



I'm Heather Zbinden and I'm a public historian from the Central Arkansas Library System. My office is housed in the Roberts Library (across the street from the Main Library in Little Rock). I program for the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies and the Encyclopedia of Arkansas. I've been at CALS since 2017 and before that, I worked on the Life Interrupted project and at Central High Museum and Visitor Center, the Old State House Museum, and Mosaic Templars Cultural Center. And then I left history and museums for about 7 years and owned a yarn shop.

In this first session, I'm going to talk about general Arkansas history but in the later sessions, I want it to be more dialogue about what you want to see from the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, the Roberts Library, and the Encyclopedia of Arkansas. How can we help you teach Arkansas history, geography, economics, and government better?

How many of you are familiar with the Encyclopedia of Arkansas?

How many use it in your classroom?

For the past 17 years, the staff of the CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas has tried to make sure that the story of this place is documented in an accessible digital format.

This free resource has almost everything you might want to know about the 25th state. And the EOA staff are in the habit of finding the most unique of those stories to tell.

Where are you from?

What grade do you teach?

What subject(s) do you teach?



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The Encyclopedia of Arkansas launched in 2006 with 700 entries and 900 pieces of media.

You can stop by the EOA for tidbits like THIS DAY IN ARKANSAS HISTORY and PHOTO OF THE DAY...

As well as to see trending entries and what's been newly added or updated.

We are updating all the time. When someone we have an entry on dies, we are often the place the newspaper checks to confirm it is true.

7,000+
entries

ALL ENTRIES FLOOD OF 1927

Flood of 1927

AKA: Great Flood of 1927
AKA: Mississippi River Flood of 1927
AKA: 1927 Flood

The Flood of 1927 was the most destructive and costly flood in Arkansas history and one of the worst in the history of the nation. It afflicted Arkansas with a greater amount of devastation, both human and monetary, than the other affected states in the **Mississippi River** Valley. It had social and political ramifications which changed the way Arkansas, as well as the nation, viewed relief from natural disasters and the responsibility of government in aiding the victims, echoing the **Hurricane Katrina** disaster in the present day.

In largely agrarian Arkansas, the Flood of 1927 covered about 6,600 square miles, with thirty-six out of seventy-five Arkansas counties under water up to thirty feet deep in places. In Arkansas, more people were affected by the floodwaters (over 350,000), more farmland inundated (over two million acres), more Red Cross camps were needed (eighty of the 154 total), and more families received relief than any other state (41,243). In Arkansas, almost 100 people died, more than any state except Mississippi. In monetary terms, the losses in Arkansas (totaling over \$1 million in 1927 dollars for relief and recovery) surpassed any other affected state.

The Flood of 1927 had its origins both in nature and in man. In the late 1920s, technological advances kept pace with the growing economy. Heavy machinery enabled the construction of a vast system of **levees** to hold back rivers that tended to overrun their banks. Drainage projects opened up new, low-lying lands that had once been forests but had been left bare by the **timber industry**.

ENTRY Flood of 1927

TIME PERIOD

Early Twentieth Century (1901 - 1940)

CATEGORY

Environment / Land and Resources / Natural Disasters

TYPE

Event

LESSON PLANS

1927 Flood (Grades 5-8)

Arkansas's Top Ten Events (Grades 6-12)

Hard Times (Grades 7-12)

Mucket Mania (Grades 6-12)

Rollin' on the River (Grades 5-12)

Southern Flood Blues (Grades 9-12)

More than 7,000 entries

- 
- **EVERY** incorporated community
 - **Government officials**
 - **Civil rights organizations from NAACP to CLOB**
 - **EVERY** military action including the **smallest skirmishes**
 - **Wildlife, flowers, plants**

WE HAVE ENTRIES ON ...

Every incorporated community and hundreds of unincorporated ones

ENTRIES ON

Government officials, including those who served in Congress, Arkansas constitutional officers, individual state legislators, and even significant sheriffs, mayors, and county judges

Civil rights organizations from the national level, such as the NAACP, to the local level, such as CLOB (Council for Liberation of Blacks)

Military events from the Civil War, ranging from major battles (Pea Ridge) down to small local skirmishes; if someone in blue and someone in gray met in the woods between 1861 and 1865 we probably have an entry documenting it.

AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - birds, fish, mammals but also fungi, lichens, ferns, jellyfishes

AND WE ARE ALWAYS DEVELOPING MORE...

Developing entries on every film set or filmed in Arkansas, as well as every book, television show, and even individual episodes set in the state (Search: X-Files)



Produced by a public library

230 countries

EVERY continent

Used by government agencies and officials, students, media, genealogists, historians (local and national)

This week we have been quoted in the New York Times as well as other papers because of the docuseries that came out last Friday about the Duggers.

Users have come from every continent (including Antarctica) and more than 230 countries.

Over 175,000 users per month

We are the only state online encyclopedia produced by a public library.

Search results for **flood of 1927**

Search for...

13,000+ media

ENTRIES 264 MEDIA 0

Tupelo Flood

Pine Bluff Flood

Lake Village: 1927 Flood

MEDIA TYPE

- Photo 5
- Document 1

CATEGORY

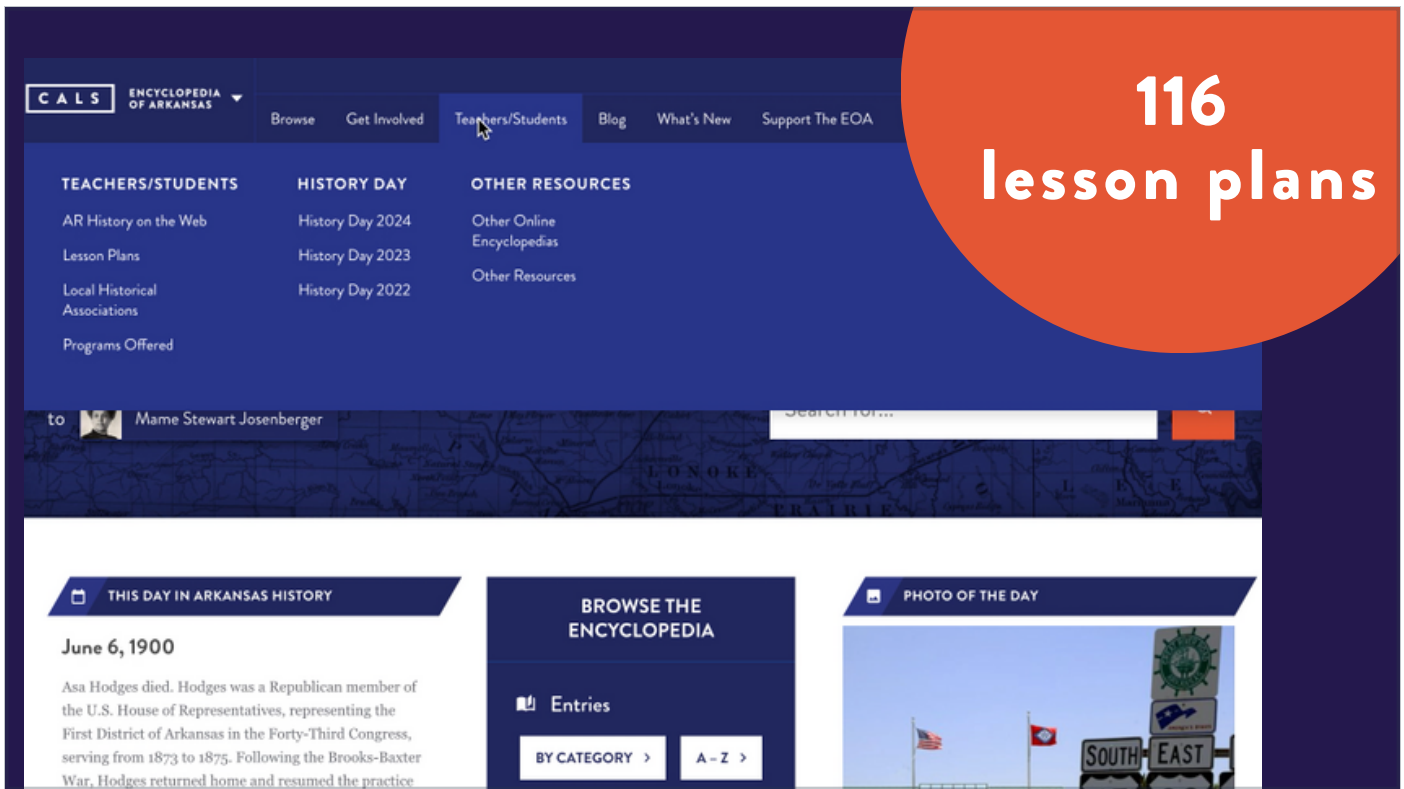
- Natural Disasters 7
- Chicot 2
- Desha 1
- Monroe 1

