Little Rock Council of Garden Clubs Records

Gardening and landscaping are generally private activities shaped by individual standards of beauty as well as limits of available time and money. By the 1920s, though, gardeners began to form garden clubs so they could meet with like-minded people to discuss their hobby and encourage one another. By 1933, Pulaski County was home to five such clubs. The leader of these clubs decided to form a federation that could help them to communicate with one another and undertake projects larger than any single garden club could manage alone.

The City Federation of Garden Clubs was founded in April 1933 by the five local garden clubs. The federation incorporated in 1952, and it changed its name to the Greater Little Rock Council of Garden Clubs, Inc., in 1955. More garden clubs were established over the years, while some disband-
ed. As of 2016, the Council represents seventeen garden clubs in Little Rock, North Little Rock, and Maumelle. The Council Board meets regularly to record information and to plan events and fundraisers. Among their regular events are garden tours, flower shows, workshops, luncheons, and the annual Holiday Extravaganza.

The records of the Little Rock Council of Garden Clubs include minutes and reports from the Council’s board meetings, financial records, and information about various events sponsored by the Council over the years. Many items from the various individual garden clubs are also collected in the records, including yearbooks, history books, scrapbooks, and membership information. In particular, the scrapbooks are valuable sources of information about the history and activities of the clubs.

The Council’s records also include a library of clippings and reports related to gardening. 

Cont. on page 2

Plum Bayou Levee District Records Available

Creating farmland out of the swamp and overflow lands in the Mississippi River Delta required draining water from the land and building levees to ward off the inevitable periodic floods. Without drainage, the land was useless for farming, but inundations also created problems for farmers. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the United States Congress and the Arkansas General Assembly authorized a number of levee and drainage projects to try to reduce flooding and control waterways, including, in 1905, the Plum Bayou Levee District affecting Lonoke, Jefferson, and Pulaski counties. Records from this levee district are among the resources recently made available to researchers at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies.

The Plum Bayou Levee District Board was authorized to sell bonds to finance the construction of levees along the Arkansas River and its tributary streams. Maintenance and improvement of the levees required additional bonds as well as taxes collected to repay the bonds. Some property owners near the river objected to the levees, both because their property was being taken by the government for flood control and because of fear that the levees might divert floodwaters onto their property. The Plum Bayou Levee District records include correspondence and legal papers representing the
This library has folders with information about plants, ranging from African violets to wildflowers, interspersed with other folders covering such topics as flower arranging, environmental education, and parliamentary procedure. One of the goals of the Council was to maintain a garden center in Little Rock. In 1946, the Council was allotted space in the Little Rock Public Library (at that time located on Louisiana Street) for a collection of books about gardening and for information on the various garden clubs. Sears Roebuck and Company made space for a garden center in its Little Rock store in 1952 and paid the salary of the center’s director for several years. The center was moved to Adkins-Phelps in 1957, and then to the Green Thumb Garden Center, and was staffed by volunteers. In 1962, it was relocated to the Senior Center in MacArthur Park, using the building formerly occupied by the Little Rock Fire Department. In September 1974, the Garden Center was moved to Hillcrest Hall (which is now a facility owned by the Central Arkansas Library System) on Kavanaugh Blvd. in Little Rock.

The collection can be accessed in the Research Room of the Arkansas Studies Institute (ASI) building, and the finding aid is available online here.

controversy over the levee project. The records also include detailed financial accounts, including ledgers maintained by the board. Minutes of board meetings, reports to the board from its officers and from engineers, and maps of the district are also included in the records.

