

Share This: f t



Formers' Corner

Victoria "Tori" Peck (M.A. in Public History, 2022) was a GRA at the Center, where she worked on the Beck Knob Cemetery (Hamilton County) [National Register nomination](#) and [preservation plan](#) and an adaptive reuse plan for the [B'Nai Israel Temple](#) in Butte, Montana. Tori was also a Dorothy Williams Potter Scholar. She

currently serves as Education Coordinator for the Museum of the Cape Fear in Fayetteville, North Carolina. This historical complex includes the [1897 Poe House](#), where Tori manages collections, programming, and community outreach. Check out her video [here](#)!



Welcome!

Welcome (back) to Dr. Torren L. Gatson! A new associate professor in MTSU's Department of History, Dr. Gatson is also the Center's new associate director. He previously worked at the Center as a graduate research assistant while completing his Ph.D. in Public History at MTSU.

Torren's scholarship centers the contributions of Black craftspeople, housing discrimination, and the built environment in the American South. He is co-editor of *Fighting for Freedom: Black Craftspeople and the*

Pursuit of Independence (UNC Press, 2025), a volume that accompanies a national traveling exhibition he co-curated, and is under contract for his next book, *We Built This: The Legacies of Black Builders in the Old North State* (UNC Press).

As a public historian, Dr. Gatson has developed more than a dozen exhibitions, including the acclaimed [Fighting for Freedom](#) and *More Than Just a Home*. He also

serves as co-director of the [Black Craftspeople Digital Archive](#), a groundbreaking digital humanities project that maps and interprets the material legacy of Black artisans across centuries and has been supported by the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area. Torren has extensive teaching experience at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, having previously directed the Public History and Museum Studies program at UNC Greensboro. You can read more about Torren [here](#).

Be sure to come by Peck Hall and say hello to Dr. Torren Gatson!

Scholars

New Reports for Cannonsburgh Village

Earlier this year, the Center completed a comprehensive assessment of the museum collections at Cannonsburgh Pioneer Village in Murfreesboro, as well as an updated preservation assessment.

Cannonsburgh, created in 1976 as a Bicentennial Project, is a reconstructed 19th-century pioneer village comprising mostly historic buildings relocated from all over Rutherford County. Owned by the City of Murfreesboro and operated by the Parks and Recreation Department, Cannonsburgh is home to community events and camps and activities for schoolchildren. It is also an open-air museum for both tourists and locals. Approaching its 50th anniversary as a community site, the village is significant to Rutherford County for the history of its individual parts as well as its collective story and serves as an essential focus for telling the stories of local settlement and county development.

Public History graduate students working with Dr. Carroll Van West produced [The Cannonsburgh Village Museum and Collections Assessment Report](#), which seeks to update the longstanding exhibits in the cotton warehouse building and to provide guidance on the handling, interpreting, and (de)acquisition of museum artifacts. Students working with Dr. Stacey Graham produced [Cannonsburgh Village Assessment Report, Part II: Preservation Needs and Development Opportunities](#). This report builds off the [2010 preservation assessment](#) written by Graham and former TCWNHA preservation specialist Michael Gavin. The goal with this update is to document the state of the historic structures that make up the village, many of which are log construction dating to the first half of the 19th century. Together, these reports seek to guide officials and staff people with the City of Murfreesboro in the continuing maintenance, interpretation, and planning that will help preserve Cannonsburgh into the future.—*Stacey Graham, research professor*



View of some of the buildings (the telephone operator's house, the schoolhouse, and the grist mill) of Cannonsburgh Village along Town Creek.

Partners



Lindsey Wood with one of the new panels installed at the World War II Remembrance Museum in Scott County.

New Exhibit Panels for WWII Remembrance Museum

Earlier this summer, the Center installed three new **exhibit panels** at the World War II Remembrance Museum in Huntsville, Tennessee, which focuses on the USS Tennessee and its crew. Jeff Swanson, the director of the museum, contacted the Center last year about a potential partnership. The museum, along with the Scott County Museum, is located on the campus of Scott High School, and students there can take advantage of opportunities for hands-on learning.