AND DO WE HAVE MEDIA...

We have worked with archives, libraries, museums, and universities around the state and the country to make sure that the EOA has visual images to illustrate our entries.

BUT THERE IS ALWAYS MORE TO FIND...

We rely on everyday citizens to help us locate photos.



116
lesson plans

So what do we offer especially for teachers and students?

We have a link page (who doesn't love a good link page) for other Arkansas History information on the web. Like links to State Parks and Arkansas Heritage sites...

The Arkansas Economic Development Census Data site

and other archives and special collections repositories

Plus a link to our lesson plans (which are not updated for the new standards but are awesome nonetheless).



TIME PERIOD
Pre-European Exploration (Prehistory – 1540)
European Exploration and Settlement (1541 – 1802)
Louisiana Purchase through Early Statehood (1803 – 1860)
Civil War through Reconstruction (1861 – 1874)
Post-Reconstruction through the Gilded Age (1875 – 1900)
Early Twentieth Century (1901 – 1940)
World War II through the Faubus Era (1941 – 1967)
Divergent Prosperity and the Arc of Reform (1968–2022)
Divergent Prosperity and the Arc of Reform (1968-2022)
Does not Apply
Modern Era (2023 – the Present)

And the Arkansas Dept of Education uses the timeperiods we use at the EOA as their timeperiods for social studies so everything dovetails nicely.



