



Whether you're a born and raised Arkansan, lived here for 30 plus years, or recently arrived to the Natural State, this place we call home has a rich, diverse, and unique history.

Since the website was launched in the mid-2000s, the staff of the Encyclopedia of Arkansas has tried to make sure that the story of this place is documented in an accessible digital format.

This free resource has almost everything you might want to know about the 25th state. And the EOA staff are in the habit of finding the most fascinating of those stories to tell.



The CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas launched in 2006 with 700 entries and 900 pieces of media.

In 2019 we switched platforms from the original proprietary website to a newly designed WordPress site.

In August 2022 we undertook a further redesign of the home page, search function, and user experience features.

You can stop by the EOA for tidbits like THIS DAY IN ARKANSAS HISTORY and PHOTO OF THE DAY...

As well as trending entries and what's been newly updated. (And here's a hint, we are updating all the time!)

ALL ENTRIES

FLOOD OF 1927

7,000+ entries

Flood of 1927

AKA: Great Flood of 1927
AKA: Mississippi River Flood of 1927
AKA: 1927 Flood

The Flood of 1927 was the most destructive and costly flood in Arkansas history and one of the worst in the history of the nation. It afflicted Arkansas with a greater amount of devastation, both human and monetary, than the other affected states in the **Mississippi River** Valley. It had social and political ramifications which changed the way Arkansas, as well as the nation, viewed relief from natural disasters and the responsibility of government in aiding the victims, echoing the **Hurricane Katrina** disaster in the present day.

In largely agrarian Arkansas, the Flood of 1927 covered about 6,600 square miles, with thirty-six out of seventy-five Arkansas counties under water up to thirty feet deep in places. In Arkansas, more people were affected by the floodwaters (over 350,000), more farmland inundated (over two million acres), more Red Cross camps were needed (eighty of the 154 total), and more families received relief than any other state (41,243). In Arkansas, almost 100 people died, more than any state except Mississippi. In monetary terms, the losses in Arkansas (totaling over \$1 million in 1927 dollars for relief and recovery) surpassed any other affected state.

The Flood of 1927 had its origins both in nature and in man. In the late 1920s, technological advances kept pace with the growing economy. Heavy machinery enabled the construction of a vast system of **levees** to hold back rivers that tended to overrun their banks. Drainage projects opened up new, low-lying lands that had once been forests but had been left bare by the **timber industry**.

ENTRY

Flood of 1927

TIME PERIOD

Early Twentieth Century (1901 - 1940)

CATEGORY

Environment / Land and Resources / Natural Disasters

TYPE

Event

LESSON PLANS

1927 Flood (Grades 5-8)

Arkansas's Top Ten Events (Grades 6-12)

Hard Times (Grades 7-12)

Mucket Mania (Grades 6-12)

Rollin' on the River (Grades 5-12)

Southern Flood Blues (Grades 9-12)

Over 7,000 entries

Often compared to Wikipedia but with the difference that our entries are peer reviewed and professionally edited

Anyone can write for the EOA but all entries are reviewed by other scholars, fact checked, and edited for grammar and spelling.

- 
- **EVERY** incorporated community
 - **Government officials**
 - **Civil rights organizations from NAACP to CLOB**
 - **EVERY** military action including the smallest skirmishes
 - **Wildlife, flowers, plants**

WE HAVE ENTRIES ON ...

Every incorporated community, hundreds of unincorporated ones and always seeking more

ENTRIES ON

Government officials from those who served in Congress, to Arkansas constitutional officers, to individual state legislators, even significant sheriffs, mayors, and county judges

Civil rights organizations from the national level, such as the NAACP, to the local level, such as CLOB (Council for Liberation of Blacks)

Military events from the Civil War, ranging from major battles (Pea Ridge) down to small local skirmishes; if someone in blue and someone in gray met in the woods between 1861 and 1865 we probably have an entry documenting it.

AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - birds, fish, mammals but also fungi, lichens, ferns, jellyfishes

AND WE ARE ALWAYS DEVELOPING MORE...

