Elaine Race Riot Subject of Conference

On the night of September 30, 1919, a group of black sharecroppers gathered inside a small, wood-frame church building outside of Elaine, Arkansas to hold a farmers union meeting. During the meeting, a car carrying two white Phillips County deputies and a black trusty stopped outside the church. Shots were fired. When the shooting ended, one deputy had been killed and the other seriously wounded. This incident touched off a wave of mob violence known as the Elaine Race Riots. What sparked the mob violence? What was the true purpose of the union meeting? Who were the behind-the-scenes leaders? Many questions such as these are still disputed eighty years later. In an effort to improve our understanding of this tragic episode and move toward a closer historical and personal reconciliation of it, a conference titled “Rumors and Reactions: Reconsidering the Elaine Race Riots of 1919” will be presented February 10-11, 2000 at the Malco Theater in Helena, Arkansas. The conference is jointly sponsored by the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies at the Central Arkansas Library System, the Delta Cultural Center, and the Phillips County Historical Society.

The conference will open with a free reception, open to the public, hosted by the Butler Center. Highlighting Thursday evening’s program will be the first showing of a new documentary, “The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow: The Elaine Race Riots,” a film by Richard Wormser and Videoline Productions of New York. Tom Dillard, Curator of the Butler Center, will follow the film with an overview of racial violence in Arkansas history. The evening’s programs will conclude with a community panel discussion on how the black and white communities have interpreted the so-called riots and how they have affected relations between the two groups over the years. Friday’s schedule will begin with a program titled “Sharecropping, Tenant Farming, Peonage, and Profits: The Delta Economy at the Advent of the Riot,” to be presented by Dr. Nan Woodruff, Professor of History at Pennsylvania State University and an authority on Southern Agricultural History. Ronnie Nichols, a free-lance historian and former Director of the Delta Cultural Center, will follow with a survey of the black leadership at the time of the riots, and Dr. John W. Graves, Professor of History at Henderson State University, will conclude the morning programs with an examination of the white leadership.

The luncheon program will include a catered box lunch and will feature Grif Stockley, a Little Rock attorney and nationally published author of several novels. Mr. Stockley is currently writing a novel on the Elaine riots, and will speak on the landmark legal cases that resulted from the riots.

Butler Center Expands Its Hours of Operation

Tom Dillard, Curator of the Butler Center recently announced expansion of the hours of operation for the Center. With the beginning of the new year, the Butler Center’s hours changed to:

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
  9:00 am - 8:00 pm
- Wednesday, Friday, Saturday
  9:00 am - 6:00 pm
- Sunday
  1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

According to Dillard, the main impetus for changing the hours was an increase in staff, thus allowing the Butler Center to “provide easier access to its collections for those after 5:00 researchers.” Previously, the Butler Center closed at 6:00 pm each night.

Inside This Issue

Curator's Column                              Page 2
Butler Center Loses Two Supporters            Page 3
Genealogy Conference Scheduled               Page 3
Charley Sandage & Harmony Music Review        Page 4
Butler Center Music Conference A Success     Page 5
BC Purchases Revolutionary War Microfilm      Page 6
Reception Honors Butler Center Fellows        Page 6
Jordan Patty Visits the Central High Museum  Page 7
Memorials & Gifts                             Page 8
Curator’s Column
Tom W. Dillard

The Butler Center has the mission of preserving the history of Arkansas and, equally important, helping Arkansans learn of their heritage. To implement this mission, we have developed a large number of strategies and programs. Today I want to share information with you on our efforts to improve the teaching of Arkansas history in the schools of the state—plus invite you to a special get together on this topic.

Most Arkansans assume that state history already has an honored place in the curriculum. That would be a most inaccurate assumption. I have worked for years on this topic, and I can tell you without fear of contradiction that we have a long way to go before state and local history receives the attention it deserves in the schools.

