

# THE BUTLER BANNER

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

Volume 8, Number 1

Summer 2005

## Hoxie integration fight to be focus of upcoming program hosted by the Butler Center and Central High National Historic Site



STANDING TOGETHER OUTSIDE IN SILENCE, CHILDREN OF NEGRO COTTON FARMERS TIMIDLY AWAIT A TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONS TO REGISTER FOR SCHOOL.

### A 'MORALLY RIGHT' DECISION

An Arkansas school board does some soul searching and Negro children enter desegregated classes

It was a sweltering July morning on the opening day of school in the delta town of Hoxie (pop. 1,853) in northeastern Arkansas. For the 800 children who came to enroll—and more particularly for some who stood against the school's brick wall, subdued and shy and waiting to be told what to do—it was a very strange morning indeed.

Hoxie, which starts the school term in midsummer to allow farm children cotton-picking time off during the autumn, had taken the bold step to end segregated education of Negro and white children. While other southern communities were busy looking for loopholes in the anti-segregation mandate handed down by the Supreme Court a year ago, Hoxie's five-member school board conscientiously interviewed parents and came to the conclusion that integration was "morally right in the sight of God."

The board's unanimous will by no means represented the unanimous will of the community. Hoxie had before it the example of two school districts which already had ended segregation in western Arkansas, where the racial pattern is somewhat different. In eastern Arkansas, with a larger Negro population and an economy founded on cotton and sharecropping, segregation is rooted much more deeply. When the board announced its decision three weeks ago, there were angry mutterings in the town and some white people threatened a boycott of the school. On the first morning 21 Negro children, whose own school had been closed, came to register at a school that had always been, to them, out of bounds. With them came a normal turnout of white children. Their tense elders, Negro and white, waited to see whether any mixings would be joined.

29

**This photo and headline was the lead-in to a photo essay run by Life magazine in its July 25, 1955 issue, two weeks after Hoxie voluntarily de-segregated its schools.**

The Butler Center and the Little Rock Central High National Historic Site are teaming up to present a special screening of *Hoxie: The First Stand*, the award-winning documentary produced and directed by University of Memphis filmmaker David Appleby, on Thursday, August 18, from 6:30—9:00 pm in the Darragh Center at the Main Library. Appleby will be on hand to provide commentary on the making of the film, and there will also be a panel discussion featuring former Hoxie students who attended school during that year.

The program will open at 6:30 with a showing of the film, followed by a panel discussion and reception. The documentary film tells the story of one of the earliest, most important, but least remembered school integration battles in the South.

In the summer of 1955, the school board of the small, rural Arkansas town of Hoxie, in northeast Arkansas, voluntarily desegregated its schools. The newly formed White Citizens' Councils saw this as a test for southern resistance to the Supreme Court's desegregation decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* and soon descended on the town. They organized local citizens to try to force the board to rescind its order, but the five members and superintendent, although quickly deserted by their early supporters, stood their ground. With the NAACP helping to keep the black families united, the board sought an injunction against the segregationists. Eventually, they drew an extremely reluctant federal government into a case that nullified state segregation laws.

Members of the panel that will be discussing the de-segregation of Hoxie's schools include Mrs. Charlene Trotter, Mrs. Fayth Hill Washington, and Mrs. Ethel Tompkins, all Hoxie students in 1955, along with Mr. Christopher Mercer Jr., attorney and former NAACP attorney, David Appleby, and Dr. Russell Wigginton, Special Assistant to the President, Rhodes College, who will serve as the panel's moderator.

The program is free, but seating is limited, so reservations are requested. For more information or to reserve your place for this look at a fascinating episode in Arkansas history, please call Cary Cox at (501) 918-3049, or email [caryc@cals.lib.ar.us](mailto:caryc@cals.lib.ar.us).

### In This Issue of the Banner

A Word From the Center	p. 2
Arkansas Jeopardy	p. 3
Genealogy workshop a great success!	p. 4
More New Faces at the Butler Center	p. 4
New Additions to BC Collections	p. 5-6



## A Word From the Center

David Stricklin  
Head of the Butler Center

It's an exciting time at the Butler Center! We're deeply involved in summer programs. We're receiving some very interesting collections of manuscripts, photographs, and other material described elsewhere in the *Banner*. And we're in the final stages of designing the new River Market building we'll share with the good folks from the archives at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, creating a terrific facility for the preservation and study of Arkansas history and genealogy. This will help the Butler Center immeasurably, as we are quite out of room!