Developing entries on every film set or filmed in Arkansas, as well as every book, television show, and even individual episodes set in the state (Search: X-Files)



Produced by a public library

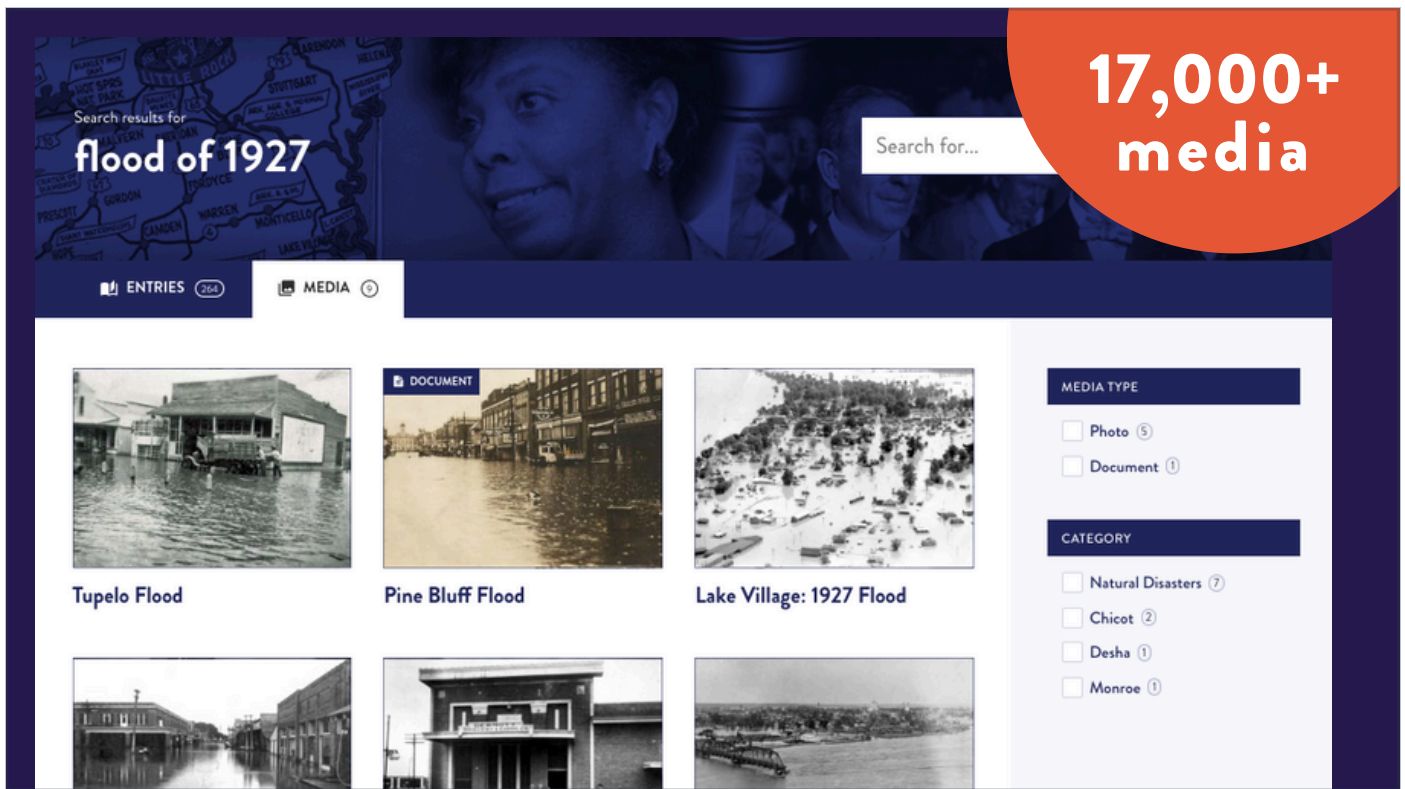
230 countries

EVERY continent

Used by government agencies and officials, students, media, genealogists, historians (local and national)

Users have come from every continent (including Antarctica) and more than 230 countries.