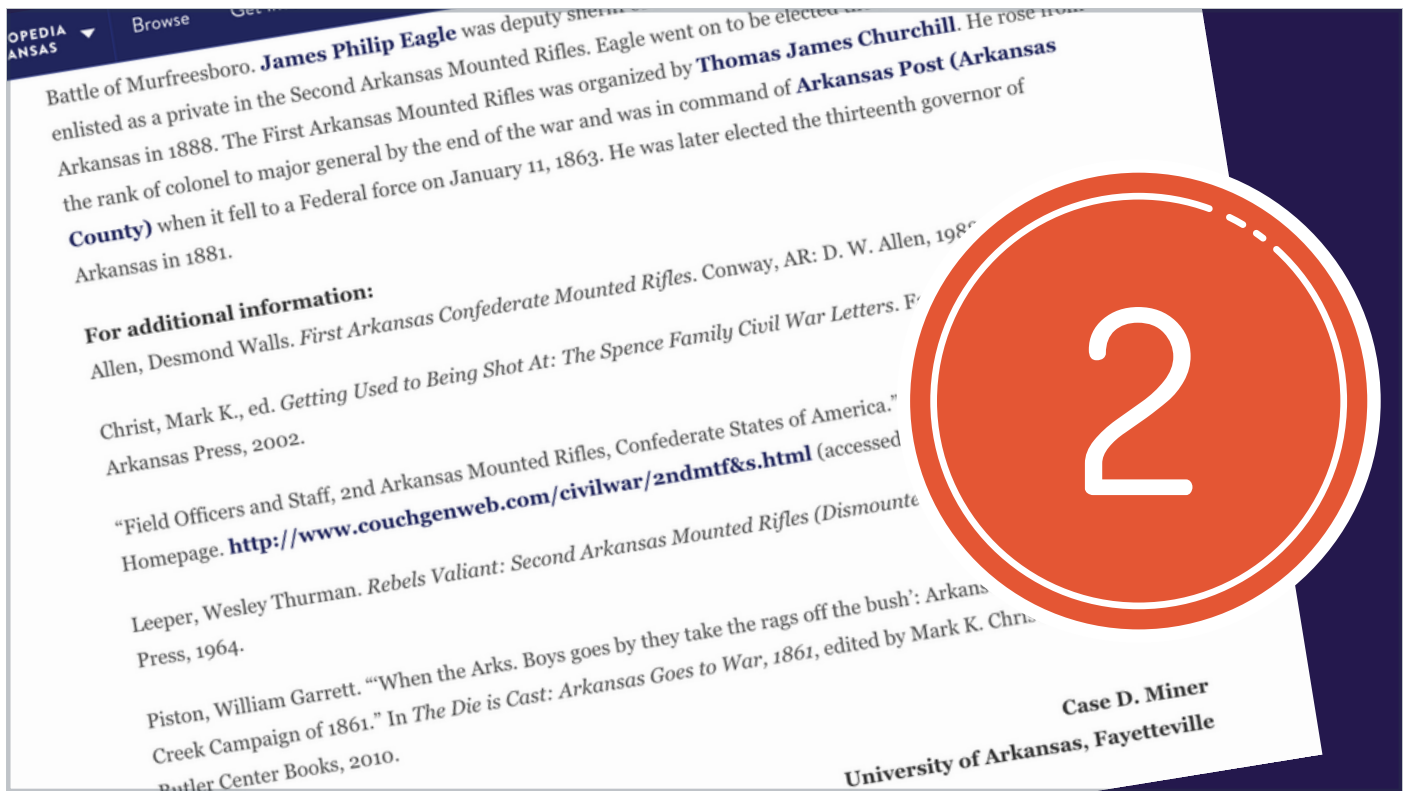
NUMBER 1

The entries are peer-reviewed.

What is peer-reviewed, you ask?

Peer review means that our entries are fact-checked by staff and reviewed by at least three scholars before they are put online. We use the same process that scholarly journals and other sources use to make sure our entries are accurate and correct. Unlike Wikipedia where any and everyone can make changes to articles, the EOA site is locked and doesn't use unvetted volunteers.

And even though we are an encyclopedia, National History Day doesn't classify us like other encyclopedias and allows the EOA to be used as a secondary source and not a tertiary source.



