



Volume I

January 2018

# HNF hosts annual meeting on January 18



The Historic Natchez Foundation will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, January 18, 2018, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Natchez Institute, 108 South Commerce Street. The annual meeting is free and open to the public and the foundation encourages everyone to come and bring a friend.

The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. with a cocktail reception and art exhibit, entitled *Out of the Archives, a Collaboration*, by

Jamey Junkin Hudnall. Photographs in the archives of the Historic Natchez Foundation inspired the art for the exhibit.



Artist Jamey Junkin Hudnall

In the spring of 2017, Jamey held an exhibit of his work at the Natchez Institute. People were captivated by the familiar subject matter, interpreted in Jamey's unique style, and he quickly sold the

majority of the artwork in the exhibit. The art appealed to all age groups, and purchasers included elementary student Gibson Hillyer, with financing from his parents, and nonagenarian Dottie Stubbs.

One piece of art to be exhibited is Jamey's interpretation of a photograph of Fort Rosalie by Henry or Earl Norman that dates to the early 20th century and is in the Dr. Thomas H. and Joan W. Gandy Collection, LSU Special Collections.



The annual meeting will conclude with a short business meeting at 7:00 p.m. to elect new board members and present awards for 2017. The foundation annually recognizes those who make contributions in the fields of preservation, restoration, and history.

## MISSISSIPPI MUSEUM MANIA—JANUARY 26-27, 2018

Mississippi Museum of Art\*\* Mississippi Museum of History\*\* Mississippi Civil Rights Museum  
A flyer is included as an insert in the newsletter. Call the foundation office to make a reservation.

### JOIN TODAY TO PRESERVE THE PAST FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

Membership expiration dates are printed above your address on every mail-out from the foundation. Each membership and donation is very important to us.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phones \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

#### Suggested Membership

Student	20.00
Senior Citizen	35.00
Individual	50.00
Family	100.00

#### Special Donor Levels Pillars of Support

Tuscan Order	500.00
Doric Order	1,000.00
Ionic Order	2,500.00
Corinthian Order	5,000.00
Portico	10,000.00

The Historic Natchez Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

Return this form with your donation to:

Historic Natchez Foundation, P. O. Box 1761, Natchez, MS 39121 601-442-2500 and [hnf@natchez.org](mailto:hnf@natchez.org)

# Natchez commemorates Mississippi Bicentennial, 1817-2017

The Historic Natchez Foundation, in cooperation with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, First Families of Mississippi, and Natchez National Historical Park commemorated Mississippi's Bicentennial at Historic Jefferson College, located in the Mississippi territorial capital of Washington, during a two-day event in September.

On Friday, September 15, guests enjoyed free barbeque, live music from the Cane Grinders, and dancing by the Chickasaw Nation Dance Troupe. Saturday activities included living history portrayals, family games on-site, and tours to the sites of Assembly Hall, where the territorial legislature met, and the Methodist Church where the first state constitution was drafted.

The commemoration ended with an illustrated talk on the architecture of Washington by Mimi Miller and a guided tour of its historic sites, including Selma, Meadville, 1828 Washington Methodist Church, Ingleside, and Sweet Auburn, where participants enjoyed refreshments.



*Included among the historic houses toured were Federal style Selma (above) and Greek Revival style Ingleside (below). Both great houses are currently for sale.*



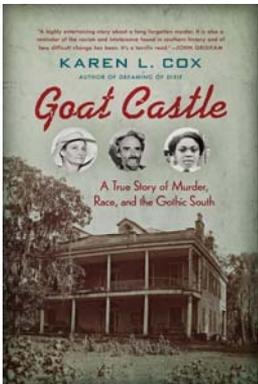
# Congress retains historic tax credits

Congress voted to retain the historic preservation tax credits in the newly enacted tax bill that initially called for their elimination. The historic tax credits had strong bi-partisan support in the Senate and benefitted from effective lobbying efforts by historic preservation organizations and large metropolitan areas like Detroit and New Orleans. Also, recent studies proved that the historic tax credits have actually generated a net gain in federal and local taxes.