Over 175,000 users per month

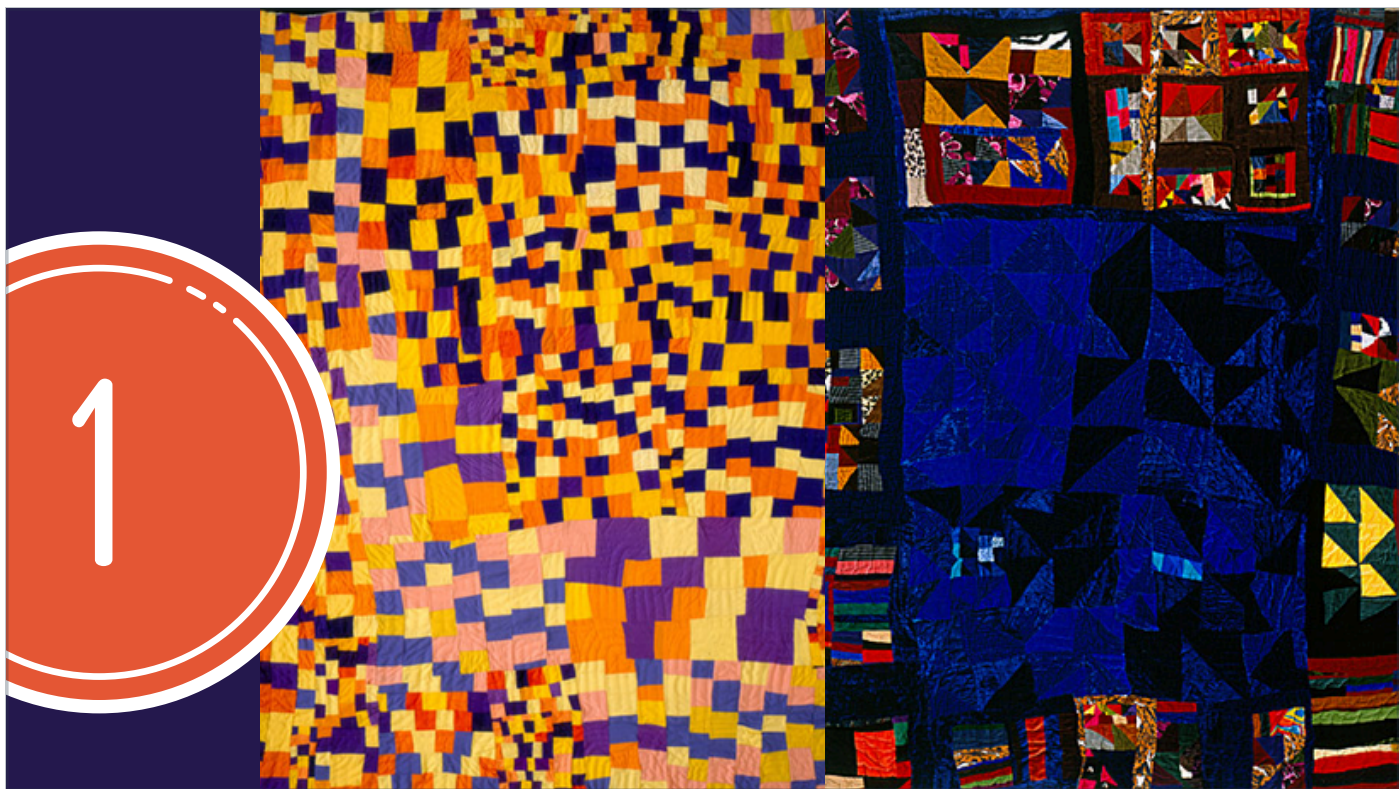


AND DO WE HAVE MEDIA...

We have worked with archives, libraries, museums, and universities around the state and the country to make sure that the EOA has visual images to illustrate our entries.

BUT THERE IS ALWAYS MORE TO FIND...

We rely on everyday citizens to help us locate photos.



