

We are the Ozarks
Somos los Ozarks

The rugged hills and fertile valleys of Southwest Arkansas, rich in water, wildlife, and other natural resources, have attracted people for centuries.

Native Americans and early settlers alike had strong ties to the land. The mountains isolated many of these settlers and their resilience, hard work, and a dry sense of humor produced a distinct "hillbilly" culture. Determined "hills" developed towns and small businesses, schools, and transportation routes.

Throughout the history of the area, people of diverse backgrounds and experiences settled here. Sometimes this resulted in conflict, as in the case of the Civil War, but always it contributed to the development of a rich cultural heritage.

Las escarpadas colinas y los valles fértiles del Noroeste de Arkansas, ricos en agua, vida silvestre y otros recursos naturales, han atraído a la gente durante siglos.

Los nativos americanos y los primeros colonos tenían fuertes lazos con la tierra. Las montañas aislaron a muchos de estos colonos. Su arduo trabajo, su habilidad para lidiar con la adversidad y su sentido del humor produjeron distintas costumbres del "montañés" (hillbilly). Los determinados "habitantes de la ciudad" desarrollaron pueblos y pequeñas empresas, escuelas y rutas de transporte.

A lo largo de la historia del área, se establecieron aquí personas de diversos orígenes y puntos de vista. Algunas veces esto resultó en conflicto, como en el caso de la Guerra Civil, pero siempre contribuyó al desarrollo de un rico patrimonio cultural.

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When One Door Closes... Shiloh Museum Finds a New Path

CONNECT

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Jama Best, Executive Director



As we reflect on the last year and the many challenges brought about by the COVID pandemic, I'm constantly reminded of the resilience, strength, and determination of Arkansans.

The pandemic has hit families, businesses, and many others

incredibly hard. This also includes museums. Many museums have been and continue to be faced with closure, layoffs, cancellation of programs, and other challenges.

As museums often do, they figure out ways to continue their valuable work and be there for their communities. I've heard numerous stories of museum staff volunteering to help in their communities, working without pay to continue their vital work of being the gatekeeper of their community's history and culture, organizing food drives, and even offering communities the use of their Wi-Fi to help those with limited internet access at home. There are so many touching stories and you'll read about some of those in this issue along with ongoing challenges museums face due to the prolonged epidemic in this issue.

Museums aren't just repositories of history; they are transformative and bring us together in very unique ways. Museums provide a way we can connect with the past, and present, and imagine the future.

Many years ago, I visited Toltec Mounds Archeological State Park as an anthropology student and upon graduation, I got my first professional job there. The ceremonial mound site is of the late-Woodland through early-Mississippian Period dating from A.D. 650 – 1050.

The mounds are most impressive and the exhibits housed within the park's visitor center offers a great deal of information about the site's prehistory and history, numerous artifacts from the site, and year-round interpretive programs. Other than the mounds, there was one artifact that literally gave me chills.

In the exhibit case, there were balls of clay that had been found during excavations. One of those balls of clay had finger impressions of the person who held it over one thousand years ago. It was an immediate connection with someone from so long ago that truly made an impression on me in so many ways.

Museums are important and make a difference even in light of a pandemic. Read more about how museums are coping and making a difference in this issue.

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From the Chair



Joseph Key, Ph.D.
Board Chair

It's been quite a year. At times isolating, terrifying, and heartbreaking. But we have also seen amazing compassion, community, and commitment to service. Through the pandemic, the humanities were there to make sense of it all.

Historians reminded us of how previous generations met the challenge of pandemics, lockdowns, quarantine, and even political division. Poets and authors told our stories and re-imagined our lives. Philosophers and theologians taught many how to find meaning in isolation. The staff of museums and educational organizations re-purposed their work to reach a virtual audience and provided new services to struggling communities.

These actions were all evident in Arkansas humanities as you will see in the stories of this issue of Connect. Recipients of the CARES Act grants were able to keep staff employed who used resources in innovative ways to support their communities. Throughout the year, they along with other grantees provided humanities programming and supported virtual education for schoolchildren. Our Next Gen Advisory Committee developed new initiatives to reach a wide audience of Arkansans on numerous stories about Arkansas history and culture. You'll read about one of those stories in this issue: Dr. Michael Pierce's groundbreaking project on the life and trial of Nelson Hackett which tells us much about the courage and resilience of running toward freedom. You'll also be introduced to our new Education Outreach Coordinator, Ann Clements, and her projects on curriculum and teacher professional development. The humanities are all of these things and more. For, ultimately, in the midst of virus and vaccine, the humanities remind us of our humanity.

A tremendous thank you to all of our grant recipients and to the AHC staff for bringing us together in new ways and keeping the humanities vibrant in Arkansas.

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ON THE COVER: Entry exhibit at the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History.

CONNECT is a publication of the Arkansas Humanities Council.

Editor: Jama Best

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Design: Lesley Cooper, Cooper Design, LLC

First Person Plural: Conducting Oral History in the Pandemic

Jo Blatti, *First Person Plural*



The narrators left to right: Mary Louise Wilson, Mary Gay Shipley and Deborah Troillett

Early in 2020, we were delighted to receive word of an Arkansas Humanities Council award that would enable collection of several additional oral history interviews for *First Person Plural (FPP)*, a statewide model project in oral and public history. We immediately notified our prospective narrators — longtime Little Rock educator and political figure, Mary Louise Williams, teacher; and administrator Sister Deborah Troillett, also of Little Rock; and Blytheville businesswoman and civic leader, Mary Gay Shipley.

The project collects and showcases the life stories of Arkansas women who came of age in the mid-20th century, during times of great change that saw the Civil Rights Movement, new roles for women, and access to technology. The series explores the reflections/experiences of diverse women throughout the state who grew up in the same general time frame, alert to the ways that individuals experience common experiences such as growing up, education, courtship, family life, working life, and community activities. Through their voices, we explore common issues and dilemmas, especially efforts to welcome new opportunities while maintaining traditions. See the

FPP website <https://1stpersonplural.org/> for a complete overview of interviews conducted to date, our traveling exhibit, public programs, and archival partners.

The project had a long-planned collaborative public program, bringing in Dr. Rachel Seidman, head of the Southern Oral History Project, for multiple appearances at the Clinton School of Public Service, University of Central Arkansas, and Esse Purse Museum with many community groups organized for the first week of the March [see the programs section of the FPP website for details of Dr. Seidman's visit]. Dr. Seidman made a highly successful tour of central Arkansas, speaking about her work at the distinguished archive which has collected so much important 20th century regional history and discussing her recent book, *Speaking of Feminism: Today's Activists on the Past, Present and Future of the U.S. Women's Movement* (UNC Press, 2019). We planned to move into research and conduct of the next oral histories following this March program. Many readers will anticipate the next sentence. By the time our speaker returned home safely — to University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, one of the first U.S.

universities to shut down — the COVID-19 pandemic was upon us all.

In a heartbeat, the issues moved from researching, scheduling and conducting interviews to human safety and assessing options — what were they? All planned FPP interviews went on “pause” immediately. Our narrators were very understanding. As an historian well aware that the influenza epidemic of 1918-19 had lasted for close to two years and encompassed two deadly waves, I had no idea if this would be of similar proportions. This time last year, I was hoping [against hope] that it might be possible to safely conduct face-to-face interviews in backyards by summer 2020. The rising infection rates quickly dispelled that notion.

What were we to do? Put the project on hold? Find alternative means to continue? The FPP staff and advisory board agreed that assessing opportunities to move forward made sense. We set to work researching our options nationally and internationally in the oral history community. This was a wide-ranging conversation; everybody in the field was in the same pickle. The resources of the Oral History Association (www.oralhistory.org/), the Baylor Institute for Oral History (<https://www.baylor.edu>), the British Oral History Society (www.ohs.uk.org/) and Transom (<https://transom.org/>) proved especially useful to our work in Arkansas. Some form of electronic media — aka ‘remote interviewing’ — looked like the best way forward — but how? And how to do this most easily for both narrators and interviewers? By way of definition, what is called ‘remote interviewing’ — real time conversation recorded over electronic media — generally has not been recommended for the kind of life histories FPP collects. Many of us are familiar with the remote technique from watching and listening to journalists use it on television and radio for informational purposes. The long-held belief in the oral history community is that face-to-face communication provides a more in-depth context for gathering reflective biographical accounts — in that it provides for building rapport, sensitivity to body language and other non-verbal signals, the general warmth of a live interaction. For FPP

and everyone else used to conducting oral histories in this way, the COVID-19 pandemic provided a challenge to that idea and to developing revised, new techniques that promised a successful outcome.

