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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

DOCKERY PLANTATION TO BE HONORED WITH BLUES TRAIL MARKER

CLEVELAND, MISS.,- (APRIL 19, 2008) Dockery Plantation in Cleveland, Mississippi will be honored with a marker on the Mississippi Blues Trail, which was developed under the leadership of Governor Haley Barbour and is designed to preserve the state's musical heritage through more than 100 historical markers and interpretive sites. The ceremony will begin at 12:00 p.m. at Dockery Plantation.

"I'm pleased to include Dockery Plantation on the Mississippi Blues Trail. Apart from the town's unique historical legacy, which includes printing its own money, Dockery was home to famed Bluesman Charley Patton and played a significant role in the development of the Delta Blues," Governor Barbour said.

Dockery Farms was founded in 1895 by Will Rice Dockery who purchased 10,000 acres bordering the Sunflower River. After years of hard work clearing the swampy woodlands, Dockery became one of the most important plantations in the Delta. An early resident was pioneering bluesman Charley Patton (1891-1934). Patton's great influence on local artists including Howlin' Wolf, Willie Brown, Tommy Johnson, and Roebuck "Pops" Staples led many people to call Dockery the birthplace of the Delta blues.

At its peak Dockery Farms was essentially a self-sufficient town, with two elementary schools, a post office, a resident doctor, a railroad depot, a blacksmith shop, and a commissary. It also printed its own money. In the early 20th century, Dockery housed 400 tenant families, most of whom were African Americans who migrated to the region in pursuit of work.

The Mississippi Blues Trail markers are funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and by support from the Cleveland-Bolivar County Tourism, the Mississippi Department of Transportation, Delta State University and the Mississippi Development Authority.

For further information of the Mississippi Blues Trail, go to www.msbluestrail.org.

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