The Flood of 1927, which lasted from spring through September, devastated many parts of Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Tennessee, and caused every levee between Fort Smith (Sebastian County) and Little Rock to fail. The Mississippi River remained at flood stage for a record 153 days. Most Arkansans could return to their homes in August or September, and they began to rebuild. In light of this, perhaps the most poignant words among the Plum Bayou Levee District records are these, from an engineer’s report, May 10, 1927: “For a good many years it has been the custom of the engineer, at your annual meeting, to submit a report covering conditions as they have existed during the past year, with recommendations as to work which may become necessary in the immediate future. Having that in mind, surveys were made and data arranged early in April for such a report. However, the unprecedented high water in the Arkansas River during the last half of April has changed conditions entirely. The report I had prepared would in no way apply, and I now find that lack of time makes it necessary for me to confine this partial report to a statement covering the location of the breaks we have suffered, and the amount of levee we have lost.” Ironically, much of the devastation from the flood was due to the “tinkering” of humans: despite unusually heavy rains, it was the levee system itself that resulted in the flood waters being poured into the Mississippi River Valley all at one time, as expansion of the tributaries was prevented by the levees.

Researchers can find detailed information about efforts to control flooding in Arkansas during the twentieth century in these records. Historical researchers and family researchers alike can also benefit from the descriptions of landowners and tax payers living in the district. The collection can be accessed in the Research Room of the ASI building, and the finding aid is available online here.
A Word from the Center
David Stricklin, Manager of the Butler Center

Arkansas Tech professor Tom DeBlack often says there’s a big future in Arkansas’s past. I’d paraphrase a little and say there’s a big present in Arkansas’s past. It’s hopping right now! I love to see people at one of our events who are excited because they feel history is important and have fun being around other people who share that feeling. My favorite illustration of that is from a time I talked with a family after one of our Arkansas Sounds concerts and asked one of the kids, a boy of about 10, if he’d enjoyed the music, and he said, “Best. Friday. Night. Ever!” That was cool for a lot of reasons, especially the fact that these parents had brought their kids with them.

I’m proud of our latest certified archivists, Nathania Sawyer and Steve Teske (see article below). CAs are like the CPAs of the archives world. Counting Frances Morgan and Brian Robertson, we’re pleased to have four of them on our staff and proud to share our space in the Arkansas Studies Institute building with four more from the UALR Center for Arkansas History and Culture: Sarah Bost, Danielle Butler, Garret Kremer-Wright, and Shannon Laush. There’s probably a collective noun for them, like “murder of crows” or “exaltation of larks.” I’m guessing a “folder of CAs.” An acid-free folder.

We’re going full blast on our curriculum project with the U.S. Department of State, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Arkansas Department of Education, and Clinton Presidential Center. We’ll have more to say in our next Banner, but I’d like to thank three Arkansas natives—two of whom don’t even live here anymore—for their work on this pathbreaking initiative for using art, documents, and other objects to get kids connected to history and civic engagement. One is our education coordinator, George West, a native of Little Rock and our leader on creating teaching resources. George’s predecessor, Kay Bland, a Nashville, Arkansas, native who now lives in Telluride, Colorado, is still very involved in leading this effort. Anne Menotti, a native of Bergman, works for the State Department in D.C. She brought us into this project and is doing a great job driving it forward as a model for teachers throughout the U.S. Stay tuned for more exciting news on what we’re calling the Arkansas Declaration of Learning. Come to the Ron Robinson Theater on the CALS Main Library campus at 10:15 on Monday morning, November 14, and then the Great Hall of the Clinton Center at 1:00 to hear gifted Arkansas teachers, State Department officials, and some of our folks tell about this work of national consequence.

We’re creating podcasts at the rate of one every two weeks, especially our series called Primary Sources, which you can reach here. It’s a remarkable testimony to the power of the people of Arkansas and the power of stories. But, to a great extent, that describes everything we do. We hope you get connected to it!

New Certified Archivists at the Butler Center

Congratulations to Nathania Sawyer and Steve Teske, the Butler Center’s newest certified archivists. Both are archival assistants in the Research Services Division.

What does it take to become a certified archivist? The study guide issued by the Academy of Certified Archivists includes a reading list of more than fifty books plus numerous articles from the past ten years from four different archival journals—more than 19,000 pages of reading material covering everything from legal and ethical issues to conservation techniques for archival materials.

