



THE ARKANSAS ARCHIVIST

MARCH 2016

AHC Celebrates Women's History Month

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 4—April 14

*The Great War: Arkansas in World War I Exhibit
Cabot High School Library and Museum*

April 30

*AHC/ Arkansas Genealogical Society Seminar
1914 Schoolhouse
Historic Washington State Park*

April 22—May 21

*The Great War: Arkansas in World War I Exhibit
Cabot High School Library and Museum*

Arkansas Women's History

Hair tied up in a bandana, arm flexed revealing a rather “unladylike” bicep, clad in the uniform of a factory worker — this is a familiar image to those who have seen propaganda posters from World War II. She has been called “Rosie the Riveter” and that seems like such a stereotype, but during World War II, it was not just a stereotype. During the

war, women all across the country put on overalls, packed their lunches in lunchboxes, and went out for a long day working in the factory. In Arkansas, many of these women worked in the war industry in plants at Jacksonville, Marche, Hope, El Dorado, Pine Bluff, and Camden where they manufactured detonators and performed other duties required for the war effort. They were the epitome of the spirit that the AHC celebrates during Women's History Month.



Women workers at the Arkansas Ordnance Plant in Jacksonville. The daughter of Laura Herring Kennedy Jigouleff (third from left) donated materials related to her mother's time working for the AOP including a biography of her mother and her work bandana.



American Red Cross Nursing Class, Leslie, Arkansas, 1917.

In 1997, Paula Taylor, former archivist at the AHC, decided to work on a project to help preserve the memory of those unsung heroes of the Homefront. Taylor's mother had worked at one of those munitions plants during World War II. Taylor recalls how the project started, “The project began because the daughter of a woman who worked at the plant contacted us and wanted to donate some materials that she had from her mother's days of working at one of the munitions plants in the state,” Taylor recalls. “This piqued my interest and I thought it might be interesting to record some of the experiences of these women.”

The World War II Arkansas Defense Plant Memorabilia Collection records the stories of many of these “Rosie the Riveters.” Included in the collection are photographs, factory newspapers, and questionnaires that Taylor sent to the women.

The women who filled out the questionnaires were proud to have been able to serve the war effort and one of the women, Catherine Crawford Lowry, was quick to say in her questionnaire, “Wore overalls, not uniforms.” When reflecting on her time working at the Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa) near Malvern, Opal Rhodes Nusko, another detonation plant worker, recalled “the excitement of being a part of the war-effort; the patriotic thrill of working on something that would be used to defend my country.”

In addition to several excellent collections at the AHC, we also have an online exhibit, the “Arkansas Women's History Collection” in the [Arkansas Digital Ark-ives](http://ahc.digital-ark.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16790coll14). This online collection contains a growing assortment of photographs, letters, and manuscript materials relating to the contribution that women have made to the history of Arkansas. The online exhibit can be accessed at <http://ahc.digital-ark.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16790coll14>. You will also find a few more photographs from the digital collection on the last page of this newsletter.

The AHC and BHCA Welcome New Commissioner Elise Hampton



The BHCA and AHC are greatly committed to education, which is why we are excited to welcome Elise Hampton as a new member of the Black History Commission of Arkansas. Ms. Hampton was born and raised in Conway, Arkansas. She received her Bachelor of Science in Education from the University of Central Arkansas focusing on middle level education. She has taught fifth grade social studies in the Conway Public School District. This year, she has shown herself to be very versatile in her pedagogical skills — she is teaching seventh grade science for the first time.

Ms. Hampton hopes to use her time on the BHCA to promote educational programs focusing on African American history. As a teacher, she wants to make sure that we have many resources available for educators. Carla Coleman, long time member of the BHCA, says of Ms. Hampton, “We look forward to working with Ms. Hampton in her goal of serving the educational needs of Arkansans. I am excited to have an educator [on the Commission] . . . to help oversee and attract material that would be useful for educators to use in the classroom. The Faulkner County area is such a great untapped avenue for research into African American history. We are pleased to have someone on the Commission with roots in that community.”

Black History Commission News



Daisy Bates, being honored in Fayetteville, 1984

The mission of the Black History Commission of Arkansas is to collect materials pertaining to African American history for the Arkansas History Commission, to encourage research in the state's African American history, and to cooperate with the Arkansas Department of Education to develop materials that support the teaching of African American History in our public schools.

