Newsletter of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians

Summer 2009
Vol. 26 No. 2

SESAH News

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI: RETHINKING THE DEEP SOUTH

Jennifer Baughn, conference co-chair

When people think of Mississippi, many envision Greek Revival mansions, shotgun shacks, and juke joints out in the middle of vast cotton fields. Few imagine a city, even a vibrant twentieth century city. Jackson, Mississippi, the capital of the state, is such a city in the heart of Mississippi, and SESAH members will have a chance to experience what Mississippians calls "urban" during this year's annual meeting in downtown Jackson.

Founded to serve as the capital, Jackson was laid out in 1822 alongside the Pearl River, on a centrally located site in the state. Moving the capital from its old site at Washington in the Natchez District transferred the center of power away from the established planters in Natchez to the more rough-and-tumble frontier part of the state.

Medgar Evers House (1956), where Evers was slain, is now a museum and a stop on the Saturday Study Tour

For years, Jackson remained a backwater town compared to the more sophisticated Natchez (which still today retains its cultural ties to New Orleans), and the newer cotton center of Columbus in northern Mississippi. Jackson was mostly a government "company town," bustling when the legislature was in session every other year, but sleepy when the legislators left.

SESAH conference participants will tour the Old Capitol during the awards ceremony and a Friday reception

A decade passed before the legislature felt solid enough financially to build a real capitol building to house state government. Once they began construction, many adversities awaited: a lack of quality building materials (Mississippi has practically no useful stone), no architects skilled enough to design such a substantial structure, and few builders able to complete the work.

In 1835, state leaders hired William Nichols (1780-1853), an architect and builder from Bath, England, who had remodeled the North Carolina State House in early Greek Revival style (1820-1824), as the new state architect of Mississippi. Nichols had moved to Alabama where he became the state architect in 1827 and designed the state capitol, Christ Church, and the new University of Alabama campus – all in Tuscaloosa. He also worked as the state engineer in New Orleans, Louisiana.

"Rethinking the Deep South," continued on page 4

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends in SESAH,

We have a fascinating and enjoyable time ahead of us in Jackson, thanks to the fine work of our co-chairs Jennifer Baughn and Michael Fazio and many others. Having been to Jackson a few years ago, I can testify that we will enjoy true Southern hospitality and friendliness in an intriguing New South city, where as Jennifer's article explains we will go far "beyond the Greek Revival" and stereotypes of the Deep South into a city with a rich and complex twentieth century heritage. Despite the budget pinches that many of us and our employers are feeling, I want to encourage all of us to come to Jackson, to renew ourselves both intellectually and through the fellowship and friendships that make SESAH a vital part of our lives.

Jennifer's account of Jackson's diverse architectural heritage raises a related architectural history topic. As Jennifer mentions, and as you may remember from our awards luncheon in Greensboro, William Nichols, an English-born architect, began his career in America in North Carolina, where he redesigned the State House in early Greek Revival style. He moved on to Alabama, and then went to Mississippi, where we will see his newly restored Old State Capitol.

Nichols's journey – from England to North Carolina to Alabama to Louisiana to Mississippi – evokes a pattern that I'm sure most of you have observed before, that of the mobility and cross currents among the architects active in the South from the colonial period onward. Although some stereotypes depict Southern architecture as being static and localized – and some of it is – throughout the centuries and across the region, architects from hither and yon have turned up regularly for a single project or a lifetime to create a heritage that reflects many architectural schools, trends, and national backgrounds.

I've been struck by this pattern during my current research and publication project: *Architects and Builders in North Carolina: A Biographical Dictionary.* Originally conceived as a book in the 1970s, after a long hiatus it is now materializing instead as an online website - http://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/ - thanks to North Carolina State University Libraries – which was officially launched on June 24, 2009.

As of this writing, some 35 authors have published about 170 entries – out of a planned total of 500 or 600. Even in this small group, the diverse origins of the architects (and builders) are remarkable. Of the 87 men posted so far as *architects*, for example, the places of origin include (besides North Carolina) Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Kansas, and Vermont, plus Germany, England, Scotland, Sweden, and Russia. Only eleven of those posted were natives of North Carolina - with no architecture school in the state before the twentieth century, this is not surprising.

Among the first North Carolina natives to obtain professional training and then practice in their native state were Louis Asbury (MIT), Gaston Alonzo Edwards (Tuskegee), and Douglas Ellington (Drexel, University of Pennsylvania, and the École des Beaux-Arts).

1845 engraving of Mississippi State House

Like William Nichols, many architects lived mobile lives. Some men worked in North Carolina briefly and then moved on, such as David Paton, who came from Scotland via New York to Raleigh to serve as superintendent, then architect of the State Capitol, then left the state and lived most of his life in Brooklyn. William Percival (said to be an Englishman) arrived with fanfare from Virginia to design dramatic, eclectic buildings on the eve of the Civil War and opened an office in Raleigh, then disappeared by 1861.