The three-hour exam consists of 100 multiple-choice questions that test the candidates’ understanding of seven different knowledge domains. According to the academy, certified archivists possess expertise in and knowledge of all aspects of archival management, share a high level of professional attainment, and can prove that their skills meet a universal standard.

Nathania Sawyer and Steve Teske join Brian Robertson and Frances Morgan, who successfully passed the exam in 2010, giving the Butler Center a total of four certified archivists!
Earlier this year, rumors spread online that Arkansas was being considered as a filming location for Episode VIII of the Star Wars franchise, with a spot in the Ouachita Mountains to stand in for some new alien planet. These reports proved to be a hoax, but two movies filmed in Arkansas have actually been released this year. At the time I write this, Greater, the story of Razorback player Brandon Burlsworth, is still in theaters, while God’s Not Dead 2 did decent business earlier this year.

In fact, Arkansas has provided locations for many a noteworthy film—and quite a few stinkers. A Face in the Crowd (1957), which was Andy Griffith’s screen debut, remains an unparalleled examination of the power of media celebrities, while White Lightning (1973) launched Burt Reynolds into stardom and established him as king of the “redneck” genre. Some Arkansas movies proved critical successes, such as 1984’s A Soldier’s Story, which was nominated for multiple Academy Awards, as was Sling Blade (1996). For the latter, Arkansas native Billy Bob Thornton took home the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay. (Thornton’s next film in the state, 2001’s Daddy and Them, was not so successful.)

But not every Arkansas movie has proven so prestigious. Roger Corman, famed B-movie king, directed 1970’s Bloody Mama and produced two other movies in the state, Boxcar Bertha (1972) and Fighting Mad (1976); these latter two were directed by Martin Scorsese and Jonathan Demme, respectively. Charles Pierce’s The Legend of Boggy Creek (1972) brought the story of the Fouke Monster to a national audience and spawned two sequels. Other such movies don’t have the same devoted following. Wishbone Cutter (1977) remains a fairly obscure regional horror movie, while one review of Pass the Ammo (1988) said that “there’s better entertainment on the nightly news.”

Even star power can’t rescue some scripts. Despite a cast that included Bob Hoskins, Antonio Banderas, and Wes Bentley, The White River Kid, which was filmed around Hot Springs, proved so bad that it was never released in the United States but, instead, debuted on video in Spain and Bulgaria in 1999.

See our Movies entry for much more!
New Faces at the Butler Center

We have had several people join the Butler Center staff over the past few months, and we are happy to have such talented employees in our midst. Karen Risinger and Sandi Ward work in the Butler Center Galleries, assisting with retail sales and exhibitions. Ward spent five years at the CALS Roosevelt Thompson branch as the programmer for children and teens before becoming a page in the galleries; Risinger comes to us from Woodbridge, Virginia. She graduated from the College of William & Mary in 2015, got married, and moved to Little Rock. She started her CALS career at River Market Books & Gifts and Bookends Café before becoming a gallery assistant.

Kim Sanders joined the Butler Center in September as our confinement sites exhibit interpreter. Over the next two years, she will develop four exhibits centering around the Japanese American experience in World War II Arkansas. Sanders previously worked at the Historic Arkansas Museum as assistant exhibit curator and taught art history at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Brett Ratliff, the new program coordinator at the Butler Center, grew up in the coal camps of Van Lear, Kentucky. Prior to moving to Little Rock, he served as program director for Hindman Settlement School, the oldest rural settlement school in the country, which today serves as a cultural center.

Alysanne Crymes—who is the Butler Center’s new cataloger/serials librarian—has been a member of the CALS staff for thirty years, beginning with her first position in the Reference Department. Before coming to the Butler Center, she was the assistant manager/serials manager in the Information Services Department at the Main Library.

Arkansas Gems Shining Bright

Butler Center Books, our publishing division, had three of its books included in the 2016 Arkansas Gems program, which is directed by the Center for the Book at the Arkansas State Library. Each year, sixteen of the best Arkansas-related books published in the preceding year are selected to be featured on Arkansas Gems posters and bookmarks. These are distributed by the Arkansas State Library at the annual National Book Festival in Washington DC and also made available to public libraries and schools in Arkansas.

