

WOMEN WHO SHAPED HOT SPRINGS AND GARLAND COUNTY

Hot Springs

WOMEN'S
LEADERSHIP
ALLIANCE





About the Exhibit

In honor of Women's History Month, this exhibit was curated by Sarah Hutzler for the Hot Springs Women's Leadership Alliance, with special recognition to the Garland County Historical Society for their extensive support, and to the Uzuri Project and Jean Lacefield for their meaningful contributions to this project. This exhibit and its contents are intended for educational and nonprofit use.

This exhibit celebrates the women whose leadership and legacy built the foundation of our region. From early settlers and entrepreneurs to educators, civil rights advocates, and cultural trailblazers, these women transformed their communities in ways still felt today. As this exhibit travels throughout Hot Springs, it invites audiences to rediscover these remarkable women, honor their contributions, and help preserve their legacies. Each panel highlights not only individual accomplishments, but also the collective strength of women whose lives intersected with this community. While some did not remain in Hot Springs, their influence began here or was shaped here in meaningful ways, leaving a legacy that helped shape Garland County and, in some cases, extended far beyond the state and across the nation.

Citation and Image Credits

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Primary sources include the Garland County Historical Society, The Uzuri Project, Encyclopedia of Arkansas, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System, Center for Arkansas History and Culture, National Park Service – Hot Springs National Park, Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame, Library of Congress, Arkansas State Archives, local newspaper archives, private collections, and community contributors.

Full image credits and additional documentation are available at our website:

<https://hswomenleaders.org/women-of-garland-county>

Contribute to the Exhibit

The history of women in Hot Springs is ongoing, and historical records are not always complete. If you have additional information, photographs, documents, or stories related to women featured in this exhibit, we welcome your input. Questions and corrections are also encouraged.

Contributions: sarah@hswomenleaders.org



Founders & Frontierswoman Era

During the early to mid 1800's, as Hot Springs took shape as a permanent settlement, women played essential roles in building community and survival in a frontier environment. Their often unrecorded labor sustained households, organized religious and social life, and created the foundations of economic stability and social cohesion. Through this work, women helped transform Hot Springs from a remote outpost into a viable, enduring community.



Image Credit: Depiction of the Dunbar and Hunter expedition to the "Hot Water of the Washita" - National Park Service, Hot Springs National Park archives.

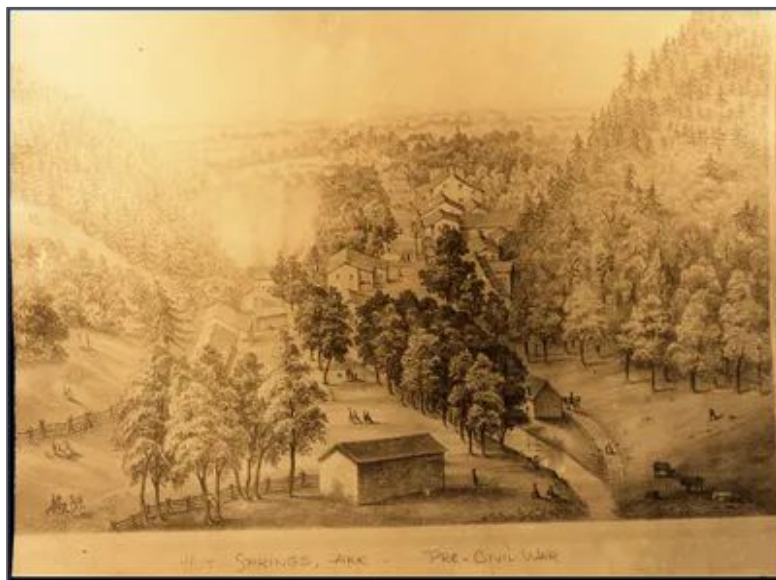


Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society.



SARAH PERCIFUL (C. EARLY 1800'S)

- First permanent woman resident of Hot Springs (1815)
- Operated early rental cabins and later a boarding house near the springs
- Recognized as Hot Springs' earliest known businesswoman

Source: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society

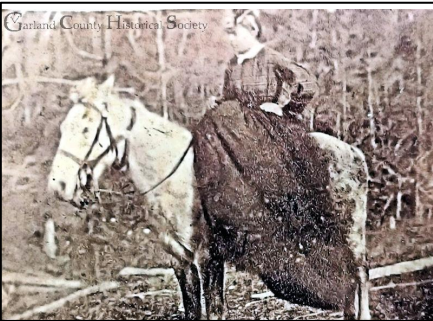
Image Credit: Image of the hot springs in 1834 - National Park Service, Hot Springs National Park archives. There are no known images of Sarah Perciful to exist. The image shown represents the time period close to which she lived.



LYDIA BELDING (C. EARLY 1800's)

- Early settler who operated boarding and lodging for visitors seeking the thermal springs
- Managed household, farm, and business while raising her family through

Source & Image Credit: Garland County Historical Society



SARAH HALE (C. EARLY 1800's-1888)

- Early Hot Springs settler (arrived in 1836) and partner in Hale House, an early lodging establishment and bathhouse
- Founded the city's first church and first school
- Rebuilt the church after the Civil War, establishing what eventually became First Baptist Church

Source & Image Credit: Garland County Historical Society

1870- Inhabitants in Hot Springs Township, in the County of Garland, enumerated by me on the 19th day of August, 1870.

See: Hot Springs

NAME	AGE	SEX	COLOR	INDUSTRY	PLACE OF BIRTH	PROPERTY	VALUE	REAL ESTATE	PERSONAL	TOTAL	WIFE	CHILDREN
Wheeler John	30	M	W	Farmer	Virginia	1000	1000	1000	1000	4000	1	2
Wheeler Jane	27	F	W	Wife	Virginia						1	2
Wheeler George	18	M	W	Farmer	Virginia	100	100	100	100	400		1
Wheeler Mary	15	F	W	Wife	Virginia						1	1
Wheeler John	12	M	W	Farmer	Virginia	50	50	50	50	200		1
Wheeler Mary	10	F	W	Wife	Virginia						1	1
Wheeler John	8	M	W	Farmer	Virginia	25	25	25	25	100		1
Wheeler Mary	6	F	W	Wife	Virginia						1	1
Wheeler John	4	M	W	Farmer	Virginia	10	10	10	10	40		1
Wheeler Mary	3	F	W	Wife	Virginia						1	1
Wheeler John	2	M	W	Farmer	Virginia	5	5	5	5	20		1
Wheeler Mary	1	F	W	Wife	Virginia						1	1

FANNIE HENDERSON (C. LATE 1800'S)

- Helped establish one of the earliest African American landholdings in Hot Springs through an 1882 federal land patent.
- Her family's homestead became a focal point for archaeological interpretation of African American life in the community.
- Represents African American agency in land ownership and community building during Reconstruction.

Sources: National Park Service, "Building an African American Community at Hot Springs"

Image Credit: There are no known images of Fannie Henderson to exist. Displayed is a reproduction of the 1870 United States Federal Census, documenting Fannie Henderson by name alongside members of her family.



Reconstruction & Transformation Era

After the Civil War, Hot Springs entered a period of reconstruction, modernization, and social transformation. Women stepped into new roles as teachers, business owners, church leaders, and civic organizers. Their expanding presence in public life helped stabilize the recovering community and reshape its identity. As tourism and urban development grew, these women helped guide Hot Springs through an era of challenge and opportunity.

