

# Common Bond

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation Newsletter

## Tennessee Hosts

## Nation's Preservation Advocates This October

Tennesseans seeking to enhance their communities through historic preservation have a rare opportunity coming this fall. Working with state and local preservation groups, the National Trust for Historic Preservation is holding the **National Preservation Conference in Nashville October 13-17, 2009**.

This annual conference is the premier educational and networking event for community leaders, volunteers, and staff working toward preservation goals. With approximately 100 educational and field sessions, special lectures, and networking opportunities, it is an excellent source for information, ideas, and inspiration. Participants will return to their communities armed with successful tactics and lessons from colleagues across the country.



The Center for Historic Preservation is committed to the success of the conference and is providing considerable staff and financial support. Center director Dr. Van West is a co-chair and has been actively involved in the planning for over a year. On Tuesday night, October 13, 2009, West, along with Ann V. Roberts, former director of the

Metropolitan Nashville Historical Commission, will tell the story of historic preservation in Nashville and middle Tennessee. The center is administering the Tennessee Diversity Scholarship program (see below), and several center staff members and students are managing field sessions.

The Tennessee Diversity Scholarship is designed to ensure that Tennessee's cultural, economic, and geographical diversity is well represented at the National Preservation Conference. One hundred scholarships are available for applicants whose attendance will benefit their communities and whose commitment to historic preservation will be strengthened by their participation. Funded in part by the Tennessee Historical Commission, the

scholarship covers registration for educational sessions and one field session; it does not cover transportation or lodging. These registration fees would normally cost between \$300 and \$500.

For more information about the scholarship program, contact the Center for Historic Preservation and speak with the Tennessee

Scholarship coordinator, Anne-Leslie Owens, at (615) 494-8938 or e-mail [alowens@mtsu.edu](mailto:alowens@mtsu.edu). To download a Tennessee Diversity Scholarship application, go to [www.preservationnation.org/conference](http://www.preservationnation.org/conference). Applications are due June 1, 2009.

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## Nashville in October...

All MTSU alumni, students, faculty, and friends are invited to the Middle Tennessee State University Reception to be held during the conference on Wednesday, October 14, 7:30-9:30 p.m., at B. B. King's Blues Club at 152 2nd Avenue North, Nashville. Hosted by the Center for Historic Preservation, the reception will celebrate the center's 25 years of research and public service. ●

## Murfreesboro Was Center of State's Preservation Movement

On April 16 and 17, heritage development advocates from across the state met in Murfreesboro for the Tennessee Preservation Trust's Statewide Preservation Conference and Main Street Summit. Locally hosted by the Center for Historic Preservation and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, the event showcased the historic Murfreesboro public square. Conference sessions took place in the Rutherford County Courthouse and in the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County.



Lenora "Boe" Washington (l) explains the history of Cemetery School to (l-r) Elizabeth Moore, Kevin Cason, and Tanya Bowers.

Invited speakers built upon the conference theme: "Celebrating Our Shared Cultural Diversity." Tanya Bowers, director of diversity for the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington, D.C., provided a compelling keynote address exploring ways to address diversity and the National Trust's efforts to preserve and interpret the stories of underserved populations. U.S. Congressman Zach Wamp delivered a leadership address featuring his recent efforts to expand the National Trail of Tears, establish the Moccasin Bend

National Archeological District, and designate Green McAdoo School, site of the school desegregation crisis in Clinton, as a national historic site.

Murfreesboro's historic sites and thriving public square provided the ideal setting for the conference. Thursday events introduced conference

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attendees to Murfreesboro with tours to the Childress House and the Cemetery School and Bradley Academy, both former African American schools. Prior to the opening session in the restored Rutherford County Courthouse, County Mayor Ernest Burgess gave a courthouse tour. Thursday night's "Main Street Mixer," held at the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County, highlighted the efforts of the Tennessee Main Street Program and Murfreesboro Main Street. Oaklands Historic House Museum's Maney Hall was the elegant setting for the conference finale, Friday night's gala and silent auction known as the "Rafter Raiser."

Since 2000, the Tennessee Preservation Trust's Statewide Preservation Conference has brought together heritage supporters from across the state for educational sessions, tours, and networking opportunities. The Tennessee Historical Commission, the Center for Historic Preservation, and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area provided sponsorship and organizational support for this year's conference, held in conjunction with the Tennessee Main Street Program and the Tennessee Cultural Heritage Preservation Society. The annual conference is the signature education event of the Tennessee Preservation Trust, a member-supported, nonprofit, statewide historic preservation advocacy and educational organization. ●



Congressman Zach Wamp receives a copy of *Barns of Tennessee* from the center's assistant director Caneta Hankins.

