



# THE ARKANSAS ARCHIVIST

MAY 2014

## BRINGING THE AHC TO YOU

**May 3—29**  
*African American Legislators exhibit*  
Jacksonport State Park, Jacksonport

**May 5—29**  
*"Fought in Earnest" exhibit*  
Newport Economic Development Commission, Newport

**May 17**  
AHC Arkansas Foodways Seminar  
Pulaski Tech  
Little Rock, South

**May 26**  
AHC  
Closed for Memorial Day

## Reception for Rare Jimmy Driftwood Film

On April 19, the AHC and the Ozark Folk Center held a reception honoring David Jones and Ron Sherman for their roles in saving rare film footage of folk music legend Jimmy Driftwood. The highlight of the program was a screening of a short documentary, "Jimmy Driftwood Remembered: The Lost Footage," created by Ron Sherman Productions.

A native of Timbo, Arkansas, Jimmy Driftwood became one of folk and country music's most prolific songwriters. It is estimated that he wrote over 6,000 songs, some of them becoming hits for country stars such as Johnny Horton, who had a number one single on both the country and pop charts with Driftwood's "Battle of New Orleans" in 1959. As part of his stardom as a songwriter, Driftwood became a member of the Grand Ole Opry.



*Jimmy Driftwood with an unidentified singer at the 1963 Ozark Folk Festival in Eureka Springs*

David Jones, former owner and general manager of KARK-TV, had more than 20 tapes in his personal archives originally shot for a documentary on Driftwood that was never completed. Jones loaned equipment to a California filmmaker and photographer to shoot the footage. After the project's completion, the film maker left Arkansas never to return for the footage. The footage features Driftwood at the height of his creative output and star power performing some of his hits at the Grand Ole Opry and around Stone County, Arkansas. Interviews with Driftwood and other famous names in country music are also captured on the film

Jones and Sherman donated the tapes to the Arkansas History Commission in November 2013. AHC Archivist Jeff Lewellen, one of the staff members who initially viewed the footage, noted, "The donation of the Jimmy Driftwood footage is significant because it fills in a part of Jimmy Driftwood's successful career as a singer songwriter and folk music performer outside of the state of Arkansas. This footage of Driftwood performing at the Grand Ole Opry and talking with some of the biggest stars in country music of the late '50s early '60s shows how important he was as a songwriter during this time in Nashville." AHC Director Dr. Lisa Speer also noted the relevance of the donation to the AHC's mission. "When David Jones visited with me about the Jimmy Driftwood film footage, he really did not have to ask twice if it was something that would interest the History Commission," said Speer. "He arranged for several members of the AHC staff to have a viewing of the footage at Ron Sherman Studios and we were all just really excited by what we saw - hours and hours of raw, archival footage of interviews with and performances by Jimmy Driftwood and other notable musical performers. A visit by Jane Fonda to Stone County, Arkansas, is even documented on one of the tapes! This footage is a wonderful complement to our Ozark Cultural Resource Center Collections. Our copies will need to be digitized before the footage can be made available to the public, but we're looking forward to sharing this great material in the near future." Photos from the event at the Ozark Folk Center at Mountain View are on page 4 of this issue.