The three titles selected from the Butler Center were A Captive Audience: Voices of Japanese American Youth in World War II Arkansas, edited by Ali Welkly; Down and Dirty Down South by Roger Glasgow; and Notable Women of Arkansas: From Hattie to Hillary, 100 Names to Know by Dr. Nancy Hendricks. More information on the Arkansas Gems program can be found here.
August’s Arkansas Sounds concert featured Jim Mize and his band.

The Walter Henderson Group played the September Arkansas Sounds show.

Songwriters Wayland Holyfield (guitar) and Randy Goodrum (piano) performed some of their Top 40 hits at October’s Arkansas Sounds concert. They were joined by Holyfield’s daughter Lee Holyfield.
In September, Legacies & Lunch attendees went on an Arkansas epic journey with Bill Jones, who discussed the legend of Petit Jean.

At October’s Legacies & Lunch, Roger Glasgow took listeners back in time through the dark underbelly of crime and corruption in 1970s Little Rock.

Cindy Beckman, Butler Center Books author of *Man of Vision: Arkansas Education and the Legacy of Arch Ford*, with Arch Ford’s son Joe Ford (left) and grandson Scott Ford (right).

Legacies & Lunch, August, featured Dent Gitchel talking about the history of the Gridiron show.

Arkansas Sounds
Fri., Nov. 4, 7:00 p.m.
**CeDell Davis**
CALS Ron Robinson Theater
CeDell Davis, Helena native and blues legend, will perform with duo Zakk & Papa Binns and band Brethren to celebrate Davis’s 90th birthday and his 63-year career—$10

Fri., Dec. 9, 8:00 p.m.
**Richard Leo Johnson**
CALS Ron Robinson Theater
Richard Leo Johnson, El Dorado native and acoustic guitar master, will perform original music in his unorthodox, new age style. Photographs taken by Johnson will also be displayed at this event—FREE
What a privilege it is to write for the Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture, and what an honor to be asked to choose six entries everyone should read. I keep the EOA on my computer’s “Favorites” list and often start the day by surfing the EOA as a reminder of the place we call home. In no particular order, here are my choices.

**Coin Harvey** by Gaye Bland. Arkansas has traditionally attracted colorful characters, and if you’ve ever seen the ghostly ruins of Monte Ne rising from the waters of Beaver Lake, you have to wonder who put it there.

**Helen Gurley Brown** by Dr. Nancy Hendricks. I am biased, having had the honor to write this one, but with all her extraordinary success in Los Angeles, New York, and around the world, HGB was still an Arkie at heart and chose Arkansas as her final resting place.

**Hot Springs** by Guy Lancaster. The Spa City remains our state’s colorful sparkling gem, adding more facets all the time such as the world-class Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival right in our own backyard.

**Ragtime composer Scott Joplin of Texarkana (Miller County), known as the “King of Ragtime”; circa 1908.**

**Scott Joplin** by Stephen Husarik. Not only can we learn more about Arkansas’s own “King of Ragtime,” who became a posthumous superstar with the 1973 movie *The Sting*, but thanks to EOA media, we can also listen to his remarkable music while reading his entry.

**Farkleberry Follies** by Ernest Dumas. Not only is the entry an interesting one (written by Ernie Dumas, how could it be otherwise?), but it also might inspire someone else to pick up the reins of this event, whose end was lamented by many.

**Hattie Caraway** by Julienne Crawford. Reading about the first woman elected (and reelected) to the U.S. Senate, it’s a great reminder that it’s never too late to make a difference. Many people who attended college in Arkansas benefited from her contributions whether they know it or not.

**Coin Harvey** by Gaye Bland. Arkansas has traditionally attracted colorful characters, and if you’ve ever seen the ghostly ruins of Monte Ne rising from the waters of Beaver Lake, you have to wonder who put it there.

