Floods Along the River

Those who live near the river and its major tributaries know how disastrous floods can be. An addition to our Living With the White River exhibit was installed last month that showcases the history of floods in the White River watershed. One panel lists 28 significant floods from 1890 to 2008. It also explains how flood heights are measured.

Pictorial panels feature historical photos of flood destruction and how communities pulled together to clean up afterwards. Especially featured is the aftermath of the 1982 flood.

Along with fear during a flood, people are fascinated by them. We often race to see how high the water has risen. Another panel shows such gatherings in Newark and Batesville.

A large pile of driftwood and items lost in a flood showcase this exhibit. Beside it is a stand that holds a computer monitor on which visitors can view a video of a flyover of the 2011 White River flood. It also contains additional information about floodplains and the benefits of floods.

Remembering the End of World War II

In 2015 an exhibit on WWII was displayed in the Honkonen Program Center. It commemorated military deeds and celebrations that took place 70 years ago when peace was declared.

A case of items showed how the war was fought on the homefront, another case was filled with war correspondence and newspapers about the war’s end. In a corner stood a rocking chair and a radio to remind visitors how important it was to receive the latest war news at 5 p.m. each day.

An Army cot held soldiers’ items and a case featured objects related to the enemies. Medals and photographs of local soldiers were displayed, all to show the heroic deeds and the losses during that war.
It was a busy summer and fall here at Old Independence Regional Museum. We have had staff changes, fundraisers, family days, and summer camps. Thanks to our wonderful volunteers and staff we have managed to survive!

In August our Humanities Educator, Amanda Nikkel, left her position to begin her teaching career as an intern at Central Elementary. OIRM is very appreciative of all Amanda accomplished during her time here. She started Family Day, Homeschool Days, and other annual events. Her contributions to the museum are invaluable and we look forward to continuing her work.

After Amanda’s departure, her position had to be filled. The board decided to combine the Director and Humanities Educator roles into a full time position. So, in August, I began my new role as Director/Humanities Educator. Stepping into the educator role has been a challenging and rewarding experience. Due to changes in standardized testing and curriculum, we too have had to change our approach to educational tours. April and I have worked with curriculum coordinators and educators to update our education plan. Our school tours will now pay special attention to certain points that are specific to the new common core curriculum. By changing the focus of our tours and creating teacher packets, it is our hope that schools will visit OIRM more frequently as a supplement to their regular lessons.

We received over $3,000 from two grants this summer, the Arkansas Humanities Council’s Small Museum Operating Grant and the Arkansas Arts Council’s Arts on Tour Grant. Grant funds were used for the replacement of six faulty smoke detectors, July’s electric bill, and Stardust Big Band’s performance at our fundraiser.

In September we hosted a grand USO Dance at the National Guard Armory. Stardust Big Band, a 17 piece band from Hot Springs, provided live music for the evening. Over 100 people enjoyed a fun night of swing dancing and 1940’s music while helping raise over $1,000! In October over 150 people joined us for a fun Fall Family Day featuring old-fashioned recipes such as homemade butter, ice cream, hoe cakes, and cracklings. We once again hosted Night at the Museum on October 30th. This year was even better than last with new historical characters and more visitors. In total we had over 160 visitors and raised nearly $1,000.

All of our events are possible because of our amazing donors and volunteers. I would like to personally say “Thank you” to each and every volunteer, donor, and staff member that makes Old Independence Regional Museum a success!

We have an amazing group of volunteers! One of our newest shining stars was given the Dennis Wright award at our annual meeting. Alan Bufford is a new volunteer but has shown outstanding dedication to the Museum. He has already accrued over 500 hours - almost as much as Twyla this year! Our other winner this year was Linda Wann, she won the Twyla Wright award. Linda has been with us for many years working collections in the archives.

These are just the two that won the award this year, all our volunteers are winners. If you know of someone who would like to join our happy family of volunteers have them give us a call.
Through our oral history collection, the Old Independence Regional Museum gathers, preserves and makes accessible the personal accounts of individuals so that future generations may hear directly from our citizens in order to better understand life the “way it used to be.”

How appropriate that we should, on this the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, add the voice of a local unsung hero. With the recognition that the Greatest Generation is rapidly passing from the scene, Bill Walmsley sat down with WWII veteran Dr. Robert A. “Lit” Craig. Mr. Walmsley and Dr. Craig recorded the amazing story of a brave young man from Independence County fighting along the front lines in some of the most famous battles in Europe.

Through this firsthand account of a soldier’s heroic journey across western Europe, researchers and the public now have access to a marvelous audio recording. Dr. Craig’s story will serve as a primary source for a wide variety of projects and purposes, including academic papers, genealogy research and personal interest.

