



Thursday, February 26, 2026 – Bowie’s Rabbit Hole, 100 Main Street

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Ticketed Event - \$30

Raise a Glass to Freedom: Bar Songs from Then to Now

Taverns were more than watering holes during the American Revolution—they were hubs of debate, dissent, and dreams of liberty. Join us for a rowdy, spirited celebration as we revive the raucous bar songs that echoed through colonial taverns—reimagined for today. Experience the soundtrack of revolution, reinterpreted with a modern twist, and step into the soundscape that inspired the founding of a nation.

In partnership with the Natchez Festival of Music
Bowie’s Rabbit Hole, 100 Main Street

Friday, February 27, 2026 – Natchez Convention Center, 211 Main Street

11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Vance Fellows and William Winters Scholars Luncheon

The Carriage House, Queen’s Room, 401 High St, Natchez, MS 39120

1:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Art Exhibits on “The Story of American Freedom” on display throughout festival in the Natchez Room.

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

NLCC Opening Ceremony with **Dr. Dewayne Middleton**, President, Copiah-Lincoln Community College; **Dan Gibson**, Mayor, City of Natchez; and **Dr. Pernell Goodwin**, Vice-President, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Natchez Campus. Musical selections on Stories of American Freedom, presented by the Natchez High Choir.

Tupelo Room, Natchez Convention Center

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

***The Tory’s Wife*, by Dr. Cynthia Kierner**, Professor of History at George Mason University. This engrossing book tells the story of Jane Welborn Spurgin, a patriot who welcomed General Nathanael Greene to her home and aided Continental forces while her loyalist husband was fighting for the king as an officer in the Tory militia.

Tupelo Room, Natchez Convention Center

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

***King of the Gunrunners; How a Philadelphia Fruit Importer Inspired a Revolution and Provoked the Spanish-American War*, by Mr. James W. Miller.** Mr. Miller retired from the University of New Orleans as the athletics director. Prior to his tenure there, he spent eleven years as a newspaper reporter and twenty-one years in the NFL. This book is about the untold story of a forgotten American whose adventures helped pave the way for the United States' emergence as an international power.
Tupelo Room, Natchez Convention Center

4:00 p.m. -- 5:00 p.m.

***How to Dodge a Cannonball* by Mr. Dennard Dayle.** Mr. Dayle is an Adjunct Professor of Writing at Columbia University and a New York-based author, specializing in writing, comedy, and illegal pranks. This book follows Anders, a teenage idealist who enlists and reenlists to shape the American Future—as soon as he figures out what that is, who it includes, and why everyone wants him to die for it. Escaping his violently insane mother is a bonus.
Tupelo Room, Natchez Convention Center

5:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Book Signing
Lobby, Natchez Convention Center

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Join us for a special screening of *Natchez* – the award-winning documentary that confronts the complex legacy of history, memory, and tourism in Natchez, Mississippi. *Natchez* offers an incisive look at how this iconic Southern town grapples with its antebellum past and the stories that shape its present.

Film screening followed by an expert panel discussion featuring:

Dr. Jodi Skipper – Associate Professor Anthropology and Southern Studies, University of Mississippi

A leading scholar in African diaspora anthropology, historical archaeology, and heritage tourism, Dr. Skipper examines how African American histories are interpreted in public spaces and how communities engage with memory and meaning.

Lolly Rash – Executive Director, Mississippi Heritage Trust

With more than two decades of experience in historic preservation, Lolly Rash advocates for the protection and thoughtful interpretation of Mississippi's historic places and cultural landscapes.

Dr. Jim Kelly – Distinguished Professor of Media and Communication

An accomplished scholar and former photojournalist, Dr. Kelly specializes in visual storytelling, media ethics, and documentary practice. His work explores how film and images shape public memory – particularly in the American South – and the responsibilities of storytellers in representing history and lived experience.