**Governor Dale Bumpers (right) with Bob Parey, who played the governor in the Farkleberry Follies; circa 1971.**

**Hattie Ophelia Wyatt Caraway** by Julienne Crawford. Reading about the first woman elected (and reelected) to the U.S. Senate, it’s a great reminder that it’s never too late to make a difference. Many people who attended college in Arkansas benefited from her contributions whether they know it or not.

**Author and Cosmopolitan editor Helen Gurley Brown.**
Thanks to these sponsors of the Butler Center’s monthly Arkansas Sounds Concert Series

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From Hattie to Hillary, 100 Names to Know
by Dr. Nancy Herdiks
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Southern Fried
Spring Whole Hog in a State of Wonder

For the Arkansas history buff on your list—
Arkansas history explained in one flag, four songs, and a handful of symbols

Arkansas in Ink
Gun-Slingers, Ghosts, and Other Graphic Tales

For the Civil War buff on your list—
Essays examining Arkansas’s role in the Civil War

Competing Memories
The Legacy of Arkansas’s Civil War

For the music lover on your list—a photo-filled reference on Arkansas music, past and present

New this fall!—Rex Nelson’s columns from the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette exploring Arkansas’s food, sports, people, and culture

New this fall! For the Arkansas history buff on your list—

Butler Center Books are available at River Market Books & Gifts on the Main Library campus in Little Rock and other bookstores, from online retailers, and through the University of Arkansas Press (via University of Chicago Press) at (800) 621-2736. See a complete list of Butler Center Books [here](#).
Entries Needing Media (photographs, etc.):
Charles Allbright
Jack Appleby (1907–1974)
Arkadelphia Male and Female Institute
William H. "Dub" Arnold
Clarence Bell
Jesse N. "Buddy" Benson (1933–2011)
Anita Blackmon
Lyle Brown (1908–1984)
Burtsell (Clark County)
Samuel Thompson Busey (1867–1962)
Carpenter’s Produce
Florence Clyde Chandler (1901–1984)
Chinn Spring (Independence County)
Richard D’Cantillon Collins (1801–1841)
John Carroll Cone (1891–1976)
William Delford (Willie) Davis
William Emmet Davis (1918–2016)
Elizabeth (Jackson County)
Floyd Hurt Fulkerson Jr. (1921–)
Galley Rock
Glenn Rowlett Gant
Virginia Gardner (1904–1992)
Jim Gaston
Janice Holt Giles
Mary Lowe Good
Green Forest Water Tower
Greenville (Clark County)
Geleve Grice (1922–2004)
Bill Halter
Carey Allen Harris (1806–1842)
Allie Cleveland Harrison (1924–2012)
Marion Steele Hays (1925–2011)
Jesse Smith Henley (1917–1997)
Curt Huckaby
Mary Dengler Hudgins (1901–1987)

Entries Needing Authors:
Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame
Arkansas Rural Education Association
Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery
Aromatique
Bureau of Legislative Research
C. E. Barton & Company
Fort Smith Tornado of 1898
Rufus King Garland
Robert LeFari
Legislative Caucuses
Norris Church Mailer
Mayflower Oil Spill (a.k.a. Pegasus Pipeline Oil Spill)
Petticoat Governments
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James Tillotson Whitehead

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Inside Our eCollections

This feature of our Butler eBanner invites readers to click their way into our many and varied digital resources. Featured this time are Butler Center Books authors who have talked about their research and books at our monthly Legacies & Lunch lecture series.

Dr. Nancy Hendricks: Notable Women of Arkansas: From Hattie to Hillary, 100 Names to Know

Charlotte Schexnayder: Salty Old Editor: An Adventure in Ink

Bernadette Cahill: Signing her book Arkansas Women and the Right to Vote: The Little Rock Campaigns, 1868–1920

Mark Christ: This Day We Marched Again: A Union Soldier’s Account of War in Arkansas and the Trans-Mississippi

Marvin Schwartz (with Sonny Burgess and the Pacers): We Wanna Boogie: The Rockabilly Roots of Sonny Burgess and the Pacers