

THE BUTLER BANNER

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

Volume 7, Numbers 1 & 2

Spring & Summer 2004

Living Curriculum Project Reaches Milestone Production is Underway on Educational Tools

The first books of the Arkansas Studies Living Curriculum will begin to roll off the presses in the fall of this year. The Living Curriculum is a massive undertaking to develop a detailed course of study in Arkansas history (and other disciplines, too) covering kindergarten through the ninth grade.

The development of the curriculum is a joint effort of the Butler Center and Archeological Assessments, Inc. (AAI), a business headquartered in Nashville, Arkansas. The entire content of the Living Curriculum will be available without cost to Arkansas schools via CDs and a project website, but the prospect of having creative, attractive books for beginning and more accomplished young readers is creating considerable excitement among those involved in the partnership.

The Arkansas Studies Living Curriculum project was established to address the need for more and better resources for teaching Arkansas history and related subjects in our state's classrooms. Despite a 1997 law mandating that Arkansas history be taught at elementary and junior high levels, many districts respond with minimal offerings and some with none at all. No elementary level Arkansas history textbook is currently in print, and development of a comprehensive, creative, integrated grade-by-grade course of study in Arkansas history has never before been attempted.

The first five print products are now in various stages of development, beginning with "The Big Bear's Arkansas ABC Book." Designed for "shared reading," in kindergarten and first grade classrooms, the ABC book will help children begin to recognize letters of the alphabet as parts of sounds and words that tell stories. In this case, the stories are rhymed verses that will take teachers and students around Arkansas looking for features ranging from apples, the Buffalo River, and cotton to xylophones (made in Arkansas), yellow pine, and zinc.



The expedition is led by "Big Bear," a character from one of the "Arkansas Stories" musical CDs, and he is accompanied by Raccoon, Squirrel, and Rabbit, the "Critter Crew." They are warmly portrayed in illustrations by Leslie Przybylek of Fort Smith. The "Big Bear" motif is borrowed by the famous "Big Bear of Arkansas" story by humorist Thomas Bangs Thorpe, a nationally popular tale first published in 1845.

Subsequent pieces will include
See "Curriculum" on Page 5

Library Refinancing Will Allow Butler Center to Mature

by Tom W. Dillard

No one is more shocked than me to realize this, but the Butler Center is out of room! Established less than seven years ago, the Center has grown at an incredible rate. We have added over 200 manuscript collections, thousands of books, a host of historic maps, many thousands of antique photographs and postcards, hundreds of paintings and other works of Arkansas art, and thousands of rolls of microfilm.

When we moved into the new Main Library in September 1997, we thought we had room to spare in our beautiful third floor space. Today, the Butler Center is overflowing like the Buffalo River after a spring thunderstorm. We started out with all our offices and collections in one location, but before long we had to borrow space on the fourth floor and basement. We have been forced to store some unprocessed collections on the fifth floor even though it does not have the needed environmental controls.

See "Millage" on Page 4



Curator's Column

Tom W. Dillard

This summer is one of the most fruitful in the history of the Butler Center. As you will note elsewhere in this edition of *The Banner*, people from throughout the state (and nation, too!) have been making contributions to the Center for a whole raft of programs and projects. I want to take this opportunity to once again extend gratitude to all the fine folks who share our sense of commitment to the Butler Center's mission.

One of the more exciting developments of this summer has been the progress we have made in developing the Arkansas Studies Living Curriculum. Since the creation of the Butler Center in 1997, we have worked steadily to improve the teaching of Arkansas history in the schools of our state. It is shocking to hear, but Arkansas history continues to be a mere afterthought in most of our schools. Even more shocking is the fact that our elementary school textbook on Arkan-

sas has gone out of print...and we do not have a replacement.

Until recent years I naively believed that passing a law would take care of a problem. In 1997, the Arkansas legislature enacted Act 787—which requires instruction in Arkansas history at *all* elementary grades and a full, one-semester course at the secondary level. This law did *not* accomplish what was intended. Arkansas history remains a minor part of the educational experience. The Butler Center is intent on doing something to get at the root of the problem and, once and for all, develop a curriculum that can and will enable Arkansas history to become a key component in the education of all Arkansans.