Later in the nineteenth century, architect Byron A. Pugin arrived in Durham from Virginia, then went to Atlanta, leaving behind him ornate Victorian buildings and a mysterious life story. The prolific regional architect Frank P. Milburn moved frequently, with offices in Kentucky, West Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and eventually Washington, D.C.

One of the most exotic figures who worked briefly in the state was Peter A. Demens, who said he was born Piotr Alexewitch Dementief to an aristocratic family in St. Petersburg, Russia; made his way to America as a refugee or entrepreneur in 1881; built railroads in Florida in the 1880s (and had a city named for his place of origin); followed the Florida land boom to Asheville, where he became a manufacturer and building contractor in the early 1890s; then headed for California and became an orange grower and journalist.

"From the President," continued on page 15

Greyhound Bus Terminal, Jackson, Mississippi (1938, W.S. Arrasmith, architect, Louisville, KY); destination of the Freedom Riders on May 24, 1961, and site of a lunch counter sit-in on July 7, 1961.

FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of the SESAH Newsletter is focused on all things Jackson, where we are convening in October for our 27th annual meeting. Jackson has long held a special place in Southern culture, from the Civil Rights Movement to literature and music. Recently, I read *Mississippi Sissy*, the incredible autobiography of Kevin Sessums, who edited Andy Warhol's *Interview* magazine and *Vanity Fair*. Sessums grew up in and near Jackson, spending time with Eudora Welty and other local literary figures. Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash sang about Jackson as do Lucinda Williams and Kid Rock.

Jackson is one of those Southern cities that we've all heard about, read about, sang about, and somehow feel connected to in one way or another. It's a place of tragedy and triumph, which often inspires amazing creativity. However, I've actually never been to Jackson and I suspect many of you haven't either. As you'll read in this issue, the SESAH conference chairs have prepared an extraordinary conference for us in "Jackson town." We're in for a memorable trip. Personally, I'm looking forward to finally spending some time in this place that has intrigued me for so long.

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Send correspondence and submissions for publication to the *SESAH Newsletter* editor. Deadline for submission of material for the Fall 2009 issue is **August 28, 2009**. Contact the editor about format preference.

The *SESAH Newsletter* has been published three times yearly since 1983. Visit www.sesah.org to download recent issues of the *SESAH Newsletter*.

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"Rethinking the Deep South," continued.

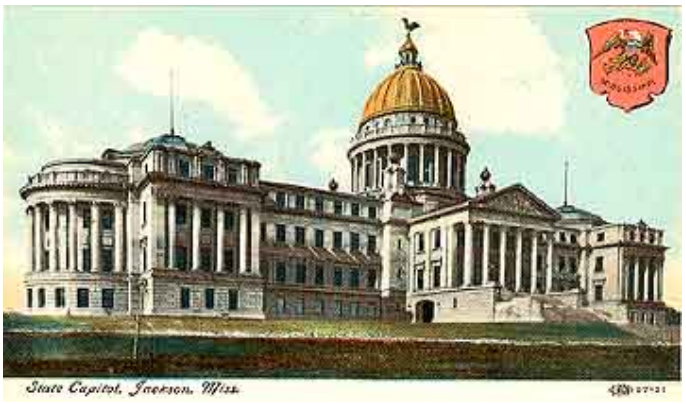
Nichols's Mississippi State House - now called the "Old Capitol" because it was replaced with the "New Capitol" in 1903 - has suffered many vicissitudes over the 150 years of its existence, but it is considered by Mississippians to be the icon of the state and a place of collective memory. Its roof has been torn off twice, both times by hurricanes (in 1909 and 2005), but it has been renovated each time, and is now the site of the Old Capitol Museum, focusing on the political history of the state.

Mississippi's $400,000 capitol, completed and occupied in 1840, turns its back on a vast floodplain to the east, and instead faces west at the terminus of Capitol and State streets. The Greek Revival Governor's Mansion, also designed by William Nichols and completed in 1842, stands at what would have been the western edge of the developed city, facing Capitol Street. Like the Old Capitol, the Governor's Mansion has been through many changes over the years, but it still functions as our governor's residence and is the second-oldest continuously occupied governor's mansion in the United States. Nichols never left Mississippi and is buried in Lexington.

Mississippi Governor's Mansion (1839,-1842, William Nichols, archt.); Charles E. Peterson oversaw a major restoration of this NHL in 1972-1975

Jackson's growth, like many southern towns, really got moving when the railroad came through town. Running north-south through town, the New Orleans, Jackson, & Great Northern Railroad (later the Illinois Central RR) crosses Capitol Street seven blocks west of the Old Capitol, and this boundary has from its beginnings formed the division between the neighborhoods of West Jackson and downtown. Between the railroad and the Old Capitol, Jackson's commercial core grew slowly through the nineteenth century and then more rapidly at the beginning of the twentieth century.