I do not know how Arkansas history came to be neglected. From speaking with older Arkansans, I have determined that at one time students did study our state history. It was probably in the 1960s and 70s that local history began a retreat from the curriculum. Whatever the time frame, an analysis done at the time of the American Revolution Bicentennial in 1976 showed that few schools gave priority to Arkansas history. Indeed, in that year Arkansas County—the mother of all counties in the state—did not offer Arkansas history at a single secondary school. Among the larger districts, the Little Rock School District hardly made a pretense of including Arkansas history. In sum, we were producing generations of young Arkansans who knew nothing of their heritage as a people.

Those folks who have kept up with this issue know that in 1997 the Arkansas General Assembly adopted legislation to permanently require the teaching of state history. But, even that did not solve the problem. Just because a law exists on the books does not mean it is being enforced.

One of the largest hurdles we have to deal with on this issue is inadequate teacher preparation. Amazingly, most of the people who are teaching Arkansas history have never had a college course in the subject! Indeed, until recently some of the colleges in the state did not even offer Arkansas history.

The result is not a happy one. Teachers are asked to teach a subject which they do not fully understand. And they have to get by with inadequate instructional materials. Textbooks are few and far between. Films and videos are often dated. We need good instructional materials on Arkansas geography, government and politics, Arkansas economics, etc. Put yourself in the place of that hypothetical teacher: you have never taught the subject before, you do not have enough good teaching materials, and you look up and 25 students are sitting before you waiting. What would you do?

The Butler Center hopes to help with this problem. The first thing we did was start a Butler Fellowship program, which resulted in the appointment of four teachers as “Fellows.” These Fellows generated dozens of lesson plans dealing with Arkansas history. We then proceeded to place these lesson plans, plus a great deal of other instructional materials on Arkansas, on our web site so they can be easily accessed by teachers everywhere. We have also conducted workshops with teachers to help them understand and use the lesson plans prepared by the Fellows.

We want to invite you a special invitation to come to a reception to honor the original Fellows and to meet the new Fellows who will be announced that evening. Please mark your calendars for Thursday, February 17, 7:00 pm. The reception will be held in one of the most historic settings in the state, the Old Supreme Court Room, second floor, State Capitol Building. Parking is free, and security will be provided.

Join us on February 17th as we continue the long journey toward full historical awareness for all Arkansans.

The Butler Center Fellows Lesson Plans at
http://www.cals.lib.ar.us/arkansas/lesson_plans.html

The Butler Banner is the quarterly newsletter of the
Richard C. Butler
Center for Arkansas Studies.
Central Arkansas Library System
100 Rock Street
Little Rock, AR. 72201
(501) 918-3058
(501) 375-7451-FAX
arkinfo@cals.lib.ar.us
http://www.cals.lib.ar.us
Timothy G. Nutt, Editor
Butler Center Mourns the Loss of Two Supporters

Betty Woods Brossier was born in Little Rock on January 9, 1918 to Wayne and Ann Gowdy. A fourth generation Arkansan and very proud of that fact, Betty often remarked that it was hard to be humble about her Arkansas roots.

Raised in Helena, Betty began her journalism career as society editor, news editor, and finally managing editor of the Helena World. She joined the staff of the Arkansas Democrat in 1973 to oversee the travel, fashion, bridal, and society sections. She divorced her first husband, Ted Woods, in 1981 and retired from the paper two years later.


Immediately after her return, Betty volunteered at the Butler Center where Curator Tom Dillard enlisted her help in drafting press releases for the Center’s events, something Betty enjoyed. Everyone appreciated Betty’s wit and humor. When asked for a photograph to use in publicity purposes, Betty replied that her best picture was taken many years ago and involved her being “buck-naked and on a bearskin rug.”

Betty Engstrom Toney, another Butler Center supporter, died January 4, 2000. She was born in Little Rock, the daughter of Harold and Fannie Gibson Engstrom. Betty donated her late husband George’s Arkansiana collection to the Butler Center. That collection, one of the largest privately-held collections of Arkansas materials in the nation, included 5,000+ books, over 500 photographs, as well as numerous maps, pamphlets, and other ephemera. Betty, herself a collector, was noted for her cabinets of beautiful cut glass.

Butler Center To Co-Sponsor Genealogy Conference

“Our Legacy, Moving Into the Millennium” is the theme for the Arkansas Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society’s one day conference scheduled for Saturday, February 26, 2000 from 10:00 AM - 4:30 PM at the library’s Darragh Center.