Rosie Lee Tompkins (1936–2006), aka Effie Mae Martin Howard, was a widely acclaimed African American quiltmaker whose prodigious talents catapulted her to the forefront of contemporary art. As New York Times critic Roberta Smith put it, “Tompkins’s textile art [works]...demolish the category.”

Effie Mae Martin was born into poverty in 1936 in rural Gould (Lincoln County). She moved to California in 1958. She married twice and raised five children and step-children. During this part of her life, she did little or no patchwork.

By the late 1970s she found peace of mind in patchwork. When her work was about to be exhibited she adopted the pseudonym Rosie Lee Tompkins to stay out of the public eye. Once her work was shown, everyone wanted to know who she was.

Deeply religious, she felt that she was the instrument of God, who designed her patchworks. “I wonder how I did that!” she once exclaimed in astonishment at her own work. “It was the Lord that helped me.”

Howard’s affinity for changeable design, vibrant color, bold contrast, multiple patterns, non-four-sided borders, and radical shifts in scale and color scheme can be found in the work of African American patchworkers nationwide, suggesting a profound influence of African art on her work. Her unlimited elaborations on familiar patterns, for example, show an aesthetic of variation reminiscent of the raffia embroideries of the Bakuba of central Africa and of certain royal Kente cloths of the Asante of Ghana and the Ivory Coast.

“These quilts are works of such distinction and devotion,” Artweek critic Alison Bing wrote “that they supersede established art-historical categories, forcing reviewers to retreat to that dumfounded admiration that attracted us to art in the first place.” A vast number of quilters report having been influenced by her work, and her quilts have been purchased by the Whitney and Oakland museums.

Howard died in 2006. Her work was the subject of a 2020 retrospective at the Berkeley Art Museum, which received coverage in the New York Times.



Cicero Osco Pilgrim (1927–1973) was a self-taught African American sculptor whose works express a highly personal and often humorous vision, showing little influence from African or European traditions. They have been collected by the Faulkner County Museum, numerous Conway families, and Hendrix College, where eleven items are on permanent display in the library .

Cicero Pilgrim was born in 1927 into a Black community near Wooster (Faulkner County). Pilgrim's education ceased after the third grade. In 1953, he married; he and his family lived on a small farm near his birthplace, where they raised farm animals, gardened, fished, gigged frogs, and hunted small animals. Pilgrim also took a variety of jobs for cash —brick-laying, roofing, and tree trimming and removal. During the 1950s, he worked on a section gang laying and repairing track for the Missouri Pacific Railroad. At night, using pocketknives and carpenter's tools, Pilgrim carved his sculptures at the kitchen table.

The Last Days (ca. 1967) is Pilgrim's masterpiece. It features two women, one with a tiny child at the highest point of the piece, and the other seated—relaxed, nude, and sensual. Around the women, four birds cling to the wood, three animals attempt to hide, and a fourth animal threatens the world beyond the carving. The doomsday message of The Last Days contrasts with the humor of such works as Nat King Cole with Sailfish and Smiling Dog. Other notable works include Dark Woman, Abe Lincoln, Flying Bear, and Spotted Horse.

Beginning in the 1960s, Pilgrim would offer his sculptures for sale to people in Faulkner County who had hired him to trim their trees. His art became generally known in the area. In the early

1970s, the art department of Hendrix College recognized Pilgrim's talent and organized a show in the Trieschmann Gallery to celebrate his work.

Pilgrim died in 1973 and is buried at Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church near Wooster.



Henri Linton (1944–) has been recognized as one of the most talented artists working in the state of Arkansas. Linton was inducted into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame in 2001.

Linton was born in Alabama in 1944 and discovered his artistic talents early. After entering a national art contest as a teenager, he won a four-year scholarship to the Columbus College of Art and Design in Ohio. Linton earned a BFA from Boston University and an MFA from the University of Cincinnati.

In 1969, the chairman of UAPB's art department, John Howard, offered Linton a job. Linton began a career teaching aspiring artists. Howard mentored both Linton and artist Jeff Richardson Donaldson. When Howard retired in 1980, Linton took the position.

