Land of the Crossbowettes

The Crossbowettes strike up a pose atop Governor’s Hill in Huntsville (Madison County), October 1962. From left: Beverly Alverson, Shirley Duncan, Susie McDonald, Linda Owens, Diane McKinney, and Juanita Thompson. Pat Donat, photographer. Northwest Arkansas Times Collection (NWAT D-62-10)

Marie Demeroukas  
Photo Archivist/Research Librarian

One of the fun things about working on photo exhibits is that I never know what will pop up because of them. About a month after “Scenes of Madison County” opened, an article about the exhibit ran in the newspaper. It featured a 1962 photo of Huntsville’s famous Crossbowettes, a high school girls’ archery team. The story ran on Sunday; early Monday morning, one of the “girls” was here at the museum. When I overheard Shirley Franklin talking about the photo I zoomed out of my office to speak with her. I had to know more!

Organized by George M. Stevens, the first National Crossbow Tournament was held in 1954 at Blanchard Springs in north-central Arkansas. Stevens was a crossbow maker and inventor who was enthralled with the weapon’s history and the romance of medieval times. Seeing a good thing, Huntsville druggist and crossbow enthusiast Arlis Coger and other civic leaders worked to lure Stevens and the tournament to town, which was soon dubbed “Land of the Crossbow.” They hoped the tourney would become a signature tourist event like War Eagle’s craft fair and Eureka Springs’ folk festival. In October 1958 the medieval-themed tournament was held on Governor’s Hill, overlooking Huntsville. It featured costumed contestants, crossbow and lancing competitions, a queen and her court, and precision.
As a part of the museum’s 50th anniversary last year, I researched the museum’s history, people, and activities and learned so much. Looking back over that period of time is both eye-opening and humbling, seeing how far we’ve come as a place for learning, preservation, and community memories.

This week I had reason to look back twenty-five years to 1994. That was the year I left my first museum job at the now-closed University of Arkansas Museum for my next job, assistant director at the Rogers Historical Museum. So 1994 is a date I can tag in my own timeline as important.

Many of you may not know that the Shiloh Museum keeps scrapbooks of our history going back to our founding in 1968. Browsing the 129-page scrapbook for 1994 was a joy. Among that year’s highlights:

- We used a museum consultant to help set up long-term exhibits in our then-three-year-old building (and this year we’ve finished a five-year renovation of our entire exhibit hall). The museum endowment hit $30,000 (and today stands at just shy of $1.75 million).
- A new exhibit, *Maud Duncan: An Extraordinary Ozark Woman*, highlighted the Winslow mayor and newspaper publisher's life (and the featured talk was given by historian/author Robert Winn, in whose Fayetteville home I now live).
- Susan Young won the “volunteer of the year” award from the Arkansas Museums Association, just as she was transitioning to outreach coordinator, a paid position (and now, after twenty-five years of service, is the recipient of multiple awards for her outstanding work).
- Photographer and museum supporter Bruce Vaughan published *Emma, We Love You*, a look at Springdale’s downtown area, and spoke at the museum (and today downtown Springdale is thriving with new activity and upcoming development, while we miss Bruce tremendously).

The museum was preparing a new exhibit, *The Changing Face of Northwest Arkansas*, to discuss multiculturalism in the region. The 1990 census listed Springdale’s population as 29,495, comprised of 98% white, 1% American Indian, and less than 1% each Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, and Latinx (while today the museum celebrates Springdale’s diversity shown in the 2018 estimated population of 81,029: 49% white, 36% Latinx, 9% Asian/Pacific Islander, 3% each Black and 2+ races, and 1% American Indian).

Times have changed a lot in twenty-five years, but we hopefully continue to learn from and appreciate the past.

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Volunteer Spotlight

Susan Young
Outreach Coordinator

Washington County Master Gardeners Ginger Candrilli and Mary Ann Bardwell have been putting their green-thumb talents to work for us since 2017. Their friendship began when they met during Master Gardener training in 2004. (They attained Master Gardener Life Member status this year—an honor bestowed upon those who complete fifteen years of service). On Wednesdays you’ll find Ginger and Mary Ann among the legion of Master Gardeners donating their time to help maintain the plantings throughout our campus.