Do you know someone with a remarkable personal story? Through our oral history collection, the museum would like to preserve other firsthand stories. We would appreciate your suggestions!

We’ve accessioned many other interesting items over the past months. **Larry Guenzel** donated a wonderful large weathervane. This vane originally set atop a wooden water tank located at the lockkeeper’s house at Batesville. **John Thompson** brought us an interesting set of blueprints/maps of the Arkansas Highway Department’s plans to widen St. Louis Street in 1969. These surveys note the property owners from whom right-of-way was to be acquired. **Blair Arnold** gave us a series of aerial photographs of Independence and Jackson Counties, noting land ownership and land usage circa 1956. **Batesville Community Theater** donated their organization’s 25th scrapbook covering performances for the years 2011-2014.

Additional behind-the-scenes work continues. Jeannie Wagoner is hard at work conserving a large collection of items from the **Fitzhugh Spragins family**. Chief among this collection are hundreds of personal letters written by various family members. Correspondence such as this gives us tremendous insight to life in 20th century America. Ruth Cook continues her work reviewing the contents of large collections from the **Independence County Extension Homemakers** and the McHue Extension Homemakers Club.

**In September the Museum held a fundraiser called “A Swing Into History.” The photo to the left shows some of the dancers who attended.**

**Children enjoying the settlement area of the new White River exhibit.**

**The photos above and below show some of the museum volunteers who dressed as living history characters during the annual “Night at the Museum” event.**
The Museum Gift Shop  
By Claudia Nobles, Gift Shop Manager

Our volunteers and staff selected some of their favorite items available in the gift shop to showcase in the newsletter. We invite everyone to visit the gift shop to see the full line of products carried by the Museum. All gift shop proceeds go to support Museum operations.

Left: Wooden bookmarks in a variety of designs are a favorite among the Museum volunteers. At just $5 each they are a great stocking stuffer for any book lover.

Claudia Nobles, the Gift Shop Manager, models one of the scarves available in the gift shop while holding a Harry Potter fish mug.

Museum Members receive a 10% discount

Arkansas made products are available

Some handmade items are available.

Books of local interest are always popular gifts.
2014 Revenues

- 28% Grant Revenue (Local, State, Federal & Private)
- 23% Membership and Day Sponsors
- 18% Memorials, Honors, & Donations
- 14% Bequests
- 8% Admissions, Archives, & Gift Shop Revenue
- 5% Workshop Fees, Special Projects, Rental Fees and Other
- 4% Interest Income

2014 Expenses

- 51% Salaries, Payroll Taxes, Benefits & Professional Fees
- 16% Utilities and Security Fees
- 15% Exhibit, Collections, Grant and Special Event Expenses
- 8% Maintenance & Repair Costs
- 5% Insurance
- 3% Postage, Office Supplies, Travel & Other Miscellaneous Expenses
- 2% Advertising
Museum Membership

Day Sponsor Members are individuals and businesses that support a day of operating costs at the Museum. For each day sponsored, the member can “name the day”. Many choose to honor a birthday, anniversary, friendship or express support of a local business.

One Day

Dave & Cindy Allen
Arkansas Lime
Citizens Bank of Batesville
First Community Bank
Willa Harkey
Jane Jameson
LaCroix Optical
Terrell & Diane Tebbetts
Dennis & Twyla Wright

Friend Memberships

Batesville Eye Care Center
Jim & Anne Bechdoldt
Polly Bennett
Paul & Joni Bube
George & Marilynn Chlebak
Sam & Rita Cooke
Dr. Robert & Patsy Craig
Boris & Pamela Dover
Gerald Fulbright
Martha Healey
Don Heuer
E.J. Jones
Carolyn Craig Keeble
Mr. & Mrs. Wesley Ketz
Mike & Bobbie Low
Rebecca Alyson Low
Merrill Family
Marian Milum
Jack & Anne Moore
David & Sharan Pittser
Robb & Amanda Roberts
Carol Robertson
Skip & Billie Rutherford
William & Louise Sandefur
Becky Siegel
Bob & Mary Slaughter
Robert S. Stroud

Four Days or More

Arkansas Lime
Citizens Bank of Batesville
First Community Bank
Willa Harkey
Jane Jameson
LaCroix Optical
Terrell & Diane Tebbetts
Dennis & Twyla Wright

Two Days

Batesville Preservation Association
Sherry Chilton-Hayes
George Lankford
Polly Livingston
MaryAnn Marshall
Steve & Ellen Massey
Midwest Lime
River City Cruisers
Lisenne Rockefeller

Econo-Mart Pharmacy
Elizabeth Evans
FutureFuel Chemical Company
John & Julie Gregg
Brad & Jennifer Griffin
Bill & Sandra Nash Hughes
Ketz Family
Ray & Diane LaCroix
Pat & Mary Lea
Matthew Luoma
Lyon College
M & A Jones Construction
Marshall Dry Goods
Arthur Montgomery
Barrett & Sara Moore
Paul & Ann Rhodes
Fred & Peggy Shelton
Kay Southerland
Barbara Stevenson
Robert & Deborah Stroud
Wade’s Heating Cooling & Electric
Bill & Janis Walmsley
Frances Williams Family
Membership Continued...

