Tennessee State Museum Spring 2023 Newsletter & Calendar of Events

Tennessee. State Museum.

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/govpubs-tn-miscellaneous-departmental-publications-board-tn-state-museum

Recommended Citation

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Miscellaneous Tennessee Departmental Publications at University of Memphis Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Tennessee State Museum by an authorized administrator of University of Memphis Digital Commons. For more information, please contact khggerty@memphis.edu.
Our exploration of the history and legacy of Rosenwald Schools in the state continues through the rest of the year with the opening of Building a Bright Future: Black Communities and Rosenwald Schools in Tennessee. Our cover story shares the legacy of a teacher and her commitment to education, not only in teaching but in her dedication to building a Rosenwald School in Lewis County. The story presents narratives from her students and community members – in their words. Our exhibitions are one way that the Museum preserves the stories and experiences of Tennesseans.

In April, we broke ground on a new storage facility for the Museum’s collection. The Museum team is currently preparing for this monumental move, and construction is scheduled to be completed in late 2024. For the first time, the Museum will have a separate building dedicated to the preservation and support of the State’s collection. This will enable the collection to be more accessible for staff and researchers and allow us to be nimbler when lending artifacts to museums across the State of Tennessee.

The collection is ripe for discovery. In our new acquisitions section, discover a painting by a Hungarian refugee to Middle Tennessee that documents a piece of Nashville’s past; sculptures by a master woodcarver from McMinn County; intricate baskets by a member of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee; a smock worn by a Knoxville member of the 40 & 8 Society; and a quarterdeck bell present on the USS Tennessee (BB-43) during the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. You’ll also learn about a rare order of reparations from General James Robertson to the Cherokee for the killing of two members of their tribe in Rutherford County, and a unique wooden box with a colorful history made by a Henry County resident.

We have a variety of engaging events scheduled through the summer and fall. Be sure to check our Calendar of Events at TNMuseum.org for an updated list. While you’re there be sure to visit our video portal for recordings of past events, and our Thousands of Stories and Junior Curators blogs for more stories about Tennessee history.

The preservation of history, art, and culture in Tennessee continues. Thank you for all you do to support that vital work.

With sincere thanks,

Ashley Howell, Executive Director
Tennessee State Museum
Prior to 1929, some Black students in Hohenwald and Lewis County attended a one-room schoolhouse located in a former church. The building was indicative of many rural schools for Black Tennesseans during this period. The teacher there, beginning around 1926, was Mrs. Eula Gray Allison. Originally from Hickman County, Allison studied education at Tennessee Agricultural & Industrial State Normal College, now Tennessee State University. After receiving her teaching certificate, she began working in Lewis County.

The beginning of Allison’s future in teaching coincided with a program that would have a significant impact both on her career and the advancement of Black education in the state: the Rosenwald Fund’s construction of “modern” schools — commonly known as Rosenwald Schools — for rural Black students across the Southeast.
The term “Rosenwald Schools” refers to approximately 5,000 structures built across the Southeast between 1912 and 1932 as part of a matching grant program and initial partnership between Booker T. Washington, the Black president of the Tuskegee Institute, and Julius Rosenwald, the Jewish philanthropist and president of Sears, Roebuck, and Co. At the program’s core was the idea that Rosenwald, Black and white local community members, and state and local governments would all contribute to raise money to create the school buildings.

In Tennessee, over a nearly 20-year period, 354 schools, nine teacher homes, and ten school shops were built across all three of Tennessee’s grand divisions. In many cases, the Black communities, which advocated for and constructed these schools, raised more money than the Julius Rosenwald Fund required. In addition to money, community members often contributed supplies, land and labor to ensure a school was constructed in their community. With segregated systems, schools for Black students routinely received less public funding than white schools. Although Black community members already paid taxes to support education, they assumed the additional burden of supplying matching funds for Rosenwald grants because they wanted better schools for their children.

By chance, on a train ride from Hohenwald to Nashville in the late 1920s, Allison met R.E. Clay, the Rosenwald Field Agent for Tennessee. The two discussed the Fund’s program, the old school at Hohenwald, and the possibility of constructing a new building there. The result was a local campaign by Hohenwald’s Black residents to provide land and money to erect a new school. According to an account by Allison published by the Lewis County Historical Society, “we had every form of money raising activities we could.”