Working with our sheaf of phone notes, emails and technical bulletins from all over and input from longtime collaborators at the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History (UA-Fayetteville), our always informative consulting engineer in Little Rock, and our wonderfully willing narrators, we were ready to start interviewing by June 2020. Not in backyards, but over modems. While we figured out the technical nuts and bolts of recording remotely, our narrators grew accustomed to having Zoom and other video conferencing in their lives, which helped a great deal. Most unexpectedly, the 2020 Arkansas Humanities Council grant became a test case for remote oral history interviewing.

The results of our background research proved gratifying. All three of the remote interviews undertaken in 2020 yielded comfortable narrator interactions and highly worthwhile interviews, largely comparable to live situations in content and audio quality.

FPP research associate Acadia Roher recorded the first remote interview with Mary Louise Williams of Little Rock. A retired educator, longtime Democratic political activist and Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority member now in her 90s, this appeared to be our biggest challenge. Yet, Mrs. Williams had been chatting weekly online with a college professor nephew in Pennsylvania for months. She and Acadia had little trouble identifying a comfortable technique — AirPods coupled with Mrs. Williams phone at her end linked via Zoom conferencing with an H6 Zoom recorder on the FPP end. In terms of content, the Williams interview brought aspects to light that intersect with archived interviews in the FPP collection and elsewhere. These include: links between her family and Winthrop Rockefeller in the Plumerville/Morrilton area; the way young African-Americans in Conway County traveled to Little Rock for education, social life and early

jobs; information about a mid-1940s assessment of Little Rock segregation by Philander Smith College students; and the circumstances of her commuter marriage with a military man while she maintained a career in the Little Rock schools.

The second interview in the series, also conducted by Acadia Roher, this time computer to computer using the H6 and Zoom conferencing, proved equally successful. Our narrator was teacher and administrator Sister Deborah Troillett, member of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. Currently head of the Interfaith House of Prayer in west Little Rock, Sister Deborah will be known to many as the longtime head of Mount St. Mary's Academy. Given the historic importance of women religious in educational and medical institutions in Arkansas and elsewhere, we have been especially attentive to including them in this series. Sister Deborah describes her Catholic girlhood in Hillcrest, coming of age in the 1960s, the role that young nuns at St. Mary's played in introducing her to aspects of the community she hadn't known, also the possibility of vocation. She discusses her journey toward vocation, the decision to join the Sisters of Mercy, an order with a tradition of social justice advocacy in addition to teaching and hospital work and provides information about the lifelong process of discernment among women religious leaders. Sister Deborah also describes opportunities she's had for international travel and comparative religious experience in addition to some of the complexities encountered while in teaching and administration.

The final interview conducted in 2020 was with Blytheville businesswoman and civic leader Mary Gay Shipley. Because so much is known about That Bookstore in Blytheville, the nationally known bookstore she founded in the 1970s, the

FPP interview, recorded with Jo Blatti, focuses on biographical information and on Shipley's civic commitments. Shipley outlines important influences of her supportive family, including a 'professional Girl Scout' aunt, a Methodist upbringing, and an older brother's civil rights work. She notes the importance of her husband's supportive role on the home front from the earliest days of their marriage and the ways first-rate staff at the bookstore enabled her to take on volunteer and nonprofit commitments such as the Women's Foundation of Arkansas, the American Booksellers Association and the Arkansas Community Foundation. Shipley also discusses her participation in the Southern Bancorp Community Partners Board, a 2012 primary run on the Democratic ticket for an open statehouse seat in Mississippi County and her current leadership role in the development of a Cold War Museum at the site of the former Blytheville Strategic Air Command [SAC] AFB.

Based on our 2020 experience, we continue to interview remotely, working with each narrator to assess their preferences and also fine-tuning our technological approaches. It certainly helps to have a talented research associate who is a digital native. All the FPP interviews are archived at the David and Barbara Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History in Fayetteville and the UA Little Rock Center for Arkansas History and Culture. The FPP interviews and summaries will go on-line shortly through the Pryor Center. Additional copies of the interviews, summaries and all of our project working papers, including research files on the individual interviews are available to students, teachers and researchers CAHC. That collection will include our notes and an evaluation of our experiences with remote technology.

When One Door Closes . . .

Allyn Lord, Director, Shiloh Museum of Ozark History



Michele Gibson, Receptionist/Store Manager

This project is supported in part by a grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council and National Endowment for the Humanities.

Like all historic events, the COVID-19 pandemic had a start and will have an end date, even if that's difficult to see right now. But what makes an event historic is what happens between those two points.

With the arrival of COVID-19, the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History in Springdale, like almost every other museum in this country, came screeching to a halt in early March 2020.

My first email to the staff, on March 4, started by saying, "There's been much talk about the Coronavirus." (I'm a master of understatement!) I attached a few articles that had been published to date about museums and COVID-19. At that point we placed signs in our restrooms about handwashing, sanitizer, and CDC advice and started disinfecting all hands-on exhibits. By March 11 we started discussing the possibility of closing the museum and cancelling programs, meetings, and events. The next evening, at the

monthly museum board meeting, we considered these factors:

- The CDC's advice was that it was going to "get worse before it gets better;"
- Schools and other local events were already shutting down;
- Our visitor demographic includes many older folks, schoolchildren, and out-of-state visitors, not a good combination for COVID; and
- As much as we hated to admit it, visiting a museum is not a priority for anyone.

The board, therefore, recommended that we close the museum and cancel all programs and events through May 31, continue to work while the museum was closed, and re-examine the situation in mid-May to determine future responses.

I met with our staff on March 13 and with Mayor Sprouse (the Shiloh Museum is a Department of

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the City of Springdale), and we determined to close as of March 16, 2020. We agreed that a few of our volunteers could work if they desired and were able to and their staff supervisor approved and was available. As for the staff, all who could work from home were encouraged to do so, and six of our thirteen staff members began City-approved off-site work. Beforehand projects were created for our receptionist/store manager to undertake for other departments and our education staff began looking at virtual programming, while other staff made use of museum online resources and materials taken home. On-site staff were folks whose work needed a more hands-on approach: managers of grounds, facilities, exhibits, collections, and library, along with the staff photographer and me.

Word went out about our closure and the suspension of programs, events, meetings, and outreach. We targeted the media, used our website and social media, and alerted our membership. We also immediately contacted the organizers of the more than fifty meetings and events scheduled at the museum through the end of April so that they could find an alternate space, if desired. We encouraged the public, while the museum was closed, to visit the museum's website to read about regional history, check out our podcast programs, and read our blog posts. And since museum staff members continued to work during the closure, researchers could continue to call or email the museum with questions about our regional history.

While some staff members were working from home, the on-site staff undertook a deep cleaning of our exhibit hall, rental space, and historic buildings. Signs were placed on doors, we changed our phone message, had staff members answer all phones and receive all deliveries, and hey — it was okay to dress down during the closure.

Although we didn't know we'd be hunkering down for months, we nonetheless committed to creating accessible ways for the public to learn about the Arkansas Ozarks from quarantine. That meant beefing up our website with more content, including morphing physical exhibits into virtual



The "crew" clockwise from top right: Bo Williams, Susan Young and Kim Hosey created a virtual museum experience.

ones and posting more historic photographs from our largest-in-the-state image collection. But what I failed to take into consideration was the creativity and commitment of our staff.

Outreach Coordinator Susan Young thought that a good way to keep the museum in the public's eye was to produce a weekly "eNews," an emailed tell-all letting folks know what we were working on while closed. Each staff member provided a photograph and brief paragraph about their week's activities. This was hugely popular, and we discovered that even good friends of the museum learned about the wide range of work we do. Though we've decreased its output to monthly, we envision continuing the eNews even after the pandemic is over.

Education Specialist Kim Hosey came up with the idea for "Shiloh Shout-Outs," a series of short videos that showcase behind-the-scenes happenings at the museum, as well as interpretations of museum artifacts, historic buildings, local history, and historic sites. Amazingly, Kim filmed, edited, and uploaded the "Shiloh Shout-Outs" solely from her iPhone. We

received an Arkansas Humanities Council CARES Act grant later in the year to purchase a video-editing laptop that Kim's now using. I'm constantly amazed at how Kim chooses topics, researches them, engages other staff members or knowledgeable community members, films the episode, edits it, and gets it online in so little time. Her video work is a strength that she brings to other museum projects.

Marie Demeroukas, Photo Archivist and Librarian also went digital during 2020. With the help of Photographer and Digital Project Manager Bo Williams, Marie created "Minute History," a series of video shorts highlighting historic sites in and around Northwest Arkansas, one minute at a time. This again took the creativity and knowledge to choose topics, research, find images, create sound effects, film new footage, and narrate (the latter provided by Ozark-born-and-raised staff member Susan Young).

