throughout the consultation process.”
—Amber Hood, director of Historic Preservation & Repatriation, The Chickasaw Nation



“Mississippi Burning” Case Files Open for Researchers

Case files, photographs, and other records documenting the 1964 murders of civil rights activists James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner are now available to researchers at MDAH.

The materials were compiled by the Mississippi Attorney General’s office in its 2004 reopening of the Mississippi Burning (code name MiBurn) case and investigation, which culminated in the June 2005 trial and conviction of Edgar Ray Killen. Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood officially closed the investigation in 2016, and the files were transferred to MDAH in spring 2019.

The materials, dating from 1964 to 2007, include case files, Federal Bureau of Investigation memoranda, research notes, photographs of the exhumation of the victims’ bodies and subsequent autopsies, aerial photographs of the burial site, federal informant reports, and witness testimonies.

Goodman and Schwerner were two of the hundreds of out-of-state volunteers who joined Mississippi Freedom Summer in 1964. The primary goals of the project were to register voters and conduct Freedom Schools. James Chaney was a Mississippian and civil rights organizer with the Congress of Racial Equality.

Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner were abducted and killed on June 21, 1964. In October 1967 the federal government charged eighteen men with conspiracy, including Killen. Neshoba County Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price, Ku Klux Klan Imperial Wizard Sam Bowers, and five others were convicted. The jury failed to convict Killen, a former Baptist minister and klansman. In 2005 Killen was convicted of manslaughter in the 1964 slayings.



Chef Nick Wallace Brings Celebrity, Fresh Taste to Two Mississippi Museums

The new Nissan Café by Nick Wallace Culinary is now open in the Nancy and Ray Neilsen Hall of History at the Two Mississippi Museums. Spearheaded by executive chef Nick Wallace, the new café will offer a wide assortment of southern and French-inspired cuisine to museum visitors during breakfast and lunch hours.

“We are excited to have Nick Wallace Culinary at the Two Mississippi Museums,” said Katie Blount, MDAH director. “Chef Wallace has a commitment to healthy, fresh food that is inspired by history and flavors of the South.”

Named Mississippi’s Best Chef of 2020 and a member of the Best Chefs America, Wallace has been featured on several international culinary competitions on the Cooking Channel and Food Network and won the Food Network’s *Chopped: Alton’s Challenge* in 2017 and its *Fire Masters* television series title in April 2021.

He has also been published in culinary magazines such as *Southern Living* and served as executive chef at the James Beard House in New York and at Jackson’s King Edward Hotel.

A native of Edwards, Wallace acquired his culinary talents from his grandmothers, Lennel Donald and Queen Morris, who both practiced southern home-cooking.

Program Highlights



Jennifer Rose, education specialist at the Eudora Welty House & Garden, reads during *Storytime on the Side Porch*.



Author Curtis Wilkie discusses Ku Klux Klan violence during the Civil Rights Movement for *History Is Lunch*.



Jimmy Quinn, a certified specialist of spirits, leads a tasting of Prohibition-era cocktails at the Two Mississippi Museums.



Mississippi Poet Laureate Beth Ann Fennelly reads from her work at the Eudora Welty House & Garden.



Rukia Lumumba, a community activist, reads about Fannie Lou Hamer at the Two Mississippi Museums.



Chris DiGiovanni, curator, discusses photography during *History Happy Hour* at the Two Mississippi Museums.

New Book Explores Mississippi History through Architecture

A new book uses Mississippi's civic structures, log cabins, schools, mansions, and skyscrapers to broaden our understanding of the state's history. *Buildings of Mississippi*, co-authored by Jennifer V. O. Baughn and Michael Fazio with contributions by Mimi Miller, is the definitive guide to understanding Mississippi's rich architectural heritage.

"*Buildings of Mississippi* is the first field guide that covers all periods from prehistoric mounds to buildings of the 21st century," said Baughn, chief architectural historian at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. "I hope the book shows visitors the variety of Mississippi's built environment and gives Mississippians a reason to take a second look at their hometowns."

Buildings of Mississippi contains more than 500 building entries, 250 illustrations, and thirty maps. Each entry includes an architectural description of the structure and a brief history. The book is a volume in the Buildings of the United States series of the Society of Architectural Historians. Baughn spent nine years writing *Buildings of Mississippi* with Fazio, a longtime professor of architecture at Mississippi State University who died last year.

"Michael Fazio was a mentor to generations of architecture students from MSU, and I was so honored to work with him as co-author on *Buildings of Mississippi*," said Baughn. "He was a good friend, and I miss his guidance and laughter."

Baughn and Fazio divided the work on the book geographically—because Fazio lived in Starkville, he took care of the north and east central regions. They jointly wrote the entries for the Coast, picking out sites as they drove along Highway 90. "The book integrates the racial landscape by examining both black and white neighborhoods and landmarks," said Baughn.



