

GCHS Newsletter—Rex Nelson party, GCHS program, and more!

Dear Friends,

Please join us at a **GCHS party from 4 to 6pm, this Thursday, in room 201 at the Convention Center!** Our special guest will be **Rex Nelson**, who will sign copies of his newly-released book *Southern Fried: Going Whole Hog in a State of Wonder*.

In this collection of columns from the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, Rex brings to life the personalities, communities, festivals, restaurants, and tourist attractions that make Arkansas unique. Throughout his career as a sportswriter, political writer, senior staff member in the governor's office, presidential appointee to the Delta Regional Authority, and now corporate communications director for Simmons Bank, Nelson has written millions of words about Arkansas and its people. Few writers in Arkansas history have delved into the state's nooks and crannies like Rex, who always seems to find something new and insightful about small towns and the people who live in them.

Also at the party you will be able to browse GCHS publications and visit with Orval Allbritton (author of many books about local history) and Mike Blythe (author of *Then and Now: Hot Springs, Arkansas*).

Our monthly program at **noon, Tuesday, April 18, at the Garland County Library** will be about noted local architect I. Granger McDaniel. Entitled "Steve McQueen and the Spa City," the program will be presented by Mason Toms of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

The buildings and homes produced by Hot Springs architect McDaniel are almost everywhere you look in Hot Springs and are generally regarded as some of the best examples of Modernism in the city. McDaniel's life was also the stuff movies are made of. In fact, *The Great Escape* was based on his experiences as a prisoner-of-war during World War II. Toms' program examines the remarkable work and life of an extraordinary man, I. Granger McDaniel.

Mason Toms is a native of Central Arkansas and a graduate of the Fay Jones School of Architecture. He currently works as a preservation designer and architectural historian at the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program with a specialty in Mid-Century Modern architecture in Arkansas. He also created and administers the Facebook Group "Mid-Century Modern Arkansas," which features unique and interesting Mid-Century Modern buildings from all over the state.

GCHS is very grateful to the generous donors who contributed \$16,307 to the society on Arkansas Gives Day! Thank you! The Arkansas Community Foundation will add bonus dollars to this amount (how much has not yet been told to us). After the Arkansas Community Foundation sends us the list of our donors, we will be able to thank you

individually.

Your support makes our work possible. Please know how much we appreciate you!

The Arkansas Historical Association has awarded *The Record 2016* article "Remembering the Hot Springs Orphan's Home" the Walter L. Brown Award for Best Edited Document in a county or local journal.

You might be interested in this symposium:

The Arkansas State Archives and the Arkansas Genealogical Society will host a symposium for people who want to learn more about World War I and how to conduct their own research into it on **Saturday, May 6**, at the WPA Gymnasium in Historic Washington State Park from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m.. The symposium's theme, "In the Genealogical Trenches: Tracing Your Wartime Ancestry," will feature speakers Mark Christ, Mike Polston, Peggy Lloyd, and State Archives staff member Mary Dunn.

Topics include *Arkansas Commemorates the Centennial of the Great War; Heaven, Hell or Home by Christmas: Untapped Sources Documenting the Role of the Arkansas Soldier in the Great War; Genealogical Reconnaissance: Researching Military Records; and Modern Military Records: A Changing Society Documented.*

The seminar is free but registration is required. Deadline for registration is **Monday, May 1**. Registration is limited, so be sure to make reservations soon. Check-in will begin at 9 a.m. Teachers can earn up to four professional development hours through attendance. Lunch will be provided.

For more information about the symposium or to register, email events.archives@arkansas.gov or call 501-682-6900.

Thank you, GCHS members, for caring so much about our history!

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