

Art Collection Endowed, Gallery Construction Underway

Someday the Butler Center will be known in part for its collection of Arkansas art. One important step in that direction occurred on May 9th, when about 75 Arkansans gathered to kick off the renovation of a building to house the collection.

Butler Center Curator Tom W. Dillard used the occasion to announce that the late Richard C. Butler, Sr. of Little Rock, the Center's namesake, endowed the Arkansas Art Collection in the amount of \$250,000 before his death. "No other major public agency has the mission of collecting art specifically by Arkansans," Dillard stated. "This endowment is vivid testimony to the foresight of Dick Butler," he concluded.

Butler's widow, Gertrude Rimmel Butler, and his son, Richard C. Butler, Jr., were in attendance at the event. Mrs. Butler took the floor to comment on her husband's interest in art, and how he wanted to help preserve that art and then share it with other Arkansans.

The building, known as the Cox Building, is located adjacent to the Library's parking lot. With 18,000 square feet of space, the Cox Building will enable the Butler Center for the first time to systematically exhibit its growing collection of art by Arkansans.

Built in 1907 to house the Thomas Cox & Sons Machinery Co., the building contains three floors and a base-

ment. According to Dr. Bobby Roberts, Director of the Central Arkansas Library System, the basement and first floor of the structure will be the new home for the Friends of the Library (FOCAL) and will also provide room for a permanent used book sales space and a small coffee shop. The second and third floors will house art galleries, including one administered by the Corps d'Arte, a non-profit artist cooperative. A 75-seat meeting room will be included in the top floor.

According to Reita Walker Miller, the newly appointed Arkansas Art Coordinator for the Butler Center, the existing collection consists of about 300 pieces of art, which includes large oil and acrylic paintings, various size prints, collages, watercolors, a few sculptures, mobiles, and quilts.

An Art Advisory Board has been named to help set guidelines for the collection. The board will advise on how best to acquire, exhibit, preserve, and protect the artistic resources of our state. The Butler Center will be happy to work with anyone who might be thinking of donating works to the Arkansas Art Collection.

Please contact Reita Miller at 501-918-3090 if you want to help with our efforts to preserve the artistic heritage of Arkansas.



Butler Center Curator Tom Dillard and Gertie Butler at the Announcement of the Renovation of the Cox Building. Photo by Reita W. Miller.



The 1907 Cox Building will be renovated to house the Butler Center's Arkansas Art Collection. Reita Miller has been hired as the Art Coordinator. Photo by Reita W. Miller.

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Curator's Column

Tom W. Dillard

On the front page of this newsletter is an account of a wonderful gift from the late Richard C. Butler, Sr. to endow the Arkansas Art Collection at the Butler Center. His generous gift will allow us to more systematically collect and exhibit works of art by Arkansas artists. Dick Butler keeps on giving and giving, despite the fact that he's been dead for nine months.

Dick did not give money to endow the art collection simply because he enjoyed art. This gift is inextricably tied to his pride in being an Arkansan.

Dick knew Arkansas well. He was born here, grew up in Little Rock, was educated in Arkansas, and built his career here. While practicing law, he tried cases in courthouses from Lake Village to Bentonville, from Texarkana to Blytheville. He came to know thousands of Arkansans, people from every walk of life. He had the remarkable ability to speak (at length!) with complete strangers. And he did not engage in idle conversation. He took an interest in people—all people, but especially here in the state he knew so well.

Dick Butler realized that "a sense of place" is integral to human beings. He knew that geography was crucial to the uniqueness of our state. As a keen observer of human nature, he knew that intangible factors—such as our unique history—combine together to make us who we are as a people.

One of the shared beliefs that cemented my friendship with Dick was the tenant that Arkansans should not allow others to define us. A self-assured man, Dick could not stomach the way some Arkansans fret about our heritage, how some of our fellow citizens are always offended by some asinine article or book that denigrated our state.

I hope others who shared Dick's Arkansas pride will follow in his big footsteps. The Butler Center needs the support—both financial and otherwise—of people who share our beliefs and sense of mission. Though Dick endowed the Center and the Arkansas Art Collection, much remains to be done.