By July 1929, the new school — a two-teacher model — was finally constructed. It was the only Rosenwald School built in Lewis County. Not only did Allison teach at the new elementary school after it opened, but she continued to work there until it ultimately closed after integration in the 1960s. Afterwards, she continued to be involved in education and was instrumental in establishing kindergarten programs in Hohenwald. These classes were also held in the Rosenwald School building for a time. As a result, Allison taught and impacted the lives of generations of students in Hohenwald and Lewis County. Today, her former students still remember her kindness, commitment and generosity.
One former student, Margaret Woolridge Booker, recalled Allison’s dedication to her students and that she would travel regularly from her home in Nashville to Lewis County to teach. “Her husband brought her to Hohenwald every Sunday in which she stayed with Mr. and Mrs. John Bumpas, then travel back home by bus to Nashville every Friday evening.”

Another former student, Lillie M. Mitchell, remembered Allison as, “the epitome of grace, beauty, knowledge, and compassion…always wanting us to be good, decent human beings and citizens was as much a goal for her as imparting knowledge of learning the alphabet, vocabulary, writing, history, geography, arithmetic, spelling, reading, civics, and art…Mrs. Allison had a unique relationship with the parents of her students and the community and became a treasured friend to all with whom she came into contact. The years she spent with us left an indelible mark and treasured memories on our hearts that has and will continue to last a lifetime.”

“Allison passed away in 2004 at the age of 103. An inductee in the Tennessee Teachers Hall of Fame, her legacy lives on in the accomplishments of her former students, some of whom became educators themselves. Former student Frankie Mitchell declared, “her compassion and loving nature became a part of my personality, which I exhibited during my thirty plus years as a classroom teacher!”

“I have many precious memories of Ms. Eula (as we called her),” former student Frankie J. Mitchell related. “The Easter egg hunts, the Christmas programs, trips at the end of the year, our trip to the county fair (children’s day) among others. She taught us how to make our own decorations from construction paper with which we decorated the windows during the holidays. She taught us how to take the materials that we had and use it in a positive manner. We may not have had a lot, but she taught us to take care of what we had. Ms. Eula loved her children, and she wanted the best for us!”
Today, the former Hohenwald Rosenwald School still stands as part of the Lewis County Senior Citizens Center. This is just one of the stories told in the Tennessee State Museum’s new exhibition Building a Bright Future: Black Communities and Rosenwald Schools in Tennessee, which will run from June 16, 2023 to February 25, 2024. Developed in partnership with the John Hope and Aurelia E. Franklin Library, Special Collections & Archives at Fisk University, the exhibition focuses specifically on individuals like Allison and their Rosenwald School communities across the state. To prepare for the exhibit, staff from the Museum and Fisk University met with alumni and community leaders across the state who attended Rosenwald Schools and are active members in preserving their histories. Generous former students shared their memories and lived experiences of growing up in and attending Rosenwald Schools. From Memphis to Newport, one theme that continuously emerged was the impact the schools’ teachers like Allison had on their students and the communities they served.

The exhibition will also act as a platform for Rosenwald School communities in Tennessee to help tell their stories. Rather than simply focus on the period when many of these schools were built (1912-1932), the exhibit will place Rosenwald Schools within the historical context of Black education in Tennessee, while also discussing the importance of preserving these buildings.

As scholar Dr. Mary Hoffschwelle at Middle Tennessee State University noted in her book, The Rosenwald Schools of the American South (University Press of Florida), while the Rosenwald School program did not directly challenge segregation, it offered Black Tennesseans opportunities to fight for better facilities for their children and provided leverage in requesting funds from local white school boards. As a result, these schools stand as a testament to self-determination and the value placed on education by these communities.

