

THE BUTLER BANNER

NEWSLETTER OF THE RICHARD C. BUTLER, SR. CENTER FOR ARKANSAS STUDIES

Volume 4, Number 3

Fall 2001

Butler Center Future To Be Decided in August Election



On August 14th voters in Little Rock and Pulaski County will decide the future of the Central Arkansas Library System, when they vote on a proposed increase of one mill in the library tax.

Currently, residents of Pulaski County outside of North Little Rock, pay a library tax of 1.8 mills. A "mill" is one-thousandths of a dollar, which translates into about \$20 for the average homeowner in the CALS area.

Tom W. Dillard, the Butler Center Curator, believes this election is a great opportunity for the Center: "This small increase in library millage will enable the Butler Center to become a major site for preserving the heritage of our state—and just as importantly—as a place where that heritage can be shared with all Arkansans."

Dillard also said the extra millage, though it will not mean a great deal of money, will enable the Butler Center to attract and retain qualified employees. "Right now," Dillard said, "we are trying to hire employees with college degrees while offering them starting salaries under \$18,000 per year. We are merely serving as a training facility for others since our employees are often hired away by more flush libraries or businesses."

The Coalition for Neighborhood Libraries, the committee of library users and community leaders which is organizing the campaign, is reminding voters to "keep our libraries working for us." Dr. Frank Kumpuris, Coalition Finance Chairman, says he is working for the millage because "I have grandchildren who need a first-rate library system."

CALS Board Chairman Dave Rickard urged Library supporters to vote during the "early voting period." Starting July 30th, two weeks prior to the official vote on August 14th, registered voters can vote at eight early voting sites around the county.

Contrary to popular belief, CALS is not well funded. Many Arkansas libraries have a higher millage, including North Little Rock, Craighead County, and Forrest City. The highest library millage in the state is paid by residents of Searcy County (county seat of Marshall) with three mills. Nationally, the state ranks 47th in public library funding. Since 1937 the state legislature has appropriated funds to help libraries, but earlier this year those funds were essentially eliminated. Dr. Bobby Roberts, CALS Roberts, CALS Director, stated that "Little Rock and Arkansas will be excluded from the new Information Economy unless we act soon."

Early Voting Locations

Pulaski County Courthouse

401 West Markham, Little Rock
Monday-Friday, July 30-August 13
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

There is no Saturday voting at the Courthouse.

All the other locations allow voting on weekdays from July 30 through August 10 between the hours of 10 a.m and 6:00 p.m. You may also vote on Saturday, August 11 from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.

Walker Tennis Center

Markham & Fair Park, Little Rock

Southwest Recreation Center

6401 Baseline Road, Little Rock

Budget Saver

13901 Cantrell Road, Little Rock

Laman Library

2801 Orange, North Little Rock

Jacksonville City Hall

Municipal Drive, Jacksonville

Harvest Foods

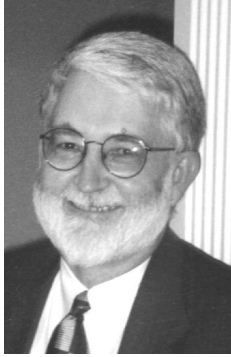
117 Audubon Drive, Maumelle

Amy Sanders Library

31 Shelby Drive, Sherwood

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Curator's Column

Tom W. Dillard

The Butler Center has lost some dear friends during the past few months. Working in an archives brings one into contact with many people who, over time, become fast friends. A large percentage of our patrons are "mature" folks; indeed, most people do not develop an interest in history or preserving historical documents until advancing years provide a maturity which lends itself to historical reflection and introspection. Alas, this same maturity means I all too often find myself attending wakes and funerals.

Five people associated with the Butler Center have died recently, and we are still recovering from the losses. *Gordon Holl* was one of the most gentle men I've ever known. Gordon was always watchful for ways he could encourage the Butler Center. We celebrate his life—and cherish his memory. *Clyde Swann* was very loyal in his attendance at Butler Center events. Upon learning that the Butler Center did not have a specimen of Niloak pottery, he and his wife, Lucille, donated a nice bowl for our collections. Every time I see that bowl, I think of

Clyde and his warm and generous spirit.

