

Newsletter

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Diamonds are an Encyclopedia's Best Friend

The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture has been awarded the Arkansas Historical Association's coveted Diamond Award for its distinguished contribution to the study of state history. The online encyclopedia was recognized at the 2009 conference of the AHA "for its outstanding efforts to create an authoritative reference work that makes Arkansas history available to researchers, students, and others using an engaging web-based, multimedia format."

The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture Project

(from the Encyclopedia website, www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net)

The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture Project arose from the need for a comprehensive and reliable reference work on Arkansas. Tom Dillard, then curator at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, and Tim Nutt, then deputy curator, began planning the Encyclopedia in late 2002. They enlisted the help of Jill Curran to explore the possibility of creating an encyclopedia for the state.

The Encyclopedia had been conceived from the beginning as an inclusive and cooperative effort of historical organizations, state agencies, and interested individuals across the state and beyond.

The team researched other state encyclopedias and then held regional meetings across Arkansas to solicit input from local historical and genealogical societies, county and regional museums, academic institutions, relevant state agencies, and archival and research facilities. The feedback and guidance from these early meetings, both in terms of organizational decisions and editorial content, became the foundation of the Project.

Curran became the project coordinator and Nathania Sawyer joined the team to be the senior editor. In the fall of 2003, the Encyclopedia's newly formed Oversight and Editorial Boards met for the first time. In December of that year, the



AHA president Laura Miller presents the Diamond Award to Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture staff members: a proud Nathania Sawyer, senior editor and project manager; a humbled Mike Keckhaver, media editor; and a distracted Mike Polston, staff historian. *Photo by Donna Ludlow*

Excitement building over 2010 conference!



Plans are well underway for the 2010 Arkansas Historical Association annual conference to be held **April 15-17 on the campus of Arkansas State University in Jonesboro**. Program chair Blake Wintory is putting together a fascinating list of sessions featuring crackerjack presenters who will focus on the conference theme, *Before the War: Antebellum Arkansas*. Local arrangements chair Joe Key is scouting out some dandy spots for both lodging and socializing. Mark your calendars now!

Photo: Arkansas State College twirling clinic, Jonesboro, 1959.
Ernie Deane Collection/Arkansas History Commission

Speaking of the war . . .

The Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission (ACWSC) will sponsor a passport program during the 150th anniversary of the Civil War between 2011 and 2015.

The passport program will encourage visitors to travel to the state's many Civil War-related sites where they will be able to have specially designed passports stamped. This will not only highlight Arkansas's rich Civil War history, but will also promote heritage tourism around the state.

The ACWSC maintains a list of Civil War sites on its website at <http://www.arkansascivilwar150.com/civil-war-sites/>, but wants to ensure that other potential sites can be included. These need not only be battle sites, but can also include buildings with Civil War history and interpretation, and museums with Civil War-related exhibits.

If you know of any Civil War properties that should be added to the list, contact Mark Christ, Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, 1500 Tower Building, 323 Center Street, Little Rock, AR 72201; send an e-mail to acwsc@arkansasheritage.org, or call (501) 324-9886.

Arkansas Historical Association

OFFICERS

President

Laura Miller, Little Rock
laura_a_miller@nps.gov

Vice-President

Tim Nutt, Fayetteville
timn@uark.edu

Secretary-Treasurer

Patrick Williams, Fayetteville
pgwillia@uark.edu

Past President

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loyaikman@cebridge.net

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joblatti@gmail.com

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jbrando@uark.edu

Vince Chadick, Fayetteville
vchadick@bassettlawfirm.com

Mark Christ, Little Rock
mark@arkansasheritage.org

Sarah Gadberry, Little Rock
bgad@sbcglobal.net

Cherisse Jones-Branch, Jonesboro
crjones@astate.edu

Joe Key, Jonesboro
jkey@astate.edu

Peggy Lloyd, Washington
peggy.lloyd@arkansas.gov

Steve Perdue, Benton
sperdue@saline.lib.ar.us

Mike Polston, Cabot
joewontgo@aol.com

Dana Simmons, Little Rock
dana.simmons@nara.gov

Josh Williams
josh.williams@arkansas.gov

Tom Wing, Fort Smith
twing@uafortsmith.edu

Blake Wintory
bwintory@astate.edu

Susan Young, Springdale
syoung@springdalear.gov

Scenes from the 2009 AHA Awards Banquet

Photos by Donna Ludlow

AHA president Laura Miller, seen in every one of these photos, presided over the awards banquet with grace and aplomb.