It is important to realize that our Arkansas Studies Living Curriculum is designed to address the problems which have kept Arkansas history out of the schools in the past. First, it will include a detailed *course of study*. Second, the Living Curriculum will actually *provide the materials necessary* for teaching that course of study.

I believe that by exposing young Arkansans to the Living Curriculum, they will be led, from the beginning of their educational experience, to be conscious of the land around them, to listen to the family lore, and to value the fabric of human experience that makes communities. By seeing themselves as part of that continuing story as it unfolds from kindergarten, students will have a chance to become adults who are conscious of their own roles in forging the continuing story of Arkansas.

I also believe that young Arkansans need heroes and role models, just

as we need them on the national level. For too long our state history has been taught as a boring recital of dates, vague concepts, and disjointed analysis. We want to take our young people below the surface, so they can learn of the richness of our heritage. For example, we want youngsters to learn about Marie Jean, a black woman who was born in French colonial Arkansas. Though born a slave, Mary John—as she was known to her American neighbors after the Louisiana Purchase—managed to purchase her own freedom, build the only inn and tavern at Arkansas Post, and become a renowned caterer. Mary John is nothing less than a hero in my mind, and she can serve as a role model for young Arkansans of all races.

I believe the single most significant hindrance facing our state is *attitudinal*. As a people we seem to drift along—as if we have no common heritage. Are we unaware of the great men and women who built our state? Are we unmindful of the trials and tribulations faced by our pioneering ancestors—people who faced challenges as great or worse than any we face today?

I have a dream for the young people of our state. In my dream, the year is 2020 and young people all over the state are graduating from high school and going on to college or into the workplace—and *they are taking with them a pride in their state and a pride in themselves as Arkansans*.

I invite you to share my dream—and to work with the Butler Center to make it become a reality.

The *Butler Banner* is the quarterly newsletter of the Richard C. Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System
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Visit the Butler Center Online
www.butlercenter.org

Art Notes

Reita Walker Miller
Arkansas Art Coordinator



On September 23, 2004, The Butler Center and the Central Arkansas Library System will host a reception for the opening of the exhibit, "Henry Sugimoto: Painting an American Experience." The exhibit will continue through Saturday, November 20, 2004 at the Showcase Arkansas Gallery on the 2nd floor of the Cox Creative Center at 120 Commerce Street across from the Main Library.

The exhibit chronicles the experience of a Japanese American artist before World War II, his internment behind barbed wire during the conflict, and, after the war, his struggle to re-establish himself in New York. It is a powerful collection of paintings on an important chapter of America's history.

Henry Sugimoto defied convention to pursue a career as a painter. Talent and a persevering drive brought him early success in the 1930s. His rising career came to a halt during World War II when he was confined to American concentration camps. What is striking about Sugimoto is the way he responded to his incarceration. The experience initiated a deeply personal exploration that transformed how he viewed himself and his art.

In 1934, Sugimoto married his longtime sweetheart, Susie Tagawa. Two years later they had their first child, Madeleine. Between raising a family and making a living, Sugimoto continued to work diligently on his art. He made several trips around California and in Mexico during the mid-thirties, taking a break from work and devoting time to painting. Carmel, Yosemite, Mexico City all provided inspiration and endless subject matter for his work.

Following the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, the FBI began to arrest Japanese American community leaders, including directors and staff of Japanese-language schools throughout California. Paranoia and rumors were widespread, and Sugimoto even found himself burning Japanese books from the school in Hanford out of fear that he would be arrested for his involve-



"Self-Portrait in Camp, 1943"

ment with the school. Evacuation orders followed hard on the release of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Japanese Americans from central California, the Sugimoto family among them, were forced to move to the Fresno Assembly Center. Sugimoto was able to include a few art supplies with the small number of possessions they could take with them, and continued to sketch and paint at the Assembly Center.

Removal to Jerome Relocation Center in Denson, Arkansas, followed. Sugimoto painted there also but the barren landscape of Arkansas more or less put an end to the rich landscape

studies he had immersed himself in during his sojourns through California, Mexico, and France. Figures, portraits, and allegories took center stage, with the physical environs of camp ever-present in the background.

