The Butler Banner
Newsletter of the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies
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Serving Arkansas, Preserving Its History

In its archives, the Butler Center holds the papers of governors, the handwritten wartime journals of soldiers on American soil and overseas, works of art by the famous and the lesser known, and countless other items gathered over the years by those who care enough about the past to preserve its artifacts and materials and give them a safe home. This kind of care is also taken by those who donate records from nonprofit organizations, as people who serve tirelessly for the sake of many important missions in the state also care deeply about preserving the history of their efforts. The Butler Center has already made available to researchers many collections from nonprofits, including the records of the Quapaw Quarter, Poets’ Roundtable of Arkansas, Panel of American Women, National Conference for Community and Justice, and Fiction Writers of Central Arkansas. The Butler Center will also receive the records of the Arkansas Red Cross.

Two collections in this same tradition have just been opened to researchers: the Little Rock YMCA Records and the Central Arkansas Chapter, National Audubon Society Records.

YMCA
The collection of documents from the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) of Little Rock comprises twenty-nine bound volumes and some loose papers that contain minutes and reports of the Board of Directors of the Little Rock YMCA, mostly covering the years from 1910 to 1990.

The YMCA was founded in London, England, in 1844 to provide a refuge for Bible study and prayer for young men seeking escape from the hazards of life on the streets. The organization aimed to meet social needs in the city and to cross social-class barriers. The first YMCA in the United States opened in Boston in 1851, and the Little Rock YMCA was established in 1885. Included in the Butler Center’s collection are copies of the Constitution of the Little Rock YMCA as it was written in 1901, as well as revised bylaws approved by the Little Rock YMCA in the 1970s. The official documents of the board reflect the social history of Little Rock during two world wars, the Great Depression, desegregation, and many other major events of the twentieth century.

The Little Rock YMCA Records also contain documents that describe the efforts to place the YMCA building at the corner of 6th Street and Broadway Avenue on the National Register of

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Historic Places, a goal reached in 1979, as well as the further history of that building. The YMCA originally met on the second floor of a building at 4th and Main Streets. It then had a building (completed by the firm of Charles L. Thompson in 1905) at Capitol and Scott Streets. The “new” building (completed by the firm of George Mann and Eugene John Stern in 1928) became a Little Rock landmark. The facility was closed in 1996, with the space eventually converted to commercial use. Work has been done, however, to preserve and restore the historical character of the building.

Audubon Society

The Audubon Society of Central Arkansas, a chapter of the National Audubon Society, was founded in 1952 as the Pulaski County Audubon Society. It changed its name in 1981 to reflect the larger regional interest of the group.

Named for naturalist John James Audubon (who visited the Arkansas Territory in 1820 and 1822, describing and depicting the birds of the territory), the National Audubon Society focuses attention on conservation of natural resources, with a particular emphasis on the wild birds of America.

The Central Arkansas Chapter, National Audubon Society Records include many documents that illustrate the work of the local chapter, such as field trips, films, programs, and workshops. Also detailed is a “crash bird course” that helps spotters identify the roughly 350 species of birds that can be seen in Arkansas. The records include official minutes and reports from chapter meetings, correspondence with other chapters and with the national organization, and records of involvement in other local organizations, including the Little Rock Zoo, the Meadowcreek Project, the Arkansas Nature Conservancy, and the Arkansas Wildlife Federation.

The chapter publishes a quarterly newsletter—originally called The Pulaski Snipe and since 1981 The Snipe—and the collection contains every copy from 1967 through 1997. One of the more notable subjects covered in the letters and other documents is the efforts of the chapter around 1987 to negotiate with Arkansas’s fish farmers regarding government agencies’ limits on the killing of waterbirds (such as egrets and herons); the waterbirds were causing problems for the farmers by feasting on the young farmed fish. The chapter also raised money in the 1980s to provide a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of Arkansas residents who were maiming and killing wild birds.

Like all the Butler Center’s manuscript collections, both the Central Arkansas Chapter, National Audubon Society Records and the Little Rock YMCA Records can be accessed by the public in the Research Room of the Arkansas Studies Institute (ASI) building.

Continuing Efforts

According to Butler Center manager David Stricklin, “Our research room in the ASI building has become one of the best places in Arkansas to study the efforts and benefits of nonprofits in Arkansas. When you figure in the collections held by the UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture with the Butler Center’s total collections, there are more than sixty collections from nonprofits in Arkansas available to researchers at the ASI. We’re very pleased to add these great materials to a large and vibrant body of research resources.” The Butler Center encourages other nonprofits to donate their records to preserve their important work.
A Word from the Center
David Stricklin, Manager of the Butler Center

Having been obsessed with ideas of time and place for many decades, I’m always fascinated by the changing of the seasons and the way those changes affect the landscape. At the Butler Center, we have a lot of recurring events that drive on into the future, irrespective of seasonal cues such as weather, leaves on or off the trees, or what kinds of gear people feel led to put on their heads.

