

THE BUTLER BANNER

NEWSLETTER OF THE BUTLER CENTER FOR ARKANSAS STUDIES

Volume 10, Number 4

Fall 2008

Upcoming Butler Center Events

Legacies & Lunch

January 7, 2009

Josie Fernandez, Hot
Springs National Park

February 4, 2009

Freeman McKindra,
biography

March 4, 2009

Rev. Don Campbell II,
biography

January 12, 2009

Authors Clyde A. Milner II
and Carol A. O'Connor will
discuss their book *As Big
as the West: The Pioneer
Life of Granville Stuart*

Cox Creative Center Galleries

2nd Friday Art Night

On the 2nd Friday of each
month, the Cox Creative
Gallery and Showcase
Arkansas Gallery remain
open until 8 p.m. Visit
www.butlercenter.org/art
or call 501-918-3090 for
more information.
Showcase Arkansas
Gallery, located on the
second floor of the Cox
Creative Center, presents
fifty juried works by the
Quilters Guild of Arkansas,
on display through
December 20, 2008.

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FOR ARKANSAS STUDIES

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Arkansas Studies Institute

The Arkansas Studies Institute (ASI) will offer expanded space for researchers, not only in the expanded reading room but also in the space available to house collections in the new archival wing. The Institute consists of three buildings that span three centuries of architectural style: the Porbeck-Bowman Building (1882), the Geyer & Adams Building (1914), and the new Manuscripts Repository (2008). The new building includes many native materials, such as Batesville sandstone and



decorative copper. The repository's glass atrium ensures the building has a lot of natural light,

Cont. on page 2

Butler Center Books

Butler Center Books expanded its operation with the addition of Ted Parkhurst as manager in early 2008. This fall, Butler Center Books published the highly anticipated autobiography

A Pryor Commitment: The Autobiography of David Pryor, co-written by Don Harrell. After the book's release, Senator Pryor quickly became immersed in promoting it. Parkhurst accompanied the senator across the state—from Blytheville to Camden, from Springdale to El Dorado. Said Parkhurst, "It has turned out to be more than a bookselling adventure. Visiting cities and towns with him has become a very personal adventure. Now that I've seen him receive hundreds of hugs—and received a

good many myself, just because I was accompanying him—I am humbled by the way this unique author has touched our state: not just our laws and our history, but our individual lives."

Cont. on page 5



Bobby Roberts, Senator David Pryor, Skip Rutherford, David Stricklin (left to right).

Cont. from Arkansas Studies Institute, p.1
reflecting off the sandstone and through the three-story atrium.

The interior of the building features ninety-seven Arkansas image panels. These four-foot-by-four-foot acrylic panels present a visual history of Arkansas and its people. The abundance of sunlight normally

The interior of the building features ninety-seven Arkansas image panels. These four-foot-by-four-foot acrylic panels present a visual history of Arkansas and its people.

would pose a threat to the manuscripts and rare books, but the collection will be protected by a series of frosted glass flanges on the west side of the building that will diffuse the light.

The ASI also houses four art gallery

spaces and a museum. The Concordia Hall Museum, housed in the Porbeck-Bowman Building, is still in development. The museum is named in honor of the Jewish social hall that was once housed in the building. When completed, it will highlight the diversity of Arkansas's population and focus on both the struggles and victories experienced by Arkansans. Maps, charts, text panels, photographs, and images of documents will present an overview of the makeup of Arkansas's diverse population.

Behind the ASI is the Count Pulaski Way, an innovative space that will serve both automobiles and pedestrians. It consists of two alleys; a rebuilt portion of Rock Street that is reminiscent of early stone roads; and the lower Arkansas River Valley Walking Map. This 200-foot-long map is a replica of the historic trail from Fort Smith to the point where the Arkansas River meets the Mississippi River. This walking map is Little Rock's largest piece of public art.

The ASI is a joint project of the Central Arkansas Library System and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR). Archival materials from UALR's archives and special collections department will be available to researchers in the reading room.

The ASI also will be home to the Clinton School of Public Service's downtown campus, the Arkansas Humanities Council, and the UALR Urban Studies program. There

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also will be a retail space located in the Geyer & Adams building. These partnerships will increase public access and awareness of these organizations as visitors can access them at one of the most desirable downtown locations.

