

Winter 2007

## From the Director:

Fall 2006 brought with it a momentous occasion. On August 24, I had the pleasure of participating in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Rutherford County Archives facility. In addition, I served on the advisory committee that worked with former County Mayor Nancy Allen to hire the county's first full-time archivist -- one of my former graduate assistants, John Lodi. We look forward to continued collaboration in the future.

We enjoy many such opportunities -- large and small -- to serve our local communities. During the summer, we responded to an inquiry from Jerianne Thompson at the Smyrna Public Library regarding local immigrant history. We were able to provide some interesting items documenting some of Murfreesboro's early twentieth-century immigrants, the Goldstein, Meshotto, and DeGeorge families. Here's what Ms. Thompson wrote in response: "*Smyrna library would like to thank you for providing us with images related to Murfreesboro-area immigrants. With your help, we were able to create a fabulous display for our month-long 'Becoming American' celebration.*" (See article on "[Murfreesboro's Early Twentieth Century Immigrants](#)").

An on-campus collaboration resulted in a new collection of war letters for the Gore Center. Early in the semester, Dr. Jim Williams's Honors History 2020 class visited the Gore Center to learn about letter-writing in war time and to read examples from our collections. They subsequently gathered letters written by soldiers from World War I to the current war in Iraq and presented them to the Gore Center to add to our holdings.

Collaboration, on and off campus, is at the heart of the Gore Center's mission. If you have ideas for collaborative projects related to the history of MTSU, Murfreesboro, or Rutherford County, please give me a call at 898-2632 or email me at [lpruitt@mtsu.edu](mailto:lpruitt@mtsu.edu).

Lisa Pruitt, PhD, Director



William Goldstein Naturalization Papers, Rutherford County, 1894

Rutherford County Archive  
Ribbon Cutting, August 2006



## Murfreesboro's Early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Immigrants

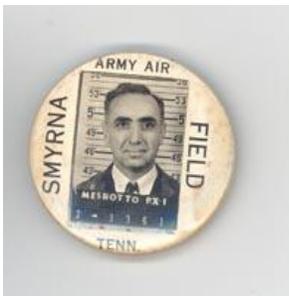
Concetta DiGiorgio Miciotto and her four children (Dominico, Grace, Vance, and Sam) immigrated to the United States from Sicily in June 1911, arriving at Ellis Island on board the ship "Alice." They joined her husband, Giuseppe, who was already living and working in Chicago. They moved to Nashville in 1913 and then to Murfreesboro in 1916 to join Concetta's brothers, Sam and John DeGeorge. Somewhere along the way, Concetta and her family changed the spelling of their last name from Miciotto to Meshotto, just as the DeGeorges had modified DiGiorgio.



Concetta's son Dominico (Dominick) was about 16 when they arrived in the United States. In 1926, Dominick, his brother and sister, and their mother Concetta opened the first Busy Bee Café at 125 N. Maple Street (where Marina's is now). In 1934, Dominick bought the building at 119 N. Maple Street. In 1937, he married Rose Culotta of Birmingham, Alabama (her parents were from the same town in Sicily that the DeGeorges and Meshottos were from). From 1937 to 1946, Dominick and Rose operated the Busy Bee Café at 119 N. Maple Street location. The Busy Bee served traditional American fare such as hamburgers and

French fries, but they were also known to have the best spaghetti in Murfreesboro.

Concetta's son Dominico (Dominick) was about 16 when they arrived in the United States. In 1926, Dominick, his brother and sister, and their mother Concetta opened the first Busy Bee Café at 125 N. Maple Street (where Marina's is now). In 1934, Dominick bought the building at 119 N. Maple Street. In 1937, he married Rose Culotta of Birmingham, Alabama (her parents were from the same town in Sicily that the DeGeorges and Meshottos were from). From 1937 to 1946, Dominick and Rose operated the Busy Bee Café at 119 N. Maple Street location. The Busy Bee served traditional American fare such as hamburgers and French fries, but they were also known to have the best spaghetti in Murfreesboro.



Dominick sold the building in 1946 and for a while he worked at the PX at Smyrna Army Air Base. He later owned and operated Dominick's Tavern, first on the Old Nashville Highway and then on Broad Street, until his death in 1973.

## Introducing Amanda Hall

## **New Gore Graduate Assistant**



Hi, everyone! My name is Amanda Hall, and this is my second semester in the Master of Arts program here at Middle Tennessee State University. I am concentrating on Public History with a further emphasis in Historic Preservation. I received my undergraduate degree in history here at MTSU in 2006, and I'm excited that I didn't have to move anywhere to seek a higher education! MTSU has a lot to offer!

I originally trained to become a secondary education teacher, but I have decided the public history field is the best way to reach out to a wider audience. The Gore Center has provided me with wonderful hands-on opportunities to create displays, process archival collections, and work with the public. I hope that my experiences here will eventually lead me into a career working for the National Park Service.

