



NEWS FROM THE PRAIRIE

AUTUMN 2020

PRESERVING OUR REGION'S HISTORY

Society Holds October Meeting Via Zoom

The Grand Prairie Historical Society held their autumn quarterly meeting October 15 on the internet by way of the Zoom platform. Around twenty members took part. President Raeann Refeld Braithwaite conducted the session from Almyra. Glenda Fread presented a program titled “Epidemic, Pandemic, Endemic, or Outbreak?” She described the effects of the 1918 flu pandemic, both worldwide and in Arkansas, and made comparisons to the current situation. President Braithwaite reported that our Facebook page has 5,855 “likes” and the website has had 125,015 visits. The newsletter is being emailed to 311 recipients. GPHS has now had a social media presence for five years. Thanks to all of you who support the Society in these efforts. Jim Prange reported on the Crocketts Bluff historical marker replacement. The plaque is being manufactured, and will be installed soon. Bayou Meto United Methodist Women have recently installed markers at the church and cemetery. Eddie and Pat Lumsden are in the process of securing a plaque for Bayou Meto Schoolhouse Lodge.

Braithwaite informed participants that the youth essay contest will not be implemented until 2021, due to the pandemic. Glenda Fread, parliamentarian, has updated several sections of the Society’s bylaws in regard to virtual meetings and decision-making by electronic mail. With a quorum present, these were approved. A letter was read from the Arkansas Department of Transportation, regarding highway signs to inform motorists of the several markers in Arkansas County which currently lack signage. These were requested and will be installed as soon as ARDOT’s schedule permits. GPHS has submitted names of Arkansas County’s physicians of the past to the Country Doctor Museum in Lincoln, AR. Nearly sixty names have been sent in for potential inclusion in the Museum’s Hall of Honor. Even if not chosen, these doctors will be researched by museum staff and resulting information placed on file for future researchers.

The Society is in the process of producing a brochure of historical markers and monuments in Arkansas County. It will be presented in the form of a driving tour. Meeting places have been selected for 2021, subject to change due to pandemic restrictions. They are the same venues GPHS originally planned for 2020: January 21, DeWitt PCCUA campus; April 15, Gillett United Methodist Church; July 15, DeWitt PCCUA campus; and October 21, Holman Community Center, Stuttgart. The Arkansas Historical Association’s annual conference is planned for June 3-5 in Little Rock. Two supporters of GPHS have moved on to new opportunities—Ranger Erik Ditzler of Arkansas Post National Memorial has transferred to Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota, and Donovan Mays of Stuttgart Public Library has taken another position. The Society appreciates the assistance of these two men in preservation efforts over the last several years. 2021 GPHS officers are Raeann Braithwaite, president; Gay Rusk, vice president; Gena Seidenschwarz, secretary; Carol Roberson, treasurer. The directors are Claudia Ahrens, Linda Fischer, Larry Fortune, Glenn Mosenthin, Bill Shrum, and Tommy Strabala.

Letter From the President

Dear Friends,

As Fall is upon us, leaves float to the ground and the daylight fades quickly. It's a reflective time for me as the first year of my term as your president nears its end. And what a year it has been. I know we all look forward to the new year and the possibilities it brings. 2020 tested our Society with the first ever cancelled meeting in our 67-year history and the decision to hold remaining meetings virtually. Please know that the decision to not hold in-person meetings was not made without much thought and consideration. We are evaluating the possibilities for our future meetings. I, as much as anyone, want to see you all in person and get back to the wonderful camaraderie that makes the GPHS such a fun and effective organization. As soon as it is safe to do so, we'll have those times again. Our resolve is strong and our commitment to preserving our history still flourishes, even in these trying times. Our membership numbers are up, we continue to have a top-notch publication in our *GPHS Historical Bulletin* and with the success of our ongoing projects, we've seen that virtual meetings cannot dampen our spirit and efforts.