Ginger Candrilli grew up in Virginia. She first learned about gardening at the age of three, when she helped her grandmother plant a garden. As a young adult, Ginger raised two children while studying to become an attorney. After a while, Ginger became dissatisfied with the legal profession. About that same time, she reconnected with a childhood friend, Ricky Candrilli. Ricky was a “back-to-the-lander” homesteading in the wilds of Madison County, Arkansas. He preferred to live simply, which appealed to Ginger. Soon the two were married. Today the Candrilis enjoy life off the grid in Madison County.

Mary Ann Bardwell was born and raised in Texas. “Mother loved gardening. As a child, I followed her around as she worked in the yard,” Mary Ann recalls. “I remember a rose she grew called ‘Seven Sisters.’” Mary Ann and her husband, Jack, spent their working years in various places where Jack’s career with the Air Force and later, the Army Corps of Engineers, took them. Along the way they raised a daughter and a son. Their daughter now lives in Northwest Arkansas, so the Bardwells decided to move to Springdale to be closer to family. As Mary Ann jokes, “We’re determined to be a problem to our daughter in our old age!”

In 2017, Ginger and Mary Ann adopted an overgrown fencerow on the east boundary of the museum campus, converting it to a lovely bed of native and heirloom plants. Groundskeeper Marty Powers christened the location “Gilligan’s Garden.” If you watched TV in the 1960s, you know why: Gilligan’s Island, a popular sitcom of that era, followed the adventures of tour-boat passengers marooned on an “uncharted desert isle.” Among the castaways were Ginger (a movie star) and Mary Ann (a wholesome country girl). While we’ve never heard our Ginger and Mary Ann compare their time here at the museum to being stranded on a primitive island, it hasn’t always been smooth sailing. Earlier this year, City workers installed a new fence alongside Ginger and Mary Ann’s bed of lovely full-grown native and heirloom plants. Due to an unfortunate miscommunication, most of Gilligan’s Garden was destroyed during the fencing project. Ginger and Mary Ann were heartbroken, as was Marty. But they approached the setback with determination. With shovels, picks, and rakes in hand, they went to work. A complete transformation was required which involved removing large rocks and poor soil brought to the surface during the fencing process. Four trips were made for top soil, additives, peat moss, and compost to remediate the damage. This was required before replacing plants. When the new plantings occur, “Gilligan’s Garden” will thrive again.

It’s easy to see that Ginger Candrilli and Mary Ann Bardwell get a lot of satisfaction from sharing their skills with the museum. “My heart is in gardening. That’s why I became a Master Gardener,” says Ginger. For Mary Ann, “Gardening makes me feel good. It makes my heart sing.” Both agree that the greatest pleasure of all comes from knowing that they’re creating a natural haven for butterflies, pollinators, birds, and museum visitors to enjoy.

Washington County Master Gardeners Ginger Candrilli (left) and Mary Ann Bardwell take a break from tending “Gilligan’s Garden” at the museum.
DONATIONS TO THE COLLECTIONS
April–June 2019

**Rick Ault:** Springdale Jaycees Fair poster, 1960s

**Don Bailey:** Civil War discharge papers, marriage certificate, land records from the Cox, Hanks, and Mason families, Johnson, 1865–1962

**Bob Besom:** Walter J. Lemke columns and newsletters, books, periodicals, and ephemera on Ozark history, 1920s–1990s

**Reuben Blood:** 142nd Field Artillery Regiment badge, Springdale, 1940s

**Russell Burdine Jr.:** Russell Burdine Sr. campaign card for Newton County sheriff; reproduction photos of Newton County moonshine stills, 1950s

**Marilyn Dotson:** World War II Navy uniform, papers, telegrams, sweetheart pin, makeup gift set, etc., and photographs of William W. “Sam” and Juanita Hubbard Bailey, Alabam (Madison County), 1940s-1970s

**Ann Engskov:** Nail keg, bellows, recipe books, Berryville Centennial 1950 film, Berryville, about 1950

**Walt Lumpkin:** *Down in the Holler: A Gallery of Ozark Folk Speech* by Vance Randolph and George P. Wilson, 1953

**Paul G. Mayfield:** Letter to E. R. Ritter, of Springdale from Patrick Parker of the University of Arkansas Chemistry Department regarding analysis of crude oil sample, 1958