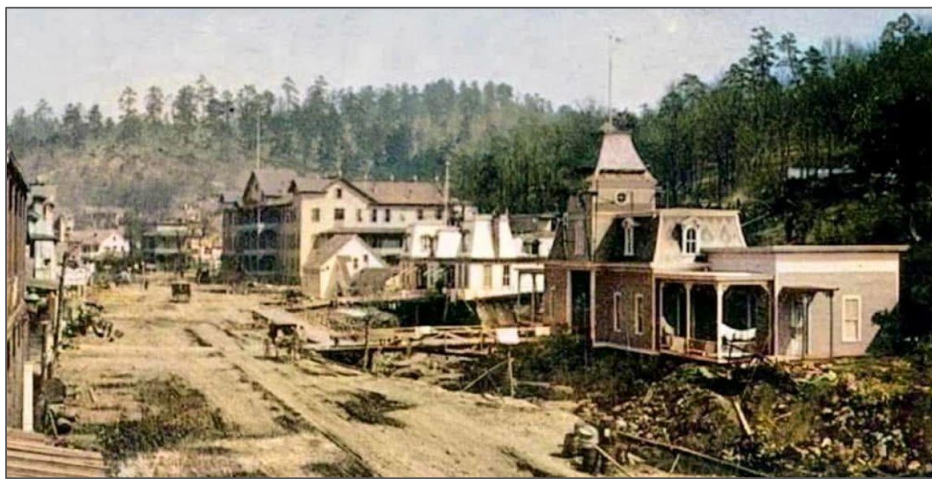


Image Credit: Garland County Historical Society



Image Credit: Depiction of "Old Hale" Bathhouse, c. 1875. Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society.



JENNIE JONES (C. EARLY TO MID 1800's)

- Donated land and built the first Jones School (1876)
- Co-founded Greenwood Cemetery (1870)
- Influenced the development of the Jonestown / South Hot Springs area

Source & Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



SARAH ELLSWORTH (1844–1927)

- Helped found the Women's National Library Association and the first library in Hot Springs
- President, Arkansas Federation of Women's Clubs (1908–1910)
- Force behind the creation of the water fountain at the intersection of Whittington, Park, and Central
- Her home, Wildwood, became a cultural landmark and a gathering place for civic and artistic life in Hot Springs

Source & Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



MARY LUCRETIA DUDLEY SPARGO (1846–1929)

- President, Frances Willard Equal Suffrage Association (Hot Springs), 1912
- President, Political Equality League of Hot Springs, 1912–1914
- Represented Hot Springs at the first State Woman Suffrage Association meeting in Little Rock, 1915

Sources: Biographical Sketch of Mary Lucretia Dudley Spargo, written by Wendy Lucas. Included in Part III: Mainstream Suffragists—National American Woman Suffrage Association. Alexander Street.

Image Credit: Courtesy of Descendants of Mary Lucretia Dudley Spargo



MARGARETTA "MAGGIE" STROCK (1859–1953)

- Early professional female artist and photographer in Hot Springs
- Worked in the James F. Kennedy studio producing photographs and stereoscopic views
- Helped document Hot Springs scenes and prominent families during the late 19th century

Sources: Thornton, Kittie. "Margaretta Maynard (Maggie) Strock, Early Hot Springs Artist." *The Record*, 1967.; Article provided by the Garland County Historical Society.

Image Credit: Portrait of Margaretta Maynard "Maggie" Strock (1859–1953). Reproduced from *The Record*, 1967. Courtesy of the Strock/Thornton family. Image provided by the Garland County Historical Society.



CARRIE ELEANE BRANSON WEBB (1883–1953)

- Principal benefactor and long-term steward of the Emma Elease Webb Community Center which supported youth programs and hosted Black men's and women's organizations, including the NAACP and the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs
- Quiet philanthropic leader and liberal contributor to charitable causes
- Influential mentor through lived example, shaping future leaders such as Dr. Edith Irby Jones
- European Tour, traveling for three months through multiple European countries alongside The Jolly 14, fourteen nationally known Black doctors, including educator Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune.

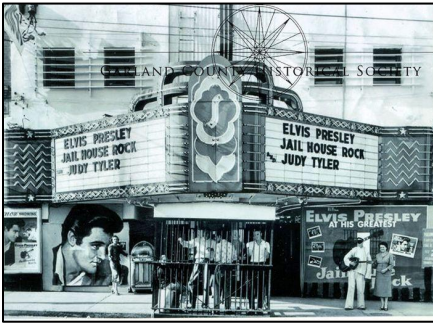
Source and Image Credit: Courtesy of The Uzuri Project archives; copyright @ 2014, John L. Webb, The Man And His Legacy.



KATHERINE STINSON (1891–1977)

- Established an early flying school in Hot Springs, possibly the first, and one of the earliest woman-founded flight schools in the United States
- Fourth woman in the U.S. to earn a pilot's license (July 24, 1912) and, at age 21, the youngest licensed female aviator, known as "The Flying Schoolgirl"
- Credited as the first woman to fly over London, marking an international aviation milestone
- Became the first woman pilot authorized to carry U.S. mail, breaking another federal barrier

Source: Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, "Katherine Stinson: Stunt Flier, Record Setter"; Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Katherine Stinson." Image Credit: Arkansas Gazette, May 11, 1916; Image provided by Encyclopedia of Arkansas.



JESSIE HOWE (C. EARLY 1900'S)

- Recognized as one of Arkansas's earliest female theater owners, and possibly the first, as she herself claimed
- Managed the Strand Theatre from its opening in 1901, operated the Best Theatre in early 1900s, and later opened and operated the Sunset Drive-In (1951–1983), shaping more than 80 years of cinema history.

Source & Image Credit: Courtesy of the W. Threadgill Collection, Garland County Historical Society archives



ETTA RADFORD (C. 1901)

- Registered nurse and supervisor at Leo N. Levi Memorial Hospital
- Donated 10 acres to the Hot Springs Girl Scout unit and later became known as the Radford House. It served generations of girls in Garland County until its closure in 2025.

Source: Information compiled from various articles published in the Sentinel Record, accessed through NewsBank: America's News – Historical and Current.

Image Credit: Sentinel Record, 4 Sept. 1940, p. 2. NewsBank: America's News – Historical and Current.



ADDIE BAXTER (C. EARLY TO MID 1900's)

- One of the earliest known Black women business owners in Hot Springs
- Built a successful hospitality network during segregation, providing lodging, food, and safety for African American travelers and workers
- Owned and operated Baxter Hotels No. 1–3 and a café on Malvern Avenue
- Expanded her holdings to an entire block on Cottage Street

Source and Image Credit: Courtesy of the Wakefield family; community records.



Gangsters & Vice Era

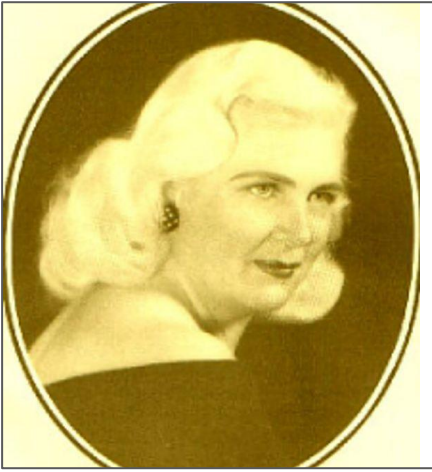
During the 1920's and 1940's, Hot Springs became infamous for illegal gambling, nightlife, and organized crime. Women operated successful businesses within this underground economy, navigating social stigma, legal risk, and male-dominated power structures. Their stories challenge traditional moral narratives, revealing how women exercised agency, economic control, and public influence in a city built on indulgence.



Image Credit: Garland County Historical Society



Image Credit: Garland County Historical Society



MADAME MAXINE JONES (1915–1997)

- Widely known as Madame Maxine Jones, she operated a highly profitable brothel that served politicians, businessmen, and organized crime figures, and was noted for her extensive political connections.
- Became a recognizable figure in the city’s underground economy

Source: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Maxine Temple Jones"

Image Credit: Courtesy of the Father Mohtt Foundation Collection, accessed via Find a Grave, “Dora Maxine Jones,” memorial no. 9106610. Original source unknown.

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 Atkins Mrs Laura, 120 Exchange
 Barnett David, 619 Valley
 Bean G L, 428½ Ouachita av
 Belmont Mrs Josie, 422½ Malvern av
 Birdsell Miss E E, 236 Court
 Bolton G B, 427½ Park av
 Boyle J W, 923½ Central av
 Brandt J J, 818 Spring
 Brown Ada (c), 159 Water
 Brunswick House, 502 Park av
BURHOP MRS GRACE, 331 Quapaw av (See left bottom lines)
 Buleson A F, 108½ Central av
 Carver Mrs Emma, 320 Market
 Chapman Mrs I M, 1252½ Central

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JOSEPHINE “JOSIE” BELMONT (C. LATE 1800’S)

- Proprietor of the West End Hotel/Club located off Whittington Avenue.
- Began with a three-woman brothel on Malvern Avenue and later expanded operations by opening a second brothel on the second floor of a store building at 422 Malvern Avenue
- Catered to professional baseball players visiting Hot Springs for spring training

Sources: Allbritton, Orval. From Leo and Verne: The Spa’s Heyday. Hot Springs, AR: Garland County Historical Society, 2004.

