



NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2020

VOL. 3, NO. 1

Please note: our new mailing address is FASA, PO Box 31342, Little Rock, AR 72260

Report from the Board of Directors

Board Meeting: held January 25, 2020 at 1:00 in the conference room at the Arkansas State Archives.

Election of new officers: Lynda Suffridge is now President, Tom Dillard Vice President and Sonny Rhodes Secretary. Susan Boyle continues as Treasurer. Other returning board members present were Vincent Anderson, Russell Baker, Gary W. Jones, Jeanne Rollberg, and Tamela Tenpenny-Lewis.

New board members: Brian K. Mitchell and Devin Sorrows were introduced. A third new board member for 2020, Mary Cooper Miller, was unable to attend.

New Archives Director: Also attending was Dr. David Ware, who was recently named Arkansas State Archives Director. Julienne Crawford, Curator, who had served as interim director, was also present.



Dr. David Ware

Arkansas History Day Contest: FASA will provide a \$100 cash prize in both the junior and senior divisions for written history or documentary showing *Best Use of the Arkansas State Archives*. Encourage your students to take part.



Brian Mitchell, left, Devin Sorrows, center

State Conference on Tourism: Board member Jeanne Rollberg has been invited by Parks and Tourism to be on a Heritage Panel at the Governor’s Conference on Tourism in early March in Fort Smith. She will be promoting FASA, as well as genealogy and heritage tourism, while she is there.

Field Trip: FASA is sponsoring a tour of the Arkansas Supreme Court building, including a meeting with one of the justices. It will take place at 1:00 p.m. on March 10, 2020. The Supreme Court Building is located at 625 Marshall Street in Little Rock and parking is available across the street from the building. Reservations will be required and early arrival is necessary because everyone must go through security. Email Jeanne Rollberg at jnrollberg@ualr.edu if you want to take part.

Arkansas Historical Association: Friends of the Arkansas State Archives will have a table at the AHA meeting on April 16, 17, and 18 in Conway. We will be promoting our organization to attendees in an effort to attract additional support for the State Archives. We look forward to visiting with members and potential members at our booth.

Thanks to all of you who remembered to send in your dues. It makes a difference!

Black History Commission Event Enjoyed by All

A large and varied crowd came out when the Black History Commission of Arkansas presented “African American Soldiers in Wartime,” a one-day symposium about the history of African Americans serving in U.S. wars, on February 1. The symposium was cosponsored by the Arkansas State Archives and was held at the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center at 501 W. Ninth St. in Little Rock.



**Brig. Gen. Gracus
K. Dunn**

Speakers were Tamela Tenpenny-Lewis discussing the B-1 Navy Band, the first non-mess-attendant African-American men in the Navy. Dr. Cherisse Jones-Branch, a Persian Gulf War veteran, presented “A Debutante, a Soldier and a War Veteran,” which recounted her own military experiences and how they have affected her. Finally Brig. General Gracus K. Dunn, who retired from the U.S. Army, presented “African-American Services in America’s Wars.” He shared his research in uncovering evidence of Black soldiers back through the American Revolution and stressing their efforts to take a full and equal part in the military.

Wilbur D. Mills University Studies High School students in the U.S. Army Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC) posted the colors. Teachers earned up to three professional development credits by attending the educational event. Refreshments were provided.

The Black History Commission of Arkansas is a seven-member advisory board of the Arkansas State Archives chaired by Ms. Carla Coleman.

Spotlight on a Friends Member Society

Afro-American Historical & Genealogical Society, Inc., Arkansas Chapter

Friends of the Arkansas State Archives is very pleased to have as one of its member organizations the Arkansas Chapter of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS). The organization was formed in 1997 by a group of Arkansans dedicated to preserving and sharing genealogical and historical research, presenting educational programs and preparing exhibits. The group’s goal is to bring to light, through research, study, collaboration, documentation and presentation, the history and heritage of Arkansas’ people of African descent. In order to incorporate more research days, meetings for 2020 will be held quarterly on the second Saturdays: April 11, August 8, and November 14 at the East Little Rock Senior Center, at 10:30 a.m.

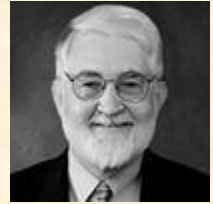
An affiliate of the national organization of AAHGS, the state chapter is involved in projects across the state to accomplish their mission. They welcome all to participate in their activities and to collaborate with members and others in researching family and cultural heritage. Please join President Margaret Moss and members during their scheduled research days (third Saturdays) at the Arkansas State Archives from 10:00 a.m. to noon on March 14, April 18, May 16, June 13, Aug. 15, Sep. 19, Nov. 21 and Dec. 19.