We anticipate moving in early 2009, so watch your mail and the Butler Center website for more information about the grand opening. ■

Student Opportunities

The Butler Center is committed to educating the public about Arkansas's history and culture. Part of its mission includes providing opportunities for students to get first-hand experience working in an archive.

Judith Young and Marc Gibson are two good examples of this mission in action. Young is a graduate student at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) working on a master's degree in public history. She currently serves as a graduate assistant in the Butler Center. Gibson is an undergrad student at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, and working on a bachelor's degree in history with a minor in anthropology. He came to the Butler Center as a volunteer and recently joined the staff as a part-time assistant.

Young is interested in genealogy and

works closely with Rhonda Stewart in the reading room. She assists patrons with questions, which helps her learn more about research resources and what information patrons are most interested in.

Gibson is helping to create finding aids for the Butler Center manuscript collection and working with the BASE (Books for Arkansas Students' Education) program. Gibson said, "Working at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies has been a wonderful experience. Seeing the place Arkansas holds in national history has been invaluable." ■



Judith Young and Marc Gibson

A Word from the Center

David Stricklin, Head of the Butler Center



The question I am asked most often is, “When is the move into your new building?” Creating the new Arkansas Studies Institute (ASI) complex (see

the cover story, pp. 1–2) has been a long process, to say the least. I’ve been at the Butler Center for almost four years, and the basic design for the ASI was already in place when I got here. Weekly meetings began at about that point. We have spent so much time with the architects and contractors—Polk Stanley and East-

Harding, respectively—that when this is all over we’re going to have to go into some kind of therapy program to deal with separation issues!

Any big project takes time, and this one has been particularly complicated, especially because of the structural and conceptual problems of trying to make one whole out of three buildings from three different centuries. New construction on one must blend with adaptive reuse of the other two. The 1882 Porbeck–Bowman Building turned out to be an especially tough one to save, but I am so pleased we were able to do so. It will be a wonderful place in which to work, and its rescue is an inspiring Arkansas success story.

I feel quite confident in giving you an

answer to the aforementioned, oft-asked question: The next *Butler Banner* you receive will have either an announcement of the date of the ASI grand opening or pictures from that event. Make plans to come and see the new ASI. I feel quite confident in saying something else: You will be very proud of the Institute.

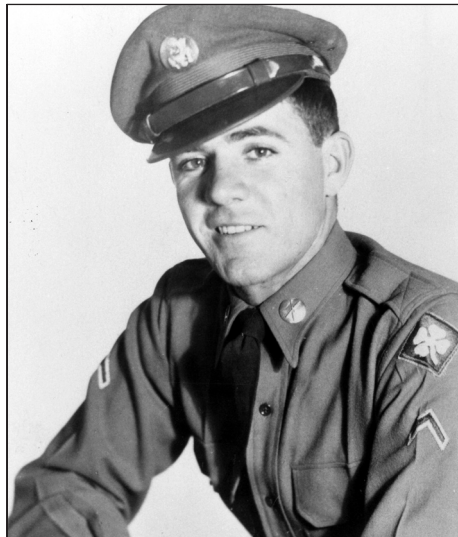
One sad note: Bill Norman, a devoted friend of the Butler Center and of the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, passed away recently. Bill was a banker with a passion for Arkansas history and a particular fascination with the ways technology could be used to share the state’s history with people around the world and in every corner of Arkansas. We will miss him a great deal and always remember his many acts of kindness and expressions of encouragement.

Thank you all for your own acts of kindness and expressions of encouragement as we move forward in this venture. ■

Forgotten: The Korean War Project

This summer, the Butler Center launched an initiative to document and preserve Arkansas’s role in the Korean War. “Forgotten: The Arkansas Korean War Project” is an attempt to fill the documentary void related to the war. Often overlooked or overshadowed by events to follow, the Korean War has fallen into a vast no-man’s-land in the American psyche, somehow lost between the headiness of World War II and the anguish of Vietnam. According to Max Hastings, one of the leading historians on the Korean War, “United States losses in three years were only narrowly outstripped by those suffered in Vietnam over more than ten.” In addition to the personal cost, the worldwide political ramifications of the war were huge and still linger today. Yet the war is one that most Americans would rather forget. Unfortunately, this has meant that the sacrifice of our men and women in uniform has often been overlooked. We believe it is time to change that.