**Caroline Newbern:** Mercury reflector lamp, Ralph Lewis’s coin purse, 1920s U.S. flag, handmade greeting card, program flier, songbook, photographs of the Berry and Lewis families, Hindsville, Springdale, and Fayetteville, 1872–1940s

**The Odd Soul:** Soda fountain tap handles from Joyce's Drugstore, Springdale, 1900s

**Truman Stamps:** Ward’s Ice Cream Company ice pick, Springdale, circa 1950

**Wanda Stephens:** Employee handbooks for McDonald’s of Northwest Arkansas and Dayco Products, Springdale, 1976, 1977, 1988

**Diane Winberry:** “Quilts, Quilters, and Quilting in Northwest Arkansas” by Cinda K. Baldwin, 1981

**Photographs loaned for copying**

**Marilyn F. Dotson:** Madison County school images from teacher Juanita Fern Bailey, late 1930s–mid 1980s

**Jayne Morin:** Reed, Hope, and Babb family portraits from Elkins, West Fork, and Prairie Grove, 1890s–1910s

**To explore our collections, visit our website’s Artifact of the Month and Photo of the Month.**

Hope to see you at our 41st annual Ozark Quilt Fair, Saturday, September 14, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Stroll the grounds where quilters and quilt lovers will have new and antique quilts for show and sale. Enjoy bluegrass, country, and gospel music by Greenland Station. Inside the museum, members of the Dogwood Quilters Guild will have a display of small quilts, and certified quilt appraiser Alice McElwain will be on hand to visit about the quilt appraisal process. The Ozark Quilt Fair is sponsored by Arvest Bank.
crossbow shooting by the Crossbowettes.

Shirley Duncan Franklin and Diane McKinney Johnson were members of the team in the early 1960s. In response to questions posed by the museum they shared their memories, excerpted and edited, below.

“We were acquainted with the original Crossbowettes who knew we had an interest in becoming a part of the team. We were both athletic, adventurous, and ready for challenges. Shirley enjoyed shooting her Red Ryder BB Gun, her brother's .22 rifle, and her childhood bow and arrow. Diane's dad was a West Texas cowboy and taught her to shoot a .22 rifle at an early age. We were trained by George Stevens and the veteran Crossbowettes. His finely made, handcrafted repeating crossbows were mostly accurate and a dream to shoot. We were also trained [by an expert] in military drill to march and follow such instructions as At Ease, Parade Rest, Attention, Present Arms, Order Arms, and Port Arms. The drills were done with exacting precision and were quite impressive.

“Mr. Stevens was always inventing new tricks to wow the audience. He was a creative genius! They included shooting balloons and Christmas ornaments on an electric-powered, revolving metal hoop on a stand, and shooting an apple off the head of a small model of William Tell's son. We practiced regularly in Arlis Coger's front yard in Huntsville and beside the Crossbow Restaurant.

“Shirley did the rapid-fire [trick], shooting all five arrows into the target as quickly as possible. And she shot a balloon out of [the mouth of] a mechanical medieval dragon that Mr. Stevens designed. Diane and Shirley performed the rapid-fire simultaneously, shooting 10 arrows into the [target's] bull's-eye. This was quite a feat because there was a 25-pound pull on the crossbow requiring it to be cocked and shot at lightning speed. Diane's other specialty was shooting backwards using a tiny mirror, which was extremely difficult! Performing in front of the crowd was exhilarating. We had a few butterflies in our stomachs, but we were trained and ready to perform.

“Diane was the Queen of Love and Beauty in 1964 and reigned over the contests. There was always a noticeable reaction in the audience when the queen and her entourage rode into and circled the tournament grounds. She arrived in an open barouche carriage [built by Ed Reed], accompanied by her Crossbowettes and a bodyguard of mounted lancers. She was officially crowned queen before the adoring crowd.

