



For More Information, Contact:  
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Bordered by the legendary Mississippi River ("Mississippi" comes from several American Indian words meaning "Father of Waters"), this state is full of beauty, history, and tradition, letting visitors relive the grandeur of the Old South. It also boasts a highway more than 8,000 years old – the Natchez Trace Parkway. Mississippi has a long literary traditional town of Oxford was home to writer William Faulkner and suspense novelist John Grisham. Award-winning authors Richard Wright and Eudora Welty also used Mississippi as the basis for their work, and playwright Tennessee Williams and puppet master Jim Henson honed their creativity in the state.

### **History**

Hernando deSoto first discovered the Mississippi River in the 16th century but the state was not colonized until 1699 by the French. Mississippi joined the United States in 1817. The state joined the Confederate States of America during the American Civil War.

### **Significant Attractions**

- Vicksburg National Military Park
- Natchez Trace Parkway
- Historic houses and district in Natchez
- Birthplace of Elvis Presley (Tupelo)
- Resorts and hotels on the Mississippi Gulf Coast
- Gulf Islands National Seashore
- Golf; casinos (statewide)
- Delta Blues Museum (Clarksdale)
- B.B. King Blues Museum (Indianola)
- Mississippi Blues Trail
- Rowan Oak, home of William Faulkner (Oxford)
- Agriculture and Forestry Museum (Jackson)
- Mississippi Crafts Center (Ridgeland)
- Great River Road (Highway 61)

## **Presidential Connection**

### **Teddy Roosevelt**

Though it is widely known that the Teddy Bear is named for President Theodore Roosevelt, few know that the "Teddy Bear Story" occurred in Mississippi. While hunting black bear in Onward, Mississippi in 1902, Roosevelt's hunting guide, a Mississippian named Holt Collier trapped and tied a 235-pound black bear for the President. Roosevelt refused to kill a tied-up bear. The story was widely-circulated in political cartoons of the day. Based on this event, toy companies made stuffed bears named "Teddy Bears." The Onward Store, on Highway 61 in Onward, remains from this era.

### **Franklin Roosevelt**

Mississippi is rich with New Deal history. The northeast Mississippi town of Tupelo was the first city powered by the Tennessee Valley Authority. Roosevelt came to "turn on the lights" and Robins Field, site of his speech, remains. Also in Tupelo are The Homesteads, one of the earliest federal housing projects. Constructed for workers building the Natchez Trace Parkway, Eleanor Roosevelt cut the ribbon on these cottages that still stand near the Natchez Trace Visitors Center in Tupelo. Other New Deal projects are the wonderful timber Civilian Conservation Corps lodges in Carrollton and Legion State Park in Winston County, the mural of the post office in Newton, and the extraordinary Walter Anderson mural of the Community Center in Ocean Springs.

### **Andrew Jackson**

Springfield Plantation, built between 1789 and 1791 in Fayette, was the site of Andrew Jackson's marriage to Rachel Robards in 1791. Jackson frequently travelled the nearby Natchez Trace from New Orleans to Nashville.

## **Story Suggestions**

### **The Old Capitol Museum**

The Old Capitol Museum, closed since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita damaged the building in the fall of 2005, is scheduled to reopen in January 2009 after a complete restoration. The museum will have a new focus, interpreting the distinguished history of the building that served as Mississippi's statehouse from 1839 to 1903. Interactive exhibits will detail government in action, the early history of Jackson as the capital city, and historic preservation. Grand Opening festivities are being planned for the week of January 4, with the Mississippi Legislature conducting the opening session on January 6 and the building's general opening set for January 10. For more information, call 601-576-6920 or visit [www.oldcapitolmuseum.com](http://www.oldcapitolmuseum.com).

### **Indianola – B.B. King Museum**

New! The B.B. King Museum & Delta Interpretive Center opened Sept. 13, 2008 in Indianola. This world class museum tells the compelling story of the man who grew up working in the cotton fields there, and became world famous as King of the Blues, greatly influencing musicians from Bonnie Raitt to Bono. Built at a cost of over \$14 million, the Center is based around the last surviving brick cotton gin in Mississippi, where Riley King (who became B.B., short for "Beale Street Blues Boy" when he went to Memphis) happened to work as a young man. B.B. King's life story is set in the context of the culture and history of the Delta. Video, interactive media, rare archival material and artifacts all combine to tell the story, including Mr. King's home recording studio, donated by him and reassembled in exact detail down to the paperclips.

