

**HISTORIC ARKANSAS MUSEUM COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 19, 2023**

**Commissioners Present:**

James Warren, Chair  
John Greer, Vice Chair  
Frances Mitchell Ross, Chair Emerita  
Ann Jennings Shackelford  
Vanessa Norton McKuin  
Tracey Hendren

**Commissioners Absent:**

Gordon Rather, Secretary  
Rex Nelson  
Kyle Wilson  
Marshall Butler

**Historic Arkansas Museum Staff Present:**

Stephanie Haught Wade, Executive Director  
Joleen Linson, Assistant Director  
Victoria Chandler, Curator of Collections  
Ian Beard, Education Director  
Mark Mourier, Accounting

**Visitors:**

None.

**Call to Order:**

Commission Chair James Warren called the meeting to order at 12:00pm. The meeting was held via Zoom with an in-person meeting option as well.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Commission Chair James Warren stated that the April 21, 2023 meeting minutes, along with the May 19, 2023 meeting minutes, will be approved next month at the June meeting.

**Financial Report:**

Museum Director Stephanie Wade reported on the balance of state funds. As of May 2, 2023, the Historic Arkansas Museum state funds balance was \$850,435.12 and the financial reports show that everything is in good standing. Ms. Wade sent additional April budgets for the Conservation Tax fund and the Arkansas Natural and Cultural Resources Council fund to the Commissioners for review. These two funds reflect the majority of money available in the museum budget.

**Museum Update:**

Museum Director Stephanie Wade shared the April 2023 visitation numbers which totaled 4,768 onsite and 211 offsite. Museum store sales for April 2023 totaled \$6,122.00.

Ms. Wade stated that the staff has had a great time planning and celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the Territorial Fair, Herb Garden, Museum Store and Trinity Gallery. More specifics will be shared in the department reports.

Museum Assistant Director Joleen Linson reported on site and facilities. Interviews will be held next week on Wednesday for Security Supervisor. The new security camera system is currently being installed by ADT. Carpets have been cleaned and windows washed, among other general maintenance projects. Updated water fountains have been installed on the first and second floor back hallways. These fountains have bottle filler taps and are ADA compliant.

Education Director Ian Beard stated that the museum has been very busy with school groups. For April, a total of 1071 school children were on our grounds doing tours and hands-on programming. For May, the pace will be same and then the school groups will stop for the summer at the end of the month. There were 158 visitors for April taking guided tours. The Living History Saturdays, which are now called Living Craft Saturdays, had 149 visitors for April. The theme for April was "Sisterhood and the Fabric of Society," as the focus of programming through June will be women in antebellum Arkansas. The May theme is "Marriage and Motherhood" and the June theme will be "Women's Work." The 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Territorial Fair was Sunday, May 7 from 1:00 - 5:00pm. There were 817 people in attendance with 100 workers putting on the event, including staff, musicians, dancers, living history demonstrators, and the like. The virtual 360 tour of the Hinderliter, in collaboration with the UALR Emerging Analytics Center, is coming along well. Mr. Beard is working with Curator Victoria Chandler to complete this project. Camp Historic Arkansas (formerly known as Pioneer Day Camp) will be held June 12 – 16 from 9:00am – 3:00pm and is fully booked with 15 campers, including 3 scholarship spots. None of the children require transportation to participate so further discussions about providing that service are no longer necessary. Preparations for Frontier Fourth are coming along as well. This event will be held on Tuesday, July 4 from 10:00am – 12:00pm and include fun activities, watermelon and lemonade and a reading of the Declaration of Independence. The blacksmith shop continues to be open on Thursdays, and several staff are learning how to set type in the print shop which has been very educational.

Curator of Collections Victoria Chandler presented the Exhibits, Collections and Arkansas Made report. Ms. Chandler stated that the department is working extremely hard on the 50th Anniversary exhibit in the Trinity Gallery which will open June 9, 2023 at 2nd Friday Art Night. With limited space, the exhibit will showcase some of the artists who displayed their works in the Trinity Gallery over the past 50 years. However, there will be graphics on the walls listing all the artists who have shown their work over the decades – with close to 1000 artists in nearly 500 shows, it has been quite a task confirming the names! Artists will have special recognition that evening. The refurbished Knife Gallery will open on Saturday, June 17, 2023, and will be a full day of family-friendly activities, speakers, and related events. The day begins at 10:00am with activities/programming on the grounds; and at 11:00am there will be a knife cutting competition by master bladesmith Jerry Fisk, who is a National Living Treasure. The Knife Gallery will officially open at 1:30pm; and then master bladesmith Lin Rhea will be honored that