## **Rutherford County Historical Society Collection**



The Gore Center is privileged to house the Rutherford County Historical Society collection. Since its inception in 1970, the primary purpose of the RCHS has been to discover, procure, and preserve the facts, articles, or documents that relate directly or collaterally, to the natural, aboriginal, civil, political, military, literary, industrial, agricultural, and ecclesiastical history of Rutherford County, Tennessee. The collection includes organizational records such as founding documents, minutes from RCHS meetings, membership records, and awards. The majority of the collection is made up of the publications created by the RCHS along with the research files of historical data compiled to create the publications. These publications are a wonderful source of information on general Rutherford County history, families, schools, churches, communities, businesses, cemeteries, and local Civil War history. Beyond the publications, the collection includes newspapers, scrapbooks, memorabilia, and many other items of interest. Finally, there are approximately 500 photos in the collection, which have been scanned into our database for easy examination. Researchers seeking information on

every aspect of Rutherford County are encouraged to stop by the Gore Center and browse this important collection.

\*Picture is from the RCHS photo collection. Other than the obvious sense of humor displayed, the details of the men are unknown.

Scott Anderson, Gore Center Graduate Assistant

## **What's New at the Rutherford County Archives?**

Life at the Rutherford County Archive has been revolutionized this year. After six months of strategic planning, all archive collections were moved to the new county archive building in early September, 2006, under the direction of Rutherford County's first full-time archivist, John Lodl. Lodl formerly served as director of two local historical sites, the Bradley Academy Museum and the Sam Davis Home. A 2004 graduate of Middle Tennessee State University with a Masters of Arts in History, he specialized in Public History with a focus on archival and museum studies.

Since the Archive's relocation, both email and visitor requests for access to county documents and research assistance have increased dramatically. At the same time, the Archive has continued to accession new materials, especially from the County Clerk and the Chancery Court. Between the increased public service activity and the deluge of new records, County Archives graduate assistants from MTSU's public history program have been very busy!

Current graduate assistants for the Rutherford County Archives are Donna

Baldwin, Janine Hunter, and Amy Lundell. Donna Baldwin is currently revising and creating a computer-database index to the County Clerk Record Books that will facilitate public access to this frequently referenced collection. Janine Hunter is creating an invaluable tool for genealogists, a searchable computer-database of all marriage certificates and marriage bonds issued in the county since its inception. Amy Lundell joined the staff at the Archives in January 2007. After obtaining familiarity with the collections, she will begin a project that complements her interests and the archives needs.

Numerous projects are available for undergraduate and graduate students at the Rutherford County Archives. Anyone interested in volunteer, internship, or graduate assistant opportunities should contact Mr. Lodl at (615) 867-4609. Under Mr. Lodl's direction, graduate assistants at the Rutherford County Archives are afforded the opportunity to learn archival methodology in a collaborative and supportive environment. The Rutherford County Archives is an exciting place to be in 2007!

## Narrating Katrina through Oral History

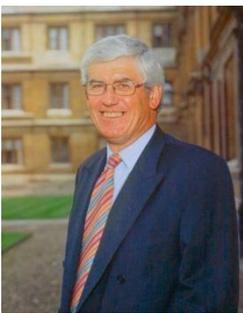
In the Fall of 2005, with special funding from the Provost, the Gore Center embarked on a project to record the experiences of people who evacuated the Gulf Coast region and came to Middle Tennessee and people from Middle Tennessee who served as volunteer responders.

To date, student volunteers and Gore Center staff have interviewed 53 people. Of these, eighteen were evacuees (six from Mississippi and twelve from Louisiana), five provided shelter for family members who were evacuees, one was a Murfreesboro resident attending Xavier University in New Orleans, one was a Mississippi Gulf Coast native attending graduate school at MTSU, and 28 were volunteer responders. Among the volunteer responders were MTSU staff and students, students at Middle Tennessee Christian School, the director of the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, the Director of Disaster Relief for the Middle Tennessee Conference of the United Methodist Church, the Chief Executive Officer of the American Association for State and Local History, National Guard members, and a veterinary technician who volunteered at an animal shelter near the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The Gore Center has signed on as an official partner with the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank, sponsored by the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University, the Smithsonian Institution, and the University of New Orleans. We are in the process of digitizing our recordings and transcripts and submitting them to the HDMB for inclusion on their web site (<http://www.hurricanearchive.org>).

If you know of anyone who should be interviewed for this project, please contact Dr. Lisa Pruitt at [lpruitt@mtsu.edu](mailto:lpruitt@mtsu.edu) or Betty Rowland at [browland@mtsu.edu](mailto:browland@mtsu.edu), or call 898-2632.

## Albert Gore, Sr., the Interstate Highway System, and the Modern South



On November 9, Dr. Anthony J. Badger presented a public lecture before an audience of about 240 people on the subject "Albert Gore, Sr., the Interstate Highway System, and the Modern South." Dr. Badger is Paul Mellon Professor of American History at Cambridge University and Master of Clare College, Cambridge. His books include *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-1940* and *Prosperity Road: The New Deal, Tobacco, and North Carolina*.