"Buildings of Mississippi is an invaluable resource and a pleasure to read," said MDAH director Katie Blount. "Baughn and Fazio offer a fascinating, thoughtful, and beautifully written chronicle of the evolution of our state's built environment, paying particular attention to the complexities of race and class that have shaped our landscape and culture."

Signed copies of *Buildings of Mississippi* are for sale at the Mississippi Museum Store. Call 601-576-6921 or email store@mdah.ms.gov for more information.

Mississippi Distilled Exhibit Wins Award, New MDAH Podcast Showcases Mississippi History

The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) has awarded MDAH its Award of Excellence for the *Mississippi Distilled: Prohibition, Piety, and Politics* special exhibit at the Two Mississippi Museums.

The AASLH Leadership in History Awards is the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history. *Mississippi Distilled* was an immersive exhibition exploring the state's volatile relationship with alcohol from the colonial period to today. It was made possible with the support of Southern Beverage Company, Inc. and McLaughlin, PC.

MDAH has launched a new podcast featuring authors and experts discussing the state's landmark moments and overlooked stories. *Speaking of Mississippi* explores the Civil War Siege of Jackson, the state's 1878 yellow fever epidemic, the desegregation of the capital city's public swimming pools, the 1970 Jackson State shootings, and more during its first season.

Speaking of Mississippi is made possible by the Community Foundation for Mississippi through its John and Lucy Shackelford Charitable Fund. Episodes are available on Apple Podcasts, SoundCloud, Spotify, Stitcher and other podcasting platforms, as well as on the MDAH website, mdah.ms.gov.

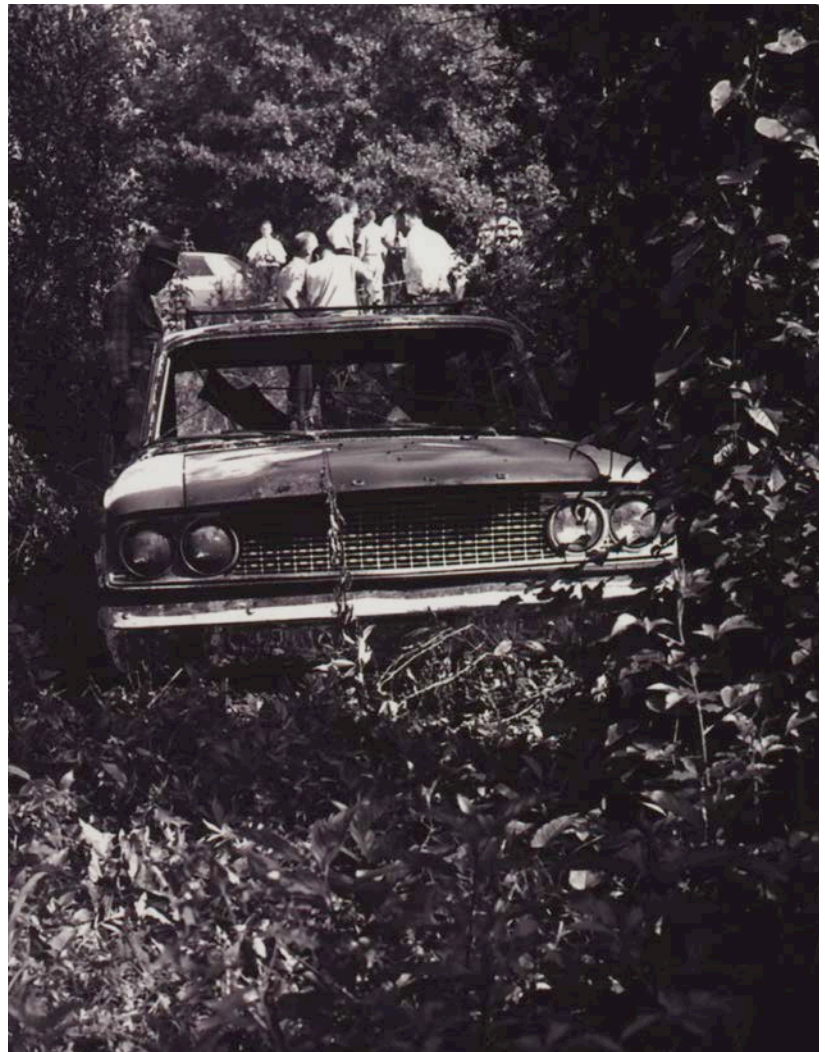
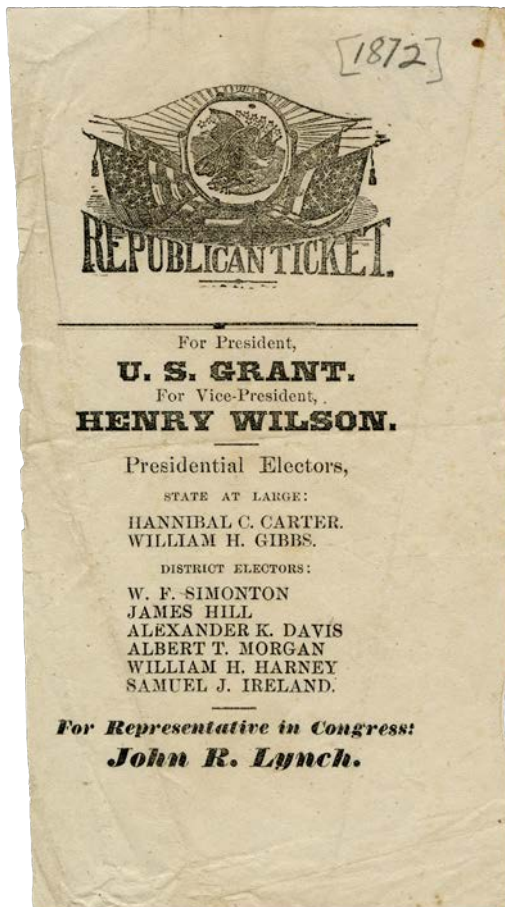