Since 1979, the Historic Natchez Foundation has made about 1,500 buildings eligible for historic tax credits by listing entire neighborhoods in the National Register of Historic Places. The foundation has also prepared over 200 successful historic tax credit applications for owners of income-producing property, which has ranged from small cottages in lower income areas to substantial houses adapted as bed-and-breakfast businesses. Local property owners, construction businesses, and property tax rolls have benefitted from the tax credits. Call the HNF office for more information.

# HNF celebrates release of Goat Castle murder book

In November, the foundation organized a special tour, produced an exhibit, and hosted a book-signing and cocktail reception in conjunction with the release of Dr. Karen Cox's new book, *Goat Castle: A True Story of Murder, Race, and the Gothic South*.



Cox's book takes a new look at an old story: the 1932 murder of Natchez aristocrat, Jennie Merrill, who long courted but never married her second cousin Duncan Minor, a nightly visitor to her mansion Glenburnie.

Living adjacent to Glenburnie were Dick Dana and Octavia Dockery, who lived in squalor with goats in the historic mansion Glenwood, which soon became known as Goat Castle.

The murder attracted national and international publicity as it exposed the eccentric lifestyles of four Natchez aristocrats, all in their 60s and all unmarried. The city's nascent tourism

industry benefitted from the publicity, and the residents of Goat Castle lost no time in opening the house to the public and charging admission.

Cox's book treads new ground in examining and exposing yet another story of African American injustice in the Jim Crow South. The likely shooter, African American George Pearls, died not long after the murder in an unrelated shoot-out in Arkansas. His girlfriend, Emily Burns, was the only one of the four suspects convicted and imprisoned even though she was the only one of the four who did not enter the house. Dick Dana and Octavia Dockery's fingerprints were found inside Glenburnie, where they had never been invited to visit.

Highlights of the tour included visits to the historic 1890 Adams County jail, where suspects were incarcerated; Jennie Merrill's childhood home Elms Court; the crime scene at Glenburnie; and the Natchez City Cemetery, where Emily Burns, Duncan Minor, Jennie Merrill, Dick Dana, and Octavia Dockery made ghostly appearances.

Following the tour, the Historic Natchez Foundation and Turning Pages Books and More hosted a cocktail reception and book-signing at the Natchez Institute, where



*Dr. Karen Cox talks to the tour group about Jennie Merrill at Elms Court, home to the MacNeil family.*

the foundation presented a large exhibit of photographs and artifacts related to the 1932 murder. Cox, a professor at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, made a brief presentation about her experiences in researching and writing the book, which is selling well and is currently the focus of negotiations for film rights. The 1932 murder is again attracting national interest and will likely benefit local tourism.

# Major changes take place at HNF in 2017 and 2018

## Patricia Catchings Retires

At the beginning of 2017, Patricia Catchings, who split her time between Natchez and Highlands, N. C., retired from working part-time at the foundation.

Patricia first worked for the foundation in the 1980s before moving fulltime to North Carolina in the 1990s. After retiring from teaching in North Carolina, she returned to



*Patricia Catchings at the foundation registration desk at the Eola Hotel reopening in 1982*

Natchez and the foundation in early 2007 to assist in running the office while executive director Mimi Miller underwent cancer treatment. This assistance evolved into a decade-long part-time job that involved Patricia in every aspect of the foundation's operation—from managing collections to handling the sponsorships and retail sales for the Great Mississippi River Balloon Race. Patricia's organizational skills are exceptional, and she is indefatigable in tackling any project. Patricia's late husband, Charles Catchings, was also involved with the foundation as a board member and president.

For fulltime retirement, Patricia chose the cold of the North Carolina mountains over the heat of Mississippi. She made a brief stop in Natchez during the Christmas holidays and wrapped newly donated books for HNF's library shelves. She has indicated that she is up to some occasional forays into Natchez to assist with small projects.

## Anna Rife dies suddenly



*Anna Rife, left, at the Eola Hotel with Ruthie Coy at the 2007 Historic Natchez Conference*

At the end of 2017, Anna Rife, who had served as the foundation's bookkeeper and office manager for 22 years, died

suddenly in December, after breaking her ankle in October. Anna always manned the registration desk at all HNF special events and membership meetings and was a familiar presence in the logo sales tent at the Great Mississippi River Balloon Race.

