

Newsletter

Volume 24, Number 2

Fall 2007

Backyard History in Hempstead County

Joshua Williams

Historic Washington State Park

One of the interesting facts of life I have learned even at my young age is that you do not understand the value of something until you lose it. I grew up in Hope in a family and circle of friends that enjoyed and thrived on history. I was constantly being reminded of some of the many historical events that had taken place in our local region. Despite my interest in history, I neglected the local events as being less important than the more impressive national and international events that you can find throughout the annals of time. It was only after leaving the area and going off to college that I finally realized the value of those local events. It was those local events that helped me understand how individual people dealt with the larger events that plagued their nation and world. Interestingly enough, we are facing a similar discussion today over the importance of teaching Arkansas history to our children within the public schools.

It was with this appreciation of local history in mind that I set out to organize an event that would help bring awareness and remind people of the historical treasures they have in their own backyard. And so began the first Red River Region Heritage Symposium, held at Old Washington State Park this past July.

This symposium is meant to encourage the awareness and historical heritage of the nineteenth-century Upper Red River Region, which encompasses southwest Arkansas, northwest Louisiana, northeast Texas, and southeast Oklahoma. Studies into the nineteenth-century culture of the Upper Red River Region and general nineteenth-century cultural trends are included as acceptable topics. The symposium complements the mission of Historic Washington State Park to preserve and interpret the history of nineteenth century Washington, Arkansas, emphasizing its cultural, architectural and restoration history.

“A Chest of Historical Treasures” was the symposium theme. Speakers were Dr. Trey Berry, professor of history at Ouachita Baptist University; Peggy Lloyd, archival manager of the Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives; Dr. Jamie



Historic Washington State Park. *Courtesy Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism*

President's Message

Tom DeBlack

As we enter the fall season when many of us are focusing on the school term, I would like to call your attention to a few matters. I hope that you have been following the news reports of the discussions that some members of the Arkansas history community have been having with the Arkansas Department of Education and the governor. I have been working closely with Tom Dillard (former AHA president and head of the Arkansas History Education Coalition), Jeannie Whayne, former U. S. Senator David Pryor, and a group of teachers to try to convince the Department of Education to revisit and revise the frameworks that they recently established for the teaching of Arkansas History in the public schools.

We believe that the process for developing these new frameworks was deeply flawed and, more importantly, that the frameworks themselves have weakened the standards for teaching Arkansas history. We met with Department of Education officials on July 19 and with many of those same officials and Gov. Mike Beebe on August 6. We have requested a one-year moratorium on the implementation of the frameworks, but as I write this column, we have no indication of what, if anything, is going to be done to address our concerns. I believe that this is a matter of great importance to all of us who love Arkansas history, and I want to encourage you to contact your state representative, state senator, and Gov. Mike Beebe in support of our efforts. If you would like more specific information about this issue, please contact me at deblack@conwaycorp.net or Tom Dillard at tdillar@uark.edu.

In other matters, board members Susan Young, Tim Nutt and Sarah Gadberry are already planning for next year's annual conference. The meeting will be held in Eureka Springs, one of state's most unique places. The theme for this gathering, "Land of Eccentricity," is certain to elicit some very interesting presentations. The dates for the meeting are earlier than usual, so please mark your calendar for March 27-29.

Another one of our board members, Laura Miller, is preparing for a hectic fall as the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the crisis at Little Rock Central High School draws near. For more information, contact the Central High School National Historic site at 501-374-1957 or check out their website at www.nps.gov/chsc. Preparations are also being finalized for the grand reopening of the Lakeport Plantation House, the "Jewel of the Delta," in Chicot County on September 28-30.

I usually end this column by saying, "The future of the past has never looked brighter," but, as the Arkansas Department of Education controversy indicates, those of us who love Arkansas history must remain eternally vigilant to preserve and protect our heritage.

Arkansas Historical Association

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Selections from the Arkansas History Commission's Ernie Deane Photograph Collection



Magnolia's Firestone plant produced parts for military planes, submarines, armored vehicles and civilian vehicles during the 1960s. In this 1965 photo, Mary Frances Dodson works on an aircraft fuel cell.

This street scene in Snow Lake (Desha County) was photographed in 1963. The building pictured housed the post office and the J. L. Britt Plantation office.