## Last Chance to Sign Up for the Arkansas Foodways Seminar

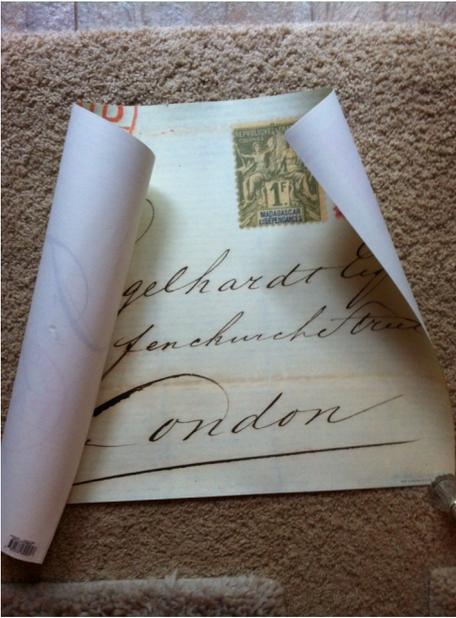


*Girl enjoys a chicken leg at Springdale's Chicken Days in 1962*

Attention Arkansas foodies! You have one last chance to sign up for the AHC Arkansas Foodways Seminar being held at Pulaski Tech's Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management Institute on May 17. People have been calling in and registering at a rapid pace but there are still a few spots left. The Culinary Institute has given us an extra week for registration, so you have a few days left to get in on this exciting (and tasty) workshop. If you need an incentive to sign up, these are a few of the goodies on the lunch menu: Brioche rolls with Petit Jean Ham and Burge's Turkey with pepper jelly on the side, green bean salad, foraged mushroom quiche with acorn crust, poke sallet, fried okra, purple hull peas, cornbread, fried pies provided by Lindsey's Hospitality House, and much more! As if the food was not enough, we will have a fantastic group of speakers who will educate and entertain about Arkansas' rich foodways heritage.

The absolute last day to register is May 9, so be quick if you want to attend! There is a \$10 fee for lunch which is payable at the time of registration. Please call 501-682-6891 or email us at [state.archives@arkansas.gov](mailto:state.archives@arkansas.gov).

## Conservation Corner



It seemed like such a good idea at the time—roll up the maps, the blueprints and other oversized pieces of paper and toss them into the back of a closet. BUT, there may come a time when you want to refer to your blueprints or frame that old certificate. You can lay your document flat on a table out of the way, put weights on it, and six months later you *may* have a flat document, but we are presuming that you don't have the luxury of this much time.

Here's a quick technique for flattening that involves water. Before you proceed, you need to know that some documents (blueprints, for instance) *may* cockle if treated with water or certain inks can run. First, test the ink on your document to ensure that it won't run. Then, lightly mist the back of the document and set it between two stacks of absorbent paper towels. Next, set the document between two flat stacks

of absorbent paper towels sandwiched between pieces of woven polyester inner facing. Put a weight on top of the document to cover completely, and change the paper towels a few times. Within a day or two you should have a completely flat document. If your document is on parchment/vellum, or has blue ink, ribbons, seals, or wax, this treatment is not advisable.

There are lots of websites that explain this process and we encourage you to explore flattening techniques online before proceeding. Or even easier—phone us and we'll be happy to help you.

## Black History Commission News

"Profiles in Arkansas Black History," a workshop sponsored by the Black History Commission of Arkansas and the Arkansas History Commission will be held on Saturday, June 7, 2014, from 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center, 501 West Ninth Street, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201.

Each year, the workshop profiles historic African American people, places, and events. This year's theme is "Teaching African American History in Arkansas Schools: The Current Reality." The focus of this workshop will be to show teachers and educators interesting ways to teach African American History in Arkansas Schools. The workshop will feature a panel discussion of educators from elementary, middle, and high school grades, and a discussion of Act 326 of 1997, which requires the Commissioner of the Arkansas Department of Education "to oversee dissemination of instructional materials and training for the teaching of African-American history in grades K-12 in Arkansas public schools and training in racial and ethnic awareness and sensitivity for teachers and administrators." Professional Development hours will be available. The workshop is free, but registration is required. Please email Tatyana Oyinloye at [tatyana.oyinloye@arkansas.gov](mailto:tatyana.oyinloye@arkansas.gov) or call 501-682-6892 to register. Please remember to tell her if you have any special dietary requirements for your meal. We look forward to seeing you there!