Elsie Freund was a favorite here at the Center. She and her late husband, Louis, were long time residents of Eureka Springs, but they retired to Little Rock a few years ago. Before Louis died last year, he and Elsie gave a large cache of their art to the Butler Center's Arkansas Art Collection. Their art will serve as a beautiful reminder of these generous and loving people.

I never met the late *Robert Garner* of Van Buren. But, we exchanged letters and phone calls on many occasions. Bob was insistent that Arkansas history be given its rightful place in the school curriculum. He was always a source of inspiration for all of us

working in the field of Arkansas history.

It is difficult to think of Arkansas history without thinking of *James W. Leslie*, a Pine Bluff resident who recently moved to Little Rock. After a career in business, Jim retired many years ago and devoted his efforts to historical research, especially on southeast Arkansas. He donated his papers, along with a generous financial gift to help process them, to the Butler Center. Those papers, now all processed and available for use, are a trove of data on the state Jim loved so much.

These losses leave us grieving, but we also celebrate their lives. And they live on in the annals of the Butler Center.

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Guest Columnist:

Jeannette Cabell Coley

Forgotten Footsteps: One German POW Camp in Arkansas

As part of its mission to disseminate Arkansas history, the Butler Banner occasionally publishes articles written by our readers. Very few Arkansans know the state was home to German and Italian Prisoners of War during World War II. The Butler Center's conference on World War II featured a session on these camps. Jeannette Cabell Coley researched one of the German camps in Eastern Arkansas. We are pleased to publish her work on this important topic.

Arnold Kramer wrote in *Nazi Prisoners of War in America* that from 1942-1946 nearly 400,000 German prisoners of war (POWs) were transported to America to work on her farmlands and factories during the Second World War. The War Department's need for more uniforms for American military men and women increased their need for cotton, and Arkansas farmers became major recipients of untrained farmhands from Germany. This is not common knowledge, according to a recent survey.

Nevertheless, Solon Anthony, currently a funeral home director in West Memphis, Arkansas remembers well the first time he saw scores of German soldiers heading for his dad's farm. In 1943, Luke Anthony leased 20 acres of land to the War Department so that it could be used for a satellite German POW camp.

Luke Anthony's farm was located in Nuehardt, Arkansas, about thirty miles west of the Mississippi River near West Memphis. "It's been a long time since I've thought about those days," Solon said as his memory reached back over fifty years. "At the time, I was only twenty-two years old, and I thought the

Continued on Page 5



Arkansas Art Corner: Recent Art Acquisition, Sadayuki Uno

Reita Walker Miller
Arkansas Art Coordinator

The Butler Center recently acquired an oil painting by Sadayuki Uno created during his internment at Rohwer Relocation Center near McGehee, Arkansas during World War II. The impressionist landscape painting of two primitive cabins in a sparsely wooded locale measures 18" x 24". The canvas is stretched over hand made stretchers of scrap wood. The painting is signed on the front, *Sadayuki Uno 9-1944* and on the back, *Sadayuki Uno 9-1944 Rohwer, Ark.*

Uno was born in Hiroshima, Japan in 1901 and came to the United States to join his father who had immigrated a few years earlier. After finishing high school in Oakland, he received a scholarship to the California College of Arts and Crafts. He stayed at the art school for a few years before heading east, first to Chicago and then on to New York where he enrolled in photography and cinematography school. He returned to the Oakland area in the late 1920s upon hearing of the illness of his father. He made his living as an interior decorator and as the economic climate of the Depression worsened, he found work as a gardener. He painted throughout this time period.

Sadayuki Uno was interned at the Fresno Assembly Center, Jerome and

Rohwer, Arkansas. At the Fresno Assembly Center Uno took up carving. With no tools or equipment to speak of, internees were forced to use butter knives and other modified carving implements. One of his first projects was five small carved pine sculptures. Each stood only four inches high and depicted major leaders of the nations at war: Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler, Churchill, and Roosevelt.

The tone is at once serious and humorous, simultaneously presenting a caricature and an understanding of their power in world affairs. The sculpture of Roosevelt was given to an admiring administrator at the assembly center, leaving only four remaining pieces. Not surprisingly, Emperor Hirohito is conspicuously absent. Any depiction of the Japanese

emperor would have created suspicion and distrust.