Please mark your calendar for the AAHGS 41st National Conference October 14-17, 2020 in Hampton, Virginia. The theme is *Virginia, Where African American Roots Run Deep: Correcting the National Narrative*. This theme supports the national commemoration of the arrival of the first Africans in English North America four hundred years ago, and begins a universal approach to truth, reconciliation and race equity in America. For more information and call for papers visit www.aahgs.org.

Spotlight on FASA Directors:

Friends Vice President Tom Dillard shared details of his love of and contributions to collecting Arkansas history at the Heritage Seekers Genealogy Club meeting in Little Rock January 27.

In his talk, “My Life Collecting Arkansas History,” he described his archival work at UCA, UA-Fayetteville, and the CALS Butler Center for Arkansas Studies. He described collections work in the state as competitive and fascinating, and at times, dicey and humorous.



Dillard’s love of history goes back to childhood, and he is a former president of the Arkansas Historical Association and the Arkansas Museums Association. He was founding director of the Butler Center and for the online Encyclopedia of Arkansas. He writes a weekly column in the *Sunday Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* and lives near Glen Rose.

New Friends board member Dr. Brian Mitchell: State of the Union Guest

Dr. Brian Mitchell, assistant professor of history at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, was the guest of Congressman French Hill (AR-02) for the State of the Union address February 4. In October 2018 Congressman French Hill’s office worked with Dr. Mitchell to present the family of the late Private Leroy Johnston medals he earned, but did not receive, for his service in World War I. Rep. Hill introduced the World War I Valor Medals Review Act, which is now law and will ensure that minorities who served in World War I are honored with proper recognition.

“Dr. Mitchell’s partnership was instrumental in the World War I Valor Medals Review Act being signed into law in December,” said Congressman Hill. “His work advocating on behalf of victims of past racial discrimination sets right injustices perpetrated against African Americans and other minority groups. Only by acknowledging tragedy can we begin to heal and move forward together towards a more hopeful future.”

Dr. Mitchell is an advocate for marginalized communities in Arkansas and specializes in righting the wrongs of discrimination by bringing to light details of the victims and events. In the course of his work, he has conducted extensive research on the Elaine Massacre and investigated the tragic deaths of the 21 teenagers who were burned in their locked dormitory in Wrightsville in 1959.

Field Trip—RSVP and mark your calendar

History lives! No institution has arguably had more impact on the legal history of Arkansas than the Arkansas Supreme Court. The Friends of the Arkansas State Archives is sponsoring a special tour of about an hour of the historic Arkansas Supreme Court Justice Building on Tuesday, March 10, promptly at 1 p.m. It is located at 625 Marshall Street at the busy State Capitol complex. <https://www.arcourts.gov/Directions>

Those who sign up to attend should enter through the front of the building on Marshall Street to go through security procedures a few minutes before 1. Participants are also encouraged to arrive early to locate parking spaces across the street. Limited numbers are permitted on tours, so please RSVP to Friends board member Jeanne Rollberg at jnrollberg@ualr.edu to sign up by March 3.

To learn more about the Arkansas judiciary, please see: <https://www.arcourts.gov/>

Volunteer Indexing Project

FASA indexers are now flattening court files from Lee County, Arkansas, and putting them in file folders in preparation for indexing. If you have a connection to Lee County, you may want to help. Members of Friends gather from 9:00 to noon on Tuesday mornings with Archives staff around a large conference table at the Department of Arkansas Heritage Collections Management Facility to index loose court records. Hempstead and Cleveland records indexed over the past year have included all kinds of court cases from murders, lawsuits, and divorces to slave sales. This indexing is a rewarding learning experience, plus a great help to the Archives in making these records available to the public. The CMF Building is on the northwest corner of La Harpe Boulevard and Chester Street. Turn left into the first driveway and continue around to the front door of the building. Please contact us at susanb1996@aol.com to become a Friends volunteer. — Susan G. Boyle, FASA Treasurer.

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR ARKANSAS HISTORY!

The Friends of the Arkansas State Archives offers a variety of levels for supporting the mission of the State Archives:

___ Basic Level, \$10 ___ Sustaining Level, \$25 ___ Organization, \$35
___ Benevolent Level, \$50 ___ Lifetime Level, \$250 ___ Corporate Level, \$500

Name: _____ Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Home Phone Number: _____ Cell Number: _____

Gift _____

Return membership form with check payable to the: Friends of the Arkansas State Archives, P. O. Box 31342, Little Rock, AR 72260. We will be communicating with you or your gift recipient via email.

FASA is a 501(c)(3) organization. Your donations and membership are tax deductible.

We Salute Our Life Members!