*Charlotte Andrews Stephens,  
the first African American teacher  
in Little Rock.  
Photo taken in 1944,  
when she was 90.*

## KNOW YOUR COMMISSIONERS

### Arkansas History Commission

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

### Black History Commission of Arkansas

<i>Mr. Marion Butler</i>	<i>Sherwood</i>
<i>Ms. Carla Coleman</i>	<i>Little Rock</i>
<i>Rev. Barry Dobson</i>	<i>El Dorado</i>
<i>Ms. Joyce Gibson</i>	<i>Prescott</i>
<i>Dr. John W. Graves</i>	<i>Arkadelphia</i>
<i>Mr. Myron Jackson</i>	<i>Little Rock</i>
<i>Mr. James Lawson</i>	<i>Jacksonville</i>

### Arkansas Records Catalog

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



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

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HOURS: 8 AM–5 PM, MON-SAT  
CLOSED STATE HOLIDAYS

## From the Director

The month of April ended on a sobering note for the state of Arkansas. We were reminded that while we live in a state of great natural beauty, Mother Nature has a dangerous side. The tornadoes that ravaged the communities of Mayflower and Vilonia on Sunday caused great destruction to property and lives. Our thoughts and prayers go out to every person affected by the disaster.

Although generally not considered a part of the area described as “Tornado Alley,” Arkansas has had its share of devastating and record-setting tornadoes. The only F-5 tornado ever recorded in the state occurred late in the afternoon of April 5, 1929, striking Jackson County in northeastern Arkansas. The tornado resulted in multiple fatalities and injuries.

The deadliest outbreak in Arkansas history occurred in March 1952, when seventeen tornadoes tore through Bald Knob and Judsonia in White County, and Cotton Plant in Woodruff County. One hundred twelve people lost their lives that day.

More recently, in February 2008, an EF-4 set an Arkansas record for length of distance on the ground – 123 miles through seven counties in north-central Arkansas. Twelve people died, over 140 people were injured, and almost 1,000 properties were destroyed or damaged.

The gripping images that result in the aftermath of these events – contemporary and historical – remind us to “keep our eyes to the skies” this time of year, to be thankful for mercies and for the kindness of our friends and neighbors, and to hold our loved ones a little tighter. —Lisa K. Speer



The aftermath of a tornado that swept through Brinkley in 1909, destroying much of the town and killing as many as fifty people.

## News from NEARA



Oscar Fendler was born in Blytheville, Arkansas, in 1909 to Polish-immigrant parents, Rebecca S. and Alfred Fendler. Within a year of Oscar’s birth, the small family moved to Manila, where Rebecca and Alfred rented a large building that provided space for the Fendler’s tailor shop and living quarters. In those early days, Manila was home to many immigrants from Lithuania, Russia, and Lebanon. Many of these immigrants owned businesses in the community.

Oscar attended public schools in Manila and later graduated high school in Blytheville. He earned his B.A. degree in 1930 from the University of Arkansas and, in 1933, his J.D. degree from Harvard Law School. Among his many accomplishments were service as the president of the Arkansas Bar Association from 1962-63, founder of the Arkansas Law Review at the University of Arkansas School of Law, and service in the Navy during World War II and in the Naval Reserve until his retirement.

In 1991, Fendler published the book *Chronicles: Incidents in the Life of Oscar Fendler (1909 to 1926)*. This work chronicles the stories of his early life and of his family from their arrival in Manila to their experiences in school and conflicts with the Ku Klux Klan.

Oscar Fendler passed away December 23, 2002, at his home in Blytheville. His records at NEARA include his obituary from the December 31, 2002, *Town Crier* newspaper, a 1991 newspaper clipping detailing his life and summarizing his then new book, *Chronicles*, a letter from Fendler to Frances Berk of Jonesboro, and a copy of *Chronicles*.

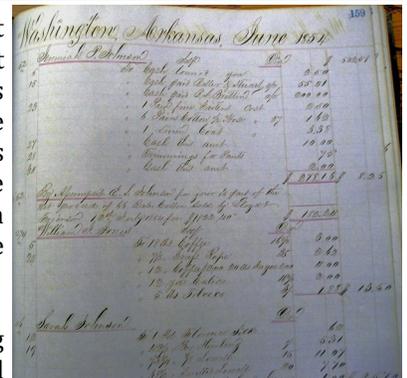
## News from SARA

The collections of the Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives at Washington contain numerous store ledgers from the nineteenth century. This particular ledger believed to be from the Trimble and Johnson store is an especially fine example from the mid-1850s.