For Uno the internment represented the most prolific period of his

artistic life. He painted, carved sculpture and wooden masks, and took up *shigin*, a Japanese form of spoken poetry. His art captures both

the humorous aspects of camp life and serious moments of inner despair. In his untitled painting of men playing cards (1944), Uno shows us a



Untitled, by Sadayuki Uno, 1944. It was painted by the artist during his internment in the Rohwer Relocation Camp and was recently acquired by the Butler Center.

behind-the-scene look at the camp firehouse, where gambling, smoking, and jokes were the norm.

Sadayuki Uno moved back to Oakland, CA after the war. He died in 1989.

The Butler Center for Arkansas Studies is pleased to be able to add this important piece of historical art to our growing collection of Arkansas art and artists.

SOURCES

Karin M. Higa, *The View From Within: Japanese American Art from the Internment Camps, 1942-1945*, University of Washington Press, 1992.

Rosalie Santine Gould, *Report to the President-American Internment Sites Preservation*, National Park Service, 2001.



Book Series Launched With Two New Titles



The Butler Center for Arkansas Studies held a booksigning on July 12 to announce the creation of its "Butler Center Book Series." An audience of fifty gathered to hear authors John P. Gill and Brian K. Robertson read excerpts from their respective books.

Crossroads of Arkansas: A One Hour Arkansas Perspective by John P. Gill is the premier title in the Book Series. Gill, a Little Rock attorney, has written an engaging and informative "one-hour" armchair guide to the state. Divided chronologically, *Crossroads of Arkansas* is the perfect "Cliff's Notes" to Arkansas history.

Second in the series is *Things Grew Beautifully Worse: The Wartime Experiences of Captain John O'Brien, 30th Arkansas Infantry, C.S.A.* edited by Brian K. Robertson. Extensively annotated, *Things Grew Beautifully Worse* is the story of an Irish immigrant to Arkansas who became a leading businessman in antebellum Little Rock. Mustered into Confederate service and later captured during the Battle of Murfreesboro (Tennes-

see), Captain John O'Brien was ultimately transferred to Johnson's Island military prison in Ohio. While imprisoned, O'Brien kept a diary in which he recounts his military service and capture in addition to his daily life in the prison. Through it all, Captain O'Brien is able to maintain his sense of humanity—and even a bit of his native Irish wit and humor.

The Butler Center Book Series was established to introduce new research to historians and the general public. Butler Center Curator Tom W. Dillard also envisions the Book Series reprinting important out-of-print books. "The book series is natural extension of our mission to preserve Arkansas history. We hope to foster new research as well as introducing a new generation to previously unavailable Arkansas titles."

Dillard remarked that he is looking for the next volume in the series and urged researchers to contact him about submitting manuscripts. The Butler Center has previously issued an Arkansas History screensaver and a music CD featuring Little Rock garage bands from the 1960s.

Crossroads of Arkansas and *Things Grew Beautifully Worse* are available for purchase in the Butler Center for \$12.50. Copies may be ordered from the Butler Center for \$12.50 each plus \$2.00 shipping per volume. For more information about these two books or about the But-



Captain John O'Brien is subject of the new book *Things Grew Beautifully Worse*, edited by Brian K. Robertson.

Photo courtesy Old State House Museum, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage.

ler Center Book Series, please write or call the Butler Center. An order form is provided below.

Book Order Form

Name: _____

Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

☐ Gill, *Crossroads of Arkansas* . _____ Copies @ 12.50 each. TOTAL: _____

☐ Robertson, *Things Grew Beautifully Worse*. _____ Copies @ 12.50 each. TOTAL: _____

☐ Arkansas History Screensaver. _____ Copies @ \$5.00 each. TOTAL: _____

☐ Little Rock Garage Band Music CD. _____ Copies @\$5.00 each. TOTAL: _____

Please include \$2.00 shipping for each book or CD ordered.

Make checks payable to:

Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System, 100 Rock Street, Little Rock, AR 72201.

Continued from Page 2

sight of 300 German soldiers marching in those straight lines towards our place was the most exciting sight I'd ever seen."