I am especially seeking help in creating an Arkansas Film and Video Archives. For almost 100 years films have been made in Arkansas—ranging from a documentary on David O. Dodd (filmed just before World War I) to television shows hosted by Steve Stephens to news programs broadcast only yesterday. Sadly, very little of this film footage has been preserved for future generations.

I also foresee this Film Archives using its holdings to produce videos for use in our schools. Our children and grandchildren tend to be visually oriented, and Arkansas history teachers need good instructional videos to make their classes come alive. We want to help fill this void.

Join us in this great effort started by Dick Butler. Please help us find the means to preserve our heritage, to share it with our children, and in the long run, produce a generation of new Arkansans. "Arkansas proud" can become more than a mere slogan.



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Legacies & Lunch

Mark Your Calendars for the next two Legacies & Lunch.

July 5: "An Evening at Johnswood," a one-act play on John Gould Fletcher and Charlie May Simon, by Bill Jones and Leslie Fletcher.

August 2: Historical Debate: "Resolved: Reconstruction Was A Positive Benefit for Arkansas," Dr. Michael B. Dougan, for the Affirmative and Tom Dillard, for the Negative.

All sessions held in Darragh Center. Soft drinks and water provided.

Eureka Springs Educator Named Butler Fellow

Will Create Arkansas Lesson Plans

Nancy R. Wood, a resident of Eureka Springs, has been awarded a Butler Fellowship. For fifteen years she has taught at the Clear Spring School in Eureka Springs. As a Fellow, Wood will be responsible for helping the Butler Center implement its goal of improving the teaching of Arkansas history in the schools.

After spending the first ten years of her life in Camden, where her father was the principal at Fairview School, Wood's family moved to Sheridan where she graduated from high school. She then attended Hendrix College, where she received a bachelors degree in social science. She took her masters degree in 1995 from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

Wood began her career in 1970 teaching at Dunbar Junior High School in Little Rock. Later she worked as a camp director and field representative for the Ouachita Council of Girl Scouts.

Butler Center Curator Tom Dillard said Wood will be expected to concentrate on preparing Arkansas history

lesson plans for the early primary grades. "Kindergarten students can benefit from state and local history just as much as older students," Dillard said. For ten years Wood taught first and second graders.

In her application for a Fellowship, Wood stressed her personal commitment to Arkansas history: "Arkansas studies—the history and geography of Arkansas—give our students the opportunity to know, understand, and, hopefully, appreciate their state. Using this basic knowledge, students can then develop an understanding of the present day situation in Arkansas..." Wood is also known for taking her students on extensive field trips to each of the six natural divisions in the state.

In 1995 Wood won two significant awards. The National Conference of Geographic Educators presented her a national Educator Award; the Arkansas Geographic Alliance named her "Arkansas Geography Teacher of the Year" for the elementary grades.

As a Butler Fellow, Wood will be responsible for preparing ten lesson



Nancy Wood is the newest Butler Fellow.

plans on Arkansas history topics. She will also conduct various training sessions demonstrating how to use the lessons in the classroom. The Fellowship, which carries a stipend of \$2,500, is a twelve month appointment.

Wood is married to Bob Messer. [If you would like information about the Butler Fellows Program, contact Tom Dillard at (501) 918-3054.]

Arkansas Art Coordinator Hired



Reita W. Miller is the new Arkansas Art Coordinator

The Butler Center is proud to welcome a new employee. Reita Walker Miller was recently hired as the Arkansas Art Coordinator. She will be in charge of acquiring, curating, and exhibiting the art works owned by the library. Reita will also coordinate volunteers from the Corps d' Arte organization to help staff the new art annex (see article on page 1).

Reita earned a B.S.E. in deaf education from the University of Arkansas and has been a professional artist since 1985. For many years, she has helped the library organize Showcase Arkansas, a bi-annual event that highlights Arkansas artists and authors, in addition to benefitting the Butler Center.

She comes to the Butler Center from the Terry Library in West Little Rock. Reita's phone number is 501-918-3090.

Butler Center Topic of SSA Session

Tom Dillard, Butler Center Curator, and Tim Nutt, Deputy Curator, presented a session at the annual conference of the Society of Southwest Archivists in Fayetteville in mid-May.