Family Memberships

James & Camille Anderson
David & Suzanne Blair
Scott & Kathryn Blackwell
Rev. Bob & Kay Burton
Robert Carius
Tom & Dorothy Dodson
George & Della Mae Dortch
R.B. & Nona Floyd
Kenny & Michele Gerhardt
Robert & Gayla Griffin
Barry & Sandy Hammers
Donald & Emma Hedden
Chuck & Sarah Jones
Oscar Jones, III
Barbara Rutherford Keedy
Guy & Charlotte Lacy
John & Jean Larson
Charles & Shirley Marable
LaVerl Mason
Randolph & Francis Mathis
Gary & Tommie McDonald
Max & Susan McElmurry
Larry & Jaydine Morton
Dick Nelms
Joe & Kay Pool
Joe & Cathy Shell
Clint & Mayfan Thomas
Fran Troy
Hal & Mary Vandiver
Fred & Linda Wann
Sandy West
Neil & Beverly Wilkins, Sr.

Individual Memberships

Denise Baker
Batesville Collectors Club
Martha Bentley
Ernestine Boyce
Lola Caraway
Rosemary Catton
Sheridan Chadwell
William Coe
Kate Cooke
Dwight Ford
Jean Garner
Carol Gifford
Annas Heasley
Margaret Henley
William Leach
Ann Luster
Linda Matthews
Carolyn McClure
Christopher Moore
Laura Parks
Robbie Purdom
Jane Purtle
Sue Richmond
Amy Shaver
Malinda Maxfield Tulloh

Senior Memberships

Joanna Buchanan
John Cantacessi
Mickey Coe
Shirley Coe

William Coe
Betty Crutcher
Connie Crymes
Janet Galvan
Velma McSpadden Gould
Janet Gray
Mary Harmon
Doris Harper
Jack Helm
James A Hester
Valerie Holler
Jack Jackson
Frances Jernigan
Dean Lindsey
Sherry Matthews
Charles McClain, Jr.
Anna Mae McSpadden
Earvin Moser
Michael Moser
Helen Musgrave
Craig Ogilvie
James Pamplin
Bob Purnell
Judy Purnell
Connie Schirmer
Joan Sellers
Loretta Shell
Katherine Stokes
Dorma Talburt
Martha Taylor
Phyllis Terhune
Mary Lee Thessen
Betty Weaver
Alice Witterman
Lucy Yeager
Haley Adams
Judy Allen
Nelson Barnett
Scott Blackwell
Bowman Family
Alan Bufford
Marilynn Chlebak
Alice Clark
Ruth Cook
Sylvia Crosby
Jacquelyn Earls
Suzanne Evans
Melody Fitterling
Taylor Fitterling
Fitterling Family
Nona Floyd
Emilee Gerhardt
Kenny Gerhardt
Carol Gifford
Beverly Grigsby
Ralph Grant
Lillie Guth
Suni Guth
Guth Family
Gail Harley
Bertha Hughes
Jimmy Hughes
Teri Lane
Kay Longenbach
MaryAnn Marshall
Duane Massey
Steve Massey
Francis Mathis
Randolph Mathis
Sherry Matthews
Greta McCann
Mary Miller
Nelda Mitchell
Ann Mobley
Julia Nail
Amanda Nikkel
Clara Nikkel
Darcy Nikkel
Claudia Nobles
Coco Nobles
Bekah Paxson
Paxson Family
David Pittser
Sharan Pittser
George Pouliot
Brienne Reed
Cheyenne Reed
Mack Reed
Ann Rhodes
Kayla Shaw
Ted Stepanek
Jalise Stewart
Nicole Ursin
Jeannie Wagoner
Linda Wann
Gracie Webb
Mike West
Dennis Wright
Twyla Wright

Left: Curator of Exhibits, Twyla Wright poses as a woman traveling by steamboat.
Right: Assistant Curator of Collections, Alan Bufford receives the Dennis Wright Award.
Below: Scenes from Night at the Museum