The town of Indianola is solidly behind the project. Citizens of this town of 12,000 raised the first \$1.8 million locally before seeking outside contributions and grants. Restaurants and shops have sprung up around the new center, making the town a real destination for tourists. The Museum is part of the larger Blues Trail which includes sites from the Crossroads at Clarksdale to Robert Johnson's grave in Greenwood.

Indianola is between Greenwood and Greenville on Highway 82 in Sunflower County, the home county of civil rights icon Fannie Lou Hamer as well as segregationist U.S. Senator James O. Eastland (both deceased). Dockery Farms where the blues were born is in Sunflower County. Mississippi Valley State University, a traditionally black college, is nearby in Itta Bena. Mississippi Delta Community College is down the road at Moorhead.

Contact:

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662 887-3009 museum office 662 347-0879 cell

### **NAS Meridian**

Naval Air Station Meridian is one of two Navy jet strike pilot training facilities used by the United States Navy; the other is located in Kingsville, Texas. The construction of the \$60 million base started, July of 1957, and later commissioned in July of 1961 in the northeast corner of Lauderdale County. With its 230 military and civilian personnel, the current operation supports Naval and Marine aviation and technical training. NAS Meridian is one of the area's largest employers and economic stimulators. For more information regarding NAS Meridian, contact Susan Junkins, Communications Specialist at 601-679-2809.

### **Mississippi State University Riley Center for Education & Performing Arts**

Historic Preservation: new unique use of an abandoned 1890 Grand Opera House Theater and adjacent department store in heart of quaint historic downtown

Downtown development/revitalization resulting from multi-faceted university-owned performing arts, education and conference center housed in buildings dating back to 1889

Arts Impact on Quality of Life & Economic Development: From Garrison Keillor to Boyz II Men, a historic 1890 theater is breathing life back into a historic southern downtown

Arts Education / Integration - Arguably one of the country's most creative states (artists/writers/performers per capita) takes the lead in whole school reform model using the arts as a means to help reach and educate students - Explain center's leadership role in arts education initiative and Kennedy Center Partners in Education program that utilizes the arts in classroom as tool for learning

Cultural/Heritage Tourism - Patrons travel from across the southeast as far as California and Canada to experience performances in historic 1890 Grand Opera House Theater in small Mississippi town

Country music sensations and singer songwriter greats, Marty Stuart (native Mississippian) & Kathy Mattea return to home of Jimmie Rodgers to perform together in historic theater (show is Feb 15, 2009).

### **Tunica**

The Tunica Miracle Story shows the Economic Miracle of one of the poorest counties in the nation becoming The South's Casino Capital. Just 16 years ago Tunica was one of the poorest counties in the nation with double digit unemployment, a poverty level average wage, and no job growth or creation. Now it's one of the largest gaming destinations in the U.S. More than 16,000 jobs have been created, bringing an economic miracle to the area.

Tunica is America's Best Value for an Action-Packed Getaway. Tunica has nine world class casinos with an average daily rate of \$65.00 per night. Tunica was voted by AOL Travel in 2008 in the "Top 10 Most Underrated Vacation Destinations in the U.S." Additionally, with gas prices being at an all-time high, Tunica has proximity to most of mid-America.

Just named the "Entrance to Blues Highway 61," Tunica, Mississippi, is the entrance to the Mississippi Delta and the rich cultural blues heritage that laid the groundwork for modern music today. Tunica is part of the Mississippi Blues Trail with three blues markers, two museums that celebrate Mississippi River and blues history, and just 30 minutes south of Memphis, Tunica's gaming and blues influences are a story that has impacted the entire U.S.