Image Credit: There are no known images of Josie Belmont to exist. The image displayed is a reproduction of the 1912 City Directory, which documents her address of 422 1/2 Malvern and profession as “furnished rooms”.



AGNES DENBY MADDEN (1901–1991)

- Prominent figure in the Hot Springs’ vice-era
- Served as a social gatekeeper and stabilizing presence, where discretion and trust were essential to maintaining power and reputation
- Represents women whose influence operated informally, without public titles or official recognition

Anchored in Hot Springs’ long-term social history through lifelong residence and local ties

Sources: Garland County Historical Society; Encyclopedia of Arkansas, “Owen Vincent Madden”

Image Credit: Courtesy of Garland County Historical Society



MADAME GRACIE GOLDSTEIN (C. EARLY 1900'S)

- Operated a long-running brothel in the Hatterie Hotel during the 1930's
- Represents women's complex roles in power, survival, and entrepreneurship within the vice economy

Sources: Legends of America, "Hot Springs Gangster Era"; Gangster Museum of America, Hot Springs

Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



MAMA CARRIE (C. EARLY 1900S)

- Operated a well-known brothel, said to have been located upstairs at 512 ½ Malvern Avenue
- Catered to visitors of the Woodmen Union Hotel, including jazz musicians and hotel guests
- Represents Black female entrepreneurship within racially restricted vice regulations

Sources: Community recollections. Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society. There are no known images of Mama Carrie to exist. The image shows the Woodmen Union Hotel (later known as the National Baptist Hotel).

OTHER KNOWN VICE BUSINESSES

Several women operated long-standing prostitution enterprises in Hot Springs, managing businesses of varying size within the city's regulated vice system.

Cora Hutchinson, later joined by Lotta Hager, operated a "rooming house" above a business at 804 Central Avenue. At times, their operation employed up to ten women, making it one of the larger establishments in the city.

Millie Tolliver, an African American woman, operated a brothel at 336 Elm Street (Broadway) near the Iron Mountain Railroad yards. Her establishment typically employed about seven women and primarily served Black railroad workers.

Other operators included Collee Potter and Grace Woods, each of whom employed approximately eight women. Lottie Wagner, a long-time operator on upper Central Avenue, employed five, as did Susie Rogers, who operated on Ouachita Avenue.

From the late 1930's through the 1950's, Mrs. Coomer and Lillian Bahre operated the Piggly Wiggly Rooms at 809½ Central Avenue, consistently employing several women. **Note:** Community recollections, city directories, and later accounts also attribute operation of the Pigley Rooms to Evelyn Anderson with Daisy Cooner, and recall the establishment as operating for approximately 65 years at what is now Spencer's Corner.

Another well-known madam, Evelyn Anderson, operated at multiple locations over time, including Central Avenue, Ash Street, and later Benton Street.

Source: Allbritton, Orval. From Leo and Verne: The Spa's Heyday. Garland County Historical Society, 2004.



Barrier Breakers in Science, Medicine, and Civil Rights

Hot Springs is home to women whose influence extended far beyond Arkansas, shaping national conversations on health, education, psychology, and civil rights. By breaking barriers and advancing equity, their work transformed institutions and expanded opportunity across the country.



Image Credit: Courtesy of Ebony magazine, "Arkansas Med School Opens Its Doors," January 1949.; UAMS, "Edith Irby Jones: Quiet Pioneer."

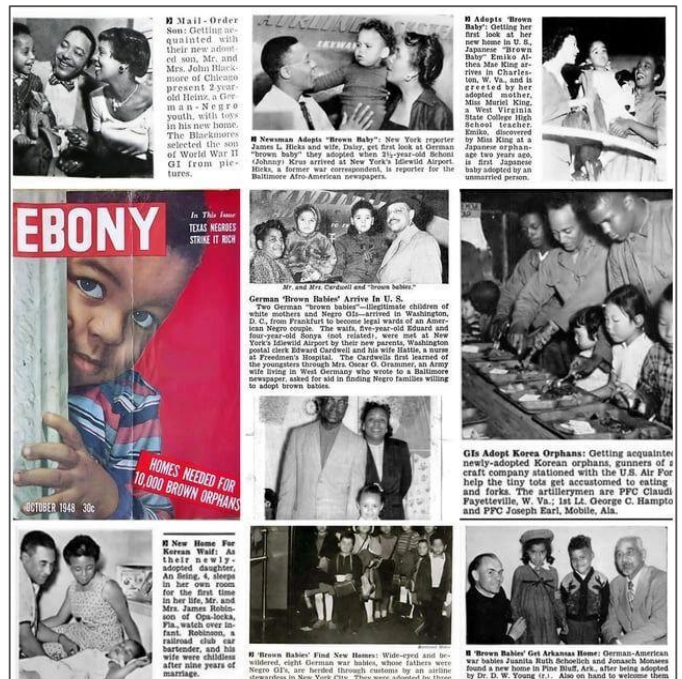


Image Credit: Ebony magazine, "Homes Needed for 10,000 Brown Orphans," October 1948. Photo essay documenting international adoption of mixed-race children born during World War II. Original sources of newspaper articles unknown.



JUANITA JACKSON MITCHELL (1913–1992)

- First African American woman to practice law in the state of Maryland
- Served as National Youth Director for the NAACP
- Led voter registration drives that registered thousands of African American voters
- Served on White House conferences under Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, and Lyndon B. Johnson

Sources: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Juanita Jackson Mitchell (1913–1992)."

Image Credit: Juanita Jackson Mitchell, extracted from the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery image Scottsboro Boys, NPG 2011 25, Wikimedia Commons.

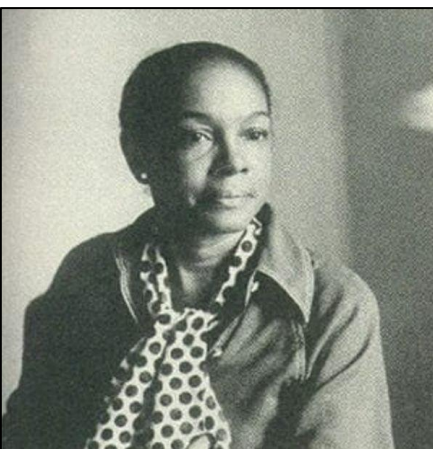


MABEL GRAMMER (1915–2002)

- Launched the "Brown Baby Plan" to find adoptive homes for mixed-race German orphans after WWII
- Wrote articles for the Afro-American to publicize the adoption effort and combat stigma
- Helped place 500+ children in African American homes and military families
- Received the Papal Humanitarian Award for her humanitarian service

Sources: BlackPast.org, "Mabel Treadwell Grammer (1913–2002)"; Wikipedia (Mabel Grammer)

Image Credit: Associated Press (AP). Photograph of Grammer with children.



DR. MAMIE PHIPPS CLARK (1917–1983)

- First African American woman to earn a Ph.D. in psychology at Columbia University (1943)
- Co-creator of the landmark "doll studies" on racial identity and child development
- Research cited in Brown v. Board of Education (1954), helping overturn school segregation
- Co-founder and longtime executive director of the Northside Center for Child Development

Sources: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Mamie Katherine Phipps Clark"

Image Credit: Northside Center for Child Development (NCCD).



DR. MARIAN BRELAND BAILEY (1920–2001)

- Co-developer of WWII U.S. Navy pigeon-guided bomb research using positive reinforcement
- Oversaw ABE's management of the U.S. Navy Marine Mammal Facility in Key West (1967–1969)
- Led government-funded research on dolphin sonar, communication, and diver assistance
- Produced nationally recognized animal acts featured on The Ed Sullivan Show, Today, The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson, Donahue, and The Tomorrow Show

Sources: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Marian Breland Bailey"

Image Credit: "Keller and Marian Breland with one of the 'stars' of the IQ Zoo", Courtesy of Bob Bailey. Image provided by the Encyclopedia of Arkansas.