The author and the Tennessee State Museum would like to sincerely thank Frankie J. Mitchell, Lillie M. Mitchell, Margaret Woolridge Booker, and numerous alumni of the Hohenwald Rosenwald School who generously shared their memories of Mrs. Allison and their time at the school; The Lewis County Senior Citizens Center for providing the opportunity to see the historic building; and the Lewis County Historical Society for their research, expertise, and time in providing information on the history of education in Hohenwald.

by Matthew Gailani
Tennessee State Museum Curator

The exhibition also features the Milan Polk Clark Enrichment Center. The building was initially built in 1926 as the Gibson County Training School with support from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. It was renamed the Polk-Clark School after Dr. Silas Polk and Mrs. Sleetie Clark in the 1960s and continued to operate as a school until the 1990s. Today the building serves as an enrichment center in Milan, Tennessee, and a portion of the building is dedicated to remembering the history of the school. Courtesy of TN Photographic Services.
Tramp Art Box by Gus Wynn, about 1940 to 1950
This box contains a fascinating story of creativity and resourcefulness from prison. Augustus A. "Gus" Wynn (1890-1966) carved this box while he was incarcerated at the Tennessee State Penitentiary. A resident of Henry County, Wynn supported his growing family as a farmer until he was convicted of first-degree murder in the death of Porter Johnson in 1936. Wynn was sentenced to 30 years in prison and sent to the penitentiary in Nashville.

Behind prison walls, Wynn's artistic ingenuity flourished. By the 1940s, Wynn was well-known for his "carnivals," where he played music, told stories and displayed fanciful carved creations. Inmates, prison employees and the public enjoyed the shows. Surviving photographs document the remarkable array of Wynn's creations that filled the stage.

Wynn collected donations during his carnivals in boxes like this one. This style of carving is often called “tramp art” for its associations with itinerant people, especially during the Great Depression. The term is misleading, however — in the late-1800s through mid-1900s, people from many backgrounds adapted scrap wood to create intricate frames, furniture and trinkets that share the term “tramp art” today.

Wynn saved the coins collected in his tramp art boxes in a hidden location in the prison, reportedly guarded by a swarm of bees. When Governor Gordon Browning commuted Wynn's sentence in 1950, Wynn deposited his collection at a Nashville bank. His savings totaled over six hundred dollars — a sizeable sum with which to start anew back in Henry County.

Newspaper clipping of “Gus” Wynn on stage playing the harmonica, banjo and drum during one of his carnivals at the penitentiary in Nashville.
Courtesy of Clifford Wallach.
NEW ACQUISITIONS

**Cornerstone Ceremony by Sandor Bodo, about 1962**

Recently donated by friends of the artist, this painting by Sandor Bodo depicts the ceremonial laying of the cornerstone of the Baptist Sunday School Building in downtown Nashville around 1940. James T. Sullivan, president of the board from 1953 to 1975, is shown speaking to the crowd. The building, which was called Sullivan Tower, served various roles for the Southern Baptist Convention until its demolition in 2018.

Sandor Bodo (1920-2013) was a prolific artist who came to Nashville in the 1950s as a refugee from Hungary. He worked at the Baptist Sunday School Board as an illustrator, contributing to newsletters, curriculum books and other publications. Bodo offered this painting as a concept for a mural for the Sunday School Board, but the mural was never commissioned.

*Gift of Robert H. (Bob) and Lois M. Jones.*

**Woodcarvings by Charles R. “Mac” McAmis, about 1940 to 1964**

“Mac” McAmis (1900-1964) created numerous woodcarvings, including these, from his home in McMinn County. A carpenter by trade, McAmis’ carvings were an expression of his creativity and worldview. His work included animals, Native American imagery and scenes from his everyday life in rural East Tennessee. Of note is a portrait of the artist’s wife, known as Miss Bonnie, pictured right. A 1961 article from *The Athens Press*, an Athens, Tennessee newspaper, documented McAmis as a “master carver” and featured photographs of some of his creations, many of which are included in this donation. This recent gift of McAmis’ carvings provides an exciting opportunity to learn from a large group of one artist’s work, documenting the evolution of his style and technique over time.

*In Honor of Granddaddy Mac, Charles Robert McAmis, a gift from his grandson, William Lawrence McAmis.*

**Four Cherokee White Oak Baskets by Agnes Welch, 1984**

Four white oak baskets, made by Agnes Welch, were recently purchased for the collection. A member of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, Welch was born in the Big Cove community on the Qualla Boundary. Unlike other basket makers, she did not learn weaving from a family member. She learned to work rivercane into baskets from Lottie Stamper, one of the Cherokees’ best-known basket weavers. Eventually, Welch started working with white oak and began adding natural dyes into the designs, often using bloodroot and walnut root. Notice the burden basket at the far right of the image, which is wide at the top and squared at the bottom. This form was a specialty of hers.