A Poem and A Pose

Shay Hopper

Woodland Junior High School

This lesson plan is based on “‘Women Locked the Doors, Children Screamed, and Men Trembled in their Boots’: Black Bears and People in Arkansas” by Matthew M. Stith, published in the Spring 2007 *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*.

Overview and Background Information

Before reading the article, students will define the key terms they will need to know to guide them through the activity.

The teacher will need to explain three concepts: tanka and haiku (both poetry), and a tableau (acting).

The Japanese form of poetry called **tanka** has five lines and follows the pattern of five syllables in the first line, seven in the second, five in the third, and seven in both the fourth and fifth.

Example (about the Civil War)

Peace?

*Come home soldier boy,
hungry, scared, and wounded.
Let go of your hate,
black, white, blue, grey, fight no more.*

Haiku is a Japanese poem with five syllables in the first line, seven syllables in the second, and five in the third.

Example (about the Trail of Tears)

Tears

*Cherokees, Choctaws
Creeks, Seminoles, Chickasaws,
lost, weeping, fear, dread.*

A **tableau** is a frozen picture which conveys a story through body placement and facial expressions, typically with several physical levels. When beginning to work in tableaux, students will not use dialogue or music.

Framework Connections

8th grade Arkansas History Frameworks (as revised in 2006)

Strand: World War I through the 1920s

Content Standard 7: Students shall examine the political, social, and economic growth in Arkansas.

W.7.AH.7-8.3 Explore the effects of tourism on the economy.

8th grade Social Studies Frameworks (as revised in 2006)

Geography – Strand 1: Students shall develop an understanding of the physical and spatial characteristics and applications of geography

Location, place, region

G.1.8.2

Compare and contrast the regional characteristics of Arkansas to other locations (teachers: in this lesson, compare wildlife in other areas to that of Arkansas)

Objectives

Students will examine, determine and understand the history of wildlife in Arkansas, focusing on black bears, and appreciate the bears’ significance to history, folklore and tourism in Arkansas.

Students will practice note-taking skills by reading the article or selected excerpts and recording key facts.

Students will be exposed to two types of Japanese poetry: tanka and haiku and attempt to craft their own creative product.

Through the creation of tableaux, the performing arts will be used as an alternative or creative method to teach content.

Students will establish the importance of state nicknames and icons as they contribute to tourism and the economy.

Suggested Levels

Grades 5-8

Time Frame

Lesson plan can be used at any point in the Arkansas History curriculum, however, during the study of the late 19th century or anytime during the study of the twentieth century is suggested.

Allow for four to five 50-minute class periods. Parts of the lesson will be done individually; others in cooperative learning settings, as well as in the classroom, or where space allows

Materials Needed

Copies of the article, “‘Women Locked the Doors, Children Screamed, and Men Trembled in their Boots’: Black Bears and People in Arkansas.”

Notebook paper and pens/pencils

Music and a player (if desired and available for background writing music or for advanced tableau performances)

Rehearsal space

Terms

tanka
haiku
tableau
carcass, p. 2
grandeur, p. 3
exploitation, p. 3
eradication, p. 3
moniker, p. 3
assimilation, p. 4
bruin, p. 5

Procedure/Activity

1. Individually, students will read and summarize either the whole article (for upper grade levels) or teacher-chosen excerpts, identifying 5 - 7 key facts from their reading. Teachers can also choose to read excerpts aloud and students can record key facts while listening to the reading (time varies depending upon method).

Teachers and students need to consider the element of tourism in their notes and analysis. Suggest to them that our state profits from a nickname. What is the history of Arkansas's nicknames and why were the ones chosen identified as appropriate at one point or another. Why are state nicknames important? How does it create an identity and economic opportunity?

2. Each student will define each key term (25 minutes).
3. Each student will create a tanka and/or haiku based on what they read, heard and/or "saw" in their mind's eye while reviewing the article (15-20 minutes).
4. Students will work in a group (either self-selected or teacher-selected) to create tableaus depicting one teacher-selected scene or story from the article (3 minutes for discussion and planning, 3 minutes for placing actors into position and rehearsing).
5. Presentation. Each student group will present their tableau. Students in the "audience" will be expected to take notes during other presentations. Students can then work as a whole to create a living timeline of tableaus to showcase and highlight the stories told in the article (20 minutes).
6. Discussion. Students will discuss the various interpretations of the story as told by each tableau (10 minutes).