The conference will offer workshops that are of special interest and unique to African-American genealogy. Participants will discover ways to trace and preserve African-American history through workshop sessions that will include topics for the beginning researcher to the more advanced genealogists.

Conference displays will include black and white photographs contributed by AAGHS Arkansas members and entitled, “Kin-Folks’ Our Family Legacy and old children’s photographs and black dolls from the collection of antique dealer and Black Americana collector, Archie Moore.

The conference is sponsored in part by the Butler Center; and grants were received from the Arkansas Black History Advisory Committee, the Arkansas Humanities Council, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Registration is $15.00 for members of AAGHS, $20.00 for non-members; and $10.00 for students. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged and includes a brown-bag lunch. Deadline for pre-registration is February 10, 2000.

For more information contact: AAHGS, Arkansas Chapter, P.O. Box 4294, Little Rock, Arkansas 72114 or call (501) 918-3056 or (501) 888-1419.

Presenters

Dr. Gwendolyn Twillie
“Folk Say-African-American Storytelling Traditions”

Tamela Tenpenny-Lewis and Vondra Buckingham
“Beginner’s Genealogy”

Carolyn Hervey and Mary Hall
“Making the Transition Between 1870s and 1860s”

Tom W. Dillard
“Characters of Color: A Look at Some Unusual Afro-Arkansans”

Dr. Theman Taylor
“The Importance of Knowing”

Archie Moore
“Identifying Old Photographs”

Darryl Miller, Kelly Smith, and Cheryl Batts
“Funeral Home Records”

Hope Mitchell, Flotsie Mitchell and Pat Wartenberg
“Family Reunion Planning”
A Harmonious Experience: Music Review

by George West

In early September, 1999, a local fisherman snagged a barely submerged log along the Saline, just upriver from Benton. The "log" turned out to be something much more astounding: a twenty-four foot dug-out canoe. Judging from the absence of sharp, iron adz blade marks, archaeologists estimate that this vessel pre-dates European contact. It appears to be the work of the Caddo tribe that populated the Ouachita region. Carbon dating may reveal, however, that the boat is significantly older and could be the creation of a still earlier people in Arkansas.

With every new fact the historical imagination soars: who built it? how? for what? where did they come from? what were they like? what else did they know? what did life look like to them?

Charley Sandage, an AETN producer and singer/songwriter, didn't need this discovery to launch his historical imagination. He has long been wondering about these people—and the many other "tribes" and generations who have inhabited Arkansas. He's made his musings into a finely crafted CD of a dozen songs, Charley Sandage's Arkansas Stories.

The collection, quilted together by Sandage's mellow narration and artfully performed by Harmony (a mainstay at the Ozark Folk Center), spans the chapters of Arkansas history.

First comes an ode, sung a cappella, to the Caddo nation, whose presence Sandage can almost sense all around his childhood home. An upbeat banjo tune follows on the New Madrid quake of 1811, which some historians describe as the real pump-primer for settlement in the soon-to-become Arkansas Territory. Two more songs are portraits of actual individuals from this period; Betsy Wells, mentioned by Frederick Gerstaeker in his journals, depicts the uncertain life of an Arkansas pioneer wife, and Tom Graves ponders the guilt (or innocence) of a Cherokee charged with murder. Another character study, Beautiful Sally, is drawn from Ruth Folk Patterson's history of a slave sold by her Cherokee masters to a white man for whom she bore four children—with dire results.

Sandage uses this tragic and all-too-typical personal history to usher in the Civil War period. Rather than dwelling on the often-cited battles, Sandage focuses on less well-known episodes from the war's end. One is the recently documented, bitterly ironic disaster of the steamboat Sulphur. While transporting Union survivors of Confederate prisons back to their homes in the North, the overloaded ship exploded and sucked some 1500 of the POWs to a watery grave in the Missis-

Lake Village) and from there to Tontitown in the hills of northwest Arkansas.