It was only in the twentieth century that Jackson became the largest city and truly the cultural capital in the State and the downtown SESAH members will experience on the Friday walking tour is mostly a result of the building boom of the 1900s through the 1970s.



SESAH will tour the New Capitol (1903, Theodore C. Link, archt., St. Louis, MO) on Thursday

This growth was based on Jackson's position as state capital and its central location as a railroad hub for the Deep South. Industries such as cotton oil mills opened along the railroad, and African Americans migrated from the outlying regions to settle in the Farish Street neighborhood stretching north from downtown east of the railroad line. Banks and insurance companies established their state headquarters downtown and their executives built their houses in newly fashionable neighborhoods such as Belhaven and West Capitol Street.

With the construction in 1901-1903 of the $1 million New Capitol (Theodore Link, St. Louis), the focus of downtown moved west and north of the Old Capitol. Jackson's historic churches have mostly remained downtown, including St. Peter's Cathedral (Catholic) [1897, W.J. McGee, builder], St. Andrew's Cathedral (Episcopal) [1903, Patrick Henry Weathers], Galloway Methodist Church [1915, Reuben H. Hunt, Chattanooga, TN], and First Baptist Church [1927, N.W. Overstreet].

Commercial "skyscrapers" began to form a skyline in the 1920s, with the most prominent being the Gothic Revival Lamar Life Building [1925, Sanguinet, Staats & Hedrick, Fort Worth, Texas & N.W. Overstreet], the Art Deco Tower Building (now called Standard Life Building) [1929, C.H. Lindsley], the Plaza Building (1929, N.W Overstreet], and the eclectic Merchants Bank and Trust (now Regions) [1929, Wyatt C. Hedrick, Fort Worth, Texas]. In addition to these prominent buildings, lower-rise department stores, hotels, and governmental buildings

filled out the downtown area, creating a rare urban space in Mississippi by the 1950s.

St. Peter's Cathedral (1897, William J. McGee, builder)

The Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi fought on many fronts. With students a crucial element in the movement, Jackson was a center of activity because both Tougaloo College and Jackson State University were located in the city. The "Tougaloo Nine" incident took place downtown in 1961 when nine Tougaloo students walked into the Jackson Municipal Library [1954, N.W. Overstreet & Associates] and sat down at the reference tables. They were jailed for several days before being released.

Woodworth Chapel, Tougaloo College (1901, Josselyn & Taylor Co., archts., Cedar Rapids, Iowa.)

As the movement evolved through the 1960s, violence broke out throughout the state: Medgar Evers, the NAACP Field Secretary in Jackson, was shot dead in 1963 in his driveway in northwest Jackson, and in May 1970, two students were killed at Jackson State University by massed police and highway patrol officers. This Civil Rights legacy, neglected as too controversial for decades, has recently begun to be acknowledged and memorialized by the wider community. Medgar Evers' house, restored by Jackson State University, is now open to the public (Saturday's bus tour will spend time here), the Municipal Library has been named a Mississippi Landmark as a tangible reminder of the Tougaloo Nine, and a state Civil Rights museum has been proposed for Tougaloo College.

Racial tension and integration, combined with the rise of the automobile culture, brought about a shift in residential patterns in the 1960s and 1970s, leaving the downtown as a center of daytime office life but bereft of retail. Central High School, located downtown, closed its doors in the 1970s, reflecting the movement of students out of in-town neighborhoods and into expanding suburbs.

Brent's Drugs, Woodland Hills Shopping Center (1946, R.W. Naef, archt.)

Even in its decline, however, Jackson's role as the governmental and business center of the state has given the downtown continuity, and it has never experienced the vacancies that other city centers did during the 1970s and 1980s. Most recently, in the early twenty-first century, important downtown projects have brought new residential life to the area, including the almost-completed rehabilitation of the long-vacant King Edward Hotel (1923, William T. Nolan, New Orleans), which will reopen by year's end as a hotel and apartments. Our first new high-rise in several decades, the 9-story Pinnacle Building (Dale & Associates, Jackson, MS/Wallace Roberts & Todd, Coral Gables, FL), opened this year, providing more office space for the law and banking firms that still have their headquarters here.

Because Jackson's downtown is fairly compact, all of our urban landmarks are within a few blocks of the conference hotel, and we hope SESAH members will enjoy exploring the city on foot. See you in October!

27TH SESAH ANNUAL MEETING OVERVIEW
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

Sponsors: The **Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH)**, founded in 1902, is the second-oldest state archives in the country (www.mdah.state.ms.us). A comprehensive historical agency, the department collects, preserves, and provides access to the archival resources of the state, administers museums and historic sites, and oversees statewide programs for historic preservation, government records management, and publications.

