

Dear Friends,

GCHS meetings are starting up again after the summer hiatus. This month's meeting is at noon, Tuesday, September 15, at the Garland County Library. Our speaker is Mike Pettey, who will tell the story of the Ohio Club, a downtown landmark at 336 Central Avenue since 1905.

Originally a private saloon and gambling club, during Prohibition (1920 – 1933) the Ohio Club became the Ohio Cigar Store. After Prohibition, it flourished again as a gambling club until illegal gambling in Hot Springs was shut down in the late 1960s. The Ohio Club is now a bar and grill which features live musical entertainment.

Mike has owned the Ohio Club since 2010 and is an expert on its colorful history, which he describes as "rich with stories about its owners and customers from all walks of life." In his program, he says "You'll be able to step back in time and hear about Hot Springs and the Ohio Club from its early years and hear about times in the nineteen teens and nineteen twenties. Until recently, not much was heard about the dark side of Hot Springs and things that went on behind the closed and sometimes open front doors of gambling establishments like the Ohio Club." Today the club is still "going strong as Arkansas' oldest bar."

The society has had a busy summer, working on our collections, helping researchers, and giving programs to civic groups. Our digitization project has continued to progress well—we now have over 26,000 items in our cataloging software.

Upcoming and fun:

From September 14 - 19, you can visit the Pioneer Cabin sponsored by the Friends of the Garland County Courthouse at the Garland County Fair. This is a terrific exhibit. On Kids Day at the fair, GCHS will present programs about early days in Garland County to a host of school children.

On October 10 from 1:00 – 6:00 pm the Arkansas History Commission and State Archives will be showing a series of rarely seen historic films at the Ron Robinson Theater at 100 River Market Avenue in Little Rock. Arkansas's Reel History will feature historic film footage from the collections of our society, the Arkansas History Commission, Ouachita Baptist University Archives and Special Collections, The Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, UALR's Center of Arkansas History and Culture, and the University of Arkansas Libraries Special Collections. Films include Hot Springs in the 1930s and 1940s, historic footage from Dunbar High School in the 1940s; Nashville, Arkansas in the 1950s; annual OBU/Henderson State football games and parades in the 1940s; Arkansas politics; the 1953 Little Rock Christmas parade; the Buffalo River in the 1960s; and folklorist Mary Parler scouring the Ozarks for folk songs.

There will be a panel discussion at the end of the day about how to preserve old film footage in personal collections. The event is free but you must register by Monday, September 28. Popcorn will be provided! For more information about the symposium or to register, call 501-682-6900 or email history.commission@arkansas.gov.

And don't forget to mark your calendars for the premiere of *The Boys of Springs* at 11:00 am, Saturday, October 10 at the Hot Springs Documentary Film Festival. Larry Foley's documentary about major league spring training in Hot Springs (narrated by Billy Bob Thornton) is truly outstanding.

Thank you for all your support! See you at the library on the 15th!

Sincerely,
Liz Robbins, Executive Director
Garland County Historical Society