

# The <sup>Arkansas</sup> Entry



Newsletter of the  
Encyclopedia of Arkansas Project

## Mark Your Calendars for May 2, 2006

As the graphic on this page depicts, Arkansas history is moving from the old to the new with the launch of the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*. The information site located at [www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net](http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net) will be replaced by the official site on May 2, 2006.

The launch marks the point the project moves from planning and initial development into a full-scale work in progress. That means the site will launch with several hundred entries and accompanying media. During the next four years, we will add several thousand additional entries and pieces of media to the website.

The online encyclopedia format creates a net of inter-related entries by providing links both within the entries and suggestions for additional entries of interest. The electronic format also provides a lot of flexibility for updating and expanding the entries as new information becomes available. The full-text search feature will allow the user to find every reference to the search term.

The website will include:

- **This Day in Arkansas History**—a piece of Arkansas history connected with each day of the year plus a link to a related entry.
- **Photo of the Day**—a sample from our photo collection with information about the subject, plus a link to browse photos from a related category.
- **Browse Entries**—the ability to browse the entries alphabetically, by subject category, by time period, by entry type, by race, or by gender, as applicable.
- **Browse Media**—the ability to browse the media by gallery (photos, maps, documents, video clips, and audio clips),

by subject category, by time period, by entry type, by race, or by gender, as applicable.

- **Search Functions**—the ability to do simple searches by keyword or to do more advanced searches by subject category, by time period, by entry type, by race, or by gender, as applicable.

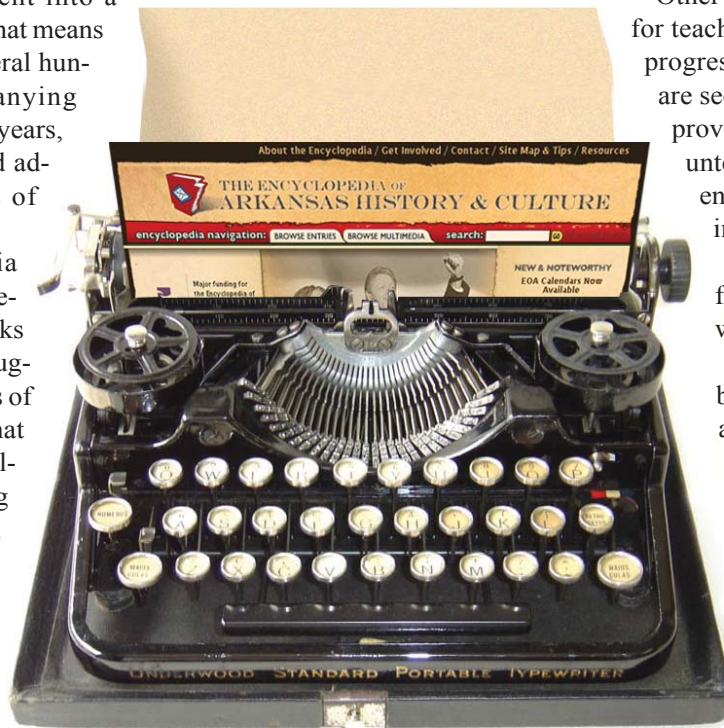
Other features will include lesson plans for teachers, lists of the entries that are in progress, as well as those for which we are seeking authors. You will be able to provide feedback on the website; volunteer to write, review, or fact-check entries; and recommend entries to be included.

Several activities are planned for the launch of the official website, including:

- A preview party the evening before launch for board members, authors, reviewers, fact checkers, and volunteers.
- A press conference the morning of May 2 to unveil the site officially.
- Regional and local launch parties that will take place throughout May at locations around the state.

The Encyclopedia has also partnered with the Arkansas Association of Instructional Media to have launch events in schools around the state. The media specialists will be using materials provided by the Encyclopedia to sponsor online treasure hunts for students in their schools.

“Work-in-progress” means that not only will new entries and media be added to the site, but also that new features will be developed and added. The goal of the Encyclopedia is to provide a reliable resource for students, teachers, historians, and the general public. Your feedback about the site will be very important in helping to determine what the needs are and how to best address them.



# Senior Editor's Column

Nathania Sawyer



**I**t's all Jill Curran's fault. Her obsession with old tourist courts has seeped into my subconscious, and now I find

myself looking for them when Paul and I are exploring the state. Not only do I look for them, I make him turn the car around and go back so I can take pictures when I find one. Then I email the pictures to Jill to see if it's one she didn't know about.

I sometimes wonder what first got Jill interested in tourist courts; it's an obscure area of expertise. Nevertheless, it has increased her knowledge of the state, architecture, tourism, and a lot of other related things.

I was the same way when I was doing research for my master's degree. One question that no one could answer kept scratching at the back of my mind, and I started looking for the answer. Along the way, I found a lot of fascinating information, met a lot of terrific people, and ended up writing a 150-page paper instead of the 35 pages I was required to turn in. Now, no one mentions the name of Harry Ashmore in my presence, because they know it will open a floodgate of information I feel compelled to share.

Recently, one of our authors told me about the research he did for an entry on Xenophon Overton Pindall, who served as acting governor of Arkansas for almost two years. He told me he found much more information than he could use in his entry. He became so interested in Pindall that he has decided to pursue the topic, and he wants to write a more in-depth piece for a historical publication.

My dream for the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* is that it will be the catalyst to spark that same kind of passion in others. I hope it provides easy answers for people who need to know when something happened or who a person was, but I also want people to say, "I want to know more." I want

those unanswered questions to scratch at the back of their minds, and for them to look farther, dig deeper, and uncover answers. Then, of course, they need to contact us and write entries for the Encyclopedia!

