

First Annual Graduate Student Conference in African American History

University of Memphis

October 22-23, 1999

Conference Coordinators

Gary Edwards
Kimberly Nichols
Donna Reeves

Special Thanks to

Dr. Kenneth W. Goings
The Marcus W. Orr Center for the Humanities
Department of History Endowment Committee
Organization of American Historians Lectureship Program
The National Civil Rights Museum

October 22, 1999
1:00-3:00

Marcus W. Orr Center for the Humanities
1999-2000 Lecture Series
Memory and Commemoration at the
End of the Twentieth Century

Joan C. Browning
Opening Speaker

“Who, What, When, Where?”-Conflicting Memories of the Albany Freedom Ride

Mitchell Hall Room 200

Historians treasure the witnesses' memories of historical events. “I was there” gives statements a presumption of credibility. Memory, like other historical sources, must be tested for accuracy—against other memories, contemporaneous documents, and written reports. Joan C. Browning, an Albany Freedom Rider in 1961, shows how Freedom Riders, reporters, and historians differ about fundamental facts about the Albany Freedom Ride.

Joan Browning has been a civil and human rights activist since the early 1960s. The organizations that she has been involved with include the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Southern Regional Council, and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives. She published “Invisible Revolutionaries: White Women in Civil Rights Movement Historiography” in the Fall 1996 issue of the *Journal of Women's History*. She also contributed an essay to *Deep in Our Hearts: Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement* due out next Spring. Browning is currently writing a biography of Joseph A. Rabun, a Baptist preacher shunned by his church and community due to his outspoken views on civil rights in the 1960s.

3:00-5:00

CREATING AND SECURING A BLACK MIDDLE CLASS
Fogelman Business Building Room 125

Chair: Caroline Getaz, University of Memphis

Papers:

“FDR’s New Deal Programs and African Americans: Rising Expectations During the 1930s for a Better Socioeconomic Existence”

Judith M. Gordon-Omelka, Wichita State University

“Till Death Do Us Part: Service Professionals and Black Communities-The Funeral Industry of Mid-Michigan, 1979-1999”

LaTerese Adkins, Michigan State University

“Vigorous and Angry Protest: Housing for Blacks in Memphis, 1935-1955”

Vickie Peters, University of Memphis

Comment: Blaine Brownell, University of Memphis

SCHOOL DESEGREGATION
Fogelman Business Building Room 131

Chair: Charles Ferris, University of Memphis

Papers:

“Beyond Roberts: Two Centuries of Struggle to Desegregate Boston Schools”
Bryan Upton, Brandeis University

“Black, White, and Gray: The Desegregation of the Citadel, 1963-1973”
Alexander Stephens Macauley, Jr., University of Georgia

Comment: Michelle Banks, University of Memphis

AFRICAN AMERICAN SLAVERY
Fogelman Business Building Room 133

Chair: Gary T. Edwards, University of Memphis

Papers:

“Slave Life in Colonial Arkansas: Sources and Preliminary Conclusions”
Joseph Key, University of Arkansas

“African-Virginian Extended Kin: The Prevalence of West African Family Forms
Among Slaves in Virginia, 1740-1870”
Kevin Roberts, University of Texas

Comment: Winthrop Jordan, University of Mississippi

6:30-9:00 p.m.

Keynote Address

National Civil Rights Museum, Rose Room

The 1999 Belle McWilliams American History Lecture Series

Dr. Waldo E. Martin, Jr.
University of California, Berkeley

“Black Freedom Struggle in the 1970s and the Problem of Identity Politics:
the Case of Joan Little”

October 23, 1999
8:00-10:00

NEBULOUS STRATEGIES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP
Fogelman Business Building Room 125

Chair: Charles DeWitt, Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law

Papers:

“Work of Our Own Hands: Martin R. Delany and the Role of Self-Improvement in the Black Crusade for Equality”
Beverly Tomek, Southwest Texas State University

“Prologue to Conflict: Teacher Salary Equalization Lawsuits in Louisiana, 1938-1943”
Joe Leonard, Jr. Howard University

“Fund, and the Development of African American Leadership, 1928-1933”
Rhonda Jones, Howard University

Comment: David Jackson, Florida A&M University

POSITIVE COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO RACIAL OPPRESSION
Fogelman Business Building Room 131

Chair: Deborah Glenn, University of Memphis

Papers:

“Spartanburg, South Carolina: One City, Two Incidents: The Near Lynching of Will Fair and the Near Riot at Camp Wadsworth”
Damon Fordham, College of South Carolina

“Patriotism in the Midst of Repression: African Americans in War-Time Waco, 1917-1919”
Katherine Walters, Southwest Texas State University

“A Study of the a Freedmen’s Bureau Agent: Martin Flood and the Struggle for Control of the Red River District (Shreveport, LA)”
Solomon K. Smith, Virginia Commonwealth University

Comment:

Russell Wigginton, Rhodes College
Donna Reeves, University of Memphis

AFRICAN AMERICAN RELIGION
Fogelman Business Building Room 269

Chair: Sister Jean Marie Warner, University of Memphis

Paper:

“The Women’s Department of the Church of God in Christ”
Anthea Butler, Vanderbilt University