Much of our time is spent planning, promoting, and carrying out our events. The flagship of our monthly events is Legacies & Lunch. We also have genealogy training events every month, and now we have a full-scale monthly concert. We also offer dozens of presentations, workshops, tours, and all kinds of other events throughout the year during which we tell people about Arkansas history and what we are doing to preserve, interpret, and share it with you.

Then there are the annual events with great sweep and power to influence and guide those who want to know about the state’s past or improve their ability to get at it. For many years now, one of those events has been our summer genealogy conference. That event has been guided by our great colleague Rhonda Stewart, whose skill in genealogical research and passion for sharing her knowledge have been keystones of our success since she joined our staff in 2005. This year’s conference featured Billie Fogarty, who taught people about land records and tombstones, among other things, and what they have to tell about the people who came to places, put their stamp on those places, and then were put within the very ground of those places. It was a powerful event that spread understanding and skill. That summarizes a lot of what we try to do.

Our events are important to us. They connect the Butler Center with people who want to know things. Sometimes, people at these events communicate to us what they want to know more about. Events, then, spawn other events or initiatives, or they inspire us to create new resources.

I hope you will be able to attend one of our events soon. There are a lot of them, as you can tell from this newsletter (see the sidebar on page 1). Come see us and find out what all the fuss is about!

Speaking of newsletters and fuss, we are surely one of the last organizations with a paper newsletter. It is a very expensive thing to produce, which is one of the reasons so many organizations have stopped doing it. Help us keep doing it—or at least do it more efficiently—by letting us know if you still wish to receive your copy by U.S. Mail or if you would like to help us save some money by receiving it by email. Send an email to our outreach coordinator Kate Chagnon at kchagnon@cals.org so we can confirm or amend your preference. Or, you can drop me a note (and maybe include a donation...) at 100 Rock St., Little Rock, 72201, to declare your allegiance to the paper version.

Echoes of the Ancestors:
Native American Objects from the University of Arkansas
Concordia Hall Gallery through March 15
An artistic display of objects created by Native Americans in ceramics, wood, grass, cane, and shell materials.
Butler Center Galleries are open 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday and admission is free.
The Butler Center is proud to announce a new initiative to document and preserve the role of Arkansans in the Vietnam War. This project follows the award-winning online collection FORGOTTEN: The Arkansas Korean War Project and demonstrates the Butler Center’s continued commitment to collecting and disseminating the state’s military history.

More than 58,000 Americans were killed in the Vietnam War, including 592 Arkansans. The Vietnam War was complicated and often controversial, with guerrilla and chemical warfare, intense bombing campaigns, atrocities, and political maneuvering—coupled with an unpopular draft and widespread protests. The war affected the United States in ways still felt today.

The Butler Center wants to make contact with Arkansans who served during the conflict, family members of veterans, and civilians wanting to share memories of the war. We hope to preserve photographs, letters, diaries, and other documents to help future generations understand the human side of this conflict.

Additionally, the Arkansas Vietnam War Project will include an oral history component, allowing veterans, family members, and civilians to share their personal memories of the war. Highlights from the collection materials, as well as additional information and questionnaires, will be available online for easy access.

For more information or to fill out a questionnaire, visit www.butlercenter.org/arkansas-vietnam-war-project. If you have questions or would like a questionnaire mailed to you, contact Brian Robertson, project director, at brianr@cals.org or (501) 320-5723.

Arkansas Vietnam War veteran Larry Weaver.

Give the gift of Arkansas art!

Paintings
Sculpture
Pottery
Cards
Jewelry
and More

Butler Center Galleries
401 President Clinton Ave.
Little Rock
(501) 320-5790
Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-6 p.m.
For August’s Legacies & Lunch, Frank Sata spoke about how his experiences as a child in an internment camp in Arkansas during World War II shaped the future for himself and his family. This lecture was held in the Ron Robinson Theater in partnership with the Clinton School of Public Service.


For October’s Legacies & Lunch, Nancy Hendricks talked about the life of U.S. Senator Hattie Caraway.

