



NEWS FROM THE PRAIRIE

WINTER 2021

PRESERVING OUR REGION'S HISTORY

Winter Quarterly Meeting Hosts Thirty via Zoom

The Society held our January meeting via Zoom, which has become a bit of a “new normal” for us, as we await the passing of the pandemic. This hasn’t deterred good participation and planning of future goals, however, as we hosted thirty members and guests January 21 to open our 2021 calendar. David Leech of Stuttgart Economic Development gave an interesting and informative presentation on recent trends and happenings, including the coming of high-speed internet, solar farms and their local impact, low unemployment, increases of sales tax revenue even with Covid-19, highway improvements, new bodycams for police officers, a new independent living complex opening west of the hospital, a high percentage of students in classrooms as opposed to online, and a low incidence of Covid-19 in the area. Mr. Leech also spoke on various improvements to buildings in the Main Street business district between Second and Sixth Streets.

President Raeann Braithwaite reported on the installation of our new historical marker at Crocketts Bluff on December 18, and thanked the various members and friends who helped with the marker project. Dyan Bohnert informed attendees that Arkansas Post National Memorial had experienced some personnel changes, and the park was open except for the visitor center. Arkansas Post Museum State Park was currently open part-time. Jessie Walsh reported that the Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie is planning to hold a fundraiser event as soon as conditions allow. They also invite the public to contribute to a “Covid Chronicle” designed to record the experiences of people in our current situation. GPHS has temporarily put on hold our youth essay contest and the county historical marker “tour” brochure until we are able to convene safely as planning committees.

The Society will once again contribute to the committee overseeing the restoration of Arkansas County’s most fragile and time-worn county record books, as we have since the 1990s. The earliest of these books are among the oldest such records west of the Mississippi River. Glenn Mosenthin has offered to repaint the St. Charles historical marker located near the former ferry landing, installed by GPHS in 1963. A committee was appointed to address the Society’s potential sponsoring of a wood painting as part of a statewide Quilt Trail program, by purchasing the paint and supplies. Dyan Bohnert and others will report back to us during our April meeting. The attendees were informed of Arkansas Historical Association’s annual conference, to be held in Little Rock June 3–5. President Braithwaite thanked everyone for joining the meeting via Zoom. Our spring meeting will take place on Thursday, April 15. Details will be announced at a later date. We are looking forward to when we can once again have our traditional potluck dinners every April in the Arkansas Post area. But most of all, we are anxious to see our members and friends in person again.

Message from our President



Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! 2020 is behind us and a new year of possibilities awaits. I hope you and your families are all well and happy. Our organization is thriving, even in these challenging times, and I commend our members for their dedication to meet and interact virtually and to continue to work on our mission and projects. I'm excited to share with you that a new historical marker was recently installed at Crocketts Bluff, replacing one from the 1960s. Many thanks to our members who were instrumental in making it happen; especially Jim Prange, Larry Fortune, John Cover and Glenn Mosenthin. Also, thanks to the Crocketts Bluff community and Stephanie Wade and the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. A new historical marker has been installed at Eddie and Pat Lumsden's Bayou Meto Schoolhouse Lodge. Plans for a future dedication ceremony for it and the Bayou Meto church and cemetery markers

are in the works. Take a drive around our beautiful Grand Prairie and see these markers!

Another completed project is our contribution of names of Grand Prairie area doctors to be included in the Country Doctor Museum's Hall of Honor located in Lincoln, Arkansas. The museum's goal was to have at least one doctor from each county. Through the efforts of our members, our area has now submitted about a dozen potential inductees. A special thanks goes to Claudia Ahrens, Gay Rusk, Dyan Bohnert, Bill Shrum and Glenn Mosenthin for these submissions.

It's time to pay our GPHS dues. We offer three levels of membership: \$25 Basic, \$50 Contributing and \$100 Supporting. Each gives you full membership benefits and entitles you to receive our award-winning journal, the *Grand Prairie Historical Bulletin*, published twice a year in April and October. Please mail your check, payable to GPHS, to our treasurer Carol Roberson at PO Box 3621, Little Rock, AR 72203. You may also pay online at our website www.grandprairiehistory.org. It is only with your support that we are able to accomplish our goals to preserve and promote our Grand Prairie history. New members are welcome!

I hope you enjoy this issue of our newsletter. Please stay safe and healthy. I look forward to when we can all be together again soon.

Respectfully,

Raeann Braithwaite

Grand Prairie Historical Society on Social Media

We email our *News from the Prairie* newsletter to more than 300 members and friends of our Society. Feel free to submit your comments, articles and/or photographs to us at grandprairiehistory@gmail.com. We welcome your input. Invite your friends to join our mailing list by emailing us, or signing up directly from our website at www.grandprairiehistory.org. Since our website was launched, we have received over 133,000 views. There are many photos and articles available for viewing, along with a wealth of additional information. We feature the ability to pay your dues (to join or renew) online via PayPal. Currently, there are over 6,100 people from almost every state and several foreign countries following us on Facebook.

Visit our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/grandprairiehistory.

Check out our website at www.grandprairiehistory.org

Society Installs Replacement Historical Marker at Crocketts Bluff



Grand Prairie Historical Society extends a special thanks to members Larry Fortune (left) and Jim Prange, who took the lead in obtaining and installing the plaque. Prange, along with Glenn Mosenthin, did research into the naming of Crocketts Bluff. It was proven that the locale was named for Davy Crockett's son William Finley Crockett, rather than William's nephew Robert H. Crockett, as was previously thought. Prange worked with Arkansas Historic Preservation Program representative Stephanie Wade to apply for and order the plaque from the foundry. Fortune coordinated the receiving of the marker, transportation to the site, and installation process, with help from Crocketts Bluff community members Kenneth Graves, Larry McCallie, and others. The original marker, installed by GPHS in 1965, was donated to the Schwab Store artifact collection.



Society members and Crocketts Bluff citizens combined to install the new plaque on a bright December day along the White River. There were around a dozen in attendance.



Pictured with the newly-installed commemorative plaque are (l. to r.) Larry McCallie, Don Roth, Jim Prange, Glenn Mosenthin, Gena Seidenschwarz, Larry Fortune, Jessie Walsh, Raeann Braithwaite, and John Cover.

Arkansas Rice Ready for the Harvest,
along Cotton Belt Route.



Grand Prairie Historical Society now offers three membership levels. Basic memberships will cost \$25.00 per household. Also, two new premium membership levels are available for those wishing to donate to the Society's efforts: Contributing, \$50.00; and Supporting, \$100.00. Contributing and Supporting memberships will be recognized in the October *Historical Bulletin* each year. We accept and appreciate memorials and honorariums and will provide letters of acknowledgement for tax purposes. If you're not already a member, please join us!

Meeting dates for 2021:

April 15, to be determined

July 15, DeWitt

October 21, Stuttgart

**Grand Prairie
Historical Society**

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GPHS is a 501(c)(3)
organization.