The POWs had come by train from the well-equipped Camp Robinson in North Little Rock. Often the large camps provided college courses, a well-stocked library, as well as American radio and movies. Life at "Anthony's Quarters" was going to be a different American experience. When the Germans arrived they went to work immediately setting up camp. From there they would be available for other farmers to come by and lease them out. The scale of pay was 80 cents per day.

"I was driving my Dad's tractor the morning they came," Solon recalled. "When I looked up and saw them, I stood straight up on the machine. Dad told me to expect them, but I didn't realize there would be so many. They marched in three columns of one hundred men. I just turned off my tractor and watched them." Solon said they pitched tents, fenced the entire area with barbed wire, and within a few days they had built five buildings to accommodate their needs. He said only one prisoner ever tried to escape, but "he never got over the fence."

"The only real contact we had with the prisoners was when we picked up the camp's garbage for Dad's hogs," Solon said. "The prisoners were good cooks. Sometimes they gave us leftovers. They were always polite. I guess being so far from home they realized that was the only way to be." Solon said sometimes his family watched the Germans play soc-

cer on Sunday afternoons and he admired the way they could "kick that ball."

Cotton farmer E.H. Clarke, Sr. at nearby Seyppell, Arkansas used the German soldier's at Anthony's Quarters on a regular basis. Ten-year-old William W. "Bill" Clarke, youngest son of E.H. and Katherine Clarke, rode in the truck with his dad to pick up the POWs. Sometimes they made two trips a day because E.H. usually worked 25-30 soldiers. Each time E.H. went to the camp, he filled out an order sheet for how many prisoners he needed, and the camp commandant issued the men. Bill said "The Germans' hands were smooth, the men looked like business

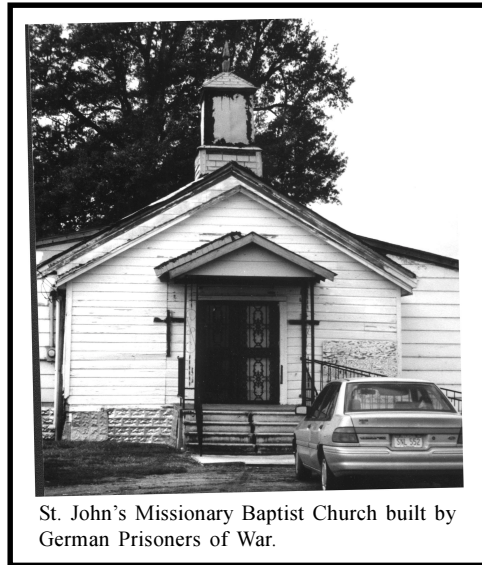
said the prisoners worked steadily but they suffered from the heat. They got blisters and their feet swelled. "But the prisoners were never a problem; no one tried to escape," Bill said.

As a young boy, the prisoners were a curiosity to Bill Clarke. He noticed the guards closely watched the POWs when they first came to his dad's farm. However, as time went by, the guards realized the prisoners were not hostile, and they became relaxed with one another.

Bill said one day a guard fell asleep while on duty. A prisoner crept close, slid the sentry's rifle from his arms, hid it, and went back to work. The prankster prisoner alerted the POWs to watch as he made a loud noise. "When the guard awoke, he groped for his rifle and couldn't find it. The prisoners had a good laugh. The guard's face flushed when the POW returned his rifle."

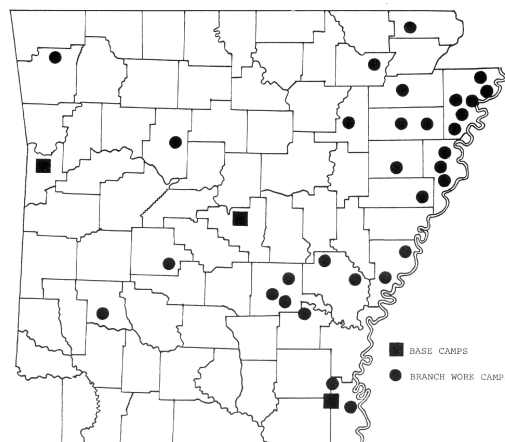
Bill's dad died in 1958. His mother reached 100 years and passed away in recent years. She never forgot the prisoner who painted her kitchen cabinets. He also carved a "head of a dying soldier" from a piece of scrap lumber; she kept it and it remains in the family today. She forgot the prisoner's name. She did recall that he said his wife was an opera singer and had sung for Hitler. Mrs. Clarke said the prisoners were well-mannered and she was nice to them. "They were young boys a long way from home." They reminded her of her oldest son who was serving in the Army in the European theater. She thought that if she showed kindness to the Germans, perhaps others would do the same for her son if he were captured.