Our partners and co-sponsors are Mississippi State University's **College of Architecture, Art + Design (CAAD)** and the **Mississippi Heritage Trust (MHT)**. The newly formed CAAD (2004) carries on the tradition of the School of Architecture, established in 1973, and offers the only curriculum in Mississippi leading to a professional degree in architecture (www.caad.msstate.edu). The Mississippi Heritage Trust, organized in 1993, advocates for preservation of our state's historic resources and has received recognition for its 10 Most Endangered List (www.mississippiheritage.com).

Accommodations: The conference will be based at the historic **Roberts Walthall Hotel** in downtown Jackson, which is in the midst of a new period of growth and the revival of previously neglected landmarks. The Walthall Hotel is located roughly at the center of downtown, within walking distance of all downtown landmarks and restaurants. The hotel, which is currently undergoing renovations, is the only historic hotel operating in the downtown area (the historic King Edward Hotel is being rehabilitated and should be open again by early next year after forty years of vacancy).

Manship House (1857, Jacob Larmour, after plans published by Andrew Jackson Downing)

Built in 1927 and designed by a local firm headed by N.W. Overstreet, the hotel originally sported an intricate Mediterranean terra cotta cornice, but it underwent a drastic renovation in the 1950s to become a Downtowner Motel. Its character now is more Mid-Century Modern than Mediterranean, especially in the courtyard addition at the rear that overlooks a swimming pool.

Venues: We will take full advantage of our downtown venue: to kick things off, our plenary talk introducing Jackson will be held one block from the hotel in the old **Central High School**, a Collegiate Gothic "castle" built in 1923 and designed by local architect C.H. Lindsley. Later that evening we will have a traditional "dinner-on-the-grounds" of the Old Capitol before heading inside to enjoy our annual awards ceremony and business meeting in the House of Representatives chamber. Friday evening we will return to the **Old Capitol** for a reception followed by a keynote lecture by **Robert Ivy**, editor of *Architectural Record* and former professor of architecture at Mississippi State University. The lecture will take place in the Art Deco auditorium of the **War Memorial Building** next door to the Old Capitol. All of these events are within a few blocks of the conference hotel.

(old) Central High School (1923, Claude H. Lindsley, archt.)

Tours: Friday afternoon we'll stretch our legs after two days of paper sessions on our walking tour of downtown. Sites such as the **Governor's Mansion**, **New Capitol**, and downtown churches will be open for our members to explore on their own, and we will also offer a guided tour of landmarks for those who like to explore in groups.

Saturday's bus tour will take us out of downtown and "Beyond Greek Revival" as we explore the residential areas north and west of the commercial center. Our first stop will be at **Tougaloo College,** located on the city's northern fringe on a former cotton plantation. Tougaloo's campus contains a National Register-listed historic district as well as two dormitories and a Brutalist-style library designed by Gunnar Birkerts, a Latvian-born architect who worked under Eero Saarinen and Minoru Yamasaki and taught at the University of Michigan.

Branch Hall, Tougaloo College (1972-73, Gunnar Birketts and Associates, archts., Birmingham, Michigan.)

Heading back into the heart of the city, we'll visit the Tudor Revival **Eudora Welty House**, a National Historic Landmark and now a house museum dedicated to telling the story of Jackson's most famous author. A stop at the **Manship House**, a Gothic Revival house from designs in Andrew Jackson Downing's publication *The Architecture of Country Houses* will remind us that beneath the twentieth-century veneer, Jackson is a nineteenth-century city. For lunch, SESAHers will be free to roam the **Fondren District**, a twentieth-century suburb that was long ago swallowed by the city.

Eudora Welty House (1925, N.W. Overstreet, archt.)

The state's first documented **suburban shopping center** (1947) is here, along with lots of restaurants and shops and even a soda fountain, all in reasonable price ranges. Fondren also boasts a wealth of Modern architecture, and we'll visit two of the most outstanding examples in the Samuel Wiener-designed **Wiener House** and **St. Richard's Catholic Church**, designed by Thomas Biggs in 1967 and recently voted one of Mississippi's Twelve Favorite Buildings.

Kolb's Cleaners, Fondren neighborhood (c.1950, N.W. Overstreet & Assoc., archts, Robert K. Overstreet, designer)

The **Medgar Evers House**, a small Ranch house located in one of Jackson's first African-American subdivisions, pays poignant tribute to the place where this important Civil Rights leader lived and died. We'll finish off our day with an early evening visit to Jackson's **Greenwood Cemetery** where we'll celebrate the end of the meeting with light refreshments before everyone scatters for another year.

Jackson City Hall (c.1846, William Gibbon, archt.)