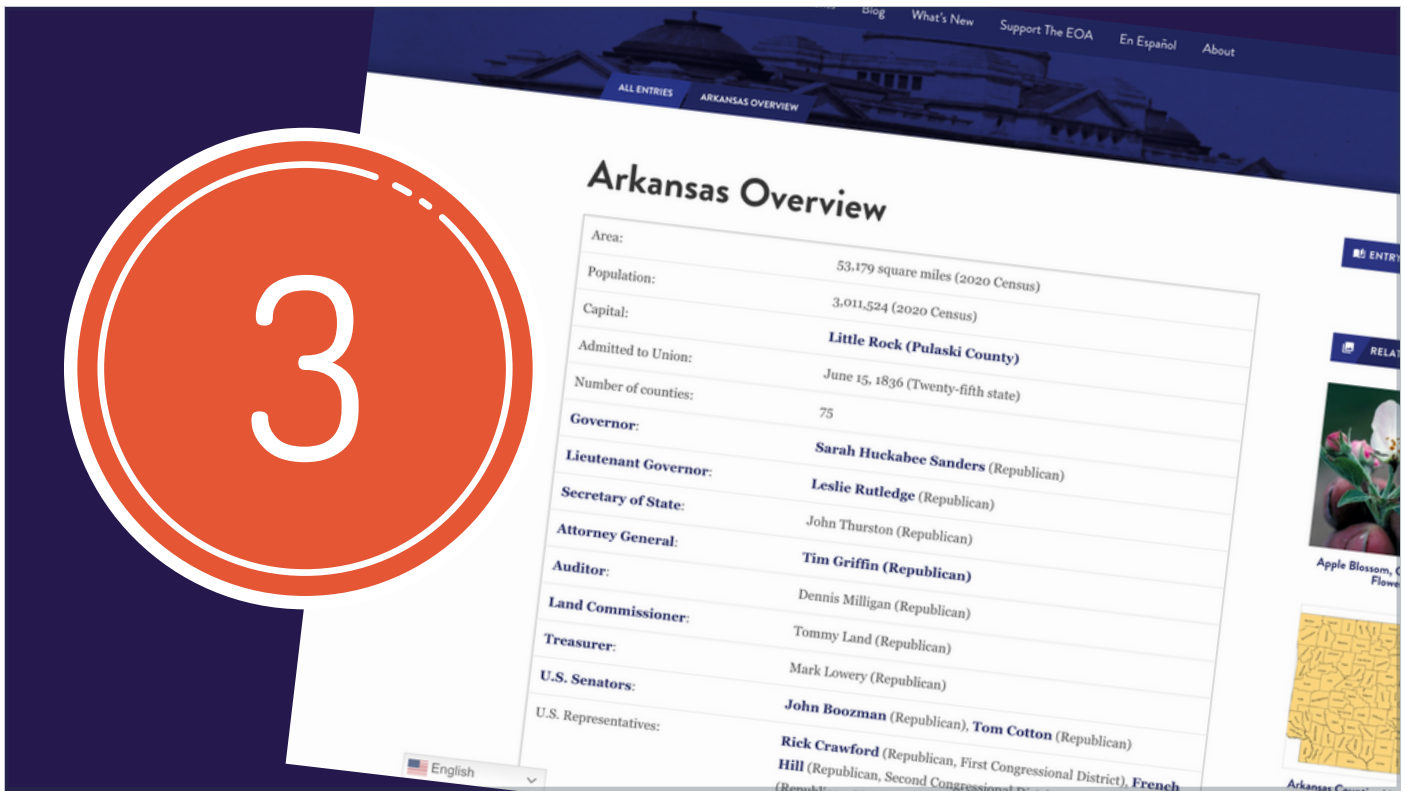
NUMBER 2

Use the EOA as a starting point for student self-guided research.

Assign students to find an entry and then scroll down to the bottom to the FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION section. This is the source material the author used.

Have students explore these sources to see how the author used these primary and secondary sources to construct the entry.

Or use these sources as a deep dive into the topic.



NUMBER 3

At the EOA we love a chart!

We have charts for general Arkansas info as you see here on the Arkansas Overview page...

and a comprehensive list of steamboat disasters in Arkansas...

lynching in Arkansas...

[CALS](#) | [UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS](#) | [Browse](#) | [Get Involved](#) | [Teachers/Students](#) | [Blog](#)

[ALL ENTRIES](#) | [HOPE \(HEMPSTEAD COUNTY\)](#)

Hope (Hempstead County)

County Seat

Location: $33^{\circ}40'04''N$ $093^{\circ}35'27''W$

Altitude: 350 feet

Area: 10.68 square miles (2020 Census)

Population: 8,952 (2020 Census)

Incorporation Date: April 8, 1875

Historical Population as per the U.S. Census:

1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,233	1,937	1,644
1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	




NUMBER 3

plus we have charts for each of our city and town entries that include latitude and longitude coordinates, altitude, area in square miles (according to the most recent census), population (according to the most recent census), and date of incorporation.

We also have a table with the historical population from the US Census on each city and town entries.

I haven't unlocked it yet but I know there is a way to use these charts for math and problem solving.



NUMBER 4

One of the newest initiatives is to create a comprehensive list of all the steamboat disasters in Arkansas.

We have a general entry on Steamboat Disasters, a chart of fatal steamboat disasters in Arkansas (totals 49), and individual entries on most of these fatal disasters.

So it is more than just the Sultana although that is the most famous one.



NUMBER 5

As I've mentioned we have an overview entry about Arkansas but we also have entries on all the official state things.