Bill has kept several of the letters
See "German POWs" on Page 6



St. John's Missionary Baptist Church built by German Prisoners of War.

German POW Camps in Arkansas



Courtesy: Arkansas Historical Association

could remain in camp, but they were made to stand in the hot sun until those who did go to the cotton fields returned.

Bill said, "We were never scared of the prisoners; they were quiet; not many could speak English. Usually only one of the group could talk to us." He



Genealogy Gab:

Dillard Collection Processed

by Linda McDowell
Genealogy Coordinator

From the famous and infamous or perhaps virtually unknown...whether Afro-Arkansians made big marks or little dents in Arkansas or around the country, most likely they did not go unnoticed by Tom Dillard. Dillard recently donated his large collection of Afro-Arkansian materials to the Butler Center. He started the collection in 1969 while still in college.

We can all recognize the names of internationally known black Arkansians such as John Johnson, born in Pine Bluff and owner of Johnson's Publishing Company in Chicago; civil rights and newspaper publisher Daisy Bates, or Eldridge Cleaver, Black Panther member and *Soul on Ice* author born in the small Jefferson County town of Wabbaseka. But, the uncelebrated and little known ranging from African-American firsts, centenarians, business people, political leaders, artists, ministers, musicians, educators, business people, poets, doctors and lawyers can also be found in the newly processed "Tom W. Dillard Black Arkansiana Materials."

Dillard made the decision over a year ago to donate his extensive collection of material to the Butler Center where it would be more useful to researchers. Over the years, he has generously shared his material with students from grade school to graduate school and college historians to family genealogists. The collection contains numerous research and historical papers, notes, newspaper and journal articles, books, pamphlets and other resources in thirty-four file boxes.

Over the years, Dillard used the materials to prepare interesting articles and programs such as "Characters of Color: A Look At Some Unusual Afro-Arkansians" where audiences learned

of the famous spiritualist and fortune teller Caroline Dye of Newport or Deputy Marshall Bass Reeves of Fort Smith, who rounded up outlaws for Hanging Judge Parker and many others. The file folders may range from a single note card to pages and pages of information as is the case with the following Arkansians who received their own



J.H. McConico

individual file boxes: Mifflin W. Gibbs, Isaac T. Gillam, Scipio A. Jones and William Grant Still. The collection contains information and material from across the state.

While processing the collection, I especially enjoyed the materials on churches, education/schools, fraternal organizations and slavery. The collection leans heavily towards law, politics and racial violence. So, if you have an interest in Afro-Arkansas history, there's bound to be a lesson or two one can learn from this new collection. The collection is cataloged as MSS 00-10.

"German POWs," continued from Page 5

the prisoners wrote to his father when they returned to Germany. One sent his regards to all, especially to "my little friend Billy." Another asked for gifts of food and tobacco.

One POW wrote and asked E.H. if the job he had offered him was still available, in case he decided to come back to the States. He wrote to Bill's father again in 1950 and reminisced, saying "I hope that it [his farm] will be in good a condition, like we left it just four years ago. I think the crop will begin soon, the time to pick the cotton, the white flowers. I guess it will be very hot now again, over there at old Arkansas, on the Mississippi." He included a picture of himself and his young bride. Nothing else was mentioned about his returning to America.

The only evidence the Germans left of their presence in this farming community is a church they built on the highway, nestled between cotton fields. St. John's Missionary Baptist Church is a vibrant congregation to this day. Ruth Webster, a charter member and current church secretary, said recently the "Germans built this church, I watched them pound the nails." Ms. Webster said she did not think any of the German soldiers had worshipped there "but they did a good job of building this church."

Solon Anthony said many of the German soldiers wanted to give something back to the communities that had been kind to them. However, time has largely erased the foreign footsteps that came to Arkansas during that horrendous period in American history.