DR. EDITH ERBY JONES (1927–2019)

- First African American to attend and graduate from the University of Arkansas Medical School (1948–1952), helping desegregate medical education in the South
- Practiced medicine in Hot Springs during segregation and expanded access to care
- First Black woman intern at a Baylor College of Medicine-affiliated hospital, despite segregationist limits
- First female president of the National Medical Association (1985)

Sources: Arkansas Women's Hall of Fame (Dr. Edith Irby Jones); Encyclopedia of Arkansas (Edith Irby Jones); Changing the Face of Medicine, National Library of Medicine (U.S. NIH)

Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society.



VELMA ANN THOMAS EARLY (1948–2004)

- Helped desegregate Arkansas pageantry after the 1969 protests challenging racial exclusion
- First African American Miss Hot Springs in 1970 and the first Black woman to compete in the Miss Arkansas Pageant
- Pursued higher education and later founded SongBird Ministries, serving communities across Arkansas

Sources: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Council for the Liberation of Blacks."

Image Credit: Courtesy of Early Family.



BARBARA JOHNSON (ACTIVE)

- First Black female head nurse in the operating room at UAMS (1960–1965)
- Director of Medical Services, OEO Head Start Program (1966)
- Assistant Professor and Department Chair of Surgical Technology, UAMS / University of Arkansas System (1974–1991)
- First Black female President, Arkansas State Board of Health (1975)

Source & Image Credit: Little Rock Black Nurses Association of Arkansas, A Spotlight in Black Nurses' History: Barbara Johnson



Philanthropy & Civic Legacy

Women of vision shaped Hot Springs through philanthropy, conservation, cultural stewardship, and civic leadership. Their investments in education, the arts, public spaces, and historic preservation built lasting institutions and a civic legacy that continues to define the city today.



Image Credit: Courtesy of Garvan Woodland Gardens



Image Credit: Garland County Historical Society. Picture of Mary Hudgins.



CATHERINE "MOTHER" BIRNBAUM (1854–1938)

- Instrumental advocate for establishing the Interstate Orphans' Home (1910)
- Secured community and business support critical to the home's survival
- Helped establish the foundation of what is now the Ouachita Children's Center

Source: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Interstate Orphanage."; Ouachita, Children, Youth and Family Services, "Our History".

Image Credit: Courtesy of Garland County Historical Society



MARY HUDGINS (1901–1987)

- Wrote historical and human interest features for Arkansas and national publications, and hosted a weekly radio program on KTTH
- Served as librarian in Hot Springs and later as medical librarian at the U.S. Army and Navy General Hospital
- Built and donated a significant Arkansas history and music collection to the University of Arkansas, and established endowments to support research
- Charter member and president of the Garland County Historical Society

Sources: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Mary Dengler Hudgins"; Garland County Historical Society; University of Arkansas Libraries, Special Collections, Mary Dengler Hudgins Papers

Image Credit: Courtesy of Garland County Historical Society



VERNA COOK GARVAN (1911–1993)

- Early female CEO in Arkansas construction/manufacturing, managing Wisconsin & Arkansas Lumber and Malvern Brick & Tile companies
- Developed a private woodland botanical garden on Lake Hamilton, personally planning and planting hundreds of species over 30+ years
- Bequeathed over 200 acres of gardens to the University of Arkansas School of Architecture, establishing Garvan Woodland Gardens as a major educational and public resource
- Worked with renowned architect E. Fay Jones on the design of the Verna Cook Garvan Pavilion within the gardens

Sources: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Verna Cook Garvan"; Arkansas.com: Thanks Verna for Garvan Woodland Gardens

Image Credit: Courtesy of Garvan Woodland Gardens.



KATHERINE COOPER ANTHONY (1934–2013)

- Helped fund the Cooper-Anthony Mercy Child Advocacy Center (2005) in Hot Springs
- Served as Director of Physical Education at Hot Springs High School and Assistant Professor at the University of Oklahoma
- Active supporter of the Garland County Historical Society and local preservation efforts

Source & Image Credit: Benton Funeral Home – Obituary for Katherine Cooper Anthony, 2013.



DOROTHY MORRIS (ACTIVE)

- Co-founded and sustained the Hot Springs Giving Circle, directing funds to local nonprofits
- Championed fundraising for institutions including National Park College and Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences and the Arts
- Supported creation and growth of arts organizations like Hot Springs Area Cultural Alliance and Hot Springs Children’s Dance Theatre
- Produced award-winning documentary films through AETN collaborations
- Served on boards such as the Hot Springs Music Festival and Mid-America Arts Alliance

Source & Image Credit: Arkansas Women’s Hall of Fame, “Dorothy Morris”



RUTH COKER BURNS (ACTIVE)

- Provided care and housing to people with HIV/AIDS in Arkansas who were rejected by family and society during the early years of the epidemic.
- Assisted in arranging funerals and burials for individuals with no family support, ensuring they received proper remembrance.
- Shared her experiences widely later in life, helping to raise awareness of the human toll of the AIDS crisis.
- Recognized for her courage and compassion in confronting stigma and building community support where few resources existed.

Source & Image Credit: Encyclopedia of Arkansas. Image courtesy of Ruth Coker Burns.



DR. VALERIE NEAL (ACTIVE)

- Oversaw the national collection of human spaceflight artifacts, including the Space Shuttle Discovery
- Helped coordinate the transfer of shuttle Discovery to the Smithsonian in 2012
- Led efforts to prepare the shuttle test vehicle Enterprise for public display
- Helped acquire major artifacts including SpaceShipOne, Spacelab, the Manned Maneuvering Unit, and a space-flown IMAX camera
- Preserved personal artifacts from astronauts including Sally Ride, Kathryn Sullivan, and Pamela Melroy
- Curated major exhibitions including Space Race, Moving Beyond Earth, and Where Next, Columbus?
- Author of several books on space history, including *On a Mission: The Smithsonian History of U.S. Women Astronauts* (2025)
- Worked with NASA on more than 25 publications about space missions, the Hubble Space Telescope, and NASA history

Source & Image Credit: Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, <https://airandspace.si.edu/people/staff/valerie-neal>



First Women of Power

As legal and social barriers began to fall, Hot Springs women entered public roles once reserved for men. From law enforcement to legal advocacy, municipal leadership to federal stewardship, these women expanded who could represent, govern, and serve the community. Their achievements opened doors for future generations and broadened the possibilities for women in public life.



Image Credit: Bessie Newsom Florence, Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



Source and Image Credit: Emmaline (Emma) Whittington owned the first steam-powered Locomobile in Hot Springs and among the earliest in Arkansas. Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society.

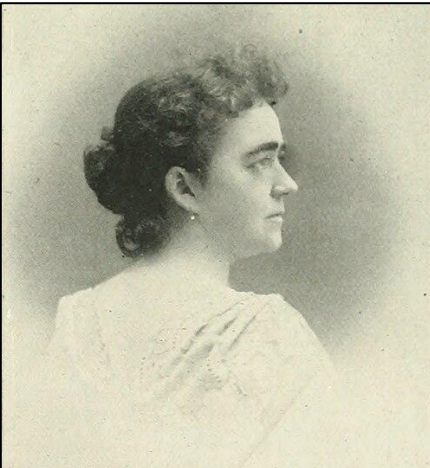


DR. FANNIE WOOTEN COWLE (1861–1946)

- Graduated from Vanderbilt University Medical School in 1899 at age 38
- Opened her medical practice in Hot Springs in 1907
- Among the earliest licensed physicians in Hot Springs; for many years, the only woman doctor in the city
- Maintained her practice in Hot Springs for over 50 years
- Prescribed the thermal waters as part of medical treatment, a requirement at the time for access to the baths

Source: Obituary of Dr. Fannie Wooten Cowle, Hot Springs Sentinel Record, February 1946. Provided by Garland County Historical Society.

Image Credit: Courtesy of the History of Medicine Collections, Vanderbilt Special Collections and University Archives.