J. G. Ragsdale Book Award

Grif Stockley

Ruled By Race: Black/White Relations in Arkansas from Slavery to Present



Lucille Westbrook Award

Michael R. Deaderick

"Racial Conflict in Forrest City: The Trial and Triumph of Moderation in an Arkansas Delta Town"



James H. Atkinson Award for Excellence in the Teaching of Arkansas History

Chereese Smith

Ozark Junior High School, Ozark



Walter L. Brown Award for the Best County or Local Journal
Pulaski County Historical Review
 (Bob Razer accepting)



Susannah DeBlack Award
 Tom and Susannah DeBlack, presenting
 Co-winners: Trey Berry, *The Arkansas Journey*
 Shay Hopper, *An Arkansas History for Young People*, 4th edition
 (Larry Malley accepting)

Winners not pictured

Violet B. Gingles Award: Justin Randolph Gage, “Vote as You Pray: The 1928 Election in Washington County, Arkansas”

Walter L. Brown County and Local Journal Awards
 Honorable Mention, Best County or Local Journal:
The Record

Best Use of Graphics: *Pulaski County Historical Review*

Best Article: Grif Stockley, “The Negro Boys Industrial School Fire: A Holistic Approach to History,” *Pulaski County Historical Review*

Best Biography, Autobiography, or Memoir: Bob Razer, “Joe T. Robinson: The New Deal’s Majority Leader, 1933-1937,” *Pulaski County Historical Review*

Best Community History: Sharon Shugart, “The Legacy of ‘Ral’ City,” *The Record*

Best Business History: Abby Burnett, “No Pompous Marble to Thy Name We Raise”: A. H. Morley and Family, Fayetteville Tombstone Carvers,” *Flashback*

Best Family History: Lamar Williamson, Jr., “The Williamsons of Monticello: Adrian and Catherine: A Family Saga, Part III,” *Drew County Historical Journal*

Best School History: Donald Holley, “Fred Taylor: UAM – United and Moving,” *Drew County Historical Journal*

Best Edited Document, co-winners:
 George Lankford, “Speaking of Things: Mary Elizabeth Agnew’s Friendship Book,” *Independence County Chronicle*

Shirley Schuette, “The land is good’: One Immigrant’s View of Territorial Arkansas, the Klingelhoetter Letter of 1834,” *Pulaski County Historical Review*

Diamond Award

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Project received a grant of \$1.28 million from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, placing it on firm financial footing. Other major contributors followed, including the Department of Arkansas Heritage and the Arkansas Humanities Council. Staffing the project took place in early 2004 as work began in earnest to recruit authors.

Dillard resigned from the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies in 2004 and went to the University of Arkansas (UA) in Fayetteville (Washington County). Nutt resigned in 2005 and also went to UA. Curran left the project at the end of 2005. Sawyer assumed their duties and became senior editor and project manager.

The Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture debuted to the public in May 2006, as a work in progress. It contained approximately 700 entries and 900 pieces of media. During its first month online, the Encyclopedia had more than 47,000 visits and 3.3 million hits. By the end of 2007, it had more than 1.5 million visits and 16.5 million hits. Users have come from every continent (including Antarctica) and more than 175 countries. The site also includes more than 1,500 entries and 2,000 pieces of media.

By project's end in 2010, the Encyclopedia will contain more than 3,000 entries in addition to thousands of pieces of related media. After 2010, the Encyclopedia will be maintained in perpetuity by the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies at the Central Arkansas Library System.

Independence County Historical Society Turns 50!

The 50th anniversary of the Independence County Historical Society will be celebrated in Batesville at 2:00 p.m. on **Sunday, October 18**—not October 4 as was announced in the last issue of the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*.



The celebration will take place at historic Morrow Hall, the 1872 "music building" of the original Arkansas College campus that is now the location of the First Presbyterian Church between College and Boswell streets in the Batesville Historic District. The festivities will feature recognition of charter members and other supporters of the organization as it begins its second half-century.

Join the Arkansas Historical Association

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

Membership Levels

- Regular \$20
- Regular, two year \$35
- Student \$15
- Contributing \$50
- Sustaining..... \$100
- Supporting \$200
- Life Membership..... \$500
(payable over three years)
- Permanent Membership ... \$1000
(payable over five years)

One-Year Corporate/Business Memberships

- Sponsor \$100
- Patron \$500
- Benefactor \$1000

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Send this form along with payment to:

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



Historic downtown Helena serves as the backdrop for the 24th annual Arkansas Blues and Heritage Festival (formerly known as the King Biscuit Blues Festival), Oct. 8-10. The internationally known festival features three days of music, food, and festivities. This year's headliners include the Cate Brothers, Bobby Rush, Michael Burks, and the legendary Pinetop Perkins. Tickets for the main stage performances are \$5 per day or \$10 for a three-day pass. There is no admission charge for the other stages or areas of the festival. For complete stage lineups and more information log on to www.BluesandHeritageFest.com or phone 870-338-6583.

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