Evaluation

Students will write an individual reflection (discussion paragraph) on Big Picture/Essential Questions:

- a. How does it benefit you, as a student, to see a story as told through living pictures (a tableau)?
- b. Why are tourism and state symbols or nicknames important for a state?
- c. In your opinion, what is the best example of a preserved building or monument and why?

Additionally, students can be tested on key terms listed above, on facts recorded during others' presentations, and/or evaluated on successful execution of tableau scene (delegation, cooperation, interpretation).

Extensions

Continue to challenge students to create tanka or haiku poetry about various topics studied in Arkansas history and to expand tableau creations and presentations by requiring students to add appropriate music, words, and some action as they become more comfortable with the medium.

Shay Hopper teaches 8th grade Arkansas History, 8th grade Introduction to Journalism, and 9th grade Yearbook at Woodland Junior High School in Fayetteville. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism and a master's degree in secondary education, both from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Shay is a board member of the Arkansas Council of Social Studies and a member of the National Council for Social Studies, National Council for History Education, Journalism Educators Association. She recently completed the revision of the middle level social studies textbook, An Arkansas History for Young People, 4th edition, published by the University of Arkansas Press.

Happy Anniversary to Special Collections!

The University of Arkansas Libraries' Special Collections Department will celebrate its 40th anniversary in October with several public events. Workshops on preserving family history will be held on Saturday, October 20. Morning sessions will focus on issues in and methods of preserving documents and photographs; afternoon sessions will explore principles and procedures for capturing oral and video history interviews with family members. An open house, including refreshments, a short program, and tours of the Special Collections repository will take place on Thursday, October 25. For more information, call 479-575-5577 or email Molly Boyd, mdboyd@uark.edu.

The Arkansas Historical Association has a limited number of bound copies of the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* cumulative index available for purchase. Priced at \$60.00, the index allows researchers and readers to obtain article citations from the full run of the *AHQ* through 2000.

Send check or money order for \$60.00 plus \$5.50 for shipping to:

Arkansas Historical Association
Old Main 416
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Please include a daytime phone number.

Mark your calendars for the 2008 AHA conference in Eureka Springs, March 27-29.

Hempstead

From page 1

Brandon, archeologist at the Southern Arkansas University Research Station; and Keenan Williams, local historian and pastor of Washington Methodist Church.

Dr. Berry spoke on the early exploration of the Upper Red River Region with both the Hunter-Dunbar Expedition up the Ouachita River and the Freedman-Custis Expedition up the Red River. As he pointed out, these expeditions were counterparts to Lewis and Clark that came through our local region, which was a part of the Louisiana Purchase that began the growth of our nation.

Free African Americans in antebellum Hempstead County was the focus of Peggy Lloyd's talk. Lloyd discussed the life of Dolly Pennington, a free black who owned property in both Washington, Arkansas and Hempstead County.

Dr. Brandon spoke on area archeological research, reminding us that archeology can provide a context for understanding the lives of past residents of the area.

Keenan Williams concluded the evening by speaking on Civil War entrenchments located along the Red River. The fortifications were built along the Red River as the last line of Confederate defense in Arkansas to delay the advance of Federal soldiers into northeast Texas. Although never used in battle, the fortifications are a constant reminder of how close the Civil War came to home.

The Upper Red River Region is indeed an area rich in history that we should not forget. Keep an eye out for our next Red River Region Heritage Symposium in July 2008. But don't wait until then to come visit us at Historic Washington State Park, nine miles north of Hope. For more information, visit our website, www.HistoricWashingtonStatePark.com, or call 870-983-2684.

Joshua Williams is the park historian at Historic Washington State Park.

Cherokee Footsteps in Northwest Arkansas

A symposium sponsored by Heritage Trail Partners

October 12-13, 2007

SHILOH MUSEUM OF OZARK HISTORY, SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12

6:30 p.m. *The Trail of Tears: Cherokee Legacy*, an award-winning documentary by Rich-Heape Films, endorsed by the Cherokee Nation and the Eastern Band of Cherokees

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13

9:30-10:30 a.m.

Session 1 *Cherokee Healing Traditions in the Ozarks*
Dr. Justin Murphy Nolan, professor of anthropology
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

10:45-11:45 a.m.