Like the creed and motto and flag and seal but also

the official state beverage (milk)

the official state cooking vessel (dutch oven)

the official state grape (cynthiana)

the official state musical instrument (fiddle)



NUMBER 6

Over the past few years, we've worked to add entries and media on plants, animals, and other non-history things that live in the Natural State.

Like slime molds (pictured here) and mites, parasites, amphibians, fish, bugs, and other creepy crawlies.

Southwest Arkansas natural resources - bauxite, bromine, aluminum, oil

All of these things have been important to this region economically, culturally, and socially. Ask people from El Dorado and Smackover and Norphlet about oil and bromine and I guarantee you will understand how these things can be tied to a regional identity.



NUMBER 7

And we have over 13000 pieces of media...

including photos, maps, audio files, and digitized documents.

I believe visuals are so important for engaging students. History is not just words on a page. It is not just names, dates, and places. It is about context.

We are also working to develop a series of short videos that you can use in your classroom.



NUMBER 8

Who doesn't love a map?

We have 363 maps - from historic maps to topographic to maps we've created to make sure they existed.



NUMBER 9

We are probably most proud of our search function.

We have spent the last few years tweaking the search function so you find what you looking for when are you looking for it.

And if you misspell something or mistyped something, the search will automatically figure out the "did you mean" and take you to the right entry.

And if you search for a keyword that shows up within the text of the entry but is not in the title, the word will be highlighted. So you will know why they entry popped up.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Encyclopedia of Arkansas website, including links for 'Donate', 'Contact', and 'Search'. Below the navigation bar, there are two columns of text. The left column is titled 'Events that marked literal turning points' and lists various historical events such as 'Act 38 of 1971', 'Act 626 of 2021', 'Alfred Krantz v. City of Fort Smith', 'Amendments 19 and 20', 'Arkansas Post, Battle of', 'Arkansas State Capitol, Desegregation of the', 'Back-to-Africa Movement', 'Branton v. State', 'Charleston Schools, Desegregation of', 'Coal Hill Convict Lease Investigation (1888)', 'Constitutional Conventions', 'Daisy Bates v. City of Little Rock', 'Election Law of 1891', 'Emancipation', 'England Food Riot of 1931', 'Flu Epidemic of 1918', 'Forrest City Riot of 1889', 'Fort Smith Conference (1865)', 'Freedom Rides', 'GI Revolt', 'Great Migration', and 'Great Southwestern Strike'. The right column is titled 'Cultural works and institutions at turning points' and lists works such as 'Accomplices to the', 'Angelou, Mar', 'Arkansas', 'Blood', 'Blyt', 'Be', 'B', 'C', 'C', 'I', 'H', 'Lu', 'Minu', 'On a St', 'Palmer, B', 'Plum Thicket, a', 'Powell, Nathan Lee (N...', 'Simon, Charlie May', 'Summer of My German Soldier', 'Thomas, David Yancey', and 'Walmart Inc.'. In the center of the page, there is a logo for 'NHD NATIONAL HISTORY DAY' with 'NHD' in large black letters above 'NATIONAL' and 'HISTORY DAY' in smaller black letters, with two red horizontal bars between 'NATIONAL' and 'HISTORY DAY'. On the right side, there is a large orange circle with a white border containing the number '10' in white.

And finally, if you assign your students a History Day project (or if you are thinking about it), the EOA compiles a list of entries that are relevant to the annual theme.

This year's theme is Turning Points in History: People, Places, Ideas, and entries on our list include the England Food Riot of 1931, the Indian Removal, the Louisiana Purchase, the Blytheville Comic Book Ban of 1954-1955, and Japanese American Incarceration during World War II.

C
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THE
ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF ARKANSAS



QUESTIONS



We also can come to your school (in most cases virtually) and provide programs, activities, and guided research experiences for students.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. The CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas is a rabbit hole I encourage you to jump down. No matter what you are interested in, Arkansas has it--and the EOA is where you can start looking.

Now I'm more than happy to answer any questions.