



GARLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

February 13, 2014

Dear Friends,

I hope you can come to our meeting at noon, Tuesday, February 18, at the Garland County Library. Denise White Parkinson, author of *Daughter of the White River*, will be the guest speaker. She will relate a Depression-era Arkansas tragedy, the true story of Helen Ruth Spence. The once-thriving houseboat communities along Arkansas' White River are long gone, and few remember the sensational murder story that set local darling Helen Spence on a tragic path. In 1931, Spence shocked Arkansas when she avenged her father's murder in a DeWitt courtroom. The state soon discovered that no prison could hold her. Using recently unveiled prison records and other sources, Parkinson gives a vivid picture of a story that captured the attention of the nation.

Denise White Parkinson is a 1986 graduate of Hendrix College. Her book *Daughter of the White River* was published by The History Press in August, 2013. Her career in journalism includes writing for the *Arkansas Democrat*, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, *Arkansas Times*, *Mature Arkansas* news monthly, *Little Rock Free Press*, *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*, *Memphis Flyer*, and *Cooper-Young Lamplighter*. Since 2008, she has been the lead writer for *Hot Springs Life and Home* magazine. She is the founder of the Hot Springs Area Community Gardens Network. She lives in Hot Springs with her husband and children.

Thanks go to all the people who donated material to us this month. A few highlights—World War II issues of the *Jones Mill Bomber*, a newspaper printed by Jones Mill; an LP of the Buddy Kirk Orchestra from The Vapors; photos of Oaklawn Park; a photo of the interior of Stearn's Hardware (with a young Hill Wheatley); a rare color postcard of the Pythian Bathhouse; very early menus from the Southern Club, Como Hotel, and Kingsway Hotel; and, donated by Police Chief David Flores, photos of the Hot Springs Police Department date from the 1880s to modern times.

Since our last newsletter, we gave a program to the Westminster Presbyterian Men's Group, the DeSoto Women's Club of Hot Springs Village, and the Vapor Valley Questors. Upcoming programs in February include the South Hot Springs Lions Club and the Hot Springs chapter of the Arkansas Retired Teachers Association.

Set your dials—I'll be talking about local history with Dick Antoine on his "Talk of the Town" radio program on KZNG-AM at 7:00 am on the first Wednesday of every month. We appreciate his interest in local history very much!

"History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illuminates reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life and brings us tidings of antiquity." - Cicero

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Thank you again for your support! You make it possible for the society to preserve our history, make it available to researchers, and teach students and the public about it. Please keep spreading the word about us and encouraging your friends to join.

See you on the 18th!

Sincerely,
Liz Robbins, Executive Director

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