

## Christmas of the Past!

**Josh Williams**

ALHA Communications Director

In the nineteenth century, the town of Washington, Arkansas has celebrated the Christmas season with a variety of different events. Many of the events that we think of today as commonplace to the celebration of Christmas were not always done. Also, there are events that were commonplace over 150 years ago, but are not highly celebrated or even thought about in today's society.

Before the Civil War, Christmas trees were not very popular in Washington as part of the celebration of Christmas. This instead came later through the influence of Germans immigrants who moved to America just before the Civil War and the use of a Christmas tree in the home of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert of Great Britain. Instead the residents of Washington would use live greenery and fruit, such as oranges, apples, and pineapples to decorate their homes around Christmas time.

Christmas was not a celebration though, that encompassed the whole month of December. When you look through the local newspapers during the early nineteenth century Christmas is not mentioned



*Queen Victoria and Prince Albert made Christmas Trees popular in England and America. The first trees were placed on tables.*

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until the last week of December. In the days of commercialization it is hard to imagine this. Instead during the first weeks of December, the big news in the newspaper was the State of Union Address by the President of the United States. During the nineteenth century the President would give the State of the Union address at the end of the year in December instead of January. The *Washington Telegraph* would always print the full speech by the president in the newspaper.

Christmas celebrations in Washington would generally start on Christmas Day and last for at least a week in keeping with the twelve day celebration of Christmas. On December 27, the Mount Horeb Lodge, No. 4 of Freemasons would annually hold

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January 12, 2012; 12pm—1 pm

Brown Bag Lecture – Arkansas' Union Forces: What Drove Madison County Men to Enlist?  
Old State House Museum

*There are many great stories of how Arkansas' young men went off to war in 1861, but what happened in 1862, '63 and '64 after the reality of war had invaded northern Arkansas? What conditions drove men to enlist with Union forces and form the Arkansas units? This talk will focus on northwest Arkansas and the men of Madison County, but will shed light on the reality of a war where the lines between friend and foe were never clear, and decisions about loyalty directly affected not only a soldier's life, but the lives of his wife, children and community as well. Speaker Rebecca Howard is a native of Northwest Arkansas and a graduate of Texas A&M University. She is pursuing a Phd in History at the University of Arkansas - Fayetteville. Her research focuses on the lives and communities of Civil War veterans along the northern border of Arkansas in the decades after the Civil War.*

*Admission: FREE. Participants are encouraged to bring sack lunches; beverages are provided.*

CONTACT:

Ian Beard

300 W. Markham, Little Rock, AR 72201

501-324-8642

[ian@arkansasheritage.org](mailto:ian@arkansasheritage.org)

### January 14, 2012; 6pm—9pm

Trial by Jury Dinner  
Historic Washington State Park

*Justice is served and you are the jury. After enjoying an evening meal at Williams' Tavern Restaurant, guests will proceed to the 1836 Courthouse. There they will take part in a living history drama where they judge the guilt or innocence of a man accused of murder. The drama is based upon an actual 1844 trial that took place in the same courtroom. Dress casual or wear your favorite 19th-century costume. Reservations are required.*

*Admission: \$25 Adults, \$20, Children under 14*

CONTACT:

PO Box 129, Washington, AR 71862

870-983-2684

[historicwashington@arkansas.com](mailto:historicwashington@arkansas.com)

### January 27, 2012; 7pm – 9pm

Night Court: United States vs. William Alexander  
Fort Smith National Historic Site

*On October 21, 1889, David Steadman went missing after hunting with his partner Williams Alexander. Steadman's remains were found a week later and Alexander was accused of*

## Is there a Santa Claus?!

If you talk to any genealogist they will say that one of their primary resources is the United States Census, which lists individuals by name living in all the various communities of the United States. As you get into some of the later censuses more details are given for each individual.

One question that has always been asked in relation to people is: Is there a Santa Claus?! Is there? Well Ben Swadley, the ALHA District I Representative, has tried to answer that question and by using good genealogical skills has found the answer to that long sought after question.

In the 1900 Census, Santa Clause was one of six children in the home of William and Henrietta Clause. He was born in Liberty Township, Missouri in 1887 and was thirteen years old at the time of the census. So yes there IS a Santa Clause!!! Merry Christmas!