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2009 SESAH Schedule

(subject to change)

Wednesday, October 28

Self-guided walking tour of downtown Jackson

3:00-6:00pm:	Registration, Walthall Hotel
6:00pm:	Board Meeting, Walthall Hotel

Thursday, October 29

8:00-9:00pm	Registration, Walthall Hotel
	Breakfast on your own
8:30-10:00pm	*Opening Plenary Session*: Central High School
	"Introducing Jackson"
	Todd Sanders, Architectural Historian, Mississippi Dept. of Archives and History
10:30-12:00pm	*Paper Session 1,* Walthall Hotel
12:00-1:30pm	Lunch on your own
1:30-3:00pm	Tour of the New Capitol
3:30-5:00pm	*Paper Session 2,* Walthall Hotel
6:00-7:00pm	Dinner-on-the-grounds, Old Capitol
7:00-8:30pm	Awards Ceremony/Business Meeting, Old Capitol (House Chambers)

Friday, October 30

8:30-10:00am	*Paper Session 3,* Walthall Hotel
10:15-11:45am	*Paper Session 4,* Walthall Hotel
11:45am-1:00pm	Lunch on your own
1:00-2:30pm	*Paper Session 5,* Walthall Hotel
3:00-5:30pm	Walking tours of downtown Jackson
5:30-6:30pm	Reception, Old Capitol
6:30-7:30pm	Keynote Lecture, War Memorial Building
	Robert Ivy, FAIA, Editor, *Architectural Record*
7:30pm	Dinner on your own

Saturday, October 31, 9 AM – 5 PM

9:00am-5:00pm	Study Bus Tour of Jackson
	"Beyond Greek Revival"

Jackson, Mississippi, panoramic view, 1910 – New Capitol (left) and Old Capitol (center)

Visit www.sesah.org for more information.

Registration

Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians
27th Annual Meeting: Jackson, Mississippi
October 28-31, 2009

Registration Fee: $_____

Advance Registration (postmark before September 29) **$125**
*(after September 30- **$150**)*
Students (with photocopy of valid student ID) **$ 65**
*(after September 30 - **$75**)*

Registration fee includes all paper and plenary sessions, a copy of the paper abstracts, reception at Old Capitol, and dinner-on-the-grounds & awards ceremony. Saturday study tour is optional with additional fee.

Saturday Study Tour: $_____

Advance Registration (postmark before September 29) **$35**
*(after September 30 - **$50**)*
Students (with photocopy of valid student ID) **$25**
*(after September 30 - **$40**)*

SESAH Membership: Renewing? **Y / N** $_____

Individual **$35**
Student **$20**
Institutional **$40**
Contributing **$50+**
Life **$500** (payable in installments)

All conference attendees and participants must be members of SESAH. Membership dues are for one calendar year. All SESAH members receive the annual journal ARRIS *as well as the society newsletter (3x/year).*
Already a SESAH member? How many SESAH conferences have you attended? _____

Please make checks payable to SESAH. **Total $**_____

Please write your name and institutional affiliation and/or city as you would like them to appear on your badge and in the participant directory:

Name: _____

Institutional Affiliation: _____

City: _____

Mailing Address: Street: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Dietary Restrictions/Preferences: _____

Send completed registration form, along with payment, to:

Michelle Jones
MSU-CAAD
PO Box A Q
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Questions??? Contact Michelle Jones at mjones@caad.msstate.edu or 662-325-2520

Visit www.sesah.org for more information.

SESAH CONFERENCE HOTEL

Roberts Walthall Hotel

225 East Capitol Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39201

(601) 948-6161 or (800) 932-6161

The Roberts Walthall Hotel is within walking distance of many downtown landmarks and restaurants. All conference paper sessions will be held at the hotel.

Make your reservations directly with the Roberts Walthall Hotel under the "**SESAH Block**" to receive your special group room rate of **$99/night** (single/double). This special rate is good only until **September 27**, so book your room early! Regular room rates after September 28 are $139.

NOTE: There are no online reservations at this time.

TRAVEL

The **Jackson-Evers International Airport** (JAN) is served by six commercial airlines including American Eagle, Continental Express, Delta, Southwest and Northwest Airlines, and US Airways. Jackson Evers International Airport is located approximately 10 miles from downtown Jackson.

Visit the airport website at http://www.jmaa.com/JAN/default.htm for airline information.

An airport express shuttle to the downtown hotel is provided by the hotel. Notify the reservation desk clerk of your flight information and the shuttle will be at the airport awaiting your arrival. Visitors may also take taxis (about $25 to downtown).

One Amtrak train (*The City of New Orleans*, running from New Orleans to Chicago) stops in Jackson each day. Visit Amtrak's website at www.bytrain.org for timetables and tickets.

For those who prefer to drive, Jackson, Mississippi, is centrally located and served by Interstate 55 North/South and Interstate 20 East/West as well as the Natchez Trace Parkway connecting to Nashville, Tennessee.

Visit www.sesah.org for more information.

Construction History Society of America (CHSA) Formed

This new Society was incorporated last year to act as a forum to address a growing interest among academics and practitioners in the history of all aspects of the design and construction industry. CHSA is based on the belief that the study of design and construction history will benefit from the interaction of all disciplines and fields of enquiry, none of which alone can present a comprehensive view of the subject.

