



# Arkansas Historical Association Newsletter

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WINTER 2018

## 78th Annual Conference in Stuttgart, April 11-13

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The AHA’s 78th Annual Conference will be held at the Grand Prairie Center on the Stuttgart campus of Phillips Community College. *Courtesy of SCM Architects.*

Stuttgart, a charming farm community founded in 1879 on Arkansas’s Grand Prairie, will host the Arkansas Historical Association’s 78th Annual Conference, April 11-13, 2019. With the theme of “Land, Race, and Identity,” the conference will mark several major anniversaries, including the bicentennial of the formation of Arkansas Territory and the centennial of the Elaine Race Massacre. Presentations will address a broad array of topics from all time periods to illuminate how the land—and ideas about it—have intersected with various identities, including race, to help shape the history of Arkansas.

To be held at the Grand Prairie Center on the campus of Phillips Community College, over forty presentations are scheduled in addition to these conferences highlights. On Thursday, a genealogy workshop led by Jeanne N. Rollberg and Gary W. Jones will be held. Keynote addresses during the luncheons on Friday and Saturday will be delivered by Dr. Calvin White Jr., “Rectifying the Identity of a Black Southerner,” and Dr. Joseph Key, “The Significance of the Territory in Arkansas History.”

Afternoon tours are organized for Friday to the St. Charles Museum, the Dale Bumpers National Rice Research Center and the Harry K. Dupree Stuttgart National Aquaculture Center, and Native Grasslands of the Grand Prairie Remnants and Restorations.

Look for registration information on the AHA website and in your mailbox.

## Museum and Library Preserve Stuttgart’s Heritage

Two Stuttgart institutions, the Mary Margaret Selig-Trahan Genealogy Collection in the Stuttgart Public Library and the Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie, preserve the town and region’s history.

The public library’s Mary Margaret Selig-Trahan Genealogy Collection, named in 2009 for a longtime volunteer and historian, holds local and regional history sources. Having grown from a single shelf, the collection now includes many unique resources: 20th-century city directories and Stuttgart phone books, and an active obituary file that aims to collect obituaries for local and former residents. The collection also has family records, a full run of the *Grand Prairie Historical Bulletin*, and the records of several clubs, including the Amici Club. The Amici Club records include community photographs from the end of the 19th century until World War I.

See Museum and Library, page 2



Founded in 1974, the Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie, showcases the regional and economic history of the Grand Prairie. *Courtesy Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie.*

## Museum and Library cont.

The Selig-Trahan Collection is open during the library's regular hours Monday through Saturday. For more information, contact the library through their website:

[www.stuttgartpubliclibrary.org](http://www.stuttgartpubliclibrary.org).

The Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie, founded in 1974, tells the story of the town of Stuttgart and its relationship to the land and agriculture that has sustained it since 1879. The museum holds many tools and tractors (many rare) that have touched Arkansas County's fertile soil as it has historically grown rice, hay, and most recently soybeans. The museum's exhibits also include displays on water fowl. It now inducts prominent conservationists, artists, duck callers and makers into the Arkansas Water Fowler Hall of Fame.

**See Museum and Library, page 4**



The Stuttgart Public Library holds the Selig-Trahan Collection. *Courtesy Stuttgart Public Library.*

### Arkansas Historical Association

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## Announcements and Upcoming Conferences

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- The Arkansas Historical Association is offering grants of up to \$300 so that one college student (undergraduate or graduate) from each of the state's congressional districts may attend AHA's annual conference, April 11-13, 2019, in Stuttgart. Funds may be used for lodging, transportation, meals, and registration. Interested applicants must provide a letter stating how conference attendance would benefit them, along with a letter of support from a faculty member. Mail the application to: Student Scholarship Program, Arkansas Historical Association, 416 Old Main, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR 72701; Or email the application to [dludlow@uark.edu](mailto:dludlow@uark.edu) using the subject heading "AHA Student Scholarship." Application deadline is March 1, 2019.
- The Arkansas State Archives and the Department of Arkansas Heritage will celebrate Arkansas Territory's Bicentennial at 9 am, March 1, at the Arkansas State Capitol, Second Floor Rotunda. Speakers include Gov. Asa Hutchinson and Department of Arkansas Heritage Director Stacy Hurst, State Historian Wendy Richter, and Swanee Bennett, director of the Historic Arkansas Museum. Celebrations will also take place at Davidsonville State Park and the Delta Cultural Center. The Territorial Arkansas Living History Fest at Davidsonville, March 1-2, is cosponsored by the Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives and will include historic games, activities and history. Contact the park interpreter at 870-892-4708 for more information or to register a school group on March 1. On March 2, the Delta Cultural Center will host "Territorial Days" from 10 am to 3 pm on the commons across from the DCC's Visitors' Center in Helena-West Helena. The outdoor event will include arts and crafts, living history re-creations, musical performances, traditional games, dancing, and shooting of period firearms. For more information, contact Drew Ulrich, [drew.ulrich@arkansas.gov](mailto:drew.ulrich@arkansas.gov).
- Arkansas Archeology Month 2019 will be held in March with a variety of programs, exhibits, hands-on activities, and tours at parks, museums, universities, libraries, and elsewhere. Archeology Month is an annual celebration commemorating Arkansas's cultural heritage as revealed through the archeology of both prehistoric and historic eras. Join the fun by submitting a program for Archeology Month. Programs can be on any aspect of prehistoric or historic archeology, early Arkansas history, or Arkansas's Native Americans. Submissions will be placed on the Events List on the Arkansas Archeological Survey website. For more information email Marilyn Knapp at [mxj02@uark.edu](mailto:mxj02@uark.edu).
- The Arkansas Chapter Trail of Tears Association (ARTOTA) will hold its spring meeting at the Sequoyah National Research Center (SNRC) in Little Rock on Saturday, March 30, at 1:00 pm. SNRC director Dr. Daniel Littlefield will discuss Trail of Tears collections, resources, and the new digital learning platform for the Trail of Tears in Arkansas. ARTOTA president Bethany Henry Rosenbaum and board members will also give an update on current activities at the state and national level. The meeting is open to the public. The Sequoyah National Research Center is located at 500 University Plaza, 5820 Asher Avenue, in Little Rock. For more information, contact Susan Young, [syoung@springdalear.gov](mailto:syoung@springdalear.gov).
- Preserve Arkansas will present Behind the Big House March 29-30, at the Historic Arkansas Museum in Little Rock. The program focuses on best practices for interpreting slavery at historic sites and researching the lives of enslaved Arkansans. On Friday, March 29, participants can sample enslaved antebellum cuisine while rotating through three interactive stations on the Museum's grounds. Participants are invited to spend the night on the Museum grounds (RSVP required). Saturday, March 30, includes lectures about documenting and preserving enslaved dwellings and researching and interpreting slavery at historic sites, as well as a genealogy workshop at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies. For more information and to RSVP, visit [preservearkansas.org/what-we-do/education/behind-the-big-house](http://preservearkansas.org/what-we-do/education/behind-the-big-house).
- The Quapaw Quarter Association hosts Preservation Conversations on the second Thursday of every month at 5:30 pm at the Old Paint Factory, 1306 E. 6th St, in Little Rock. Upcoming conversations include: "Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits" on March 14; "Insurance for Historic Properties" on April 11; "Historic Wood Windows" on May 9; and "Historic Stained Glass Windows" on June 13. For a full schedule and details on how to RSVP to these free lectures, visit [www.quapaw.com](http://www.quapaw.com).



## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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.”



The museum grounds are home to four buildings: a Prairie House, School House, a two-thirds replica of the Emmanuel Lutheran Church, and a print shop/fire station.

The museum also holds collections of rare newspapers, maps, and a few manuscripts like the memoir of Texas Seims who died in 2014.

Grounds of the Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie. *Courtesy Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie.*

## President's Message



AHA President Mark Christ

In 2019, we will see some transcendent anniversaries in Arkansas history, to wit:

- Two hundred years ago, in 1819, Arkansas Territory was created, along with Pulaski, Clark, and Hempstead counties. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft and Thomas Nuttall wandered through the dense forests of the new territory, writing observations that would become some of Arkansas's earliest written descriptions. The first Quapaw Treaty was signed, ceding most of the tribe's land claims in the region, and Joseph Bonne settled on the Arkansas River at a place that would become Pine Bluff.
- One hundred fifty years ago, in 1869, Boone and Grant counties – the latter named for the conqueror of the Confederacy – were created amid the chaos of Reconstruction.
- One hundred years ago, in 1919, Southwestern Collegiate Institute opened in northwest Arkansas – it is known today as John Brown University. The Arkansas General Assembly ratified the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, bringing the nation one step closer to finally giving women the right to vote. And in Phillips County, a meeting at a church in Hoop Spur led to one of the darkest episodes in Arkansas history, the Elaine Massacre.

These anniversaries provide a glimpse into the richness and depth of Arkansas history, and the Arkansas Historical Association is dedicated to examining all aspects of those events and keeping them alive for new generations to explore. Though the holiday season is past, it is never too late to give one, two, nay THREE AHA gift memberships to the history lovers on your list. The \$20 annual cost – which includes a subscription to the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, which I dare call the finest history journal in the nation – is almost sinfully cheap.

Mark your calendars for the 2019 Arkansas Historical Association Annual Conference. We will be going to Stuttgart on the Grand Prairie April 11-13, 2019, with the theme "Land, Race, and Identity," which will allow us to explore many of the aforementioned anniversaries. You can register at [http://arkansashistoricalassociation.org/?page\\_id=17](http://arkansashistoricalassociation.org/?page_id=17).

*Mark Christ*

President

## Dr. C. Calvin Smith Scholarship

The Dr. C. Calvin Smith Scholarship is intended to fund attendance at the Arkansas Historical Association's annual conference by a student from a racial or ethnic group underrepresented in the AHA's membership. The scholarship, worth \$250, is bestowed annually to a student at an institution of higher learning in Arkansas who is studying history or a related field. Funds may be used for lodging, transportation, meals, and registration. Scholarship recipients will also be granted a complimentary membership in AHA.

**To Apply** Applicants may self-nominate or be nominated by another person. Applications shall include a brief biographical statement, a current plan of study, and a statement regarding the applicant's interest in Arkansas history.

Mail the application to: Dr. C. Calvin Smith Scholarship Program, Arkansas Historical Association, 416 Old Main, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR 72701, or email the application to [dludlow@uark.edu](mailto:dludlow@uark.edu) using the subject heading "Dr. C. Calvin Smith Scholarship." The application deadline is March 1, 2019.

## AHA Back Page



*Riceland U.S.A.*

Rice has been successfully cultivated on Arkansas's Grand Prairie since the 1890s. Visitors to Stuttgart have been struck by the rural community's rising skyline and the contrasting flat rice fields. In 1962, the *New York Times* observed the following about Stuttgart, "The grain elevators dominate the skyline. For miles away, they appear to form a medieval city of fortified castles." Forty years later, the paper of record repeated the observation, "From a distance, the rice capital of America resembles a small metropolis; its grain elevators and processing mills rise from the delta plains like so many skyscrapers plunked in the middle of unending rice fields." *Image Courtesy of Blake Wintory*