

THE BUTLER BANNER

NEWSLETTER OF THE BUTLER CENTER FOR ARKANSAS STUDIES

Volume 10, Number 2

Spring 2008

Upcoming Events

Visit www.butlercenter.org for more information

Legacies & Lunch

(First Wed. of every month at noon in the Darragh Center, Main Library)

May 7 - Dr. C. Fred Williams, "A History of UALR: From People's College to Comprehensive University"

June 4 - Mr. Richard Mason discusses his autobiography, "The Red Scarf"

Showcase Arkansas Gallery presents, **Arkansas Politics, Patriotism, and Pride**, May 9 through June 28

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.

2nd Friday Art Night Schedule

May 9 • June 13
July 11 • August 8

THE
BUTLER
CENTER
FOR ARKANSAS STUDIES

AV/AR Digital Collections

History can now be seen and heard through a ground-breaking tool pioneered by the Butler Center. Through the AV/AR—the Audio/Visual Archive—users can listen to and/or watch oral history interviews, speeches, and radio and television programs.

"As far as we have been able to determine, AV/AR is the first database of its kind in Arkansas, maybe anywhere," says David Stricklin, head of the Butler Center. Researchers can search a



printed index of the contents of the database and locate desired excerpts, which will make the sounds and sights of historical accounts more
cont. on page 2

Genealogist, Writer, and Historian

Processing someone's papers, I have found, creates a unique connection, perhaps even a friendship, with that person. This has

been especially true as I have worked with the Ruth Yingling Rector Papers, which are now available in the Butler Center. Rector's research interests parallel my own, and, in fact, her work was critical to the research for my master's thesis. I have learned much about the research process from her papers, which

show her to be a talented genealogist, researcher, and historian.

A native of Searcy, Rector began developing her family history in the early 1970s. Her search for family background led her to a much broader story, with connections to German immigration, early Arkansas politics, life in antebellum Arkansas, and Arkansans in the Mexican War and the California gold rush. Rector pursued
cont. on page 2



Catherine and Daniel Peil

accessible and immediate. The contents of the audio/visual database can be searched by topic and are freely accessible online. AV/AR will be particularly valuable to teachers and students, whose needs constitute a special focus of the Butler Center.

The Butler Center developed this research tool from the ground up with the hope that the methods used would be adopted by other institutions with research collections. It can be found at the Butler Center's website, www.butlercenter.org, under "Digital Collections."

Stricklin says, "Our goal in creating this research tool was to make recorded materials available to people who otherwise might not have access to them. Somebody with a shoebox full of old oral history interview tapes could bring them to the Butler Center, allow us to put the recordings on the AV/AR, and thus make them accessible to a person who lives across the street or on the other side of the world."

The first phase of AV/AR was made possible by a grant from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. The first topics covered by AV/AR focus on the role of race relations in Arkansas history and ongoing efforts to come to terms with the state's growing population diversity. Additional topics will be added to the database as funding becomes available. ■

The **BUTLER BANNER** is the
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Cont. from Genealogist, Writer, and Historian

each thread with an eye for accuracy and attention to detail, and with the hope of publishing the various stories.

Rector's research showed that her husband, Dr. Joe Lee Rector Jr., shared a connection to the Germanna Colony in Virginia and with four Arkansas governors, James and Elias Conway, Henry Rector, and William Fishback. Research regarding her own family revealed similar surprises.

Born Ruth V. Yingling, Rector was a descendant of Sebastian Jüngling (Yingling) a German immigrant who in 1847 settled in White County near his sister, Catherine Jüngling Hilger. The Hilger family, Rector found, was part of a group of 140 Germans who came to Arkansas from Germany in 1833.

The Ruth Yingling Rector Papers contain primary material, research notes, published materials, and correspondence pertaining to research on the history and genealogy of the Yingling family and the Rector family, as well as the Rheinhessen Emigration Society. Rector described her research in a December 1977 letter to Dr. Myra Ellen Jenkins, State Records Center & Archives of New Mexico:

"I have had the good fortune to receive from German archives and libraries several letters which were written by various members of the colony and sent back to relatives in the homeland. . . . As the story evolves, it is becoming obvious that this information should be published to benefit the hundreds of descendants of these 140 people. I am neither writer nor historian, but I have traveled several times along the Rhine River searching for the home of my ancestors. . . . [I]n the process . . . I have learned methods for German research, found records of the 1833 colony and continue the search."

Rector fully intended to write a book about the Rheinhessen Emigration Society, hoping initially to publish it at the time of the 1986 Arkansas Sesquicentennial. This did not happen, not because she was "neither writer nor historian," but because ill health cut short her efforts around 1990.