Work on the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* is progressing nicely. Check out [www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net](http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net) to see the latest list of topics, including some unspeakable for. We're doing some work updating the Butler Center's online lesson plans for teachers. And we're about to enjoy a pretty thoroughgoing renovation of the Center's website.

We're also continuing to find ways of engaging other people who are hard at work in the vineyards of Arkansas history. We're working with our friends down the street at the Old State House, who have a fascinating new exhibit on Arkansas's connections to the U.S.-Mexican War, and those at the Historic Arkansas Museum, who are further developing their great collection of nineteenth-century structures. We're working with another Department of Arkansas Heritage museum, the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center, creating digital access to recorded documents. We're working with the Clinton Presidential Center and the Clinton School of Public Service and with the folks over at the Capitol, where Wendy Richter has taken leadership of the Arkansas History Commission. Welcome, Wendy! It's great to see so many

people working so effectively to preserve, understand, and interpret the history of Arkansas.

And now, something about some other friends. I hope you'll subscribe to the *Oxford American* magazine, which you can do by visiting [www.oxfordamericanmag.com](http://www.oxfordamericanmag.com) or calling 1-800-314-9051. The *Oxford American* is an Arkansas-based non-profit, with headquarters at the University of Central Arkansas. It has added a lot to the historical and literary landscape since it moved here a few years ago. Editor Marc Smirnoff and colleagues have become mainstays in the Arkansas Literary Festival, for instance, something CALS is heavily involved in. We in the state need to keep it going and keep it here.

I'd say that even if I didn't have a piece in the *OA*'s seventh annual Music Issue, which should be coming out about the time you receive this *Butler Banner*. The last Music Issue won a National Magazine Award. The magazine is always terrific, and the annual music issue is always made even better by an accompanying CD. As the great Bill C. Malone (along with his modest co-author) said in the recently revised edition of *Southern Music/American Music*, "One of the most interesting, and often quirky, sources of vintage and recently recorded southern music is the annual Southern Sampler CD made available by the *Oxford American* magazine." I hope you'll support this fine resource for southern writing and music.

It's a great time to be here. When you get a chance, come by and see us! And thanks to all our supporters for the various ways you help us do the important work of the Butler Center.

David

Visit the  
**Butler Center Online**  
[www.butlercenter.org](http://www.butlercenter.org)

The *Butler Banner* is the quarterly newsletter of the Richard C. Butler, Sr. Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System  
100 Rock Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501.918.3056  
501.375.7451—Fax  
[arkinfo@cals.lib.ar.us](mailto:arkinfo@cals.lib.ar.us)  
<http://www.cals.lib.ar.us/butlercenter/>  
Printed and distributed with private funds.  
Cary Cox, Editor



Volume 8, Number 2 // Summer 2005

## Plans in the works for new Arkansas History children's program series

Part of the Butler Center's mission has always been to promote Arkansas history education in the schools, and we have worked toward that goal primarily by sponsoring workshops and providing lesson plans and other curriculum materials for teachers. But we've long desired to explore new and different ways of sharing Arkansas history with our state's youngest citizens. Plans are now in the works to develop a joint programming initiative with the library's Youth Services department to provide educational yet entertaining Arkansas history programs to K-6th grade students. Two programs are already scheduled as part of CALS Summer Reading Program. On July 22, Spirit Trickey, daughter of Little Rock Nine member Minnijean Brown Trickey and an Interpretive Ranger for the Central High National Historic Site, presented a program on the Little Rock Central High Crisis of 1957, and in August, Butler Center staff members Linda McDowell and Rhonda Stewart will conduct a genealogy workshop for middle-school children. Furthermore, plans are being discussed for a youth-oriented Arkansas history program to be presented once a month as part of Youth Services' Saturday Morning Storytime program series. These programs will be much more interactive than a typical Butler Center adult program, and might often have a topical connection to our evening programs or our Legacies and Lunch series. Watch the *Banner* for more information as we further develop this exciting new idea!