FLORA HARROD HAWES (1863–1917)

- Appointed Postmaster of Hot Springs, Arkansas in 1889
- Recognized as the youngest woman postmaster in the United States at the time of her appointment
- Managed a federal post office with a salaried staff, including both men and women

Source & Image Credit: Willard, Frances E.; Livermore, Mary A. R. (1897), American Women: Fifteen Hundred Biographies (public domain)



REGINA KAPLAN (1887–1957)

- First administrator of Leo N. Levi Memorial Hospital and founded the Leo N. Levi School of Nursing
- Established the Garland County chapter of the American Red Cross
- Organizer and founding trustee of Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Founder of Lakewood Convalescent Home of Garland County
- Honored by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt in 1944 for national leadership in nursing

Source & Image Credit: Source and Image Credit: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Regina Kaplan"



BILLIE FOWLER RILEY (1887–1954)

- First woman to serve on the Hot Springs Police Department (1944–1954)
- President of the Hot Springs American Legion Auxiliary and later district president, supporting veterans and community service initiatives
- Among the oldest members of the Hot Springs Business and Professional Women's Club

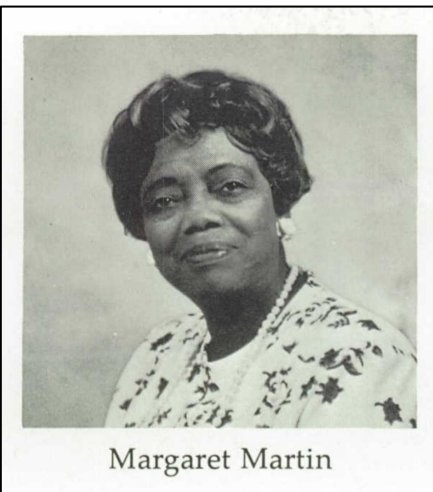
Source & Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society. Billie is shown with Pee Wee Roberts at Jones School in 1956.; Sentinel-Record newspaper article, May 31, 1968



ALTA SMITH (1888–1963)

- First Publicity Director, Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce (1924–1963)
- Creator of iconic tourism slogans and imagery
- Authored nationally distributed promotional booklets
- Maintained national media attention through economic and wartime challenges

Source & Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



Margaret Martin

MARGARET LONG MARTIN (1910-2010)

- First African American woman elected to public office in Hot Springs
- Only Black woman to run for three public offices: school board member, justice of the peace, and city director
- Elected multiple times as justice of the peace during the 1950s–1970s
- Served on the Hot Springs School Board (1975–1976)
- Dedicated educator who served as an elementary school principal, high school English teacher, and university instructor
- As part of her volunteer work with the National Education Association, she visited 14 countries in Europe and Asia to examine how other nations approached education and how their systems differed from the United States
- Active member of the NAACP during the Civil Rights era

Source: The Challengers: Untold Stories of African Americans Who Changed the System in One Small Southern Municipality by Elmer Beard, 2015; Sentinel Record, 7 July 2010, p. 7. NewsBank: America's News.; Courtesy of Jean Lacefield.

Image Credit: Hot Springs High School Yearbook, 1977 (Hot Springs, AR), p. 235.



BESSIE NEWSOM FLORENCE (C. LATE 1800S)

- First woman attorney to practice in Garland County, opening a Hot Springs law practice in 1921
- Vanderbilt University graduate with law coursework at George Washington University
- Winner of the John D. Larner Prize for highest academic standing in law courses for three consecutive years
- One of fewer than six women lawyers in Arkansas at the time of her admission

Source: Hot Springs Sentinel-Record, "Woman Lawyer to Enter Law Practice," announcing Bessie Newsom Florence as the first woman lawyer to practice in Garland County (1921)

Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



MELINDA BARAN (ACTIVE)

- First woman elected Mayor of Hot Springs, Arkansas (1989–1994)
- Three-term elected member, Hot Springs School District Board of Directors (beginning 1978)
- Appointed trustee, North Carolina Supplemental Retirement System (\$127 billion), 2012–2023
- Established a trust in 2019 leaving the remainder of her estate to ASMSA, creating a lasting educational legacy

Source: Courtesy of Melinda Baran

Image Credit: Arkansas School for Mathematics, Sciences, and the Arts. (2019, April 4). Former Hot Springs mayor announces planned gift for ASMSA.



HELEN ELIZABETH BOYD SELIG (1937–2022)

- Mayor of Hot Springs (1994–2000), overseeing construction of the Hot Springs Convention Center
- First woman to chair the Greater Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce
- Key leader in bringing ASMSA to Hot Springs, with a campus building named in her honor (2022), and founder of the Helen Selig Promise Kept Endowment at ASMSA
- Founded Selig Commercial Real Estate, the city's first firm specializing in commercial real estate

Source: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Helen Elizabeth Boyd Selig"

Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



MINNIE LENOX (ACTIVE)

- First African American woman to serve as a department head for the City of Hot Springs, serving as Director of Human Resources from 2004–2023
- Dedicated community advocate and mentor, supporting and serving countless community organizations while preserving the lived history of school integration in Hot Springs
- Leader in workforce training and professional development, shaping ethical leadership and organizational culture across the city

Source: Hot Springs Sentinel-Record. “Langston Alumni Speak to Summit Students.” February 27, 2014.; Hot Springs Sentinel-Record. Edwards, Courtney. “Leaving a Legacy: Retiring HR Director Serves as Queen of Parade.” March 19, 2023.

Image Credit: Courtesy of Minnie Lenox



JOYCE CRAFT (ACTIVE)

- First woman and first African American woman Superintendent of the Hot Springs School District (2007).
- Impacted over 10,000 students during a 44-year career as teacher, administrator, and superintendent.
- Long-time National Park College Board of Trustees member (2001–2024), serving as board chair.
- First African American woman accepted into the Rotary Club of Hot Springs and initiator of community literacy and youth programs.
- 2025 Remarkable Woman of Arkansas

Source: National Park College, “Joyce Craft (Trustee biography)”

Image Credit: Courtesy of Joyce Craft



DR. SALLY CARDER (ACTIVE)

- First woman president of National Park Community College (2005–2014) and key leader in the merger that formed the college
- Former Director of Instruction and President of Quapaw Technical Institute
- Advocate for workforce development and expanded access to education in Garland County
- Continued public service after retirement by leading and advancing the City of Hot Springs Community Resource Center

Source: City of Hot Springs, Arkansas. Civic Alert.

Image Credit: Courtesy of Dr. Sally Carder



JOSIE FERNANDEZ (ACTIVE)

- First woman superintendent of Hot Springs National Park (2004–2018), completing 25 years with the National Park Service
- Led rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of Bathhouse Row and founded the Artist in Residence Program
- Former superintendent of Women’s Rights National Historical Park and organizer of the 1848 Women’s Rights Convention sesquicentennial
- U.S. Air Force Reserve officer, served at the Pentagon after 9/11, retiring as a colonel

Source: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, “Josie Fernandez”; National Park Service, “Josie Fernandez”

Image Credit: Administrative History of Hot Springs National Park, Ron Cockrell- National Park Service. Image provided by Encyclopedia of Arkansas



Authors, Arts, Performance, & Cultural Identity

Hot Springs has long been shaped by women whose artistic expression and storytelling influenced both local culture and national audiences. Through music, performance, writing, and public presence, these women broadened the cultural identity of the region. Their achievements challenged expectations, celebrated local narratives, and connected Hot Springs to wider artistic movements.



