The MTSU Center for Historic Preservation joins with communities to interpret and promote their heritage assets through education, research, and preservation. Key to our pursuit of this mission are our many excellent partners and our hard-working graduate and undergraduate students. We thank them for helping to make 2016–17 a fruitful and rewarding year.

• The Center published Tennessee FFA: Tradition and Transformation in collaboration with the Tennessee Future Farmers of America Foundation. Written by Savannah Grandey and Dr. Carroll Van West using the archives of the foundation, it is the first history of this student-centered and -driven organization.

• At the invitation of local officials, the Center carried out a heritage development study of the Rhea County Courthouse (1891), a National Historic Landmark. The report included several recommendations for enhancing the existing Scopes Trial Museum and increasing heritage tourism in Dayton, Tennessee.

• At the request of Memphis officials, West created a Civil Rights Movement timeline for Clayborn Temple AME Church, chronicling its history as a refuge, meeting place, and starting point for demonstrations during the nationally significant sanitation workers strike of 1968. He also co-authored the National Register nomination of Rock of Ages CME Church, where the sanitation workers first organized.

• Metro Parks of Nashville and Davidson County asked the Center to prepare a heritage development study of the 179-acre Moore Farm. Jenny Andrews led a project team that assessed the farm’s preservation needs and completed a history of the farm and the surrounding Cane Ridge community.

• The Center launched a new national project, the Santa Fe Trail in Missouri Building Survey. Led by Amy Kostine, it is another partnership with the National Trails Intermountain Region of the National Park Service to document our nation’s historic trails.

• In April 2017, the Shiloh Community Restoration Foundation of Macon County, Alabama, gave the Center its Historic Journey Award for building the new history exhibit at the National Register-listed Shiloh Rosenwald School.

• Teaching with Primary Sources–MTSU conducted 34 teacher workshops across the state, from Brownsville to Knoxville. Among the topics covered were the yellow fever epidemics in Memphis, the New South, civics education, and the Jim Crow era. Our partners included the Tennessee Historical Society, Pink Palace Museum, West Tennessee Delta Heritage Center, Museum Center at 5ive Points, and East Tennessee Historical Society.

• The Northeast Nashville History Project, a partnership between the Center, First Baptist Church East Nashville, and Nashville Public Library, used a National Humanities Alliance grant to create public programs about this historic African American neighborhood and the challenges it faces.
The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area tells the whole story of America’s greatest challenge, 1860–75: the powerful stories of intense warfare, the demands of the home front and occupation, the freedom of emancipation, and the enduring legacies of Reconstruction.

Leveraging federal, state, local, and private funding, the Heritage Area creates statewide opportunities for education, interpretation, preservation, and economic development.

• In partnership with Nashville Public Television, Heritage Area staff assisted with the research and production of Tennessee Voices Lifted: The Black Press. The second installment in the new series The Citizenship Project, the documentary features the state’s early African American newspapers and free expression after the Civil War.

• We continued our multi-year partnership with the state’s Tourist Development and Transportation departments to research and implement the Tennessee Civil War Trails marker and signage program, which interprets well-known and lesser-known Civil War and Reconstruction-era sites. To date, the program has installed 426 markers, incorporating sites in all of Tennessee’s 95 counties.

• Newly updated, the digital collection Trials, Triumphs, and Transformations: Tennesseans’ Search for Citizenship, Community, and Opportunity (http://dsi.mtsu.edu/trials/) focuses on issues of citizenship and community-building. Coordinated by Dr. Susan Knowles, the collection explores the transition from the Civil War to Civil Rights.

• To celebrate the centennial of the National Park Service, the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act, and the 20th anniversary of the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, the Heritage Area and the Tennessee Department of Tourist Development held community events in Franklin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Charleston, Knoxville, and Parker’s Crossroads.

• We certified 10 Century Farms founded during the Civil War and Reconstruction period in Tennessee, including the English “Old Homeplace” Farm (1867) in Lincoln County, the Sellers Farms on Clear Fork (1870) in Washington County, and the Ward Farm (1874) in Decatur County.

• Staff and students installed a new signature exhibit at the McLemore House Museum in Franklin. Torren Gatson and Marquita Reed worked with the African American Heritage Society of Williamson County to research the life of Harvey McLemore, a former slave who became a landowner, and his descendants. A ribbon-cutting was held at the museum in the spring of 2017.

• In West Tennessee, we worked with community members in McKenzie to create interpretive panels for the Webb School Historical Museum. The museum preserves the memory of a historic African American school that closed in 1966. The exhibit situates the school’s legacy within the larger story of Reconstruction, segregation, and education. We also created a heritage development plan for the historic Johnson Temple CME Church in McKenzie.

• The Heritage Area continued its partnership with Main Street Murfreesboro/Rutherford County to manage the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County, which interprets the 1862 Battle of Murfreesboro. Our newest acquisition is a portrait of Mildred Martha Hopson Williams Jordan, who lived through the war and Reconstruction in Murfreesboro.
Faculty and Staff of the Center for Historic Preservation, October 2017

Dr. Carroll Van West, Director
Dr. Antoinette van Zelm, Assistant Director
Dr. Stacey Graham, Research Professor
Lydia Simpson, Programs Manager
Kira Duke, Educational Specialist
Savannah Grandey, Fieldwork Coordinator
Amy Kostine, Trail of Tears Project Historian
Dr. Susan Knowles, Digital Humanities Research Fellow
Laura Holder, Federal Liaison, Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area
Kelle Knight, Executive Aide
Alexandria McMahan, Secretary

Our Students, 2016–17

Ph.D. Graduate Assistants: Michael Fletcher, Torren Gatson, Elizabeth Johnson, Tiffany Momon, Marquita Reed, and Lane Tillner

M.A. Graduate Assistants: Grace Allen, Jenny Andrews, Denise Gallagher, Kelli Gibson, Kate Hatfield, Annabeth Hayes, Victoria Hensley, Ethan Holden, Typhanie Schafer, Taylor Stewart, Sherry Teal, and Matthew Whitten

Undergraduate Assistant: Katelyn Dinkins

Congratulations to the following students who previously worked at the Center and received their degrees over the past year! Ph.D.: Aleia Brown, Jenna Stout, and Sade Turnipseed; M.A.: Jenny Andrews, Brad Eatherly, Graham Henderson, Brad Miller, Jessica Reeves, Veronica Sales, and Taylor Stewart

Cover photos (clockwise from top left):
The Rhea County Courthouse in Dayton, Tennessee
Tiffany Momon at Macon County High School in Lafayette, Tennessee
Elizabeth Johnson on the grounds of the Stanton Presbyterian Church in Haywood County, Tennessee
The grand re-opening of Franklin’s McLemore House Museum, featuring a new exhibition created by the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area

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