



THE ARKANSAS ARCHIVIST

FEBRUARY 2016

AHC Celebrates Black History Month with Launch of New Digital Collection

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 16—March 28

The Great War: Arkansas in World War I Exhibit
Maim Street Historical Museum
Manila

March 1—March 30

African American Legislators Exhibit
Pulaski Technical College
North Little Rock

In 1926, Carter G. Woodson, the Father of Black History, established the second week of February as “Negro History Week” based on his core belief that, “Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.” In 1976, President Gerald Ford expanded the week into a month.

This month the Arkansas History Commission and Black History Commission of Arkansas celebrate Black History Month by launching a new digital collection. The collection, titled “The World We Live In: The History of African-Americans in Arkansas,” contains photographs, letters, recipes,

school records, and other items that illustrate the lives and legacies of the rich and diverse history of black Arkansans.

AHC African American History Program Coordinator Tatyana Oyinloye, who worked on the project, says that she is pleased with the project’s focus on African American schools in Arkansas. “I focused on African-American schools,” says Oyinloye, “because so much has been lost through the years about black schools. Schools were one of the centerpieces in the African-American community, and are vital to helping us understand the history of those communities in Arkansas. So many of those school buildings no longer exist, which makes this project even more important.”

Digital Archivist, Danyelle McNeill, who worked with Oyinloye on the project, agrees with this sentiment. What McNeill sees as most important to her about the digital collection is that it gives a sense of the complex history of African Americans in Arkansas. “The history of African Americans in Arkansas is long and complex,” McNeill explains. “From Arkansas’s earliest Territorial days through modern day, Arkansas’s African American community has endured difficulty with strength and perseverance while contributing to the world a legacy of powerful role models. One of the most important factors for African Americans in Arkansas is probably one of the least addressed: the sense of close-knit community. This collection highlights the everyday life of Arkansas’s African American communities, including education, work, religion and leisure.”

Much of the material in the digital collection was acquired for the Arkansas History Commission by the Black History Commission of Arkansas, an advisory board established by Act 1233 of the Arkansas General Assembly in 1991. Dr. Lisa Speer, Director of the AHC says of the BHCA’s work, “The State of Arkansas and the AHC is fortunate to have a dedicated group like the Black History Commission of Arkansas actively working to collect and preserve African American historical materials. Our collections and our knowledge of the state’s African American heritage are richer for their efforts.” The collection can be reached by logging onto <http://ahc.digital-ar.org/cdm/> and selecting The World We Live In—A History of African Americans in Arkansas.

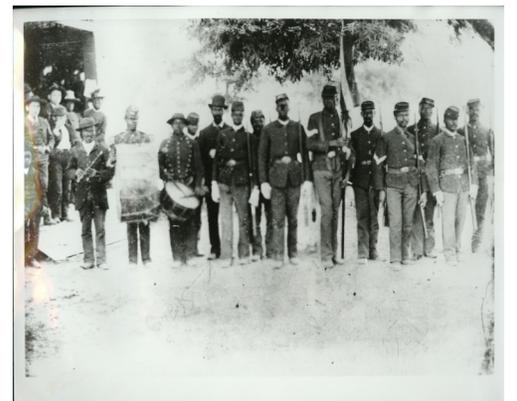
The World We Live in: A History of African Americans in Arkansas

“Surely the world we live in is but the world that lives in us.”

-Daisy Bates



Woodworking Department of the Colored Industrial Institute, Pine Bluff, 1893



Color Guard of an African American Regiment in the United States Army stationed in Des Arc Circa 1864.

The AHC and BHCA Welcome New Commissioners



Rod Soubers
Arkansas History Commission

This month we welcome new appointees to the Arkansas History Commission and to the Black History Commission of Arkansas.

Rod Soubers has extensive experience in the field of archives. Soubers, a native of Naches, Washington, served at the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas, for nine years as an archivist. He then served eight years at the

Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California, as the head archivist. After leaving the Reagan Library, he served as Director of Access Management at the National Security Council. Since retiring, Mr. Soubers has been volunteering at the Baxter County (AR) Heritage Center helping them to develop a historical archives.

Dr. Cherisse Jones-Branch is an Associate Professor of History at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro. She holds her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Charleston, and her Ph.D. from Ohio State University. She has been on the faculty at ASU since 2003 where she has written numerous articles on the topics of the role of women in the Civil Rights Movement. Her most recent book, *Crossing the Line: Women's Interracial Activism in South Carolina during and after World War II*, was published in 2014. Dr. Jones-Branch is co-editor of *Arkansas Women: Their Lives and Times*.

The BHCA also welcomes Elise Hampton of Conway as a new commissioner. Look for a profile of Ms. Hampton in our March newsletter!



