

Lower Mississippi River Dispatch No. 343
Tomorrow: Saturday, April 16th
JUKE JOINT SATURDAY!



Opening the Quapaw Canoe Stage: Zoe Sundra and Lautaro Mantilla
Saturday morning 10am, 3rd & Sunflower, downtown Clarksdale

Quapaw Canoe Company Stage: Saturday, April 16th

Kremser Plaza – by the Fountain – 10am - 5pm

3rd & Sunflower in downtown Clarksdale

10am – Zoe Sundra & Lautaro Mantilla

11am – Daddy Rich

12 noon – Anthony "Big A" Sherrod & Allstars w/Space Cowboy

1pm – Jaxx Nassar

2pm – TBA (possibly CW Gatlin)

3pm – Dexter Allen

4pm – La La & Element 88

5pm – The Blues Doctors

Saturday, April 16th

James T. McCafferty Booksigning

The Bear Hunter: The Life and Times of Robert Eager Bobo in the Canebrakes of the Old South

10am-5pm

Under Quapaw Canoe Co Porch

289 Sunflower Avenue

Clarksdale, Miss

Over a century ago readers of outdoor magazines in America and Europe relished the tales of Coahoma County bear hunter Robert Eager Bobo. Yet, in the years, Bobo, the most famous bear hunter of the 1890s has been all but forgotten – until now.

Award winning writer James T. McCafferty has snatched the adventures of bear hunter R. E. Bobo from the obscure recesses of history and presented them in finest Delta style in his new book, *The Bear Hunter: The Life and Times of Robert Eager Bobo in the Canebrakes of the Old South*. McCafferty will be in Clarksdale Saturday, April 17, signing the book at Quapaw Company.

Though the *The Bear Hunter's* author now lives in McComb, Mississippi, he has Clarksdale connections, too. In the 1980s McCafferty wrote a weekly outdoor column for the *Press Register*. Before that, though, his “ father was pastor of St. Paul United Methodist Church from 1961 to 1965,” he says, “and I attended Kirkpatrick and St. George Elementary Schools.” It was at the latter school McCafferty first became acquainted with the Bobo family. Coahoma County attorney “Jack Bobo was in my fifth grade class at St. George when I started there in 1964.”

McCafferty's father was transferred to Leland in 1965, but his path would cross with Jack Bobo's yet again. "When I entered law school in August 1976," he recalls, "Jack Bobo was there."

It was not until a dozen or so years later, though, that McCafferty first became accumulating material on Jack's bear hunting ancestor. While working as a freelance magazine writer in Oxford, Mississippi, in the late 1980s, McCafferty says, "I stumbled across an 1892 article by an Indiana man who had taken a bear hunting trip to the Delta's Sunflower River. In the article, the Hoosier wrote of meeting an "R. E. Bobo" whom he called "an enthusiastic hunter" who owned a large pack "of the very best bear dogs.

"I immediately thought of my classmate from St. George and law school, Jack Bobo," remembered McCafferty. I contacted Jack who told me that R. E. Bobo was indeed his great, great grandfather. A conversation with Jack's father, the late Bob Bobo of Clarksdale, followed."

McCafferty intended to write a book on old time Delta bear hunting back then, but making a living for his family (he and his wife have five children) caused him to shelve the project until about four years ago.

Once he began writing again McCafferty, who has also written two children's books on Delta bear hunter Holt Collier, realized he had the material, not just for one book, but for at least three or four. "One of the persons about whom I found more information than I had ever imagined existed," McCafferty recalls, "was Robert Eager Bobo. Bob Bobo may

well have been the most written about bear hunter of the latter nineteenth century.” The end result was a 217 page book, exclusive of extensive endnote, bibliography, and index sections.

Part biography, part history, *The Bear Hunter* is built around the adventures of R. E. Bobo – his life as a Coahoma county pioneer, his record 304 bear kills in one year, and his hunt with the Jesse James gang, among other stories. The book, though, is far more than a recitation Bobo’s hunts, McCafferty says. “It presents the 19th century Delta bear hunting culture in all its aspects. Bear dogs, horses, dugout canoes, the old Delta practice of hunting bear with the knife alone, and other subjects are examined in detail.”