Along with those weekly or monthly products, the staff were skillfully able to morph many of our on-site annual events to virtual. These included our summer history camps, the Ozark Quilt Fair, and Cabin Fever Reliever (open house). What struck me profoundly was that these events, while lacking that special in-person intimacy, made museum activities accessible to a larger and more diverse audience. As an example, our summer history camps usually each top out at 20 students, as that's as many as our education staff and volunteers can work with during a week. Last June and July, however, a total of 110 campers were involved. And, to my delight, two of those campers were young people on the autism spectrum who wouldn't have been able to attend camp on-site.

One of the most remarkable successes of our virtual ramp-up was the moving of our first annual Native American Days in November to all virtual,

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partly in thanks to an AHC CARES Act Grant. The two-day event included videos and livestreaming from several tribal elders as well as the Arkansas Archeological Survey. We had assumed we could host perhaps 500 students at an on-site event. The virtual event, however, attracted 2,110 students from 57 schools across Arkansas as well as from several other states. That's the power of an online program. The program abstracts and other resource materials were revised for 5th-grade reading levels and have since been translated into Spanish, Marshallese (roughly 15% of the Springdale population), and American Sign Language and are available online for teachers and others to use throughout the year. Contact education manager Judy Costello to access the materials online (jcostello@springdalear.gov).

Clearly, our virtual programming was wildly successful. As many other museums have realized, we expect that at least some of that programming will continue to be virtual, especially due to its increased accessibility. If you're interested in checking out some of our virtual programming, go to the Shiloh Museum YouTube channel or Facebook page.

While all this was happening, we began to research what it would mean to reopen the museum. In August we began to purchase supplies: masks (both for adults and children), face shields, cleaning and disinfecting supplies, hand sanitizer and hand-sanitizer stations, and floor decals. We began to produce COVID-related signage in-house. And, perhaps most importantly, we developed protocols and a policy for being open during the pandemic.

With the support of the museum board, and in conjunction with the City of Springdale, the Shiloh Museum reopened to the public on September 1, 2020. We were surprised at first by the number of out-of-town, and especially out-of-state, visitors. After a few months of being open, that reverted to our usual visitor demographic of more local than out-of-the-area visitors. However, the number of walk-in visitors continued to be extremely low until recently.

Among our preparations were:

- Determining maximum capacity for our exhibit hall and other public spaces;
- Changing our restrooms from one each for men and women to one for staff and volunteers and one for the public, with signage to indicate maximum numbers, locks, and safety;
- Creating a one-way path through the exhibit hall and changing our doorways to a one-in-and-one-out pathway;
- Closing our museum store, since it was too small for social distancing and impossible to disinfect between customers;
- Closing our historic buildings, which are also too small for social distancing;
- Closing our research library to the public, although keeping it available for staff research via email, U.S. mail, or phone;
- Putting a temporary halt on the twelve history-related groups which meet monthly or bi-monthly at the museum;
- Remaining closed to all in-person programs, meetings, and events; and
- Creating a list of cleaning and disinfecting protocols for staff to undertake three times daily.





Despite the pandemic, Shiloh Museum had an otherwise amazing year. For instance:

1. When our board and staff completed the 2020-2024 strategic plan, our biggest vision was that the museum campus extend from about three acres to an entire city block. That meant almost doubling our current campus size with the purchase of four properties. In 2020, through the intersections of planning, timing, luck, and good relationships, the museum was able to add two of those properties to our campus. The City of Springdale and the Tyson Family Foundation each purchased a next-door duplex for the museum. The first became, through immense labor on the part of staff (again, “thanks” to the pandemic for making their time possible), our new digitization center, exhibits shop, development office, and storage location. The second is being used as storage and awaiting future plans. Additionally, we learned that the owner of the third property, a private home, has given us the right-of-first-refusal on the property in his will. What a way to expand in pandemic 2020!

2. We were able to complete the renovation of our

exhibit hall, which had begun in 2015. Because we didn’t have any visitors for six months, it allowed us to leave exposed surfaces, tools, and other equipment from the exhibit work without worry of inconveniencing visitors.

3. Our outside campus — lawns, trees, flowers, shrubs, etc. — continued to grow through the pandemic. Among our outdoor accomplishments was to hold two “drive-through” milkweed plant giveaways. Several years ago the Shiloh Museum became the first official waystation in the area for migrating Monarch butterflies. Milkweed serves as a host to their eggs and larvae and provides them nectar nourishment, and, in turn, they pollinate the plants. For our two events we gave away more than 2,000 milkweed plants and collected over \$1,000 in resultant donations for the Elizabeth Richardson Center, which provides us use of their greenhouse. A great collaboration that helped the public and the Monarchs.

In sum, I’d like to quote that old saying, “when one door closes, another one opens.” That’s how it felt at the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History in 2020.

Scoop from the Staff



AHC staff wants to connect with you! In this column, we will give you the scoop on what's new at the council, share information on projects and programs we're working on, provide advice on how to write successful AHC grant applications, and much more!

If you are thinking about applying for an Arkansas Humanities Council grant, read on for tips that will help you navigate our application process.

Determine if your project is a humanities project.

We've defined humanities in our guidelines, available at www.arkansashumanitiescouncil.org. If, after reading the definition, you are still unsure if your project qualifies, contact AHC staff.

Check your organization's eligibility.

The council awards grants to nonprofits and public institutions (individuals may not apply).

- Make sure your organization's EIN and DUNS numbers are current.

Before applying, organizations must have a current Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number

and Employer Identification Number (EIN). The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issues the EIN, and DUN & Bradstreet issues the DUNS number. Visit our website for more information.

Read AHC Grant Guidelines.

The guidelines cover the grants we offer, application requirements, post-award reporting requirements, allowable expenses, application deadlines, and more. We are happy to answer any questions you have about the guidelines, so please contact us!

Know how to create a successful grant budget.

- A detailed budget narrative helps the grant reviewers have an in-depth understanding of your project. Use the narrative to tie your budget and goals together. Itemize the budget thoroughly.
- Ensure the project can be completed within the one-year time period.
- Review the activities that are not eligible for funding.



Know how to submit your application.

We accept applications through an online grant management system—Foundant. Visit our website, click the grants tab, and select “Apply for a Grant” to access the system. To enter, you must create an account. Have your EIN and DUNS numbers ready because they are required to complete the registration process. Once registration is complete, you’ll be able to access the electronic applications for all open grants.

Reach out to us.

AHC staff will review your application draft, allowing the opportunity to fix any issues that could derail your proposal. AHC offers grant writing workshops to demonstrate how to complete our online grant applications, provide technical assistance, and answer your questions.

We are here to support you every step of the way in providing impactful, quality humanities programs and resources to your communities. Connect with us! Call us at **501-353-0349** or email us at info@arkansashumanitiescouncil.org. We’d love to hear from you!

Before you go, please take a moment to read about our new grant initiatives and upcoming grant deadlines.

New Grant Initiatives**African American History and Culture Grant**

The purpose of the African American History and Culture Grant is to provide funding for nonprofit organizations that wish to research, document, preserve, and interpret Arkansas’ African American history and culture. The maximum award is \$5,000. The deadlines for applications are February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15.

Access to the Humanities Grant

The purpose of this grant is to assist organizations in ensuring that their humanities projects, events, and programs are accessible to Arkansans with disabilities. The program or project must be related to the humanities to be eligible. The goal is to provide a stop-gap solution for organizations to ensure access when other funds are not available. The maximum award is \$1,500, and the deadline for these grants will be the first of each month, except December.

Upcoming Grant Deadlines**Access to the Humanities Grant**

First of each month except December

African American History and Culture Grant

May 15, 2021

August 15, 2021

November 15, 2021

Mini-Grant

June 15, 2021

Major Grant

September 15, 2021

“‘In the fangs of tyrants’: Nelson Hackett, Fugitive from Arkansas Slavery”

Dr. Michael Pierce, University of Arkansas



In 1842 and 1843, Nelson Hackett was the most famous Arkansan in the Atlantic World. His name passed through the lips of governors, legislators, diplomats, and colonial officials. Newspapers throughout North America and Europe reported on his actions and their repercussions, and British, Canadian, and American activists took up his cause and demanded justice. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert even discussed his plight at Buckingham Palace.

That Nelson Hackett, this most famous Arkansan, was an enslaved man speaks to the yearnings for freedom of those held in bondage, the extraordinary lengths to which Arkansas slavers would go to protect their investments in human property, the vast networks of abolitionists — both white and black — working to undermine the “peculiar institution,” and the ability of fugitives like Hackett to force governmental officials to confront the moral crisis at the heart of chattel slavery.