The Butler Center is soliciting information from Arkansans who were on the battlefield as well as those left home. Of particular emphasis is the acquisition of letters, photographs, diaries, and other written records of Arkansas’s Korean War veterans. Our oral history campaign will allow veterans to share their personal memories.



Jim Mullings, 1950

In addition, we are sending out a questionnaire to all interested Korean War veterans.

Since launching the project, we have made contact with a number of Korean War veterans. Our first response came from Jim Mullings of Claremore, Oklahoma. Mullings, a Paris (Logan County) native, was a member of the Arkansas National Guard when it was mobilized for federal service. After arriving in Korea in January 1951, he served as a gunner on a 155 mm self-propelled artillery piece affectionately known as “Bulldog’s Bark.” Mullings shared doz-

ens of his snapshots from the war with us as well as newspaper clippings and other documents. Serving as the guinea pig for our first Korean War oral history, he performed admirably, and we were lucky to get some fascinating insights into the war. One particularly interesting story revolved around him unwittingly giving two North Korean spies a ride in his Jeep. He also recounted the difficulty of seeing the suffering of the civilian population. Through his words, Mullings was able to offer a candid portrait of what it was like for a young Arkansas boy to be thrust into a war in a faraway place. Such interviews are a veritable gold mine of information. And most importantly, they are a vital and irreplaceable piece of our collective history as Arkansans.

If you are a Korean War veteran, or if you know of one, please contact us about the project. It is our intention to see that Arkansas’s Korean War veterans finally get the respect and recognition they deserve. Though nearly sixty years separates us from the event, it is important for us not to lose sight of the sacrifice that these men and women offered for their country. Through this project, we hope to make sure that they will never be forgotten. ■

Contributed by Brian Robertson,
Butler Center Manuscripts Coordinator



THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ARKANSAS HISTORY & CULTURE

Senior Editor's Column

Nathania
Sawyer



That darn de Soto. No man has ever given me so much trouble!

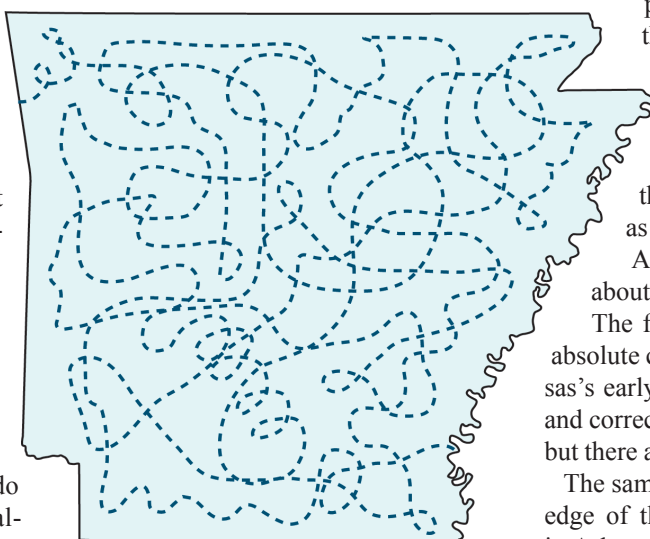
For those of you who slept through your Arkansas History class: Hernando de Soto became the first

European to set foot in what is now Arkansas when he crossed the Mississippi River on June 18, 1541. We know this because de Soto and some of his men left written accounts of their travels through Arkansas. Sounds simple enough doesn't it? But, no...

First, it was his name: Is it Hernando DeSoto, Hernando De Soto or Hernando de Soto. Then there was the whole calendar thing. When is June 18th not June 18th? The answer is: after Pope Gregory XIII decided to introduce a new calendar. Yep. In 1582, we switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar, which means that, according to the calen-

dar we use today, de Soto entered Arkansas on June 28th.

But, the most maddening problem is the variety of information that exists about de Soto's route through Arkansas. Congress



Hernando de Soto's Journey Through Arkansas

commissioned the first detailed study of de Soto's route in 1936, and that study became the accepted version of history. In 1997, Charles Hudson, an anthropologist at the

University of Georgia, proposed a different route based on newer archaeological discoveries and translations of the records of the journey. I believe there are at least three different routes that historians have put forth for de Soto's journey through Arkansas, which makes it easier to understand why so many places in the state claim that "de Soto slept here." We've joked about making a t-shirt with the map included with this column as a fundraiser for the EOA!

And, don't even get me started about the wild pigs!