Yet, *The Bear Hunter* is no dry historical tome – far from it. McCafferty maintains a cohesive narrative – enlivened with a sense of comedy – that always commands the reader’s attention.

McCafferty received an unexpected but very welcomed review from Betty Pearson Bobo, great granddaughter of the bear hunter and, at 94, his oldest living descendant. “Not long ago I received an email from Mrs. Pearson,” McCafferty says. “‘I can't tell you how much I enjoyed’ the book, she told me. ‘It is beautifully written and the amount of research you did is staggering. The picture of what the Delta was like as late as the 1890s is mind boggling.’”

“It’s hard to describe how happy I was to hear that from her. I wanted the Bobo family to be happy with the book, and I wanted it to be a quality product that would be around for many years to honor their ancestor.”

McCafferty is pleased by the overall reception for *The Bear Hunter*. The book has sold well in hardback (\$24.95 -- it is about to go into a second printing) at bookstores in Memphis, Oxford, Greenwood, and Jackson, as well as in the Kindle edition on Amazon. “I am gratified,” he says, “that so many have let me know how much they enjoyed the book and affirmed that I have accomplished what I set out to do: to tell the story, not just of R. E. Bobo, but of the old Delta bear hunting culture in general, and to preserve the memories of the many Delta pioneers who might otherwise be forgotten. They deserve to be remembered.”

The Bear Hunter is currently available at the Clarksdale Press Register office and, beginning with McCafferty’s appearance at Quapaw Canoe Company this Saturday, April 16, will be available there, as well. It may be the last chance for those interested to obtain a personalized autographed copy of the book’s first printing. “I have fewer than 80 copies of the first printing left,” McCafferty says.

McCafferty hopes to be at Quapaw Canoe Company by 10:00 a.m. and will be there signing books most of the day.

This thoroughly researched and superbly written account of the exploits of Robert Eager Bobo – one of the Mississippi Delta's pioneer leaders and most fabled bear hunters – is better than any cowboy story that you have ever read – and it all really happened.

--Honorable William F. Winter

former governor of Mississippi and past president of the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Bravo to Jim McCafferty! His skills as a wordsmith, historian and storyteller shine in his marvelous story of The Bear Hunter, Robert Eager Bobo – a real-life character whose 19th century exploits were every bit as fascinating as those of Daniel Boone or Davy Crockett. You won't want to put it down!

--Keith Sutton, author of

Arkansas Wildlife: A History

McCafferty's masterful portrayal of an era, now almost unimaginable, when the Mississippi Delta was forest primeval and bears were as plentiful as hogs, brings to life a host of colorful 19th century characters. The reader sees, hears,

feels, smells and tastes the drama of the hunt – an essential addition to the library of both Southern folklore and outdoor writing.

--Ernest Herndon, outdoor editor,

McComb, Mississippi, Enterprise-Journal

About Jim McCafferty:

Jim McCafferty grew up in the Mississippi Delta during the 1950s and 1960s and is the award-winning writer of hundreds of articles that have appeared in *Field & Stream*, *Outdoor Life*, and many other publications. His two children's books, *Holt and the Teddy Bear* (the story of Holt Collier, Theodore Roosevelt, and the Mississippi Delta hunt that resulted in the naming of the Teddy Bear) and *Holt and the Cowboys*, each received Children's Crown Collection designations. McCafferty practices environmental and education law in McComb, Mississippi. He and his wife, the former Malinda Hamilton, of Greenville, Mississippi, have five children and are communicants of St. Nicholas of Myra Byzantine Catholic Church in New Orleans, Louisiana.



JUKE JOINT FESTIVAL 2016

<http://www.jukejointfestival.com/>

JUKE JOINT FESTIVAL

2016 -- 13TH ANNUAL EDITION OF JUKE JOINT FESTIVAL & RELATED EVENTS!