Thea Walden Baker
Nancy Bartlett
Bob Besom
Frank Bigger
James R. Bruce
Joann Cooper
Ron Fuller
Prof. John William Graves
Mary Heady

Sandra Hillier
Allison Holland
Cheryl Nichols
Gordon S. Rather Jr.
Maylon T. Rice
Elizabeth Robbins
Mrs. Roy Roe
Frances Ross
James B. Rule

Robert G. Sherer (dec.)
Kitty Clay Sloan
Rod Soubers
Dr. Lisa Speer
Lynda Suffridge
Dr. Frank Thibault
W. Stuart Towns
Linda Kay White
Leah Wilkinson

Board of Directors, Friends of the Arkansas State Archives

Lynda Suffridge, President, North Little Rock
Sonny Rhodes, Secretary, North Little Rock

Tom Dillard, Vice President, Malvern
Susan Boyle, Treasurer, Little Rock

Vincent Anderson, Mountain Home,
Russell Baker, Mabelvale
Ken Bridges, El Dorado
Richard Butler, Little Rock
Sondra Gordy, Conway
Richard Hartness, Wynn
Allison Holland, Little Rock

Gary W. Jones, Little Rock
Mary Cooper Miller, Batesville
Brian K. Mitchell, N. Little Rock
Jeanne Rollburg, Little Rock
Devin Sorrows, Little Rock
Tamela Tenpenny-Lewis, Little Rock
Gary Walker, DeQueen

Getting Involved

Besides joining the Friends group, there are other ways you can support the preservation of Arkansas's documentary heritage:

- Contact public officials to encourage their support of the State and Regional Archives.
- Volunteer at the Archives for special projects, exhibits, research, and events.
- Join a Friends committee. You can help with publicity, outreach, advocacy, and membership.
- Write articles for our newsletter, or assist with content for our Facebook page.

Membership Benefits

- Invitations to pre-register for Archives events prior to the general public.
- Receive newsletters from the Archives as well as the Friends organization.
- Opportunity to network with a community of professional and lay historians interested in preserving our state's history.
- Help the Friends support, promote, and strengthen the collections, services, and programs of the Arkansas State Archives.



Mission of the Arkansas State Archives and its branches:

- Keep and care for the official archives of the State of Arkansas;
- Collect material bearing on the history of Arkansas from the earliest times;
- Copy and edit official records and other historical material; and
- Encourage historical work and research by the public.

The mission of the Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives (NEARA), a branch of the Arkansas State Archives, is to collect and preserve primary and secondary source materials pertaining to the history of northeast Arkansas and its people. NEARA also serves as a resource center for historical research focusing on the unique history, culture, and heritage of the area. NEARA opened in 2011, founded through a partnership between the Arkansas History Commission and Arkansas State Parks, and is located within Powhatan Historic State Park. NEARA collects material on a 16-county region in Northeast Arkansas, which includes the counties of: Baxter, Clay, Craighead, Crittenden, Cross, Fulton, Greene, Independence, Izard, Jackson, Lawrence, Mississippi, Poinsett, Randolph, Sharp, and Stone. Dr. Fatme Myuhtar-May serves as archival manager.

Email: northeast.archives@arkansas.gov. Phone: 870-878-6521.

The mission of the Southwest Arkansas Regional Archives (SARA), a branch of the Arkansas State Archives, is to collect and preserve primary and secondary source materials pertaining to the history of southwest Arkansas and its people, and to serve as a resource center for historical research focusing on the unique history, culture, and heritage of the area. SARA, which was founded in 1978 as a project of the Hempstead County Historical Society, with assistance from the Arkansas History Commission, Historic Washington State Park, and the Pioneer Washington Restoration Foundation, is located within Historic Washington State Park. The Arkansas History Commission acquired SARA in 2005. SARA offers a variety of research resources related to a 12-county region in southwest Arkansas that includes the counties of Columbia, Hempstead, Howard, Lafayette, Little River, Miller, Nevada, Ouachita, Pike, Polk, Sevier, and Union. Melissa Nesbitt is the archival manager.

Email: southwest.archives@arkansas.gov. Phone: 870-983-2633.

Arkansas History Commission

Dr. Brady Banta, Jonesboro
Dr. Shawn Fisher, Searcy
Ronald Fuller, Little Rock
Jason B. Hendren, Bentonville
Heather Nelson, Jonesboro
Rodney Soubers, Mountain Home
Dr. Micheal Tarver, Clarksville

Black History Commission of Arkansas

Carla Hines Coleman, Little Rock
Elise Hampton, Conway
Dr. Jesse Hargrove, Alexander
Ricky Lattimore, McGehee
Pat Finley Johnson, Pocahontas
Dr. Cherisse Jones Branch, Jonesboro
Frank H. Stewart, Conway

Write us at FASA, P.O. Box 31342, Little Rock, AR 72260

Check out our website at ararchivesfriends.org

www.facebook.com/ARArchivesFriends

Visit us on Twitter at @FoASA

