

Arkansas State Archives

## Arkansas Digital Archives

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ASA newsletters

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### ASA newsletter 2018 October

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# ARKANSAS State Archives

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A Division of the Department of Arkansas Heritage



**Happy Halloween!**

**From the Arkansas State Archives:**

A spooky scene circa 1992, Stone County, Arkansas.

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### **Lights Continue to Haunt Gurdon**

One of Arkansas's best-known ghost stories originates at a site near Gurdon in Clark County. The phenomenon — commonly known as “The Gurdon Light” — has been the source of much speculation since the 1930s.

Local legend says the lights are connected to the 1931 murder of Will McClain, a railroad section foreman. The story drew national attention in 1994, when NBC aired a segment on the light on “Unsolved Mysteries.”

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### **Lake's History Spotlights ASA**

Arkansas's historical role in developing scientific land management techniques is in the limelight after workers restored the historic Dam at Lake Bennett. The lake is the first in North America built to study soil and silt erosion in a specific watershed.

The Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism and USDA plan to hold an event at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 1, to discuss the dam, its history and cultural significance to Arkansas.

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### **SARA Mulls Columbia County History**

During the latter part of the 19th century, people flocked to an area known as Magnesia Springs. The springs were said to have healing properties, and eventually two hotels were built in the area to accommodate visitors who came for the waters.

The Methodist Episcopal Church South owned property near the springs, so the church became a place to hold gospels, social meetings and political gatherings.

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## Grant Preserves African American History

On May 5, 1959, a fire broke out in the boys' dormitory at the Arkansas Negro Boys Industrial School in Wrightsville, a juvenile detention center housing 69 children. Forty-eight children managed to escape by prying open windows, but the rest perished in the blaze. Their bodies were so badly burned they were unrecognizable and buried in a mass grave.

This year the Curtis H. Sykes Memorial Grant, which funds preservation and public programming projects related to African American history, helped fund a memorial marker to remember the fire and the children who died in it.

Applications for the grant are open now.

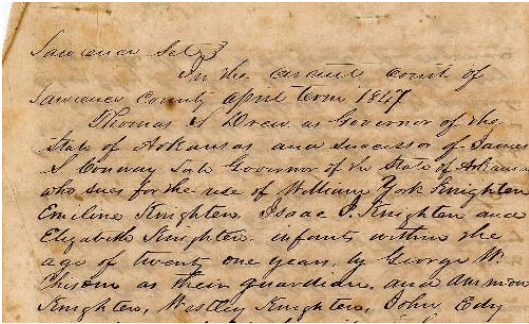
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## ASA Project Will Increase Access for Researchers

On a recent Tuesday morning, about seven volunteers met at the Collections Management Facility to sort through Hempstead County records dating from 1815 to the 1930s. The project is the brainchild of Dr. Wendy Richter, state historian and director, and is meant to make genealogical records more accessible to the public.

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## NEARA to Hold Volunteer Day

The Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives will host a Volunteer Day to encourage people to volunteer.

The event will be 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 10, at the branch at 11 S. Seventh St. in Powhatan. Volunteers will get snacks, giveaways and training. The main project will be processing Lawrence County court records.

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## Submissions Open for NEARA Research Award

Get started on that original, unpublished manuscript for the Exemplary Archival Research Award! Manuscripts are due by Feb. 1.

Participants are eligible to win a \$1,000 cash prize and be considered for publication in a statewide journal.

Anyone is eligible to submit a manuscript.

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