With the outcome of the war in question, Sugimoto also had concerns about his future as an artist. He had concealed his work from the authorities for some time, for fear of the consequences of being found depicting scenes from camp. Eventually, however, he painted freely.

His work came to the attention of the Arkansas art community that included Louis and Elsie Freund and poet laureate John Gould Fletcher and his wife, Charlie Mae Simon. Through their efforts his work was shown at the Hendrix College art gallery in early 1944. The gallery exhibition was the first time the paintings had been seen by anyone outside of camp. This recognition did much to restore Sugimoto's resolve to continue his life as a practicing artist. Henry and Susie Sugimoto, under the escort of the camp's director, were allowed to attend the opening of the exhibition in Conway, Arkansas.

Political issues played a greater part in Sugimoto's work after this, as well. The loyalty questionnaire administered by the government in 1943 brought confusion, distress, and fear to all ten War Relocation Authority [WRA] camps, and even resulted in physical violence.

The Jerome camp closed in 1944, and the Sugimotos were subse-

"Millage," continued from Page 1

Not to worry! The Library System is seeking to refinance its capital bonds—and this will enable the Butler Center (along with other related library programs) to move to a new location. Even better, while it is a "new" location, the building we will be moving into is a beautiful historic structure—the Geyer-Adams Building adjacent to the Library's parking lot.

Won't Raise Taxes

On August 17th, voters in the city of Little Rock will consider a proposal to refinance \$25 million in capital bonds to take advantage of lower interests rates. CALS Director Bobby Roberts emphasizes that the refinancing will not raise the tax rate. The refinancing will generate an additional \$12.8 million dollars for the Library System.

About \$4 million of these new funds will be used to renovate and expand the Geyer-Adams Building. The building, which was constructed in 1914, was designed by the famed architect Charles Thompson. The original plans and specifications still exist. It was originally built to house a prosperous grocery wholesale operation.

Plans for the new facility include the creation of a "Center for Arkansas History," a joint venture between the Library System and UALR. Included in the new facility will be, in addition to the Butler Center, the



Geyer & Adams Building

UALR Archives, the Clinton Gubernatorial Papers Project, and an Institute of Arkansas Governmental Studies.

This will combine under one roof more than 10 million manuscript items, 46,000 books on Arkansas, several

Did Washington Sleep Here? Butler Center and CALS to Shine a Light on Presidential Visits

Whenever the question of presidential connections to Arkansas is raised, everyone's first response is obviously Bill Clinton. But did you know that eighteen other presidents besides Clinton have visited Arkansas? Zachary Taylor was the first, and every president since Herbert Hoover has visited Arkansas at least once. To commemorate and celebrate those presidential



visits the Butler Center and CALS will be presenting an exhibit this fall, "Presidential Pathways in Arkansas," in connection with the opening of the Clinton Presidential Library in November.

The exhibit will include photographs, newspaper articles, and other documents, as well as a variety of presidential memorabilia, including cam-

paign materials such as bumper stickers and buttons. All nineteen presidents will be featured.

The exhibit will be on display from late October through December. While we have collected a significant number of photographs and documentation, we are still on the lookout for other materials to enhance the exhibit. If you, or someone you know, has any presidential memorabilia

which might be useful in the exhibit, please give us a call at (501) 918-3056. All borrowed items will be carefully handled and securely exhibited, then we will return them to the lender. So make plans now for your own "pathway" to the Main Library, to see our "Presidential Pathways" exhibit this fall.

thousand rolls of microfilm, about 200,000 historic photos and maps, and over 10,000 volumes on the genealogy of our state and region. For the first time in the history of our state, researchers can find in one location a gigantic trove of information on Arkansas. I believe this new facility will not only give the Butler Center a more suitable home, it will also give us the very real advantage of being housed with other

agencies that share our mission.

How You Can Help

If you live in the city of Little Rock and want to help the Butler Center reach its full potential, please help in two ways. First, talk to your friends

and ask them to vote. Second, be sure to vote yourself. The election is Tuesday, August 17. However, you will be able to cast your ballot during the "early voting" period. Remember, this refinancing will not raise your tax—it will merely allow the Library System to take advantage of lower interest rates.