“The costumes worn [by the Crossbowettes] were quite distinctive and added to the atmosphere of the historic era represented. The medieval attire was composed of the following: white blouse with full, long sleeves; gold shorts covered with white, two-inch-wide vertical strips attached to the waist and legs; gold cummerbund; turquoise cape lined in gold with a single lion appliquéd to the back of the cape [in the style of the coat of arms of King Richard the Lionheart of England]; a white and turquoise Tudor beret-style hat with a long white feather; a quiver with a leather strap holding five arrows; and tennis shoes and white socks. [The costumes were] made by a professional seamstress, Bernice Cooper.

“In 1959, Dr. Austin Smith built the Crossbow Restaurant. The Crossbowettes performed for patrons at the north side of the restaurant on Sunday afternoons. Many of the girls worked there in the summers as waitresses, [as did Shirley and Diane, during high school and college]. We wore black skirts, white blouses, and turquoise capes which were very festive and welcoming. We were also the first lifeguards at the Withrow Springs Park swimming pool. After working the 6 a.m. morning shift at the restaurant we would head out Highway 23 North to finish the day at the pool until 9 p.m. Visitors at the park would see us at the pool and at the Crossbow the next day. Shirley continued
Crossbowettes Shirley Duncan Franklin (left) and Diane McKinney Johnson pose with their 1962 photo at the Shiloh Museum, July 2019.

was asked if she was a twin on several occasions.

“We left the team in 1965 after graduating from high school. We passed on the costumes and beloved crossbows to the next generation of Crossbowettes. Shirley did not participate in the sport any longer; however, Diane has a modern hunting bow and has harvested several bucks during bow season. We continue to be lifelong friends along with a few others. We have so many wonderful shared memories that we connect immediately when we are together.”

The crossbow tournament moved to Withrow Springs State Park in 1966, where the event’s pageantry lessened over time, only to resume again in the late 1990s as Renaissance festivals gained in popularity. The last Crossbowette performance was in 1967; the last tournament was held in 2003.

We’d love to preserve more history about the Crossbowettes and the crossbow tournament. If you have memories, images, or artifacts to share, please email Marie Demeroukas or call 479-750-8165.

More Crossbowettes photos on page 8.

WISH LIST

For education programs
• Walmart or Harps gift cards to purchase perishable items such as apples, cream, and eggs for education programs, any amount

For staff office
• (2) two-drawer white file cabinets, $150 each (or used ones in good condition)

For exhibits workshop
• clamps, any size, $5 and up
• scaffold section, $200

For photo and digitization projects
• B+W UV Haze MRC 010M filter – 72mm, $40
• B+W 72mm XS Pro Kaesemann high transmission circular polarizer MRC-nano filter, $85
• Fujifilm NP-T125 rechargeable lithium-ion battery, $119
• mini refrigerator for film storage, $100

For kitchen/breakroom
• microwave oven, $80

THANK YOU
. . . for these “for-use” items (April–June 2019)

Bob Besom: Shiloh Reflections by Bruce Vaughan; University of Arkansas, 1871–1948 by Harrison Hale

Syd Caldwell: Like Cords Around My Heart: A Sacred Harp Memoir by Buell Cobb

Seth Herod: “Turn and Learn” activity book

Lokomotion Family Fun Park: gift card for kids’ fishing derby prize

Spring Street Grill: pies for our Washington County Master Gardener volunteers

Springdale Bowling Center: gift card for kids’ fishing derby prize

Luke Wright: apple peeler repair

CREATE YOUR LEGACY

By adding just one sentence to your will, you can help give children, families, and community members a place for learning, memories, and preserving local history. Simply say, “I bequeath X% [or $X] from my estate to the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History Endowment at Arkansas Community Foundation, 5 Allied Drive, Suite 51110, Building 5, Little Rock, AR 72202 TIN: 52-1055743.”
Board Member Brief

**Name:** Zessna Garcia Rios

**Family:** My family is originally from Mexico but we moved to Northwest Arkansas in 1992.

**Job:** Community engagement coordinator at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art

**Pets:** I have one giant two-year-old puppy. Her name is Mia.

**Hobbies:** I enjoy going dancing with friends and going to the movies.

**Favorite TV show:** I have lots, but my top three are, in no particular order: *Queer Eye*, *Golden Girls*, and *Bones*.

**Describe a perfect day.** Spending time with my family, my pup, and some close friends outside in the backyard having carne asada.

**What is your favorite animal and why?** The bottlenose dolphin. I’ve always loved them since I was a kid. They are so beautiful, playful, and carefree.