*Photo of Agnes Welch, Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual*  
*Courtesy of Southern Appalachian Digital Collections, Western Carolina University.*
**40 & 8 Smock, 1920 to 1940**
The Museum recently acquired an unusual smock, worn by Samuel Brody of Knoxville, TN, as part of his membership with the 40 & 8 honor society. The 40 & 8 is an independent honor society of American veterans, formed shortly after the First World War. The name “40 & 8” derived from the cargo capacity of French boxcars which carried American soldiers to the front — 40 men and eight horses to a boxcar. Samuel Brody served in the First World War as a sergeant in the U.S. Army Tank Corps. Brody was a member of the Knoxville chapter of the 40 & 8, which is still active.

---

**Gen. James Robertson Orders Cherokee Reparations, 1797 to 1798**
This order of reparations to the Cherokees was issued on November 21, 1797. The order is headed, “For amount delivered the Cherokee Indians by order of General James Robertson in consequence of two Indians being killed on Stones River by white people.” The goods, including silk, linen cloth, buttons, thread and a rifle, were delivered on January 30, 1798. The Treaty of Tellico Blockhouse was made on November 7, 1794, and effectively ended the Cherokee-American Wars that began in 1763 and lasted for 30 years. This document attempted to amend an illegal killing of two Cherokees in Rutherford County for the purpose of avoiding a conflict that likely would have resulted in more deaths in the area.

---

**USS Tennessee Quarterdeck Bell, 1917 to 1942**
This mounted quarterdeck bell was present on the USS Tennessee (BB-43) during the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. When the U.S. Navy commissioned new battleships in the 1910s, the Tennessee became the lead ship of the newly designated “Tennessee Class” battleships. The ship mounted twelve 14-inch guns and served exclusively in the Pacific Theater. On the morning of December 7, the ship was moored alongside the USS West Virginia on Battleship Row. The ship was not damaged as extensively as others in the harbor, but did sustain two bomb explosions before the attack ended. The USS Tennessee was repaired, modernized and put back into service by early 1942.
**Updates in Our Permanent Exhibitions**

Several new textiles have been rotated in our *Change and Challenge* gallery, which focuses on the years 1870-1945. Regular rotations are a necessary part of preserving the stability of textiles, which are particularly sensitive to light and other environmental factors. Frequent rotations can prevent or slow light damage such as fading and discoloration.

One of the objects is a matching blouse and skirt set from the 1880s. The set, made by J&M Louisville, was worn by Dixie Douglas in the 1880s. The fabric's striking pattern features black walnuts, a plant native to Tennessee. The silhouette of the set is typical of the 1880s. The bodice is closely fitted to the wearer's body, which would have been shaped and supported by a corset. The volume of the skirt is primarily contained to the back, in a bustle.

The other artifact is a 1920s dress worn by Margaret Johnson Patterson Bartlett of Greene County. Bartlett, the great-granddaughter of President Andrew Johnson, would have worn this dress as a young woman. The dress is cut straight, highlighting the newly popular boyish silhouette, and features a shorter hemline and sleeveless arms. This drastically different silhouette reflected the changing attitudes towards women's rights and their roles in society during the 1920s.

**Replica Shell Gorget, About 1250 to 1450**

A replica shell gorget is now on display in the *Tennessee Time Tunnel*. The symbols on this Cox Mound, or the Four-Crested-Bird style gorget, reflect the worldviews of Southeastern Indians during the Mississippian Cultural Period. Four design elements are characteristic of this type of gorget. There is a cross in the center, surrounded by a rayed circle. Those elements are encompassed by a looped square with crested birds positioned in the four cardinal directions. It is believed that the cross and rayed circle represent the axis mundi, or center pole. The center pole connects the Above World, the human world and the Under World. Iconographic elements in prehistoric art can be compared to Indigenous folklore and contemporary stories to aid in the understanding of Indigenous lifeways.
UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION
Saturday, June 10
10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
This year’s Juneteenth Celebration, “Looking to the Past to Empower the Future,” will feature an edition of our TN Writers | TN Stories series with New York Times bestselling author Sheree Renée Thomas. Thomas will discuss her role as part of the editorial team for the book, Africa Risen, an anthology of 32 original stories showcasing fantasy and science fiction tales from Africa and the African Diaspora. Throughout the day, families can enjoy Storytime and craft activities. There will also be a dance, poetry and music hour followed by a special lecture. Check our website for a full schedule of events: TNMuseum.org/Juneteenth

DAILY SUMMER ACTIVITIES
June 1 – August 12
Join us at the Museum this summer for a variety of activities happening Tuesdays through Saturdays. In the event of a special program, the special program's schedule will take precedence.