The Encyclopedia is also sparking interest in some fun ways. Our staff historian and assistant editor became fascinated with the giant watermelons grown in Hope. They recently acquired some seeds from the current record-holder in the annual watermelon-growing contest and are attempting to grow a giant melon on the sunny ledge in the Encyclopedia of Arkansas offices. Stay tuned. If they are successful, we may be sponsoring a watermelon-eating contest in our offices this summer!

May 2, 2006. It's the end of the first phase of the Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture. We'll breathe a sigh of relief if the server doesn't crash and the launch is executed without any major problems. Then the staff will take a few days of well-deserved R&R before we begin the next phase of the project—adding a few thousand more entries and related media, uncovering more amazing facts about Arkansas, and working with teachers, students, and the public to raise our collective awareness of Arkansas's rich history and culture.

Be sure to let us know what you think of the Encyclopedia. Your feedback will be an important part of our planning for the future. ■

## **The Arkansas Entry**

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

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# Contributions Abound

by Shirley Schuette

We recently received several gifts in memory of Ralph A. "Pat" Walsh, Jr. Pat may be best remembered as the longtime station manager of KAAY Radio. His family designating the Encyclopedia as a recipient for memorial gifts reminded us of the amazing generosity people have shown the Encyclopedia.

Our first donation came from Delores and Tom Bruce of Little Rock. This gift allowed us to lay the groundwork for the project. After we announced the project, other contributors quickly followed. The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, the Department of Arkansas Heritage, and the Arkansas Humanities Council have been ardent supporters of this project, and we would not be launching in May without their support.

It's exciting to see the base of support for the Encyclopedia. Not only have historical societies and other organizations provided gifts, but so have many individuals. One gift was in honor of a lady's 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday, while another honored a child's 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher.

Most of our contributors live in Arkansas, but we have also received gifts from as far away as Monrovia, California, and Gloucester, Massachusetts.

We are honored that people are choosing the Encyclopedia to receive their memorial and tribute gifts. It's just another demonstration of the level of interest that exists for this project. ■

# Student Values Experience as EOA Graduate Assistant

by Teresa Lauderdale

Being the graduate assistant for the Encyclopedia of Arkansas this school year has been one of the most rewarding experiences I've had. As an undergraduate history major and a Public History student at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, the research traditionally involves exploration at great depth of a single topic. The enormous breadth and variety of topics involved in the EOA project has worked wonderfully to create a sense of balance to that single topic intensity.

As a fact checker, I often encounter a wide range of topics within a single entry which require concurrent multiple lines of research. Pulling five books that contain information on the story of David O. Dodd, for instance, along with a volume of the Acts of Arkansas, pertinent volumes of the *Arkansas Historical*

*Quarterly*, and several volumes of the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, is not unusual, and is actually a comparatively short list. A search through five or more books or articles to find support for a single fact is normal.

The assistantship at the EOA has been invaluable in familiarizing me with the resources available, especially those in the Butler Center, and I am often able to find just the right source without wading through all that has been written on a topic. The most valuable thing I'll take with me next spring when the assistantship ends—I'm fortunate to have been asked to stay on a second year—is the knowledge that I was a part, albeit a small part, of the building process as a fact checker, for the Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture. ■

## Become a fact checker for the Encyclopedia

The *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* is seeking people to fact check entries. Participants will receive training on how to complete the fact-checking process. For more information or to sign up, contact Mike Polston at [mpolston@encyclopediaofarkansas.net](mailto:mpolston@encyclopediaofarkansas.net) or (501) 918-3055.

## Summer Internships with the Encyclopedia

Open to undergraduate and graduate students.

Deadline for applications is April 1. For more information and to print an application form, go to [www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/student\\_participation.php](http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/student_participation.php).

## 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:

( ) Tax-deductible contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Add my name to the Encyclopedia of Arkansas mailing list.

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Return to:

Encyclopedia of Arkansas, Central Arkansas Library System, 100 Rock St., Little Rock, AR 72201 or Email: [info@encyclopediaofarkansas.net](mailto:info@encyclopediaofarkansas.net)

## “I Didn’t Know That About Arkansas”

Guest contributor: Guy Lancaster

*Guy Lancaster is Assistant Editor for the Encyclopedia of Arkansas. He is a Ph.D. student in the Heritage Studies program at ASU in Jonesboro.*

You’d think that, growing up in Jonesboro as I did, I might have heard about the Jonesboro Church Wars they had back in the 1930s, right?

Wrong.

No, I never heard anything about the Wars until I started working for the Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture. The whole thing began when Joe Jeffers, an actor-comedian turned evangelist, came and preached a revival at First Baptist Church in 1930 and proved himself a popular draw. When he returned the following year, his sermons led to a brawl at the church, and his godly

followers later attacked the mayor and police chief and caused so much ruckus that Governor Harvey Parnell had to call out the troops to restore order.

Jeffers subsequently built his own church but soon left it in the hands of a new pastor, Dale Crowley. When he returned later, wanting his church back, his and the Crowley factions fought like animals, tear gassing and machine gunning each other until Crowley ended up in court on a murder rap.

No, you won’t find a whole lot of people in Jonesboro who want to talk about this. But you’ll be able to read about it in the *Encyclopedia*. Because history isn’t just governors and explorers—it’s also zealots turning the streets of Jonesboro into a war zone.

Just don’t tell the people back home I said so. ■



Photo by Guy Lancaster  
*First Baptist Church in Jonesboro as it stands today.*



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