Image Credit: Marjorie Lawrence at Levi Hospital, Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society

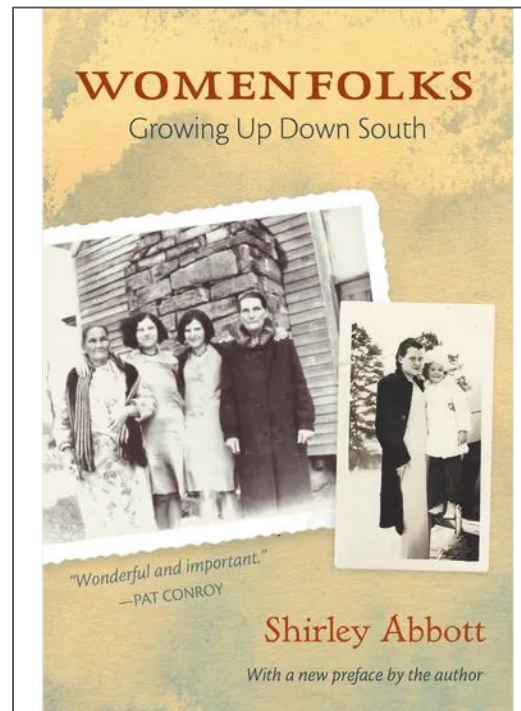


Image Credit: Cover of *Womenfolks; Growing Up Down South* by Shirley Abbott



INEZ HARRINGTON WHITFIELD (1867–1951)

- Nationally recognized artist known for watercolor paintings of Arkansas wildflowers. Exhibited work nationally, including at Rockefeller Center and the University of Colorado
- Helped organize Hot Springs' first Little Theater (late 1920s)
- Organizer and first president of the Hot Springs Business and Professional Women's Club
- Founded the Hot Springs branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) (1932)
- Donated or inspired the donation of 400 wildflower paintings to the Arkansas Arts Center

Sources: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Inez Harrington Whitfield"; Arkansas Studies, Whitfield Collection (Arkansas wildflower paintings), Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



GERTRUDE HOWARD (1892–1934)

- One of the most visible Black actresses of early Hollywood, working steadily during an era of severe racial discrimination.
- Appeared in more than 20 films during the silent and early sound era, including a notable role opposite Mae West in *I'm No Angel* (1933), helping pave the way for future generations of Black performers.
- Praised as one of Hollywood's highest-paid Black actresses of her time, a rare distinction in the 1930's.
- Former Broadway performer and touring actor, representing early Black success in mainstream American entertainment.

Sources: Actress Gertrude Howard, New York Amsterdam News, February 4, 2021. Image Credit: Photo of Gertrude Howard, Find A Grave, memorial #194475539



MARY SYBIL KIDD LEWIS (1897–1941)

- Starred as a prima donna in the Ziegfeld Follies (1921–1922), made her European opera debut at the Vienna Opera House in 1923, and debuted at the Metropolitan Opera in 1926.
- Received one of the largest public welcomes in Arkansas history upon returning to Little Rock in 1926
- Among the most recorded sopranos of her generation, with later radio recordings produced for NBC
- Participated in major national charitable and civic events, including President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1936 polio fundraising birthday celebration

Source: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Mary Sybil Kidd Lewis". Image Credit: Courtesy of the Museum of American History, Cabot Public Schools, accessed via Encyclopedia of Arkansas



MARJORIE FLORENCE LAWRENCE (1907–1979)

- Star soprano with the Metropolitan Opera (1935–1941), internationally acclaimed for major roles in Wagner, Verdi, and Halévy
- Remarkably rebuilt her career after polio, later chronicled in the Oscar winning film *Interrupted Melody* (1955)
- Performed for U.S. and Allied troops during World War II and sang at President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1945 inauguration
- Lived near Hot Springs beginning in 1941 and held summer opera coaching workshops at her ranch, Harmony Hills
- Awarded Doctor of Humane Letters and named Commander of the British Empire (CBE)

Source: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Marjorie Florence Lawrence"; Country Music Pioneer, Hot Springs, Arkansas

Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



JOAN MEREDITH (1907–1980)

- Appeared in several silent films in the mid 1920's, including *Blue Blood* (1925) and *The Perfect Clown* (1925)
- Selected as one of the WAMPAS Baby Stars of 1925, highlighting young actresses poised for stardom
- Starred alongside notable actors of the era

Source: Wikipedia, "Joan Meredith".

Image Credit: Joan Meredith, March 1925, Photoplay Magazine (image from Wikimedia Commons, public domain).



PATSY MONTANA (1908–1996)

- Wrote and recorded "I Want to Be a Cowboy's Sweetheart" (1935), the first million-selling single by a female country artist.
- Had her own network radio show, *Wake Up and Smile*, on ABC (1946–47).
- Returned to Arkansas in 1947 and performed locally on KTBS in Hot Springs.
- Made more than 7,000 personal appearances in the U.S., Canada, and Europe.
- Inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Arkansas Entertainers Hall of Fame (1996).

Sources: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Patsy Montana"

Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



SHIRLEY JEAN ABBOTT TOMKIEVICZ (1934–2019)

- Author of the acclaimed memoir trilogy *Womenfolks*, *The Bookmaker's Daughter* (a *New York Times* Notable Book), and *Love's Apprentice*
- Wrote for *Smithsonian*, *Harper's*, *American Heritage*, *Gourmet*, *Southern Living*, and others
- Fulbright Scholar; educated at Texas State College for Women, University of Grenoble, and Columbia University
- Honored with the Arkansiana Award (1985) and the Porter Prize for literary excellence in nonfiction (2005)

Source: Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "Shirley Jean Abbott Tomkiewicz"

Image Credit: Courtesy of Shirley Abbott and Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. Image provided by Encyclopedia of Arkansas.



Women In Workforce

Women have long been central to Hot Springs' economy. As teachers, nurses, hospitality workers, clerks, and bathhouse attendants, they helped sustain key industries, especially tourism and health, shaping daily life through skilled, often under recognized labor in a city built on caregiving and service.

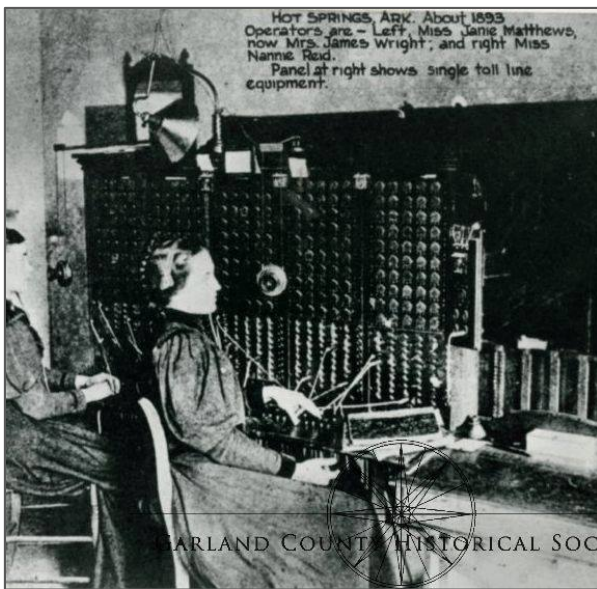


Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society

EDUCATORS

Educators of Hot Springs played a vital role in shaping generations of students and strengthening the community. Through classrooms and lifelong advocacy for learning, these women expanded educational opportunities and helped build pathways in Hot Springs and Garland County.



LELIA MOREHEAD CONTE (1890–1956)

- Served 47 years in education in the Hot Springs School District
- Principal of Jones School for 38 years (1918–1956)
- Named Principal Emeritus of Jones School upon retirement
- Founding leader of Delta Kappa Gamma, serving as its first State Treasurer and first president of the Hot Springs chapter, and honored with the Service Award for advancing women in education

Sources: Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, Arkansas - Founders & Leaders Biographical Records

Image Credit: Courtesy of Garland County Historical Society



JOHNNIE MAE MACKEY (1901–1969)

- Served nearly five decades in public education, shaping student life and school culture across Garland County
- After retiring as principal, joined the Hot Springs School Board, continuing her service to public education
- Known for her firm discipline, sharp wit, and commanding presence, becoming a legendary figure among alumni
- Honored with “Johnnie Mae Mackey Day” (circa 1969), proclaimed by Hot Springs mayor Dan Wolf, recognizing her lifelong contributions to education
- Active in women’s clubs and civic organizations throughout Hot Springs

Source: Local photographs, alumni recollections, and community records

Image Credit: Original source unknown.

EDUCATORS

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MATTIE L. COLLIER (1906-1990)

- Principal of Goldstein Elementary School
- Appointed founding trustee of Garland County Community College in 1970
- Advocated for hiring Black faculty and advancing inclusive education
- Served as President of the National Medical Auxiliary in July 1957
- Influential educator, mentor, and civic leader in Hot Springs

Source: *The Challengers: Untold Stories of African Americans Who Changed the System in One Small Southern Municipality* by Elmer Beard, 2015.; Courtesy of Jean Lacefield.