Linton has thrived as an artist. With scores of renderings, his work is noted for its examination of Arkansas Delta aerial landscapes. His paintings received critical praise from solo shows at the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts in 1996 and 2000, the first regional artist to exhibit at the Strauss Gallery after the Arkansas Art Center's expansion in 2000. His work is displayed throughout the state, including in public collections at UAMS, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, and the Arkansas Arts Center. He co-authored a book about his work (2003).

Linton's passion for African American history and culture manifests itself in his work organizing and coordinating photographic exhibitions on important figures such as Beulah Flowers, the mentor of Maya Angelou; Isaac Scott Hathaway and mentor John M. Howard; and Arkansas photographer Geleve Grice.

Linton also developed UAPB's University Museum and Cultural Center. Gathering historical photographs, papers, annuals, books, newspaper clippings, tokens, mementos, and a variety of other artifacts, Linton organized, designed, and helped construct all the displays at the museum.



Barbara Ann Higgins Bond (1951–) is a nationally recognized illustrator and commercial artist whose most important works have concerned the history and struggles of African Americans. She has designed and illustrated cultural heritage stamps published by the U.S.P.S. and the United Nations.

Higgins was born in Little Rock (Pulaski County) in 1951. Higgins entered Phillips University in Oklahoma then transferred to the Memphis College of Art in Tennessee. There she met and married Benny Hayes Bond in 1973. She is known professionally as Higgins Bond.

In 1973 Higgins Bond graduated with a BFA in advertising design and moved to New Jersey to work for a Park Avenue advertising agency. After the birth of her son, she resigned and began practice as a freelance artist.

In the 1970s, Anheuser-Busch, Inc., began sponsoring “The Great Kings and Queens of Africa” program. Higgins Bond was the only artist to have three pieces in the collection: Mansa Kankan Musa, a fourteenth-century king of Mali; Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten and his wife, Queen Nefertiti; and Yaa Asantewaa, Queen of Ghana.

Higgins Bond has exhibited at numerous locales in singular and group shows. Notable among these were exhibitions at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1974, Hunter College in 1975, and the DuSable Museum of African-American History (a Smithsonian affiliate) in 1977.

Higgins Bond has been acknowledged with numerous artistic awards, prizes, and honors. In

1979, she received the Certificate of Merit from the Society of Illustrators. She received the Award of Merit for her work with Black Enterprise magazine. Since 1980, Higgins Bond has painted collector plates for Calhoun's Collectors Society, the Bradford Exchange, and the Hamilton Collection.

In 1986, Higgins Bond was recognized by Governor Bill Clinton at a ceremony honoring distinguished Arkansans. In 1997, she was inducted into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame. In 2009, Higgins Bond won the Ashley Bryan Award, presented by the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System, for outstanding contributions to children's literature.



Larry Dell Alexander (1953–2021) was a visual artist, writer, and Bible teacher best known for his elaborate pen-and-ink drawings and crosshatching technique. He painted *Clinton Family Portrait*, an oil painting that he gave to President Bill Clinton in 1995. He also wrote several Bible study commentary books on the New Testament.

Alexander was born in 1953 in Dermott (Chicot County). He began drawing at age four and never received any formal art training growing up. He studied architecture in Pine Bluff at Southeast Arkansas College.

His career as a professional artist began in 1991 when he first developed his pen-and-ink style and used it to create several lines of greeting cards under the now defunct Alexander Greeting Card Company name. Between 1991 and 1994, he also created more than eighty pieces of pen-and-ink fine art. In a 1995 Fort Worth Star-Telegram newspaper story, Colvin Gibson, president of the Irving Black Art Council, said that Alexander's work "not only depicts the Black experience, it also depicts the American experience." Alexander used many of his drawings on his popular Fineart T-shirt line in the mid-1990s.

Alexander was also a realist painter who worked in the media of oil, acrylics, and watercolors. Six pieces from his popular "Dermott Series," paintings concerning his childhood days, became part of the permanent collection at the Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas in Pine Bluff. Alexander's work can also be found in many private collections.

