The Delta Cultural Center will host the Annual Conference of the Arkansas Historical Association in downtown Helena-West Helena April 11-13.

The presentations will continue the Civil War theme of “Claiming Freedom” with a bonus session that focuses on other aspects of freedom. Other highlights include:

**Keynote Addresses:**
- Friday--Dr. James Downs (Connecticut College), “Dying to Be Free: The Health Conditions of the Newly Freed Slaves during the Civil War and Reconstruction”
- Saturday--Dr. Story Matkin-Rawn (University of Central Arkansas), “We Made the South What it is: Arkansas and the Other Great Migration.”

**Receptions:**
- Thursday--Fort Curtis Reconstruction (350 Columbia St) hosted by the Delta Cultural Center and sponsored by Arkansas State University Heritage Sites
- Friday--Community Room, Phillips Community College (1000 Campus Dr) sponsored by the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies.

**Banquet & Awards Presentations:**
- Friday--Community Room, Phillips Community College.

**Friday Tour:**
Tour of Civil War Helena--Mark Christ (Arkansas Historic Preservation Program) will guide a tour (by bus) to Fort Curtis Reconstruction, Batteries C and D, Freedom Park and the Confederate Cemetery. The tour provides an overview of Union occupation of Helena, the experiences of freedom seekers who came to Helena, the battle of Helena, and its aftermath.

**Saturday Tour:**
Walk Through History: Cherry Street Historic District in Helena--Rachel Silva (Arkansas Historic Preservation Program) will lead a walking tour of Helena’s Cherry Street Commercial District. The district, which flourished from 1880-1935, replaced the flood-prone commercial district along the waterfront.

Local arrangements for the conference were organized by Cathy Cunningham, Community Development planner with Southern Bancorp and a trio from the Delta Cultural

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Registration
Deadline: March 29, 2013
Have you registered?
The historic Beth El Heritage Hall will be the main venue for the 2013 AHA annual meeting. Completed in 1916, it is a contributing structure to the Perry Street Historic District. Temple Beth El served the regional Jewish community in the Arkansas and Mississippi Deltas until 2006, when it was reluctantly closed after membership dwindled. Remaining members of the congregation donated the Temple to the Department of Arkansas Heritage and it now serves as a cultural arts center for the Delta Cultural Center. After its closure, many of the Temple’s religious artifacts were donated to Temple Israel in Memphis and Congregation Etz Chaim in Bentonville. Beth El’s records were donated to the American Jewish Historical Society in New York.

HISTORIC VENUES, continued on page 4
President’s Message

As the month of April approaches, we are looking forward to the annual conference. This year we are meeting in Helena-West Helena from April 11-13, and the conference theme of “Claiming Freedom” continues the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. In July 1863, Confederate troops unsuccessfully attempted to take the Union-controlled city of Helena. Many of this year’s presentations will focus on the War and Helena’s importance. The city, itself, is commemorating its role in the War in many ways, including recreating historic Fort Curtis. There will be lots to see and hear at the conference.

I want to thank Board Trustees Jamie Brandon and Mark Christ, as well as many folks in Helena-West Helena, for their hard work in putting together a stellar conference.

You’ll notice a new editor with this issue of the AHA Newsletter. I would like to recognize Nathania Sawyer for her work as editor and welcome Blake Wintory into the position. Please help Blake by sending him information about history-related events taking place in your community. He can be reached at bwintory@astate.edu

I look forward to seeing everyone in Helena-West Helena.

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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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One-Year Corporate/Business Memberships

| Sponsor ....................$100 |
| Patron ..........................$500 |
| Benefactor ....................$1,000 |

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Send this form along with payment to:
Arkansas Historical Association
History Department, Old Main 416
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701
Nearby are the Saint John’s Episcopal Church and First United Methodist Church, which will hold concurrent sessions on Friday and Saturday, respectively. Saint John’s Episcopal, constructed in 1916, and First United Methodist, constructed in 1913, also are contributing structures to the Perry Street Historic District.

Lunch on Friday and Saturday will be at the R. L. Kitchens Post No. 41. Built in 1922, it is one of the oldest American Legion buildings in Arkansas. Designed and built by Helena’s Legionnaires, it has long been a staple of community life in Helena. In 1983 it was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

History Commission Creates Black Legislator Traveling Exhibit

In January the Arkansas History Commission announced *Arkansas African American Legislators, 1868-1893*, a free traveling exhibit produced by the Commission and the Black History Commission of Arkansas. The exhibit tells the story of the eighty-five African Americans who served in the Arkansas General Assembly in the 19th century. In 1868, after the Civil War, Arkansas adopted a new constitution. Its provisions included black males’ right to vote and hold public office. African American lawyers, merchants, ministers, educators, farmers, and other professionals served in the Arkansas General Assembly. Photographs of forty-six of the eighty-five legislators are an integral part of the display. Also featured is a complete listing of the legislators and a short history of post-Civil War and election law “reforms” that effectively ended African Americans’ election to legislative positions until the 1970s. Comprising eight stand-alone panels, the exhibit is available for display at sites across Arkansas. Email state.archives@arkansas.gov with “African American Legislators Exhibit” in the subject line to inquire about the exhibit.