Having had the opportunity to process her papers and make them available for other researchers, I hope to have the honor of taking up where Ruth Yingling Rector left off in getting this story out, not just for the other descendants, but for anyone interested in early Arkansas history and its international connections.

The Butler Center for Arkansas Studies is grateful to Joe Lee Rector III for donating his mother's papers. ■

Contributed by Shirley Schuette, Manuscripts Assistant, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies



Ruth Yingling Rector

A Word from the Center

David Stricklin, Head of the Butler Center



Spring is a season of losses and gains, even in the history business. Much of Arkansas has suffered losses from bad weather this spring, including some CALS staffers. All of Arkansas suffered the loss of the incomparable Willie Oates, whose papers are in the archives of the Butler Center. We are about to lose our wonderful colleague Anna Morshedi, for happier reasons, who will move with

her husband to Utah for his medical residency. This is her last *Butler Banner*. But there are gains.

We now enjoy the services on a full-time basis of a fine librarian, Shari Hays, as reported on page 7, and we are joined by Bob Razer, as reported on page 6. Bob's work with us on collection development brings decades of experience in Arkansas bibliography to the Butler Center. I often refer to Bob as the Bibliographer Laureate of Arkansas. We're delighted to have him on board.

We've enjoyed gains in some other important areas. Prior to 2007, the Butler Center published a book every year or so. We published three last year and have six in the works for this year. Having Ted Parkhurst (see page 8) in on this part of our work will be an immense help. Having the new AV/AR database (page 1) up and running is also very exciting. We really hope this new tool will help researchers and teachers get quick access to useful excerpts of recorded speech for their various Arkansas history needs. Usage of our collections and online databases continues to grow rapidly. The new Arkansas Studies Institute (ASI) facility, which will house the Butler Center and several allied organizations, is taking shape. The interior is starting to give a visitor the sense of three-dimensionality, a welcome change after many months of looking at plans in only two dimensions. To get a spectacular view of some computerized images of the ASI facility, visit www.butlercenter.org.

Things are going very well here, testimony to the vision and dedication of many supporters and planners of the work of the Butler Center and the continued good work of our staff members, volunteers, and researchers. We are developing as rapidly as the weather in Arkansas changes. It's a great time to be here. If you haven't been in for a time, come by to see us! ■

Apology

We regret our failure to mention that the Edna A. Miller Collection, featured in the last issue of the *Butler Banner*, was graciously donated by Sue and Danny Gildner. ■

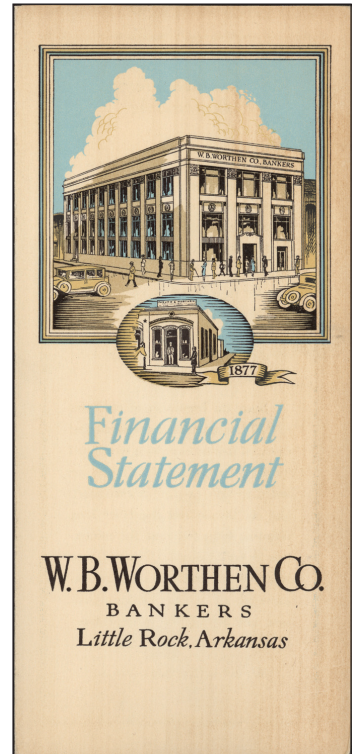
You Can Take That to the Bank!

The Butler Center recently acquired the business records of one of Arkansas's most well-known commercial institutions. Worthen Bank, founded in Little Rock by William Booker Worthen, first opened its doors for business in 1877. The company eventually grew into one of the largest banking institutions in the lower mid-South. In many ways, the growth of the bank and Arkansas's economic development are intertwined.

The collection consists of approximately fifty linear feet of records. It contains early ledger books (including the bank's first account book) as well as annual reports, newspaper clippings, correspondence, scrapbooks, and several hundred photographs. Also within the collection are several rolls of film, one of which includes images of the 1929 construction of the bank's building at Fourth and Main streets in Little Rock.

The Worthen Bank Records were donated by George Worthen, a local banker and the great grandson of the bank's founder. The collection will be processed and made available to researchers later this year. ■

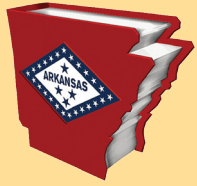
Contributed by Brian K. Robertson, Manuscripts Coordinator, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies



1932 Worthen Bank Pamphlet

French Visitor

The Butler Center opened its doors to French researcher Jennifer D'Hoir for a special research trip for her senior thesis. During her six weeks in Arkansas, D'Hoir researched the 2000 presidential election in Arkansas, trying to discover why Al Gore lost Arkansas. While at the Butler Center, D'Hoir used archival materials and interviewed Butler Center fellow Jay Barth and other political observers and participants. After completing her thesis, D'Hoir will receive a degree in political science with an emphasis in American politics. She will be back in the U.S. next year as a Fulbright Scholar. ■



THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ARKANSAS HISTORY & CULTURE

Senior Editor's Column

Nathania
Sawyer



David Stricklin teases me about my obsession with spreadsheets. I confess that I love looking at numbers because they give me a sense of perspective as to how we are doing. I use numbers a lot when I speak to groups—how many visitors we have, how many hits the website receives each month, and how these numbers have continued to grow since we launched. I laugh now when I think back to one of our early grant applications in which we predicted

ed that the encyclopedia would receive 50,000 hits per month. In January and again in February of this year, the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* received more than two million hits—that's forty times more hits than we originally estimated!

Those numbers tell me many things, but mostly they are validation that the public likes what we have created. Even without the numbers, I know the encyclopedia is a huge success. The feedback from teachers has been terrific, people frequently contact us for information because they believe we are an authoritative source, and we're seeing the encyclopedia cited in news stories all across the country. Recently, we were contacted by the *New*

York Times because the reporter was looking for sources of information about Bob Riley and whether or not he could be called the first legally blind governor.

Perhaps the best compliment we've received came from a historian who said it was second nature for him to go to the encyclopedia for information, and that it was hard for him to remember not having this resource available.

A lot of discussion circulates among state encyclopedia projects about sustainability. Creating a resource is one thing, but keeping it alive and viable is a challenge. I feel so lucky that the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas* has the unwavering support of the Central Arkansas Library System. We know that it will always have a home, and that CALS director, Bobby Roberts was serious in his pledge that it would remain staffed to keep it updated and a valuable resource for the state.

The encyclopedia's permanent home, along with the rest of the Butler Center's operations, will be in the Arkansas Studies Institute. I believe the Institute is just another example of how vibrant the history community is in Arkansas. I look forward to working with other Arkansas history institutions and organizations to build on the current momentum and make our state's history accessible to everyone. ■

Explorations of Arkansas History

Guy
Lancaster

Historically, Arkansas's wilderness has been viewed as a lair of dangers. There were those black bears that gave the state its unofficial nickname the "Bear State" for so long. Snakes we have as well—cottonmouths and copperheads are the most common, though we also have the coral snake and a few species of rattlesnake. That's four of four of North America's poisonous snakes, for those keeping count. We also have both of North America's poisonous spider species, the black widow and the brown recluse, as well as the larger but less dangerous tarantula. And up until the twentieth century, mosquitoes spread malaria and other diseases.

However, the one species of scorpion present in Arkansas, the striped bark scorpion (*Centruroides vittatus*), hasn't attracted much fear or dread. This scorpion lives

primarily in western Arkansas, where it tends to be most active from April until June and may even be found roaming around the attics of houses. Its venom is of relatively low toxicity, likely causing swelling and perhaps a bit of nausea.

You will soon be able to read about the striped bark scorpion on the

Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture website. That's because the Encyclopedia covers natural history as well as social history. There are entries on birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians, wildflowers, butterflies, and moths; species both common and endangered and other aspects of Arkansas's natural environment are all available at the click of a mouse. And we're looking at adding even more, so lovers of nature should check back with us regularly to see what else has joined our cuddly snakes, friendly spiders, and favorite little scorpion. ■



CALS Takes Over the Literary Festival

The 2009 Arkansas Literary Festival will be operated by the Central Arkansas Library System (CALS). The Arkansas Literary Festival was started in 2004 by Arkansas Literacy Councils, Inc., as a unique way to emphasize the importance and joy of reading. Bobby Roberts, director of CALS, says, "CALS and the Arkansas Literary Festival naturally complement each other. CALS is pleased to be able to continue the good work that has taken place over the past four years."

Each April in Little Rock's River Market District, the Arkansas Literary Festival offers free author sessions, book signings, children's craft and writing activities, costumed characters, street performers, writing workshops, an outdoor book fair, and more. The Festival has attracted nationally prominent authors and well as regional authors.

David Stricklin, head of the Butler Center, and Susan Hill Gelé, CALS's assistant director for public relations, will be in charge of

the 2009 Festival. Gelé says that, "The Arkansas Literary Festival is a great community event. CALS has been a part of it since the beginning, and I am excited about our future role in the Festival. I am looking forward to wonderful things." ■



WANTED

AUTHORS AND MEDIA

We need authors, photographs, documents, video, maps, and audio clips to help make the Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture the most complete resource on Arkansas history.