The fact is, we will never know with absolute certainty the "truth" about Arkansas's early history. The record is amended and corrected as new discoveries are made, but there are no absolutes.

The same could be said about our knowledge of the Native Americans who lived in Arkansas. Separating folklore from fact can be a tricky business. This subject came up recently in an email exchange with one of our editorial board members, State Archeologist Ann Early. She was concerned

Continued on page 5

Explorations of Arkansas History

Guy
Lancaster

Why did Arkansas secede from the Union? That's a question we had to field for a patron the other day. Of course, such a question is fraught with significance for those who insist that the Confederate states did not secede solely to protect the institution of slavery, but all our patron wanted to know was if any statement of reason for secession was issued either by the secession convention that removed Arkansas from the Union or by Governor Henry Massie Rector.

Arkansas held two secession conventions: one in March 1861, at which a pro-Union

faction held the majority, and one in May 1861, at which all but one delegate voted for secession. Our fact checker found that the records of the second convention referred back to a resolution from the March 1861 session spelling out six reasons for secession: 1) the Republican Party was solely a Northern party and hostile to slavery, 2) Northerners refused to offer protection to the slave property of Southerners, 3) Republicans declared that Congress had the power to limit slavery, 4) Northerners disregarded fugitive slave laws, 5) Northerners denied Southerners the right to move

through non-slave states with their slaves, and 6) "They have degraded American citizens by placing them upon an equality with negroes at the ballot box."

Was slavery the main reason Arkansas left the Union? According to the secession convention itself—yes, it was. Whether slavery was the reason so many non-slaveholding Southerners chose to take up arms is a different question, but as far as Arkansas's leaders go, they were certainly intent upon preserving their "peculiar institution" and denying their slaves freedom and liberty. ■

Cont. from Butler Center Books, p.1

Pryor's career is unparalleled. His political life includes service in the Arkansas House of Representatives, as governor of Arkansas, in the U.S. House of Representatives, and in the U.S. Senate. He is currently chairman of Arkansas's Democratic Party.

Pryor's autobiography provides its readers with a candid account of his time serving the state and reveals his passion for the residents of Arkansas. It is available now at River Market Books & Gifts and other local bookstores, and you can also order it from our distributor, the University of Arkansas Press, at www.uapress.com.

Butler Center Books is a project of the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies and the Central Arkansas Library System. This publishing program was made possible by a gift from John G. and Dora "DeDe" Ragsdale. Butler Center Books publishes volumes that increase knowl-

edge about and appreciation of the history and culture of Arkansas.

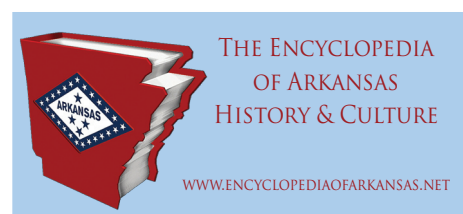
Other recent and upcoming Butler Center Books titles include:

- *Big Hat Law: Arkansas and Its State Police—1935-2000*, by Michael Lindsey
- *A Life on the Black River in Arkansas: The Memoir of a Farmer, Rural Entrepreneur, and Banker*, by Ewell R. Coleman with Mary Frances Hodges
- *The Good Ground of Central High: Little Rock Central High School and Legendary Coach Wilson Matthews*, by George M. Cate
- *Ready, Booted, and Spurred: Arkansas in the U.S.-Mexican War*, edited by William A. Frazier and Mark K. Christ
- *Pfeiffer Country: The Tenant Farms and Business Activities of Paul Pfeiffer in Clay County, Arkansas, 1902-1954*, by Sherry Laymon. ■

Cont. from de Soto, p.4

about the proliferation of popular culture information and local legends about tribes that contradict current scientific understandings. Ann says that many of these stories first appeared during Victorian times when communities felt the need to create positive, heroic histories for themselves.

