

Noted author traded her pen for a camera to capture compelling images of Depression-era American life

Renowned author Eudora Welty may have taken exception to the maxim that a picture is worth a thousand words, but it is hard to imagine this gifted writer crafting more stirring images than those she captured on film in the 1930s.

Currently on view at the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson is a sampling of Welty's photography in a new exhibit, "Passionate Observer: Eudora Welty among Artists of the Thirties." The exhibit, which offers a compelling view of the nation during the Great Depression,



runs through June 30.

Welty often derided her own photographs as "snapshots." But they are more complex than that—they are a stirring and deeply personal glimpse into the lives of everyday people struggling to maintain dignity and courage in the face of one of the greatest catastrophes to hit America.

In her photographs, Welty captured what she so eloquently revealed in her prose: the complexity and dignity of the human condition. Her work explores the people of Mississippi, New York and New Orleans through scenes from everyday life that

have changed or vanished forever.

The collection of Welty's photographs are exhibited together with paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints and photographs of notable American artists at the time of the Great Depression. Featured artists include Walter Anderson, Walker Evans, Margaret Bourke-White, Edward Hopper and Grant Wood.

The Mississippi Museum of Art is located at the intersection of Lamar and E. Pascagoula streets in downtown Jackson. The museum is open 7 days a week, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., with extended hours on Tuesday evenings until 8 p.m.



One of Welty's photos in the exhibit called "Tomato packers' recess."

/Mississippi Department of Archives and History photo

To find out more about this exhibit, the museum or other exhibits, call (601) 960-1515, or toll free at 1-866-843-9278. Or visit the Museum's Web site at www.msmuseumart.org.

Petit Jean Mountain inspired creation of the Arkansas State Parks system

Thanks to a country doctor, outdoor enthusiasts have been finding a pleasing prescription for natural wonders in Arkansas for 75 years.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the 1927 legislation that heralded an official beginning to the state parks in Arkansas. The origins of the system can, however, be traced to 1907 and to one simple dream: to preserve a portion of the scenic mountain near Morrilton that Dr. Thomas William Hardison called home.

Hardison tried to convince the National Park Service to create a national

park on Petit Jean Mountain where the waters of Cedar Falls plunge almost 100 feet to splash noisily on the floor of a natural amphitheater. The mountain's beauty inspired



A hiker pausing to take in the beauty of Cedar Falls in Petit Jean State Park.

/Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism photo

him to try to save the wilderness area from development.

Although the National Park Service declined, he took his request to the Arkansas legislature. The state began accepting donations of land for the park in 1923, and the legislature approved an act in 1927 establishing a State Parks Commission.

The state began seeking out areas of natural beauty and historical interest that would provide "educational, recreational, health, camping and other outdoor life advantages." The new law instructed the commission to use its lands "to protect and preserve in its original habitat and native beauty the flora, fauna and wildlife therein."

Among the 51 state parks now spread throughout

Arkansas are sites atop mountains, on the shores of her largest lakes, and on lands where Civil War battles were fought and Native Americans lived. You can stay in lakeshore cabins, rustic lodges and riverside campsites.

While preserving the state's natural and historical heritage, they offer nearly every recreational activity imaginable, including boating, swimming, fishing, golf, hiking, camping, horseback riding and sightseeing. There's also a diamond mine where you can hunt for precious gems, a folk cultural complex, a riverboat, swamp tours and many more adventures.

For more details about the parks, call (501) 682-1191 or 1-888-AT-PARKS (1-888-287-2757). Or visit the Web site www.arkansasstateparks.com.