HANDS-ON HISTORY
Tuesdays - Saturdays • 11:00 a.m.
Museum living history interpreters will present programs throughout the galleries, such as what Civil War soldiers carried in their haversacks, life on the early Tennessee frontier, and how Tennessee women helped American women gain the right to vote. Presentations and gallery location will vary daily.

STORYTIME
NOW WITH ASL INTERPRETATION EVERY FOURTH SATURDAY
Storytime in the Children's Gallery takes place every Tuesday and Saturday at 10:30 a.m. On every fourth Saturday of the month, Storytime will feature an American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter from our community partner, BRIDGES For the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

HISTORIC GAMES
Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays • 1:00 p.m.
Learn more about games played in the past such as Hoop and Stick, Nine Pins, Checkers, Chuck a Luck, and Chunkey. Staff will be on hand in the Grand Lobby to teach you how to play. Kids of all ages are sure to enjoy these fun games.

FRONTIER PRINT SHOP
Wednesdays and Fridays • 1:00 p.m.
Join us in the Forging a Nation gallery for an in-depth look at the Frontier Print Shop and the 18th century letterpress printing process.
16
No. of Tennessee Rosenwald School Communities featured in our exhibition, *Building a Bright Future: Black Communities and Rosenwald Schools in Tennessee*.

103
Age of Mrs. Eula Gray Allison when she passed away in 2004. A teacher at the Rosenwald School in Hohenwald, Tennessee, and inductee in the Tennessee Teachers Hall of Fame, her legacy lives on in the lives of her former students, many of whom became educators. (See our cover story).

40 & 8
In WWI, the cargo capacity of men and horses in a French boxcar, which carried American soldiers to the front. The 40 & 8, named for this capacity, is an independent honor society of American veterans, formed shortly after the War. (See New Acquisitions on page 7).

65,000
Sq. Footage of Museum’s new collection storage facility (see page 15).
140,000
Approximate number of artifacts to be moved into the Museum’s new storage facility (see page 15).

90,387
No. of visitors to Museum from July 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023.

15,991/44
No. of students / counties served by field trips to the Museum from July 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023.

25,059/258/52
No. of students / trunks delivered / counties served by the Museum’s Traveling Trunk program from July 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023.

11

Approximate number of artifacts to be moved into the Museum’s new storage facility (see page 15).
LECTURES
Available now at TNMuseum.org/videos:

The Legacy of Black Entrepreneurship in Tennessee Lunch & Learn
series honors the stories of some of Tennessee’s most noteworthy historic Black businesses. The series is hosted by Tranae Chatman, curator of social history. Guests include:

• André Prince Jeffries, owner of Prince’s Hot Chicken
• Dr. LaDonna Boyd, President and CEO of R.H. Boyd Publishing Corporation
• Cheryl McKissack Daniel, fifth generation CEO and President of McKissack & McKissack
• Darrell Cobbins and Shirley Peace Cobbins of Peace Realty and Universal Commercial

In Conversation: Andrew Feiler, Frank Brinkley and Charles Brinkley
Andrew Feiler discusses his photography work and the exhibition, A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America. He is joined by brothers Frank and Charles Brinkley in conversation about their experience as Rosenwald School students in Cairo, Tennessee.

TN Writers | TN Stories: Title IX with Mary Ellen Pethel, Ph.D.
Mary Ellen Pethel, Ph.D. discusses her book, Title IX, Pat Summit, and Tennessee’s Trailblazers, and introduces guests to past and present pioneers instrumental to the success of women’s athletics across the state of Tennessee and the nation. She is joined by panelists Niesha Campbell, Deputy Director of Athletics at Austin Peay State University;

Uplifting Their Communities: Jeanes Teachers and Rosenwald Schools
Maury County historian, Jo Ann Williams McClellan, discusses the lesser known history of the Jeanes Teachers and their many contributions to African American communities in the South.

