

Delta Blues Newsletter

December 2011

Note: From the Museum Director

We've rolled and tumbled through another busy summer and fall festival season here at the **Delta Blues Museum**. The 24th Sunflower River Blues and Gospel Festival was a special one, a tribute to local Clarksdale musicians and supporters, and we had our first-ever **Museum** booth at the always rockin' **King Biscuit Blues Festival**.



Museum staffer Lee Pharr mans the King Biscuit Blues Festival Booth

But the really big event that takes place every day right outside our door is the ongoing construction of our new **Muddy Waters Addition**. The walls are up, the windows are in, paint is going on the walls, and it's starting to look like the building that I've seen only in drawings for the last couple of years!



New Muddy Waters Addition, looking west, towards Ground Zero Blues Club



New Muddy Waters Addition, looking east, to the Museum in the depot building

If you haven't bought a custom engraved **Blues Brick** to become part of the walkway to the new, expanded Museum, there's still time. Each brick carries a personalized message of your support for the **Delta Blues Museum** - makes a great gift! Just \$50. [Click here to buy a Blues Brick](#)



Here's a work-in-progress look at the walkway where the Blues Bricks are going

SUPPORT THE DELTA BLUES MUSEUM BUY A BLUES BRICK



The other Big News is our new online Store!

Our new online Store is loaded with products, some of which you can find only at the **Museum**. It's got a new look with a new, easier-to-use layout, and has lots of special features, including a Gift Item section for your holiday and special occasion shopping needs. A word about the selection of CDs, DVDs and books: we have worked hard to present an essential library of these media products, from the basics to specialty items for those more familiar with blues culture. Take a look and please shop-your purchases will help support the Museum and our activities. [Click here](#) to check it out.



New online Store Home Page

In other news... I appeared on a panel as part of the **Oxford Blues Fest**, held in Oxford, Mississippi with **Scott Barretta**, blues historian, **Dick Waterman**, photographer and blues impresario, and **Ben Wiley Peyton**, musician. I think that we managed to get across some blues culture information while telling some pretty good stories. (Between us all, we had more than a few!)



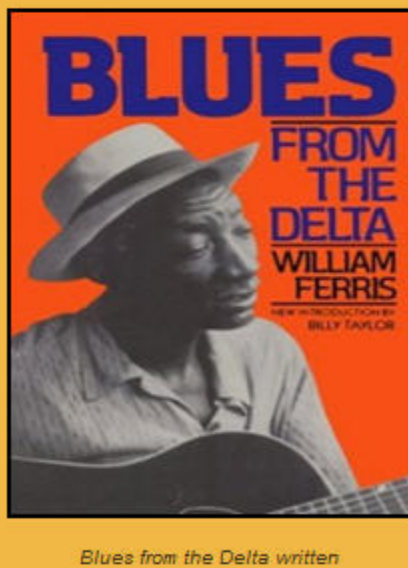
Barretta, Ritter, Waterman, and Peyton at Oxford Blues Fest panel, Oxford, MS

I'm reminded again how important it is that we preserve our blues heritage when I heard about the death of **Hubert Sumlin**, Howlin' Wolf's great guitarist. With the passing of Sumlin, **Honeyboy Edwards**, and **Pinetop Perkins**, two of the last living links to the origins of Delta blues have now passed into history. Keeping that history alive is what we do every day here at the **Museum** - thanks to your support.

More sad news: **Gary Miller**, owner of **Blues Source** here in Clarksdale, passed away on December 17. Gary was a passionate lover of the blues and a great friend of the Museum. He donated the **Charley Patton 78**, "**Pony Blues**," which is the centerpiece of our Charley Patton exhibit and was advising on the development of our new permanent exhibitions. He will be missed.