The Society publishes a quarterly newsletter and held a well-attended inaugural conference last November at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, on the theme "*Learning from Design and Construction Failures"*. Through an affiliation agreement with the main Construction History Society based in the United Kingdom, members in CHSA receive their newsletters and copies of their refereed journal *Construction History.*

Visit the website at www.constructionhistorysociety.org where details of membership can be found. Further meetings are planned in Washington, DC, and Philadelphia and details will be announced shortly.

CHSA look forward to collaborating with other professional societies active in the field. For further information contact chs@coa.gatech.edu

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MEMBER NEWS

In April, **Travis McDonald** led an all-day symposium "Learning from Palladio: Renaissance Reflections at Poplar Forest." Recently, Travis was also interviewed for an AP article about Poplar Forest that was published in travel sections of newspapers around the United States.

Robbie D. Jones was appointed to the board of directors for Historic Nashville, Inc., chartered in 1974 as the city's nonprofit historic preservation organization.

ENDANGERED ARCHITECTURE

Did you know that three of the National Trust's 2009 **America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places** are located in the SESAH region?

- **Miami Marine Stadium, Miami, Florida**
- **Dorchester Academy, Midway, Georgia**
- **Cast-Iron Architecture, Galveston, Texas**

NEWS FROM VIRGINIA

SESAH member Laura Purvis, a student at UVa, informs us that the DeJarnette Center in Staunton, Virginia, was threatened with demolition. This center was once part of the Western State Lunatic Asylum, a hospital for the mentally ill that opened in 1828. The facility was infamous for its practices of eugenics during the 1930s under then-director Joseph DeJarnette. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1969, the facility was converted into a penitentiary in the 1970s and vacated in 2003.

In 2005, the Virginia General Assembly turned the 80-acre facility over to the City of Staunton with preservation easements in place meant to protect the architectural significant buildings. Since then, developers and architects have created an innovative plan to rehab and re-purpose these buildings as part of a massive New Urbanist style complex called "The Villages at Staunton." The village will feature upscale condos, a luxury hotel and spa, offices, and a retail center. Visit www.villagesatstaunton.com for more information. Stay tuned!

Baltimore architect William Small designed the main 1828 building at the Western State asylum. Flanking porticoes were added in 1847, a chapel designed by Thomas Blackburn completed in 1851, and additional buildings constructed in the antebellum era and through the early twentieth century.

Be sure to subscribe to the new SESAH email listserv at

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sesah/

Join the SESAH Facebook group at

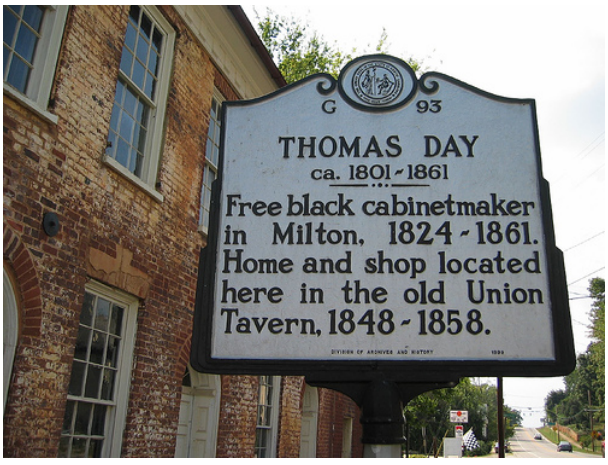
www.sesah.org

2008 SESAH Annual Meeting - Study Tour B
"Architectural Legacy of Thomas Day"

Ruth Little, Raleigh, North Carolina

Jo Leimenstoll, professor and director of the graduate program in Interior Architecture at UNC-Greensboro, led a Saturday study tour following the annual SESAH Conference in Greensboro in October 2008. Leimenstoll is the co-author of an upcoming book on the furniture and architecture of free black artisan Thomas Day (1801-1861), the most important furniture maker in North Carolina during the antebellum era.

The tour of six plantation houses in nearby Caswell County that contain interior woodwork by Mr. Day was remarkable because few of the houses are ever open to the public. The houses, built from the 1840s to the early 1860s, of two-story frame construction with sturdy Greek Revival entrance porches, do not reveal their true glory until you step inside. Then Day's unique interpretations of Empire and Greek and Gothic Revival forms turn the standardized forms of mantels, surrounds, stair railings and newel posts into dramatic sculpture.



Day's trademark parlor ensemble consists of a large scale classical revival mantel flanked by shallow open closets with sculpturally molded surrounds. The mantel features an undulating frieze and shelf supported by colonettes that appear to be free-standing. At the William Long House, built in 1856, Day carved three-dimensional frowning African faces as the capitals of the mantel pilasters.

Day's most unusual woodwork appears in the newel post of the central hall staircase of his houses. The newels elongate into serpentine, spiral plant-like forms that sometimes resemble a fiddle-head fern, or the tendrils of a vine. This startling freedom from the conventions of style may derive from Day's African-American ethnicity.

