

Volume 2, Number 4
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Arkansas

The Entry

Newsletter of the
Encyclopedia of Arkansas Project



Two Website Features Will Capture Arkansas's Past

When the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas* launches, Arkansas history buffs will be a few mouse clicks away from receiving their daily dose of Arkansas info. Two of the website's features, "This Day in Arkansas History" and "Photo of the Day," will present daily facts or events in Arkansas history that occurred on that particular day. A link will then take readers to related Encyclopedia entries to learn more.

Laura Hodo, the Encyclopedia's first student intern, has spent the fall semester researching and compiling the database for "This Day in Arkansas History." "Researching Arkansas history is at times like a treasure hunt. There are dates when nothing exciting seems to have happened and other dates when everything happened," said Hodo. Choosing just one interesting fact on those eventful dates in Arkansas history has proved to be a challenge for Hodo. "I discovered that Mary Steenburgen and John Grisham were both born on February 8th but in different years. Also, Billy Bob Thornton's birthday is August 4, 1955. Al Joyner won his gold medal at the 1984 Olympics on that same day, twenty-nine years later."

"This Day in Arkansas History" and "Photo of the Day" will sometimes feature obscure facts and pictures from Arkansas's past, with a balance between the historically important, the amusing, and the unusual. Hodo explained, "I included the date that the Little Rock Nine entered Central High School, September 23, 1957, because of its significance, but the dates that Prohibition was enacted and then repealed—January 1, 1916 and August 24, 1933—are just interesting to know."

Because so many people have expressed interest in "This Day in Arkansas History," the Encyclopedia of Arkansas decided to produce a 2005 calendar to give the public an early look. "Any Arkansan will enjoy this calendar. Some dates, like Bill Clinton being elected president on November 3, 1992, will make people reflect, while other dates, like when La Salle and De Tonti reached the Arkansas River—March 13, 1682—will inform them," said Hodo.

To purchase the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas 2005 Calendar*, fill out and mail the order form in this newsletter or print an order form at www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.



Laura Hodo, Encyclopedia intern, researching at the Butler Center

ASU Graduate Student is Encyclopedia's First Intern

When her internship ends in early December, Laura Hodo will have traveled over 4,500 miles between Jonesboro and Little Rock to work for the Encyclopedia of Arkansas Project. Hodo graduated from Arkansas State University in May 2003 with a BA in history and lives in Jonesboro. She feels all those hours and miles on the road are paying off.

"Several of my professors from ASU are contributing to the Encyclopedia," Hodo said. "Knowing that such incredible historians as Dr. Calvin Smith and Dr. Michael Dougan are participating in the Project encouraged me to apply for the internship. And I'm so glad I did."

When she completes her MA in history at ASU in May 2005, Hodo plans to pursue a career in museum work and teach history at the community college level. Working on the Encyclopedia Project, she feels, has sharpened her research, writing, and computer skills.

According to Project Coordinator Jill Curran, in the brief weeks of her internship, Hodo has made an invaluable contribution to the Encyclopedia. "Before Laura came, we had done only preliminary work on 'This Day in Arkansas History.' We turned the database over to Laura and she's really made it her own. When I asked her to compile a list of interesting dates in Arkansas history for our 2005 calendar, I knew the project was in good hands."

(See "Internship" on page 4)

Coordinator's Column

Jill Curran



One of my favorite parts of my job is traveling around the state speaking to community groups about the Encyclopedia of Arkansas Project. I tell people about getting involved in the Project and what they'll be able to see and hear on the Encyclopedia website. (Of the other senses I wish we could include besides seeing and hearing, tasting would have to be my first choice, if only for McClard's barbecue.)

While I get to be out and about promoting the Encyclopedia, there are two groups of people who get very little public attention but deserve a great deal of the credit for the health and well being of the Project. They are our Oversight Board and Editorial Board. The Encyclopedia's Oversight Board is a group of 20 individuals responsible for making policy decisions for the Project and overseeing its finances. The larger Editorial Board reviews Encyclopedia entries to ensure their completeness and accuracy—a very important job. Both of these groups met recently, and I'd like to share with you just two decisions of the Oversight Board.

