



# THE ARKANSAS ARCHIVIST

APRIL 2015

## The AHC Commemorates Its 110th Anniversary

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**April 3, 10, 17 & 24**

Digitization Clinics  
AHC Conference Room  
Little Rock

**April 21—May 3**

Fought in Earnest: Civil War  
Arkansas Exhibit  
Powhatan Historic State Park

**April 27**

110th Anniversary Open House  
AHC, Little Rock

**May 2**

Beginning Genealogy Workshop  
AGS/AHC  
State Capitol

**May 5—22**

African American Legislators,  
1868—1893 Exhibit  
Nevada County Depot and Museum,  
Prescott

This month marks the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Arkansas History Commission. We are devoting much of this issue to the celebration of 110 years of preserving and promoting Arkansas's history. Throughout the month of April, the AHC will host several events in honor of this milestone.

From 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. each Friday in April, AHC staff invites the general public to bring in archival material appropriate for scanning on flatbed scanners or for photographing, including documents, maps and photographs. AHC archivists will scan material to archival standards. Individuals will be provided with CDs of the digitized images at no charge. Members of the general public who choose to take advantage of this free scanning service will be asked to share the digital copies with the History Commission for research, exhibits and publication. "The digitization clinic is a modern twist on the way the History Commission built its collections from the beginning," said Commission Director Dr. Lisa Speer. "Through the years, our collections have grown thanks to the foresight of historically minded citizens across Arkansas and the U.S. We still like receiving donations of historical manuscripts and records, but we recognize that not everyone is ready to donate their family papers and memorabilia. This digitization clinic provides them with an option to share the content, while maintaining the originals during their lifetime."



Researchers study the 1880 United States Census in the AHC research room in the Old State House, circa 1960

The AHC also has put together an online digital collection titled, "Tales from the Vault -- Celebrating 110 Years." Each staff member has selected and shared items that he or she has found most interesting. This online digital collection can be found at: <http://ahc.digital-ar.org/>.

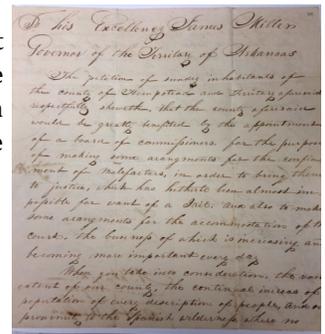
We will wrap up this month of commemorating 110 years of service to the people of Arkansas on April 27. From 10 a.m. until noon, the AHC will host a special open house event. The general public is invited to participate in this event, which will involve an exhibit on the agency's history, historical "gems" on display in our research room, the unveiling of an Arkansas photographic mural, and, of course, birthday cake. We hope our readers will join us in our celebration of 110 years!

## The AHC Highlights the Importance of the Gulley Collection

One man's trash is another man's treasure, or so goes the saying. In some cases, this is literally true. In the early part of the twentieth century, the state's government offices were moving to the new capitol building from their former homes in what would be later called the Old State House. While packing material to move, workers earmarked old records for shipment to Saint Louis for recycling.

Luckily for historians, a man named L.C. Gulley happened upon the material. He sifted through it and pulled out papers he thought might be of historical significance. L.C. Gulley had stumbled on a gold mine. There were documents and letters dating back to 1819 concerning the formation of the Arkansas Territory, letters written by our earliest governors, documents regarding treatment of the Native Americans, and other invaluable material — material that Gulley saved from being lost forever. We are lucky that Gulley thought this material was important enough to donate to the AHC. Today, that material continues to enlighten scholars and historians who are interested in the formation of our state.

Undated petition in the Gulley Collection from the citizens of Hempstead County asking Territorial Governor James Miller to strengthen law enforcement in the county and to make "some arrangements for the confinement of malefactors."



## Clara Bertha Eno



The AHC has had a number of prominent commissioners over the years. One of the first commissioners, and one to whom we owe a debt of gratitude, is Clara Bertha Eno. Eno was born in Van Buren in 1854. One of her earliest memories was of helping her mother care for wounded Confederate soldiers during the Battle of Van Buren in the Civil War. In 1862, following the death of her father, her mother took her family to Connecticut. She returned to Van Buren several years later to teach school.

Eno's interest in history led her to devote much of her time to community issues. She was an instrumental voice in the drive to save the Old State House from demolition. Her work involved many civic issues such as literacy. In 1909, her work in promoting Arkansas history caught the attention of Governor George Donaghey, who appointed her to the Arkansas History Commission. She served on the AHC for the next 42 years. She also was an early member of the Arkansas Historical Association (then named the Arkansas Historical Society).