Clause, William	8-1	Head
—, Henrietta		Wife
—, Emma B		Daughter
—, William E		Son
—, Earler		Daughter
—, Santa		Son
—, Nellie		Daughter
—, Earler		Son

*Santa Clause in the 1900 Missouri Census.*

**HEAR YE! HEAR YE!**

**NOMINATE  
BEST LIVING HISTORY  
EVENT  
&  
BEST LIVING HISTORY  
CHARACTER  
OF 2011**

**FORMS ATTACHED TO NEWSLETTER**

the crime. After being placed on trial, he was found guilty. His attorney J. Warren Read managed to have his case appealed by Supreme Court. This was the first appeal to take place in Parker's court. A few months later Alexander was retried for murder. This program is a recreation of that second trial. The Fort Smith National Historic Site's staff and volunteers will present a mock trial based on a case heard by Judge Parker in 1890. The living history event will take place in the historic courtroom. Reservations are required.

Admission: \$5 per adult.

CONTACT:

Jeremy Lynch

PO Box 1406, Fort Smith, AR 72902

479-783-3961

[jeremy\\_lynch@nps.gov](mailto:jeremy_lynch@nps.gov)

### January 28, 2012; 6pm – 8pm

Night Court: United States vs. William Alexander  
Fort Smith National Historic Site

On October 21, 1889, David Steadman went missing after hunting with his partner Williams Alexander. Steadman's remains were found a week later and Alexander was accused of the crime. After being placed on trial, he was found guilty. His attorney J. Warren Read managed to have his case appealed by Supreme Court. This was the first appeal to take place in Parker's court. A few months later Alexander was retried for murder. This program is a recreation of that second trial. The Fort Smith National Historic Site's staff and volunteers will present a mock trial based on a case heard by Judge Parker in 1890. The living history event will take place in the historic courtroom. Reservations are required.

Admission: \$5 per adult.

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Jeremy Lynch

PO Box 1406, Fort Smith, AR 72902

479-783-3961

[jeremy\\_lynch@nps.gov](mailto:jeremy_lynch@nps.gov)

### January 27-28, 2012

4th Annual Fort Smith History Conference  
"Into the Nations: Narrative Peoples of Arkansas and Oklahoma"

University of Arkansas at Fort Smith

Dr. Daniel Littlefield is the keynote speaker and his presentation will be - "Into The Nations, Literally!" Additionally, there will be presentations covering Southwest clothing and fashion, the unique experience of Chickasaw removal, The Drennen Rolls, naturalists and healing, as well as off-site trips to area places of significance.

Martha Siler

479-783-3000

[Marthasiler@gmail.com](mailto:Marthasiler@gmail.com)

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## "Christmas" from page 1

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marches in commemoration of St. John the Evangelist, who is a patron saint of freemasonry and the local chapter of the Sons of Temperance would also hold marches and celebrations. Use of alcohol was of course prohibited with this group. During the week of celebration, the residents of town would get together at the local taverns and each other's homes and hold dances and celebrations for the season. The local tavern, The Washington House, was the most common location for these events.

After the Civil War, other traditions that we find common today became a part of the celebration of Christmas. Santa Claus was first mentioned in the *Washington Telegraph* in 1871. As part of an advertisement for goods at Taylor and Jetts Mercantile, they mentioned that Santa Claus had just dropped off goods for people to buy for Christmas. It is also during this time that advertisements for Christmas gifts and presents begins to be advertised. Before 1870, the advertisements focused mainly on various fruits and figs that came in for Christmas meals and celebrations.

The first mention of a Christmas trees in the local newspaper was in 1871. The Presbyterian, Methodist, and Episcopal churches placed Christmas trees within their sanctuary's for their members and the community. Residents of town went to each church during Christmas week to celebrate the holidays. The paper stated the trees "furnished merriment to the little folks, and to some who were not so little."

Christmas trees would continue to be in the various churches of town. At different times, the Sunday School classes of each church would decide to come together and make a Union Christmas tree for the entire community at one of the public buildings in town. This would usually be at the schoolhouse or the courthouse. Everyone in the community would bring a present to place under the tree. The presents included "handsome toilet setts (i.e. perfume) and vases, beautiful wax dolls and bouquets, silk kerchiefs of gorgeous hues, and others of both a useful and humorous character." Those that attended the event would then draw a number and would pick a present matching that number under the tree.

Of course with any community celebration there would always be a chance of pranks. In 1881, the newspaper reported that the usual pranks of removing signs and tearing down fences and building them across the public street were done. On top of this a group of people moved the buggies from Lazarus & Jagersfeld's stable and rolled them down the hill to Town Creek. What a Christmas to remember!