First, on the recommendation of the Encyclopedia staff, the Board voted unanimously to extend the launch date of the Encyclopedia to mid-2006. The staff and I have gnashed our teeth over

this issue. In the end we all felt it would be far better to launch a fuller encyclopedia we're proud of and one that students and the general public can use from day one, than to go public with a smaller, less useful site. I know the Board made the right decision.

The other unanimous vote I want you to know about is the decision to pay all Encyclopedia authors. Originally we had planned to pay only the authors of large, overview entries, such as "Agriculture" and "Education." Although paying all authors will add considerably to our budget, it will help keep the Project on track. Plus it's only fair that authors should get something in return for their hard work—even if it's less than \$50. Of course, for those authors who would like to forego their pay for the sake of the Project, we will list them as donors and say a heartfelt "thank you" for their extra contribution.

For all of their hard work reviewing thousands of entries, the Encyclopedia Editorial Board is not being paid. Nor is the Oversight Board. And they are really busy people! They deserve all of the thanks and credit we can give them. I encourage you to learn who our board members are and thank them if ever you get the chance. They are listed on our website: www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

Some of us on the staff met in Memphis recently with five other Southern encyclopedia projects. We taught a lot and learned a lot, and we came away with a strong sense that our state's effort is in very good shape. This is thanks in no small part to the two boards who guide this very big and important project.

The Arkansas Entry

is the quarterly newsletter of the Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture Project.

Butler Center for Arkansas Studies
Central Arkansas Library System
100 Rock Street
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 918-3016
info@encyclopediaofarkansas.net
www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net

Needed: Office Work Volunteers

If you can give a few hours of your time, please call (501) 918-3022 or e-mail jcurran@encyclopediaofarkansas.net.

Multimedia Notes

Tim Nutt

[Editor's Note: Frank McGarity, who served as Multimedia Editor for the Encyclopedia Project since January, resigned his position in August and moved to New Mexico with his family. The responsibility for gathering multimedia for the Encyclopedia has been incorporated into a new Staff Historian position, being filled by Tim Nutt. Tim, who already serves as Managing Editor for the Encyclopedia, will be joining the project full time in December when his tenure as Interim Curator for the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies ends. Tim says he is "hoping to find the 'King Tut's tomb' of Arkansas photographs."]

Recently I traveled to the Special Collections Department at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville where the staff graciously allowed me to scan a number of images. I was ecstatic to find a photograph of Rufus King Garland, brother of Governor and U.S. Senator Augustus Hill Garland, and leader in the Arkansas Greenback Party. I never knew an image existed of this fascinating man, and it made my trip even more worthwhile.

We received a good response from the last issue of this newsletter about needed images, but we are still seeking media for a number of entries. I know someone out there has an image of the pearl button industry that flourished in the 1920s in Arkansas, early photos of the wine industry, or an early video/audio of the King Biscuit Blues Festival—to name just three subjects.

I encourage you to contact me if you believe you have a photograph that should be included in the Encyclopedia of Arkansas. Maybe your photo will alert us to a subject that deserves an entry. I also urge you to go to the Encyclopedia's website and look at the entries for which we need authors. Many of those will need images as well.

Thank you for the enthusiastic response we have had so far to the Encyclopedia Project. Remember, this is your Encyclopedia. Contribute to it.

Senior Editor's Column

Nathania Sawyer



Words of wisdom from Tom Dillard: "Never rely on technology; it will always let you down." I'm generally more optimistic than Tom

about technology, but recent events have moved me a little closer to adopting his dogma.

Some apologies are coming, but first I need to give you a little background.

We rely heavily on technology to manage the more than 1,000 entries currently in progress. Before the Encyclopedia is completed, we will more than triple that number of entries. All the entries are edited on computers. Every aspect of the project is managed by massive databases that track the progress of individual entries and all information related to the author and multimedia. The majority of our communication is done by e-mail.

My first apology is for the use of form letters. The only way we can manage so many entries is through a series of standardized letters, which are generated by our databases. I would love to be able to have truly personal correspondence with every author at every step of the process, but the form

letters are a necessary evil.