Voters can vote early at four locations around the city. Starting Monday, August 9th through Saturday, August 14th, ballots can be cast at the following locations: Dunbar Recreation Center, 1001 West 16th Street; Southwest Community Center, 6401 Baseline Road; and Delta Trust and Bank, 11700 Cantrell Road. Also, early voting at the Pulaski County Courthouse begins August 2nd and ends August 14th.

Vote!

“Sugimoto,” continued from Page 3

quently moved to Rohwer. They stayed there nearly until the end of the war, when they left Arkansas for New York and a new life.

After leaving Rohwer in 1945, the

Sugimotos struggled through their first lean years in New York. Sugimoto eventually found work in a textile company creating fabric designs—work he did not enjoy, but which supported the family for years. He continued to paint in his spare time and made a point of keeping current with the active arts scene in the city. In 1962, Sugimoto retired, intending to devote all his time to art and travel.

The Japanese American community’s growing willingness to talk about the incarceration experience had an effect on Sugimoto and his work, too. He testified in 1981 before the U.S. Commission on War-time Relocation and Internment of Civilians. His testimony helped



“Puzzlement”

achieve one of the primary goals of the redress movement: a formal apology from the government and recognition of the mistakes that had been made in the treatment of Japanese Americans during the war.

This is one of 8 exhibits that will be on view throughout Little Rock during the conference, “Life Interrupted: The Internment of Japanese Americans in WWII Arkansas,” September 23-26, 2004.

Visit www.lifeinterrupted.org, a powerful new educational web site being recognized by the national media for its creativity, design and content to learn more about this period of American history and the role Arkansas played.

We need gallery volunteers during this important exhibit! Training and materials will be available to familiarize you with the exhibit. If you would like to volunteer to be a gallery guide during the Henry Sugimoto exhibit, please call Reita Miller at (501) 918-3090.

“Curriculum,” continued from Page 1

a companion reader to the Big Bear CD, and a series of adventure stories in which animal characters will travel around Arkansas. As learners move up through the grades, they will find textbook-style materials, along with stories, activities, maps, graphics, illustrations, songs, and other features that can be used at every level to ninth grade and beyond. Geography, citizenship, and chronology of events will be emphasized and repeated at different levels and with growing sophistication. Among the first five publications will be an Arkansas history text designed for fifth-grade use, accompanied by a collection of stories designed to help fifth graders visualize life during all periods of Arkansas’ history.

Formal work on the Arkansas Studies Living Curriculum began during the summer of 2003, and has been sustained by the two partners, The Butler Center and AAI, and by crucial assistance from The Bridge Fund, an endowment administered by the Arkansas Community Foundation and dedicated to improving the teaching and learning of Arkansas history. Plans call for the effort to continue over approximately three years, depending on continued funding.

Tom W. Dillard, Butler Center curator, said he expects the Living Curriculum to revolutionize the teaching of Arkansas history in the schools of our state. Dillard concluded, “For over a generation we have neglected to teach young Arkansans about their heritage. By our neglect, we have sent the message to our children that Arkansas has a minor and inconsequential history. We need to correct this situation—and soon. I believe the Arkansas Studies Living Curriculum will do just that.”

For information on how you can help with the Living Curriculum project contact Tom Dillard, Butler Center Curator at (501) 918-3054 or email tomd@cals.lib.ar.us.



Apples are crisp and sweet in the fall
Off the limb, in a pie, any way at all



Alligators swimming in the rivers down south
Have an awfully big tail and an awfully big mouth

The letter “A” illustration from the new childrens’s ABC book designed to teach younger Arkansans about the Natural State.

The Encyclopedia of Arkansas Seeks Volunteers

Work continues on *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, which is scheduled to debut to the public on June 15, 2005. The initial launch of the *Encyclopedia* will include approximately 900 text entries plus photos, maps, audio/video clips and other enhancements.

