

GC Historical Society Newsletter/Link to March 16 Zoom Meeting

Dear Friends,

What is the longest building on Bathhouse Row? The Quapaw Bathhouse!



The Spanish Revival style Quapaw Bathhouse opened in 1922 on the sites of two Victorian bathhouses—the Magnesia and the Horseshoe. The Quapaw closed its doors in 1968. It reopened a year later as Health Services, Inc., but closed again in 1984. In 2007 Anthony Taylor and Bob Kempkes of Taylor & Kempkes Architects partnered with two others to lease and rehabilitate the building as Quapaw Baths and Spa. National Park Service Photo.

Help us mark the 100th “birthday” of our national park with historian Dan Chmill at our Zoom meeting at noon, Tuesday, March 16.

He will present:

“Celebrating Hot Springs National Park’s Centennial by Rethinking Our Relationship with the National Parks.”

When is the meeting? Tuesday, March 16, Noon, CST

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82659500014>

Or iPhone one-tap :

US: +16465588656,,82659500014# or +13017158592,,82659500014#

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 646 558 8656 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 669 900 9128 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799

Webinar ID: 826 5950 0014

International numbers available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82659500014>



Jules Falk celebrates the thermal water at the Noble Fountain, Central Avenue and Reserve Street, ca 1917. In the background center is the Lamar Bathhouse with a pumping station at its right.

Dan will point out that visitors often travel to the sixty-three national parks scattered across the United States under the impression that the parklands are wide expanses of untouched nature preserved in perpetuity for themselves and generations to enjoy. They are wild places innately separate from humans.

The public's unwillingness to let go of this romantic and ahistorical perception of the parks has confused the millions of visitors who have driven down Central Avenue and into Hot Springs National Park for the past one hundred years.

The park is set in the middle of a bustling town, and its namesake, the springs and their acclaimed thermal waters, no longer reside in nature, piped into hidden reservoirs and elegant bathhouses instead of bubbling up from the ground.

This situation, the result of constant innovation on the part of ordinary citizens and park administrators, has frustrated some, leading many to deem Hot Springs unworthy of its national park designation. But Dan argues that when we look at the park's history, not only was Hot Springs vital to the early American national park project, but the relationship between humans and the park's waters demonstrates a new and refreshing way to look at how the public can enjoy our national parks.

He believes that the park's centennial offers an excellent opportunity to remind us how the wonder of the natural world in our national parks does not vanish if humans are part of the equation. Instead of places preserved without people, the parks are, and have always been, places where humans interact with nature and learn something about the site and themselves.

Dan is a PhD Candidate in the History Department at the University of Kansas. He is trained as an environmental historian, a subfield of history that studies the relationships created between the human and non-human worlds across time and space. His dissertation, "Taking the Waters: A Hydrological History of Health and Leisure in Hot Springs National Park," bridges the often separate natural and human histories of Hot Springs.



Visitors at the corner of Reserve Street and Central avenue, on February 12, 1921. A few weeks later, on March 4, 1921, Hot Springs Reservation officially became Hot Springs National Park. This south end of Bathhouse Row consisted of (right to left) a pump station, the first Lamar Bathhouse, and the Buckstaff Bathhouse.

We'll leave time after the presentation for questions.

Please share the Zoom link with friends!

Please read the copy of the February minutes at the end of this document. If you want to make any corrections or additions to them, please email or call me.



The Society was saddened at the recent passing of Clay Farrar. Clay was a board member and a volunteer for many years. He deeply loved Hot Springs and its history. He wrote many excellent articles for *The Record*, he spearheaded the expansion of our building in 2018, and he did much more.

Clay was a key member of the group that, in 1985, saved the town's National Park designation and sparked the government to turn the then-closed Fordyce Bathhouse into the park's Visitors Center. In the last few years he spearheaded the community's efforts to protect and re-purpose the former Army and Navy General Hospital campus.

We are deeply grateful for his passion for our history and for his leadership. He will be greatly missed.

Thank you for your support! I hope you can join us remotely on the 16th (and on our Facebook page).

Liz

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Leave a legacy. Please remember GCHS in your estate planning.

Garland County Historical Society

Monthly Meeting

February 23, 2021

The meeting was conducted remotely using Zoom. The meeting was called to order by President Julie Nix at noon.

Minutes of the January 19, 2021 meeting had been emailed to members by Liz Robbins. There being no corrections or additions received, the minutes were approved.

Executive Director Liz Robbins announced that the Society has suffered another great loss, GCHS Board member and prominent local historian Mike Dugan.

The next meeting will be March 16, 2021. Part of the celebration of the Hot Springs National Park Centennial, Dan Chmill will present the program, "Celebrating Hot Springs National Park's Centennial by Rethinking Our Relationship with the National Parks."

Executive Director Liz Robbins then introduced today's program, "Radio Station KTHS: the Arlington Years," a presentation by Hollis Duncan and Harold Higgins.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine C. Johnston

Secretary