Sandage has a knack for singling out both the obscure and the universal in these family stories from Arkansas. I Don't Believe the Levee's Gonna Hold captures the awe of every family who had the misfortune to live in the bottomlands along the Mississippi and Arkansas rivers and their

Charley Sandage's Arkansas Stories

Performed by Harmony

tributaries during the Great Flood of '27.

Meanwhile, two remaining songs borrow directly from musical memories that likewise belong to many Arkansas families. The Tune Called Leather Briches traces the history of that common Ozark melody; They Sang On is a reverent tribute both to the shape note tradition of the upland South (the lyrics are built on the hymn What Wondrous Love Is This) and to three Ozark women who have become known nationally as tradition-bearers of Arkansas' musical heritage: Emma (Dusenberry of Mena), Almeda (Riddle of Greers Ferry), and Ollie Gilbert

Continued on next page
of Mountain View).

The historical fact at the core of each song is one of the real appeals of this creative endeavor by Sandage. Those who know the particulars behind certain songs will appreciate his attention to detail. That tune “Leather Britches,” as the song points out, originated in the Scottish highlands, as does much of the Ozark fiddle tradition. The tremolo of the mandolin in A Townsfolk Story echoes the musical style of Italy. The verse about Granny Riddle in They Sang On ends with a high, feathered roll of the voice that characterized Almeda’s singing. These are extra touches added only by artists—Sandage and Harmony both deserve this label—who genuinely care about the real lives behind each song’s story.

Teachers will find constant use for this CD throughout the year. Turning stories into songs is a doubly effective way to pull young learners into Arkansas’ history (as Jimmy Driftwood has previously shown), and Sandage is an accomplished storyteller. Older students can be sent off to research the primary sources and scholarly publications on which each of the songs is based; then they can be challenged to write new verses of their own.

Plus, the songs raise questions that professional historians have to ask every time they read and write about history: where does this information come from? whose point of view is this? is there another side of this story? Tom Graves will teach students of any age how to ask the same important questions:

Tom Graves sits in a Little Rock jail.
Is he a man of the earth or a devil from hell?

Folks read about him and they say, “Can you tell me, Who is this man, Tom Graves?”

The songs also dive right into some of the more troubling chapters of Arkansas history. These aren’t surface level Pecos Pete and Johnny Appleseed songs; Sandage doesn’t skirt the issues of prejudice or poverty. Jim Crow (Just Rode In On a Railroad Train) is one of the best-written songs on the CD and will serve well as a discussion starter in the classroom:

Nobody cares if you paid your fare...
If your money’s the wrong color
You’re gonna ride that coach back there.

In the greatest strength is sometimes a point of weakness. Sandage is so committed to teaching Arkansas’ history that in some cases the theme overwhelms the song. Beautiful Sally, though it is a sobering story, is a less effective song. Like Cahokia, it muses too much, and the music turns sentimental. By contrast, the songs Jim Crow and Tom Graves bite into the issue of racism with the better-suited tone of a Joan Baez protest instead of a Judy Collins lament.

The songs that work the best are the ones that concentrate on a particular event, keeping the lyrics focused. As a songwriter, Sandage has a gift for capturing the mood and emotions of a moment in history with a colorful, memorable refrain. I Don’t Believe the Levee’s Gonna Hold, the last cut on the CD, is just one example of a potent song that sticks with the listener. These songs have the same essential ingredients of the ballads that some Ozark families have passed down for generations. Some of these may well last a long while, too.

The faults of this project are few; its attributes are many. Charley Sandage and Harmony have done their job well. The more the listener knows of Arkansas history, the more craft he or she will discover in these songs. And the more one listens to the songs, the more one will know—and appreciate—the lessons of Arkansas’ history.

George West teaches American Studies at the Arkansas School for Math and Science in Hot Springs, where his students have developed The Arkansas Memory Project online. With Bill McNeil of the Ozark Folk Center, he has produced record albums of Ozark storytellers and singers and a television documentary on Almeda Riddle. He plays fiddle with the Celtic-Ozark trio, “Lark in the Morning.”

NOTE:

The Butler Center collects recordings of Arkansas musicians. If you have a 78 or 45 rpm record, a cassette, a CD, or even an 8-track tape of a local band or singer, we would love to add it to our music collection. For more information, contact the Butler Center at 918-3055 or email Tim Nutt at timn@cals.lib.ar.us.