Nashville Room, Natchez Convention Center

Sponsored by Kathleen McClain Bond and Marcia McClain McKinzie

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Scholar's Mixer
Private event for William Winters' Scholars
Natchez Convention Center, St. Louis Room

Saturday, February 28, 2026 – Natchez Convention Center, 211 Main Street

- 9:00 a.m. – 8:30 p.m. **Art Exhibits** on “The Story of American Freedom” on display throughout festival in the Natchez Room.
- 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. ***Southern Ladies and Suffragists*, by Dr. Miki Pfeffer.** Dr. Pfeffer is an independent researcher and native New Orleanian whose work has appeared in the *Encyclopedia of World’s Fairs and Expositions*. At the World’s Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition, the Woman’s Department became a petri dish where cultures clashed but where women from across the country exchanged views on propriety, jobs, education, and suffrage.
Tupelo Room, Natchez Convention Center
Sponsored by Melinda and Ben Yarbrough, M.D.
- 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. ***Whiskey, Women, and War: How the Great War Shaped Jim Crow New Orleans*, by Mr. Brian Altobello**, educational consultant in New Orleans area schools and lecturer on the American Queen Steamboat Cruise Line. As the US entered World War I in 1917, a burst of patriotism in New Orleans collided with civil liberties. The author explores local enlistment and war bond efforts, Prohibition and the red-light district’s closure, the political fight over women’s suffrage, and race relations as African Americans joined the city’s war effort.
Tupelo Room, Natchez Convention Center
- 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. ***The First Code Talkers*, by Dr. William C. Meadows**, Professor of Anthropology and Native American Studies at Missouri State University, Springfield. Drawing on nearly thirty years of research in U.S. military and Native American archives, surviving accounts from code talkers and their commanding officers, family records, newspaper accounts, and fieldwork in descendant communities, the author explores the origins, use, and legacy of the Native American code talkers.
Tupelo Room, Natchez Convention Center
Sponsored by Melinda and Ben Yarbrough, M.D.
- 12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Book Signing**
Lobby, Natchez Convention Center
- 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. **Ticketed Event - \$25**
***Food Power Politics: The Food Story of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement*, Dr. Bobby J. Smith, II**, Assistant Professor in the Department of African American Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This book unearths a food story buried deep within the soil of American civil rights history. Drawing on archival research, interviews, and oral histories, the author re-examines the Mississippi civil rights movement as a period when activists expanded the meaning of civil rights to address food as integral to sociopolitical and economic conditions.
Rolling River Reloaded, 406 Main St, Natchez, MS

- 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. ***Three Years in the Life of Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer, an American Catalyst for Change*, Dr. J. Janice Coleman**, professor of English at Alcorn State University. In the years 1962, 1963, and 1964, Mrs. Fannie Lou Hamer of Ruleville, Mississippi, transformed herself from a poor, uneducated sharecropper on a plantation in Ruleville to a powerful voting rights advocate on a national stage. How did this rapid transformation take place? The Fannie Lou Hamer “Is This America?” quilt helps to tell the story.
- 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. ***Moving the Chains: The Civil Rights Protest that Saved the Saints and Transformed New Orleans*, Dr. Erin Grayson Sapp**, PhD in English and American History from Tulane University. Dr. Sapp has served as a scholar-in-residence for the Historic New Orleans Collection, writing for their magazine, giving talks on local athletics, and researching the Sugar Bowl and Saints-related topics. This book tells the untold story of the athlete protest that necessitated a backroom deal, as New Orleans scrambled to respond to a very public repudiation of the racist policies that governed the city.
Tupelo Room, Natchez Convention Center
- 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. ***Our Lady of Bewilderment*, Alison Pelegrin**, the 2023-2025 Poet Laureate of Louisiana. She is an American poet, writer, and English lecturer. Whether by way of visitations from secular saints, hauntings from childhood, or back talk from “indelicate broads,” a complicated world speaks to and through Alison Pelegrin in *Our Lady of Bewilderment*.
Tupelo Room, Natchez Convention Center
- 5:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. **Book Signing**
Lobby, Natchez Convention Center
- 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. **Ticketed Event: Banquet - \$45**
Voices of Freedom: An Evening with Gloria J. Browne-Marshall, author of ***A Protest History of the United States***. Dr. Browne-Marshall is a writer, educator, legal advocate, and a playwright. She is a professor of Constitutional Law and African Studies at John Jay College, was a Resident Fellow at the Institute of Politics at the Harvard Kennedy School, as well as a Visiting Professor at the Harvard Kennedy School. She won the 2024 American Bar Association Silver Gavel Award. This book explores 500 years of protest and resistance in US history—and what the unsung heroes of social movements past can teach us about navigating our chaotic world. William Winter Scholars and William and Harriet Vance Fellows will be recognized during the event.
Tupelo Room, Natchez Convention Center