Dave Rosen Big Band—Arkansas Sounds concert series, July

Suzy Bogguss—Arkansas Sounds concert series, September

On September 16, the Butler Center hosted a delegation of Russian archivists from the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Center who learned about the various ways we manage our collections and connect with the community. They are pictured here with Archival Assistant and AV/AR Specialist Anna Lancaster.

Editor Guy Lancaster and illustrator Ron Wolfe at the signing table for the September launch of *Arkansas in Ink: Gunslingers, Ghosts, and Other Graphic Tales* (Butler Center Books, 2014).

Ben Nichols—Arkansas Sounds concert series, August
The inside history of rock and roll pioneers and their origin in the river town of Newport

Arkansas in Ink
Gamblers, Ghosts, and Other Graphic Tales

Encyclopedia of Arkansas entries paired with witty cartoons bring to life the wacky but true stories of Arkansas history.

From Azaleas to Zydeco
A 4,500-Mile Journey through the South

Inspired by a 1937 map and travelogue, an author journeys through the unique cities of the South.

We Wanna Boogie
The Rockabilly Roots of Sunnys Boogies and the Proces

In 1920, a sophisticated California woman moves with her husband to an Arkansas cotton farm and weaves a keenly observant narrative in her letters home.

Muzzled Oxen
Hoping Cotton and Saving Hope in 1920s Arkansas

A German immigrant soldier marches through scorching summers and brutal winters to fight in savage Civil War combat—and captures it all in his journal.

Butler Center Books are available at River Market Books & Gifts on the Main Library campus in Little Rock and other local bookstores, through the University of Arkansas Press (via University of Chicago Press) at (800) 621-2736, and from online retailers. To see a complete list, please visit www.butlercenter.org/publication.

For the music lover on your list—a photo-filled reference on Arkansas music, past and present
Encyclopedia of Arkansas: Of Mussels and Men

By Guy Lancaster, EOA editor

Do you know what a “derecho” is? You will soon, because the Encyclopedia of Arkansas (EOA) has an entry in progress on the subject—in this case, a particular weather phenomenon. In fact, the EOA is currently working to expand its offerings in the categories of science and nature, with numerous entries in development covering various classes of plants and animals, specific endemic species, and important scientific and agricultural research centers in the state.

Far from being an excursion away from the realm of “proper” history, the expansion of the science and nature components of the EOA helps to illuminate and reveal human history as well, because people, as the Catalan writer Ignasi Ribó explains, “are embodied beings, embedded in a natural and a cultural environment, members of a human community but also of a biological community.” Arkansas’s history has been shaped dramatically by microscopic organisms, from the Plasmodium protozoan that causes malaria to the influenza virus that disrupted Arkansas life and politics in 1918. Plant-parasitic nematodes remain one of the most pernicious agricultural pests for both Arkansas and the world at large. And last year, the never-smooth surface of Arkansas politics was further roiled by the possibility that the federal government would designate forty percent of the state as critical habitat for two endangered mussel species.

There is no easy division between nature and history, and making the EOA more useful to a wider circle of readers means tackling the stuff most of us last confronted in a biology textbook. If you’d like to join the fun, click on the “Get Involved” tab on the EOA homepage (www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net) to find the list of entries we are seeking.

Entries Needing Media (photographs, etc.):
Arkadelphia Presbyterian Academy
Osro Cobb
Carl Richey “Cotton” Cordell
Corinth (Howard County)
Cotton Plant Academy
Incoming Kingdom Missionary Unit
Indian Bay (Monroe County)
Mitchellville (Desha County)
Monticello Academy
Montrose (Ashley County)
Clarence Bloomfield Moore
Charlotte Moorman
John Pruitt
Rabbits Foot Lodge
Raggio (Lee County)
Reed (Desha County)

Entries Needing Authors:
Evangeline K. Brown
Diphtheria
Kathryn Hall-Trujillo
Gladys McFadden & the Loving Sisters
Office of the Surgeon General
Whooping Cough
If you would like to write one of these entries, please contact Guy Lancaster at glan caster@encyclopediaofarkansas.net

James Byron Reed
Benjamin Franklin Rice
Yancopin (Desha County)
Yellowhammer
If you have pictures or other media, please contact Mike Keckhaver at mkeckhaver@encyclopediaofarkansas.net

We need entries, photographs, documents, videos, maps, and audio clips to help make the EOA the most comprehensive and engaging resource on Arkansas history.

WANTED: AUTHORS AND MEDIA

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Buxton Brickyard in Nashville, Arkansas; circa late 1800s. The brickyard was started by Fred M. Buxton in 1884. He later sold the land and opened a second brickyard in 1897. From the Lucille and Parker Westbrook Collection.