March is Women’s History Month and what better way to highlight women’s history than to profile an African American woman who has been influential in the history of Arkansas. Daisy Bates was a writer, political activist, and newspaper publisher. Without her, much of

the Civil Rights Movement’s history in Arkansas might have been different. She was bold and fearless. She wrote, “No man or woman who tries to pursue an ideal in his or her own way is without enemies.” Despite opposition from segregationists, she became a symbol in the struggle for civil rights in Arkansas. The AHC is lucky to have on microfilm copies of the newspaper she edited and published, *The State Press*. The paper chronicled the turbulent fight for equality in Arkansas and is priceless for historians and for those who want to be inspired by an important historical figure.

In the last two centuries, the role of women in history has changed dramatically. Where before women were largely homemakers, now they have taken a bigger leap and become , teachers , doctors , lawyers, judges, writers, business owners and much more. The Arkansas History Commission holds a variety of historical materials on African American women who have made an impact on Arkansas in large and small ways. Daisy Bates, Charlotte Stephens, Annie Mae Bankhead, Helen Nunn, Lottie Shackelford, and Maya Angelou are just a few Arkansas women who can be researched using materials at the Arkansas History Commission. For more information about these women and others please visit our website at www.ark-ives.com.

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
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- Ms. Joyce Gibson Prescott
- Dr. John W. Graves Arkadelphia
- Ms. Elise Hampton Conway
- Dr. Cherisse Jones-Branch Jonesboro
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From the Director



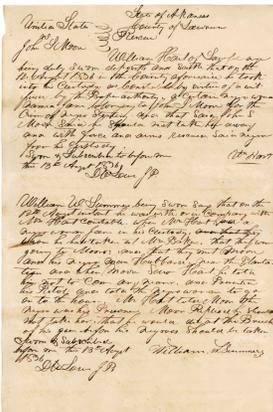
In June 2014, the Arkansas History Commission and the Black History Commission met jointly to discuss long-term planning for the state archives. The result of those discussions is a ten-year strategic plan adopted at the last quarterly meeting of the AHC on March 10. The plan provides seven goals the agency will accomplish by 2025, and identifies numerous activities that agency staff will undertake as we work to achieve those goals. Goals identified in the plan include: improving and promoting **public access** to agency collections and expanding our holdings; strengthening the agency's technology infrastructure and expanding **digital initiatives**; strengthening the role of the state archives in **preserving state records**; providing support for the **preservation of local government records**; **cultivating outreach** opportunities; providing **appropriate staffing** for our three facilities; and addressing our growing **facility needs**.

Underlying most of the goals in the strategic plan is the need to improve funding and staffing for the agency. The AHC is funded almost entirely out of general revenue, except for a small revenue stream that we produce from fees, like copying services and microfilm sales, and external grant funds, which vary annually. In FY16, the AHC received a little over \$1.9 million from the Arkansas General Assembly for all its expenses. Compared to neighboring state archives, Arkansas lags behind in funding. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History's appropriation is almost \$4 million, and Alabama's is just over \$6 million. Arkansas also does not compare favorably in terms of staffing levels. The Missouri State Archives employs 58 full-time staff, Texas 64 and Tennessee 43. Several of the goals in the AHC's new strategic plan involve expanding functions that, for years, have been neglected due to this historic lack of underfunding. However, these functions – like preservation of state records and support of local government records preservation – represent routine work for most state archives across the United States. Arkansas has lagged behind all other states in the preservation of its official history. The AHC has recently taken a significant step forward in these efforts with the support of Governor Asa Hutchinson's memorandum of February 17, 2016, to state agencies, offices and departments regarding historical records preservation. The next large step in ensuring we can work effectively with state entities is obtaining appropriate levels of funding and staffing to do the job. You can help by being an advocate for the AHC and for the preservation of Arkansas history through our Friends group and in your local community.

If you'd like to view the AHC's 10-year plan, a complete copy is available at: <http://www.adptfoi.com/History/>. I'd welcome your feedback on the plan. Please feel free to contact me at lisa.speer@arkansas.gov.

—Dr. Lisa K. Speer, Director

News from NEARA



It's like a scene from a classic western. The Constable comes to arrest a man and his two workers. The man to be arrested pulls out his pistol and refuses to let the lawman take anyone! But in a cinematic twist, the two people that he's defending from the Constable are slaves.

While it may sound like fiction, this is an account straight out of Lawrence County court records. In 1835, John S. Moore owned two slaves named Jane and Hubbard who had a five year old son named Elbert. However, a local doctor named Henderson White ended up with a legal claim on Elbert.