Image Credit: Garland County Historical Society



DOROTHY LOCKHART LOGAN (1920–2010)

- Teacher at Greenwood School, a one-room school for African-American students, where she taught all the grades
- Spent 35 years as a teacher and librarian in the Hot Springs School District and serving as librarian at Hot Springs High School
- Selected by the Arkansas State Department of Higher Education for a statewide bibliography on ethnic groups and contributions
- Contributed historical works including "A History of Blacks in Hot Springs Prior to Integration" and "The History of Langston High School"
- Served on the Garland County Community College Library Advisory Committee

Sources: Carrigan Memorial Funeral Home, "Dorothy Logan Obituary Archival biography"; Dorothy Lockhart Logan, "Biography" (educational and community service record)

Image Credit: Courtesy of Garland County Historical Society, 1970 HSHS Old Gold Book

BATHHOUSE ATTENDANTS

Bathhouse attendants were essential to the operation of Hot Springs National Park, providing physician-prescribed treatments under demanding conditions. Highly trained and respected, many were African American women whose work shaped visitors' experiences and helped sustain a strong local community.



MATTIE FIELDING (C. 1860)

- One of the earliest African American federal employees in Hot Springs
- Oversaw the Government Free Bathhouse for 22 years
- Supported local Black hospitals and civic efforts while securing employment opportunities for others

Source & Image Credit: Courtesy of National Park Service, Hot Springs National Park. "Mattie Fielding"



MARY WEBSTER (1880)

- Worked more than 50 years in the bathing industry
- Administered physician-prescribed hydrotherapy treatments for decades
- Known for endurance, compassion, and service to visitors and community alike

Source & Image Credit: Courtesy of National Park Service, Hot Springs National Park. "Mary Webster."; Hale Bathhouse, 1916. National Park Service, Hot Springs National Park archives.



MAGGIE NORTHCOTT (1895)

- Began working at Hot Springs National Park during the Great Depression
- Served in bathhouse roles and was honored for 25 years of service
- Provided essential public care during challenging eras in Hot Springs history

Source & Image Credit: Courtesy of National Park Service, Hot Springs National Park. "Maggie Northcott."

BATHHOUSE ATTENDANTS

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ROBERTA GIBSON (C. EARLY 1900'S)

- Served more than two decades at the Government Free Bathhouse
- Cared for indigent bathhouse visitors through the Depression, WWII, and postwar tourism boom
- Witnessed the final day of service when the free bathhouse closed in 1957

Source & Image Credit: Courtesy of National Park Service, Hot Springs National Park. "Roberta Gibson (Roberta Jackson)."



THELMA GUINN (C. EARLY 1900S)

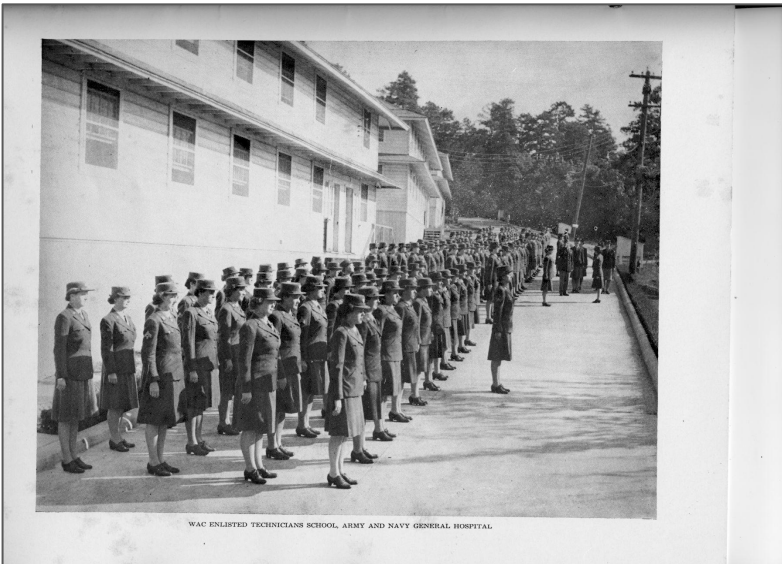
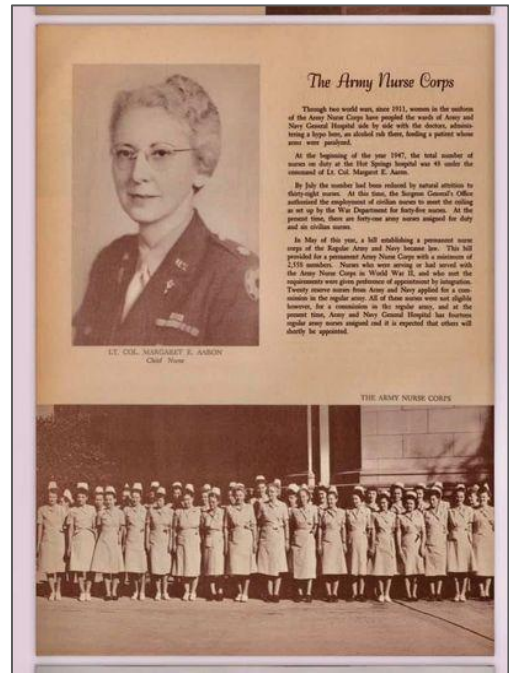
- Longtime bathhouse attendant at the Government Free Bathhouse
- President of the City Federation of Women's Clubs in Hot Springs
- Active NAACP member during desegregation efforts and Chair of the Freedom Fund advocating for equal access in public spaces

Source & Image Credit: Courtesy of National Park Service, Hot Springs National Park. "Thelma Guinn."

WOMEN'S AUXILIARY ARMY CORPS (WACC)

Hot Springs, Arkansas, was a significant training hub for the Women's Army. The Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, created in 1942, allowed women to serve in non-combat roles during World War II. This included administrative, medical, and technical positions. In Hot Springs, a WAC medical technical school opened at the Army and Navy General Hospital in 1943 to train women for military healthcare service.

Image Credit: Courtesy of Garland County Historical Society



NURSING

Nurses have long played a critical role in Hot Springs, providing care in hospitals, bathhouses, and homes for residents and visitors seeking healing. Nurses strengthened community health and helped lay the foundation for modern healthcare in Hot Springs and Garland County.

Image Credit: Courtesy of Garland County Historical Society



Image Credit: CHI St. Vincent Hot Springs began in 1888 as St. Joseph Hospital, operating from the former Adams Hotel on Cedar Terrace, donated by Father McGowan to the Sisters of Mercy. A five-story brick and stone annex was added in 1903, expanding the growing hospital campus.



Image Credit: Sisters of Mercy, Courtesy of Garland County Historical Society



Image Credit: Courtesy of Garland County Historical Society



Image Credit: 1940 photograph shows the St. Joseph hospital rooftop convalescent garden, where patients gathered to talk, play games, and recuperate in the sunshine.



St. Joseph Hospital provided the Sisters of Mercy First Aid Station during the Arkansas State Fair held at Oaklawn Park in Hot Springs. Dated 1907, this photograph shows an ambulance standing ready for transport, with the driver already seated.



Civic Clubs

Women's clubs played a vital role in shaping Hot Springs' social, cultural, and civic life, particularly during periods when women were excluded from formal political power. Through organizations focused on education, public health, historic preservation, and community welfare, women mobilized collective influence to improve schools, libraries, parks, and social services. These clubs provided leadership opportunities and created lasting institutions that helped guide the city's growth and identity, making them an essential part of the story of women's impact in Hot Springs.



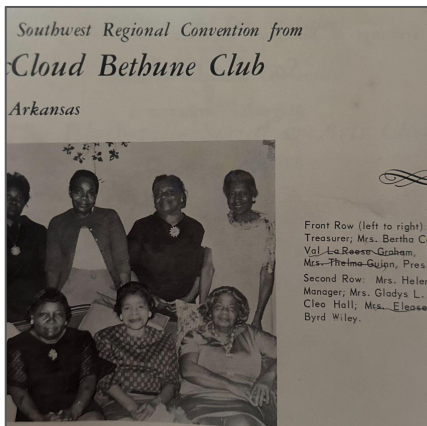
Image Credit: Business and Professional Women's Club Band Float, Hot Springs, Arkansas. Jim Davis Hot Springs Collection (BC.MSS.09.35). Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System.