THOUSANDS OF STORIES BLOG
Available now at TNMuseum.org/Stories:

• Curator’s Corner - Robert E. Clay and Black Education in Tennessee
• 50 Years and 50 Women: Celebrating the Impact and Legacy of Title IX in Tennessee
• Curator’s Corner - In the Late 1800s, Mary Sharp College Educated Young Women and Challenged the Education Establishment
• Tragedy and Triumph in ‘Walk Through Fire’
• Who Was Timothy Demonbreun?

JUNIOR CURATORS
The Junior Curators blog introduces young readers to Tennessee history, while incorporating the state’s social studies standards through vocabulary and critical thinking exercises. Recent posts at TNMuseum.org/junior-curators:

• West Tennessee: Crystal Shrine Grotto in Memorial Park Cemetery
• Manifest Destiny and Tennessee
• Name That County Quiz pt. 7
• The First of Many - Part II: Suffrage
• Fisk University
• First of Many: Ida B. Wells Part III
• Vice Admiral William P. Lawrence: Author of the Tennessee State Poem
• A Tale of Two Constitutions: The United States and Tennessee
Tennessee State Representative Greg Vital and Senator Bo Watson hosted a reception at the Museum in April to welcome board members from the Julius Rosenwald and Rosenwald Schools National Historic Park Campaign. Guests, which included Rosenwald School alumni and community partners of the Museum's upcoming exhibition, Building a Bright Future: Black Communities and Rosenwald Schools in Tennessee, heard comments from Ashley Howell, Tennessee State Museum executive director; Stephanie Deutsch, Rosenwald Park board member and author of You Need a Schoolhouse: Booker T. Washington, Julius Rosenwald, and the Building of Schools for the Segregated South; Betty Williams, Rosenwald Schools alumnus; and Rep. Vital, also a Rosenwald Park board member, who presented Howell with Joint Resolution No. 506 honoring and recognizing the contributions of Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald School Communities to the State of Tennessee. Following the reception, guests toured the Andrew Feiler photography exhibition, A Better Life for their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools that Changed America.
In February, the Legacy of Black Entrepreneurship in Tennessee Series honored the stories of some of Tennessee’s most noteworthy historic Black businesses. The Museum’s curator of social history, Tranae Chatman, welcomed André Prince Jeffries, owner of Prince’s Hot Chicken; Dr. LaDonna Boyd, President and CEO of R.H. Boyd Publishing Corporation; Cheryl McKissack Daniel, fifth generation CEO and President of McKissack & McKissack; and Darrell Cobbins and Shirley Peace Cobbins of Peace Realty. Recordings of all events are available to view at TNMuseum.org/Videos.

The Museum’s second annual “Craft a New Year” Workshop series in partnership with Tennessee Craft took place in January. Instructors Nancy Jacobsohn, Bezar Aradini and Mary Sullivan shared their expertise in clay, embroidery and bookmaking during these one-day workshops that continue to be popular with participants, who learn new skills in Tennessee craft traditions.

An “In Conversation” event kicked off the opening weekend of A Better Life for Their Children: Julius Rosenwald, Booker T. Washington, and the 4,978 Schools That Changed America. The program featured the exhibition’s photographer, Andrew Feiler, along with educators Frank Brinkley and Charles Brinkley, who were Rosenwald School students in Cairo, Tennessee. Their discussion was followed by a tour of the exhibition, which was open through May 21, 2023.

The Tennessee State Museum is proud to be a recipient of three Tennessee Association of Museums (TAM) awards of excellence, which were presented at the annual TAM conference Awards Ceremony in Bartlett, TN at Davies Manor Plantation on March 15, 2023. The TAM Awards of Excellence were presented to museums across the state for exceptional projects, programs and events held during 2022.

The Tennessee State Museum was recognized with the following Awards of Excellence: Temporary Exhibition: Painting the Smokies: Art, Community, and the Making of a National Park; Special Event: Juneteenth Celebration at the Tennessee State Museum; and Publication – Flat Paper: Haunted Museum Poster.
The Tennessee State Museum and State of Tennessee Real Estate Asset Management Division (STREAM) of the Department of General Services broke ground in April on a 65,000-square-foot storage facility for the Museum’s collection of art and artifacts. Designed by Gobbell Hays Architects (GHP), the building will be constructed by T.W. Frierson and is expected to be completed in 18-22 months at a cost of $32.5 million. The facility, to be located off Ellington Parkway on state property near the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, will house approximately 140,000 artifacts from the Museum collection, most of which are currently stored in the James K. Polk Building.