Entitled "A New Kid on the Archival Block," the two-part session described the procedures for establishing the Butler Center and the type of programming presented.

Attendees of the session were impressed with the Butler Center's unique programming activities.

The Butler Center's



"Two Natures of Man," painting by Louis Freund, ca 1950.



"Old State House," watercolor by Edwin Brewer, 1962.

A Sampler

"The Big Swinger," woodblock print by Edward Faiers, 1968.



T • H • E
**BUTLER
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FOR ARKANSAS STUDIES

Arkansas Art Collection:



“On the Barn,” painting by Al Allen, 1960

“Hattie W. Caraway,” study for painting by J.O. Buckley, 1998.



“Cloudscape,”
acrylic by Sheila Boylan Parsons,
ca. 1975.

**“Those persons working
in the arts in Arkansas
through day by day con-
tact know that Arkansas
people have a definite
craving for beauty.”**

Ralph M. Hudson, 1944.

Butler Center To Co-Sponsor Teacher Workshop

School teachers from north Arkansas will have an opportunity to learn more about the history and geography of the state at a workshop scheduled for Tuesday, July 18, 2000. The workshop will be held at the Hammerschmidt Conference Center at North Arkansas College in Harrison.

The workshop, entitled "Arkansas: A Natural For Your Classroom," is being co-sponsored by the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies and the Teachers of Arkansas Studies Council (TASC), an affiliate of the Arkansas Historical Association. It will start at 9:00 am and end at 3:00 pm.

Tom Dillard, workshop co-chair and Butler Center Curator, said he expects about 100 teachers for the Fair. Dillard noted that the Arkansas legislature passed a law in 1997 requiring Arkansas history in the schools

of the state. The law also requires local schools to help their teachers improve their skills in the field of Arkansas history.

A \$10.00 workshop registration fee includes lunch. For an extra \$4.00, participants can join TASC and receive special Arkansas history materials throughout the year. The registration deadline is July 14th. Registration fees should be mailed to Mrs. Maenette LaRue, Resource Fair Co-Chair, P.O. Box 104, Rudy, AR 72952. In-service credit will be available to participating teachers.

The workshop will be an instructional resource fair with exhibits to inform teachers about materials available to aid in their teaching of Arkansas

subjects.

The luncheon program will be a living history presentation by Kent Goff and other living history actors from the Mississippi Valley Educational Pro-

grams. Other programs will highlight the World War II-era Japanese Relocation Camps, Arkansas Geography, Native-Arkansians, and Arkansas forests. The day will end with a tour of the Boone County Museum.

Although the workshop is geared toward teachers, anyone interested in Arkansas subjects may attend. For more information, contact Tom Dillard at 918-3054.



Portion of Allsopp Book Collection Donated to Butler Center

The Butler Center recently was given some rare Arkansas titles from the famed book collection of the late Fred W. Allsopp. The bulk of the collection was either donated or sold at auction after Allsopp's death. Allsopp, newspaper publisher and renowned book collector, died in 1946 at the age of 78.

Fred Allsopp was born in Wolverhampton, England and came with his family to the United States in 1869, and to Prescott, Nevada County, Arkansas in 1877. Allsopp moved to Little Rock in 1884 and became associated with the *Arkansas Gazette*, first as its business manager and then later an owner.

Always interested in the book trade, Allsopp co-founded Allsopp & Chapple Book Store. He was the author of *Folklore of Romantic Arkansas*, *History of the Arkansas Press*, as well as numerous volumes of poetry. He was renowned for his rare book collection, estimated in the 1940s to contain close to 10,000 volumes, many of which were rare and first editions. His house on Fairview in Pulaski Heights had a room with bookcases built especially for his collection.



Fred W. Allsopp

When Allsopp died in 1946, his book collection was directed to be sold at auction to benefit various institutions around Little Rock, including the Little Rock Museum of Fine Arts, Mount Holly Cemetery, the Little Rock Boys' Club, and to the City of Little Rock for the acquisition of property Allsopp Park. His Arkansiana collection was specifically given to the George W. Donaghey Foundation at Little Rock Junior College (now UALR).