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The **Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art** is moving forward on the building of the Ohr Campus on Beach Blvd in Biloxi. The Ohr Pods were erected in December of 2007 and will house the Ohr pottery when completed. *TIME Magazine recently selected Biloxi's Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, designed by Frank Gehry, for 2008 Style & Design 100 Issue, available to subscribers only.* The Pleasant Reed Interpretive Center, a replica of the Pleasant Reed house – a shotgun home built by a freed slave in Biloxi, will host a grand opening September 29, 2008 and will be available to host small special events/receptions. Construction on the welcome center has begun. The entire campus is expected to open by late 2010. Contact Julie Gustafson (228) 374-5547, [www.georgeohr.org](http://www.georgeohr.org)

**Beauvoir, The Jefferson Davis Home** reopened June 3, 2008 following a nearly \$4 million restoration. The interior paint restoration will not be complete for several months so visitors to the home can see the historic paint restoration first-hand. Currently offered are tours of the Davis home, the grounds, a gift shop and an exhibit displaying hurricane damaged/restored items from the Museum and Home. The library pavilion and Hayes cottage are currently being replicated and plans are to build a new Presidential Library. Contact Rick Forte, (228) 388-4400, [www.beauvoir.org](http://www.beauvoir.org)

The **Mississippi Coast Coliseum and Convention Center** is expanding to a total of 350,000 sq. ft. of flexible meeting and exhibition space. The \$68 million expansion is targeted to open mid-2009. The existing Convention Center (180,000 sq ft) is open for business and the new expansion is scheduled to open October 2009. Contact Paula April (228) 594-3700, [www.mscoastcoliseum.com](http://www.mscoastcoliseum.com)

Offshore and inshore **fishing** along the Mississippi Gulf Coast is considered by many to be better than ever. Most of our charter fleet is located at the Point Cadet Marina in Biloxi but many are operating from the public launch facilities along the Gulf Coast and the Long Beach Harbor. Contact Tom Becker (228) 385-2910 – Mississippi Charter Captains Association, [www.MSCharterBoats.org](http://www.MSCharterBoats.org)

The **Gulfport-Biloxi International Airport** expanded air service to include Orlando/Sanford aboard Allegiant and Charlotte aboard U.S. Airways and increased flight from Dallas and Houston. The airport completed over \$50 million in expansion and has begun a parking garage that will increase parking spaces to approximately 1,600 by November 2008. We also became

part of the Preferred Flyer Program. A new Hurricane Katrina Exhibit just opened in the lobby beside the ticket counter. Contact Jim Pitts (228) 863-5951 ext 14, [www.flygpt.com](http://www.flygpt.com)

The **Maritime & Seafood Industry Museum** is looking toward a potential ground breaking for the new museum in January 2009. The new museum will be located on Highway 90 across from the Schooner Pier Complex and beside the Ohr Campus. Contact Robin David, (228) 435-6320, [www.maritimemuseum.org](http://www.maritimemuseum.org)

The **Walter Anderson Museum of Art** is planning a \$6 million expansion that will triple their vault space and gallery for larger exhibits. Additional information should be available in November 2008. Contact Gayle Petty-Johnson (228) 872-3164, [www.walterandersonmuseum.org](http://www.walterandersonmuseum.org).

Fun, engaging exploration of Earth and Space where everyone makes discoveries, are the concepts behind **INFINITY at NASA Stennis Space Center**, the \$40 million attraction scheduled to open on the Mississippi Gulf Coast in 2010, the first of its kind for our region. **Edwin Schlossberg** is the designer of Mississippi's first hands-on, minds-on interactive science center. Contact John Wilson (228) 688-3337, [www.infinitysciencecenter.org](http://www.infinitysciencecenter.org)

Harrah's and Jimmy Buffett are working together to create **Margaritaville Resort & Casino** in Biloxi. The property is currently under construction and is expected to open 2010. [www.harrahs.com/casinos/grand-biloxi/casino-misc/margaritaville.html](http://www.harrahs.com/casinos/grand-biloxi/casino-misc/margaritaville.html)

The Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau is partnering with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Golf Association and the Mississippi Hotel & Lodging Association to offer **Golf, Gaming, and Fishing Packages** in October/November and **Shopping and Dining Packages** in November/December. These packages will be available by calling 1-888-388-1006 or visiting [www.golfgamingandfishing.com](http://www.golfgamingandfishing.com). Contact Richard Forester (228) 896-6699 ext 212 MS Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Linda Hornsby (228) 374-8611 MS Hotel & Lodging Association  
Kevin Drum (228) 374-4653 MS Gulf Coast Golf Association