The journey that would propel Nelson Hackett onto the international stage began in July 1841, when he fled Arkansas and slavery. His flight took him from Fayetteville across Missouri, Illinois, and Indiana, through parts of Ohio and Michigan, into

Canada, and ending at Chatham, some fifty miles east of Detroit. To sustain himself for this nearly 1000-mile escape, Hackett took a fine racehorse and saddle, a beaver coat, a gold watch and chain, and about \$500 in gold and silver coin. Upon setting foot in Canada near the end of August, Hackett believed that “the humanity of the British law made him a free man.” Hackett, though, would not be free for very long. Alfred Wallace, the man who the state of Arkansas considered to be Hackett’s owner, tracked him to Chatham, had him arrested on charges of theft, and secured his extradition back to Arkansas. Hackett became the first fugitive that Canada returned to bondage.

Nelson Hackett would also be the last such fugitive that Canada sent back. Abolitionists in the United States, Canada, and throughout the Atlantic World refused to allow his return to set a precedent. Fearful that slave owners would fabricate claims of theft as a pretext to extradite fugitives, they invoked Hackett’s case as they met with British and U.S. diplomats, took to the floor of the Canadian Assembly, lobbied imperial officials, and petitioned Parliament. In the end, abolitionists secured a commitment from the British to regulate the extradition process in ways

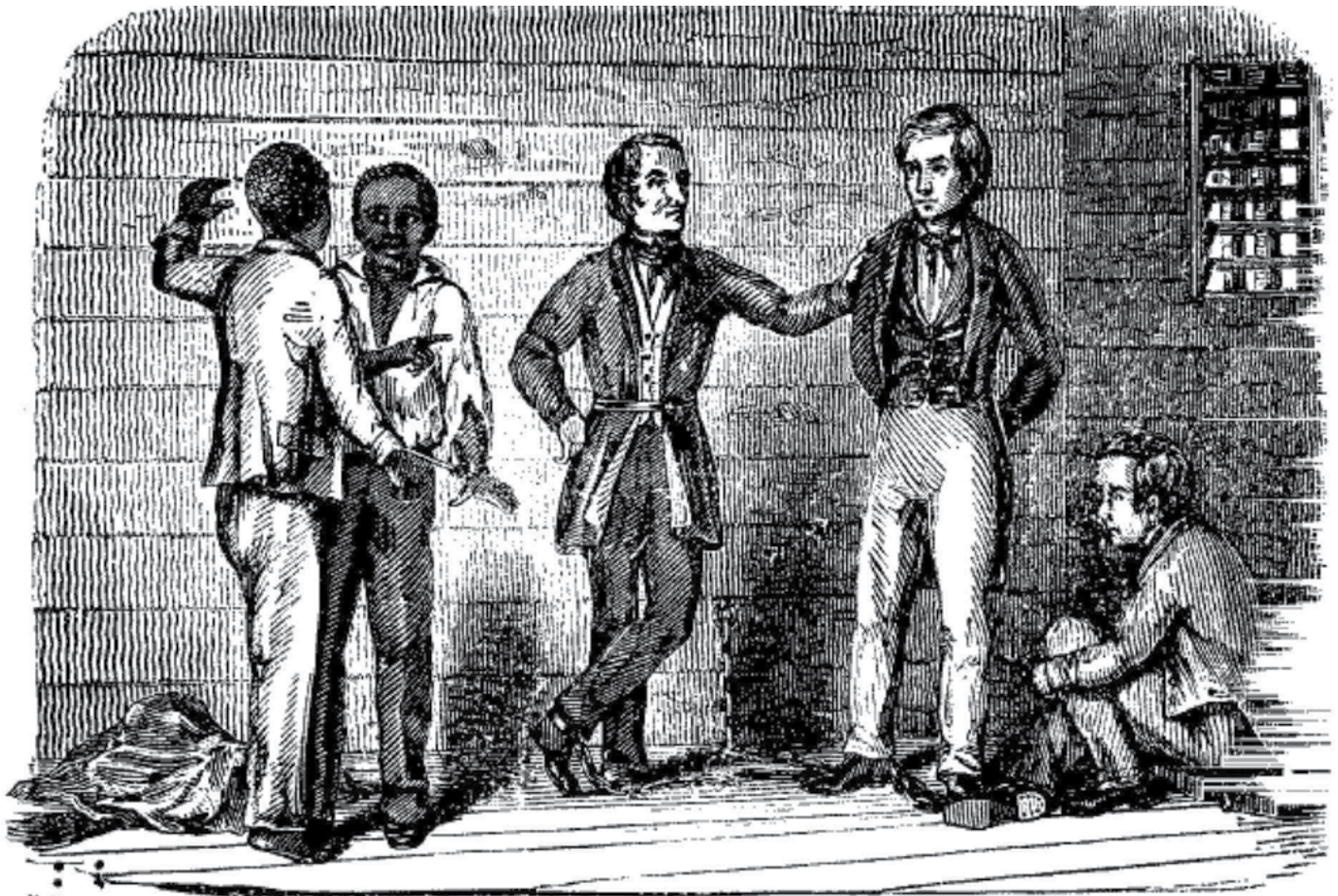
that made it nearly impossible for slavers to secure the return of fugitives. Thus, Hackett and his flight helped ensure that Canada remained a refuge for those fleeing American slavery, which made possible the stream of fugitives in the 1850s that fueled the sectional crisis that ended in civil war and emancipation.

The Nelson Hackett Project, nelsonhackettproject.uark.edu, a public humanities program of the University of Arkansas Humanities Center, seeks to tell Hackett's story to the broadest possible audience. The Project's centerpiece is an interactive website that provides a narrative of Hackett's flight and the conflicts over extradition it provoked along with primary documents, transcripts, maps, and images. The Project, though, has plans for more activities: summer teacher institutes, additional archival research, and scholarly publications. The purpose

of these endeavors is not simply to honor one man's struggle for freedom and demonstrate the power (and limits) of human agency but also to explore the ways that slavery shaped the development of Arkansas, the Nation, and the World.

One of the primary problems in reconstructing the life and flight of Nelson Hackett is that there are few records of his words and thoughts. This problem is rooted in the racism that undergirded the slave system and created most of its archival records. Hackett's flight is therefore reconstructed using other voices, including slavers and their apologists, black and white abolitionists, journalists, and colonial and elected officials. This process, though, makes Hackett into someone who is acted upon and judged rather than the center of his own story and thus obscures much of his humanity. Only Hackett's actions themselves

continued on page 14

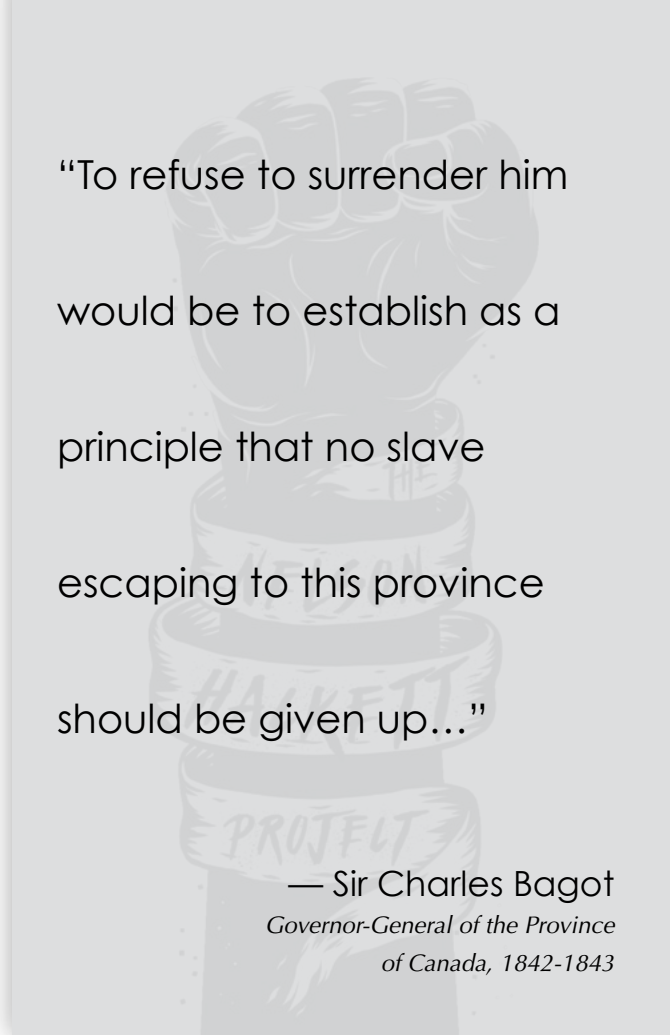


THE INTERIOR OF THE JAIL IN PALMYRA, MISSOURI.

— flight from Arkansas, journey to Canada, and escape upon his return to Fayetteville — tell us about his motivations and desires.