Session 2 *The Ridge Family and Removal*
Dr. Alice Taylor-Colbert, University of Arkansas-Fort Smith

Noon-12:45 p.m.

Lunch Dennis Sixkiller, Host of *Cherokee Voices*, *Cherokee Sounds* radio show

1:00-2:00 p.m.

Session 3 *Current Trail of Tears Research*
Dr. Dan Littlefield, Sequoyah Research Center, University of Arkansas-Little Rock

2:15-3:15 p.m.

Session 4 *The Trail of Tears: A Cherokee Perspective*
Troy Wayne Poteete, Vice-President, National Trail of Tears Association

3:15-4:15

Session 5 *Reflections*
Chadwick "Cornassel" Smith, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation

The symposium is free, but pre-registration is required by Monday, October 8. Box lunches may be pre-ordered for \$10; you are welcome to bring a sack lunch.

The Shiloh Museum of Ozark History is located at 118 W. Johnson Avenue in downtown Springdale. To register, or for more information, call the museum at 479-750-8165; email shiloh@springdaleark.org.

This project is supported in part by a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Help us acknowledge the individuals and groups doing good work in the field of Arkansas history. Nominate them (or yourself!) for one of these AHA awards:

- **James H. Atkinson Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Arkansas History.** For K-12 teachers; \$1,000 prize.
- **Walter L. Brown Journal Awards.** Best county or local journal; best article in a county or local journal.
- **Violet B. Gingles Award.** Best paper on Arkansas history; \$500 prize.

- **J. G. Ragsdale Book Award in Arkansas History.** Best book-length nonfiction study of Arkansas history; \$500 prize
- **Lucille Westbrook Local History Award.** Best manuscript article on a local Arkansas subject; \$500 prize
- **Susie Pryor Award.** Given by the Arkansas Women's History Institute for the best unpublished paper on a topic in Arkansas women's history; \$1,000 prize.
- **Letter of Commendation.**

Contact an AHA board member for details on any of the awards.

“Something that changed the world”

Spirit Trickey and Quantia Fletcher

Central High School National Historic Site

Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site’s new Visitor Center will open as part of the 50th year commemoration of the desegregation of Central High School on Monday, September 24, 2007.

The new visitor center will “put what happened in Little Rock in the context of the founding of the country, and within the larger story of the civil rights movements in the United States,” said Laura Miller, Chief of Interpretation and Cultural Resources of Central High School National Historic Site.

Special guests during the commemoration include the Little Rock Nine; Congressman John Lewis (D-GA), a former Freedom Rider and leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee; Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne; author Nikki Giovanni; and the Freedom Singers, whose songs and music played an important role in the Civil Rights Movement. Members of the 101st Airborne will escort the Little Rock Nine onto the stage. Cyrus Bahrassa, Central High student body president will give remarks on the future face of Central.

Thelma Mothershed Wair, a member of the Little Rock Nine, said that Little Rock has changed “a lot”

since 1957. “It’s much friendlier. People open doors and smile at you. That’s not the way the city used to be.” Wair looks forward to the opening of the visitor center. “I want my son and grandson to see how much we’re celebrated,” she said. “They don’t realize what a big deal it is and I want them to know. We paved the way, and I’m proud that I was there and involved in something that changed the world, as I see it.”

The story of the desegregation of Central High School is not only African American history but a part of American history, and world history. “When the rights of anyone group becomes endangered, then all of our rights are endangered,” said Mike Madell, Superintendent of Central High School National Historic Site. The new visitor center will open its doors to allow people from all walks of life experience and explore the history of the events surrounding the Central High Crisis of 1957.

For more information, visit our website at www.nps.gov/chsc or call 501-374-1957. Additional 50th anniversary events are listed at www.arkansasglobecoming.com.

Spirit Trickey and Quantia Fletcher are park rangers at Central High School National Historic Site.

Join the Arkansas Historical Association

Membership includes four issues of the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* per year, as well as the Association’s newsletter.

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The Southern Tenant Farmers Museum in Tyronza tells the story of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, formed in Tyronza in 1934 in an effort to “secure better living conditions...and higher wages for farm labor and to help build a world where there is no poverty...for those who are willing to work.” The museum is open Monday through Saturday. For more information, call 870-487-2909. *Courtesy Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism*

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