Butler Center’s First Music Conference A Success

“Melodies & Memories: A Celebration of Arkansas’ Musical Heritage,” the Butler Center’s first music conference was nothing less than a success. Featuring scholars and bands representing the spectrum of the music field, the total estimate for attendance exceeded 500.

The biggest event of the conference was the reunion concerts of two Little Rock bands, The Culls and The Coachmen. Greeted by screaming groups (a.k.a. spouses and children), the two bands rocked the River Market Pavilion and a good time was had by all. Saturday’s finale to the conference featured a posthumous tribute to Little Rock native Robert Palmer. Bill Jones, a lifelong friend of the Palmer family, gave a stirring presentation on Palmer’s strong influence on music. Dorothy Cox, Robert Palmer’s sister, performed a self-penned song in tribute to her brother.

The second music conference is in the planning stages and will be held in October, 2000. If you would like to serve on the planning committee for this conference, please call Tim Nutt at 918-3055 or email timn@cals.lib.ar.us.
The Butler Center's new microfilm cabinets were soon filled with 2,670 boxes of the United States Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files—a recent purchase from the National Archives. The microfilm contain an estimated 80,000 pension and bounty land warrant application files for soldiers of the Revolutionary War. Most of the records in the files date between 1800-1900.

The pension records for the Revolutionary War usually contain affidavits made by the veteran, his neighbors or associates to support his military claim, and includes summaries of service, the military organization in which he served, dates of service, date and place of birth, names of heirs, and other soldiers who served with the applicant.

The bounty land warrants were authorized by Congress in 1776 as a substitute for the wages it was unable to pay its soldiers. The warrants were certificates for "free" public land used both to encourage enlistments and reward for service after the war. If the soldier died, his heirs were allowed to take claim of the land after the war. The number of acres granted was based upon the soldier's rank and ranged from 100 to 1,100 acres.

Amazingly, the number of applicants for bounty lands exceeded the number of persons applying for pensions. The information contained is similar to the pension records.

Not all bounty land applications were approved since the claimant had to prove his service in the war, but a rejected claim did not necessarily indicate that the claimant's service was never rendered, only that the claimant did not provide sufficient proof. Not all veterans farmed the land granted to them; many sold their warrants because up to 1830 the warrants could only be used for land in the U.S. Military District in Ohio. Gradually, that restriction was relaxed and by 1842 veterans were allowed to redeem their claim at any federal land office.

Currently, the Butler Center is the only Arkansas institution that owns the Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files. The microfilm is in process of being cataloged but is available for use. Call the Butler Center at (501) 918-3056 if you have questions.

Join the Butler Center and Senator David Pryor in honoring our 1998-99 Butler Center Fellows Thursday, February 17, 2000 Old Supreme Court Room Capitol Building 7:00 pm

Bonnie Haynie Bryant High School Margaret Grimes Courtway Middle School Conway School District Beverly Ruthven Baker Elementary Pulaski Co. School District Sondra Gordy University of Central Arkansas
Central High Museum: An Overview
by Jordan Patty

The Little Rock Central High School desegregation crisis is one of the most important events in Arkansas history. People from all over the nation and the world witnessed the struggle of the nine African-American students—"the Little Rock Nine"—as they attempted to enter the school through an angry mob of segregationists. The arrival of Federal troops to escort the students into the school building put Little Rock at the center of the civil rights movement in the fall of 1957. Now, there is a place where visitors to Central Arkansas can learn more or simply refresh their memories.

The Central High Museum and Visitors Center opened September 20, 1997, the 40th anniversary of the Crisis, in the renovated Mobil gas station located across the street from the school. The renovation of the building was a collaboration of local and national businesses. Architecture Innovations Group and Witsell, Evans, and Rosco were the local architectural firms involved in the museum and Quatrefoil Associates from Maryland designed the actual exhibit. The Mobil Foundation and Corporation no only contributed financially, but also provided the input of a company historian regarding the appearance of the building exterior in 1957.