Little is known about Hackett's early life. He did not enter the historical record until two weeks after his July 1841 escape. At that time, Alfred Wallace, a merchant and landowner, registered two bills of sale at the Washington County Courthouse. In the first, dated June 15, 1840, Jacob Cartwright conveyed "a certain Negro Boy named Nelson about 24 years of age" to Willis Wallace in exchange for "a boy named Moses and a grey mule." In the second, dated one day later, Willis Wallace sold "Nelson" to his brother Alfred for \$1000. The bills of sale do not indicate how Cartwright came to own Hackett or how Hackett got to Fayetteville, which was not established until 1828. They do suggest, though, that the town's white people knew him simply as "Nelson." When and why he adopted the last name of Hackett, which he used in Canada, remain unknown. The only descriptions of Hackett's physical appearance come from an account of his return to Fayetteville. A reporter for the Peoria Register described him as "handsomely formed, about 30 years old, of very prepossessing address" and noted that he "wore his hair nicely combed, was genteelly clad, and was in short a negro dandy."

There are conflicting accounts of Hackett's July 1841 departure from Arkansas. Alfred Wallace accused Hackett of leaving Fayetteville while Wallace was away and of stealing the racehorse, saddle, coat, silver and gold coin, and a neighbor's watch and chain on the way out of town. Wallace initially suggested that Hackett raped a white woman before leaving town but quickly dropped the claim. Abolitionists, though, portrayed the thefts as incidental to Hackett's escape. According to Charles Stewart, a white abolitionist who interviewed the fugitive in a Detroit jail in the winter of 1842, Hackett had accompanied Wallace to a horse race "a considerable distance" from Fayetteville. Wallace did not return home but directed Hackett to take the horse and other items back. Instead of heading to Fayetteville, Hackett made his escape. Stewart



"To refuse to surrender him
would be to establish as a
principle that no slave
escaping to this province
should be given up..."

— Sir Charles Bagot
*Governor-General of the Province
of Canada, 1842-1843*

wrote, "Hackett finding himself well mounted, under circumstances that permitted absence, directed his course towards liberty At the time he had in care the outside coat of his master, and he also had his gold watch." After fleeing Arkansas, Hackett headed 360 miles northeast to Marion City, Missouri, a hotbed of abolitionist activity located on the Mississippi River. According to the account by the Peoria journalist, "[Hackett] travelled only at night, and hiding through the day in the woods, subsisting on such fare as the desert afforded. Upon reaching the [Missouri] river, he luckily found the ferry tended by a negro, of whom it is believed he made a confidant, as the same negro subsequently denied all knowledge of the fugitive's passing that way. The friend thus gained, doubtless furnished him with a supply of food, while by his advice he was probably enabled to proceed more boldly. Avoiding the thoroughfares, he made for Marion city on the Mississippi."

After crossing the Mississippi River, Hackett probably made his way to nearby Quincy, Illinois, a prominent starting-off point on the Underground

Railroad. The only account that describes his journey from Illinois to Chatham — the one in the Peoria Register — provides only superficial information: “Here he [Hackett] breathed freer, and ventured to pursue his journey in the day time... As he journeyed, he would sometimes represent himself as being a free man, living in some county before him, and at others, when he thought it would better answer his purpose, as a slave escaping from bondage.” Crossing into Canada in late August 1841, Hackett thought that he had found freedom.

Near the end of August 1841, Hackett arrived in Chatham, some fifty miles from the border in what is now the province of Ontario. There is no direct evidence as to why Hackett made Chatham his destination. The town was home to a large number of blacks, many of them having fled slavery in Kentucky, and Hackett might have been drawn to it by its reputation as a “Mecca” for fugitives. But Hackett might also have had more particular reasons to heading there, like reconnecting with family and those he knew before being taken to Arkansas.

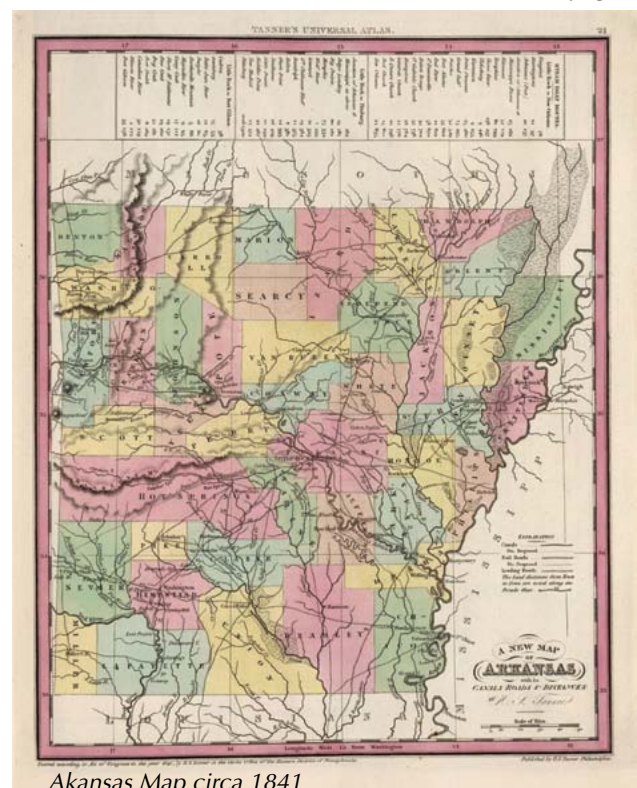
Alfred Wallace, though, had put a man on his trail and, after learning that Hackett had crossed the Mississippi River, personally travelled to Canada to try to locate him. That Wallace knew to head to Chatham — finding Hackett there less than a week after the fugitive’s arrival — suggests that he was aware of some sort of connection between Hackett and those in the town. In Chatham, Wallace confronted Hackett, beat him, and had him imprisoned on charges of theft. Wallace’s demand for Hackett’s extradition back to Arkansas set off international furor.

Abolitionists — both black and white — called on Canadian authorities to honor the British Empire’s commitment to providing refuge for fugitives and grant Hackett his freedom. They insisted that slavery was an abomination and that Hackett had the right to take any items that would aid his flight. Defenders of slavery, and those who wanted to prevent black fugitives from settling in Canada, countered that Hackett was not simply a fugitive but also a thief who needed to be

punished. Confident that Hackett would be released, abolitionists were surprised when Canada’s governor-general, Sir Charles Bagot, ordered the fugitive to be returned to Arkansas. Bagot explained, “to refuse to surrender him would be to establish as a principle that no slave escaping to this province should be given up, whatever offence, short perhaps of murder, he might have committed; a principle which would have been repugnant to the common sense of justice of the civilised world, would have involved us in disputes of the most inconvenient nature with the neighbouring states, and would have converted this province into an asylum for the worst characters.”

After Bagot’s February 1842 order, an agent of Arkansas’ governor transported a bound and gagged Hackett to Detroit’s jail to await a return to Fayetteville later that spring. At this time, the city’s black community mobilized the transnational abolitionist movement in an ill-fated effort to prevent Hackett’s return to Arkansas. In resolutions sent to abolitionist newspapers in the United States, Canada, and England, the city’s Colored Vigilant Committee explained, “Hackett was not demanded by the Executive of Arkansas,

continued on page 16



Arkansas Map circa 1841

for the purpose of punishing for larceny, but to punish and make an example of him for the unpardonable offense of absconding from slavery” and warned that, if the extradition was allowed to stand, Canada would “no longer be a safe asylum for our unfortunate brethren who are fleeing from bondage.”

In early May 1842, two agents of the state of Arkansas fitted Hackett with chains and a hobble for his forced return to Fayetteville. The trip began aboard a Great Lakes steamship that took them to Chicago. There, they boarded a stagecoach for a four-day trip to Peoria, where they intended to catch a steamboat on the Illinois River. But on the third night, while in the town of Princeton, Hackett escaped again, this time for two nights before being recaptured by an area farmer. After retrieving Hackett, the three men steamed to St. Louis before continuing on to Fayetteville. The most detailed account of Nelson Hackett’s June 1842 return to Fayetteville appeared nine years later in *The Liberator*, William Lloyd Garrison’s abolitionist newspaper. It came from William Murdock, an enslaved man who also escaped from Alfred Wallace and made his way to Canada. Murdock recounted: “Nelson Hackett was brought back by [Alfred] Wallace . . . he was kept in handcuffs and fetters for some time, and closely watched besides — that he was flogged with great severity five or six times, and then sold off to the interior of Texas — that the first whipping, which was done in the presence of all the slaves, consisted of 150 lashes upon his naked body. His whippings afterward varied from 39 to 50 to 60.” Murdock’s account is consistent with what one of Arkansas’ U.S. senators told abolitionist Lewis Tappan in late 1842: “N. H. was taken to Arkansas — tried for stealing & publicly whipped — then delivered to his master by whom was sold to some one in Texas.”