Image Credit: Courtesy of Jean Lacefield's personal collection. Photograph of Mary Bethune Club meeting, Hot Springs Chapter.

Fortnightly Club is the oldest federated club in Hot Springs. It was organized in 1895 at the Ellsworth home which is known as "Wildwood." It became a member of the Arkansas Federation of Women's Clubs in 1897 and the general Federation in 1908. The club participates in the Federation projects and the programs conform to the study groups and are interspersed with book reviews, panel discussions and musical presentations. The 15 members meet the first Wednesday of the month, October through June. Current officers are: Mrs. J.B. Mitchell, president; Miss Georgia Schweer, first vice president; Miss Gordonelle Williams, second vice president; Mrs. William A. Seiz, recording secretary; Mrs. F.P. Hill, treasurer; Mrs. R.T. In- and Mrs. H.H. Moyers, parliamentarian.

Image Credit: Courtesy of Garland County Historical Society. Sentinel-Record (multiple articles, including Feb. 19, 1961; Feb. 6, 1977). Picture is from the Feb. 6, 1977 article.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLORED WOMEN'S CLUBS, HOT SPRINGS CHAPTER (C. 1896'S-1930'S)

- Dedicated to improving conditions in African American communities
- Motto: "Lifting as We Climb"
First annual conference of Arkansas Association of Colored Women held in Hot Springs, 1908
- The 17th Biennial Convention was held in Hot Springs in August 1930, Daisy Lampkin with NAACP makes address
- Supported educational opportunities, social reform, health advocacy, anti-lynching legislation, protection of black women and girls, and civil rights
- Hot Springs Member Clubs: Alpha Art Club, Mary McCloud Bethune Club, Myrtle B. Stilson Club, Moonglow Club, Entre Nous Club, Deltanaires Club

Source: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society; Courtesy of Jean Lacefield's personal collection. National Association of Colored Women's Clubs Southwest Region Program (1969).

Image Credit: Courtesy of Jean Lacefield's personal collection. National Association of Colored Women's Clubs Southwest Region Program (1969)



COUNCIL OF HOT SPRINGS FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS (C. 1960'S)

- Many member clubs were founded between 1895 and the 1930's.
- Connected local women to larger networks
- Supported scholarships, libraries, schools, hospitals, conservation, arts programs, and charitable assistance
- Hot Springs Member Clubs: Century, Coterie, Fortnightly, Forum, Progressive, Sesame, Thinkers, Wakeup, Demoiselle, and Criterion

Source: Garland County Historical Society; Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "General Federation of Women's Clubs of Arkansas (GFWC)" ; Sentinel-Record (multiple articles, including Feb. 19, 1961; Feb. 6, 1977); General Federation of Women's Clubs correspondence, 1957

Image Credit: General Federation of Women's Clubs of Arkansas meeting, 1918. Photograph from the People Photograph Collection, courtesy of the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System / Encyclopedia of Arkansas.



HOT SPRINGS WOMEN'S CIVIC CLUBS

- Frances Willard Equal Suffrage Association, Hot Springs Chapter (c. 1911–1917)
 - Active during the peak of organized suffrage campaigning prior to World War I
- Political Equality League of Hot Springs (c. 1911–1917)
 - Local branch of a statewide organization that played a key role in women’s suffrage movement in Arkansas
 - Contributed to the ratification of the 19th Amendment
- Hot Springs Business and Professional Women’s Club (c. 1919)
 - Oldest businesswomen’s civic club in the Hot Springs area
 - First organization to focus on issues of working women
 - Multigenerational and nonpartisan
- American Association of University Women, Hot Springs Chapter (c. 1920–present)
 - Advanced gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy
- League of Women Voters, Hot Springs (c. 1920s–mid-20th century)
 - Formed from suffrage organizations after the passage of 19th Amendment
- Hot Springs Area Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated (chartered March 21, 1987, still active)
 - Organized by thirteen founding members
 - Established to promote high academic standards, provide charitable and educational programs, and strengthen community life throughout Hot Springs and the surrounding communities

Source and Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society. Image of Hot Springs Business and Professional Women’s Club Christmas float.



Image Credit: Garland County Historical Society. Members of the Black Entre Nous Club dancing at an American Red Cross dance at the Army and Navy Hospital. Lots of local people and groups volunteered in different ways to entertain patients and staff. Article was in the Army and Navy General Hospital post newspaper called The Bugle dated Nov. 5, 1944.



Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society.



Everyday Life & Community

Beyond formal roles and public achievements, women created the social networks that sustained daily life in Hot Springs. Church women, socialites, and civic club members organized events, fundraising, charitable work, social gatherings, and community rituals. Their activities shaped moral culture, community cohesion, and local traditions. Much of this work was unpaid and undocumented, yet it held the city together, strengthening families, building networks, and responding to community needs. These women created spaces of belonging, connection, and identity, forming the city's social heart.



Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



Image Credit: Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



Famous Women Who Visited

Hot Springs, Arkansas, has long attracted nationally and internationally known women drawn by its thermal waters, entertainment scene, political gatherings, and cultural prominence. From stage icons and musicians to reformers and political leaders, these women's visits reflect Hot Springs' historic role as a crossroads of health, culture, power, and performance.



Image Credit: Eleanor Roosevelt stands with Hattie Caraway on the front steps of the Arlington Hotel, June 10, 1936. Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society

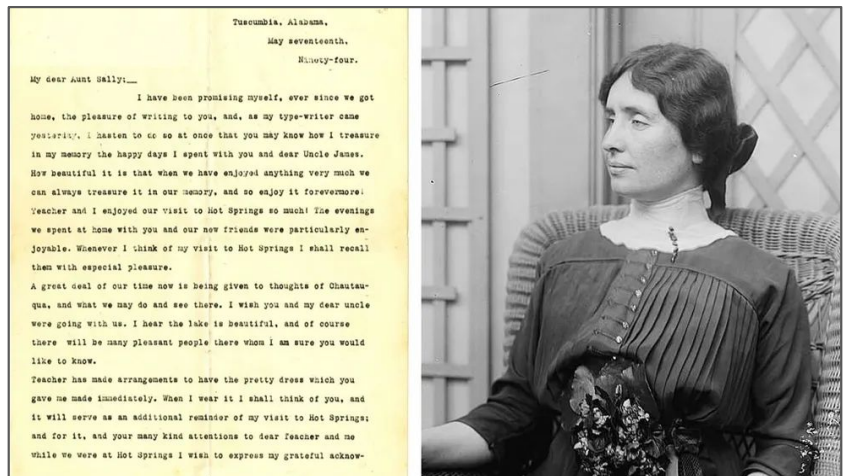


(Copyright 1906, by F. B. Johnston.)
MRS. BOOKER WASHINGTON AND PARTY AT HOT SPRINGS, ARK.
1 Mrs. W. Jochanberger; 2 Mrs. M. Pryor; 3 Dr. C. M. Wade; 4 Mrs. B. T. Washington; 5 Mrs. Arthur Sheppy; 6 Mrs. J. Bush; 7 Mrs. Nellie Eden; 8 Mrs. Fleetwood; 9 Mr. W. E. Lew; 10 Melnot C. Wade; 11 Mrs. Lockhart; 12 Miss Cora Richmond.

Image Credit: Margaret Murray Washington. The photograph appeared in the May 1906 issue of The Voice of the Negro and shows an excursion of the Southern Federation of Colored Women to Hot Springs in January 1906. Dr. Wade stands in the upper left, with Margaret Murray Washington, wife of Booker T. Washington, positioned to his right. Melnotte Wade, Dr. Wade's daughter, is also pictured. She is seated near the right end.



Image Credit: Madam C. J. Walker, public domain. Courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society



Source & Image Credit: Hot Springs National Park; Letter from Helen Keller to her Aunt Sallie Phillips Keller, Sallie Phillips Keller Papers, MS680.01, Arkansas State Arch