To learn more about Day's architectural woodwork, see http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~ncccha/biographies/thomasday.html.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SAH Study Tour:
A Landmark at Sea: The Architecture and Design of the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum
New York City, New York
July 17, 2009
www.sah.org

SAH Study Tour:
The Legacy of Daniel Burnham: Architect and City Planner
Chicago, Illinois
August 7-9, 2009
www.sah.org

American Association for State & Local History
2008 Annual Meeting
Indianapolis, Indiana
August 26-29, 2009
www.aaslh.org

SAH Study Tour:
Hidden in Plain View: The Capital City's Overlooked Architectural Resources
Washington, DC
September 11, 2009
www.sah.org

American Society of Landscape Architects
2008 Annual Meeting
Chicago, Illinois
September 18-21, 2009
www.asla.org

Future SESAH Annual Meetings

Jackson, Mississippi - Oct. 28-31, 2009
Chattanooga, Tennessee - Oct. 13-16, 2010
Charleston, South Carolina - 2011

Send event info to robbiejones4@comcast.net

SAH Study Tour:
Civil Rights Memorials
Alabama & Georgia
October 8-11, 2009 - Tentative
www.sah.org

2009 National Preservation Conference
National Trust for Historic Preservation
60th Annual Meeting
Nashville, Tennessee
October 13-17, 2009
www.PreservationNation.org

2009 Southeastern College Art Conference
Mobile, Alabama
October 21-24, 2009
www.unc.edu/~rfrew/SECAC/annual_conference.html

Society for American City and Regional Planning History
13th National Conference on Planning History
Oakland, CA
October 15-18, 2009
www.dcp.ufl.edu/sacrph/

Pioneer America Society:
Association for the Preservation of Artifacts & Landscapes
41st Annual Meeting
Pipestem, West Virginia
October 29-31, 2009
www.pioneeramerica.org

American Studies Association Meeting
2009 Annual Meeting
Washington, DC
November 5-8, 2009
www.theasa.net

Society of Architectural Historians
63rd Annual Meeting
Chicago, Illinois
April 21-25, 2010
www.sah.org

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS LIBRARIES

FAY JONES COLLECTION

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Fay Jones Collection Opened for Research

The papers of famed Arkansas Architect Fay Jones are now open for research at the University of Arkansas Libraries' special collections department. The formal opening of the collection was announced by Carolyn Allen, dean of libraries, during the April 4 dedication and renaming of the Fay Jones School of Architecture.

The collection contains biographical information, correspondence and drawings for projects, business and academic records, slide and photographic images, books and working models. The records were donated to the University of Arkansas Libraries by Fay Jones and his wife Mary Elizabeth "Gus" Jones between 1997 and 2009. The task of processing and organizing the papers was a six-year project, resulting in a collection of 606 linear feet of material. A finding aid for the collection is available online, in addition to a project catalog containing information about the projects and illustrations of them.

Jones was an internationally known architect and educator who won the American Institute of Architecture's highest honor, the AIA Gold Medal, in 1990. Working from his small studio in Fayetteville, he practiced architecture from 1954 to 1998, designing more than 200 projects, including residential buildings, chapels, pavilions and intricate metal structures. His most acclaimed structure is Thorncrown Chapel in Eureka Springs. Of the projects for which records exist, 129 were built, 84 of which were in Arkansas.

Jones met his mentor, Frank Lloyd Wright, in 1949. Both Jones and his wife Gus became members of Wright's Taliesin Fellowship in the mid-1950s. Wright's most lasting influence on Jones was in the application of the principles of organic architecture: simplicity of construction, use of native materials, attention to crafted details, and seamless integration of buildings to sites.

Jones inspired and educated generations of Arkansas architects and lectured widely throughout the United States. After a teaching stint at the University of Oklahoma, Jones returned to the University of Arkansas in 1953 where he began his twin careers of teaching and maintaining an architectural practice. In 1966 he became chair of the university's architecture department, and in 1974 he was named the first dean of the new School of Architecture. Jones died in Fayetteville in 2004.

The Fay Jones collection is a complete record of Jones' teaching, his practice, his philosophy of architecture, and his skill as an artist. Personal materials include biographical information from Jones's childhood through his World War II service. The collection includes numerous carefully kept appointment books, registration certificates, sketch books and phone messages that provide details not found elsewhere. Printed resources include posters from seminars and meetings, clippings, magazines featuring Jones' work and portions of his own library.

Materials documenting more than 200 building projects from 1950 to 1998 include correspondence, construction schedules, notes, sketches, reports and product literature. Over 22,000 separate sheets of drawings illustrate the development of projects from conceptual drawings to presentation and construction drawings. More than 20,000 slides and photographs record Jones' architectural creations and travels. Recorded interviews and audiovisual items featuring Jones and his works are in VHS and DVD formats. His academic records include lecture notes, class rosters and University of Arkansas School of Architecture administrative records.

