



NEWS FROM THE PRAIRIE

WINTER 2020

PRESERVING OUR REGION'S HISTORY

Society Hosts Presentation on Women's Suffrage

The Grand Prairie Historical Society held their winter quarterly meeting January 16 at the Grand Prairie Center in Stuttgart. A crowd of around 35 braved the blustery weather to hear an excellent program by Kathleen Pate, education specialist at the Clinton Presidential Library. Her presentation highlighted the suffrage movement in Arkansas from its post-Civil War beginnings to the 1920 passage of the Nineteenth Amendment. Suffragists founded the Arkansas Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA) in the 1880s. The Political Equality League was established in 1911. As the movement grew, the AWSA was reorganized in 1914 to spread the impact to other parts of the state. Meanwhile, the suffragists joined forces with the prohibition movement. Positive results were achieved when legislators passed a bill in 1917 making Arkansas the first state in the nation to allow women to vote in primary elections. Over 40,000 women cast votes in the 1918 primary. In July 1919, Arkansas was the twelfth state to ratify the recently-passed Nineteenth Amendment, which became law in August 1920. Attendees enjoyed the informative program by Ms. Pate. She currently serves on the boards of the Arkansas Museums Association, the Arkansas Women's History Institute, and Girl Scouts Diamonds of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. She is chair of the Arkansas Women's Suffrage Centennial Commemoration Committee, and represents Arkansas on the Women's Vote Centennial Initiative Task Force.



Left: GPHS Secretary Gena Seidenschwarz with Kathleen Pate, education specialist for the Clinton Presidential Library. Right: Some of the attendees at the January quarterly meeting. GPHS thanks the Grand Prairie Center for use of the excellent facilities.



President Raeann Refeld Braithwaite (left) presents a certificate to our outgoing President Dyan Bohnert, expressing appreciation for her long-standing efforts in this region's historical preservation. Some of these include spearheading the Scull Cemetery restoration, directing the Arkansas Post Battle Sesquicentennial, placement of a historical marker, and implementation of numerous other events. Thank you, Dyan!

Before the program, members and guests enjoyed light refreshments. A new feature was unveiled at the end of the meeting. Names were drawn from a numbered sign-in sheet. Winners were given door prizes, such as back issues of the Historical Bulletin. GPHS welcomes Raeann as our new president!

New Directors Named in Division of Arkansas Heritage

Stacy Hurst, secretary of the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism (ADPHT), recently named Jimmy Bryant as director of Arkansas Heritage, a division of ADPHT. The Division of Arkansas Heritage (DAH) consists of four heritage museums and four heritage resource agencies that work to preserve, protect and promote the natural and cultural history of Arkansas. Bryant will oversee the work of all eight entities. The heritage museums are Delta Cultural Center, Historic Arkansas Museum, Old State House Museum and Mosaic Templars Cultural Center. The heritage resource agencies are Arkansas Arts Council, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission and Arkansas State Archives. Bryant served as director of archives and special collections at the University of Central Arkansas (UCA) from 1998 through 2019, and was named the university historian later in his career. He was responsible for leading all aspects of the UCA Archives Department and was responsible for the acquisition, organization and preservation of historical documents relative to Arkansas and Arkansans.

Secretary Hurst also named Dr. David Ware as state historian and director of the Arkansas State Archives (ASA). Ware has served since 2001 as state capitol historian in the Office of the Secretary of State. Prior to his service as the state capitol historian, he was an archives assistant at the University of Arkansas, Little Rock; project historian at Cheyenne Frontier Days Old West Museum in Wyoming; and curator of exhibits and collections at Western Heritage Center in Billings, Mont. He has written articles and reviews for publications such as the *Journal of Arizona History* and the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas*, and has written *It's Official! The Real Stories behind Arkansas's State Symbols*, published by the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies. He has a great knowledge of many facets of Arkansas history and the preservation of archival and artifact collections. "Dr. Ware's educational background and his tenure with state government make him well-suited to lead the Archives," said Hurst. "As state capitol historian, he has already worked with many of the ASA staff, and that collaboration will continue in full as they work together to preserve our important historical records." The preceding information was provided by the Division of Arkansas Heritage.