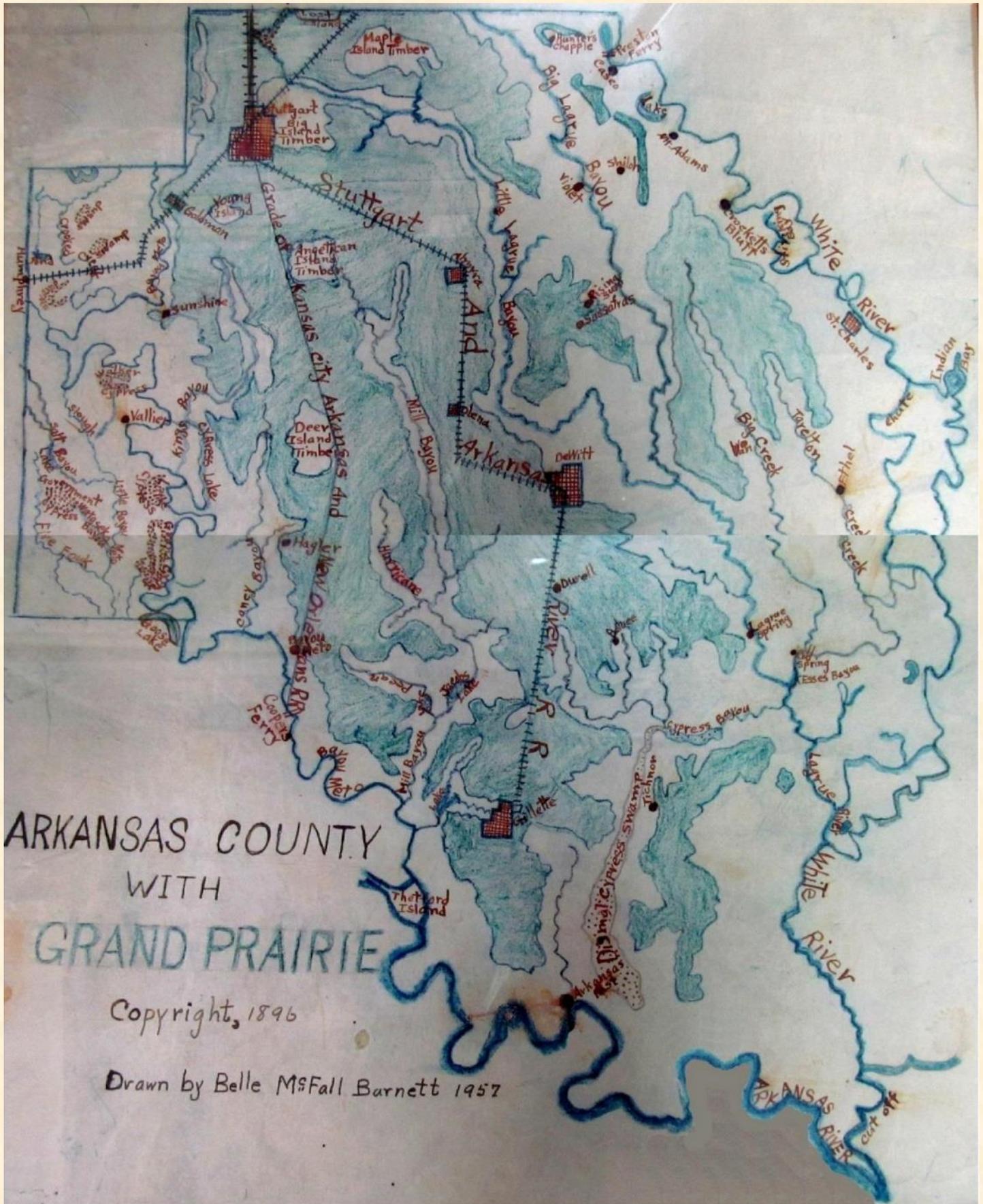
As we enter the holiday season, if our experience in 2020 has shown us anything, it's that family and friends are most important. Although our holidays may look different this year, I hope you and yours will find a way to enjoy time spent together, happy hearts and full bellies. May your Thanksgiving be blessed and your Christmas merry in ways you've never even considered.

Please stay safe and healthy!

Respectfully,

Raeann Braithwaite





Rendering of 1896 Arkansas County map, hand copied by historian Belle McFall Barnett of Stuttgart in 1957, and later given to Dr. H. V. Glenn. Shaded areas depict prairie lands of the 1890s, as well as many former communities. *Courtesy of Glenn Mosenthin.*

Grand Prairie Historical Society Offers Two Valuable Colonial-era Resources

Arkansas Colonials

1686 – 1804



Arkansas Colonials 1686–1804: A Collection of French and Spanish Records Listing Early Europeans in Arkansas, compiled by Morris S. Arnold and Dorothy Jones Core, is available from GPHS for \$25 postpaid. The 104-page book was published by the Society in 1986 and includes censuses, militia, and other civil records from Arkansas Post in the French and Spanish periods. The book includes maps and is surname-indexed. To order this newly reprinted edition, send \$25 to Raeann Braithwaite, Grand Prairie Historical Society, Box 15, Almyra, AR 72003.

ABSTRACT
of the
CATHOLIC REGISTER
of
ARKANSAS
(1764–1858)



Abstract of the Catholic Register of Arkansas 1764–1858, compiled by Dorothy Jones Core, is available from GPHS for \$25 postpaid. The 100-page book is an abstract of baptisms, marriages, and burials by Catholic priests in the Parish of Arkansas, including the only records kept during the Spanish era. Accurate translations by language professor Nicole Wable Hatfield. Originally published in 1976, this valuable indexed reference was long out of print. To order this newly reprinted edition, send \$25 to the above address.

We appreciate and value our new premium memberships!

Platinum—Judge Morris S. Arnold, John W. Cover, Christian Doughty, Paul Ted Buerkle Doughty, Frank and Suzanne Doughty, Richard Hill, Charles Janney, George Lehmann, Charles Whiteside.

Gold—Bob and Claudia Ahrens, David T. Carty, Ron Carter, Marilyn Gibson, Eddie Lumsden, H. Glenn Mosenthin, Barbara Riley, Randall and Claudia Robison, Roger and Sondra Turner, James Waggoner, JoAnn West, Lois Wilson, Jack Woerner Jr.

Grand Prairie Historical Society

P. O. Box 3621
Little Rock, AR 72203
870-830-1425

www.grandprairiehistory.org

Officers

President: Raeann Braithwaite
Vice-Pres: Gay Hampton Rusk
Secretary: Gena Seidenschwarz
Treasurer: Carol Roberson

Newsletter Editor

Glenn Mosenthin

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organization.