Christmas was a community celebration that was celebrated through New Year's Day in Washington that brought the community together to celebrate this wonderful time of year. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

**February 4, 2012, 7pm –9pm**

Historic Dance Workshop  
Historic Washington State Park

*Did you know there was once a specific dance to pick your next dance partner? Learn this dance and other common dances of the mid-19th century. Enjoy favorites such as the Virginia reel, patti-cake polka, and many more. Dance experience is not required for this evening workshop. Refreshments furnished. Class limit is 30. A minimum of 6 people is required for the workshop.*

*Admission: \$18 per couple or \$10 single*

CONTACT:

*Billy Nations*

*PO Box 129, Washington, AR 71862*

*870-983-2860*

*[Billy.nations@arkansas.gov](mailto:Billy.nations@arkansas.gov)*

**February 18, 2012, 7:30pm – 9pm**

Shakespeare in the Park  
Historic Washington State Park

*Enjoy an evening performance of Midsummer Night's Dream by the American Shakespeare Center of Staunton, Virginia. Performance begins at 7:30 p.m. with a pre-show performance at 7 p.m. in the 1940 WPA Gym. Two afternoon workshops will be provided covering topics of how to perform Shakespeare on the modern stage. Workshop admission is \$5 per person. Call ahead to reserve tickets. Tickets may be picked up at the 1874 Courthouse Visitor Center.*

*Admission: \$5 adults, \$3 children (ages 6 - 12)*

CONTACT:

*Billy Nations*

*PO Box 129, Washington, AR 71862*

*870-983-2860*

*[Billy.nations@arkansas.gov](mailto:Billy.nations@arkansas.gov)*

**February 18 – 19, 2012**

Frontier Days at the Hill of the Five Trails  
Historic Washington State Park

*The frontier spirit lives on the Southwest Trail. Walk through a frontier encampment and learn about survival skills used by Arkansas settlers. Watch reenactors demonstrate tomahawk throwing, use of muzzleloading rifles, and more! Admission to the camp is free. Tours of the park are available at regular price.*

*Admission: Admission to the camp is free. Tours of the park are available at regular price.*

CONTACT:

*Billy Nations*

*PO Box 129, Washington, AR 71862*

*870-983-2860*

*[Billy.nations@arkansas.gov](mailto:Billy.nations@arkansas.gov)*

**Put your event or program in the ALHA Calendar. Send your Spring Event submissions for the Winter newsletter by February 15.**

# Who's Who!!!

## Barbara Ward ALHA Vice President

Barbara Ward is the Vice President of the Arkansas Living History Association. In this capacity Barbara helps with the committees that select scholarships for the annual conference and select awards for best Living History presentations in the state.

Barbara Ward has been working at the Historic Arkansas Museum in Little Rock, Arkansas since 1999 in the education department. Currently she is the Programs Coordinator, and the living history program is one of the area's included in her responsibilities.

Barbara is very excited about the Arkansas Living History Association and the great things the organization can accomplish for all living history performers and people who would like to become involved in living history and reenactments.

Prior to joining the museum, Barbara's experience was in Theater and Broadcast Journalism (Radio). She attended the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and also attended the University of Central Arkansas in Conway. She considers it a privilege to be the ALHA Vice President and a member of ALHA.



*Barbara Ward (seated on left) portraying Mrs. Chester Ashley of Little Rock at the Old State House Statehood event in 2007.*

*Merry  
Christmas*



*Happy New  
Year*



*To all Members*

*From*

*The Arkansas Living History  
Association Board*

*Sign Up Today!!!  
ALHA Conference  
Fayetteville, AR*

*Deadline:*

*March 2-4, 2012*

*See conference schedule @*

*[www.arkansaslivinghistory.com/downloads](http://www.arkansaslivinghistory.com/downloads)*

*Current ALHA Membership: 103*

*Tell more people about ALHA!!!*

## JOIN THE ALHA FACEBOOK PAGE!



**SHARE PICTURES  
AND EVENTS WITH  
OTHER LIVING  
HISTORIANS IN THE  
STATE**

**POST YOUR OWN PICTURES OF  
THE CONFERENCE ON  
FACEBOOK AND BECOME A  
FRIEND!!!**

### 2011 ALHA Officers

President	Kristyn Watts <a href="mailto:kristyn.watts@arkansas.gov">kristyn.watts@arkansas.gov</a>
Vice President	Barbara Ward <a href="mailto:barbara@arkansasheritage.org">barbara@arkansasheritage.org</a>
Secretary	Brooke Malloy <a href="mailto:brooke@arkansasheritage.org">brooke@arkansasheritage.org</a>
Treasure	Debra Browning <a href="mailto:histreenactors@wmconnect.com">histreenactors@wmconnect.com</a>
Comm. Dir.	Josh Williams <a href="mailto:josh.williams@arkansas.gov">josh.williams@arkansas.gov</a>

