

ARKANSAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Eighty-Fourth Annual Conference

Law and Justice in Arkansas



April 10-12, 2025
Fort Smith

The Conference in Brief

Thursday, April 10

Genealogy Workshop: 1:00-3:30 p.m.
Community Room, Fort Smith Public Library

Reception: 6:00-7:30 p.m.
Fort Smith National Historic Site

Friday, April 11

All Activities in the Fort Smith Bakery District

Registration: 7:30 a.m.

Welcome: 8:00 a.m.

Sessions: 8:20 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

Luncheon and Business Meeting: 12:30 p.m.
Collection Room (Bakery District)

Tours Depart: 2:30 p.m.
Courtyard Marriott

Reception and Awards Banquet: 5:30 p.m.
U. S. Marshals Museum

Saturday, April 12

All Activities in the Fort Smith Bakery District

Sessions: 8:20 a.m.-12:20 p.m.

Luncheon: 12:30
Collection Room (Bakery District)

Cover image: Deputy Marshals at Immaculate Conception Church, Fort Smith, 1908. *Courtesy of Fort Smith National Historic Site, National Park Service.*

Law and Justice in Arkansas

The eighty-fourth Arkansas Historical Association (AHA) annual conference will be held at Fort Smith, April 10-12. Fort Smith was established as a U.S. military outpost in late 1817, to keep peace between the Osage and Cherokee nations. The city that developed around the fort became a hub for migrants heading west, as well as a seat of law and justice and headquarters for U.S. Marshals operating against outlaws. The U.S. Army continued to use the greater Fort Smith area as a military base (Fort Chaffee) from WWII to Vietnam, processed Vietnamese and Cuban refugees, and provided shelter to victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Conference sessions and luncheons will be held in the Fort Smith Bakery District at 70 S. 7th Street. Established as the Shipley Baking Company in 1921, the Bakery District is within walking distance of the conference hotel and the convention center.

Before attendees convene for the opening reception at the Fort Smith National Historic Site on Thursday evening, genealogist and historian Angela Walton-Raji will present a workshop entitled, “Bringing Peace to the Frontier: Lost Genealogy of Western Arkansas,” in the Fort Smith Public Library Community Room.

On Friday afternoon, attendees can choose from two historic tours. Tom Wing will lead a bus tour of important Crawford County sites including the Drennen-Scott House and the Parley Pratt gravesite. Steve Kite, Tim Nutt and Erin Langford will lead a tour of two Fort Smith churches – Immaculate Conception Catholic Church and First Lutheran – and historic Oak Cemetery, the city’s oldest and largest cemetery and the burial site of many prominent citizens.

Conference attendees will also have an opportunity to view, “*We the People*”: *Constitutions of the State of Arkansas*, a traveling exhibit from the Arkansas State Archives. The exhibit will be on display in the Bakery District lobby throughout the conference.

The conference committee members are: Tim Nutt, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Library; Lisa Speer, Ouachita Baptist University; W. Scott Tomlin, Arkansas Tech University; and Tom Wing, Drennen-Scott Historic Site and University of Arkansas-Fort Smith.

Lodging: Attendees can reserve rooms at the Courtyard Marriott, 900 Rogers Avenue, Fort Smith, AR 72901, at the rate of \$110 per night plus tax by calling 479-783-2100 or by booking online at arkansashistoricalassociation.org by **March 11**.

Registration: Members can complete the registration form and send with check or money order to the Arkansas Historical Association, Department of History, 416 N. Campus Drive, Main 416, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR 72701 or register online at www.arkansashistoricalassociation.org. The registration fee is \$25. The deadline for registration with meals is **April 3**.



Old U.S. Jail, Fort Smith before 1886

Courtesy of the Fort Smith National Historic Site, National Park Service

Thursday, April 10

Genealogy Workshop: 1:00-3:30 p.m.

Community Room, Fort Smith Public Library

Genealogist and historian Angela Walton-Raji will lead a workshop entitled, "Bringing Peace to the Frontier: Lost Genealogy of Western Arkansas."

Reception: 6:00 p.m.

Fort Smith National Historic Site

Sponsored by the Fort Smith Convention and Visitors Bureau and Stone's Throw Brewing

Friday, April 11

All activities in the Fort Smith Bakery District

Presidents' Breakfast: 7:00 a.m.

Judges Boardroom, Courtyard Marriott

President Rachel Patton will host a breakfast for former presidents of the association. A complimentary breakfast buffet is available in the Marriott Bistro Restaurant.

Registration: 7:30 a.m.

Bakery District Lobby outside Arvest Bank

Welcome: 8:00 a.m.