While still in Fayetteville or on his way to Texas, Hackett escaped yet again. This is known because Arkansas’ congressman — Edward Cross — visited abolitionist Joshua Leavitt, an associate of Tappan, to tell him. Leavitt recounted the conversation in a letter that appeared in several abolitionist papers: Hackett “escaped a third time, and has not been

heard from since; and whether he has gone clear, or is destroyed, is not known.” Hackett’s fate will remain unknown unless additional evidence is located.

Abolitionists — both in the United States and the British Empire — refused to let Hackett’s extradition set a precedent. Soon after Hackett was sold off to Texas in the late summer of 1842, U.S. Secretary of State Daniel Webster and British diplomat Lord Ashburton finalized a treaty to smooth relations between the United States and British North America. Among the issues they addressed were land disputes, Great Lakes navigation, and the extradition of criminals. Abolitionists were especially concerned with Article 10 of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty as it codified the procedures used to extradite Hackett back to Arkansas. They feared Article 10 would not only discourage enslaved people from fleeing to Canada but also make it possible for slavers to extradite the thousands of fugitives who had already settled north of the border. Much of the abolitionist campaign to convince the British government to revoke or modify Article 10 was built around Nelson Hackett’s extradition and the violence he endured upon his return to Fayetteville. Abolitionists insisted that the injustices suffered by Hackett would be repeated thousands of times if the extradition provision was allowed to stand.

The campaign to modify Article 10 began in September 1842, when a delegation from the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society visited Lord Ashburton. Led by Americans Lewis Tappan and Gerrit Smith, the delegation opened the meeting by discussing the “particulars of the case of Nelson Hackett.” Lord Ashburton explained that Article 10 was needed to prevent the escape of common criminals across the border, a problem that was creating difficulties on both sides, and that, if fugitives from slavery were exempted, the U.S. Senate probably would reject the entire treaty. Lord Ashburton assured Tappan and Smith, though, that the British government remained committed to abolition and “friends of the slave in England would be very watchful to see that no wrong practice took place under

article ten." Ashburton's assurances satisfied some, the Boston-based *Emancipator* and *Free American* insisting that "such cases [as Hackett's] will never pass again under the tenth article." Others continued to hope for some modification, but they realized that British subjects were better positioned to lobby Her Majesty's government.

When Parliament took up ratification of the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, British and Canadian abolitionists likewise invoked Hackett in demanding modification of Article 10. The famed Thomas Clarkson warned that the unmodified treaty threatened the security of some 12,000 Canadians who had escaped bondage in America: "slave owners, encouraged by the case of Nelson Hackett... will pester our government in Canada with thousands of applications." Anglo-Canadian Charles Stuart insisted that fugitives in Canada would be sent back under Article 10 could never receive fair trials and offered Hackett's example as proof — "Alas! he is in Arkansas — he is in the fangs of tyrants."

Prime Minister Robert Peel's Parliamentary majority blocked efforts to modify Article 10, fearing that the Americans would reject the amended treaty, but abolitionist pressure forced it to provide assurances that the use of Article 10 to extradite fugitives from slavery would be strictly limited. The Colonial Office followed through by issuing very detailed instructions limiting the return of slavery's fugitives under Article 10. The purpose was to permit extradition only in extraordinary cases, such as those involving pre-meditated murder. Such instructions allowed Britain to maintain its treaty obligations with the United States, ensure that fugitives would not be returned to bondage, and mollify abolitionists. When in early 1843 officials in the Bahamas refused to extradite a Florida fugitive who had killed his master during the escape, abolitionists throughout the North Atlantic world celebrated the limits they had forced upon Article 10. Joshua Leavitt exclaimed, "The excitement, the debates, the doings in Parliament, have done much to awaken public attention that the slaveholders will not likely make application in that quarter."

At the center of these debates was Nelson Hackett. One man's simple act of fleeing Arkansas and slavery set in motion events that helped to ensure that Canada and the Bahamas would remain places of asylum for those escaping bondage in America. No fugitives after Hackett would be returned to the United States and slavery. Although Hackett's fate remains unknown, his martyrdom became an effective tool for those fighting to protect slavery's fugitives. Hackett's legacy is, thus, significant. The persistent stream of fugitives to Canada after 1843 became one of the two principal factors (the other being the status of slavery in the western territories) that fueled the sectional crisis that led to civil war and emancipation. For these reasons, the man who was once the most famous Arkansan in the Atlantic World needs to be remembered by those who struggle against oppression and their allies.



Sir Charles Bagot, Governor-General of the Province of Canada, 1842-1843



Opening Day at the Calico Rock Museum Visitor Center March 1, 2020

Grants Save Calico Rock Museum

Steven D. Mitchell

The Calico Rock Community Foundation received a CARES Act I and CARES Act II grant for a total of \$15,850 through the Arkansas Humanities Council and National Endowment for the Humanities. The foundation owns and operates the Calico Rock Museum & Visitor Center located in Calico Rock, Arkansas. Without this grant, the museum would not have been able to survive the past year.

Ready for Success

In Fall, 2019, the Calico Rock Community Foundation began a major expansion and relocation of the museum. The foundation acquired two historic buildings that connect to a building the museum already owned which housed the museum's art center in late Summer 2019. With acquisition completed, the foundation set about the task of restoring these historic treasures from a state of utter dilapidation. All three buildings were connected by cutting through two feet of rock walls to carve entries between them. Prior to this expansion, the museum was operating a heritage center on one side of the street and the art center on the other. By connecting these buildings, the museums could be joined together in one facility that would have

14,000 square feet of space. Construction was completed in February, 2020 and everything moved into the new center. The new Calico Rock Museum & Visitor Center opened their doors in the new facility on March 1, 2020. Calico Rock was ready for success. Then, the pandemic hit.

Shut Down

On March 13, 2020, the museum closed under orders by Governor Asa Hutchinson who declared a public health emergency in the early days of the global pandemic. Within days of the first COVID-19 case in Arkansas and just thirteen days after opening the new center, everything screeched to a halt.

The foundation employed five staff members at the time of the closure. To position those employees for the greatest opportunity for success, the foundation took the very difficult action to terminate their employment. This allowed the employees to apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, which provided income nearly equal to their normal salaries while keeping them safe.

Despite being unemployed, the staff volunteered their time to help families in the area who were less fortunate by having a food drive. The

foundation maintained the public WiFi for students who had been forced to go virtual to provide them with internet access. Students and families were able to access the WiFi from the safety of their vehicles on Main Street.

The museum mobilized its Facebook, Twitter, and e-mail presence to share information with the public on public health advisories, unemployment assistance programs, local help for families in need, and help for small businesses.

The Impact of the Pandemic

The Calico Rock Museum & Visitor Center reopened on July 1, 2020. Strictly following the governor's orders and public health guidance, the museum installed plexiglass dividers, added signage and crowd control measures, instituted regular cleaning routines, required the wearing of masks, offered free masks and hand sanitizer for the visitors, and instituted safer practices. The impact on the museum's annual visitors was dramatic. The 2020 visitors were 75% lower than in 2019. While the foundation has a diverse revenue stream that includes rental properties,



Despite everything, the Museum Foundation gave back to the community with a food drive.

retail sales, grants, contracts for government services, and fundraising, the decline in visitors translated into a similar decline in retail sales. Additionally, with businesses shuttered the foundation made the compassionate decision to eliminate the rent on foundation properties for eight months.