## DESOTO COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

**DeSoto County marks the spot: Riches, treasures, delightful discoveries.** In 1541, heading west in his search for gold and a passage to China, the explorer Hernando DeSoto camped in what would later become the northwest Mississippi county bearing his name. Today, more than four centuries later, DeSoto County offers another vital passage all its own. As the southern gateway to Memphis and the northern gateway to the Mississippi Delta, this scenic county has once again become a highly prized base camp for eager explorers lured by riches and treasures. And, as for DeSoto itself, it's here that today's explorers have found a truly delightful discovery—a fun-filled, value-packed destination that puts them in prime position to get the very best of the region. For more information contact Kim Terrell, 662.393.8770, [kim@desotocountytourism.com](mailto:kim@desotocountytourism.com), [www.desotocountytourism.com](http://www.desotocountytourism.com).

**DeSoto Agritourism: Sweet success from the ground up.** When DeSoto County locals tell you Brussel's Bonsai dwarfs the plant nurseries you may have seen before, it's more than simply a play on words. With 100,000 square feet of greenhouse space stretching beyond its pagoda-roofed headquarters, Brussel's is the largest importer, grower and supplier of fine bonsai in the United States. With a visitor's lounge and guided tours available, Brussel's proves an inspiring host to the uninitiated as well. Exploring row upon row of lush majestic miniatures—from young nursery stock to 200-year-old specimen trees—is often the first step in what will become a lifelong interest. Other agri-businesses have also found a welcome venue in DeSoto, where they have enjoyed home-grown success with family operations. Today, Brussel's is only one component in year-round schedule of agritourism options, everything from picking blueberries to petting billy goats, horseshoes to hayrides to the "FUNdamentals of farming." For more information contact Kim Terrell, 662.393.8770, [kim@desotocountytourism.com](mailto:kim@desotocountytourism.com), [www.desotocountytourism.com](http://www.desotocountytourism.com).

**DeSoto Recreation: All hands on deck for an unsinkable outdoor experience.** Dotted the glassy surface of the more than 40,000-acre Arkabutla Lake, sailboats spread their brightly colored sails against the cloudless blue sky as they glide through the glittering water below. It's a beautiful if surprising picture: Who knew the best sailing winds south of Chicago could be found on a Mississippi lake? Yet the gracefully balanced crafts—indeed, the lake itself—are an apt image for DeSoto County, a verdant spot in northwest Mississippi where a strategic balance of natural and human resources has helped to create one of the Mid South's premiere outdoor destinations. Every year, more than two million visitors come here, drawn by the lure of everything from sailing, boating, fishing, swimming, hunting, hiking and camping at Arkabutla. Visitors also enjoy golfing at the county's four championship courses (72 holes in all), skateboarding and baseball at the largest adult/youth baseball complex in the nation. Truly an outdoor paradise, DeSoto County is a natural success that happens to be largely man-made—and from materials as inspiring as a dream, as unlikely as a disaster. For more information contact Kim Terrell, 662.393.8770, [kim@desotocountytourism.com](mailto:kim@desotocountytourism.com), [www.desotocountytourism.com](http://www.desotocountytourism.com).

### **Natchez Trace Compact**

#### **Native Genius:**

*American-Indian history runs deep on the Natchez Trace Parkway*

Shh. Can you hear them? Can you see them? When you're still, you can feel the presence of a native people who traveled this road, before it was a road, in search of food and the preservation of their way of life. All along the Trace you can find remnants of their story: from the struggle of the great Choctaw Chief, Pushmataha, and his treaty with Andrew Jackson at Doak's Stand, to the second largest ceremonial mound in the nation, and many other burial and ceremonial mounds in between. Come experience the stories of the Natchez, Creek, Cherokee and Chickasaw tribes at the Grand Village of the Natchez Indians and the exhibits of Chickasaw Village and Chickasaw Council House. Whether in the majestic mounds or authentic villages, it's possible to hear the echoes of these great American cultures and feel their presence.