### District Representatives

District 1	Ben Swadley <a href="mailto:ben.swadley@arkansas.gov">ben.swadley@arkansas.gov</a>
District 2	Ian Beard <a href="mailto:ian@arkansasheritage.org">ian@arkansasheritage.org</a>
District 3	Pody Gay <a href="mailto:pgay@springdalear.gov">pgay@springdalear.gov</a>
District 4	Leita Spears <a href="mailto:leita.spears@arkansas.gov">leita.spears@arkansas.gov</a>

# ALHA Year 2011 in Review



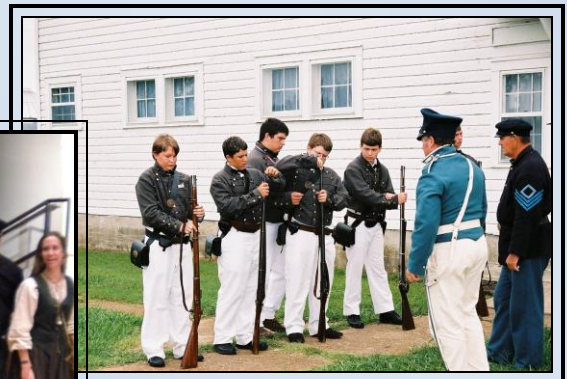
*(Above) ALHA Members attend the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Wilson's Creek*

*(Right) Evening Awards Banquet at the SEALHFAM Conference in Little Rock*



*(Left) ALHA Members are recognized for their ALHA Certification.  
(Below) Tulip Academy winner of 2010 Outstanding Living History Event*

*(Right) Living Historians show off their "wears" at the 2011 Conference*



## 2010 Awards Nomination Cover Sheet

Deadline for Nominations is February 1, 2012.

The nomination period covers calendar year 2011. Nominations may be made by any ALHA member or sponsor/host institution that wishes to nominate ALHA member(s) for awards. Provide the following information and then see the Awards Criteria Form and list/attach support information.

Nominee:

Nominator:

Address, City, Zip Code:

Telephone & E-mail:

Parent Agency (if applicable)

Award Category (check one)

Outstanding Living History Event

Outstanding Living History Program

Outstanding Living History Character

ALHA would like to inform local media about the winners of the 2011 awards. Please provide the name and address of the preferred media contact for the nominee below: Include name, address, telephone number and e-mail:

Each nominee should provide ALHA with four to six digital images for use in the awards presentation.

Send your nominations and digital images to:

Barbara Ward  
ALHA Vice President  
[barbara@arkansasheritage.org](mailto:barbara@arkansasheritage.org)

## Arkansas Living History Association Award Nomination Guidelines

### Outstanding Living History Event & Outstanding Living History Program

**Guidelines** – Separate awards will be given for Outstanding Living History Character and Outstanding Living History Program. You may choose to enter one or both. You may pick a single program within an event and enter it in the Outstanding Living History Program category or enter an entire event in the Outstanding Living History Event category. The event or living history program must involve ALHA members during calendar year 2011. Award recipients will be chosen by the ALHA Awards Committee that consists of the Vice President and the District Representatives. Awards will be presented at the annual conference.

Award recipients will be determined by the information provided on the nomination narrative you submit and how well you address the evaluation criteria. Nominations may be submitted by e-mail in Microsoft Word format using 12 point font or mailed in.

**Winning nominees in the past have read all the criteria and provided detailed responses that inform the judges. Unsuccessful nominees generally provide a minimum of information, few details and failed to address the evaluation criteria.**

You may wish to provide support material with your nomination. Suggestions to include are news releases, brochures or fliers and photographs or digital images from the event/program.

Below are specific questions or statements you should address in your nomination form and the criteria by which the outstanding recipients will be selected:

#### **I. Describe the event or program**

*Evaluation Criteria* – Where was the event/program held, when it was held, what was it about and what was the historical setting and context?