The Arkansas State Archives is located at 2B215, 2nd Floor, One Capitol Mall, Little Rock, AR 72201. Hours are Monday–Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Directions—From I-630 take exit 2B. Turn north onto Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, then turn left onto 7th Street at the first light. Continue west on 7th Street for two blocks. Turn right on Wolfe Street. Designated visitor parking spaces are located in the lot at the bottom of the hill. Visitors may park in any unassigned space if designated parking is unavailable.

Post Memorial Features Comprehensive Library

Arkansas Post National Memorial's Visitor Center contains a little-known library collection of over 700 books. The wide variety of books interpret all periods of Arkansas history including Native American, Colonial, Territorial, Civil War, and later eras. One notable collection is a complete set of *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. This valuable 127-volume series, popularly known as the *Official Record*, comprises the most thorough documentation of the Civil War and is often used as a primary source by authors. Recently, Carmen King of the Ulysses Grant Historic Site in St. Louis took on the painstaking effort of cataloging all of the 765 books. Each volume was added to the online library of the National Park Service, so that interested persons everywhere may search for titles housed at Arkansas Post National Memorial. The collection may also be browsed in person at the Visitor Center. Park staff are available to assist researchers. For an internet search, navigate to <https://eosfcweb01.eosfc-intl.net/N94044/OPAC/Index.aspx> and enter ARPO in the search area. The Memorial is located at 1741 Old Post Road, Gillett, AR 72055. Visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/arkansaspostnps/>. Future researchers will benefit greatly from Ms. King's two-week effort to physically organize and catalog Arkansas Post National Memorial's library collection of valuable books.

Ulster Historical Foundation to Present Irish Genealogy Program at Little Rock

As part of their 2020 USA Lecture Tour, the Ulster Historical Foundation (UHF) will present a program in Little Rock on Irish Genealogy. The event will take place Saturday, March 21, 2020 from 9:00am to 3:00pm. at the Darragh Center, located in the Main Library, 100 Rock Street, in Little Rock's River Market District. Established in 1956, the aim of the Foundation is to encourage an interest in the history of the province of Ulster; promote a positive image of Northern Ireland overseas; strengthen cross-community links through the understanding of Northern Ireland's history; broaden access to historical documents and records for Irish genealogy; and to inspire pride in Irish and Scots-Irish heritage. UHF is renowned for its professional, world class research, courses in family history, annual conferences and extensive lecture tours in North America which provide a welcome opportunity to engage with many people interested in their Irish and Ulster family history. The Foundation pioneered the online availability of birth, marriage and death records in Ireland, and for over six decades has been offering expert genealogical advice through professional research services. Headquartered in Belfast, UHF works closely with all communities in Northern Ireland to help unlock the past and contribute to peacebuilding and reconciliation. The Little Rock program is being hosted by the Arkansas Genealogical Society and Central Arkansas Library System. The event is free, however only 100 seats are available. Lunch will be on your own, with several eating establishments nearby. Registration and other information will be updated at <https://www.agsgenealogy.org/>.

GPHS Announces New Membership Levels

Due to the rising costs of production and distribution of its publications, Grand Prairie Historical Society will be increasing membership dues beginning 2020. Basic memberships will cost \$25.00 per household. Also, two new membership levels will be offered for those wishing to donate to the Society's efforts. Annual membership levels include: Silver – \$25.00, Gold – \$50.00, and Platinum – \$100.00. Gold and Platinum members will be recognized in the *Historical Bulletin*. We accept and appreciate memorials and honorariums, and will provide letters of acknowledgement for tax purposes. —Editor.

From the President

Dear Friends,

As January brings us to another new year, we're offered a time to reflect and to look forward to new opportunities. Your newly elected officers and board of directors have already been working to plan interesting and relevant programs for our year and to continue our legacy of historic preservation and education of our Grand Prairie area. I'm excited about the new opportunities that await!