#### **Love, American Style**

*Romance blooms on the Natchez Trace Parkway*

It is said that all the world loves a lover, and the Natchez Trace Parkway certainly loves its lovers. You don't have to travel to Niagara Falls or Paris; you can find romance on the Natchez Trace Parkway. It inspired Pulitzer-prize winning novelist Eudora Welty in her dramatic tale of Robber Bridegroom, a handsome highwayman who stole his maiden bride as he galloped past on horseback. It was also a catalyst in the true stories of former vice president Aaron Burr, who attempted to woo a Natchez widow before fleeing arrest, and future president Andrew Jackson, who honeymooned on the Trace under the stars. Today it provides just as many romantic backdrops as it did then, and it attracts couples of all ages. Love blooms on carriage rides through antebellum Natchez, in the search for gifts as a token of love at the Mississippi Craft Center or in Ridgeland's antique mall, and in the music of Jackson's Farish Street blues and Nashville Bluebird Café. Take your love to any one of these attractions, or simply rely on nature taking its course. From the Spanish moss of Natchez to the gently rolling hills of Nashville, the Trace will truly engage your soul.

#### **Natural Excitement**

*Outdoor Recreation on the Natchez Trace Parkway*

There's more than one reason the Natchez Trace Parkway has been hailed by the GORP outdoor guide as a "treat." Whether you're a birdwatcher, biker, motorcyclist, golfer, or just plain love the outdoors, the Parkway has a plethora of activities to whet your appetite. It affords the opportunity to connect with 157 types of feathered friends, ride miles of gently curving road with vistas around every bend, or camp under the stars at any of the 10 campgrounds or 12 adjacent state parks spread across Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee. There is truly something for everyone. If your recipe for a good time means "just add water," the Trace pours on the fun at the Ross Barnett Reservoir in Ridgeland, and at the many lakes and parks that form a banquet of boating, fishing and water fun along the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. Looking for birdies instead of birds? There are golf courses in every town along the Parkway, and in the Shoals area, two

courses on the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail. Whether it's a flying arrow or a soaring bird, a canopy of trees or a canopy of stars, a fish flashing in the sunlight or the flash of a biker's smile, the Natchez Trace is the road to recreation.

### **Ridgeland Tourism Commission**

*The Art of It All...*

See the beautiful glaze on a piece of pottery, the exquisite detail of handmade jewelry, the intricate stitches of an old-fashioned quilt, the unique way light captures you from a canvas, and taste the way a delicious dish melts in your mouth...all of this is found in Ridgeland. It is an artist's haven, and you can find all this and more at the Gail Pittman Studio and Outlet, B. Liles Studio, Mississippi Craft Center, Jackson Street Gallery and Viking Cooking School. There's so much to see and do; come experience the art of it all in Ridgeland!

### **Renaissance at Colony Park**

*Elegant Old-world Design...*

Relax and get away from the hustle and bustle as you explore Renaissance at Colony Park. Not just a shopping center, but a *lifestyle center*, where you'll find anything your heart desires among architectural artistry, luxurious landscaping and beautiful water features. Renaissance offers a level of quality in brand, selection and service unavailable anywhere else. When you're all shopped out, sit down to a feast at one of the great restaurants, or get front row seats to some of the region's most exciting performances and shows. Renaissance at Colony Park has something for every taste and every mood.

### **Natchez Trace Parkway**

*Take a trip back in time...*

The Natchez Trace Parkway runs through Ridgeland like a thread connecting the city's past to its present. Come explore a place where a walk in the woods is an exercise in history. First trod by buffalo, then American Indians, and later Ohio Valley traders who sold their flat boats for the value of their timber in Natchez and walked home via the Old Trace, today the 444-mile All American Road and National Scenic Byway is an important example of America's natural and cultural heritage. Its beauty and serenity will capture your mind and awaken your senses to a simpler time.

### **Ross Barnett Reservoir**

*Where water meets wonderful...*

A retreat for boaters, skiers, anglers, picnickers, birdwatchers and campers, the Ross Barnett Reservoir has something for everyone. From vacationing families to singles spending time with friends, and even the lone man, escaping to the quiet of his thoughts and a fishing pole in the early dawn, it can all be found at the Reservoir. With 105 miles of shoreline and 33,000 acres of surface area, there is plenty of room to kick back and relax.