Tom W. Dillard, head of the special collections department, observed, "Fay Jones was an Arkansas treasure, and I believe his archive will be a treasure to future generations. I anticipate the collection will be used extensively as architects and architectural historians seek to determine the full scope of the brilliance of this Arkansas architect and teacher."

A selection of Jones' sketches, models and plans is on permanent display in the Libraries' architectural archives in Mullins Library 126. The recent renaming of the School of Architecture in honor of Fay Jones was made possible by a generous gift from Don and Ellen Edmondson of Forrest City, Ark., who also supported the processing of his papers in special collections. Another gift from the Edmondsons produced four display cases for models, as well as a large brass emblem for the architectural archives door in Mullins Library.

For further information on the Fay Jones Collection, visit http://libinfo.uark.edu/specialcollections.

Ed. Note: SESAH toured several buildings designed by Fay Jones, including Thorncrown Chapel (1979-80), when the organization held its 1998 Annual Meeting in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Many architects of North Carolina buildings, including those who planned some of the best known edifices, never resided in the state but provided designs from distant urban offices. "Far fetched and dear bought," complained one local architect. Some designed/planned only a few buildings, such as Thomas U. Walter of Philadelphia and Richard Upjohn of New York in the antebellum period; Alfred Eichberg of Savannah later in the late nineteenth century; and Shreve and Lamb of New York in the twentieth century. Especially well-known is Richard Morris Hunt's design for the Biltmore Estate near Asheville.

Mississippi State Capitol (1838-1840, William Nichols)

Other urban architects maintained ongoing relationships with their North Carolina clients, such as New York architect Alexander Jackson Davis in antebellum years; Philadelphian Samuel Sloan and mail-order Tennessee architect George F. Barber in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; and Hobart Upjohn of New York in the 1910s and 1920s. In addition, many commissions went to architects in neighboring states such as Albert L. West of Virginia and South Carolina, Jacob Graves, Joseph Sirrine, C. Gadsden Sayre, and others.

Some architects, however, came from afar and settled down, such as John Hawks, the English-trained architect of the colonial Tryon Palace in New Bern, or Scotsman William Bell, architect of the United States Arsenal in Fayetteville, who died – some say of a broken heart – soon after Sherman's troops burned his life work. James F. Post of New Jersey became Wilmington's leading builder-architect in the nineteenth century.

Adolphus Gustavus Bauer, assistant to Samuel Sloan of Philadelphia, stayed after Sloan's death to practice for the rest of his short life. Frank Weston began in New York, moved to Denver and worked with Henry Trost, then came back east to Greensboro. Charles E. Hartge of Germany established a lifelong career in eastern North Carolina in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In the twentieth century, Charles C. Hartmann of New York was sent to North Carolina to supervise hotels by the prolific New Yorker William Stoddart, and, offered a plum project to establish a practice in Greensboro, spent a long and productive career there. Immediately after World War II, the already famous young Russian-born architect Matthew Nowicki came from Poland to New York and then to Raleigh to head the architecture department in the new, modernist School of Design. He designed the world-renowned Dorton Arena for the State Fairgrounds, and seemed headed to lead the profession in the state but was killed in a plane crash in 1950.

Meanwhile – as SESAH'ers remember with pleasure from our Greensboro meeting, when we visited his own residence – mid-twentieth century modernist Edward Lowenstein of Chicago moved to Greensboro to become one of the city's leading architects.

Such patterns, far from unique to North Carolina, extend across the South and the nation. As we head to Jackson, we continue to trace the cross currents of our architects' lives and the architectural accomplishments they gave our communities all across our region.

Catherine W. Bishir
Raleigh, North Carolina

READY TO SERVE?

SESAH is seeking nominations for positions on the board of directors: representatives for Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, and Texas as well as an at-large candidate. Here's your chance to get more involved in SESAH and to give back to this vibrant community of architectural historians! Self nominations welcome. Elections will be held in Jackson.

Contact vice president Michael Fazio at mfazio@sarc.msstate.edu for details.

ABOUT SESAH

The Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians (SESAH) is a regional chapter of the national Society of Architectural Historians and includes twelve states - Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

The nonprofit organization holds an annual meeting, publishes a three-times-a-year newsletter and an annual journal, *ARRIS*, and presents annual awards, including the "Best of the South" preservation award.

SESAH was founded in 1982 at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta to promote scholarship on architecture and related subjects and to serve as a forum for ideas among architectural historians, architects, preservationists, and others involved in professions related to the built environment. The annual meeting features scholarly paper sessions, business meeting, study tours, and a keynote lecture by a national leader in the field. SESAH members come from across the U.S.

www.sesah.org

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

27th SESAH Annual Meeting
Jackson, Mississippi
October 28-31, 2009

Parsons Brinckerhoff
1900 Church Street, Suite 203
Nashville, TN 37203

Please notify the Treasurer of address changes.