In Memory of One Good Man

Larry and Virginia Swaim. This photo was taken on the Shiloh Museum grounds in 1998 to honor the Swaims, who had been members of the Shiloh Museum for 30 years—the longest of anyone on our membership list.

Allyn Lord
Director

I’ve met plenty of well-known men and plenty of everyday men, too. But my experience has been that it’s more often the modest, unpretentious men who leave a real legacy of achievement and generosity. Such was the case with my friend, Larry Swaim, whose contributions to archeology and Northwest Arkansas museums have been huge. Larry passed away in July and, despite his advanced age of 93, I still gasped at the news and continue to remember the man who gave so much to so many.

I first met Larry and his equally unassuming wife Virginia when I moved to Northwest Arkansas in 1982. At the University Museum, my first employer, the couple was part of a volunteer crew, assisting curator Peggy Hoffman with varied tasks involving collections. Often they were asked to identify and/or clean archeological artifacts from the museum collections. But I had little knowledge then of their long and important history in the area.

Born in Waterloo, Iowa, Larry was a World War II veteran who, like Virginia, remembered family trips to hunt for arrowheads and fossils along the banks of the Mississippi River. When they retired and moved to Arkansas in 1959, they attended a meeting of the Northwest Arkansas
I spent a recent trip to Little Rock and back thinking about the concept of “a sense of place,” spurred by Paul Greenberg’s editorial in the July 27 Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. A popular phrase these days, often used to describe architecture, cities, ruralness, or even personal anchoring, entire essays on the subject tumble from search engines. Even so, “a sense of place” seems remarkably difficult to define.

Greenberg summed it up as having to do with “identity, with roots sunk deep—not just in the land and language, but in the look and feel” of a place. With some surprise, I encountered an almost tangible sense of place upon moving to Northwest Arkansas, although I’ve never been able to explain it well. All I could say was that it had to do with a connection to the land, the rocky soil, the hills and hollows. An innate and intimate understanding rooted in nature, in these hills, and perhaps in history. I couldn’t quite put my finger on it.

For me, at least at first, that Ozark sense of place stood in contrast to my own. Growing up in Massachusetts near the coast, my home, my roots, perhaps my identity, are tied to the smell of pine trees, to salty breezes, to American Indian place names, to saltbox houses, to Revolutionary War muster rolls. A definitely different sense of place from the Ozarks, yet both seem now, after almost 32 years here, to be part of me.

I wondered, then, if sense of place is tattooed on the heart or soul. And, if so, can we wear multiple brands as we adopt different places as home? After spending more than half my life in the Ozarks, I feel such a strong sense of identity and belonging here, although I know that my Yankee roots will never allow me to be “one of you.”

On my drive back from Little Rock, I passed by the two vistas that most always take my breath away. One is that moment, driving west on I-40, just before hitting the Pig Trail, where, looking north, the Ozark hills first come into view. Their stunning presence always feels like home to me, especially in autumn when, in full blaze, they remind me of my New England roots. The second occurs when driving north on I-49 and just cresting the hill to see the towers of Old Main commanding the city of Fayetteville. There it’s difficult to refrain from smiling, for it’s a sense of pride, of home, of family and friends, of settledness, of soul satisfaction.

Is there a collective sense of place? Or do we each define our own sense of place? All I know for sure right now is that I have two physical “homes” in this world and both help define who I am.

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**Shiloh Museum of Ozark History**
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Open Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. • Free Admission
Planning for 50!

Allyn Lord
Director

It’s hard to believe it, but in a few short years—September 2018, to be exact—the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History will turn fifty. Knowing that time easily slips away with small and big projects alike, we’re already planning for the half-century mark. One goal we’re moving towards is a complete renovation of the exhibit hall.

In the recent past, it was common to call exhibits that rarely changed “permanent” exhibits. Museums today rarely refer to their long-term exhibits that way, since “permanent” displays mean that they’re not updated with information, artifacts, and photos, and also don’t attract repeat visitors. Today most professional museums describe their less-often-changed exhibits as “long-term” or “core.”

When the current Shiloh Museum building was opened in September 1991, the exhibits included a timeline of Arkansas history, a partial reconstruction of the McGarrah-Reed log cabin, a Civil War video, an apple shed, a Frisco train mural, and timber-related artifacts. A few of those exhibits actually started life in the old museum building, the former city library. Now, 23 years later, all of those listed exhibits still exist, although they’ve been supplemented by many others. Recognition of that fact led museum staff and board members to include the exhibit hall renovation as one of its goals in its 2011–2015 strategic plan.