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### **Great Escape:**

*History, beauty and the great outdoors  
on the unspoiled Natchez Trace Parkway.*

It is, first of all, a road, 444 miles of it, stretching in a canted diagonal that leads from Natchez up to Nashville. It is also a record, first carved out of the prehistoric wilderness by mastodons and giant bison lumbering north, and then by Native peoples, the Chickasaw, the Natchez and the Choctaw on hunting and trading parties. Today, however, it is above all an escape route, rescuing today's visitors from the mass-produced clutter of the modern world, as it surrounds

them with unspoiled natural beauty and a rich and exciting history of our nation and our land. The Natchez Trace Parkway isn't the road less traveled, but it certainly feels that way with its tranquil scenic vistas. Each year more than 50,000 visitors take in the engaging exhibits at the Natchez Trace Parkway's Visitors Center located in Tupelo, and yet the atmosphere on the Trace is so serene that it's been named one of the country's best biking roads.

**Beauty and the Beasts:**

*American classics rev up and roam at the  
Tupelo Automobile Museum and the Tupelo Buffalo Park.*

Some have humps. Some have fins. Some are beautifully preserved pieces of the American past, historical jewels artfully arranged in a collection valued at more than \$6 million. Some are living, breathing, galloping representatives of the historic American frontier, roaming over 200 acres as a magnificent herd, the largest of its kind east of the Mississippi. And while some will get your motor running; others are sure to speed your pulse, because at the Tupelo Buffalo Park and Zoo and at the Tupelo Automobile Museum, one-of-a-kind American classics aren't just on display, they're also main attractions in exciting and interactive experiences that are wowing visitors from all over the country and even the world.

**True Blue:**

*At the birthplace of Elvis,  
discover the genuine article.*

You think you know him. The songs—sure, you know the songs. The music, the voice. The shy honeyed drawl. The dancing—gyrations, people called it—impossibly lithe and loose-limbed. How could you not know Elvis? The artist, the icon, the musical genius. The most influential person in all of 20<sup>th</sup> century music, maybe in all of today's popular culture. Everybody knows Elvis. Right? And then comes The Meeting. When you arrive face to face with the two-room shotgun house where Elvis Aaron Presley came into the world in the wee hours of a cold January morning in 1935, in a birth filled with joy and sorrow, light and darkness, sound and silence...a fullness that still seems to reverberate in the quiet of this humble structure. If you feel wonder that such an improbable journey could begin at such an improbable place, you are not alone. For many, the Birthplace moment is one of awe and inspiration.

**Star Power:**

*A city on the rise, Tupelo attracts  
people, praise and unparalleled opportunity*

Long known as a trusted medical hub and acclaimed manufacturing market, Tupelo is not a town to sit and wait for things to happen. Tupelo leads the way and makes things happen. A dynamic Southern city that is growing every day, Tupelo has now become a nexus of exciting new urbanism, with our downtown district taking its place as the showpiece of a revitalized and energized downtown. From renovations to already amazing attractions, additions of fine hotels to the complete turn-around of the downtown district, Tupelo continues down the progressive path it began years ago.

**The Writer Story:**

*Columbus, Mississippi is the birthplace of Pulitzer Prize  
winning author, Tennessee Williams*

The Tennessee Williams Home & Welcome Center is the first home of Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Tennessee Williams. The author made history with well-known plays such as *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *The Glass Menagerie*. Tennessee Williams, the man said to be the most important American playwright, was born in Columbus, Mississippi in 1911. He spent his beginning years in an old Victorian home that was the rectory for St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Williams' grandfather, Reverend Walker Dakin, served as minister for the church. In 1993, the rectory was in danger of being torn down to make room for a church expansion. In an effort to preserve this historic literary landmark, the yellow and blue gingerbread home was loaded onto flatbed trailers and moved to Main Street, where it was restored. Just three months after opening, Tennessee Williams was honored with a U.S. postage stamp, and a public ceremony was held there. The home was also recently honored with the designation of a National Literary Landmark, and it now serves as the official Welcome Center for Columbus.