# Cairo Rosenwald School Restoration Completed

The Center for Historic Preservation is pleased to partner with Tennessee Preservation Trust and the Cairo Rosenwald School in Gallatin, one of several Rosenwald Schools selected to receive a generous restoration grant from Lowe's and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Cairo Rosenwald School, located just outside Gallatin in Sumner County, is owned and maintained by the Cairo Improvement Club. Trustees worked with the center and the Tennessee Preservation Trust to complete the grant application. The funds were used to stabilize the foundation, repair the roof, update electrical work, and restore the building to its original design. The restored school will serve as a community center and rental facility for events.

The Rosenwald Schools represent an important chapter in the history of the United States. Originally built by Julius Rosenwald and Booker T. Washington between 1918 and 1932 as part of a school-building program for African Americans in the rural South, today only about 10 percent of the over 5,300 buildings constructed remain standing, and many are in serious disrepair. The National Trust for Historic Preservation named Rosenwald schools to its list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places in 2002. For more information on the National Trust's Rosenwald Schools Initiative, go to [www.rosenwaldschools.com](http://www.rosenwaldschools.com).



Sumner County's Cairo Rosenwald School as stabilization began in December 2008.

Many local individuals and organizations have provided financial support and labor to the Cairo School Restoration Project. TPT's executive director, Dan Brown, a former contractor, provided hundreds of hours managing the project. He noted, "The time was well spent, and we could not be more pleased. The Cairo Rosenwald School represents how a building can anchor its community, providing a space for education and fellowship that is shared by generations. TPT is pleased to join the National Trust, Lowe's, and the other partners to preserve this important local landmark."

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MTSU Public History students getting hands-on experience at Cairo Rosenwald School in March 2009.

This spring, several Middle Tennessee State University students saw the project in process and lent a helping hand at Cairo Rosenwald School. Paul Hoffman, a graduate research assistant at the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, organized the student effort, which included Megan Akerstrom, Catherine Hawkins, Amanda Hall, and Katie Merzbacher, all master of arts candidates in the Public History program at MTSU. The students prepared the original windows for painting and gently cleaned the original painted finishes in the cloakroom.

In addition to Cairo Rosenwald School, Lincoln Rosenwald School in Bledsoe County and Free Hills Rosenwald School in Clay County also received generous grants from the Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation. Cairo Rosenwald School and Durham's Chapel Rosenwald School will be included on a field session during the National Preservation Conference in October (see page 1).



# BARN<sup>OF</sup>S OF TENNESSEE

Written by Caneta Skelley Hankins and Michael Thomas Gavin  
Photographs submitted by readers of *The Tennessee Magazine*

*Barns of Tennessee*, a newly completed book that illustrates the indelible connection between generations of the state's residents and their farms, has been published through a partnership between Donning Company Publishers, the staff of *The Tennessee Magazine* and co-authors Caneta S. Hankins and Michael T. Gavin, both of the Center for Historic Preservation.

The 160-page, hardbound book features 375 photographs of Tennessee barns—made from stone, log, brick, and metal—along with information about each one. Most of the photographs are in color, though several are vintage black-and-white images. The project began with a request to readers of *The Tennessee Magazine* to share photographs and stories of their barns. Before the project was over, the authors sorted through more than 3,500 photos. Gavin recalled, "After looking through the images and descriptions that people submitted, it was obvious that Tennesseans love their barns. Our challenge was to organize the abundance of material in a way that was meaningful and understandable."

*Barns of Tennessee* is available for \$45 plus \$5 shipping and handling through the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association's Nashville offices at 710 Spence Lane and via its Web site ([www.tnelectric.org](http://www.tnelectric.org)). ●

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## CHP Gets New Look, New E-Newsletter

After 25 years, the Center for Historic Preservation is updating its image and its publications. Our thanks to graphic designer and former MTSU student Betsy Jones for designing the new CHP logo. Created in green and black, the new logo is intended to represent the economic and environmental benefits of historic preservation. The words "history," "education," and "architecture," define the Center's primary research areas. We are also reexamining the ways we communicate with our partners. In order to best use our financial resources while protecting the environment, we will send all future newsletters in an electronic format. To be placed on the e-mail list, send a request to histpres@mtsu.edu. ●

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