afternoon/evening from 4:00 – 7:00pm in the HAM Theater and atrium as the 2023 Arkansas Living Treasure. The Cabe Gallery is being repainted in preparation for the traveling exhibit from the American Folk Art Museum called *Mystery & Benevolence: Symbolic Expressions of the Masons and Odd Fellows* which will open in August 2023. The object crates will arrive mid-July. Ms. Chandler is very pleased to have Harrison Mitchell as the new Registrar. Mr. Mitchell's former part time historical researcher position is now open and interviews will take place next week. Ms. Chandler shared a recently acquired work by Arkansas artist AJ Smith from his *Faces of the Delta* series called *Meeting in Oneida, Arkansas at Lee's Grocery*. Mr. Smith is a master with graphite and printmaking. This is our first acquisition from Mr. Smith, and the work will be displayed in the Trinity Gallery upcoming exhibit.

Museum Community Engagement Director Ellen Korenblat was attending the American Alliance of Museums annual conference in Denver, CO so Director Wade reported on her behalf. Tricia Spione, volunteer and membership director, and Jake Hicks, store manager, are also at the annual conference. Mr. Hicks is specifically attending the Museum Store Association annual meeting in conjunction with the AAM conference. Community Engagement staff played a supporting role with the Territorial Fair, as Teresa Knight worked on all the signs, handouts, recipe cards, banners, and related materials. Tricia Spione worked with volunteers and Jake Hicks offered herbs for sale through the Museum Store to highlight the 50<sup>th</sup> year of the Mary Worthen Herb Garden. Sherry Stevenson handled purchasing, while Ellen, Teresa and Lindsey Tugman worked on promotion. For the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday Art Night, held on May 12, 2023, Kat Robinson was here to sign her new book *The Great Arkansas Pie Book*. More than a thousand samples of five kinds of pies were offered to visitors. Book sales that night were great and everyone loved the pie! A dancer from Ballet Arkansas performed a stunning piece in the Cabe Gallery, a member of the Herb Society served lavender lemonade and answered questions about the herb garden, Blues Boy Jag played music, and Flyway Brewing served beer. The Preserve Our Past exhibit, an art contest for children hosted by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, debuted in the Children's Gallery that evening as well. Community Engagement has been working on an upcoming reception for the Worthen Arkansas Made Gallery to be held Wednesday, June 7 from 5:30 – 7:00pm in the Cabe Gallery. An invitation was sent out, as well as a press release. There will be brief remarks followed by a reception. Ms. Korenblat's team has also been working on a list of artists and contacts for the upcoming Trinity 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibit so they can be properly recognized at the event.

#### **Historic Arkansas Museum Foundation:**

Ms. Korenblat has reported that the membership program brought in \$2,455 since the last Commission meeting. The Foundation has reestablished its membership committee, which is being chaired by Aaron Scott. They are focusing on attending all museum events and have several new ideas to increase membership. Past Foundation President Lori L. Burrows' Celebration of Life was held on May 6, 2023. The Foundation sent a flower arrangement. As previously mentioned, the Pie Party for members will now be called the Lori L. Burrows Pie Party. The HAM Foundation Finance committee met last week, and the next Foundation meeting will be on May 25, 2023.

#### **Other Business:**

Commissioner Vanessa McKuin thanked the museum staff for their contributions and partnership with the Niloak pottery exhibit at Historic Cane Hill. The exhibit extends through July 8, 2023. Commissioner Frances Ross commented that the show is excellent.

Director Stephanie Wade also wished Commissioner Rex Nelson a speedy recovery after his accident.

Director Wade also offered congratulations to Commissioner James Warren's wife, Judge Joyce Warren, as she is a 2023 inductee into the Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame.

**Next Meeting Date:**

The next meeting of the Historic Arkansas Museum Commission will be held Friday, June 16, 2023, at 12:00pm via Zoom. Museum Director Stephanie Wade will send instructions to join the meeting. Lunch will be provided in the Loughborough Conference Room.

**Adjournment:**

With no other business to discuss, Commission Chair James Warren adjourned the meeting at 12:25 pm.

**Gordon S. Rather, Jr. Secretary**