



# The Entry

Newsletter of the  
Encyclopedia of Arkansas Project

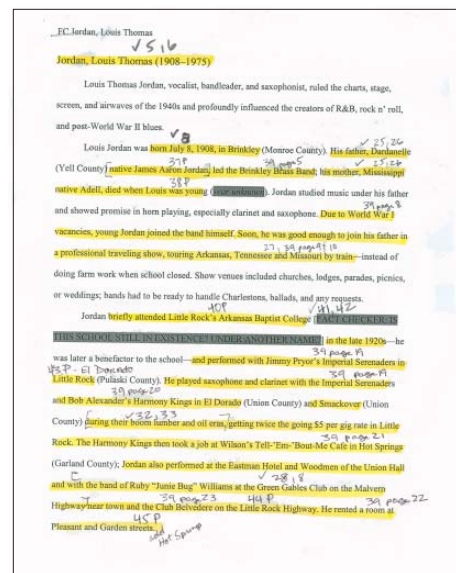
## Yellow Highlights of a Fact Checker

by Carole Burke

Typically my volunteer job as a fact checker starts with a thick letter from the Encyclopedia office, containing a printout of an entry liberally colored in yellow. The yellow highlights indicate facts that need verification. Despite the best efforts of contributors to be accurate, numbers can be inverted, names misspelled, facts unclear, etc. Fact checking is a vital part of the effort to produce a reliable and authoritative reference resource.

In the past several months I have received three *Encyclopedia* entries to fact check: Virginia Maud Dunlap Duncan, a newspaper editor; Louis Jordan, a musician; and Mount Holly Cemetery in Little Rock. Each of these topics is significant to the character and richness of Arkansas.

The Encyclopedia Project is a wonderful endeavor that will help provide information about our state's historical events, people, locations, and a variety of other topics. I don't remember when or where I first heard about the project, but as information became available, I decided I wanted to contribute. Eventually, there was



Fact checkers receive a copy of the entry with information to be checked highlighted in yellow. Their notes indicate confirmation of the facts or if conflicting information exists.

a list of volunteer opportunities, and one need was for fact checkers. This was the job for me. I like mysteries and the challenge of finding information. Besides, I have a bunch of years of experience as an academic librarian helping folks find information. I thought my research and library skills would allow me to sprint through fact checking a simple entry. After working with these three entries, I have learned to set aside

extra time, make more photocopies instead of relying on my notes, and prepare for lots of surprises and dead ends.

To ensure good results from the fact checking process, the Encyclopedia of Arkansas's staff conducted a workshop for volunteers. Their two-hour presentation incorporated many helpful tips about historical re-



Louis Jordan, 1935

search, potential resources, procedures, research support, and a thick handout. Ideally, the fact checker is supposed to identify two primary sources for each yellow, highlighted fact. These sources should be different from the ones used by the author of the article.

The facts that need checking vary by the type of entry. The Duncan and Jordan entries were essentially biographical. The yellow marks highlighted birth dates, death dates, marriage(s), children, education, and their contribution(s): essentially, who, what, where, when and why. The Mount Holly entry included names of some of the notable people buried there as well as the history of the cemetery's establishment and development.

Fact checking the Louis Jordan entry was the most challenging. According to the author, Jordan was born in Arkansas in 1908. I was able to confirm his birth and date dates by using obituaries published in the *New York Times* and *Arkansas Gazette*. The census records for 1910 and 1920 helped me find data about his parents. The records not only confirmed his birth, but also listed his parents' names, their ages, and places of birth.

Electronic resources were useful. I searched the 1910 and 1920 censuses via HeritageQuest Online and found newspaper articles in LexisNexis. However some facts needed to be checked

(See "Fact Checking" on page 3)

## Coordinator's Column

Jill Curran



You may remember receiving a fundraising letter from our honorary co-chairs David Pryor and Win Rockefeller a few weeks ago. It was on behalf of the Encyclo-

pedia Project, and it asked you to make a donation to help us record and preserve our heritage. As their letter said, contributions will help us complete the *Encyclopedia* by 2010 and make it available to teachers, students, and interested browsers across the world, free of charge.

This was the first time the Encyclopedia Project has solicited donations by mail, and we weren't sure what to expect. While we knew that the project has wide and enthusiastic support across the state and beyond, we didn't know how that would translate into dollars when we asked for help.