The exhibit, entitled "All the World is Watching Us: Little Rock and the 1957 Crisis," is designed using a chronological format, beginning with various topics of historical relevance to the desegregation of Central High. For instance, a comparison of Little Rock Senior High School (now Central) and Dunbar High School (the high school for African-Americans) illustrates the disparity between "separate but equal" facilities that resulted from the Supreme Court case Plessy v. Ferguson.

The actual account of the crisis begins with an examination of each day when the nine students attempted to enter the school. Contemporary photographs of the event illustrate the tension outside the school, and first-hand accounts from witnesses accompany the visual elements to give an overall idea of the hostile environment. The time-line also marks significant events occurring during the students’ tenure at the school. An old black and white television replays 1957 news stories about the Crisis. A larger color television features a program with recent interviews spliced together with older footage, thus presenting a documentary feeling. The use of the photographs, first-hand accounts, and television footage creates a very educational museum experience.

The Central High Museum and Visitor Center is located a few blocks south of I-630 at 14th and Park Streets. The hours are 10:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday through Saturday, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm on Sunday. Admission is free. Call the museum at (501) 374-1957 for more information. The museum director is Ms. Laura A. Miller.

"Elaine," Continued from Page 1

Following the luncheon Dr. Jeannie Whayne, Director of the Arkansas Center for Oral and Visual History at the University of Arkansas and Editor of the Arkansas Historical Quarterly, will contrast the various historical interpretations of the Elaine riots. The last program will be a panel discussion on the need for additional research on the Elaine riots that might provide for greater understanding and reconciliation. This panel will be led by Dr. Richard Cortner, Professor of Political Science at Arizona State University; a leading Constitutional Law scholar, and author of A Mob Intent On Death, a book which analyzes the litigation that arose from the riots and eventually resulted in a landmark U. S. Supreme Court decision.

Troops Marching with Elaine Twelve, From: A Mob Intent on Death

The conference will conclude Friday afternoon with a guided bus tour of the Elaine area. Tour participants will be shown several places of interest connected with the riots.

The conference is free but pre-registration is requested. Reservations will be required for the luncheon and the bus tour. The luncheon will be a catered box lunch provided at a cost of $5 each. The bus tour is free but seating is limited. Pre-registration and reservations can be made by calling Tom Dillard or Cary Cox at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies at the Main Library of the Central Arkansas Library System, (501) 918-3056; or Nashid Madyn at the Delta Cultural Center in Helena, (870) 338-4350.
In Memory Of
Richard C. "Dick" Butler

Bob and Nancy Bailey
Rev. Donald K. Campbell
Mildred Dunn
Kathryn & John Eoff (Texas)
Mr./Mrs. Vernam Forbes
John William Graves
Dr./Mrs. Gerald Hanson
Bill Harrison
Ella and Margaret Hatchett
Mr./Mrs. J. French Hill
Mr./Mrs. Jay F. Hill
Mr./Mrs. Sam Hodges
Mr./Mrs. Cyril Hollingsworth
Jay Jernigan
Helen Leigh
Mozelle Mitchell Nelson
Fred Poe
Bob Razer
Burnelle B. Regnier
Peyton and Betty Rice
Bobby Roberts
H.B. Solmon
Marilyn Tibbits
Dr./Mrs. Harold J. White
J. Gaston Williamson
Pat and Ruth Wilson

Books and Materials
Arkansas State Society,
Children of the American Revolution
Henry de Linde
Patrick Dunnahoo
Linda Evans
Bobbie Forster
Art Gallaher
Betty Harp
Robert Haydon
Hubbell Family Historical Society
Jack R. Hutchins
Mrs. Gerald T. Jones
Jon Kennedy
Lena Mazzanti

Martha Fletcher McCourt
Greg McMahon
Archie Moore
Shirley Pine
June R. Riddick
Bobby Roberts
Barbara Shults
Peg Smith
Margaret Stevenson
William L. Terry
Mary N. Waters
Ruth Wilson
Norris P. Wood

BETTYE SHAYER
Sonja Mossburg

THE BUTLER CENTER
FOR ARKANSAS STUDIES
Butler Center for Arkansas Studies
Central Arkansas Library System
100 Rock Street
Little Rock, AR 72201