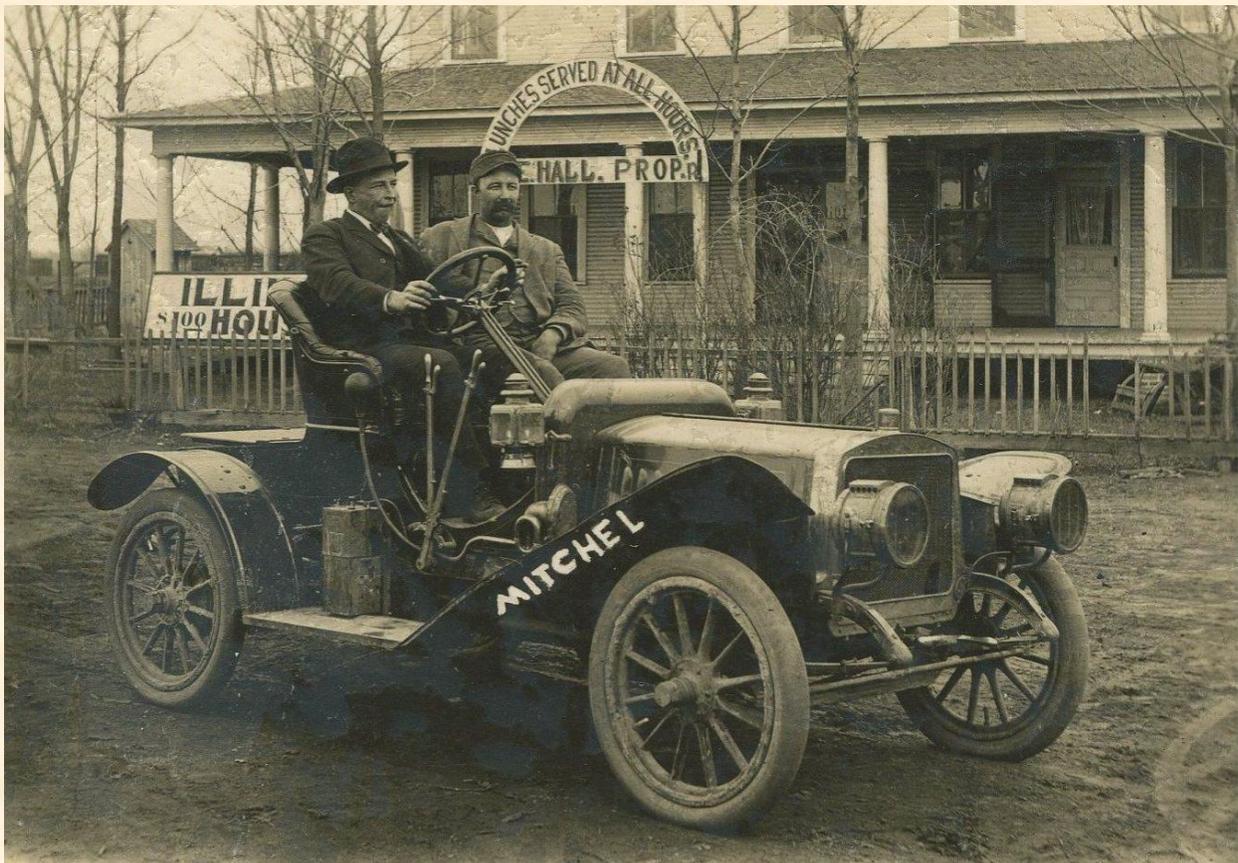
Our social media outlets continue to be very popular. Comments on our Facebook posts often reveal a memory long forgotten, create a lively discussion on historical accuracy and have sometimes even led to the discovery of new relatives. I'm happy that this gives us all a way to connect and interact with people from all around the country and even the world who have an interest in the history of our area. For those of you that are local, I encourage you to attend our quarterly meetings. We're working on projects that are important and we need your help. We have superb programs that you're sure to enjoy. We have a great group of members and you'll fit right in. Come join us!