“This storage facility marks a milestone in the State of Tennessee’s commitment to preserving and sharing its history,” said Ashley Howell, Tennessee State Museum executive director. “It will make the Museum’s collection more accessible for research and scholarship, and enable us to more efficiently mount new temporary exhibitions, rotate artifacts in our permanent exhibition, and loan objects to other institutions. Our future lies in preserving our past, and we look forward to protecting the state’s artifacts and their stories for that future.”

Joining Howell to offer comments at the groundbreaking were Jen Murphy, Assistant Commissioner of General Services; Peter Heimbach, Director of Special Projects in the Department of General Services; and State Senator Bo Watson, chairman of the Douglas Henry State Museum Commission.

“This is truly a monumental day for the Tennessee State Museum and the Douglas Henry State Museum Commission.”

- Senator Bo Watson
The Indian Removal Act and Treaty of New Echota: Historical Thinking with Primary Sources

This summer, the Museum offers teachers across the state ways to help students think like historians. In a six-hour workshop, State Museum educators will use the Cherokee removal period in Tennessee to apply skills such as forming a hypothesis, reading critically, and analyzing a narrative. By exploring primary and secondary sources, and using activities that teachers can use with their students, workshop discussions will attempt to answer three major questions:

- **What did the Indian Removal Act and the Treaty of New Echota do?**
- **What was the reaction to these two documents?**
- **Why did some Cherokee leaders decide to sign the Treaty of New Echota?**

Teachers will also learn about other free classroom resources offered by the Tennessee State Museum, as well as the resources of our partnering sites. Workshops will be held in locations in East, Middle and West Tennessee:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee State Museum</td>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>June 2 and July 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President James K. Polk Home and Museum</td>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>June 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Scott County Jail and Museum</td>
<td>Huntsville</td>
<td>June 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morton Museum of Collierville History</td>
<td>Collierville</td>
<td>June 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnsonville State Historic Park</td>
<td>Johnsonville</td>
<td>June 26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sign up for these free teacher workshops online:**

[TNMuseum.org/professional-development](http://TNMuseum.org/professional-development)
CHILDREN’S CORNER

You Don’t Have to Go to Gatlinburg to Explore the Smokies!
The Children’s Gallery features displays that offer a variety of adventures and experiences for your little ones, including a quick trip to the Great Smoky Mountains! With a little imagination and some exploring, you can learn about the different animals, plants and people that thrive there. Did you know there are about 1,500 black bears roaming the Smokies today? Have you ever noticed the patterns on the shell of the Eastern Box Turtle? Have you ever touched the antler of a deer? Check out Cades Cove, which is home to several historic buildings and settler stories. Learn about the dazzling firefly show that you can watch by winning a lottery! You can be one of the 10 million people who visit the Smokies every year, but from the comfort of downtown Nashville.

ON THE COVER

CYNTHIA BLAIR FERGUSON DRESS

This red plaid child’s dress (1950-60s) was made for Cynthia Blair Ferguson by her mother, Mrs. Mary Lou Blair, to wear for her first day of school. Ferguson attended the Dunbar Rosenwald School in Loudon, Tennessee. According to the archives at Fisk University, the “two teacher school,” constructed around 1923, was one of two Rosenwald Schools built in Loudon County. The Dunbar Rosenwald School Foundation is the current alumni network and one of many organizations who have graciously worked with the Museum over the course of developing the Building a Bright Future: Black Communities and Rosenwald Schools in Tennessee exhibition on display beginning June 16, 2023. The school dress is currently on loan to the Museum courtesy of Mrs. Cynthia Blair Ferguson.

Unless otherwise indicated, all photographs that appear in the newsletter are taken by Museum staff and Tennessee State photographers and are protected by copyright. Any use of the images without permission from Museum staff is not permitted.
We’re breaking ground on exciting new offerings at the Tennessee State Museum. From our award-winning programs to our traveling trunks initiative to our interactive galleries, your support helps us cultivate educational and cultural events that make history come alive. We are committed to offering the quality programming you’ve come to expect from your State Museum. Consider donating today at TNMuseum.org/Donate.