



Delta Studies Center

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Six Ways to Bury a good Ideas:

1. **It will never work.**
2. **We can't afford it.**
3. **We've never done it that way before.**
4. **We're not ready for it**
5. **It's not our responsibility.**
6. **We're doing fine without it.**

A Message from the Center

Peggy Robinson Wright

Almost three years ago when I started with the Delta Studies Center, I never realized how exciting it would be. There was some apprehension and maybe I was a little afraid but I knew that this was where I wanted and needed to be. After working over twenty + years in community based work, this was an opportunity to help build partnerships and collaborations across the region.

The opening of the Center in 1998 provided an opportunity to use the valuable resources (faculty and students) here at ASU to work in the communities that we are a part of. As the only publicly supported university here in the Delta, it was an opportune time.

I believe that because of the programs that are being developed by the different disciplines, our reputation will continue to grow in the Delta Region. Building a sense of region, of commu-

nity, it does not happen simply by accepting a common heritage. Acceptance of a common heritage is difficult, because we are a diverse people and region. Contributions to our heritage in different ways, yet all significant. Our region will continue to emerge as we continue to learn work, and share together within a regional context, focused on regional issues. Our personal investment in problem solving will build our region, our community.

Many exciting efforts are underway throughout the region. These efforts are diverse people. Yet, we are united in a mutual goal to build unity and commitment to improvement of the quality of life for all residents of the Delta. There was a significant milestone reached with the approval of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee agreeing to fund \$20 million for a Delta Regional Authority that would

help improve economic conditions in the Mississippi Delta. Also under consideration is legislation for possible designation of the entire seven-state Delta region as a National Heritage Area as a way to preserve the culture for future generations and as a way to enhance the economic future of the Delta Region.

DSC taps into the real diversity of the Delta. We are new in terms of development initiatives in the delta. There is no individual or project mold through which one must conform to posture to interface with the Delta Studies Center. There are resource constraints, and there are pragmatic priorities, but our door is open to you, each and every one of you!

Delta Vision: Delta Voices Mississippi Delta Beyond 2000: A National Conference

By: Rasheda Hamilton

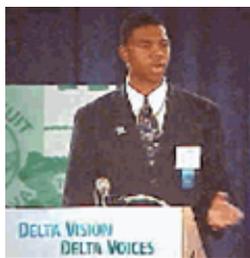


Senator Blanche Lincoln
D-AR

"From the banks of the Potomac to the banks of the Mighty Mississippi, we are listening to the true and powerful voices of the Delta...."



Mr. Conn Davis
East Prairie, Missouri



Mr. Marlon Henderson
Jonesboro, Arkansas

Community leaders, activists, and grassroots organizations from the 219 counties and the 7 states of the Mississippi Delta gathered in Washington, D.C. to share ideas to improve life in the Delta.

The conference host, Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater, has major concerns with life in the Delta. As a "native son," of Lee County, Arkansas, Secretary Slater knows exactly what this part of the country needs. In his welcome to all participants, Secretary Slater stated "more than 20 federal agencies of the federal government have signed a Memorandum of Understanding pledging to work together in promoting the development of the Delta region."

President William J. Clinton and Vice President Albert Gore, Jr., Delta natives attended the conference. In their separate speeches, they both spoke on the conditions of the Mississippi Delta. President Clinton Spoke about the amazing potential of the Delta and all that it had accomplished already. His quote was used throughout the entire conference: "From the banks of the Potomac to the banks of the Mighty Mississippi, we are listening to the true and powerful voices of the Delta, and we are committed to working together to make our vision of prosperity and opportunity a reality for the people of the Delta at the dawn of the new millennium." Other confer-

ence speakers came from small communities as well as larger businesses. Some of the special speakers were students from the Mississippi Delta. Latrice Jackson an 11th grade student from Marianna, Arkansas introduced Secretary Slater the first day. On the second day, Marlon Henderson of Jonesboro, Arkansas introduced him. Conn Davis from East Prairie, Missouri introduced President Clinton. Other speakers included Theodore Roosevelt IV, the great grandson of President Teddy Roosevelt and Senator Mary Landrieu commented on how the Internet had linked the Delta to the entire world.

On the first day, Greyhound buses transported the entire group to the White House. Although it was raining, the group had the opportunity to see one of the greatest sites of our country. Once the rain was conquered, the guests were treated to a buffet of numerous hors d'oeuvres and deserts. Each guest had the opportunity to gaze through the White House and have their picture made with the President. In addition to all that, the guests were entertained by the Marine Corps band.

In hi agenda, Secretary Slater planned for ideas to be transferred among the participants to bring economic prosperity to the entire country. Hopefully this "meeting of minds" accomplished his goals.



