

Old Independence



Regional Museum

Summer 2013
Newsletter

New Exhibit in the Works: War Comes to Us

For several months our exhibit team has been working toward creating a whole room exhibit that will chronicle the Civil War in northeast Arkansas. Each wall will feature a separate year, from 1862 through 1865. Although the hard fought and devastating war has been over for almost 150 years, it lingers on through family stories. It remains of interest to many who visit our museum.

For the past few years the museum has displayed four panels about the Civil War, however, visitors have asked for a different approach. New panels of photographs, a larger number of object artifacts, and

interactive games will show more of the story.

The exhibit will not glorify war, but will acknowledge its effects on people of that time and the challenges they faced afterward. Confederate secessionists, Union sympathizers, slaves, freedmen, families who faced bushwhackers and jayhawker guerrillas, were all caught in the cross-hairs.

The question is: What can we still learn from that time? We hope you will attend our exhibit opening later this fall.

The current Civil War exhibit located in the J.K. Southerland Gallery will be incorporated into the new Civil War Exhibit in the First Community Bank Gallery.



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Special points of interest:

- Learn about the new items added to our collection.
- Visit the gift shop to see all the new summer lawn art items.
- Have you ever considered becoming a volunteer? Find out how in our volunteer column.

The Collections Corner

Sharan Pittser, Curator of Collections

The curators' office continues to be a very busy place. Several large collections have come into the museum that have yet to be accessioned. Only three of us are working the collections at this time. We are waiting for one of our docent's password to be logged into the computer system so we can begin his registrar's training.

Myra Wood has donated some yearbooks from the Sulphur Rock schools. We are delighted to have those. We are always looking to add to the yearbook collection from area schools of those yearbooks we do not have.

Lucy Yeager has donated a number of items from the Civil War era. One of her ancestors was a Confederate soldier captured by the Union soldiers. He spent much time in a Federal prisoner of war camp. Lucy has donated his homemade gray uniform jacket, rings he carved while a prisoner of war, plus a number of documents.

The carved rings were an exciting donation. Sometime ago, letters written to Kate Hooper by Confederate POWs and donated to OIRM, mentioned carving rings while in prison. Now OIRM has examples of those rings.

The latest large collection has come from the home of Katherine Stokes. Her daughter, Carolyn Stokes Buchanan, donated, in the name of the family, many objects, textiles, documents and ledgers from Melton Stokes time as a businessman in Evening Shade & Batesville.

Twyla and Linda Wann continue to work with the objects stored upstairs in OIRM and in the textile room.

We are taking in very few textiles as that room is full. There just is very little room to store anything more. The same is true of the Mezzanine where objects are stored. We have had to reject some large objects for that reason, and that is sometimes a heart breaker.



Mother's War flag from the Milton and Alberta Stokes family home on Main Street. The flag has four blue stars signifying the family had four sons serving in World War II. The sons were Edward Earl Stokes, Harry Burton Stokes, Keith Davidson Stokes, and Joseph Ray Stokes. Stokes Collection



Right - Photo of the Confederate uniform jacket worn by James P. Coffin during the Civil War. The fabric was woven and the uniform was made by his wife Lucy Lyons Coffin. Yeager Collection

Below - Photo of rings that were cut from black buttons by Charlie Coffin while a prisoner at Fort Delaware POW camp during the Civil War. Each ring has a different carving. Yeager Collection



Website News

www.oirm.org

Be sure to check out the Museum's website at www.oirm.org. The website is maintained by volunteer Scott Blackwell and features upcoming events, archival information and the Museum blog. The site includes information useful to those planning a visit to the Museum, whether it be for research or group tour planning. Visitors can even access forms to apply for day camps.

A new feature on the website is the artifact of the week in the blog section of the website. Each week the Museum staff chooses a artifact from the Museum's collection to be featured on the blog. The entries include a photograph of the artifact as well as information about the item. Past entries are also accessible on the site.

Education

Amanda Nikkel, Humanities Educator

Old Independence Regional Museum hosted over 1000 students during the 2012-2013 school year! We are pleased that the museum has continued to garner support from schools in eight of the twelve counties represented for the past 3 years. This year schools visited the museum from Independence, Baxter, Sharp, White, Fulton, Woodruff, Cleburne, and IZARD counties. Many of these school groups were able to take advantage of the Free Field Trip Grant that the museum offers to schools in our 12-county region. This grant has been generously funded for the past 4 years by a private donor.

In addition to the Free Field Trip Grant, the Museum offers many hands-on, demonstration, and living history programs for schools to add to their experience. Some of our most popular programs this year were: *I am Not a Spy*, *The Language of the Fan*, *Going West!*, *Charlie Needs a Cloak*, and *Butter Making*.

I am Not a Spy, our most requested program, is a living history interpretation of Emily Weaver's experience being accused, tried, and convicted of spying during the Civil War. Volunteer Greta McCann portrays Emily Weaver.

