



Arkansas Historical Association Newsletter

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SPRING 2017

76th Annual Conference in Pocahontas, April 20-22

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Pocahontas, straddling the Ozark foothills and the Delta alluvium, will be the site of the 76th Annual Conference of the Arkansas Historical Association, April 20-22, 2017. Five Rivers Historic Preservation, Inc. will be the conference host in Pocahontas's historic downtown.

This year's conference theme is "Great War, Great Changes." Sessions will tackle a range of subjects, including: Arkansans in World War I, the founding of Arkansas's "Mother County," Gilded Age Arkansas, the Arkansas German Experience, Desegregation of Hoxie, and more. Highlights include:



At the center of Pocahontas's town square is the old Randolph County Courthouse, headquarters for the 2017 AHA Conference. Built in 1872, the Italianate style courthouse was replaced in 1940 by a new Art Deco courthouse, just a block away. Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973, today it houses the Randolph County Chamber of Commerce. Courtesy Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism.

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Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives, Powhatan

In March 2011, the Northeast Arkansas Regional Archive (NEARA) became the second regional branch of what is now the Arkansas State Archives. NEARA, located on the grounds of Powhatan Historic State Park, collects and preserves historic resources primarily documenting northeast Arkansas.

The collections at NEARA include the original Lawrence County records. Lawrence County, the "Mother of Counties," was established in 1815 by the Missouri territorial legislature. Saved by the Lawrence County Historical Society, the approximately 500 cubic feet of court cases, marriage records, probate records, and pension records are some of Arkansas's earliest documentary records.

Kitty Sloan, whose family has deep roots in Powhatan, endowed the Arkansas Historical Association's NEARA Award in 2013 in honor of her grandfather Eugene.



The Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives opened on March 3, 2011 in Powhatan.

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An artist's conception of Davidsonville, founded on the Black River in 1815. The town was Lawrence County's first seat. Davidsonville State Park, established in 1957, is scheduled for Friday's afternoon tour. *Courtesy of Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism*

Keynote Addresses: *Friday*—William H. Pruden III, “Rebel Without a Base: William Kirby and the Politics of War and Peace”

Saturday—Morris S. Arnold, “The First World War: Arkansas and the Seven Years’ War”

Receptions: *Thursday*— Randolph County Heritage Museum, 106 E. Everett, 6:00–7:30 p.m.

Friday—Strolling reception along 100 N. Marr Block, Downtown Square, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Banquet & Awards Presentation: Historic Randolph County Courthouse, 107 E. Everett, 7:00 p.m.

Friday Afternoon Tours: Historic Davidsonville State Park (pre-registration required).

Rice-Upshaw House and William Looney Tavern (pre-registration required).

The annual conference committee members are Susan Young (chair), Shiloh Museum of Ozark History; Steven Kite (program chair), University of Arkansas-Fort Smith; and David Sesser (speaker chair), Henderson State University.

Sponsors for the conference include: Eddie Mae Herron Center and Museum; Five Rivers Historic Preservation, Inc.; Butler Center for Arkansas Studies; and University of Arkansas Press.

The conference is also supported through funds from the Arkansas Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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Announcements and Upcoming Conferences