Dr. Cherisse Jones-Branch
Black History Commission of Arkansas

KNOW YOUR COMMISSIONERS

Arkansas History Commission

Ms. Mary Dillard Malvern
Mr. Michael Lindsey Fayetteville
Mr. Robert McCarley Little Rock
Ms. Elizabeth Robbins Hot Springs
Mr. Rodney Soubers Mountain Home
Dr. Robert Sherer Little Rock
Mr. Michael Whitmore Rogers

Black History Commission of Arkansas

Ms. Carla Coleman Little Rock
Ms. Joyce Gibson Prescott
Dr. John W. Graves Arkadelphia
Ms. Elise Hampton Conway
Dr. Cherisse Jones-Branch Jonesboro
Mr. Myron Jackson Little Rock
Rev. Frank Stewart Conway

Black History Commission News



This month, the BHCA finished a joint project with the Arkansas Humanities Council. The aim of the two-year project was to document the Civil Rights stories of Arkansans at the grass roots level. The project consisted of oral interviews with nineteen individuals and the creation of a traveling exhibit. The traveling exhibit, entitled, "Foot Soldiers for Freedom," contains excerpts from the interviews, as well as photographs, and information about the struggle for Civil Rights in communities all over the state of Arkansas.

BHCA Commissioner Carla Coleman says about the project, "This was the completion of a long and rewarding project. We wanted to document parts of the movement that might have been forgotten. So often the textbooks record what happened in [the cities]. This project records other stories, such as those from eastern Arkansas, providing a more complete picture of the Movement and the times."

One such recorded story was that of Judge Olly Neal. Neal helped to establish a clinic in Marianna, and later worked as a community organizer. When tensions grew in Marianna, Neal led a boycott of white-owned businesses until the business owners agreed to treat African Americans equally.

The project also records the story of Rev. Campbell, a white minister from Scott who came to work with the Civil Rights Movement. These stories still have the power to move both the teller and the listener. Several times during Campbell's interview, he became emotional recalling his experiences. Those stories still have power and resonance even today.

The Arkansas Humanities Council is making the "Foot Soldiers for Freedom" traveling exhibit available to venues around the state at no charge. Individuals interested in reserving this exhibit should contact the Humanities Council at 501-320-5761.



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ONE CAPITOL MALL
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72201
501.682.6900
STATE.ARCHIVES@ARKANSAS.GOV
WWW.ARK-IVES.COM

HOURS: 8 AM-4:30 PM, MON-SAT
CLOSED STATE HOLIDAYS

From the Director



This month, thanks to the support of Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, the Arkansas History Commission took a significant step forward in fulfilling its role as the state archives. On February 17, 2016, the Governor's Office issued a memorandum pertaining to the preservation of historical documents held by Arkansas state agencies, offices and departments. In this memorandum, Governor Hutchinson issued a mandate for state agencies, offices and departments to work with the Arkansas History Commission in the preservation of records currently not in use that have long term administrative, legal and historical value.

Governor's Hutchinson's acknowledgement that the History Commission has been unable to comprehensively work with state agencies on the preservation of important historical records due to our lack of sufficient manpower, resources and space is a welcome and encouraging recognition to our agency. We look forward to seeing other positive changes on the horizon for our agency that will bring the Arkansas History Commission and State Archives up to the same level as the archives of the other forty-nine states. See the full text of Governor Hutchinson's memo online at: [http://www.arkives.com/userfiles/pdfs/Governors Memo 20160217.pdf](http://www.arkives.com/userfiles/pdfs/Governors_Memo_20160217.pdf)

Starting in March, the History Commission will host the first of a number of state agency records preservation workshops where our staff will discuss topics like: identifying records that may have long-term value; caring for records in your custody (before they become archival); managing electronic records; how the state archives can assist in the identification of archival records; and the process of transferring records to the state archives. The AHC wants to make this process as easy as possible for state agencies. Ultimately, our goal is to assist agencies with the care and disposition of records that document their important work.

The History Commission presently has scheduled state agency records preservation workshops through August on the following dates and at the following times: March 23, 9:00 a.m. to noon
May 4, 1:00-4:00 p.m.
June 8, 9:00 a.m. to noon
August 10, 9:00 a.m. to noon.

We are asking each state agency to designate a records representative to attend a workshop and serve as the primary contact with the AHC for scheduling records transfers. The AHC will be sending out additional information soon to state agencies, departments and offices about this initiative and getting agency representatives registered for workshops. We appreciate your participation in the workshops, and your support in preserving Arkansas's official historical records! —Dr. Lisa K. Speer, Director

News from NEARA

Tracing Your Roots Series

The Multicultural Center presents the Tracing Your Roots Series in collaboration with the Northeast Arkansas Genealogical Society

Tuesday, February 9, 2016
5-7 p.m.
Tracing Your Roots Part 1 of 3: How to Start Your Family Tree Research
Reng Student Union, Third Floor, Multicultural Center, Suite 3003

Tuesday, February 16, 2016
5-7 p.m.
Tracing Your Roots Part 2 of 3: Using Online Resources to Assist with Your Research
Dean B. Ellis Library, Computer lab, 149

Tuesday, February 23, 2016
5-8 p.m.
Tracing Your Roots Part 3 of 3: Overcoming Barriers: How to Use Slave Narratives and Ellis Island Records
Dean B. Ellis Library, Computer lab, 149

To RSVP please email ASStateMC@State.edu

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Multicultural Center

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Although history defines our very purpose at the Arkansas History Commission and NEARA, this month we take a closer look at Black History as part of the nation's celebration of Black History Month. For us at NEARA, that means a few things. In addition to our usual column in this newsletter and participation in local events, this year, for the first time, we are participating in a three-part genealogy workshop at Arkansas State University.