Comment: Randolph Meade Walker, LeMoyne-Owen College

AFRICAN AMERICAN MILITARY SERVICE
Fogelman Business Building Room 133

Chair: Paul White, University of Memphis

Papers:

“Of the Services and Sufferings of the Colored Soldiers: African Americans in the Seven
Years War”
Jeffrey Kotkin, University of Massachusetts at Boston

“Refusing to Serve in the Gulf War: Lessons for the Writing of Black Working Class
History”
Betsy Esch, New York University

“African American Contributions in World War II”
Gleen Reese, University of Memphis

Comment: Joseph Hawes, University of Memphis

October 23, 1999
10:30-12:30

AFRICAN AMERICAN RENAISSANCE MUSIC AND THEATER
Fogelman Business Building Room 125

Chair: Dana McKelvy, University of Memphis

Papers:

“Jazz and the New Negro: The Politics of Black Music in 1920s Chicago and New
York”
Alwyn Williams, University of Sydney, Australia

“Shuffle Along: The Emergence of Musical Theater in the African American Renaissance of the 1920s”

James Davis, University of Northern Iowa

Comment: Arthe Anthony, Rockefeller Scholar, University of Memphis

THE RHETORIC OF GENDER
Fogelman Business Building Room 131

Chair: Jonathan Jones, University of Memphis

Papers:

“Gender Roles and Humanity in Antebellum Slave Narratives”

Matthew M. Scullin, Boston College

“The Baddest Motherfucker[s] Ever to Set Foot Inside of History: Black Militancy, Black Manhood, and the Black Panther Party”

Steve Estes, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

“Reproductive Politics of Women in the Black Panther Party”

Gniesha Dinwiddle, University of California at Los Angeles

Comment: Earnestine Jenkins, University of Memphis

THE DIASPORA FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT
Fogelman Business Building Room 133

Chair: Steven Patterson, University of Memphis

Papers:

“The Diasporic Periphery: The Lessons of Garifuna History”

Matthew L. Brodsky, University of Georgia

“Black American Women Radicals and the Third World, 1945-1965”

Erik S. McDuffie, Temple University

“Confronting Whiteness in the Afro-Atlantic”

John Walker Davis, University of Georgia

Comment: Frederick Knight, University of Memphis

Phillippe Zacair, University of Memphis

CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISM DURING WW II AND THE COLD WAR
Fogelman Business Building Room 269

Chair: Scott Cracraft, University of Memphis

Papers:

“Black Skin Over Red Blood: African American Protest During WW II”
David MacLaren, Loyola University

“Communist Front Shouts Kissing Case to the World: The CCRI and the Politics of Race and Gender During the Cold War”
Patrick D. Jones, University of Wisconsin

Comment: Charles Eagles, University of Mississippi
Kimberly Nichols, University of Memphis

October 23, 1999
2:00-4:00

AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATION
Fogelman Business Building Room 269

Chair: Antonia Mead, University of Memphis

Papers:

“Wiley College from 1933 to 1942: The African American Harvard West of the Mississippi”
Gail K. Beil, Stephen F. Austin State University

“Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic: African American Women Teachers, 1860-1940”
Jennifer Walton, Central Michigan University

Comment: Christopher Caplinger, Vanderbilt University

RACIAL VIOLENCE
Fogelman Business Building Room 125

Chair: Whitney Huey, University of Memphis

Papers:

“Detroit, How Has Thou Fallen?: The Detroit Free Press and the Riot of 1863”
Michael W. Phillips, Central Michigan University

“The Rebels Are Bold, Defiant, and Unscrupulous in their Dementations of All Men:
Daviness County, Kentucky, 1865-1868”
J. Michael Crane, Vanderbilt University

“Reconstructing a National Culture: African American Men and Women and the
Lynching Spectacle, 1880-1930”
Teskani Browne, UCLA

Comment: Thaddeus Smith, Middle Tennessee State University
David Tucker, University of Memphis

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF BLACK IDENTITIES Fogelman Business Building Room 131

Chair: David Madlock, University of Memphis

Papers:

“Hair and Integration: African American Women and Beauty Culture in the Civil Rights
Era”
Susannah Walker, Carnegie Mellon University

“Making Choices the Use of Power in Reconstructing the African American Family”
Lynne Nelson Manion, University of Maine

“Standing in the Gaps: Middle-Class Women’s Responses to Lynching in Tennessee,
1890-1930”
L. Thames Leonard, University of Mississippi

Comment: Kenneth W. Goings, University of Memphis

AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN’S SELF-HELP MOVEMENTS Fogelman Business Building Room 133

Chair: Ann L. Greene, University of Memphis

Papers:

“Cooperate and Nothing is Impossible: Christian Social Service and Nannie Helen
Burroughs’ Venture in Economic Cooperation”
Stephanie Harry, University of Maryland

“Pray Not Your Tasks Suited to Your Powers, Pray for Powers Suited to Your Tasks:
The Evolution of Savannah Women’s Organizations, 1903-1921”
Katherine Ferreira, Armstrong Atlantic State University

“Working for Community: African American Women in Social Welfare History”
Althea Webb, Murray State University

Comment: Beverly Bond, University of Memphis