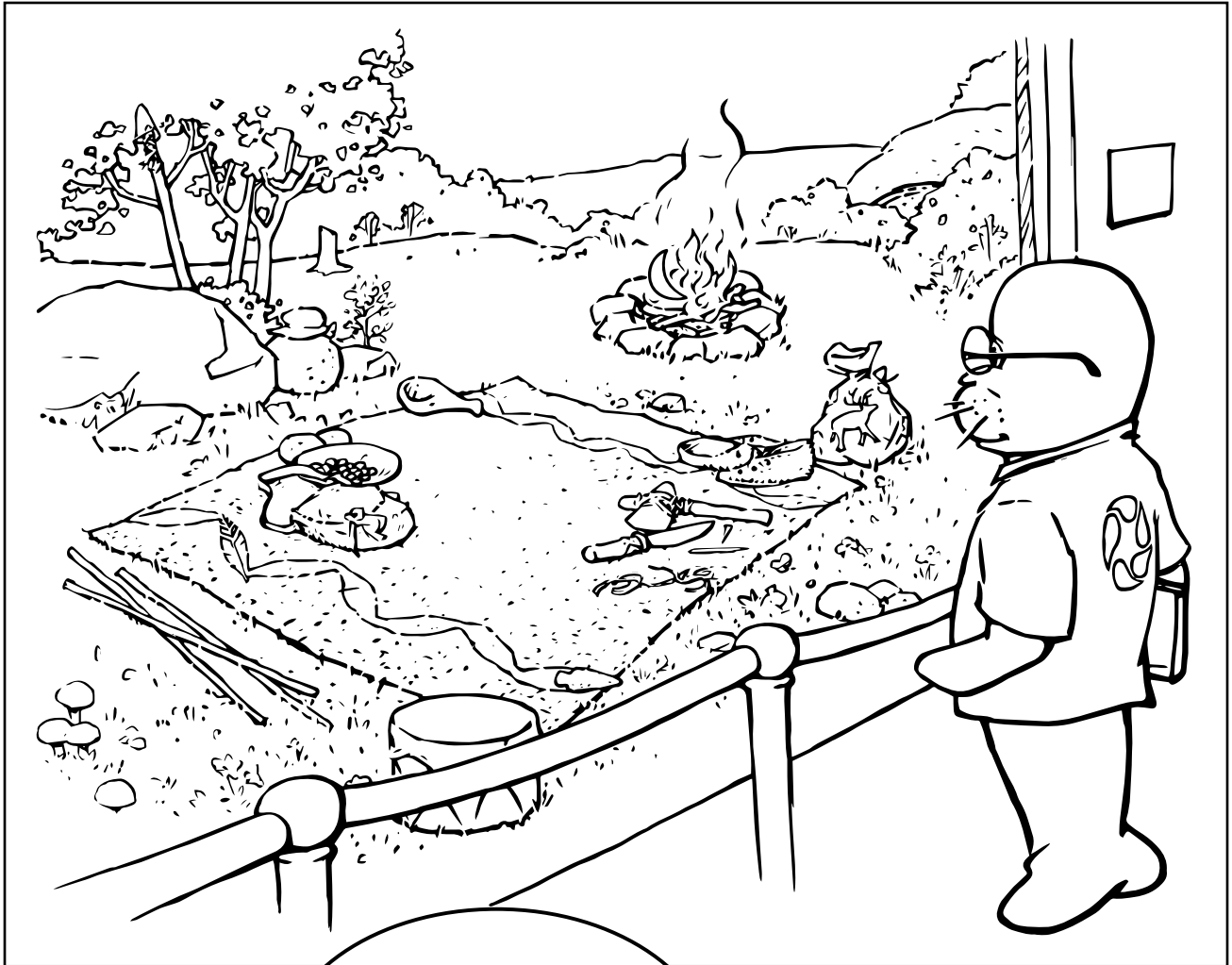
Effect of the CARES Act Grants

Without the CARES Act Grants, the Calico Rock Museum & Visitor Center would have permanently closed. Period. The grants provided the money to rehire staff and reopen the museum.



Hugh Manatee's Corner

Find the hidden items in the picture of Hugh visiting a museum.



Hi kids! Find the hidden items in the picture of me at the museum!



- arrowhead
- spear
- clay pot
- feather
- elk
- moon
- blanket

Answers on page 25

A Word From the Next Generation

AR History is Our History

Heather McNamee

Next Generation Advisory Committee member

I love podcasts. Like really love them. There is a podcast for just about everything. Need to get your morning news brief? There's a podcast for that. Anxious about that job interview? There is a podcast for that. Want to start a podcast? There is a podcast for that. And now thanks to the Arkansas Humanities Council, if you want to learn more about Arkansas History there is also a podcast for that.

The AR History Podcast was born out of discussions in the Next Generation Advisory Committee. This committee is developing projects that will educate participating Arkansans about a variety of humanities-related topics. I knew there was not an Arkansas History podcast out there yet and thought producing one would be a fun way for Arkansans to learn about specific aspects of the state's history. I also hope the podcast can become an additional resource for teachers.

Each episode will examine a specific aspect of Arkansas History and include interviews with scholars, park interpreters, and other Arkansans. Some episodes will even include interviews with people who experienced these events firsthand. Season one is in production now and will include episodes about the Arkansas Humanities Council, the Hoxie Desegregation Crisis, The New Madrid Earthquakes of 1811-1812, Hattie Caraway, Danielle Bunten Berry, the Elaine Massacre of 1919, and many more important stories! The first few episodes of season one should premiere in May and can be accessed from Spotify, Apple Music, and wherever you get your podcasts.

I hope the AR History Podcast becomes a popular resource for those interested in learning more about this state's fascinating history. Give it a listen!

May 2021 "Crafting Arkansas" Virtual Events

May 4, 2021, 6:30 PM

Cross Stitch and Its Impact on Arkansas History: An Introductory Session to Cross Stitching

The Arkansas Humanities Council in partnership with Historic Arkansas Museum, a museum of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, presents this opportunity to learn about the historical impact of cross stitch in Arkansas from Victoria Chandler, Arkansas Made Researcher and Acting Curator. Get a chance to try the craft yourself with a demonstration of an introductory project from a representative of the Embroiderers' Guild of America Diamond Chapter. This is a two-part series; the second event will include more complex stitch work.

May 11, 2021, 6:30 PM

Cross Stitch and Its Impact on Indigenous Culture: An Intermediate Session on Cross Stitching

The second in the two-part series presented by the Arkansas Humanities Council in partnership with the Historic Arkansas Museum, a museum of the Department of Arkansas Heritage presents this opportunity to learn about the historical impact of cross stitch on native populations during Indian removal from Victoria Chandler, Arkansas Made Researcher and Acting Curator.

May 18, 2021, 6:00 PM

Crafting Arkansas: An Introduction to Canning Jams and the Craft's Impact on Arkansas History

In partnership with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Research and Extension., Michelle Carter, Ouachita District Food Preservation Expert, will demonstrate how to preserve fresh strawberries as jam using water bath canning techniques and answer questions about the canning process. Additionally, a ten-minute overview of the craft's impact on Arkansas History will be given by Danielle Butler, Archivist, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies.

Visit the events section of our website at www.arkansashumanitiescouncil.org to register and for more information. Hope to see you there!

New Board Members



Kathy Anderson is the Library Director at Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas. She received her Bachelor of Science in Computer Information Systems from UA Monticello, a Master of Science in Information Science from the University of North Texas-Denton, and a Master of Education in Learning Systems Technology from UA Little Rock. She grew up in Monticello, Arkansas. She is currently a board member of the Arkansas Historical Association. She served as a board member of the Preservation of African American Cemeteries, Inc. (PAAC) and as the National Organization Librarian of the Afro-American Historical & Genealogical Society (AAGHS). She worked as a Librarian at UA Monticello for 14 years before moving to Redfield in 2019 to become the Library Director at Philander Smith College. She enjoys reading, genealogy research and spending time with family.



Judy Costello is the Education Manager at the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History. She has degrees in agricultural engineering from Auburn University and Louisiana State University. Judy invested many years homeschooling her three children, all of whom are now University of Arkansas graduates working on advanced degrees in various fields. While schooling her children, Judy volunteered with 4-H, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, a historical society, and various music associations. In each of her volunteer endeavors, Judy developed community-based programs. Through working with children from all social and economic backgrounds, she became passionate about making education for students as accessible and inclusive as possible. While serving on the boards of multiple organizations she has not only developed networks with varied individuals, but also gained a better understanding of a variety of organization types. Her interests include outdoor activities, working with children, and learning new things.



Dr. Bettye Gragg graduated from Drew High School in 1967. She attended the University of AR at Monticello where she obtained a BA degree in 1979 in Elementary Education. Gragg earned a Masters degree from the University of Fayetteville in Education 1982, and a Masters degree in Guidance and Counseling from the University of Little Rock in 1989, with certifications as a Curriculum Specialist. In 1998, Dr. Gragg graduated with a Doctorate Degree in Educational Administration and Supervision; with certifications in Superintendency and Administration.

Dr. Gragg has served as an educator for 49 years in the Monticello District. Her experiences have circled kindergarten to graduate school, including: teaching, counseling, assessment, supervision, and administration. Gragg currently serves as a Federal Coordinator for Monticello Schools, and has served as an adjunct instructor at UAM. Gragg is a member of several community boards. Dr. Gragg and her husband attend Holmes Chapel Church.



Dr. Jillian Hartley has lived in Northeast Arkansas for twenty-one years. She attended Arkansas State University where she earned a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in history. She also graduated from ASU's Heritage Studies program in 2016. For the past nineteen years, she has taught history at Arkansas Northeastern College in Blytheville. Her main area of expertise is environmental history with an emphasis on the reclamation of the upper Mississippi Embayment region. She has also researched and published several works related to commemoration. She has previously served on the Arkansas Community College Conference Board and is currently the President of the Delta Gateway Museum Association. She lives in Jonesboro with her husband James and son Tristan.



