



THE ARKANSAS ARCHIVIST

JUNE/JULY 2015

AHC Staff Hits the Road this Summer to Visit Educational Co-Ops

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 24—27

*African American Legislators,
1868—1893 Exhibit
Old Rosenwald School,
Mt. Olive, Arkansas*

August 1

*Researching Modern Military Records
Workshop
MacArthur Museum of Arkansas
Military History*

August 11-25

*Fought in Earnest:
The Civil War in Arkansas
Lake Dardanelle State Park,
Russellville, Arkansas*

August 29

*The Great War: Service on All Fronts
Patrick Henry Hays
Senior Center, NLR
Symposium and Exhibit*

If it's Tuesday, it must be . . . Monticello? Arkansas History Commission staff members Brian Irby and Danyelle McNeill have been touring the state this summer, visiting the educational co-operatives in conjunction with a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council to create lesson plans from the Commission's vast collection of primary source materials.

Since summer 2013, a group of Arkansas History Commission staff have been working on creating lesson plans. The initiative was launched by Dr. Lisa Speer during her first year as director. Speer wanted to see the AHC reach out to new groups of users, in particular K-12 educators, who are increasingly encouraged to use primary sources in the classroom. The AHC, with the oldest and largest collection of historical materials on Arkansas, was well positioned to provide materials to educators.

The AHC's initiative to create lesson plans was bolstered through a partnership with the Arkansas Humanities Council, which provided funding for the AHC to create an initial group of plans and vet them during a teachers workshop in July 2014. The workshop was a great opportunity for the AHC to solicit feedback from teachers. The teachers' feedback helped to reframe the plans for phase two of the project, — the visits to the educational co-ops, which started in June 2015.

The workshops have been a great opportunity to introduce the AHC's resources and services, its website and, of course, the lesson plans to the state's teachers. Of these workshops, Irby says, "Teachers have been very enthusiastic about using our primary sources. It is very gratifying to know that they are enjoying using our lesson plans." In all, the AHC has created ten plans to date. The plans, along with the

related primary source documents, can be accessed on the agency's digital collections website at ahc.digital-ar.org/. To access a list of the co-op visits still to come this summer, visit our news and events page at www.ark-ives.com/news-events/.



Archival Assistant Brian Irby discusses lesson plans with teachers at Camden

The AHC Presents the Charles Yaerger Collection

We are lucky to have a wide range of different types of items in our collection. Recently, Charles A. Yaerger donated an interesting collection of materials from Cummins Prison to the AHC. Yaerger was a chaplain at the Cummins Unit from 1972 to 1980. One day in the 1970s, Yaerger was walking down the hall and noticed some prison trustees cleaning out a room. They were throwing away documents and photographs, of which Yaerger was able to save some of the most interesting items.

He found a card file recording the names of all of the inmates condemned to death from Lee Sims, the first man executed in 1913, to inmates executed in the 1950s and 1960s. From this card file he compiled a list of "Persons Sentenced to Death by the State of Arkansas," which records the name, crime, date sentenced, and date executed for each man and woman listed. Incidentally, the women on the list had their sentences commuted.

He is possibly the only person to have sat in the state's electric chair, "Old Sparky," and lived to tell the tale. According to Yaerger, he was running late to a meeting and when he got there it was standing room only. The only chair available was the old electric chair, which had been decommissioned when a new chair was brought in. "I made sure it was unplugged," he added wryly. The collection contains a photograph of the old electric chair. Other items in the collection include photographs of inmates. These photographs were created from the original glass negatives, some of which were cracked. We are thankful to Mr. Yaerger for donating this interesting collection to the AHC!



Strolling Down Main Street Arkansas



Downtown Fayetteville, 1930s

Over the last year, the AHC has added much new content to our [Arkansas Digital Ark-ives](#), including collections pertaining to Arkansas women and ethnic groups, World War I, as well as lesson plans and topical collection guides. This month we add a collection devoted to “Main Street, Arkansas,” created by Archival Technician Darren Bell. Darren is a graduate of the Public History program at Southeast Missouri State University, where he completed a Master’s degree with an emphasis in downtown revitalization. Darren has worked with Main Street programs in Missouri and Arkansas, and

his experience in preserving the integrity of historic downtowns fueled his interest in creating this digital collection from the archives at the AHC. “At one time you would see our downtowns bustling with life and energy,” he says. Then, after 1945, things changed. “People left the downtown. They had cars and could live outside the city,” he observes. This left the downtowns of many of our cities neglected and abandoned. Since the 1980s, there have been efforts to revive and restore downtown areas. Community groups have organized projects aimed at rehabilitating abandoned buildings and encouraging businesses to return to the cities’ business districts.

Darren has selected a number of interesting items for this digital collection. “Downtowns were where people gathered to conduct business and interact with each other. Downtown was an important place for the life of a community. I wanted to select items that reflected that fact in this collection,” he asserts. There are photographs, posters, architectural drawings, and other items that document the history of the downtown sections of our cities. The collection not only focuses on downtown areas before 1945, but also focuses on the endeavors of the 1980s to revive downtown areas.