The *Encyclopedia* staff is seeking volunteers for the following areas:

• **Writing**—The staff needs volunteers to write entries in their areas of expertise. To volunteer as an author, contact Nathania Sawyer at nsawyer@encyclopediaofarkansas.net or (501) 918-3026. The *Encyclopedia's* Guidelines for Significance as well as the Author Guidelines are available online at www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

• **Fact Checking**—Every entry in the *Encyclopedia* must be checked

for accuracy against primary sources around the state. To volunteer as a fact checker, contact Jill Curran at jcurran@encyclopediaofarkansas.net or (501) 918-3022.

• **Clerical**—The *Encyclopedia* staff will need volunteers for a variety of projects, including creating databases of information, digitizing handwritten entries, and other clerical work. To volunteer for clerical work, contact Jill Curran.

• **Fundraising and Publicity**—The *Encyclopedia* needs volunteers to help with fundraising projects and spreading the word about the project at conferences, meetings and other events around the state. To volunteer for fundraising and publicity projects, contact Jill Curran.

• **Sharing Resources**—Each entry in the *Encyclopedia* will include a

variety of multimedia enhancements including photos, illustrations, maps, audio clips, and video clips. If you or your organizations have materials that may be included in the *Encyclopedia*, contact Frank McGarity at fmcgarity@encyclopediaofarkansas.net or (501) 918-3018.

Volunteers are critical to the success of *The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*. Please share your time and expertise to ensure we create the best possible resource for our state. For more information about the project and you can become involved, please visit the website at www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

Your History...
Your Encyclopedia

Still Time to Hear Reminiscences at Legacies & Lunch

If you have not yet had an opportunity to attend the Butler Center's Legacies & Lunch, there is still time to do so before the end of the year. This year's presentations featured notable Arkansans reminiscing about their careers. Legacies & Lunch speakers for the remainder of the year include:

- ♦ Bob Fisher
- ♦ Dorothy Stuck
- ♦ John L. Ferguson
- ♦ Craig O'Neill
- ♦ Philip Kaplan

If you are unable to attend one of the presentations, the City of Little Rock is now taping the presentations and airing them on the local access channel. Check your local listings.

Recently Processed Manuscript Collections Hold Wealth of Information on the State

- ♦ Arkansas Federation of Music Club Records
- ♦ Mount Holly Cemetery Association Records
- ♦ Charles H. Elias Papers
- ♦ Arkansas Banking Materials
- ♦ Arkansas Furniture and Carpet Company Records
- ♦ Capital Hotel Materials
- ♦ Doris Williamson Mapes Materials
- ♦ E. Eugene Mapes Papers
- ♦ George H. Benjamin Scrapbook
- ♦ Joseph Rosenberg Materials
- ♦ Julia Daisy Little Papers
- ♦ Carl Hancock Art Collection
- ♦ Benjamin Palmer Collection
- ♦ Charles H. Atkins Collection
- ♦ Jefferson Robinson Civil War Diary
- ♦ John Talbut Civil War Letters
- ♦ Laura Cornelius Conner Papers

All of the listed manuscript collections are available for research use in the Butler Center. The finding aids for the collections will also be accessible on the Butler Center's website at www.butlercenter.org.

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Items Enrich Butler



Devoted to the interests of the
LITTLE ROCK ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



Center's Collections



1. Rehabilitation class for wounded WWI soldiers, Camp Pike, North Little Rock, ca.1918.
 2. Masthead of *The Rudder*, the newsletter of the Little Rock Athletic Association, 1924.
 3. Sheet Music dedicated to the Little Rock military group, "Fletcher Rifles," 1891.
 4. Aerial view of the Union Sawmill Company, Huttig, Arkansas, ca.1910.
 5. House boats following the dredge, near Blytheville, ca.1920.
 6. Jonesboro Police Officers, ca. 1920.
 7. First Communion Group, St. Edwards Catholic Church, Little Rock, ca.1920.
- All items purchased off the Internet using the P.A.R.T. fund.

New Acquisition Has Railroad Ties



The John Magill House located at 3401 High Street in Little Rock circa 1905. Magill served as Immigration Agent for the Missouri Pacific Railroad. The photo was purchased through P.A.R.T. funds.

T•H•E
BUTLER
CENTER
FOR ARKANSAS STUDIES

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

The mission of the Butler Center is to collect, preserve, and provide access to the historical and cultural record of Arkansas.

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