#### **II. Describe the program/event goals**

*Evaluation Criteria* – How did the event/program relate to the mission of the host institution or pertain to the historic relevance of the site or goals for the event/program?

#### **III. Success in reaching the target audience**

*Evaluation Criteria* – Describe the target audience. List any information you may have pertaining to audience age, where they came from and information on their diversity. Provide statistics on the numbers attending and any details you may have on your success in meeting any predetermined goals. Provide information on audience participation (if it was a goal).

#### **IV. Program Foundations, Planning and Research**

*Evaluation Criteria* – List any research and sources involved in the planning and implementation of the event. Provide details concerning any research that went into planning the historic setting, costumes, dialogue, props, or interpretation of characters. Consider naming primary documents, types of research performed places research was conducted, and training or selection of staff/volunteers.

**V. ALHA Participation** (Note, ALHA involvement in the program/event is required in order to expand membership and encourage institutions and sites to involve ALHA in their events and programs).

*Evaluation Criteria* – Tell us how ALHA member involvement augmented the quality and historical accuracy of the event/program. Explain who was involved and how they interacted with the host institution/site.



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## Arkansas Living History Association Award Nomination Guidelines

### Outstanding Living History Character

This award is given for the best interpretation of a living history character. Awards will be given for both first person and third person interpretations.

Guidelines – The performance must have been given in Arkansas by an ALHA member during calendar year 2011. Award recipients will be chosen by the ALHA Awards Committee that consists of the Vice President and the District Representatives. Awards will be presented at the annual conference.

Award recipients will be determined by the information provided on the nomination narrative you submit. Nominations may be submitted by e-mail in Microsoft Word format using 12 point font or mailed in.

**Winning nominees in the past have read all the criteria and provided detailed responses that inform the judges. Unsuccessful nominees generally provide a minimum of information, few details and failed to address the evaluation criteria.**

You may wish to provide support material with your nomination. Suggestions to include are news releases, audience feedback, brochures or fliers and photographs or digital images from the performance.

Below are specific questions or statements you should address in your nomination form and the criteria by which they will be judged:

#### **I. Describe the character**

*Evaluation Criteria* – Give us the background information on the character being portrayed. Provide a short biography that tells who the character was, the time period, etc. Provide information on whether this is a specific person from history or a fictitious character based on historical information. Tell about the character's clothing, accessories, props, makeup, or accompanying visuals that are important to the character's portrayal and how accurate all of these items are to the context in history being portrayed.

#### **II. Describe the character's presentation**

*Evaluation Criteria* – Describe what the character's performance was about. Describe where was the performance held, date(s) it was held, length of the performance, what was it about, and what was the historical setting and context. Tell us whether the interpretation was a solo effort or a depiction of a character among other characters. If the performance was an individual within a group, describe why this characterization stood out.

#### **III. Success in reaching the target audience**

*Evaluation Criteria* – Describe the target audience. List any information you may have pertaining to audience age, where they came from and information on their diversity. Provide statistics on the numbers attending and any details you may have on your success in meeting any predetermined goals. Provide information on audience participation (if it was a goal).

#### **IV. Character Foundations, Planning and Research**

*Evaluation Criteria* – Describe the research that was involved in the planning and implementation of the character's interpretation. Provide details concerning any research that went into planning the historic setting, costumes, dialogue, props, and the interpretation of the character. Consider naming primary documents, types of research performed, where research materials were obtained, training and any involvement of other characters, staff or volunteers.

# Arkansas Living History Association 2011 Membership Registration

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Institution: \_\_\_\_\_  
Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ Web site: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Type of Membership:

\_\_\_ **Individual: \$12** Any adult, 18 yrs of age or older. The member shall have full voting privileges in the ALHA as a general member.

\_\_\_ **Institutional: \$50** This includes 5 members with full voting privileges. \$10 per additional member over the first 5.

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of Additional Members X \$10 = \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the 5 members to receive the newsletter and their email addresses:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

## Help us learn more about you.

Periods of Interest: \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Interest: \_\_\_\_\_

What you would like to receive from ALHA: (this will help us develop training opportunities, meetings, workshops, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please make Checks Payable to: ALHA

Please send Registration along with Payment to:

Brooke Malloy, Secretary  
Old State House Museum  
300 W. Markham St.  
Little Rock, AR 72201

Visit us at [www.arkansaslivinghistory.org](http://www.arkansaslivinghistory.org) and find us on Facebook