The AHC plans to continue to add to this collection from our own holdings, but we invite our readers to donate materials from their own personal collections to help us document and preserve “Main Street, Arkansas.” In some communities, the landscape of downtown is forever changed, while other towns have had greater success in maintaining the integrity of historic structures and districts. Whether helping to preserve buildings or memories, your documents are key to sustaining Main Streets in Arkansas and across the US. If you’d like to learn more about donating to the AHC, please contact us at state.archives@arkansas.gov. We’d love to hear from you!

Black History Commission News



From left to right: Joel Goldstein, Lafayette Norwood, Gerald Norwood, Carla Coleman, Tatyana Oyinloye, and Donna Goldstein

A few months ago we told you about a project funded through the Curtis Sykes Memorial Grant Program where the South Sebastian County Historical Society was cleaning the Norwood Family Cemetery, an African American cemetery in Greenwood, Arkansas. We are pleased to update our readers that the project has been completed.

The Sykes Grant covered expenses and materials necessary to complete the project to make improvements at the cemetery including installing a fence and memorial marker. The cemetery, located on the old homestead of Jim and Fannie Norwood, contains approximately 82 marked graves and many more unmarked graves.

Donna Goldstein, the project director for the project sees this as only the first step in a larger program aimed at educating the community about Henry Norwood. “It’s very satisfying to see this portion of the project draw to a close,” she says of the program. “Friendships and connections have been made that will last a lifetime. However, the work doesn’t end here. We are developing a project to bring Gerald and Lafayette Norwood back to the community to speak to our young people on the topic of character, which their grandfather Henry had in abundance. We are also pursuing funding to bring the ARISE Choir of Wichita, Kansas, of which Gerald Norwood is a member, to the city for an authentic presentation of traditional spirituals through storytelling and performance.”

The next deadline to apply for the Sykes Grant is October 2. We will be holding a grant writing workshop on September 12. For more information, please contact Tatyana Oyinloye at tatyana.oyinloye@arkansas.gov.

KNOW YOUR COMMISSIONERS

Arkansas History Commission

Ms. Mary Dillard	Malvern
Dr. Ray Granade	Arkadelphia
Dr. Ruth Hawkins	Jonesboro
Mr. Michael Lindsey	Fayetteville
Mr. Robert McCarley	Little Rock
Ms. Elizabeth Robbins	Hot Springs
Dr. Robert Sherer	Little Rock

Black History Commission of Arkansas

Ms. Carla Coleman	Little Rock
Rev. Barry Dobson	El Dorado
Ms. Joyce Gibson	Prescott
Dr. John W. Graves	Arkadelphia
Mr. Myron Jackson	Little Rock
Mr. James Lawson	Jacksonville
Rev. Frank Stewart	Conway

Arkansas
Records Catalog

ark-cat.com



THE ARKANSAS ARCHIVIST
IS A PUBLICATION OF THE
ARKANSAS HISTORY COMMISSION
AND STATE ARCHIVES

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



Archivists often get questions about how they decide what to digitize (or not) from their collections, and here at the History Commission we certainly get our share of questions and comments about what we add to our digital collections site. It's not uncommon for someone to ask if we'll ever digitize *all* of our holdings, and the answer to that question is not likely. Why not, you ask? Well, for one reason, we have been collecting for 110 years, and we have *a lot of stuff* — 13,734 cubic feet of manuscripts, records and half a million photographs or more — and that doesn't count our regional locations. While much of the material we've collected is great, not every receipt, cancelled check, scrawled note, or unidentified, blurry photograph, is worth the time and resources it would take to turn that item into a digital resource and maintain it in perpetuity. *Time and resources* — administrator-speak meaning funding.

Jill Hurst-Wahl, Associate Professor at the Syracuse University School of Information Studies, noted in a 2007 blog post on the cost of digitization studies that as a culture we are conditioned to not talk about how much things cost. The result is a paucity of studies on the actual cost of digital imaging projects. One of the references Hurst-Wahl cites in her blog is a 1999 article by the late Steve Puglia, who worked as a Preservation and Imaging Specialist at NARA from 1988 to 2011. While Puglia's article is sixteen years old now, it provides us with some basis for understanding the challenge archivists face in choosing what materials to digitize from large collections. Puglia breaks down the cost of creating a single digital image into three categories: digitizing, metadata creation (i.e., cataloging, description, indexing), and "other," a category that includes administration and quality control. The average adjusted price *per image* for digitizing is \$6.15; \$7.00 for metadata creation; and \$10.10 for administration and quality control. At these average rates, the price for creating *one digital image* is \$23.25. These costs do not include any additional work, like manual transcription of text, or cleaning up OCR'd (optical character recognition) transcription, nor do they include the cost of maintaining and migrating the digital data into the future. Puglia's article, which is not for the faint-of-heart archivist, addresses those costs, too.