In this issue, we're excited to premier a new feature—the Museum Corner. We are lucky to have so many wonderful museums on the Grand Prairie. This section will give you the information you need to support them and their projects.

Happy New Year! May it be prosperous and historic for us all!

Respectfully,

Raeann Braithwaite



This ca. 1912 photo shows the Illinois House Hotel, which stood on the southeast corner of Grand Avenue and the Cotton Belt Railroad, very near the Stuttgart depot. The hotel's name must have been a welcoming sign to the many new Midwestern arrivals. Rooms cost \$1.00 per night. The car was made by the Mitchell-Lewis Motor Company.

Museum Corner

Arkansas Post Museum State Park Upcoming Events

March 28, 9am–4pm Great American Cleanup—Visitors will be allowed to assist park staff as we care for and spring clean the buildings, grounds and artifacts. If you have ever wondered how historic structures and artifacts are cleaned and cared for, then you will have a blast! Please wear sunscreen and bring a lunch. Wear loose breathable clothing and comfortable shoes. Other work wear will be provided by the museum.

April 4, 9am–4pm Let's Play Outside—Fun filled day of kid friendly programs! A variety of historic programming will be offered. Join in with no cost and experience what life is like on the Arkansas Grand Prairie. Programs such as doll making, old fashioned toys, A Well-dressed Lady, and so much more will be offered throughout the day. Don't worry if the weather turns rainy, programs will be moved indoors.

May 2, 9am–4pm Planting Day—Clean up and plant an herb garden. We will sow seeds from the past as we recreate a "Kitchen Garden" near our Summer kitchen exhibit. Children will also be given their own special biodegradable planting pots to take home with soil and planted seeds. Wear plenty of sunscreen and bring water. Comfortable outdoor clothing is suggested, that you will not mind getting dirty. All soil, tools and seeds will be provided by the museum.

June 6, 9am–4pm Great Outdoors Month—Clean up and plant a flower garden. We will sow seeds from the past as we recreate a "Butterfly Garden" near our Log Cabin exhibit. Children will also be given their own special biodegradable planting pots to take home with soil and planted seeds. Wear plenty of sunscreen and bring water. Comfortable outdoor clothing is suggested, that you will not mind getting dirty. All soil, tools and seeds will be provided by the museum.

July 4, 11am–4pm Picnic at the Park—Join the Museum for a sunny fun filled day. Nothing feels more American than a day outside in the sun. Pack a picnic basket for the family. Be sure to include plenty of water and sunscreen. The museum will set up old-fashioned family friendly games such as checkers, croquet, sack races, sidewalk art and more! Guided tours will be available throughout the day. For more information contact the Museum.

5530 Hwy. 165 South, Gillett, AR 72055 Phone 870-548-2634
www.arkansasstateparks.com/parks/arkansas-post-museum

Museum of the Arkansas Grand Prairie Upcoming Events

Thursday, February 13 Annual Valentine Luncheon with Style Show by the Social Shop

March 30–April 1 Arkansas Museum Association Conference

Wednesday, April 22 Delta By-Ways Commission meets at the Museum

Saturday, May 2 Antique Car Show Museum/Kiwanis

Thursday, June 18 Annual Victorian Luncheon

Tuesdays June 23–July 28 Projects on the Prairie - Children's Summer Education Program

921 East Fourth Street, Stuttgart, AR 72160 Phone 870-673-7001
www.grandpraiemuseum.org



Don't forget the 6th Annual Slovak Heritage Day, Saturday, February 8 from 2:00–10:00.

Please make plans to join us at Gillett United Methodist Church on April 23. Our annual potluck dinner is from 6:00–7:00, followed by our quarterly program and meeting. We will feature an interesting presentation by Arkansas State Archives Director Dr. David Ware.

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

**Grand Prairie
Historical Society**

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