Vice President Gore
Town Hall Meeting



Secretary Slater and
President Clinton



Congressman Berry
D-AR



A crowd shot of the 800 people that attended the May 10-11, 00 Delta Conference

Judd Hill Plantation Reunion

By: *Vaneta Williams Harvey*

In September 1995, descendants of the sharecroppers that toiled the soil of Judd Hill Plantation met and formed the Judd Hill Memorial Scholarship Committee. Their purpose was to help young African Americans in the Trumann area to stay in school and perform academically in order to receive scholarships both from the committee and other sources to enable them to have a better life through education. The Judd Hill Memorial Scholarship Committee sparked the interest of many others and grew until a reunion was planned for Memorial Day weekend of 2000. People traveled from Nebraska, Wisconsin, Illinois, and California to attend the Judd Hill Reunion. There were over 400 attending various events that were held during the weekend.

Orange Judd Hill started the Plantation in 1925, when he purchased the first tract of land for the Missouri Cooperage Company. In 1933 during the Great Depression, Hill had financial difficulties and signed the land over to his daughter and her husband, Esther and Samuel Caryl Chapin. Chapin used New Deal crop reduction payments during the Depression and turned the plantation into a very profitable business. Cotton was their biggest cash crop and the use of sharecroppers was cheap labor in those days. When World War II started the farms began to mechanize, sharecroppers began to leave the Arkansas

Delta and move to other states to find work in the factories. Judd Hill Plantation was also effected as fewer people were needed for laborers and many found more fulfilling lives and careers in other places. When sharecropping ended in the late sixties and early seventies, Judd Hill continued to prosper. Eventually, the plantation was rented out to farmers in the area and after Esther Chapin's death in 1991, the plantation became the Judd Hill Foundation with much of the profits going to Arkansas State University for research.

On May 26, 2000, people started gathering at the Trumann Community Center for a reunion of the descendants of people that had lived and worked on the plantation. The opening ceremonies were held at the time, but that did not effect the reunion as people greeted each other with hand shakes and hugs. As people visited the various exhibits that the committee had worked so hard on, they started to reminisce about times past. Mrs. Betty Evans, the spouse of one of the descendants told me, "there are strong family ties and a strong sense of family here." She was impressed with the sense of togetherness that she encountered at the reunion because being raised in the big city of Omaha, Nebraska she had never experienced the emotions of renewing old acquaintances that were evident at the Judd Hill Scholarship Reunion. But not everyone in

attendance were from out of state. As one of the Interviewers for the Delta Studies Center, I had the opportunity to interview Mr. Van Bailey from Trumann. He started working on the plantation as a small boy and continued until he retired just a few years ago. He witnessed the transition of the small sharecrop plots through mechanization that took place in the mid's 1900.

People came and went throughout the weekend attending various functions that were held. One of the most touching events was the dedication of Judd Hill and Tulot Cemeteries where many people that worked on the plantation were buried in unmarked graves over the years. A ceremony honoring veterans that lost their lives at war was also one of the major events of the weekend.

Everyone owes their gratitude and thanks to the reunion committee who worked so diligently to bring everyone together for the weekend. There will be another reunion in the future and the committee is considering a Semi-Annual Reunion. If anyone has any information about Judd Hill, please contact Mrs. Mattie Wortham (870) 483-2105.

Sources: [The Poinsett County History](#), [The Jonesboro Sun](#), and Mrs. Mattie Wortham.



Entrance to the Trumann Community Center where the Judd Hill Reunion was held.

"...there are strong family ties and a strong sense of family here."



Memories quilt displayed at the Judd Hill Reunion during Labor Day weekend.

Delta Cultural Center: The Re-opening

By: Pat Snodgrass



Moore-Horner House
323 Beech Street
Built in 1859

Many things come and go in the changing of the Mississippi Delta. I was fortunate enough to be part of the re-birth of such an event. The re-opening of “The Delta Cultural Center” located in Helena, Arkansas, was filled with a daylong celebration of good food, great music and some interesting speeches made by local long time residents. We talked to passer-bys that met with friends that they had not seen in almost twenty years. We were able to talk to some of these strong-minded, very proud families. They came from all parts of the globe, some of their ancestors came from Italy, Greece, the nomadic tribes of the Holy land and slaves, who later became tenant farmers and large farm owners in their own right. They all had one common bond, their ancestors had settled in al little town along the Mississippi, called Helena, Phillips County, Arkansas.

Helena is a very pretty collection of old southern homes and traditions. Showing the character of the strong willed people who helped to formulate life along the Mississippi. Farmers, merchants, bankers and tenant farm workers who rose to the top of the economic ladder. This also included some of the best musicians that has ever been heard along the banks of the Mississippi River; great gospel singers, workers on the docks, and people of all ages singing; working together to make the

small town of Helena a major river stop for the Mississippi steam boats. There is a strong foothold of music still associated with the Helena area and the Mississippi Delta; soul, rock, folklore and some really familiar spiritual gospel music. Again showing the missing of this area’s people, thoughts and hopes.

