



August 2013

Dear Friends,

We hope you can come to these interesting events:

**September 4:** The 100th anniversary of the Fire of 1913 (the largest urban fire in Arkansas history, destroying sixty city blocks) will be observed on Wednesday, September 4 (the eve of the September 5, 1913 fire) by the Garland County Historical Society, Visit Hot Springs, the Hot Springs Fire Department, and the public.

- At 3:30 p.m. a plaque provided by Visit Hot Springs will be unveiled at the exact location of the start of the fire on Church Street behind the Convention Center. The plaque will summarize the history of the fire and show photographs of the fire in progress and the ruins it left behind.
- At 4:00 p.m. in Room 201 of the Convention Center, GCHS and Hot Springs Fire Chief Ed Davis will give a program about the fire. GCHS members Mike Blythe, Clyde Covington, and Liz Robbins will tell the story of the fire and show many photographs of the conflagration and the ruins it left behind. Chief Davis will provide a professional firefighter's perspective about the fire.

**September 14:** The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program's next "Walks through History" tour will visit the Whittington Park Historic District in Hot Springs on Saturday, September 14, at 11:00 a.m. The free tour is co-sponsored by the Whittington Valley Neighborhood Association and GCHS and will begin in front of the Dryden Ouachita Mountain Pottery Plant at 341 Whittington Avenue. This neighborhood contains examples of Queen Anne, Craftsman, and Ranch-style homes. The residential area developed around Whittington Lake Reserve Park, constructed in the 1890s as part of an extensive building and landscaping program for the Hot Springs Reservation. Whittington Park/Ban Johnson Field hosted decades of pro baseball spring training. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an entertainment district was established, including an ostrich farm, alligator farm, and an amusement park.

**September 17:** GCHS monthly meetings begin again at noon, Tuesday, September 17, at the Garland County Library with Dr. Ann Early, State Archeologist. Her program will examine Hernando De Soto's presence in Arkansas and the contributions to De Soto research made by John Fordyce of Hot Springs.

We are very grateful for grants and donations we have received this summer. The Oaklawn Foundation awarded us a \$10,000 grant for our Digitization Project, and the Arkansas Humanities Council awarded us a grant to pay for our IT fees and our website management fees for a year. The Stovall Family Foundation gave us \$5,000.

We want our society to keep improving, so we have joined the StEPs program (Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations) sponsored by the American Association for State and Local History. The StEPs program gives models and suggestions based on the highest standards for historical organizations. It provides a process of evaluating and improving our policies and procedures—all aspects of the management of a historical society. We have participated in a webinar, a conference call, and are working through their evaluation materials.

Our wonderful volunteers have been cataloging, helping visitors, and doing so many other things that help us with our mission. We are also hard at work on the final stages of *The Record 2013*.

Thanks to all who responded to our call for materials about Hot Springs High School 1962-1964. You came through with just what we needed!

What are we looking for now? HSHS graduation programs from 1966 up to 2012. If you have any that we could copy and return (or keep), please let us know. Thank you!

And thank you again for your support. Our society couldn't preserve our local history and make it accessible to students, researchers, and the public without wonderful members like you!

Sincerely,

Liz Robbins  
Executive Director