Parke-Bernet Galleries in New York City held the auction in early April 1947. Items up for sale included folios of Shakespeare from the 1600s, letters written by Napoleon, and hundreds of rare signed first editions. One of the items given to the Butler Center is *Gobolinks*, an 1896 book by Ruth McEnery Stuart and Albert Bigelow Paine. The Butler Center is the only Arkansas institution owning this title.

The Allsopp books were given to the Butler Center, by Mrs. Fern Cross of Little Rock.

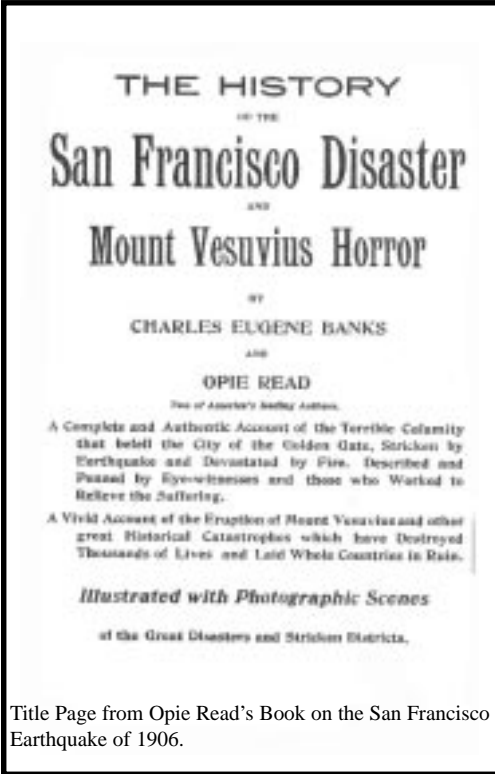
Butler Center Acquires Rare Old Items

The Butler Center recently acquired some rare and unusual items for its collection. Although the bulk of our purchases are made through traditional methods, such as bookstores, we also scour flea markets and Internet auctions.

One of the items that we acquired from the Internet is a book written by Opie Read. Known for his fiction books of the

late 19th and early 20th centuries, Read also authored non-fiction

works, including a work on the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. This particular book, *The Complete History of the San Francisco Disaster and Mount Vesuvius Horror*, co-written with Charles Eugene Banks, is currently held by only two other libraries in the world, both being in California.



Title Page from Opie Read's Book on the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906.

Another interesting item found on the Internet was a photograph of Arkansas author Octave Thanet. Thanet, the pen name of Iowa native Alice French, wrote many of her novels while living in Black Rock, Lawrence County. The photograph was taken around 1910 and was apparently included in a book on



Alice French, aka Octave Thanet, circa 1910.

Iowa authors, although the specific title is unknown at this time. Included with the photograph is biographical information on the author.

The Butler Center trains not only its employees, but also the library director in the art of locating Arkansas

materials. While on vacation, CALS Director Bobby Roberts found a publicity poster for a movie entitled "I'm From Arkansas" in a flea market. The movie was produced by PRC Pictures in 1944 and starred Slim Summerville (who also played in the Keystone Kops series), El Brendal, Iris Adrian, and Bruce Bennett. It was directed by Lew Landers. According to the *VideoHound's Golden Movie Retriever*, the plot is set in the fictional town Pitchfork, Arkansas and involves a sow giving birth to ten piglets---apparently a rare occurrence in small Pitchfork.

Recently, a museum in northwest Arkansas was given a book on eastern Arkansas. Since the book fell out of the collecting scope of this particular museum, it was given to the Butler Center. This book, entitled *Cracker Tales*, was written by Albert W. Harris and published in 1912.

Hopefully, this article has inspired you to go to flea markets and search the Internet for Arkansas items. We would love to add your finds to the Butler Center collections.



"I'm From Arkansas," movie publicity poster, 1944.

In Memory Of

Juanise Johnson
Zack Blair
Earline Butterworth
Jamestowne Society
Little Rock Company

Bill Puppione
Bob Razer Family

Eugene Brewster
Nan Snow
Dorothy Stuck

In Honor Of

Gertrude R. Butler's 90th Birthday
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