Coordinated by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, this workshop introduces ASU students and the ASU community to the great fun of finding their family roots - and the great frustration that can come with trying to do so for African American families. NEARA staff worked

together with members of the Genealogical Society of Craighead County, Arkansas, to develop workshops to teach participants the basics of genealogical research and to introduce them to resources that may help to untangle some of the confusion and difficulties they will encounter.

Class participants learned the basics of using census and probate records, church records, and family papers to trace their lineage. NEARA staff and GSCCA members also introduced participants to tools and databases such as Ancestry.com, Familysearch.com, Freedmen's Bureau records, slave narratives, and other sources to trace their histories. By the end of the workshops, students were using their own trial subscriptions (or regular subscriptions) to Ancestry.com to build their own family trees!

News from SARA



George Daniels

George Daniels was born June 7, 1876, in Foreman, Arkansas. As active members of the community, he and his wife Armitie were founders of The Colored Benevolent Society. In the decades following the Civil War, numerous benefit societies were formed in order to support the African American community in their newly gained freedom.

The Colored Benevolent Society in Foreman was founded in the late 1930s or early 1940s to help support African-American families in the event of sickness or disability and to help pay for funeral costs if needed. Members paid a monthly fee and could apply to receive funds when the need arose. In the second generation of the Society's existence, children could join if their parents had been members. The Society was discontinued around 1999, but four of the second generation members are still living. They are now in their 80s and 90s.

These photographs of George and Armitie Daniels were donated to SARA by Phyllis Hamilton who knew the couple in her childhood. For more general information on African-American Benevolent Societies, see <http://www.100menhall.org/about-us/history-of-benevolent-associations/>. Many thanks to Phyllis Hamilton for information on the Society in Foreman.



Armitie Daniels

Staff Picks



This month we feature Archival Manager Jane Wilkerson's choice a collection of photographs from the Hamblen Family.

Who is in this photograph? The photograph is of Samuel Hamblen, sitting in his law office in Hot Springs in about 1890. He was my great-great grandfather.

Who was he? He was born in Maine in 1836. During the Civil War, he became a colonel leading an African American artillery unit. In the 1870s, he settled in Arkansas and established a law office and land surveying business. He was very successful in both fields. He had originally come to Hot Springs to survey the land reservation and ended up staying. He laid out several of the original trails on Hot Springs Mountain.

Is this part of a larger collection? Yes, the photograph can be found in the Jane Wilkerson Photograph Collection. In the collection, there are a number of my ancestors' photographs.

New at the AHC

February Donations and Accessions

AHC

John H. Reynolds Correspondence, 0.25 cu. ft.
Greg Butts, Arkansas State Parks Director collection, 10 cu. ft.
Rosemary Hamel collection, 1 cu. ft.
Willis Turner/ Finney family papers, 0.20 cu. ft..

NEARA

The Ozarks Mountaineer, Vol. 87

SARA

The Gems of Pike County, Arkansas: Pike County, Archives and History Society,
Fall 2015, vol. 26, No. 4
Blade Magazine, February 2016,
American Bladesmith, Vol. 87, Spring 2016

We always receive more material than we are able to list in our newsletter. For a full listing, see our blog

<http://arkansasstatearchives.blogspot.com/2016/02/february-2016-acquisitions-and.html>

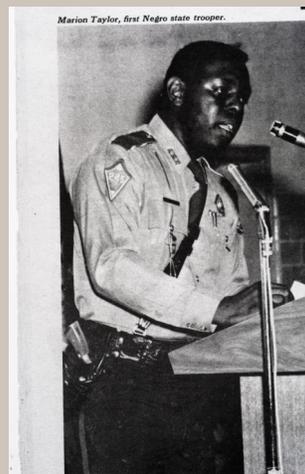
We appreciate the generous support of our donors!

In our lead story this month, we told our readers about the new digital collection, The World We Live In — A History of African Americans in Arkansas. This is only a sampling of some of the images in the collection. Remember to come back to see what has been added to the collection!

<http://ahc.digital-ar.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16790coll20>



*Sewing class at the Colored Industrial Institute.
Pine Bluff, 1893*



*Marion Taylor, First African
American State Trooper in Arkansas,
1968*



*African American Episcopal Church Service,
circa 1955*



*Girl's Department of the Colored Industrial
Institute, Pine Bluff, 1893*



*Hugh Simmons (second row, far right) and
the New Farmers of America (NFA) Students,
Okolona, 1950*