The second apology has to do with e-mail. We recently learned that some of our e-mail communications were not received. Some were filtered out by anti-spam programs and some fell into the black hole of the Internet. Some authors who were invited to write entries never received their instructions; some authors who submitted entries never received acknowledgements; some authors submitted entries that we never received. We had many problems during the summer when we were transferring from a temporary e-mail system to our freestanding e-mail server. We are in the process of confirming the contact information we have on file for all of our authors and testing e-mail addresses. **If you are an author for the Encyclopedia and have not received a message asking you to update your contact information, please contact us at editor@encyclopediaofarkansas.net immediately.**

Tom may be correct about technology. However, the same technology that frustrates us some days delights us most of the time. It is enabling a staff of six and an army of volunteers to create a fully searchable, cross-referenced online encyclopedia we can all be proud of.

Dillard Leads Encyclopedia Project From Fayetteville

Encyclopedia of Arkansas Editor-in-Chief, Tom W. Dillard, has moved to Washington County to be Head of Special Collections at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. He left his position as Curator of the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies in September.

Dillard continues to lead the Encyclopedia Project from his new locale and recently said, "I am more proud of my work with the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* than just about any aspect of my 35-year career."

As Editor-in-Chief, Dillard helps to set editorial policy, determine topics for inclusion, select writers, review entries, and plan fundraising activities. He also is busy researching and writing several entries for the Encyclopedia.

He can now be reached at UA Fayetteville at (479) 575-5576 or tdillar@uark.edu.

Recent Contributors

Skip and Billie Rutherford
Little Rock

Catherine H. Hepinstall
Little Rock

Mike Turner
Newport

Bill Norman
Crossett

Shirley and Sam Strauss
Little Rock

(in honor of Tom Dillard)

The Encyclopedia of Arkansas Response Form

Yes, I would like to make the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* the definitive reference on all things Arkansas. I would like to help in the following ways:

Name _____

Tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____.

Address _____

Tax-deductible pledge of \$ _____ payable in installments. Please contact me so we can set up a payment plan.

City/State/Zip _____

I would like to volunteer my time and/or expertise. Please contact me.

Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

Add my name to the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas* mailing list.

Return to:

Encyclopedia of Arkansas, Central Arkansas Library System, 100 Rock St., Little Rock, AR 72201
or E-mail: info@encyclopediaofarkansas.net

“I Didn’t Know That About Arkansas”

Guest contributor: Clifton E. “Gene” Hull



Clifton E. “Gene” Hull is a well-known expert on the history of railroads and has authored an overview entry on Arkansas railroads for the Encyclopedia. He wrote this note to Project Coordinator Jill Curran after reading the last edition of *The Arkansas Entry*:

“Congratulations on the Encyclopedia Project. The following is what

‘I Didn't Know About Arkansas.’ The Ozark Mountains are not mountains. About 300 million years ago, the area known as the Ozark Mountains rose from a shallow sea by geological pressure as a single limestone boulder. What we call “mountains” are the greatly-eroded remains of a single, huge plateau of limestone.

“I discovered this during research for a history of the Arkansas River basin, including its main tributaries, the Cimarron and Canadian Rivers.”

We invite you to share information about Arkansas that has surprised you. Part of our vision for the Encyclopedia is that it will provide many such “light-bulb” moments as users learn more about Arkansas.

(“Internship” cont. from page 1)

“We are involving interns and other students in the creation of the Encyclopedia of Arkansas not only to benefit from their work and the perspective they bring to the Project, but also to give them real world experience in history and publishing,” said Curran. “I only hope all of our future interns will be as bright and enthusiastic as Laura, and contribute as much to the Project as she has.”

According to Hodo, the benefits received are well worth the effort involved—and the miles. “As a graduate student, it gives me the chance not only to improve my research skills, but also to contribute to an amazing project. The Encyclopedia recognizes our incredibly rich history and culture, and to be a part of preserving that is a great opportunity for me as a student and as an Arkansan.”

If you would like to be a guest contributor to “I Didn't Know That About Arkansas,” please send your ideas to Jill Curran at jcurran@encyclopediaofarkansas.net or call (501) 918-3022.



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100 Rock Street
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

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