At the time I'm writing my column, the digital collections of the Arkansas History Commission contain 2,273 digital objects. Using Puglia's 1999 benchmarks, we can estimate that we've invested approximately \$52,847.25 in creating our digital collections. Is that a reliable estimate? Probably, considering two years of work by numerous members of the staff, equipment costs, software licenses, and storage costs for the data. ContentDM, the digital collection management software we use, allows us a 10,000 item limit. Consider when we reach that limit that we could potentially have minimally invested \$232,5000 in creating the collection, to say nothing of storing it for the long term. Next month: How does the AHC select what it digitizes? —Lisa K. Speer

News from NEARA



The Arkansas History Commission and NEARA are excited to bring patrons into closer contact with our collections through the Arkansas Digital Archives. Coming soon is a digital collection called "From Swamps to Farms: The History of Farming in Arkansas" and features many selections from NEARA's holdings.

In it you'll find scenes from Barney Seller's photo collection that show the beauty of farming in sweeping vistas. There are court cases from Lawrence County which point to how integral agriculture is to the fabric of Arkansas. Portraits from Tom McDonald's photo collection focus on the people who toil as farmers to mold the land into good harvests. Out of the Mammoth Spring and general photograph collections are images which demonstrate the various facets of agriculture in Arkansas communities.

Together, these items paint a complex portrait of agriculture in Arkansas. From land use to crops, equipment, legal issues, animals, people, and culture, farming is a deeply ingrained part of Arkansas. Through this digital collection we celebrate how agriculture has and continues to shape Arkansas. Check out this new addition coming soon as well as all of our other digital collections currently online. You can find them at <http://ahc.digital-ar.org/>.

News from SARA

Shelby Linck began her service as SARA's 2015 Summer Intern on June 2. Born in Apple Valley, San Bernardino County, California, Shelby grew up near Clinton, Van Buren County, Arkansas, and graduated from Southside Bee Branch High School. She attended the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville where she majored in anthropology and art history. She became familiar with Historic Washington State Park when she participated in the 2010 Archeological Field School at Washington with Dr. Jamie Brandon of the Arkansas Archeological Survey. She graduated from UA Fayetteville in 2013 and has entered the MA program in Public History at UALR. She recently completed coursework in records management where she studied the processing of collections and completed an internship at the Butler Center in the art gallery.



At SARA Shelby will continue to get experience in processing collections. She will also gain experience in research methods, transcription of historic documents and courthouse research. She will also have the opportunity to participate in the activities of a busy historic state park and to work on other duties as assigned. Shelby hopes to pursue a career in museums and archives.

The SARA Summer Internship is sponsored by SARA Foundation, the Friends' group for the Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives. Historic Washington State Park provides housing and utilities. The internship will conclude on August 8, 2015.

Claire Cade



This summer we welcome a new conservator, Claire Cade, to our staff. Claire is a graduate of Henderson State University with a Bachelor in Fine Arts degree in studio art. If her name sounds familiar, our readers might recall that Claire was one of our interns last summer. She worked with Jane Thompson in the conservation lab where she learned a number of important conservation techniques.

Claire grew up in Searcy, Arkansas. She was always interested in art. One of her first memories was when she was in preschool and drew a ballerina with her crayons. The teacher was amazed and hung the picture on the wall for all to see. Since then, Claire has continued to be interested in art, though now she is more interested in making block prints than she is of drawing ballerinas.

As our new conservator, Claire hopes to emphasize the science of conservation. "I love the chemistry involved," she says, "It is interesting to see how the different chemicals interact with each other." We are glad to welcome Claire to our staff and we look forward to working with her to preserve Arkansas's many historic treasures.

New at the AHC

May and June Donations and Accessions

AHC

National Guard records, 56 cu. ft.
Central High Press photographs, 10 images
Madison County, Arkansas photographs, 10 images
Richard Bullard Collection supplement, 0.25 cu. ft.
Cranford, Johnson, Robinson, and Woods archives, 88 cu. ft.

SARA

Original Hempstead County marriage licenses from 1875 to 1900 and into the 20th century. 3 cu. ft.

NEARA

Barney Sellers Collection supplement, 4.6 cu. ft., plus travelling exhibit consisting of 30 framed images
Wings of Honor Museum, 18 aerial photographs

We always receive more material than we are able to list in our newsletter. For a full listing, see our webpage (www.ark-ives.com) and our Facebook page.

We appreciate the generous support of our donors!

We hope that all of our readers are enjoying summer — and hopefully in a nice air conditioned room! These are the months when people throw away their cares and responsibilities and go on vacation. This month we highlight a few of our favorite summer vacation pictures from our collection.



Young men demonstrating an elephant walk



A little summertime courting in 1911



The Allison Family listen to a little banjo picking on the front porch



Children having a swim in a washtub in 1952



Andrew Waldo taking a road trip to California, 1921



Ruth Conner petting a stone crocodile near Beaver Dam in 1968