### **Home of the Nation's First Decoration Day:**

*Columbus, Mississippi is the home to Decoration Day, a forerunner of today's Memorial Day Observance*

Columbus, Mississippi, served as a hospital town during the American Civil War. While other cities were ravaged during the Civil War, Columbus' service to preserving life aided in the preservation of its antebellum and Victorian homes. While many of the casualties from strategic battles, such as Shiloh, were brought to Columbus for recovery, thousands suffered mortal wounds and were buried in the town's historic Friendship Cemetery. In 1866, a group of ladies from Columbus decided to decorate the graves of the soldiers with flowers. A poet, Francis Miles Finch, happened to be in town that day and commemorated the occasion with the poem, "The Blue and the Grey." This simple, yet respectful act of placing flowers on the graves of both Union and Confederate soldiers in Friendship Cemetery began an annual tradition we know today as Memorial Day.

### **Arts, Architecture and Antebellum:**

*Experience 19<sup>th</sup> Century Living in Columbus, Mississippi*

Columbus, Mississippi boasts three National Register Districts with around 676 properties. The area [also](#) boasts one of the greatest concentrations of nineteenth-century residential structures in the state, a virtually complete record of American building styles from the 1820s through the 1900s. Additionally, there are significant examples of the adaptations and combinations of architectural designs which are unique to Columbus, known as "Columbus Eclectic". You can see it all at the annual Columbus Spring Pilgrimage, an award-winning event that has earned the coveted reputation as one of the best and most authentic historic home tours in the South.

The antebellum mansions of Columbus are impeccably maintained as resplendent as ever. Many tour homes feature re-created activities of the 1800's complete with period costumes, which add even more authenticity to this historic event. It's an experience visitors will long remember. You won't want to miss the Annual Decorative Arts and Preservation Forum & Antique Shows & Sale. It's a must for all enthusiasts!

### **A Distinctive Destination:**

*An unrivaled destination for Southern architecture and down-home cooking*

The National Trust for Historic Preservation named Columbus, Mississippi one of its 2008 Dozen Distinctive Destinations. The birthplace of prize-winning playwright, Tennessee Williams, Columbus is home to three National Register Historic Districts that boast an impressive 676 properties. While other cities were ravaged during the Civil War, Columbus was a "hospital town," leaving the antebellum and Victorian homes-along with their contents-spared. Tours of these architectural gems abound. Whether taking a guided walking tour or winding through the scenic area by car, visitors are able to experience 19th century living first-hand. Attractions include Waverley Plantation Mansion, a National Historic Landmark and one of the most photographed homes of the South; Friendship Cemetery, the site of the first Memorial Day celebration in 1866;

and the Mississippi University for Women, the oldest public college for women in the United States and home to 23 National Register properties. Columbus will undoubtedly surprise you with its diverse and abundant cultural resources. As one of the best kept secrets in the state of Mississippi, it is an unrivalled destination for anyone who enjoys Southern architecture, savors down-home cooking, and seeks an escape to the great outdoors.

## **Climate**

Mississippi's moderate climate encourages outdoor activities year 'round. The state experiences four distinct seasons, but temperatures are mild all year.

## **How to Get There**

There are no non-stop international flights into Mississippi. The closest international airport is at Memphis, Tennessee. Domestic airports include: Jackson, Meridian and Gulfport/Biloxi.

## **Distances and Times**

- Mississippi is in the country's Central Time Zone
- The South observes Daylight Savings Time from late April through October
- Greyhound and Trailways bus lines and AMTRAK rail lines offer stops throughout Mississippi
- Jackson is 399 miles (646 kilometers and 7 hours by car) from Atlanta, Georgia
- 245 miles (397 kilometers and 4 hours by car) from Birmingham, Alabama
- 180 miles (292 kilometers and 3 hours by car) from New Orleans, Louisiana
- 212 miles (343 kilometers and 3 1/2 hours by car) from Memphis, Tennessee
- 185 miles (300 kilometers and 3 hours by car) from Mobile, Alabama

For additional travel information, call 1-800-WARMEST (927-6378) (while in the United States) or 1-601-359-3297 (outside the United States), fax 1-601-359-5757. Internet site: <http://www.visitmississippi.org/>