Dr. Marjorie Hunter has twenty-one years of experience in the secondary classroom with more than ten years teaching AP World History. Marjorie has attended the annual Advanced Placement World History reading since 2006 as Reader, Table Leader, and Question Leader on the piloted Short Answer Question. When asked what inspired her love of history, she claims her experiences traipsing through many cathedrals in Europe when she was 15 after living a year in Tehran, Iran. Thoroughly enthralled with historical studies she graduated with a B.A. in History from California State University - Bakersfield. Marjorie then moved to Arkansas to pursue a teaching career at the Academies of West Memphis. Interested in furthering her education, Marjorie earned both a Master's and PhD in Heritage Studies from Arkansas State University - Jonesboro. Her current research areas of interest focus on the support groups women form in times of social crisis such as the Great Depression. Marjorie currently serves the social studies community as a consultant for the College Board AP World History program, and is a recent past member of the Board of Directors for the National Council for the Social Studies. Additionally, she has published an article with the Organization of American Historians' online journal, "The American Historian." In addition she has numerous book reviews in journals such as "The History Teacher," "World History Connected," and the "Swiss American Historical Society Review." Born with a serious case of wanderlust, Marjorie spends as much time as possible traveling around the U.S. having embraced the RV lifestyle. Other adventures have taken her to Europe, the Middle East, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean.



Alex Vernon has lived in Little Rock since 2001. He's the M.E. and Ima Graves Peace Distinguished Professor of English at Hendrix College in Conway, where he teaches modern American literature and writing. His internationally well-regarded scholarship mostly focuses on American war literature and film. In Arkansas he has also served on the commission of the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History in Little Rock, the advisory board of the Hemingway-Pfeiffer Home and Museum (Piggott), and the talent committee for the Arkansas Literary Festival. Alex had the good fortune to direct a two-year National Endowment for the Humanities program with the Central Arkansas Library System, and has participated in an NEH lobbying day on Capitol Hill.

Teacher's Lounge

Ann Clements
Education Outreach Coordinator



Welcome to the first Connect Magazine feature article just for teachers! The Teacher's Lounge will break down the latest information on our AHC programs, grants and lesson plans to assist you in teaching humanities. Along with a few personal notes, some of my favorite humanities resource websites, random thoughts — you know, like those conversations that just spontaneously happen in the Lounge. Relax and come on in!

Summer Teacher Professional Development Workshops and Lesson Plans

One of the most exciting projects in development is a series of K-5 civics lesson plans that fully integrate with the Arkansas Social Studies Curriculum. The lesson plans will be ready for a sneak peek this summer in a series of virtual PD sessions. Classroom testing for the elementary plans will take place this fall — stay tuned for how you can participate and benefit from this activity.

Middle school and high school plans are in the works as well. Our Board Chair, Dr. Joe Key, formed a Civics Education Advisory Sub-committee earlier this year to coordinate the development of the secondary plans. Members are Dr. Kristen Mann, Dr. Paul Babbitt, Heather McNamee, Claudine James, and Marjorie Hunter — all excellent educators with a broad range of classroom experience. One of the AHC goals is to ensure all lesson plan development and programs are led by Arkansas teachers, so you know they have been created and tested by experienced and creative professionals with practical classroom experience. If you are an elementary, middle school or secondary teacher and are interested in participating in this project, please email me for more information.

Follow Us!

Communication is key to the success of any education program we develop. Social media is vital to getting information to you in a timely fashion. A new Facebook weekly feature, Lesson Plan Tuesday, highlights well-researched classroom-ready lesson plans on current humanities topics. These are also posted to the ACSS list-serv — if you are not familiar with the Arkansas Council for Social Studies, check out their great resources at the website arkansascouncilforthesocialstudies.wildapricot.org. And don't forget AHC's Instagram and Twitter accounts to keep up with grant deadlines, new programs and great photos when we can safely travel again.



Let's Talk Money

Are you looking for grants to help pay for PD, field trips, classroom projects or district-wide humanities ventures? The Arkansas Humanities Council offers grants specifically for teachers and librarians in these areas. R.E.A.C.H. grants can be used for workshops, seminars, registration and travel costs, along with classroom, school or district projects that have strong humanities components. While field trips are severely curtailed due to COVID, we do offer grants to cover transportation costs to Arkansas State Parks and the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History, many of which are back open in a limited capacity. Minigrants and Major Grants fund larger humanities-based projects. You can learn all about AHC grants and guidelines on our website. Have a project idea you want to fund? Feel free to reach out to me at any time with your questions — I'll be glad to help!

Random Thoughts

Here's where I'll share some of my favorite humanities websites, inspiring/fun quotes, or, you guessed it, random thoughts!

Bookmark This!

EDSITEment — <https://edsitement.neh.gov>
A website partnership between the National Endowment for the Humanities and National Trust for the Humanities that offers free resources for teachers, students, and parents searching for high-quality K-12 humanities education materials. Subjects include history and social studies, literature and language arts, foreign languages, arts, and culture. Great resources for all grade levels.

iCivics — <https://www.icivics.org>

Founded in 2009 by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor after her retirement from the Supreme Court, iCivics offers middle and high school lesson plans, games and teacher materials that present abstract concepts from real-life issues. Their fun and challenging games put the students in the roles of judges, members of Congress, community activists, even the President of the United States.

Quotables

"To me, history ought to be a source of pleasure. It isn't just part of our civic responsibility. To me, it's an enlargement of the experience of being alive, just the way literature or art or music is."

— David McCullough

Thanks for reading! If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments on this column or the AHC, please contact me at aclements@arkansashumanitiescouncil.org. That's all for now — see you next issue!

AHC is Social!



@ArkansasHumanitiesCouncil

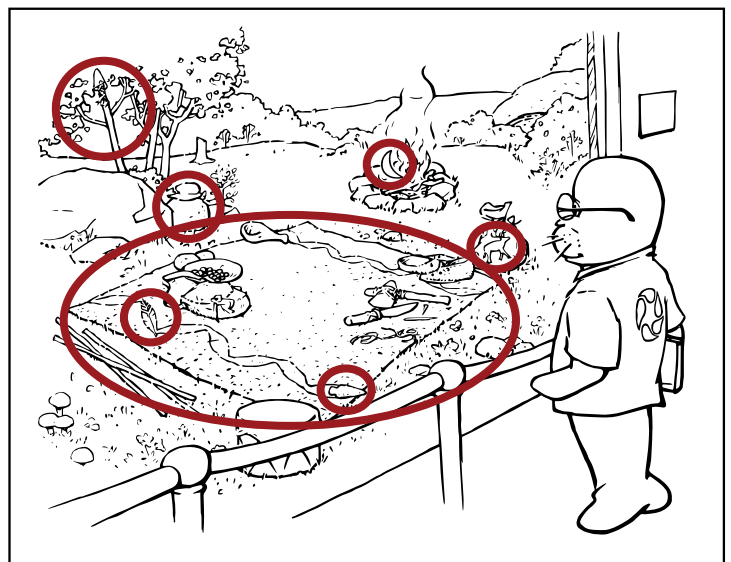


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Three Tips for Everyday Digital Accessibility

Melanie Thornton

Coordinator of Access and Equity Outreach

University of Arkansas — Partners for Inclusive Communities

Too often we think of digital access as residing solely in the hands of web developers and web designers. But all of us play a role in designing digital environments. If we take the time to learn a few simple strategies, we can contribute to creating a more accessible world.

Add Alt Text to Images in Your Word Documents

A screen reader, technology used by people who are blind, cannot discern the contents of an image. Alt text provides a way to make the contents of the image accessible to a blind person who is reading your document. To add alt text, right click on the image and choose Edit Alt Text from the context menu. The Alt Text box should appear to the right of your document. Type a description of the image in the box. There is no need to type "image of" or "picture of." Simply describe what is in the image.

Add Alt Text to Facebook Images

Facebook has a feature that auto-generates descriptions of images, but it is limited by what object recognition technology can recognize about the image. The information that is auto-generated is vague and often inaccurate. You can easily create your own accurate descriptions.

Upload your photo by either selecting the Photos/Videos button or dragging and dropping your photo into the post. Scroll over the thumbnail of your image and select Edit. Then select the Alt Text option to the left of the image. Write the



description of the image in the text box to the left of the image. Select the Save button at the bottom left. The text you add will not be visible to others but will be read when a screen reader comes across your image.

Use Camel Case for Hashtags

Hashtags offer a great way for people to follow a specific topic on Twitter. Camel case, or capitalizing the first letter of each word, makes it easier to see where one word ends and the other begins.

For example, instead of:

#disabilityinclusion

Use:

#DisabilityInclusion

Notice in this case the first letter of disability and the first letter of inclusion are both capitalized.

Following these tips will make a big difference to creating a more accessible world.