Charley Patton exhibit, with "Pony Blues" 78 donated by Gary Miller



Blues from the Delta written by William Ferris

Speaking of blues history, historian **Bill Ferris**, founder of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at Oxford, whom we hosted at the Museum during last year's Juke Joint Festival, checked in to tell us that his **Blues from the Delta**, a pioneering study of blues culture, has now now been translated into Italian for the many blues fans of that country. "A book as deep as the blues: rich in conversation, reference, history, and firsthand experience with blues musicians and the culture that informs the music. The poetry, games, house parties, religious and secular traditions of black life in the Delta are explored in living prose that is also a work of immense scholarship." If you haven't already, read this early and essential look at Delta blues culture circa the 1970s (in English) when original blues musicians and the old traditions could still be found intact.



The Delta Museum "decorated" for the Holidays (it does snow in Mississippi!)



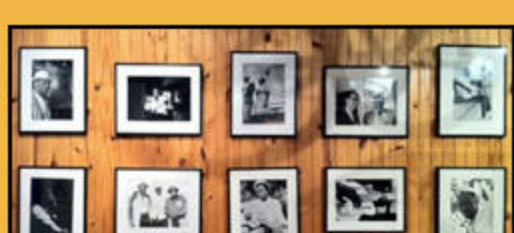
And we didn't forget to "decorate" the new Muddy Waters Addition

Thanks for supporting the Museum in 2011 - here's wishing you a happy holiday season!

Shelley Ritter, Director

This newsletter is supported in part by funding from the Mississippi Arts Commission, a state agency, and, in part, from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

NEW EXHIBITS & RECENT ACQUISITIONS



Son House portraits by Dick Waterman

Our current exhibits remain on view for winter visitors.

Son House Portraits by **Dick Waterman**, the famed music photographer and Oxford, MS resident, who helped rediscover House in the '60s and managed his concerts during that era's blues revival. (For more on House, see our "[Follow Son House](#)" Web feature.)

Mississippi: State of Blues, photographs by noted photographer **Ken Murphy** taken from the book of the same name. The display features 30 large-format photos of blues scenes

in and around **Clarksdale**, from performances at the Sunflower River Blues and Gospel Festival and Red's to portraits of Super Chikan and Jimbo Mathus. The book, which includes an essay by Mississippian blues historian and writer **Scott Barretta**, is for sale in our online [Store](#).

This year, the 100th anniversary of **Robert Johnson's** birth, we acquired a painting of the Delta legend by **Rick Seguso**.



Robert Johnson: painting by Rick Seguso



A "Razor Blade" Stewart signature shirt



"Ground Zero Blues Club, Clarksdale" by Ken Murphy



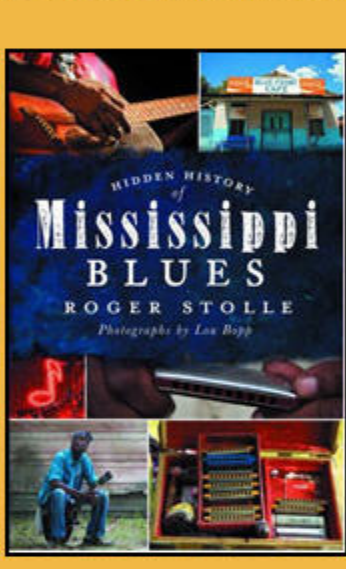
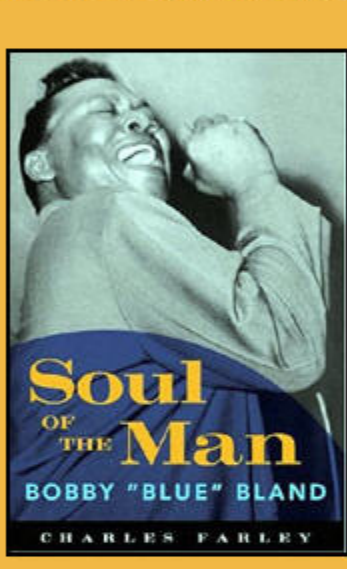
King Cotton Hotel

Josh "Razor Blade" Stewart donated a photograph and one of his distinctive performance shirts.

Steve Gibson donated a sign from Memphis' legendary (and long gone) **King Cotton Hotel** - thanks!