While we had hoped to raise at least \$10,000, I'm happy to report that we have raised over \$13,000! Thank you to everyone who has made a donation so far (listed on page 5). We greatly appreciate your support and want you to know that your gifts are money well spent. We will list your names in all versions of the *Encyclopedia* as a way of permanently honoring your generosity.

Of course, if you haven't made a donation, it's not too late to join your fellow Arkansas history appreciators and contribute to the Encyclopedia Project. It's tax deductible, and above a certain amount you get "some really cool stuff."

For a \$100 donation, you will receive an Encyclopedia of Arkansas lapel pin. These pins are reserved for individuals who contribute directly to the project, either by writing, volunteering, or making a significant financial donation.

For \$500 you will receive an Encyclopedia of Arkansas pin in the shape of our logo and your choice of two books published by the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies. Titles include:

- *"All Cut to Pieces and Gone to Hell": The Civil War, Race Relations, and the Battle of Poison Spring*
- *Bandits, Bears, and Backaches: A Collection of Short Stories Based on Arkansas History*
- *The Crossroads of Arkansas*
- *Things Grew Beautifully Worse: The Wartime Experiences of Captain John O'Brien, 30th Arkansas Infantry, C.S.A.*

For your generous donation of \$1,000 you will receive a pin and all four Butler Center books, plus the soon-to-be-published title *'A Rough Introduction to This Sunny Land': The Civil War Journal of Pvt. Henry Strong, 12th Kansas Infantry.*

From the beginning of the project, we have worked to make the *Encyclopedia* as comprehensive and representative of our great state as possible. How wonderful it is that so many Arkansans (and non-Arkansans!) are supporting us in this effort—which is in itself, I think, historic.

### Special Note

Tim Nutt, who served as managing editor-staff historian, and was one of the founders of the Encyclopedia Project, is the new Archives and Manuscripts Librarian for Special Collections at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

Tim is greatly missed in the Encyclopedia offices. Fortunately for us, we will continue to benefit from his vast knowledge of all things Arkansas in his new role as special projects editor. The rest of the staff and I wish him good luck and God-speed (and many emails) in his new job.

It is my great pleasure to announce that Mike Polston will succeed Tim as staff historian for the Encyclopedia. Mike is well known in the Arkansas history community, and we are very fortunate he is joining the Encyclopedia team. Learn more about Mike and our other new employee, Guy Lancaster, by reading the article on page 4 of this newsletter.

## Encyclopedia Receives Grant from the Arkansas Humanities Council

The Arkansas Humanities Council has awarded the Encyclopedia Project a grant in the amount of \$34,120. These funds will help pay for author stipends, salary support, and printing costs. Part of the funds will also be used to explore available options for interoperability with other state encyclopedia projects.

Council Director Bob Bailey said, "The council is delighted to offer its support to the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*. We look forward to its launch next year."

This is the second year the Arkansas Humanities Council has provided funding for the *Encyclopedia*. We appreciate the organization's enthusiasm for the project and its continued support.

### Spring Internships with the Encyclopedia

Open to undergraduate and graduate students. Deadline for applications is November 11. For more information and to print an application form, go to [www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/student\\_participation.php](http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/student_participation.php).

### Want to know more about the Encyclopedia?

Be sure to visit our website at [www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net](http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net) to learn more about the Encyclopedia's history and ways to get involved.

*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](mailto:info@encyclopediaofarkansas.net)  
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## Senior Editor's Column

Nathania Sawyer



"Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will not die, but long after we are gone be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistence."

Daniel Hudson Burnham

Why do so many great quotes come from architects? I think it's because they know the value of excellence and its ability to stand against the ravages of time. I think the great architects want their work to survive and be appreciated long after they are gone.

Creating an encyclopedia is a lot like creating a building. Many others exist, but you want yours to be the best—to be the one that stands the test of time. You have the same concerns: budget, deadline, availability of raw materials and craftspeople, and fear that your vision won't translate into the final product. But, you have to have faith that your infrastructure is solid, your plans are well constructed, and the workers are committed to excellence.

We are fortunate to have the support of people who share our vision of excellence. Our board members, authors, reviewers, editors, and fact checkers have embraced this project and remain enthusiastic through the slow, and sometimes painful, process of converting vision to reality.