Jeannette Cabell Coley is Historian of the State Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She lives in West Memphis.

World War II Conference A Success

Over 350 people from throughout Arkansas participated in the recent World War II conference sponsored by the Butler Center. Among the highlights was the opening address by Nan Snow, who spoke on a young Fort Smith Air Corpsman by the name of Floyd Hughes Davis who was killed in the last weeks of the European war. Dr. William Shea, history professor at the University of Arkansas at Monticello, amazed the rapt audience when he gave a detailed talk on

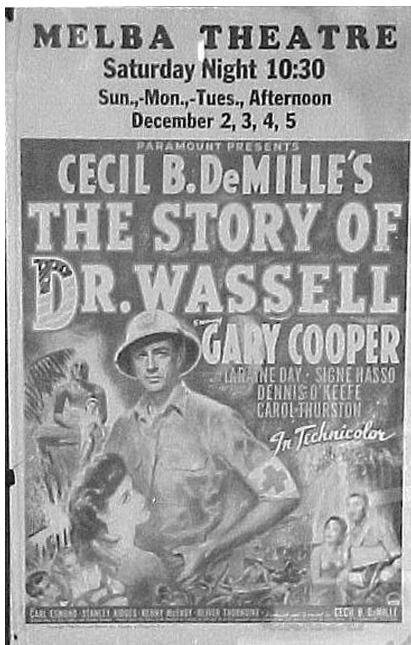
German and Italian prisoners of war held in Arkansas. The session on Japanese Relocation Centers in Arkansas, presented by Russell Bearden of White Hall High School, attracted a standing-room-only crowd.

Conference participants not only had outstanding speakers but they were treated to a large number of exhibits on World War II memorabilia. Among these items were war bond posters, as well as a large number of military uniforms and other gear from the collection of Ron Fuller of Little Rock.

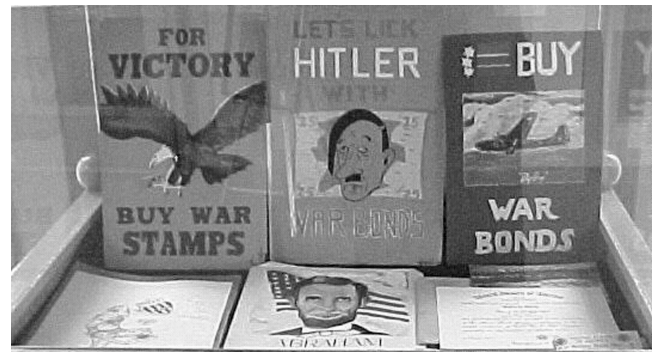
The conference concluded with the broadcast of "The Story of Dr. Wassell," a film released in 1944 which recounted the story of a Little Rock war hero. Photographs taken during the conference are shown on this page.



Nan Snow, the inaugural speaker, and Butler Center Curator Tom W. Dillard take time to pose for the camera.



The "second premiere" of the Story of Dr. Wassell starring Gary Cooper ended a successful conference.



Artwork from the Rohwer Japanese Relocation Center Elementary School was included in the exhibits. The artwork was on loan from Rosalie Santine Gould of McGehee.



It was an overflow crowd at the World War II conference.



Helga Mullins, a German war bride participated in the panel discussion on Saturday afternoon. She and her husband now live in Little Rock.

In Memory Of

Dr. Fred Gordy

Betty & Peyton Rice
Little Rock, Arkansas

Dr. E.L. Hutchison

Jamestowne Society
Little Rock Company

Mildred Walker Bass

Daughters of the American Revolution
Captain Basil Gaither Chapter

James W. Leslie

Tom & Mary Dillard
Little Rock, Arkansas

Sylvia Smith

Tom & Mary Dillard
Little Rock, Arkansas

In Honor Of

Floy P. Luppen

James & Ellen Kane
Little Rock, Arkansas

David Dicker

Miriam D. & Miss Kevin Raney
Little Rock, Arkansas

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Little Rock, Arkansas

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Louise Isgrig

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Pat Jones

Arkansas Bar Association
Little Rock, Arkansas

Jeanne McDaniel

Little Rock, Arkansas

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Little Rock, Arkansas

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