**What three people, living or dead, would you invite to dinner?** Harriet Tubman, Dolores Huerta, and Maya Angelou, three strong women with incredible stories to tell. I can only imagine the amazing stories they would share and the wisdom they would impart from their struggles and their victories.
More from the Land of the Crossbowettes


Karen Smith (back, second from right) is crowned queen by 1966 queen Trudy Gaskill (back, second from left), October 1967. Identified in the queen’s court is Judy Karnes, front left. From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, November 12, 1967. Courtesy Judy Karnes Cotton

The queen and her court on parade at the Eureka Springs Fall Festival, October 1966. Crossbowettes, from left: Judy Karnes, Claudette Elzey, Queen Trudy Gaskill, Chris Smith, and Kathy Counts. Courtesy Judy Karnes Cotton

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Dave & Patsy Louk
Brenda Love
Dr. & Mrs. Don Love
Kelli Maestri
Tom Maringer
Sharon Martin
Aaron & Brittany McArthur
Wendell Mccrinn
Mac & Karen McGilvery
John, Lynn, & Hannah McLarty
Dorothy R. Miller
Jim & Kathy Miller
Shannon Dillard Mitchell
Melanie Moncur
Ed Stilley, the focus of our *Instruments of Faith* exhibit, passed away June 12 at the age of 88.

We are very fortunate that Ed and his family were able to attend an exhibit reception held here at the museum in March of this year. Our thoughts continue to be with Ed’s family.

Ed Stilley’s legacy will live on through those who met and knew him.

*Russell Cothren, photographer. Courtesy Kelly Mullhollan*
CURRENT SPECIAL EXHIBITS


UPCOMING EVENTS AND EXHIBITS

**August 10, 1:00–3:00 p.m.** Quilt show-and-tell with certified quilt appraiser Alice McElwain. Bring your quilt to share. Caring for heirloom quilts will be discussed.

**August 17, 10:00 a.m.** *Feed Communities* will help you make seed balls that are a fun and easy way to grow native wildflowers. Part of our Shiloh Saturday Series for families.

**August 21, noon.** “Politics, Prejudice, and Permanent Posts,” a program on western Arkansas boundary markers by retired archaeologist John Riggs.

**September 14, 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.** 41st Ozark Quilt Fair. See details on page 4.

**September 18, noon.** “Working for Things Eternal,” a program about Ted Richmond and his Wilderness Library in Newton County, by Shiloh Museum outreach coordinator Susan Young.

**September 21, 10:00 a.m.** Learn about the life cycle of a monarch butterfly and pay a visit to the museum’s Monarch Waystation. Part of our Shiloh Saturday Series for families.

**October 16, noon.** “The Ozark Coverlet Project: But Wait, There’s More!” Martha Benson and Laura Redford, founders of the *Ozark Coverlet Project* to document historic coverlets found in the region, will share their latest discoveries.

**October 19, 10:00 a.m.** Make-and-take your own corn husk doll. Part of our Shiloh Saturday Series for families.

**November 16, 10:00 a.m.** Joyce Hicks of *Northwest Arkansas Turtle Rehabilitation Center* will introduce you to some of her turtle pals. Part of our Shiloh Saturday Series for families.

**November 20, noon.** In honor of the 150th anniversary of the founding of Boone County, local historian Roger Logan will discuss the circumstances in 1869 that led to the birth of a new county and soon a new city, Harrison.

**December 17–June 20, 2020.** *Working on the Railroad*, a photo exhibit on the history of railroading in the region, from the arrival of trains in 1881 to present-day tourist excursions.

**January 11, 2020, 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.** Cabin Fever Reliever, the museum’s annual celebration of the new year, featuring displays by local collectors.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Shiloh Museum of Ozark History serves the public by preserving and providing resources for finding meaning, enjoyment, and inspiration in the exploration of the Arkansas Ozarks. Adopted by the Shiloh Museum Board of Trustees on February 11, 2016.

Join the Shiloh Museum Association

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• 10% discount on Shiloh Store purchases
• Discount on photo reproduction fees
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• Invitations to exhibit openings and special events

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☐ Senior Couple - $15  ☐ Founding - $1,000

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