- The Old State House Museum on March 11 opened “Cabinet of Curiosities: Treasures from the University of Arkansas Museum Collection.” The exhibit shows a diverse collection of artifacts from the University of Arkansas Museum, most not seen since the museum closed to the public in 2003. Artifacts include dinosaur bones, Ming Dynasty pottery, and a machine gun taken from Bonnie and Clyde’s car. The exhibit will run through September 2018.
- The Arkansas State Archives and the Arkansas Genealogical Society will host their annual history symposium on Saturday, May 6, 2017, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the WPA Gymnasium in Historic Washington State Park. The symposium’s theme, “In the Genealogical Trenches: Tracing Your Wartime Ancestry,” will feature speakers Mark Christ, Mike Polston, Peggy Lloyd, and State Archives staff member Mary Dunn. The seminar is free, but registration is required with seating limited. For more information about the symposium or to register, contact events.archives@arkansas.gov or call 501-682-6900.
- Historic Washington State Park in Hempstead County will host the 11th Annual Red River Heritage Symposium on July 22 from 1 to 7 p.m. The Symposium’s theme is “The Timberland Industry” and will focus on the impact of the timber industry in the Red River region. A teachers’ workshop will take place Friday, July 21, and Saturday morning. Teachers can receive up to six professional development hours for each day. Register by July 19. Call 870-983-2684 or email HistoricWashington@arkansas.com for more information and costs.
- During May, Preserve Arkansas will hold two events to coincide with Arkansas Heritage Month and National Preservation Month. On Thursday, May 18 at 6 p.m., Preserve Arkansas will host “A Most Endangered Bicycle Ride” to learn about Little Rock’s Most Endangered Places—past and present. On Friday, May 19 at 10 a.m. Preserve Arkansas will hold a press conference at an historic site to announce the 2017 list of Arkansas’s Most Endangered Places. For more information and cost of the bicycle tour, call 501-372-4757, email info@preservearkansas.org or visit preservearkansas.org.
- Preserve Arkansas, the Black History Commission of Arkansas, and the Lakeport Plantation will host “Behind the Big House,” a workshop with Joseph McGill on April 28-29. Moving beyond stately historic homes, the program explores extant slave dwellings and interprets the experiences of the enslaved people who inhabited them. This workshop will include live historical interpretations and lectures to highlight the important contributions African Americans made to Arkansas’s history. In cooperation with Joseph McGill, South Carolina-based Slave Dwelling Project, Jerome Bias, interpreter at Stagville State Historic Site in North Carolina, and genealogist Angela Walton-Raji, the program will offer a broad understanding of the importance of slave dwellings in the interpretation of historic landscape and their role in heritage tourism. Register by April 14. For more information, visit preservearkansas.org/what-we-do/education/behind-the-big-house.
- The University of Arkansas Press has just published *The Arkansas Post of Louisiana* by Morris S. Arnold and Gail K. Arnold. Copiously illustrated with almost fifty maps, color portraits, and superb examples of Quapaw hide paintings, along with numerous black-and-white photographs, the book covers the essential aspects of the Post’s history, including the nature of the European population there, their social life, the economy, the architecture, and the political and military events that reflected and shaped the Post’s mission. A central feature of the work is the Post’s role in nurturing and sustaining the crucial alliance with the Quapaw tribe.
- Applications are now being accepted for the first Tom and Dolores Bruce Historical Research Fellowship. The fellowship assists researchers, scholars, graduate students, and documentary producers who use materials from at least two of the following institutions: the Arkansas State Archives, the CALS Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, the Historical Research Center at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock’s Center for Arkansas History and Culture. The award of \$1,000 is to be used to offset the costs of research, including reproduction of materials, travel, or lodging. Applications should be submitted by May 15 to Brian Robertson at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System, 100 Rock St., Little Rock, AR 72201. For more information, email brianr@cals.org or call 501-320-5723.

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

- ☐ Individual, one year.....\$20
- ☐ Individual, two year.....\$35
- ☐ Family, one year.....\$30
- ☐ Family, two year.....\$45
- ☐ Foreign, one year.....\$30
- ☐ Student, one year.....\$15
- ☐ Contributing, one year.....\$50
- ☐ Sustaining, one year.....\$100
- ☐ Supporting, one year.....\$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: _____

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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

Renewal and new memberships can be paid online using Paypal; visit the AHA website <http://arkansashistoricalassociation.org> and click "Membership."