Entries Needing Media:

Arkansas Literacy Councils
Arkansas State Horticultural Society
Audubon Arkansas
Crop Circles
Hugh Anderson Dinsmore
Barry Lee Fairchild
Garvan Woodland Gardens
Nelson Hackett
Harrison Race Riots
John Wesley Huddleston
Information Galore
Island 37
Jay Noal Lawhon
Lois Lenski
Mallet Expeditions
William Francis McBeth
Ewell Ross McCright
Peter Gregory McGehee
Memphis-Arkansas Memorial Bridge
Oden (Montgomery County)
Old Mike
Religious Society of Friends

Earl Thornton Ricks
Rotary Club of Little Rock
St. Charles Lynching of 1904
Frank Stanford
Timberfest
Frank Glasgow Tinker
Kathryne Bess Hail Travis
Tucker Telephone

If you have pictures or other media, please contact Mike Keckhaver at mkeckhaver@encyclopediaofarkansas.net

Entries Needing Authors:

Lake City (Craighead County)
Lincoln County
Magnolia (Columbia County)
Marion (Crittenden County)
Sevier County

If you would like to write one of these entries, please contact Anna Lancaster at alancaster@encyclopediaofarkansas.net

Bill Clinton State Government Project

Bob Razer and Frances Morgan have been hard at work processing William J. Clinton's gubernatorial papers under the Bill Clinton State Government Project. After a re-organization of CALS staff, Bob Razer, former manager of the project, will now lead the Butler Center in collection development. Razer has a life-long love for Arkansas history and a vast knowledge of Arkansas authors and printed materials relating to our state.

"The Arkansas Studies Institute is a wonderful concept. I look forward to helping ASI fulfill its potential, to expanding the scope of the Butler Center's collections, to developing some new special collections especially pertinent to Little Rock and the state, and to helping demonstrate the truth of Faulkner's comment, 'The past is not dead...

it's not even past," says Razer.

Former Bill Clinton State Government Project assistant manager, Frances Morgan, will take over as manager of the project. Morgan has been a CALS employee for over fourteen years and is excited about her continued work on the project. "I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to direct the processing of this fascinating and important collection," says Morgan. Joining Morgan is Jamie Metrailer, the Clinton Project's new archival assistant, who comes to us from the Arkansas History Commission. Metrailer has worked for CALS as a library assistant at the Williams branch library, as an intern and contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, and as a volunteer in the Butler Center. ■

flash ...Butler Center Events in the Spotlight



"This I Believe" recording with Phil Mariage, David Stricklin, Senator Mark Pryor, and Senator David Pryor



William H. Bowen at March Legacies & Lunch



Arkansas Studies Institute weekly building meeting



Brian K. Robertson shows Phillip Purifoy photographs during his day at the Butler Center as part of a job shadowing program at Jefferson Elementary School

BUTLER CENTER DONORS

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Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture

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Gordon Wittenberg, Little Rock
George Worthen, Little Rock

Butler Center Welcomes Shari Hays

Shari Hays joins the Butler Center team to help catalog new material and assist patrons with their research. Hays is not new to the Central Arkansas Library System (CALS). She has been employed by CALS for six years as Fletcher Library branch manager and then as a cataloger in the Main Library's technical services department. Hays has been cataloging Butler Center material for some time, but now will become a full-time Butler Center staff member. Hays will also perform book and pamphlet preservation work. Hays says, "I studied preservation in graduate school at University of North Texas when I was working on my master's in library science. I really enjoyed learning how to preserve, protect, and extend the life of fragile and precious materials."



Parkhurst Takes Lead of Book Publishing

Founder of August House Publishers, Ted Parkhurst has been named manager of book publishing for the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, a program funded privately through a generous gift from John G. and Dora “DeDe” Ragsdale. Parkhurst’s 25 years in the publishing world bring experience and knowl-



Ted Parkhurst



Senator David Pryor

edge to an already successful publishing program. Former president of the Publishers Association of the South and past chairman of the UALR University History Institute, Parkhurst will guide the Butler Center in material selection and marketing. With over 600 published works by Arkansas authors under his belt, Parkhurst will take the Butler Center publishing program to a new level.

“Showing the new Butler Center Books logo recently at the Arkansas Historical Association, it was instantly clear to me that the Butler Center is highly regarded in Arkansas’s community of authors. We at the Butler Center plan to publish with an entrepreneurial spirit, fulfilling Mr. Butler’s legacy in books that will delight and inform readers throughout the state and beyond,” says Parkhurst.

Parkhurst will begin his work by publishing Senator David Pryor’s autobiography. “It is an honor to publish the work of such a key Arkansas figure,” said David Stricklin, head of the Butler Center. “Senator Pryor has experienced many crucial moments in Arkansas’s history, and the Butler Center is pleased to help put those experiences on paper and into the hands of readers.” ■

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