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Squared Preserves - Preserving our History through Preserves

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Staff Creative Residencies Summer 2024 Self-Assessment

Squared Preserves - Preserving our History through Preserves

Merrill Magruder, Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Family Engagement in the Office of the Chancellor, researched and applied traditional canning techniques.



Throughout the Creative Residency, I was able to learn the basics of canning and preserving with my family and other Mississippians. Currently, I have 94 jars of strawberry jam, jalapeno strawberry jam, pepper jelly, and sweet tomato chow chow. My stipend went towards purchasing the ingredients and the proper canning equipment. I also bought several cookbooks from the early 1900's for a historical perspective. As a play on words, I decided to name my new hobby Squared Preserves, hinting to both the historic Oxford Square and poking fun at preserves used twice (squared).

The biggest obstacle I am facing is trying to make videos for social media. I am meeting with an IMC student who will teach me the basics of video editing. And I can't forget this struggle -standing over a hot stove for several hours in July...



In the future, I plan to continue to make jams and jellies with my daughter. I want to create new flavor combinations seasonally and eventually hope to add Jello to the mix! Using the right amount of gelatin and sure-jell is a science that ensures your product holds up. I plan on taking the flavors from my sweeter jams and make Jello shots out of them. I currently sell them to friends and family, and this will give me an opportunity to perfect them!



The Creative Residency allowed me to learn from my family while making jams and jellies. I spent a week in Ingomar, MS learning the proper techniques and meeting local farmers.