After White's death, the administrator of his estate John B. Hammond began settling the affairs which included taking Elbert away from his parents. Moore was evidently angry over this. He gave permission to Jane and Hubbard to visit Elbert overnight, which Hammond also allowed. However, when Hammond awoke that morning, all three slaves had vanished. Immediately Hammond accused the slaves of theft/rescue and named Moore as an accessory.

But John S. Moore wasn't intimidated so easily. He refused to let his slaves be arrested. He adamantly proclaimed that Hammond shouldn't have the boy. Then, when the courts continued to rule against him, Moore paid the judgment in full in lieu of returning Elbert. In 1837 he paid \$304, which today would be roughly \$6380! True stories like these are found throughout NEARA's records. Come discover them at NEARA this summer!

News from SARA

Lillian Florence "Lillie" Middlebrooks made her own mark on Arkansas women's history. Lillie was born April 28, 1887, to George D. and Mary Tyson Middlebrooks who were married in 1882 in Nevada County. The family was living in Parker Township, Nevada County at the time of the 1900 census, but by 1910 they had moved to Hope in Hempstead County where Mr. Middlebrooks' occupation was listed as commercial traveler.



Lillian Florence "Lillie" Middlebrooks

Lillie was fortunate to live in an era in which more career opportunities were opening up for women. At age 23 on the 1910 census Lillie's occupation was listed as bookkeeper. Other records indicate she worked in that position at the Hope Furniture Company. By 1920 she was able to vote for the first time, and in 1929 she was elected as Hempstead County Treasurer and served in that capacity until 1932. This was historic in that she was the first woman elected to public office in Hempstead County. Deed records indicate that she had also amassed a large amount of property, and by the 1940 census she is listed as a real estate dealer. Lillie never married, and she lived the remainder of her life in Hope where she was a member of First Baptist Church. She died at a local hospital in Hope on October 7, 1976, and is buried in Hope's Rose Hill Cemetery.

Staff Picks



This month, we feature Archivist Jeff Lewellen's pick, a reprint of the first issue of Sing Out! Magazine.

What was Sing Out! magazine and why was it important? It was a national magazine dedicated to the folk music scene during the 1950s through today. What makes it really important to historians is that it provides knowledge not only about folk music and folkways around the country, but it reflects the political and social changes in the nation taking place during the turbulent 1950s and 1960s. The original Editor was Robert Wolfe with contributors including Pete Seeger, Alan Lomax, and

Paul Robeson.

What was the topic of the first issue of the magazine? The May 1950 issue has a full spread cover photo of the Arkansas Rackensack Society, an Arkansas group who was dedicated to the preservation and perpetuation of traditional Arkansas folk culture. There is also a full story about Jimmy Driftwood and the beginnings of the Ozark Folk Festival in Mountain View, which would later result in the creation of the Ozark Folk Center in the 1970s. Another Arkansas connection in the first issue is the cover photograph of sheet music of the "Hammer Song," also known as "If I Had a Hammer," written by Pete Seeger and Arkansas native Lee Hays.

How can patrons access the magazine? We have a full run of the magazine from 1950 through the fall 2000 issue. They can be found in the AHC research room.

New at the AHC

March Donations and Accessions

AHC

State Land Survey Plats supplement, 9 cu. ft.
Nancy J. Hall portrait and plaque
John Lee Webb House condition assessment report, 2 cu. ft.
Jesse Core papers, 22 cu. ft.
Arkansas Black Hall of Fame journals, 0.25 cu. ft.
Arkansas Department of Career Education photograph collection, 0.50 cu. ft.
Pulaski Chancery Court summons, Henry Wilson, 0.1 cu. ft.
Henry Norwood collection, 1.2 cu. ft.

SARA

Ouachita County Historical Quarterly, Vol. 47, No. 2, Winter 2015

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/2016/03/acquisitions-and-accessions-for-march.html>

We appreciate the generous support of our donors!

In our lead story this month, we told our readers about the Arkansas Women's History digital collection. 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/p16790coll14>



Patricia Peacock, World Champion Duck Caller, near Stuttgart, 1955



Geraldine Jones Jefferson, circa 1930



Female telephone operators at the Telephone Company Building, Little Rock, 1915



Catholic Benedictine Sisters and Students, Wynne, 1900



Journalism students at the University of Arkansas, 1929