But renovation isn’t cheap. A “white paper” from 2010, supplemented in 2013, explored the possibilities for the exhibit hall renovation and noted that commercial design and fabrication costs range from around $250 to $400 per square foot, which meant that the price for a state-of-the-art exhibit hall would be between $1.25 and $1.8 million. Those costs are higher today. As a result, when considering the other big-ticket items the museum has in its strategic plan—the completion of the Shiloh Meeting Hall, additional compact storage for collections, digitization for our huge photograph collection, and land acquisition for future growth—it seemed unlikely that we could afford to engage a commercial firm to do the work. We decided to challenge ourselves and complete the renovation in-house.

Over the next four years you’ll see the exhibit hall morph from a functional though somewhat confusing layout with mix-and-match exhibit designs and some dated labels and displays, to exhibits which are more cohesive, holistic, balanced, intuitive, accessible, and up-to-date. This will be no small task and will involve every staff member, whether as curator, designer, builder, artifact- and photo-finder, painter, education consultant, wall mover, editor, translator, evaluator, or related-store-merchandise buyer.

As I write today, the section of the exhibit hall dedicated to the 1820–1860 period (often euphemistically referred to as “pioneer”) has been closed, most of its furniture, cases, and labels removed, a doorway sealed, and much of the floor torn out. (See page 5.) Soon, visitors will see a new exhibit about this important era of Arkansas Ozark history. Following that, the next four years will bring new exhibits on the 1860–1920, 1920–1950, and 1950–present periods, as well as updated introductory and special-exhibit areas.

There will be much to celebrate during the museum’s 50th anniversary, not the least of which will be an exciting and new exhibit hall. Watch for occasional reports on our progress along the way.
Archeological Society (NWAAS) at Cobb Cave in Newton County. You might say they became “hooked.” They became members of the Society and, through the years, Virginia served as secretary and treasurer while Larry eventually held every office possible. They also volunteered at archeological digs and helped with the University’s archeology labs.

The Swaims’ next connection to Northwest Arkansas began in 1965 when the City of Springdale purchased Judge Guy Howard’s collection of Indian artifacts with the intention of starting a city museum (soon to become our own Shiloh Museum). Then president of the NWAAS Society, Larry was contacted by Mayor Charles Davis to help the City transport, clean, organize, and catalog the large collection. This went on every Saturday for several years! As Larry recalled, they would “lay the artifacts out on tables, and then we would go around the table, trying to make a decision on what they were and what time period they came from.” His vital connection to this work and his role as Society president led to Larry becoming an ex-officio member of the Shiloh Museum’s first board of trustees.

Larry and Virginia were not only indispensable volunteers with critical skills and knowledge, but they also supported the Shiloh Museum from day one. In fact, they have perhaps been our longest museum members, signing up when memberships were first available in 1968 and continuing through Virginia’s death in 1998 until 2010 when Larry took his second retirement to the St. Louis area. That’s 43 years of membership history!

But the Swaims weren’t finished. They became charter members of the Bella Vista Historical Society in 1976 or 1977, and, according to Society president Carole Harter, when it was time to start the Bella Vista Museum, Larry and Virginia actually built the exhibit on the area’s prehistory. They went on to become “very active, serving as officers and helping arrange for University of Arkansas classes for credit to be held at the museum.” Even after Virginia’s death, Larry continued to serve as a museum docent.

During their time in Northwest Arkansas, I often ran into the Swaims at archeology presentations and here at our own museum events. In the 1990s they served on the University Museum’s advisory board. No matter when or where I’d see them—or later, see Larry—they were unflaggingly interested and involved but entirely humble and self-effacing. Meeting Larry, you’d never know how critical a role he and Virginia played in our history. Modest and unpretentious, Larry was one of the best men I’ve known.

She Can Do It!

Welcome to our new education assistant, Carly Squyres! This is actually a “welcome back” to Carly, as she spent the summer of 2012 working as an intern in our education department.

Born and raised in Tyler, Texas, Carly grew up exploring Arkansas during family vacations. Her love of the area led her to the University of Arkansas, where she received a B.A. in history.

Carly comes back to Arkansas from Hood River, Oregon, where she worked as education and volunteer coordinator for the History Museum of Hood River County.

This fall you might catch a glimpse of Carly portraying Rosie the Riveter as part of our “Dinner with the Searcys” program for schoolchildren about Northwest Arkansas during World War II.