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The \$1,000 prize is awarded to the best manuscript article using archival records from NEARA, particularly the Lawrence County territorial papers (1815-1836). Past winners include:

2016 Edward Harthorn, "Pushing him back over the pulpit: David Orr and Religious Conflict in Early Arkansas."

2015 Blake Perkins, "Women, Early Settlement, and the Making of Territorial Lawrence County, 1815-1820."

2014 Steve Saunders, "Dissecting Davidsonville 1815 – 1829: A Postmortem of Arkansas' First Nine Blocks."

According to NEARA's archival manager, Meredith McFadden, significant collections for the region include the Townsend Papers, the Mammoth Spring State Park Collection, and the Tom McDonald Collection. The latter collection contains the work of Jonesboro-based studio photographer Tom McDonald. From the mid-1960s until 2011, he photographed families, weddings, baptisms, and natural disasters. Hanging on the wall at NEARA, is McDonald's portrait of Rufus and Caroline Laine, the last mule farmers in Craighead County. The finding aids for these collections and others can be found on NEARA's website, archives.arkansas.gov/neara, under the research tab.

NEARA, located at 11 7th Street on the grounds of Powhatan State Park, is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 8 am to 4:30 p.m. Staff can be contacted by email, northeast.archives@arkansas.gov, or by phone 870-878-6521.

President's Message



AHA President Mark Christ

Spring is finally here, and I hope everyone is planning on joining us in Pocahontas April 20-22 for the 76th annual Arkansas Historical Association Annual Conference. Coinciding with the 100th anniversary of the United States' entry into World War I, the conference has the theme "Great War, Great Changes" and will include sessions focusing not only on 1917-18, but also on woman's suffrage, the Gilded Age, the Civil War, and Lawrence County's rich history. Keynote speakers will be William H. Pruden of North Carolina's Ravenscroft School on wartime Senator William Kirby and the esteemed Judge Morris S. Arnold on Arkansas and the Seven Years' War. Thanks again to Susan Young, Steve Kite and "Zen-like presence" David Sesser for their considerable efforts to bring the conference together. April also marks the beginning of Arkansas's commemoration of World War I. The official kickoff event was held on April 8 at the Old State House Museum and featured remarks by Governor Asa Hutchinson and a day of living history and other activities associated with Arkansas's mobilization to fight the Great War. The Arkansas World War I Centennial Commemoration Committee is working with folks around the state to promote local activities centered on the war era, and in partnership with the Arkansas Forestry Commission is developing a program that will hopefully see a WWI Memorial Tree in every county in the state. Visit <http://www.wwiarkansas.com/> for updates on the commemoration.

The Arkansas Historical Association is accepting donations to endow the Dr. C. Calvin Smith Scholarship, which will help a student from a racial or ethnic group underrepresented in the Association's membership attend the annual AHA conference. Dr. Smith was a ground-breaker in both the teaching and study of Arkansas history, and this scholarship will allow more students from diverse backgrounds to attend the conference and mingle with history professionals from around the state. Contributions, marked "Smith Scholarship," can be sent to the Arkansas Historical Association, Department of History, Old Main 416, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville AR 72701.

See you all in Pocahontas!

Mark Christ

President

Arkansas World War I Centennial Commemoration Committee

On March 31, 2016, Governor Asa Hutchinson, through executive order, established the Arkansas World War I Centennial Commemoration Committee to "ensure a suitable statewide observance of the centennial of World War I and to cooperate and assist national, state, and local organizations with programs and activities suitable for the centennial observance" during 2017 and 2018.

The nine-member committee, chaired by Dr. Shawn Fisher, professor of history at Harding University, officially kicked-off the commemoration at the Old State House on April 8 with "Arkansas and the Great War: Remembering 1917." Before the commemoration began, the committee's website was filled with impressive information about Arkansas and the Great War: an in depth timeline, bibliography, list of Arkansas military units, lesson plans, and audio for podcasts and "Arkansas WWI Minutes." The State Archives also produced a traveling exhibit, "The Great War: Arkansas in World War I," that has been on the road since August 2015. The commemoration will continue through 2018. Learn more at <http://www.wwiarkansas.com/>.





Constructed in 1940, Randolph County's Art Deco courthouse is just a block away from the 1873 courthouse. Designed by Eugene John Stern as a WPA-funded project, the buff brick and concrete structure was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. A large stone, believed by some to be a meteor that fell in the Black River in 1859, is now displayed on the front lawn of the courthouse. *Courtesy Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism.*