For the Home Schooled students in our region, OIRM offers Home School Days in the fall and spring. Each Home School Day has a theme with games, activities, and crafts engaging the students in the subject matter. This fall our theme will be Early Arkansas Explorers. OIRM typically hosts close to 100 students

during the fall and the spring Home School Days.

Our work doesn't stop at the end of the school year, though! OIRM hosts 3 day camps over the course of the summer! In June a one-day, Native American Day Camp was held, and it was filled to capacity with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders. In July, our 4-day Pioneer Day Camp will introduce 4th, 5th, and 6th graders to frontier life. Parts of this Pioneer Day Camp will be repeated during another one-day Pioneer Camp for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders.

Program Reflections

Already this year a good number of people have attended three major museum programs.

January : *Samm Wooley Coomb's Photography* was presented by Ila Clements, Peg Giem, Mark Woodward, and Larry Stroud to a full house! It was to open our temporary exhibit of Coomb's photography. His photographs range from those taken deep in Mexico, in the backwoods of Oregon, within the Hippie culture, and of the Folk scene in Mountain View. It will stay on view through this year.

February: *All Aboard*, a program on the history of our region's railroads was given by Mike West (with requests for him to repeat the program!). Phillip Goodin co-presented with him, focusing on his many years tending railroad bridges.

April: the museum hosted two days of noontime films during Filmfest in Batesville.

May: *Prehistoric Art of Independence County and Northern Arkansas*, a program by Scott Davidson, local attorney and amateur authority on the subject, was well-attended. His projected images and engaging conversation created a real hit!

Upcoming Programs

July 23-26 Day Camp for students in the 4th-6th grades. The cost is \$40 per student. Learn about pioneer life by making crafts and playing games.

August 5 Day Camp for students in the 1st-3rd grades. The cost is \$10 per student. Learn about pioneers and make some fun crafts to take home.

September 22, 2 p.m. *Do You Speak Arkansas?* will be a humorous program on dialects that will help the museum celebrate its 15th birthday party, and its annual meeting. The program presenter will be Susan Young, the outreach coordinator at the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History.

Sept. 30 and October 7 Fall Home School Day The theme will be "Arkansas Explorers" with a cost of \$5 per student. Arkansas was once the "Western Frontier" of the United States. Learn about some of the early explorers who visited Arkansas.

October 19 Wild Arkansas Fall Family Day Crafts, demonstrations and hands-on activities will allow visitors to explore the "wild" history of Arkansas.

October 27, 2 p.m. *Arkansas Economic Geology* is the topic that Sandra Chandler, geologist with the Arkansas Geological Survey will bring to the museum. She will have mineral specimens to display.

December 14 Christmas Family Day Join us in our traditional Christmas celebration featuring cookies, carols crafts and games.

Volunteer!

Amanda Nikkel, Volunteer Coordinator

“Volunteering can be an exciting, growing, enjoyable experience. It is truly gratifying to serve a cause, practice one's ideals, work with people, solve problems, see benefits, and know one had a hand in them.”

Harriet Naylor

In 2012, OIRM's volunteers dedicated over 6,000 hours of service to the Museum. Our volunteers are our most valuable assets. They archive collections, curate exhibits, manage the gift shop, lead school tours, help with special events, welcome visitors, process retail sales, assist with research, manage computer needs, and these are just highlights.

Thank you to our volunteers who make it all work! If you know of anyone who is interested in volunteering with this wonderful group of people, please tell them to give me a call!

Heritage Garden

OIRM, in coordination with the Master Gardener's of Independence County and through the Greening of Arkansas Grant from the Arkansas Flower and Garden Show, has planted a garden on the side lawn of the museum. This garden features many heritage plants that were used in the Old Independence region for medicinal and dyeing purposes. The plan is to add a garden tour to our repertoire of programs offered to schools. These programs will either focus on plants and herbs used in folk medicine or plants used for dyeing. Signage will be installed to identify each plant and a brochure will be produced, for the general public to use during their self-guided tour, highlighting each plant's uses.

From the Museum Gift Shop

Claudia Nobles, Gift Shop Manager

Some new items featured in the Museum gift shop are garden items for children. Other new items include glass totems for garden décor and bright metal flowers for porches and fences. Bird houses have long been a best seller in the gift shop and we have some new designs and colors.

Take a peek at some of the new books available for summer reading. We also have several new puppet designs in the gift shop. These make great gifts for kids and even adults!

Stop by and shop with as you cool from the summer heat!



The unusual glass totems pictured above are created locally.

Metal flowers, birdhouses, and puppets are among this summer's best sellers in the Museum Gift Shop. Remember that the proceeds from the gift shop go directly to support Museum operations.



Independence County Master Gardener's volunteers planting the new Medicinal and Dyeing Garden on the Museum side lawn. The garden will be used in the Museum's educational programming.