In her spare time, Carly enjoys baking. Her current favorite recipe is a fudge cake made by her great-grandmother.
With the museum’s 50th birthday on the horizon in 2018, staff are undertaking a five-year redesign of the exhibit hall. First up—reimagining the McGarrah-Reed log cabin display. If all goes well, by the end of the year we’ll have new displays and interpretive panels examining life in Northwest Arkansas from the 1820s until the eve of the Civil War in 1861.

We have a stereotype about early Arkansas Ozark pioneer life—white subsistence farmers living in log cabins, carving out a homestead on the frontier. This was certainly true, but there is more to the story. Affluent settlers brought enslaved workers with them and, through their labor in farming or business, gained further wealth. Towns developed and with them came sophisticated offerings such as higher education, social affluence, and craftsmen who made luxury products like fine cabinetry and photographs. Native Americans were part of our history, as people who lived in the area or who were forced to march through it on the Trail of Tears.

Working with our collections manager, Carolyn Reno, and Mary Suter, curator of collections at The University Museum in Fayetteville, I “shopped” the holdings of both institutions in search of pioneer-era artifacts. Many hours and dozens of photos later, my head was stuffed with possibilities.

I know I won’t be able to show or tell everything I’d like to, but there are a few areas where I feel we need help in telling our story. There’s not as many pre-1860s artifacts in our collection as we would like.

For those of you who have items from Northwest Arkansas and are looking for a good home for them, I hope you’ll consider donating your treasures to the Shiloh Museum. We would be proud to preserve and share your family story as it relates to our area’s rich history. If you don’t wish to make a donation at this time, or have items from elsewhere that fit the 1820s–1861 time period and would represent objects the settlers could have used, perhaps you might consider a long-term loan.

The following is a wish list of items I hope to find, both artifacts and props.

- Tallow candles, pine knots
- Wood trenchers, pewter plates, horn cups, bone or wood-handled utensils, carving knife
- Iron spiders (round-bottomed skillet on legs)
- Ceramic storage jars, wooden keg
- Taxidermied deer, black bear, squirrel, turkey, raccoon, opossum, quail, prairie chicken, rabbit
- Homespun linens, skeins of homespun wool or cotton (natural or traditional color)
- Hide-covered wooden trunk or Jenny Lind trunk
- Wood rake, shovel, hay fork
- Bear oil
- Leather shoes, wooden shoe lasts
- Bonnet
- Coverlet section or remnant
- Oak block to demonstrate shingle making

If you have items for consideration or questions about what we’re looking for, please email me or call 479-750-8165. Thanks!

What’s in Store
Kathy Plume
Gift Shop Manager

This month is a busy time for many folks preparing for the start of a brand new school year. Even though my children are long past the age for buying crayons, scissors, and paste, I still enjoy walking the aisles of the school supplies, reminiscing about the excitement of the new beginnings each school year brought to our household.

How about adding a little back-to-school surprise for your child or grandchild by purchasing an Animal Tracks Sports Bottle for them to use for their water or favorite juice? These 18-ounce bottles are very study with a flip-straw lid and shaped nicely for small hands. The bottles are BPA free, contain recycled materials and proudly made in the USA. Each bottle comes with an activity book and 42 waterproof animal track stickers that children can use to personalize their bottle.

We will offer these bottles at a 10% discount through September 15. If you are a museum member, you will receive an additional 10% discount in addition to your member discount. Please remember your purchase supports the museum and our programs, facilities, and projects, and we now accept credit and debit cards. We hope to see you soon!

WISH LIST

For collections storage
• Rolling staircase ladder, $300

For photo archive and research library
• *The History of Garfield, Arkansas, 1874-1996*, by Wanda Mahurin
• 5-drawer file cabinet for research files, $400 (or used one in good condition)

For education programs
• Walmart gift card (any amount) to purchase perishable items such as apples (for demonstrating an apple peeler) and cream (for making butter)
• Purchase of period-correct fabric for making living history costumes

For oral history projects
• Sony MDR-7503 headphones, $50

For public events
• 2 white table skirts for 8-foot table, $40 each

For staff breakroom
• Microwave oven, $75

Thank you for these “for-use” items (May–July 2014)
*Maurice Colpitts*: dial caliper; tap and die set; heat gun
*Jacob Costello*: landscape plants
*Lewis and Clark Outfitters*: prizes for kids’ fishing derby
*Monarch Watch*: milkweed plants
*Greg Sims*: compact storage
*Southtown Sporting Goods*: bait for kids’ fishing derby
*Springdale Public Library*: Bloomington-Lowell Bits & Pieces
*Walmart Supercenter #54*: prize for kids’ fishing derby
*Walmart Supercenter #359*: prizes for kids’ fishing derby