The riverfront buildings of this old southern town have been refurbished to represent the original buildings with many “time stamped” displays. Paintings showing how old Helena looked, maps showing locations of battles that were fought and the remembering of those that gave all for their cause. Homes like the Moore-Horner House that are being restored to their glory days of the past, reflecting some of the grander and hard times of the people.

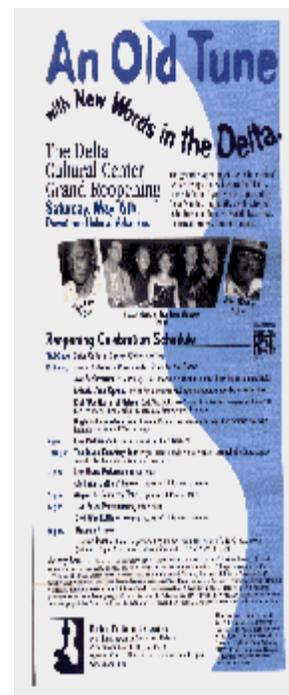
One of the more favorite places to visit is the old Missouri-Pacific depot, built around 1912. The Depot houses a permanent exhibit featuring many Arkansas Delta themes. Exhibits of themes range from the civil war, to the telling of great stories about the boats on the “Old Man River,” the mighty Mississippi. Stories of the African-American experiences from days of old telling of their growth and their success are also exhibited in this Depot. The showing of events that tell of the many leaders that have come from the Delta, as well as the new generation of leaders

that are growing wiser and smarter in the ways of the world each and every day. We are all hopeful that the many visitors will vision this as a community that is proud of it’s past and more hopeful for its future, of its children as they learn to play, work and grow together to tell the story of the Mississippi Delta, some good, and some bad, but all in all trying to explain that people have to work together for the future of any community to grow and survive. Go for it Helena! Be proud of the work you have done and continue to work to be more of an influence in the growth of your future citizens. We are proud to support you and wish you many great accomplishments in your days ahead.

“...hopeful that many visitors will vision this as a community that is proud of it’s past and more hopeful of it’s future, of it’s children as they learn to play, work, and grow together to tell the story of the Lower Mississippi Delta.”



Missouri-Pacific Depot
Built 1912



Internships: A Valuable Catalyst For Knowledge By: *Richard Brewer*

University internships provide students with hands-on experiences in specific settings which give students a change of pace from the traditional classroom/lecture environment. It has been my philosophy that mentor teachings provide an excellent framework for knowledge, but one does not fully understand the function of something until he actually performs certain duties. That is why I became quite excited in August of 1999 when I learned that the Delta Studies Center was seeking a student intern for their Hiking & Biking Trail Project.

I suppose in many ways that this internship began my geographic career. This was the

first time I was part of an extensive research project and used modern geographic tools. I began with simple tools such as topographic and political maps of the eight-county Crowley's Ridge region. I then looked for possible hidden trails on aerial photographs using stereoscopic equipment. The field research brought extensive usage of GPS (global positioning system) units which provide points that trace the path of the Crowley's Ridge Old Military Road. I have recently began work with computer mapping and GIS (geographic information systems) which will provide a detailed visual representation of the proposed recreation trail.

I feel that this project can only better prepare myself for future endeavors. Many geography graduate students have classes or specialize in GIS/GPS, aerial photography, and other physical geography sub-fields. If a graduate degree is not pursued, the experience obtained from this internship will also prove to be very useful in a workplace environment. I am thankful for this opportunity in my pursuit for knowledge and to work with some very good, wise, and helpful people.



Richard Brewer
Student Assistant
Hiking & Biking Project

"...this project can only better prepare myself for future endeavors."

Delta Events

SEPTEMBER 12, 2000
10:00 AM-3:00 PM
Delta Cultural Center
Helena, Arkansas

Deep South Humanities Center; at the center for the Study of Southern Culture

The first of several planning meetings to be held at various sites along the Lower Mississippi River Delta Region.

For more information check out DSC's website at <http://www.clt.astate.edu/dsc>

The Heart & Soul of the Delta
Symposium
November 1-3, 2000
Delta State University
Cleveland, Mississippi

This symposium is designed to recognize the unique heritage of the Mississippi Delta and continue charting a course for future understanding and development. The three-day event will provide an atmosphere to broaden dialogue, encompassing matters of the heart and soul.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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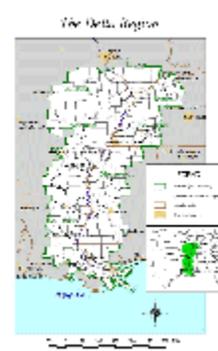
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3rd Annual Delta Conference
November 8-10, 2000

Where: Grand Casino, Convention Center & Veranda Hotel in Tunica, Mississippi

Who: the CDC Community, Supporters, & Funders

Sponsored by: Mid South Delta LISC



Source: DOT

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