In 2001, Alexander published his first book, *African-American History at a Glance*, which included

several pen-and-ink drawings of African Americans who have contributed substantially to American history. Alexander's book was used to help create a supplemental text put together by the Irving Independent School District to help improve the American history curriculum in local high schools in 2002.

In 2006, Alexander published his second book, *Sunday School Lessons from the Book of Acts of the Apostles*, which deals with his calling by God to teach the Bible. He continued writing and publishing books with similar themes in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009. Alexander also wrote two weekly online Bible study commentaries.

In 1996, Larry Alexander and Larry Crockett, both natives of Dermott, put together the first Arkansas Schools Tour. After the first year, however, the tour was continued by Alexander alone, through 2007. These tours were conducted to instruct and encourage children in pursuing their goals and careers in the visual arts field, as well as other areas, and to stay away from illegal drugs. Alexander usually ended his tour with a two-day art exhibit and print signing at the Dermott Crawfish Festival.

Alexander died in 2021.



Capturing some of the most powerful aspects of African American life from the mundane to the sublime, Geleve Grice (1922–2004) established himself as Arkansas’s most prolific photographer for more than six decades. From his studio in Pine Bluff (Jefferson County), Grice produced thousands of photographs over the years for a variety of special occasions, including weddings, funerals, and school graduations. Although some of his more high profile photographs were featured in national publications, the heart of Grice’s work highlighted the common people and events of southeast Arkansas.

Geleve Grice was born in 1922 in Tamo (Jefferson County), a small farming town near Pine Bluff; he grew up there and in Little Rock (Pulaski County). Grice began his photography career as a high school senior. L. C. and Daisy Bates, publishers of the Arkansas State Press newspaper, encouraged his journalistic interests by creating a gossip column that featured his images and writings about fellow Dunbar classmates.

While in the navy, Grice was stationed in Illinois and went to Chicago on leave, where he took amateur photos of the city’s nightlife, capturing unique images of famous Black Americans like Joe Louis, Louis Armstrong, and famed guitarist T-Bone Walker.

Grice attended the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff where he served as a yearbook photographer, and was eventually hired in 1947 as the campus photographer. In 1949, Grice married. When he graduated in 1950, Grice had already opened the professional photography studio where he would earn his living for the next forty years. He frequently worked outside the studio for the Arkansas State Press and KARK and KTHV television stations. Grice’s photos also

appeared in such national publications as Ebony, Jet, and Life magazines.

In 1948, Grice was commissioned to document the integration of the University of Arkansas Law School in Fayetteville when Silas Hunt (accompanied by attorneys Wiley Branton and Harold Flowers) became the first Black student to enroll at an all-white Southern university since Reconstruction. There are no other known photographs of this event.

In 1958, Grice photographed Martin Luther King Jr.'s commencement address at AM&N College. His collection also includes images of Mary McLeod Bethune, Ray Charles, Thurgood Marshall, and Muhammad Ali, among others.

In 1998, the UAPB art department sponsored an exhibit of his work. The Old State House Museum in Little Rock followed in 2003 with a more extensive exhibition of his work. In 2003, the University of Arkansas Press published a book featuring many of Grice's most captivating photos. Grice died in 2004.



Eddie Lee Kendrick (1928–1992) was a self-taught artist who was inspired by the Arkansas landscape, his dreams, gospel music, and his Christian faith. Though Kendrick had drawn and painted all his life, his art was not well known until 1993, when three works were included in *Passionate Visions of the American South: Self-Taught Artists from 1940 to the Present*, an exhibition organized by the New Orleans Museum of Art and curated by Alice Rae Yelen.

Eddie Kendrick was born in 1928 on a farm near Stephens (Ouachita County) and he lived in Arkansas most of his life. In the mid-1940s, the family moved to Longley Settlement, a Black community in southwest Pulaski County. Religion and music were important to Kendrick.

By the early 1950s, Kendrick had married; they divorced in 1971. In 1981, he married again; that marriage ended in 1989.