Become a visionary!
The Shiloh Museum plans its future and works to make those plans a reality every day. To do so, we regularly engage in strategic planning, which involves envisioning where we want to go in the next five or so years and the steps it takes to get there. Our current strategic plan ends in 2015, so next year we’ll begin the process again. Are you interested in being a part of the strategic planning team? Email us; we’ll keep you informed as our planning gets underway.
Dr. Larry M. Aaron: Hand plow and wood stove from the Aaron and Brown families, Spring Creek (Benton County), early to mid-1900s

Susan Chadick: Holcomb family Bible, 1851

Ricky Lynch Creamer: Bobbie Byars Lynch’s Springdale High School graduation scrapbook, annual, autograph album, papers, and photographs of Springdale and family, early to mid-1900s

Staci Davis: Photograph of Springdale High School Class of 1916

Michael Dunn: AT&T Model 28 teletype machine, Fayetteville, mid-1950s–early 1980s

Wanda Dupree: Quilt made by Essie Ward, Marshall (Searcy County), ca. 1970

Robert McClain: Photographs and negatives from the estate of Bobbie Byars Lynch, Springdale and Washington County, early 1900s


Margaret Shaver: Glass bowl; Rev. Thomas Norwood’s sermon ledgers; Clifty school books; photographs of Walden and associated families; all from Madison and Benton counties, late 1800s–early 1900s

Shiloh Museum Board of Trustees: Packing labels for Springdale Concord Grapes (Springdale Grape and Fruit Growers Union) and Northwest Arkansas Concord Grapes (Springdale Berry Growers Assn.) both from early 1900s, and Nelson’s Tomato Juice (Nelson Packing Co., Springdale), ca. 1935

Dr. E. Mitch Singleton: 100th anniversary edition of Prairie Grove Telephone Company phone book, 2005

Karen Smith: Household items; Polaroid camera; advertising novelties; canning label; papers; photographs; all from the estate of Martha Reder Lankford, Springdale, 1930s–2000s

Deloris Stults: Aerial photograph of Springdale Municipal Airport, 1980

Wilma and Carol Sutton: GE AM/FM radio; school rings; clothing and textiles; papers; photographs; all from the Sutton and Farish families, Stony Point (Washington County), 1900–2000s

Margaret Taylor: Two baby dolls; kerosene can; family items, all from B. F. Thurman family, Washington County, early 1900s

Susan Young: Tonka T-6 toy bulldozer, Fayetteville, early 1970s

Photographs loaned for copying: Carole Byerly, Tom Duggan, Wayne Farwell, Joyce Griffith, Tom and Cindy Rimkus, Robert Robinson

To learn more about artifacts and photos in our collection, visit our website’s “Artifact of the Month” and “Photo of the Month.”

Subscribe to our website’s RSS feed to keep up with the new offerings each month.

Nelson’s tomato juice canning label, circa 1935. Purchased by Shiloh Museum Board of Trustees
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Through July 2014

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Hunt Elementary School
Tracey Birkes’ class
Sharon Cain’s class
Emily Canada’s class
Amanda Casamayor’s class
Jami Cheshier’s class
Polly Collier’s class
Julie Davis’ class
Ladonna Fontenopulos’ class
Ann Gawf’s class
Blake Gregory’s class
Megan Hinson’s class
Robin Hubbard’s class
Jean Huffman’s class
Katie Hulsey’s class

Individual
Allen County, Indiana, Public Library
Margie Alsbrook
Erwin Baird
Cassandra Barnett
Angie Bassett
Wes Block
Sallyann Brown
Zoe Caywood
Donald Choffel
Janet Clower
Lois Cole
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Larue Mabry
Mary Ann Marquette
Mimi Mathis
Shannon Dillard Mitchell
Cathy Montgomery
Karen Morton
Oda Mulloy
Willie Nemec
Juanita Nordgren
Kay Ogilvie
Bill Palkowski
Gail Pianalto
Sue Richardson
Melissa Roach
Joy Russell
Wilma Samuel
Sabine Schmidt
John Selph
Marcella Sharum
Linda Sheets
Brooke Shock
Bill Shook
Thelma Smallen
Deb Smith
Richard Stamps
Wanda Brewer Stephens
Richard Swanson
Christine Talley
Marion Tichenor
Jean Toenges
Thomas Tripplet
Mrs. Guy Wann
Mark Wann
Tony Wappel
Nova Jean Watson
Ann Webb
Dianne Wilson
Mildred Winborn
Theresa Wohlfeld
Bob Young

