



GCHS NEWS

Things done and things to come.

July 15, 2011:

Dear Friends,

GCHS is very happy to announce the publication of Orval Allbritton's new book: *The Mob at the Spa: Organized Crime and Its Fascination with Hot Springs, Arkansas*. Please join us for its official debut at the Convention Center, Room 201, from 4-6, Friday, July 29. You can have Orval sign your copy of the book, enjoy delicious refreshments, and even sit in Al Capone's favorite chair from the Southern Club.

The Mob at the Spa is a 270-page soft cover that tells about mobsters who came to Hot Springs from approximately 1920 to 1965, including some of the biggest names in the underworld. Vacationing here, they patronized our shops and hotels, took the thermal baths, and gambled in our casinos.

In his book, Orval separates fact from fiction, presenting what can be documented about the mobsters' connections to the Spa City. In the process, he relates fascinating and little-known stories of their visits to Hot Springs and their connections with its citizens. Did Al Capone use a secret tunnel between the Arlington Hotel and the Southern Club? No. Did anyone try to assassinate him while he vacationed here? Yes. The details of that attempt as well as Capone's Hot Springs' activities and connections are explored in the book.

In addition to Al and Ralph Capone, Orval discusses John Torrio, Charles O'Bannion, Lucky Luciano, Bugsy Siegl, Frank Costello, Albert Anastasia, Meyer Lansky, Joe Saltis, Mickey Cohen, Sam Giancana, Carlos Marcello, Joseph Valachi, and others. He tells the story of convicted killer and New York Cotton Club owner Owney Madden, a mobster who married Hot Springs' postmaster's daughter and retired here. Explaining the transformation of Madden into a model local citizen, Orval describes the Maddens' quiet life in their home on Grand Avenue and the extent of Madden's interests in local gambling.

He also tells the stranger-than-fiction story of Lucky Luciano's 1936 arrest on Hot Springs Promenade, an arrest that led to a lengthy struggle over his extradition to New York between local officials and the Arkansas attorney general, the Arkansas governor, and New York prosecutor Thomas Dewey—a struggle that included armed state troopers confronting local law enforcement at the Garland County Courthouse.

In this book, you will learn about Frank Costello's involvement in the Jack Tar Hotel and Bathhouse, how Costello and then Albert "The Lord High Executioner" Anastasia nearly became



czars of Hot Springs' gambling clubs, how Meyer Lansky recruited a local girl to become a big-money courier for the Mob, and much more.

Orval explains the history of Hot Springs gambling, why it flourished, where it occurred, and who controlled it. He answers the question, "Was the gambling in Hot Springs controlled by locals or by the Mob?"

All this and more are in *The Mob in the Spa*, which explores the visits by powerful mob bosses, their molls, and their underlings to Hot Springs, Arkansas.

After the book's debut at the book launch party, it may be purchased for \$20 (\$25 if mailed) at the Garland County Historical Society archives, 328 Quapaw, from 8-12, Monday through Friday. Checks made out to the Garland County Historical Society may be mailed to PO Box 21335, Hot Springs, Arkansas, 71903. The book will also be available online at the society's website: garlandcountyhistoricalsociety.com.

We hope to see you on the 29th!

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