Eno was intensely interested in the history of Arkansas, but she was especially devoted to the study of the history of her hometown of Van Buren. One colleague later remarked, "Miss Eno — when I think of her I think of Van Buren. When I think of Van Buren I think of Miss Eno. They are inseparable." She spent many years working on a history of her hometown, completing it in 1949, when Eno was 95 years old. It was certainly the culmination of her life's work and she asked the staff of the Van Buren *Press Argus* to assist her in publishing her manuscript. The staff worked day and night for three months and produced the volume, *The History of Crawford County, Arkansas*. Eno refused to apply for a copyright for the book, declaring in the front of the book, "This Book Is Not Copyrighted. Its Contents Are for the Good of All People Who Love America."

Although she declared that she would live to see 100 years of age, Eno passed away in 1951 at the age of 97. She left behind a large amount of scholarship that has continued to inspire researchers ever since. We are proud that she was a part of the AHC and celebrate the legacy that she left.

## Black History Commission News



2014 BHCA Commissioners

who served a term of seven years and were appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Since the passage of the original bill, the name of the organization has changed to the Black History Commission of Arkansas. Despite the name change, the purpose is still to collect materials dealing with the historical impact that African Americans have had on the history of Arkansas. Additionally, the BHCA is tasked with working with the Arkansas Department of Education to promote the teaching of African American history in Arkansas public schools. The BHCA also administers a grant program that provides support for African American historic preservation and public programming projects. The board continues to provide the much needed information and education for African American history in Arkansas.

For years historians worried that the history of Arkansas' African American community would be lost unless there was a concerted focus to collect and preserve historic material. In 1991, State Senator Jerry Jewell sponsored Senate Bill 710 establishing the Arkansas Black History Advisory Committee charged with the responsibility of preserving African American history. The 78th General Assembly passed it making it Act 1233 of 1991.

The Advisory Committee was composed of residents of the state

## 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

Rev. Frank Stewart	Conway
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

## Arkansas Records Catalog

[ark-cat.com](http://ark-cat.com)

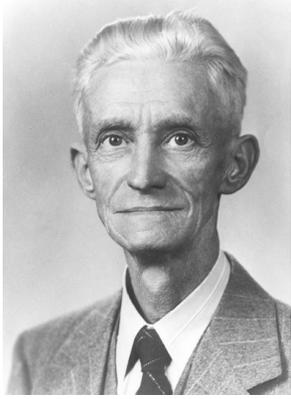


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CLOSED STATE HOLIDAYS

## From the Director



Dallas Herndon

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of this month, the History Commission will celebrate 110 years of existence as the state archives of Arkansas and as a collecting repository of Arkansas historical materials. Despite over a century of collecting, the agency has had only five directors since it was first established by the General Assembly. John Hugh Reynolds, whose survey work on Arkansas records laid the foundation during the agency's early years, served as secretary to the Commission until 1911 when the first full-time director, Dallas T. Herndon, was appointed. Herndon was one of two directors to serve over forty years, laboring as State Historian and Director from 1911 until his death in 1953. Under Herndon's leadership, the Commission developed a full-fledged archival program, and assembled a significant museum collection, as well as a portrait gallery of distinguished Arkansans. During Herndon's tenure, the History Commission expanded out of cramped quarters at the State Capitol and into the Old State House, where it resided until 1979, when it moved into its current residence at One Capitol Mall. Ted Worley succeeded Herndon as director in 1953. Despite Worley's brief service as director (1953-1960), he made a number of significant improvements at the Commission, including overseeing a facility expansion and purchasing the agency's first microfilm reader. Dr. John L. Ferguson became director in 1960, and would hold the position until 2005. His tenure remains the longest in the agency's history. Under Ferguson, the Arkansas

History Commission made many significant advances. Among Dr. Ferguson's many notable accomplishments was his commitment to growing the agency's in-house microfilming program, which is still going strong today and filming over 118 Arkansas newspapers. The funding for and infrastructure of the Commission also grew substantially under Ferguson's guidance, developing from an agency of three people in 1960 with a budget of a little over \$18,000 to an agency with twenty positions and budget of over one million dollars when he retired in 2005. Dr. Wendy Richter, who succeeded Ferguson in 2005, implemented and oversaw many positive upgrades during her seven years as director, including a renovation of the AHC's research room, the establishment of two regional archives at Historic Washington State Park and Powhatan Historic State Park, the creation of the agency's first digital collections, and the inauguration of Ark-Cat, a statewide collaborative records catalog. Next issue: Looking into the future. —Dr. Lisa K. Speer



Dr. John Ferguson

## News from NEARA



The Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives (NEARA) branch of the Arkansas History Commission (AHC) organized as a collaborative effort between Arkansas State Parks (ASP), the Lawrence County Historical Society (LCHS), and the Arkansas History Commission. This effort was necessary to provide for the ongoing preservation of the Lawrence County court records

previously held at the Powhatan courthouse.