He has also co-edited a number of books on the civil rights movement, such as *The Making of Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement* (with Brian Ward) and *The Role of Ideas in the Civil Rights South* (with Ted Ownby). He has written articles and given lectures in the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States on US Southern political history, including the life

and work of Albert Gore, Sr. Professor Badger is currently completing a biography of Albert Gore, Sr., with financial support from the Samuel Fleming Foundation, the Mellon Fund at Cambridge University, and the Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center at Middle Tennessee State University.



Albert Gore, Sr., (1907-1998) graduated from Middle Tennessee State Teachers College in 1932. He served as school superintendent for Smith County while attending the YMCA Law School in Nashville. In 1937, he married Pauline LaFon, a recent graduate of Vanderbilt Law School. They moved to Carthage, Tennessee, and started a law firm together. In 1938, Gore was elected to the United States House of Representatives for the 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. He served through 1952, when he was elected to the United States Senate, taking office in 1953. Gore held the Senate seat through 1970. During his 18-year tenure in the Senate, Gore was notable as a Southerner who was moderate on civil rights and who opposed the conflict in Vietnam. One of his most significant achievements, however, was his co-authorship, with George Fallon of Maryland, of the 1956 Federal-Aid Highways Act, which created the "National System of Interstate and Defense Highways." In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, interstate highways dramatically transformed the cultural and economic landscape of the South and the nation. The year 2006 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Interstate Highway System.

Many thanks to the following for their financial support of this event:

MTSU Distinguished Lectures Fund

Albert Gore, Sr., Research Center

Samuel Fleming Foundation

Tennessee Department of Transportation

American Democracy Project at MTSU

College of Liberal Arts

Department of History

Department of Political Science

Concrete Industry Management Program  
Business & Economic Research Center

## Lightning Strikes the Decade



Amanda Hall, Gore Center graduate assistant, designed an exhibit for the Golden Raiders Class of '56 fall induction ceremony. The exhibit featured a “then and now” theme, highlighting the similarities between today’s MTSU Raiders and those of fifty years ago. A powerful resemblance exists between the 1950s era of expansion and the growth of the university at present. Q. M. Smith, president of MTSU during that time, worked hard to accommodate the growing student body, a result of the post-World War II boom and the G.I. Bill. New dormitories, libraries, and classroom buildings dramatically changed the campus landscape. The last decade has also seen similar expansion with the addition of the Walker Library, the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building, the Business and Aerospace building, and the renovation of Todd Hall.

MTSU Athletics was also featured in the exhibit, which highlighted the winning age of celebrated athletic director Charles “Bubber” Murphy. Both men’s and women’s athletics were examined from each decade to underscore the importance of athletics in defining the character of MTSU. Interesting campus life photos of the 1950s were paired against modern pictures, all of which illustrate MTSU’s lasting legacies of tradition, memories, and pride.

## History Corner

This page is from a 1911 edition of McCall's Magazine located in the Walter King Hoover Collection at the Gore Research Center.

### Fashionable Millinery for the Young Girl

This department is conducted by Miss K. Hensley, the well-known Fifth Avenue milliner



A. A fashionable bonnet shape

It is perhaps easier to find a becoming hat for the young girl than for the older woman, for almost any shape, provided it is not too mature, sets off a fresh and youthful face.

The girl of sweet sixteen or seventeen looks charmingly picturesque this spring in one of the new bonnet shapes that Paris has declared to be the very latest fashion for the young girl.

Three very beautiful examples of this style are shown on this page. The one at the upper left-hand corner is of black straw trimmed with a wreath of roses most artistically shaded from pink to palest yellow, white beneath the brim is a frill of lace falling over the hair in a way that makes one think of the fashions of former days. Next this is another bonnet shape of rough black straw trimmed with a draped band of Empire-green velvet and a fringe of pale-pink flowers falling over the brim.

The third bonnet is shown at the foot of the right-hand column. This is made of very soft, flexible straw in a lovely shade of pale pink. It is trimmed with a wreath of roses and spring flowers. In the back is a huge bow of black velvet. The brim is covered with a full frill of white lace held down by a bow-pleating of narrow velvet ribbon.

Combinations of black and white are most prominent in millinery this season. Another idea is black with a brilliant contrasting color and also white with a brilliant color. Black hats are trimmed with coral and reds, royal blue, purple and emerald green. White straw hats have contrasting touches of the same brilliant shades. Often the black and white together is relieved

(Continued on page 40)

1. A quiet and becoming shape trimmed with lace and with accents of shaded roses.

2. Hat of black and white straw trimmed with a bow of pink roses.

3. Showing the way in which a big hat is wound with ribbon.

4. Trim of rose tulle silk and crown covered with hair ribbon of Valenciennes.

5. Black straw hat lined with white straw and trimmed with the bow of black and white silk ribbon with Empire-green.

6. An effect in black and royal blue.

8. Of pale pink with a wreath of flowers.