Our 13th annual, 2016 edition of Juke Joint Festival is dedicated to all of the late, great Delta blues performers who have passed away during the past year — including Juke Fest regulars LC Ulmer, Elmo Williams and Eddie Cusic as well as other Mississippi bluesmen like BB King. RIP.

Juke Joint Festival is "half blues festival, half small-town fair and all about the Delta." It celebrates our past AND living history by presenting over 100 blues acts during the course of the weekend -- most of them Mississippi or Southern, many in their 60s, 70s, 80s or even 90s! This is the real-deal Mississippi blues festival that you've read about. It is like no other in the world.

During the daytime, you can expect at least a dozen small stages with authentic blues. At night, we feature all of our surviving juke joints, blues clubs and other indoor stages -- last year included 20+ venues.

Our next Juke Joint Festival is Saturday, April 16, 2016, with exciting related events on starting at 5pm on Thursday, April 14th and carrying through the night of Sunday, April 15th. (Related events on that Sunday include the always free and fabulous Cat Head Mini Blues Fest at 10am as well as the Second Street Blues Party in front of the Rock & Blues Museum.)

The home of this much acclaimed festival? Historic CLARKSDALE, MISSISSIPPI -- just 90 minutes south of the Memphis International Airport and once home to such blues greats as Son House, John Lee Hooker, Junior Parker, Ike Turner, Eddie Boyd, Sam Cooke, Muddy Waters, Pinetop Perkins, Earl Hooker, Lil Green, Big Jack Johnson and many many others. It's the land of the Crossroads!

What is the JUKE JOINT FESTIVAL? It's a positive event for everyone in Clarksdale. It's good for families, businesses, musicians and tourists alike. The festival itself combines an international "blues festival" with a community-minded "small-town fair," creating a strong and memorable event like no other in the universe. It's organized by the Clarksdale Downtown Development Association (CDDA) and staffed by enthusiastic volunteers. This "half small-town fair, half blues festival" does more than simply entertain attendees -- though it definitely does that, too! It aims to educate and enlighten native Deltans and blues tourists alike through a series of performances, exhibits, and presentations involving music, art, storytelling, film, and children's events. The event mixes visitors with locals and showcases the economic power of cultural tourism, turning average Deltans into ambassadors for the region.

Speaking of economics, last year's festival was our most successful yet with full hotels and expanded press coverage. Festival attendees came from at least 46 U.S. states, 53 Mississippi counties and 28 foreign countries. The Juke Joint Festival makes every effort to keep vendors, talent and suppliers as local as possible. A family-friendly event, the festival also provides a bus service at night to discourage drinking and driving between music venues. Our daytime Saturday events are all FREE while our nighttime Saturday events all come for the price of a cheap (\$15 pre-sale or \$20 that night) wristband which gets you unlimited rides on the blues shuttle bus and entry to at least 20 nighttime 'juke joint' venues.

Friday, April 15th

Mothman Ohio Street Performance

Under Quapaw Canoe Co Porch

6pm, 45 min set

289 Sunflower Avenue

Clarksdale, Miss

Saturday, April 16th

Quapaw Canoe Company Stage

Kremser Plaza -- by the Fountain

3rd & Sunflower in downtown Clarksdale

10am - 5pm

(Featuring Zoe Sundra & Lautoro Mantillo, Daddy Rich, Anthony "Big A" Sherrod & Allstars w/Space Cowboy, Jaxx Nassar, TBA (possibly CW Gatlin), Dexter Allen, La La & Element 88, and The Blues Doctors)

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Thursday, April 14th - Sunday, April 17th

Juke Joint Festival in Clarksdale!

Music at many jukeboxes, stages, and on the street. Many related events all around town, including canoe/kayak/paddleboard rentals on the Sunflower River and a live canoe-carving demonstration at Quapaw Canoe Company. For complete schedule of events go to:

http://www.jukejointfestival.com/fest_events.php

The Lower Mississippi River Dispatch

is brought to you courtesy of:

The Lower Mississippi River Foundation



RIP: John Madison "Mad Dog" Fewkes
June 16, 1956 - April 8, 2016

www.rivergator.org

www.wildmiles.org