## Books and Materials

**Carolyn LeMaster**  
Little Rock

**Grif Stockley**  
Little Rock

**Ray Price**  
Little Rock

**Jeanne McDaniel**  
Little Rock

**Jim McDaniel**  
Little Rock

**Howard Stebbins III**  
Little Rock

**Lynn Frost**  
Little Rock

**Rhonda Stewart**  
Little Rock

**Howard Norton**  
Vilonia

**Julie Hendrix**  
Little Rock

**Joe Lee Rector III**  
Reno, NV

**Bobby Roberts**  
Little Rock

**Dave Wallis family**  
Pine Bluff

**Dixie Howard**  
Maumelle

**Mark Christ**  
Little Rock

**Amanda Saar**  
Little Rock

**Bob and Julie Weir**  
Bellevue, NE

**Lewis Leslie**  
Little Rock

**The Queens Borough  
Public Library**  
New York, NY

**Phyllis Brandon**  
Little Rock

**David C. Smith**  
**National Society of  
Sons & Daughters of Pilgrims**  
Pembroke, KY

**Edith Miller**  
Conway

**David Stricklin**  
Little Rock

**Helen Powell**  
Pittsfield, MA

**Raymond Troy**  
Little Rock

**Cary Cox**  
Little Rock

**Fiction Writers of  
Central Arkansas**

## Rice Art Conservation Fund

by G. Grimsley and  
Carol Graham, Jr.  
Rogers

## Memorials

**Loren Partain**  
by Thomas Bruce  
Little Rock

by the Third Thursday Book Club

Tucker Steinmetz

Russ Matson

Charles Chappell

Ark Monroe III

Dick Norton

Walter Nunn

Chris Barrier

Robert D. Cabe

Jim Lester

Cyril Hollingsworth

John Jarrard

George Worthen

**Carrie Rummel Dickinson**

by David Stricklin and

Sally Browder

Little Rock and Batesville

by Tom and Mary Dillard

Fayetteville

**Thanks for helping  
preserve  
Arkansas' history!**

## Let's play — ARKANSAS JEOPARDY!

Be sure to mark your calendar now for our fifth annual presentation of Arkansas Jeopardy! to be held Saturday, October 29. If you've never attended Arkansas Jeopardy!, you owe it to yourself to check it out; and if you have experienced it before you need to do so again because this year it will be bigger and better than ever! For those few who don't have a clue what it is, Arkansas Jeopardy! is the Butler Center's annual fundraiser, featuring contestants playing the Jeopardy! game and competing for some neat prizes, plus the right to call themselves the king or queen of Arkansas trivia. That's right; all the questions and answers relate to Arkansas history and popular culture. (But it's really not as difficult as it sounds!) We'll still have the same great computerized, big-screen, Jeopardy game board and Skip Rutherford will be back to serve as emcee, but the prizes and silent auction items will be the best ever, plus this year we're going to introduce a celebrity game, featuring three household-name Arkansas personalities. Watch the next Butler Banner for more details, but mark your calendars now, because you won't want to miss it!

## Butler Center's 2005 Legacies and Lunch Schedule

### August 3

"Arkansas Autobiographies"  
Parker Westbrook

### September 7

"A Better Life in Rural Arkansas:  
The Modernization of the Rural Home  
In 20th-Century Arkansas"  
Lynn Russell

### October 5

"Arkansas Autobiographies"  
Walt Coleman

### November 2

"Arkansas Autobiographies"  
Jimmie Lou Fisher

### December 7

"Arkansas Autobiographies"  
Alan Leveritt

All programs are held in the Darragh Center, Main Library,  
12 Noon—1:00 p.m.

Bring your lunch; water & soft drinks provided. For more  
information call Cary Cox at (501) 918-3049.

## **A “Menagerie of Genealogy!” explored at the Butler Center’s fourth annual genealogy workshop**

### ***High attendance reflects strong interest in family history***

Special problems in genealogical research were the focus of the 161 attendees of the Butler Center’s fourth annual genealogy workshop, “A Menagerie of Genealogy,” held on Saturday, July 16, 2005 in the Daragh Center at the Main Library in Little Rock.

The annual genealogy workshop is designed to provide helpful instruction for newcomers to family history research as well as the advanced student. Topics and presenters in this year’s workshop included: “Paleography: Reading and Understanding Historic Records,” an introduction to the art and science of interpreting old handwriting by Russell P. Baker, archival manager for the Arkansas History Commission and State Archives, and “Remember Me As You Pass By: Cemetery Art and Symbolism,” a look at common, and uncommon, cemetery symbols found in Arkansas by Susan Young, outreach coordinator for the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History.