RECENT & UPCOMING EVENTS

The **Museum** hosted hidden book signings for **Charles Farley's** biography, author of **Soul of the Scene: Bobby "Blue" Bland**, and for **Roger Stolle's** book, **Hidden History of the Mississippi Blues**, a survey of the current blues scene in and around Clarksdale.



Two new books, two great "reads"

We enjoyed visiting with many of you at our **King Biscuit Blues Festival** booth. We also opened the **Museum** on Sunday for many King Biscuit visitors.

We were "wowed" by **Dorothy Moore's** headlining performance at the 24th **Sunflower Blues and Gospel Festival!**



Dorothy Moore

ARTS & EDUCATION PROGRAM NEWS

The students in the **Delta Blues Museum Band** spread a lot of good blues cheer during the annual **Christmas parade in Clarksdale**. Thanks to museum volunteer Princess Pride for coordinating the parade float. We're also especially grateful to Al Jones, Dana Russell, and Dale and Quincy Moore for assistance in providing the truck, trailer, and generator.

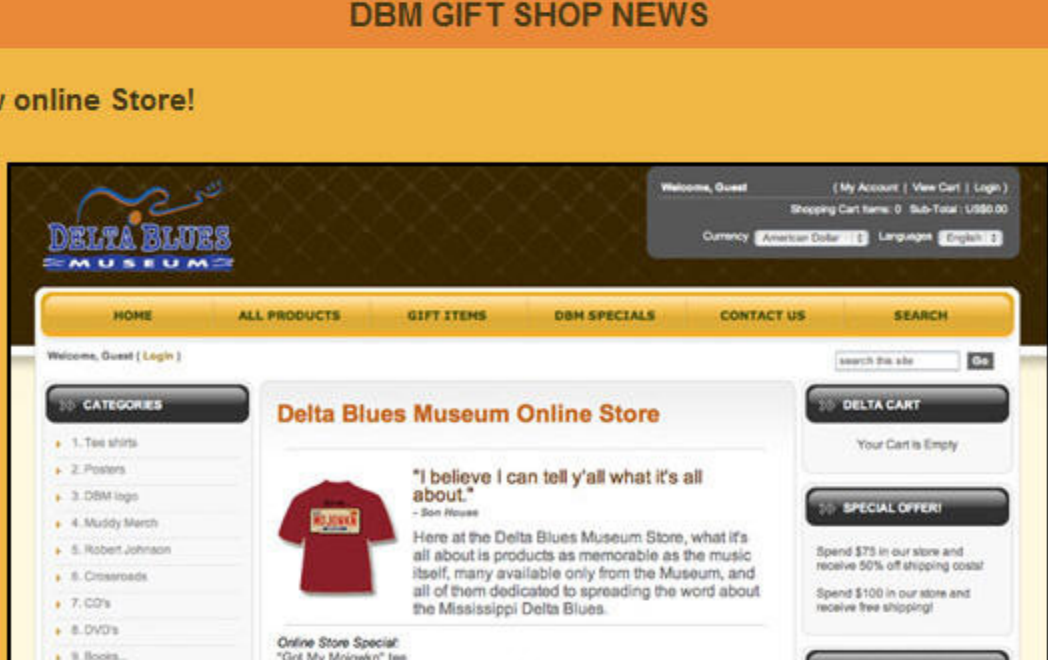


Delta Blues Museum Band

The **DBM band** also performed during the **Sunflower Festival**, at **Ground Zero Blues Club**, and at the **Coahoma County College Homecoming Festivities** along with **Bobby Rush**.

DBM GIFT SHOP NEWS

We have launched our new online [Store!](#)



With a **new layout**, **new products**, and a new, **easy-to-use shopping cart**, we are ready to deliver the blues goods from our shelves to your door. Take a look: [click here](#)

Plan time to shop with us when you visit the **Museum** for CDs, DVDs, books, tee-shirts, posters, and special Son House merchandise (tees, postcards).

[Gift Shop](#)

[Sign up for our newsletter](#)

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This site is made possible through support from the Mississippi Arts Commission, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Rock River Foundation.