In the 1970s, Kendrick worked as a custodian at Parham Elementary School in Little Rock. There he was discovered by Ruth Kaplan Arnold, coordinator of the Little Rock School District's Arts in Education program. Arnold arranged for Kendrick to paint during his free time and bought art supplies for his use until Parham closed in 1979.

In 1991, Kendrick agreed to be a visiting artist at Gibbs Magnet School at the invitation of Susan Turner Purvis, art specialist, who bought his supplies. For several months, he painted in her space in the hall as the children looked over his shoulder.

Kendrick's extant works date from 1977 to 1992, the last fifteen years of his life. During this

period, his symbols for the way to eternal life evolved from the literal to the metaphoric. In earlier works, figures of Christ dominate the composition. Symbols used in *Church of God in Christ* suggest the artist's transition from the literal to the metaphoric. In one work a tower, its shape suggested by a dipping gourd, provides visual and symbolic metaphor between heaven and earth. Kendrick added glitter to the tower, symbolizing the Holy Spirit, as he did in other works on fabric in the mid-1980s.

Around 1985, Kendrick began to use planes, trains, and boats for the way to heaven, eventually replacing the figure of Christ with visual metaphor and text.

In 1992, Kendrick died of cancer. Kendrick's art and life were celebrated with the retrospective *A Spiritual Journey: The Art of Eddie Lee Kendrick*. Curator Yelen organized the exhibition for the New Orleans Museum of Art. It opened in 1998 at the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts; six pieces of Kendrick's work are held in their permanent collection.



Henry Jackson Lewis (1837?–1891), who was born into slavery, has been called the first Black political cartoonist. His drawings appeared in publications across the nation.

H. J. Lewis was born in Water Valley, Mississippi, in 1837 or 1838. As a child, he fell into a fire, maiming his left hand and blinding his left eye. By 1872, he was living in Pine Bluff (Jefferson County), where he worked as a laborer in the mid-to-late 1870s.

By 1879, he was selling drawings of city and Arkansas River scenes to the national publication Harper's Weekly, and he later sold similar drawings to Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper. In 1882, a Pine Bluff Commercial article referred to him as a "caricaturist and pencil artist" whose sketches "of both imaginary and real scenes are wonderfully correct," and concluded, "We bespeak for him a brilliant and successful future."

In 1882, Edward Palmer, a leading archaeological field investigator for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC, hired Lewis as an assistant. Lewis drew Indian mounds and related scenes, as well as maps for Palmer in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee the rest of that year and in early 1883.

In the mid-1880s, because of a lack of suitable work around Pine Bluff, Lewis went to Little Rock (Pulaski County) and worked at least briefly as a "porter" for the Arkansas Gazette. He later said he learned some artistic techniques from Gazette staff engravers. He also occasionally sold cartoons to the national weekly comic publications Puck and Judge. In 1889, Lewis moved to Indiana, where he worked for the Freeman, a new "national illustrated colored newspaper."

Lewis has been called the first Black political cartoonist for his Freeman work. His earlier drawings touched on a variety of topics but most notably included several sharp attacks on the policies and personalities of the new Republican administration of President Benjamin Harrison. After October 1889, his cartoons attacking the Harrison administration ceased to appear, perhaps because of economic pressure on the financially troubled Freeman by allies of Harrison, an Indianapolis native. Indeed, no new works by Lewis were published in the Freeman between December 1889 and August 1890.

When Lewis's drawings reappeared in the paper, they tended to be on humorous subjects or race relations in general, rather than political subjects, except for two cartoons indirectly criticizing Harrison in December 1890 and January 1891. His last published work, a drawing of a new church in St. Louis, appeared in the Freeman in 1891. By then, his health had declined, reportedly aggravated by the harsh Midwest winters, and he died of a respiratory disease in 1891. Obituary notices in the mainstream Indianapolis Journal and in the Freeman referred to him as "a genius," and the Freeman's tribute concluded with a wish that he had lived "a completer life, where conditions may not interfere, or man's narrowness or unfair hatred prevent the full expression of his unique and striking gifts."