Lindsey Wood began working on the panels as a student in Dr. West's Essentials of Museum Management class. In addition to being a student, Lindsay works at Alvin C. York State Park, which is not far from the World War II Remembrance Museum. For

this project, she worked closely with Center field work coordinator Savannah Grandey Knies.

The USS Tennessee battleship survived Pearl Harbor, and the panels focus on three aspects of the ship's history. The "Welcome" panel talks about the origins of the museum, including contributions by Senator Howard Baker, a WWII veteran and Scott County native, and Paul Dawson, son of USS Tennessee photographer Lee Dawson. The next panel explores the history of the ship between 1920 and 1940, and the final panel examines the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor and memorializes those crew members who died or were injured that day.—*Antoinette van Zelm, assistant director*

Leaders

Summer Student Interns

Each summer, some Center for Historic Preservation graduate research assistants fulfill their internship requirements for the M.A. in History with a Public History concentration. Internships are thoughtfully designed to provide students with professional training and experience, while also offering valuable support to communities and organizations that need assistance in developing preservation programs and projects.



Paige Hurley at Franklin's Juneteenth Celebration (sponsored by the African American Heritage Society of Williamson County).

With support from the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, graduate research assistant Paige Hurley spent the summer developing exhibit panels and tours for the Merrill-Williams House, a community heritage center owned by the African American

Heritage Society of Williamson County and scheduled to open in late 2025. She has also been researching collections management and digital collections databases for scanning, collecting, and housing Franklin's African American historic documents and resources.

The Heritage Area also supported John Wallace, a GRA with the Rutherford County Archives, who worked with Tennessee State Parks to conduct research into Fort Loudon State Historic Park's McGhee Carson sites and those interred there. His findings will be compiled into an interpretive plan, wayside exhibits, and printed materials for the park.

Three other CHP GRAs, Amelia Blakely, Joshua Brown, and Liz Nahach, pursued internships independently. Amelia worked with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission as a graduate fellow in the Bureau of Academic Affairs and Workforce Alignment. She conducted research that will inform THEC's policy revision in new academic program approval and the commission's delegated authority on academic actions. She also assisted with the revision of the agency's Quality Assurance Funding standards to be implemented in 2026 and in the creation of the agency's new Master Plan for 2025-2035.

For his internship, Joshua created an interpretive use plan for St. Mark's Primitive Baptist Church in Spring Hill. Taking his cues from the Friends of St. Mark's, he researched the history of the church, worked to identify the church's pastors over the years, and explored the contributions of prominent church members. He also looked into the preservation of artifacts for the church.

TCWNHA GRA Liz Nahach returned to her home state to work as a built environment intern for the Missouri Department of Transportation. She researched and developed histories and architectural assessments for two bridges as part of their Section 106 compliance agreements. She also documented architectural sites to assess National Register eligibility and potential impact from proposed transportation projects.—*Laura Holder, TCWNHA federal liaison*

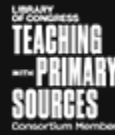
Upcoming

August 20 (Murfreesboro)--[Discovering the Past: A Local History Expedition](#), 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., an MTSU College of Liberal Arts Lifelong Learning Program

August 31—Deadline to apply for Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area [Collaborative Partnership Projects](#)

September 11 (online)—Digging In Webinar with TPS Southern Region, 4 p.m. Central, [email](#) to register

September 30-October 1 (Nashville)—[Tennessee Council for History Education Conference](#)



© Copyright 2025, Center for Historic Preservation, Middle Tennessee State University, Box 80, 1301 East Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37132 USA 1-615-898-2947

Middle Tennessee State University, in its educational programs and activities involving students and employees, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or age. Furthermore, the university does not discriminate against veterans or individuals with disabilities.

Share this email:



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

Box 80
Murfreesboro, TN | 37132 US

This email was sent to .
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

emma®

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.