Also included were “Did They Come in Ships? Finding and Using Immigration Records,” a session designed to simplify the sometimes complicated process of researching immigration records by Susan Boyle, a professional genealogist with over twenty years experience, and “Was Grandpa Really Grandpa? Using DNA Identification in Genealogy,” a presentation explaining in layman’s terms what DNA is and how it can be used in genealogical research by Dr. Buford Suffridge, a retired orthodontist who has extensively studied how science and medicine can be applied to family history research. Free copies of the outline and notes for each session are still available, just stop by the Butler Center or call 918-3056, or email [mcdowell@cals.lib.ar.us](mailto:mcdowell@cals.lib.ar.us).

## **Butler Center welcomes new archival assistant & summer interns**

The Butler Center is pleased to welcome a new staff member in our Manuscripts Division. Natasha Naragon joined our staff in May as an archival assistant, helping process manuscript collections and creating finding aids for them. Natasha grew up in Northwest Arkansas. She earned a B.A. in politics with a minor in gender studies from Hendrix, developing an interest in state politics while studying under Dr. Jay Barth. She has worked for KATV Channel 7 News, Paschall Strategic Communications, and U.S. Representative Vic Snyder as press secretary and scheduler. She also has experience running a small family business. Natasha says she is excited about the opportunity to collect and preserve primary source materials in Arkansas history so future generations can access them and, most importantly, learn from them. In her leisure time, Natasha enjoys reading literature, amateur photography, and floating the Buffalo National River.



We are also excited to introduce four — count ‘em! — summer interns who have been helping us with a multitude of different tasks. Alana McGhee attends Arkansas Tech University. She lives in Perry, keeping up her grandmother’s old house, and is taking summer classes at UALR. She is a fine arts major and hopes to pursue a master’s degree in art history. Shaina Langston received a bachelor’s of art from UCA with a minor in history, and is now attending UALR where she is a graduate assistant and in her final year of school for her master’s in art history. She dreams of pursuing a Ph. D., then teaching at the college level, or perhaps working in a history or art museum. Shaina also hopes some day to unearth some history (literally!) by going on an archaeological dig. Sara Sweatt is from Hot Springs, where she attended Lakeside High School. She is a junior at Lyon College in Batesville, double-majoring in English and history (our very own David Stricklin was previously one of her professors!). Sara remarks that her post-graduate plans are still, well, unplanned, but suspects that gaining future employment will likely mean further education. Jessica Scranton is a Little Rock native and a graduate of Episcopal Collegiate High School. She is home for summer break from Randolph Macon Woman’s College in Virginia, where she will be a sophomore this coming fall.



## *New items enhance Butler Center's collections —*



*Above* — Second Lieutenant George A. Winslow, 3rd Arkansas Cavalry, Union Army.

*Upper right* — A group of neighborhood kids gather to form a band in Biscoe, Ark., about 1930.

*Right* — Students and faculty participate in a flag ceremony in front of Old Main, on the campus of Ouachita Baptist College, May 27, 1902. Old Main, built in 1889, served as the administration building at Ouachita until it burned in 1949.



We've also received several great additions to our manuscripts collections, including materials relating to Arkansas aviation history and the history of Pine Bluff from the late Dave Wallis, materials on German immigration to Arkansas from Joe Lee Rector, research notes and other materials that document the state's Jewish heritage from Carolyn LeMaster, and the research notes collected by Grif Stockley for his forthcoming biography of Daisy Bates. Processing on some of these collections has already begun. Thanks to each and every person who has contributed to the work of the Butler Center, either financially or through the donation of archival materials. The Butler Center would not be possible without your ongoing support!

*A great addition to the Butler Center's photograph collections —*



This photo was taken just a few months after the oil boom hit the town of Smackover, whose population had ballooned from less than a hundred to over 5,000. Death Valley was a lawless collection of honky-tonks, barrelhouses, dance halls, and gambling joints.

**T • H • E**  
**BUTLER**  
**CENTER**  
**FOR ARKANSAS STUDIES**

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

NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
LITTLE ROCK, AR  
PERMIT NO. 183