Beautifully written in a swirling clerical script, the ledger is still completely legible. The store’s

clerk kept a detailed daily record of his customers and their purchases from a single item to a large list that fills a page or more. The clerk also notes who made the purchase. Usually it is “Self” but it may also be “Lady”—presumably the wife of the account holder---or some other person sent on an errand.

The records tell much about the tastes and habits of citizens of Washington in the 1850s. Daniel Witter, an attorney, purchased three gallons of whiskey at 60 cents a gallon. Augustus H. Garland and his step-father Thomas Hubbard ordered their groceries from New Orleans. The costs and the freight charges by steamboat from New Orleans via Camden to Washington are noted. Canned mackerel, boxes of sardines and canned oysters were popular food items for many, and, above all, the ladies and the gentlemen of Washington wanted to be well-dressed. Yards and yards of fine fabrics are listed in the accounts with fine buttons, boots and kid gloves for both men and women. The citizens of Washington, Arkansas, lived in a global economy and enjoyed its amenities.



# Jimmy Driftwood Film Reception



AHC Director Dr. Lisa Speer with David Jones



(Left to Right)  
David Jones, AHC Archival Technician  
John Freshour, AHC Archivist Jeff  
Lewellen, and Ron Sherman



Ron Sherman discusses making the short documentary film



David Jones speaking about preserving the Driftwood material



AHC Archivist Jeff Lewellen talks with historian Brooks Blevins

## New at the AHC

### April Donations and Accessions

#### Arkansas History Commission

John S. Polk Collection, addition, 3 cu. ft.

Laura Fanning Collection, 0.25 cu. ft.

Cora Evans Collection, 0.25 cu. ft.

McGehee Hotel, 0.02 cu. ft.

Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism,

Photograph Albums, 0.75 cu. ft.

Bledsoe Scrapbook, 0.5 cu. ft.

#### Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives

1944 Jonesboro Arkansas City Directory

*The Fortenberry Family in Arkansas*

#### Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives

Franks Family Papers, 0.75 cu. ft.

Polk Family Tree (chart)

Hope Chamber of Commerce Records, 0.5 cu. ft.

Pat Weaver Collection, 1.5 cu. ft.

County Maps, State of Arkansas

We always receive more material than we are able to list in our newsletter. Starting with May accessions, we'll be publicizing the complete listing on our website ([www.ark-ives.com](http://www.ark-ives.com)) and on our Facebook page.

We appreciate the generous support of our donors!

## Staff Picks

This month we feature Archival Manager Jane Hooker's pick, letters between Governor J.M. Futrell and her grandfather appointing her father to the position of municipal judge of Pine Bluff.

This is quite a personal pick. How did you find them? I had been working here at the AHC for a few years and had no idea about it. My brother told me, "You know, the Futrell papers have some material about dad in them." So, I had to look into it and there it was.

What is the topic of these letters?

The municipal judge of Pine Bluff had passed away in office, so the governor had to appoint someone to fill the position. Apparently, the governor and my grandfather were acquainted and he had promised my grandfather that he would appoint my father to the position. My father was only 29, but had already been in the legal business for a while. He had gone to college at 16, so he got started early. This appointment was important to him and he continued as municipal judge for over 20 years before going into private practice.

This sounds like a good view of behind the scenes politics. Looking through the folder dealing with this topic, you see some of that. After the judge passed away there was immediate lobbying to have different people appointed, but in the end the governor chose my father because of the promise he had made to my grandfather.

Any other collections that might give a personal look at politicians? One of the most interesting is the Biographical Memoranda of Arkansas Legislators which was begun in 1918 and continued into the 1960s.