Anna was an incredible "numbers" person. She could rattle off board member telephone numbers from memory, and she knew to the penny, without looking it up, the exact amounts of recurring expenses like payroll checks. And woe to anyone late in preparing a time sheet or failing promptly to hand over a charge receipt. She was detail driven and unfailingly dependable.

Anna faced special challenges in her own life, and her loss has created many challenges for the foundation staff.

## Trevor Brown off to Dallas



*Trevor and Makalah Brown on HNF's Hudson River Valley Trip in 2013*

Another major change will take place in February when deputy director Trevor Brown leaves Natchez for a new position as a planner with the City of Dallas—a nice government job with regular hours, weekends off, good salary, and government retirement plan.

Trevor will say good-bye to the perks of the non-profit world: raising your own salary, no division of labor, and special events on nights and weekends. He will greatly miss the constant rearranging of tables, chairs, and audio-visual equipment for meetings and events held in the Natchez Institute (and at other locations) for multiple community organizations who hold meetings day and night, weekday and weekend.

Trevor will be especially missed by the Great Mississippi River Balloon Race. During his tenure, he introduced online ticket sales, onsite ATM machines, and improved onsite credit card and point-of-sale processing.

The HNF office will miss most of all the sense of humor that has emanated from his desk in the office cloister of the Natchez Institute.

What a dull place it will be.

## HNF will hire new staff

In 2018, sooner rather than later, the Historic Natchez Foundation seeks to hire a new staff member to serve as financial officer and office manager. Interested parties should contact the foundation office.

Also in 2018, the foundation will undertake a careful and thorough search for a new executive director. Current executive director Mimi Miller looks forward to hiding in a back room and devoting time to fundraising through grant writing and publishing. She has also stated that she wants time to write before "age depletes her brain of its 44-year storehouse of Natchez history."

## Thanks, Rebecca McGehee

Rebecca McGehee volunteers one day a week at the Historic Natchez Foundation, and has tackled tasks that are difficult for staff to undertake with the office open to the public. Her most notable project to date is her reorganization of the supply room, which had become almost a museum of office paraphernalia dating back to 1990. She also recently accomplished the sad task of boxing up and reorganizing the work station occupied by the late Anna Rife.

## HNF begins construction

The long-planned project to rehabilitate the Natchez Institute basement as a museum and archival storage facility will come to fruition in 2018. The project includes the installation of a fire suppression system and climate controls to protect the irreplaceable: Adams County's historic courthouse records and HNF's archives, photographs, and museum objects. The National Park Service will share some space for off-premises storage. HNF expects some disruption of operation and service, since the basement has to be emptied for construction and the installation of the fire suppression system will impact all stories of the building.



*Rows of boxes of 19th-century Adams County Circuit Court case files in the basement of the Natchez Institute*

Historic Natchez Foundation  
P. O. Box 1761  
Natchez, Mississippi 39121

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### **HNF Annual Meeting**

Thursday  
January 18, 2018  
5:30 p.m.—7:30 p.m.

in conjunction with the opening of  
a Jamey Junkin Hudnall Art Exhibit  
*Out of the Archives, a Collaboration*

### **Mississippi Museum Mania**

Thursday and Friday  
January 26-27, 2018

Mississippi Museum of Art  
Mississippi Museum of History  
Mississippi Civil Rights Museum

## **Historic Natchez Foundation 2017 Awards**

### **George and Ethel Kelly Restoration Award**

**Ricky and Wanda Smith  
Ravennaside**

### **Mary Postlethwaite History Award**

**Karen Cox  
Goat Castle Murder**

**Dan and Jan Shiells  
Courthouse Records Project**

### **Charlie Compton Preservation Award**

**Chesney Doyle  
F.O.R. Natchez**

### **Special Merit Awards**

**Mike Blattner  
207 High Street**

**Pat and Lisa Miller  
Natchez Brewing Company**

**Eddie Burkes  
Farmer's Market**

**Mac Hazlip  
Cottage on Briel Street**

**Jeremy Houston  
Miss-Lou Heritage Tours**

**Rebecca McGehee  
Volunteer of the Year**

## **Officers and Board of Directors 2017 2018**

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Stratton Bull

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