Collection Room

Rachel Patton, AHA President

Hon. George McGill, Mayor of Fort Smith

Dr. Terisa Riley, Chancellor, University of Arkansas - Fort Smith

Session 1A: 8:20-9:30 a.m., Collection Room

African Americans in the Civil War and Reconstruction

Moderator: Brian Robertson, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System

“Slavery’s Vigilante Violence in Arkansas”

Kelly Houston-Jones, Arkansas Tech University

“Fighting for What’s Theirs: Struggles of Black Arkansans’ Property Ownership and the Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880”

Kimberly Green, independent scholar

“Thomas Bass: Reconstruction Politician in Arkansas”

Ani-ya Beasley, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Session 1B: 8:20-9:30 a.m., Room 103-105

Law and Justice Through the Centuries

Moderator: Chris Mortenson, Ouachita Baptist University

“Authority and Religion at Early Arkansas Post”

Linda Jones, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

“Baptists, Booze, and Backlash: Craighead County, 1896-1898”

Richard Hartness, independent scholar

“‘No Good Will Come of Such Acts’: Public Executions, 1901-1904”

Mark Christ, independent scholar

Break: 9:30-9:50 a.m., Arvest Lobby

Sponsored by the University of Arkansas Press and the Arkansas State Archives

Session 2A: 9:50 -11:00 a.m., Collection Room
County Law and Justice

Moderator: Brian Irby, Arkansas State Archives

“Crime and Justice in the Arkansas Delta: Chicot County, 1840-1880”
Tom DeBlack, Arkansas Tech University, emeritus

“‘One of the Most Lawless and Uncivilized Places in All Creation’:
1839 Washington County”
Lisa Childs, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

“Justice Divided: A Judicial History of Sebastian County, Arkansas”
Judge Jim Spears (Ret.), independent scholar



Session 2B: 9:50-11:00 a.m., Room 103-105
The Law and Infamous Women

Moderator: Nathania Sawyer, Certified Archivist

“Ordinance 760: Fort Smith’s Vice District and Legal Prostitution,
1907-1924”
Ben Boulden, independent scholar

“White Slavery in Fort Smith: How the Mann Act Was Used to Police
Human Trafficking”
Shanna Jones, Liberty University

“Mary Kettering: Victim or Black Widow?”
Shelley Blanton and Roxy Wylie, University of Arkansas-Fort Smith

Session 3A: 11:10 a.m.-12:20 p.m., Collection Room

African Americans in Slavery and Forced Exodus

Moderator: Matthew Hild, Georgia Tech

“Five Days to Leave: The Black Expulsion of Catcher, Arkansas”

Michael Anthony, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

“Slavery and Freedom: Abby Guy’s Legal Fight for Freedom”

Emily Housdan, UA Little Rock Downtown

“The Exodus from Sheridan: Segregation, Sawmills, and Resettlement in Post-Brown Arkansas”

Ronna Pennington, Arkansas State University - Three Rivers

Danna Carver, independent scholar



Session 3B: 11:10 a.m.-12:20 p.m., Room 103-105

Twentieth Century Law and Justice

Moderator: Blake Wintory, Mosaic Templars Cultural Center, Division of Arkansas Heritage

“Prohibition, Immigrant Declarant Voting, and Political Power in Early-Twentieth-Century Washington County”

Rebecca Howard, Lone Star College-Montgomery

“Without Any Deliberate Speed: *Rogers vs. Paul* and the Desegregation of Fort Smith Public Schools”

Tom Wing, University of Arkansas-Fort Smith

“Confined Cooperation: Ideals, Realities, and Justice in the Jerome and Rohwer Camp Cooperative Enterprises”

Joshua Cobbs Youngblood, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Luncheon: 12:30 p.m., Collection Room

Business Meeting

Presiding: Rachel Patton, President

President's Report

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Election of Trustees

Keynote Address

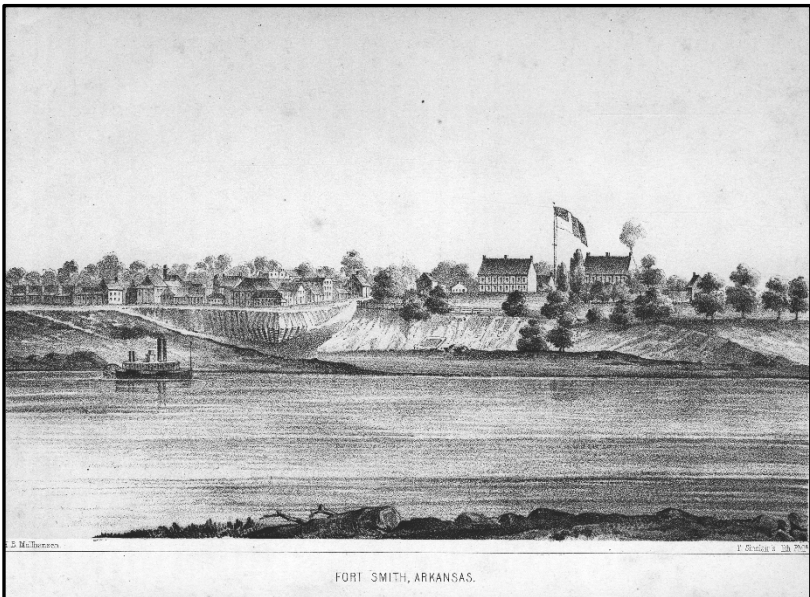
“Jurisdictional Conflict in Indian Territory: Nineteenth Century Tribal and Federal Relationships”

Catherine Foreman Gray, Historian and Preservation Officer of the Cherokee Nation

Tours: Depart Courtyard Marriott at 2:30 p.m.