For the EOA's purposes, we're trying to strike a balance by including the local-tradition stories as well as noting when the tales contradict current research and understanding. This is a perfect example of how we rely on the expertise of our editorial board and how lucky we are to have people with all kinds of specialized knowledge on our board. ■

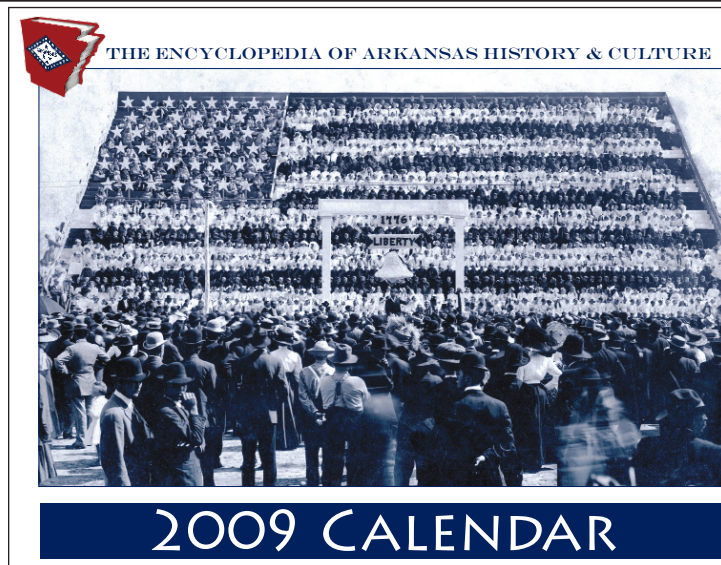


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- _____ BASE—placing free books about Arkansas in our public schools, especially those with high percentages of low-income students
- _____ *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*—our free, authoritative research tool visited by more than 5,000 people a day
- _____ Home Movie Day—our program to make digital copies of Arkansas-related amateur home movies available
- _____ Legacies & Lunch—our popular monthly lecture series on Arkansas history and culture
- _____ Lesson plans and other curricular materials—for Arkansas history teachers and students
- _____ Other/general—helping the Butler Center in its collection and outreach efforts

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flash ... Butler Center Events in the Spotlight



Ginger Beebe, at the Cox Creative Gallery signing copies of the annual Artist Calendar



David Stricklin, head of the Butler Center, and Senator David Pryor, after the first copies of the senator's autobiography were delivered to Butler Center Books.



Al Bell, speaker at the October Legacies & Lunch

Mosaic Templars group from Barbados, posing with some members of the Butler Center staff



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In memory of Bill Norman:
David Stricklin

CALS Hosts the Annual Arkansas Literary Festival



The Central Arkansas Library System (CALS) is hosting the sixth annual Arkansas Literary Festival, a celebration of the written word, April 16–19, 2009. Brad Mooy joined CALS as the festival coordinator this summer. He said, “We’re fashioning an exciting festival full of stimulating authors and fun activities for all ages. Our memorable roster of events includes sessions with dynamic writers from New York, North Carolina, California, Washington, Colorado, Texas, Arkansas, and more. Best of

all, the festival is free to the public. The Arkansas Literacy Councils did a terrific job hosting the festival for the past five years. We’re hoping the Central Arkansas Library System can build on that foundation and reach even more readers and writers in 2009.”

Prominent authors from across the United States read from their own works, discuss relevant themes, and sign books. Workshops allow participants to refine writing skills. Storytelling activities and reading programs are scheduled for families to en-

joy. Featuring a variety of vendors and concessions, the downtown festival takes place in multiple venues including the Main Library campus, River Market Books & Gifts, the Arkansas Studies Institute, and Historic Arkansas Museum. Events are FREE to the public. Butler Center staff members are heavily involved in the festival.

For more information contact 501-918-3098, email LitFest@cals.org, or visit www.arkansasliteraryfestival.org.

Contributed by Brad Mooy, Arkansas Literary Festival Coordinator

Images from Our Collection

Until the advent of railroads in Arkansas during the Reconstruction era, steamboats were the primary means of transporting people and goods in and out of the state. The first steamboat reached Little Rock in 1821, and others were soon operating on the state's various waterways, such as the White, Black, Ouachita, Little Red, Fourche La Pave, St. Francis, and Buffalo rivers, as well as Bayou Bartholomew. Both sides in the Civil War used steamboats in Arkansas for the rapid transport of soldiers and war materiel; Union gunboats were also used in the capture of St. Charles and Arkansas Post. However, by the 1890s, railroads were providing the services once the purview of steamboats, and railroad bridges across major waterways



made river navigation by such large boats difficult if not impossible. Today, many Arkansas rivers are still used for the transportation of cargo, but that is done

by diesel-powered towboats pushing barges; the only remaining steamboat is the *Arkansas Queen*, a tourist passenger boat docked in North Little Rock. ■

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