Powhatan served as the fifth county seat of Lawrence County from 1870 to 1963; the records held at the courthouse dated to the creation of Lawrence County in 1815 by the Missouri territorial legislature and represented some of the earliest records documenting our history.

In the early 1960s, voters elected to consolidate the two Lawrence County seats of Powhatan and Walnut Ridge and to close the Powhatan courthouse. When the courthouse closed, the county abandoned many of the records held there. Eventually, the county gave the records to the Lawrence County Historical Society. In the 1970s, Arkansas State Parks developed the abandoned Victorian courthouse and surrounding area into a state park. LCHS and Powhatan Historic State Park coexisted there until the last major renovation, which necessitated permanently removing the records.

To ensure continued preservation, they came to an agreement in which ASP would secure funding to construct a new facility for the care of the records, LCHS would donate the records to AHC, and AHC would provide staffing to operate the new facility inside the park. NEARA opened to the public on March 3, 2011. Since then, holdings have more than tripled from that original donation, making NEARA a premier research facility for northeast Arkansas.

## News from SARA

As the Arkansas History Commission prepares to celebrate its 110<sup>th</sup> birthday, SARA is approaching its tenth anniversary as the southwestern branch of the state archives. Officially SARA became part of the AHC on October 1, 2005, but the relationship goes back much farther. Efforts to preserve the old town of Washington and its heritage went back many decades, culminating in the opening of Historic Washington State Park in 1973.



SARA founders Dr. John Ferguson, Mildred Smith, Charlene Etter, and Mary Medearis, circa 1978

As part of Washington's participation in the 1975-76 Bicentennial, Mrs. Mildred Smith, a local schoolteacher, headed the Planning Committee for a fundraising drive. Mrs. Smith thought it might be appropriate to use the funds for a local library and approached then State Historian Dr. John L. Ferguson for advice. Dr. Ferguson, a native of nearby Howard County, had long taken an interest in Washington and gave her his view. Instead of a local library, he replied: "Think big, Mildred! Think archives!"

And so it began. In February 1977, Mildred Smith, Charlene Etter and some twenty volunteers organized a workshop to be held on Saturday, Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>. The staff of the AHC and Parks and Tourism conducted the workshop on operating the archives for the coming year and had "What to Collect" as the theme. Thus began what continues today as the southwestern branch of the AHC.

## Staff Picks



HOOKER, JOHN E., Pine Bluff, Ark.; bn. Brookville, Miss., Feb. 11, 1902; adm. to bar, 1928. Ed. Davidson Coll., Southwestern Univ. and Cumberland Univ. (LL.M.); Municipal Judge. Mar. Quapaw Lodge, F. & A. M., Earles Lodge. Frat. Sigma Alpha Epsilon. Democrat.

This month we feature Archival Manager Jane Hooker's choice, the 1935 issue of Bench and Bar of Arkansas.

What is this book and why is it important to you? It is a directory of members of the Arkansas Bar Association during that year. It is kind of like a yearbook. Most of the attorneys have their photographs in the book. It is an interesting look at the legal profession in 1935. What I like most about it is that my father, grandfather, and uncle are all in the book. So, it is really very personal to me.

In addition to photographs, what other information is in the book? It gives a list of the various organizations to which the particular attorney belongs in addition to listing his or her educational background. It even gives the attorney's political affiliation. It also listed if the particular attorney is in the Arkansas Legislature. From looking at the book I realized that my grandfather was serving in the legislature at the time that the legislature was creating the AHC. So, it is an interesting connection to me.

Are there any other people in the book that our readers might know? There are a number of prominent politicians in the book. Governor Charles Brough and Governor Junius Futrell are both in the book, as is future Congressman Brooks Hays.

## New at the AHC

### March Donations and Accessions

#### AHC

National Guard Records, 66 cu. ft.

#### SARA

Photo of Pvt. John D. Musgrave, addition to the Musgrave Collection.

#### NEARA

Devoe Elbert Hedrick papers 0.2 cu. ft.  
Charles Stuck Jr. papers 2.7 cu. ft.

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](http://www.ark-ives.com)) and our Facebook page.

**We appreciate the generous support of our donors!**

## The AHC Through the Years



AHC meeting, 1951



Archival Manager Russell Baker and  
Microfilm Technician Ronnie Watts, circa  
1970



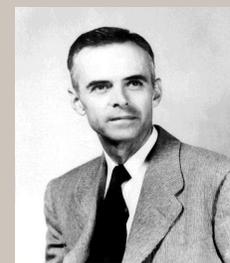
AHC Director Dr. John  
Ferguson inspects old  
newspapers, circa 1965



Russell Baker salvages  
historic material from a  
courthouse, circa 1970



AHC Staff, 2014



AHC Director  
Dr. Ted Worley,  
1953-1960