Drennen-Scott House and Van Buren (bus)

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, First Lutheran Church, and Oak Cemetery (carpool)



Fort Smith, circa 1853

Courtesy of the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Little Rock

Annual Awards Banquet

U. S. Marshals Museum

789 Riverfront Dr., Fort Smith AR

Reception: 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Sponsored by Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, the River Valley Democrat-Gazette, and the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System

Banquet: 6:30 p.m.

Awards Presentations

Lifetime Achievement Award

Award of Merit

Arkansas Diamond Award

J. G. Ragsdale Book Award

Tom Dillard Advocacy Award

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

NEARA Award for Exemplary Archival Research

James L. Foster and Billy W. Beason Award

Lucille Westbrook Award

Violet B. Gingles Award

Susannah DeBlack Award

Walter L. Brown County and Local Journal Awards

Arkansas Women's History Institute Susie Pryor Award



United States Courthouse and Post Office, Fort Smith, ca. 1910
Courtesy of the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Little Rock

Saturday, April 12

All Activities in Fort Smith Bakery District

Session 4A: 8:20-9:30 a.m., Collection Room

Law(lessness) and (In)justice in Civil War East Arkansas

Moderator: Matt Stith, University of Texas at Tyler

“Legitimate Military Targets? The Lost Cause, the Laws of War, and the Battle of St. Charles”

Terry L. Beckenbaugh, U.S. Air Force Command and Staff College, Maxwell Air Force Base

“‘Freedom to Starve, Rot, Die’: Injustice in Helena’s Black Refugee Community, 1862-1863”

G. David Schieffler, Crowder College

Session 4B: 8:20-9:30 a.m., Room 103-105

Fighting Against the System

Moderator: Ruth O’Loughlin, Lakeport Plantation

“The Arkansas Fight Against the Fair Employment Practices Committee”

Caleb Lawley, independent scholar

“A Failure of Justice: The Missouri & North Arkansas Railroad Strike, 1921-1923”

Kenneth C. Barnes, University of Central Arkansas, emeritus

“The *X-Ray* and Justice at the University of Arkansas”

Brian McGowan, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Break: 9:30-9:50 a.m., Arvest Lobby

Sponsored by the Arkansas Women’s History Institute and the Black History Commission of Arkansas

Session 5A: 9:50-11:00 a.m., Collection Room

Murder in the Eyes of the Law

Moderator: Rodney Harris, Williams Baptist University

“The 1868 Murder of Albert Parker”

Shelly Churchwell, White County Historical Society

“A ‘Diabolical Deed’: The Cane Hill Murders of 1839”

Susan Young, independent scholar

“Detective Sam Spight and the Case of the Dead Vegetable Vendor”

Tim Nutt, Historical Research Center, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences



Session 5B: 9:50-11:00 a.m., Room 103-105

Characters in Law and Justice

Moderator: Matthew P. Rooney, Arkansas Archeological Survey

“Tommy Robinson: The Dichotomy of Urban Criminal Justice and Rural Populism”

Revis Edmonds, Division of Arkansas Heritage

“Buried Truth: Thomas Murton and the Transformation of Arkansas Prisons in the 1960s”

Juliette Robinson, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

“The Masonic Fraternity and the Transfiguration of Law and Order in Arkansas after the Civil War”

John Kyle Day, University of Arkansas-Monticello

Session 6A: 11:10 a.m.-12:20 p.m., Collection Room
Incarceration and the Law

Moderator: Carla Coleman, independent scholar

“Pulaski County Penal Farm”

Anne-Elise Tidwell, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

“‘Another Man Done Gone’: Richard Audell Clift and the
Pulaski County Penal Farm”

Lisa Speer, Ouachita Baptist University

“Constitution and Congestion: Making an Overcrowded
Penitentiary”

David Ware, Arkansas State Archives

Session 6B: 11:10 a.m.-12:20 p.m., Room 103-105

Arkansas Constitution and Arkansas Laws

Moderator: Scott Tomlin, Arkansas Tech University

“Redemption, White Supremacy, and National Trends: Rethinking
the Arkansas Constitution of 1874”

Rodney Harris, Williams Baptist University

“The Arkansas Constitution’s Judicial Article and Amendments,
Passed and Proposed”

Kay Goss and the Hon. Rodney Slater, independent scholars

Luncheon: 12:30 p.m., Collection Room

Keynote Address: “There’s Always a Backstory”

Mara Leveritt, Investigative Journalist and Author

Thank you!!

The Arkansas Historical Association is grateful to our conference supporters!