We are less than a year away from the launch of the Encyclopedia. Every minute of the next nine months is critical to our success. If you are not already involved with this project, I invite and encourage you to get involved and be a part of creating the premier resource for information about Arkansas. We have lists of entries in progress and those for which we are still seeking authors on our website at [www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/seeking.php](http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/seeking.php). We are adding new entries to these lists every week and always welcome suggestions for additional topics to include.

When we unveil the website next year, what you see will be based on a vision, but will exist only because of the support of hundreds of people and organizations who made a commitment to this project and came through on that commitment.

And, if we've done our job well, it will not die, but long after we are gone be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistence.

("Fact Checking" cont. from page 1)

using print or microform resources. For the Jordan entry, I was trying to verify some events during his career in the 1950s. I tried back issues of the *Arkansas Democrat* and *Arkansas Gazette* with no success.

Eventually, I found a confirming article in his hometown newspaper that was available on microfilm at the Arkansas History Commission. I wasn't 100 percent successful in confirming all the facts in the Jordan entry (darn it!), but I was able to find much of the information through the Butler Center, History Commission, and Ottenheimer Library.

The process was time consuming, but pleasantly time consuming. If you enjoy being a history detective, I urge you to volunteer to be 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 volunteer fact checkers.

Volunteers receive training on how to fact check entries.

Our next training session will be held September 2005 at the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies in Little Rock.

For more information or to sign up, contact Mike Polston at [mpolston@encyclopediaofarkansas.net](mailto:mpolston@encyclopediaofarkansas.net) or (501) 918-3055

### 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_, Address \_\_\_\_\_  
payable in installments. Please contact me so we can set up a payment plan. \_\_\_\_\_
- I would like to volunteer my time and/or expertise. City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Please contact me. 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)

# New Employees Join EOA Project

The Encyclopedia of Arkansas Project is pleased to welcome two new employees: Mike Polston as the staff historian and Guy Lancaster as the project's assistant editor.

Mike Polston has been a history teacher at Cabot High School and an adjunct professor of history at ASU Beebe for many years. He has researched, published, and presented on a broad range of Arkansas topics. He has won awards both for his teaching and his historical research and is well known in the Arkansas history community. While at Cabot High School, Polston created a local-history museum at the school.

Guy Lancaster holds two degrees in English and is currently working on one in theology from St. Gregory's University, as well as his Ph.D. in Heritage Studies from Arkansas State University. He recently served as editorial assistant for the *Encyclopedia of World Folklore*. His fiction has previously appeared in *Arkansas Review: A Journal of Delta Studies*, and his first novel, *Queen of Purgatory*, will be published this year.

Please join us in welcoming Mike and Guy to our team.



Mike Polston and Guy Lancaster

## Preorder Your 2006 Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture Calendar

We are in the process of publishing our second annual *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* calendar. If you preorder your 2006 calendar(s), you will receive free shipping.

To preorder your 2006 calendar, return this form with a check by October 1, 2005, to:

Encyclopedia of Arkansas  
Central Arkansas Library System  
100 Rock Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201



Thank you for your support of this project!

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

Guest contributor: Lindsey Clark

Although born, raised, and educated in Arkansas, I didn’t start to take an interest in Arkansas history until I lucked into a semester-long internship with the Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture.

While researching and writing for the upcoming website feature “This Day in Arkansas History,” I learned about Louise McPhetridge Thaden, a famous female pilot during aviation’s golden age. Born on November 12, 1905, in Bentonville, she grew up in Arkansas and attended the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville from 1921 to 1925. She moved to San Francisco in 1928, where she married Herbert Thaden, a fellow pilot.

On December 7, 1928, Louise set the first recorded altitude record by a woman in the U.S.—20,260 feet. The very next year she defeated Amelia

Earhart and others to win the first National Women’s Air Derby. She became the first woman to win the Bendix Transcontinental Air Race from New York City to Los Angeles a few years later, on September 4, 1936. It was the first year that women were allowed to compete, and her time set a new race record.

Thaden helped to pave the way for women who wanted to pursue traditionally male careers. Although she is much less famous today than Amelia Earhart, her contributions to women’s history and aviation are on par with hers. I am amazed that someone so courageous and so revolutionary



*Louise Thaden ca. 1929. Photo courtesy National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution*

was from Arkansas—but perhaps I shouldn’t be. Thaden and so many other significant Arkansans make me proud to call Arkansas home.

*Lindsey Clark is a history major at Hendrix College.*



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