Kevin Earlee Cole (1960–), a Pine Bluff (Jefferson County) native, is one of the most renowned mid-career artists in Atlanta, Georgia; his works are widely collected, with Bill Cosby and Michael Jordan being notable collectors. Cole’s combinations of pastels mixed with primary, vibrant acrylics applied to twisting and curling canvases are a divergence in contemporary visual arts. His well-known “necktie” pieces are thematically linked to the history of African Americans in Pine Bluff, Tarry (Lincoln County), and Star City (Lincoln County)—areas that saw much racial violence during the early and middle 1900s. In 2018, he was inducted into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame .

Kevin Cole was born in 1960 and grew up on the east side of Pine Bluff. He attended the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB), where he received a BS in art education in 1982, studying under teachers such as John Howard, Earnest Davidson, Terrence Corbin, and Henri Linton. Cole completed a master’s degree in art education and painting from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1983 (on a full fellowship) and an MFA in drawing from Northern Illinois University in 1985.

Shortly after graduating in 1985, he began teaching public school in Atlanta. Since that time he has taught at every level from middle to university, taking only a two-year leave of absence (1994-1996) to work on a mural for the Olympic Games. While he teaches, he continues to produce art, show in galleries, and expand his voice in the African American art community.

Cole is most well known for his various abstract “necktie” pieces, inspired by his grandfather, who was active in the civil rights movement. He once pointed out to young Cole a tree where it was

said that African Americans were lynched by their neckties on their way to vote. Cole also did a series entitled Tied Up in Politics.

Cole has produced a high-dollar-value body of work. His art is collected nationally and internationally and can be seen in public and private venues. Cole's installations and murals are featured at parks, convention centers, airports, museums, art galleries, universities, and even embassies.



Jeffrey Richardson (Jeff) Donaldson (1932–2004) was an important and influential African American artist and art educator during the second half of the twentieth century. Working within the context of the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and beyond, Donaldson pioneered a distinctively Afrocentric—or, using the term he coined, “TransAfrican”—aesthetic that championed the societal contributions of African Americans and, as an artistic counterpart to the Black Power Movement, challenged white hegemony.

Jeff Donaldson was born in Pine Bluff (Jefferson County) in 1932. He grew up in Faith (Jefferson County) and Pine Bluff. He attended the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB), becoming the college’s first studio art major. John Howard, chair of the art department, mentored both Donaldson and artist Henry Linton. After Donaldson graduated he accepted a teaching position to establish an art program for Black students.

Donaldson settled in Chicago in the early 1960s and resumed his education, earning a master’s degree and a PhD in African American art history.

In Chicago, Donaldson became involved in the Black artistic community and, in 1967, co-founded the Organization of Black American Culture (OBAC) with the objective of using artistic expression, especially visual art, to advocate for civil rights. The group’s signature project was Wall of Respect (1967), a mural painted on the side of a building. The mural’s eight sections featured images of fifty “Black heroes” from various fields of endeavor. A celebration of Black cultural achievement, the project inspired the creation of outdoor murals in hundreds of cities throughout North America and Europe.

Donaldson co-founded another organization with similar objectives, the African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists (AfriCOBRA), and wrote its influential statement of aesthetic principles, which were derived from African artistic traditions. He organized the Conference on the Functional Aspects of Black Art (CONFABA) in 1970 and led the American delegation to the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in Lagos, Nigeria, in 1977. From 1970 until his retirement in 1998, he was a faculty member and administrator at Howard University in Washington DC, serving as chair of the art department, director of the art gallery, and dean of the College of Fine Arts.

Donaldson's art has been widely exhibited. Donaldson also was a prolific writer of essays on art criticism and history. Donaldson died in 2004.

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THE
ENCYCLOPEDIA
OF ARKANSAS



QUESTIONS



This is just the tip of the iceberg. The CALS Encyclopedia of Arkansas is a rabbit hole I encourage you to jump down. No matter what you are interested in, Arkansas has it—and the EOA is where you can start looking.