From the Collection

Built in the 1930s, this wooden baby incubator was used as late as 1950 when Dr. W. C. Simmons of Bay Springs placed Kendrick Blakeney in it as a premature baby. Blakeney donated the incubator to MDAH in 2019. The incubator's central glass window has a painting of a girl carrying flowers.

From the Archives

This campaign flyer advertising the 1872 Republican ticket in Mississippi is on temporary loan to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture for an exhibition about Reconstruction. Mississippi's 1872 electorate included newly enfranchised African American men, and Republicans carried the state.



Newly Available in the Archives

This photograph from FBI files documenting the 1964 murders of civil rights activists James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner shows the Ford station wagon the men were driving on the day they were killed. The photo is among the records that are now available to researchers at MDAH (See story on page 4).

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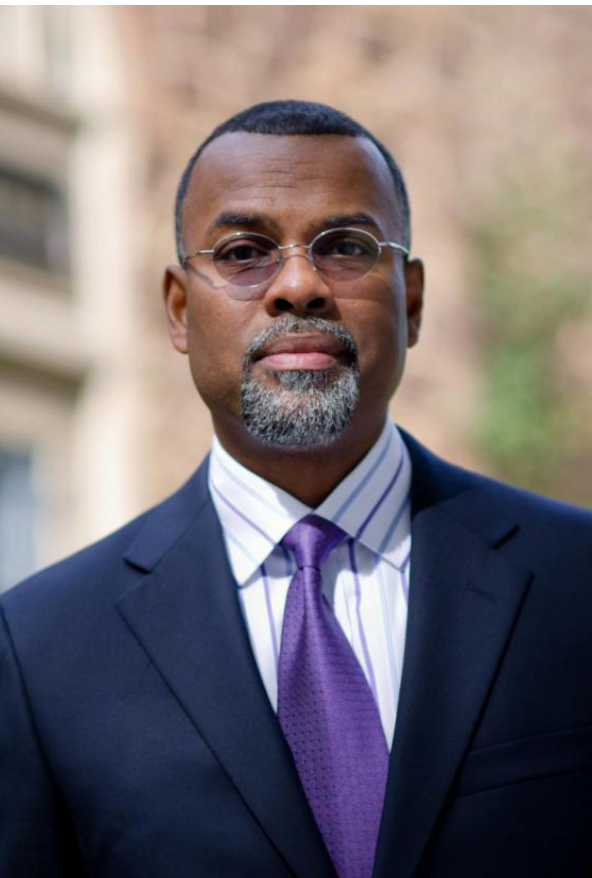
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Katie Blount, director

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Eddie S. Glaude Jr.

Mark Your Calendar

Un(re)solved

Friday, August 27, through Sunday, October 24

A special exhibit at the Two Mississippi Museums tells the story of lives cut short and examines a federal effort to investigate more than 150 civil rights era cold cases.

Medgar Wiley Evers Lecture

Thursday, October 14, 6 p.m.

Moss Point native Eddie S. Glaude Jr., chair of the Department of African American Studies at Princeton University and author of *Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and its Urgent Lessons for Our Own*, will speak at the Two Mississippi Museums.

Veterans Day Program

Wednesday, November 10, 10:30 a.m.

Honor Mississippians who have served in the US Armed Forces during a ceremony at the Two Mississippi Museums. Co-hosted by the Daughters of the American Revolution, Mississippi Veterans Affairs, and the Mississippi War Veterans Memorial Commission.