Quilt Fair Time

Our 37th annual Ozark Quilt Fair takes place
Saturday, September 13, from 10:00 a.m.
to 2:00 p.m. Quilts for show and sale will be
swaying in the breeze under shade trees on the
museum grounds, musical entertainment will be
provided by Working Class Grass, and the Itty
Bitty Quilt Committee will have a display of small
quilts inside the museum. Bring the family and
help us welcome fall to the Ozarks!
Joyce Griffith of Eureka Springs recently loaned some 50 photographs to us for copying. Spanning the early 1900s through the 1960s, the photos show the Dowell and Trammell families of Eureka Springs. Here are three of our favorites. The image at the top left of a mother nursing her baby is a first for our collection.
**Calendar**

**Through March 24, 2015.** *A Boy’s Toys*, an exhibit of toys from the 1930s and 1940s from the Orville Hall Jr. Collection.

**Through January 10, 2015.** *Just Doing My Work*, an exhibit featuring the paintings of folk artist Essie Ward.

**Through December 13.** *Healing Waters*, a photo exhibit about medicinal springs in Northwest Arkansas.

**August 20, noon.** “Fiddle Tunes Grandpa Played,” a program by Arkansas grand champion fiddler Will Bush.

**September 13, 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.** 37th Ozark Quilt Fair, with new and antique quilts for show and sale.

**September 17, noon.** “One Family in Benton County: Eyewitnesses to Arkansas Statehood, the Civil War, and the Coming of the Railroad,” a program on the pioneer Grimes family, by Grimes descendant James Huffman.


**November 1, 10:30 a.m.** Screening of *Oak Cemetery: A Forgotten Place*, a documentary by filmmakers John Cooper and Tiffany King on Fayetteville’s historic African-American cemetery. Sponsored by the Washington County Cemetery Preservation Group.

**November 19, noon.** “Pennyroyals, Persimmons, and Pawpaws,” a program on local native plants historically used for food and medicine, by Justin Nolan, professor of anthropology at the University of Arkansas.

**December 16–May 16, 2015.** *Lime Light*, a photo exhibit about the lime industry in the Arkansas Ozarks and the dangers the workers faced.

**2015**

**January 10, 2015.** Cabin Fever Reliever, the museum’s annual open house featuring displays by local collectors.

**January 21, noon.** “Disappearing Ground: Karst, Sinkholes, Caves, and More,” a program by Arkansas master naturalist Denis Dean.

**January 26–January 9, 2016.** *Out of the Darkroom*, a photo exhibit featuring images from the museum collection chosen by museum photographer Don House.

**February 18, noon.** “Kith, Kin, and Claims on Chicken Bristle Mountain,” a program about the effects of the Civil War on a Washington County community, by Shiloh Museum outreach coordinator Susan Young.

**March 18, noon.** “Preserving Our Heritage: Documenting Historic Arkansas Cemeteries,” a program by Kathleen Cande, senior project archeologist with the Arkansas Archeological Survey.

**Mission Statement**

The Shiloh Museum of Ozark History serves the public by providing resources for finding meaning, enjoyment, and inspiration in the exploration of the Arkansas Ozarks. Adopted by the Shiloh Museum Board of Trustees on July 13, 2006

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**Join the Shiloh Museum Association**

- Satisfaction of knowing you are supporting an important cultural institution and helping preserve our Arkansas Ozark heritage, and
- 10% discount on Shiloh Store purchases
- Discount on photo reproduction fees
- Reduced fees for children’s and adult workshops
- Invitations to exhibit openings and special events

**Consider a gift to the Shiloh Museum Endowment Fund**

- Check here if you would like more information about the endowment fund.

**Help us save money and trees**

- Check here if you would like to receive your newsletter by email instead of U. S. mail.

**Email address ________________________________

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**Membership Levels**

- Individual - $15
- School class - $12.50
- Family - $20
- Senior Individual (65+) - $10
- Senior Couple - $15
- Patron - $50
- Sponsor - $100
- Sustaining - $250
- Benefactor - $500
- Founding - $1,000

**Name ___________________________________________**

**Address _______________________________**

**City __________________________ State __________ Zip __________**

**Please make check payable to:** Shiloh Museum

118 W. Johnson Avenue
Springdale, AR 72764

479-750-8165