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FALL 2022

THE HISTORY CURRENT

News & highlights from the Bossier Parish Libraries History Center

Preserving the history and memories of Bossier Parish, Louisiana

FALL FOR HISTORY

BY MARISA RICHARDSON

Fall is fast approaching and some exciting History Center events along with it! Join us for our monthly recurring programs - World War IIs-Day coffee chats and our Genealogy SOS help sessions.

Our popular Read & React series returns this September. Rusty Beckham is back with us to lead discussion on "Other Powers: The Age of Suffrage, Spiritualism, and the Scandalous Victoria Woodhull."

Look at the book releases for some fascinating history reads or check out our brand new Time Travel kits. We've had these for our younger patrons, but the new ones contain plenty of reading material and activities for our adult patrons. So get cozy with your pumpkin spice lattes (and maybe a cat or two) and spend the autumn season discovering some history!

READ & REACT WITH HISTORY

ONE BOOK, FOUR EVENINGS

MONDAY EVENINGS

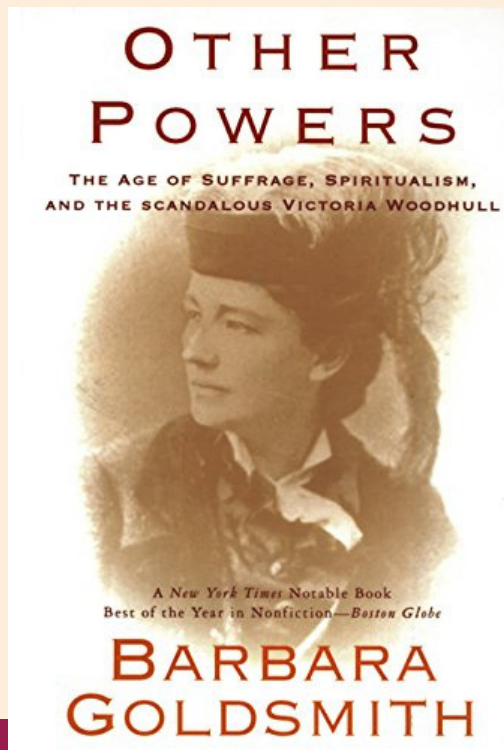
6 - 7 PM

SEP 12

SEP 19

SEP 26

OCT 3



CALL THE HISTORY CENTER
AT 318-746-7717 TO
RESERVE YOUR SPOT.

BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE
FOR PICKUP NOW!

A highly readable combination of history and biography, *Other Powers* follows the stories of some of the most colorful social, political, and religious figures of America's Victorian era with the courageous and notorious life of Victoria Woodhull—psychic, suffragette, publisher, presidential candidate, and self-confessed practitioner of free love.

It is set amid the battle for women's suffrage, the Spiritualist movement that swept across the nation in the age of Radical Reconstruction following the Civil War, and the bitter fight that pitted black men against white women in the struggle for the right to vote.



FEATURED SCHOLAR: RUSTY BECKHAM

Back by popular demand, our discussions will be led by historian and Benton High School history teacher, Rusty Beckham. Rusty has his M.A. in History from Villanova University in Pennsylvania.



FILL THE SCHOOL BUS -- WITH SOUR CREAM??

by Pam Carlisle

Look for Pam's weekly newspaper column in the *Bossier Press-Tribune* every Wednesday!

Almost a century ago there was a program where school buses were used to provide community aid for tough economic times. In 1930, the first full year of the Great Depression, the Bossier Parish School Board had shelves installed in the back of school buses so the buses could contain not only students, but sour cream! That might sound a bit odd, but sour cream was very deliberately chosen for what would now be referred to as a "cash cow" project. It was a project designed to bring local farmers additional cash with little ongoing investment beyond the initial one, which in this case was literally the purchase of a cow!

Bossier parish farm agent H.F. Spencer, as well as agriculture agents across the region, encouraged farmers to get a cow, or maybe even a few cows, which could then produce cream that could be sold as a profitable "sideline" in the slower season of their farms, like late fall and winter. Agent Spencer believed that the cows could "bring in a nice little pay check during a season that is often barren for most farmers. Though they cannot hope to realize any great profit from such a program, they can, by using sour cream shipping as a sideline, make enough money to buy groceries and other necessities during the great part of the year."



A 1930s-era Elm Grove school bus.

Why sour cream? According to agent Spencer, as reported in *The Bossier Banner-Progress* in September, 1930, "It is not necessary to have dairy barns and practice extreme sanitation with sour cream as with marketing whole milk." He instructed, "Cows may be milked in the usual way, the cream skimmed off by hand each day and put away in a cool place, preferably in a tub of cool water. Then when the shipping day is at hand the cream is taken to the station and the money received for it." The farmer could keep the skim milk at home "to feed to hogs and poultry." Spencer admitted the price for the sour cream was not as much as for milk, but given that refrigeration was prohibitively expensive (and electrification had not yet reached all of rural Bossier), he argued that with the lower overhead costs for sour cream, the profit from cream versus milk was just about equal.

The August 14, 1930, issue of *The Bossier Banner* reported that, "As evidence of the interest in the milk cow, the Bossier Parish School Board held a special meeting Monday to discuss plans and ways of aiding the farmers of the parish in the marketing of sour cream. All members of the Board were very much interested in the movement, and have agreed to equip their school buses with racks for the transporting of cans of cream and other farm produce to the high school agricultural departments."

In other words, the buses would pick up both kids and cream on their drives through rural Bossier Parish, and bring them both to school! Once at the high schools, the cream was tested for butterfat in the agriculture department and then shipped to the Claiborne Cooperative Creamery in Homer, which would pay by the pound of butterfat.

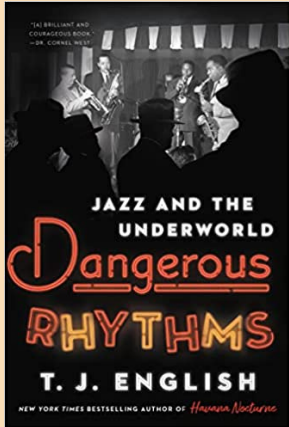


Claiborne Creamery, courtesy of the Claiborne Parish Library. The Claiborne Parish Cooperative Creamery provided farmers of the region, which included Bossier Parish, a cash market for milk and cream. The Creamery opened on June 16, 1929 and operated successfully until the business sold in 1960.





NEWLY RELEASED HISTORY READS

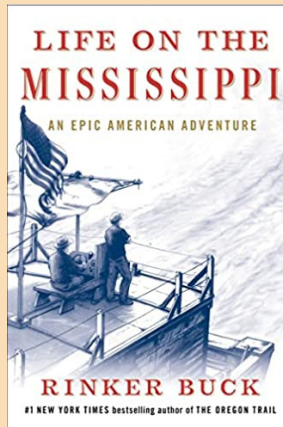


Dangerous Rhythms: Jazz and the Underworld
by T.J. English

Dangerous Rhythms tells the symbiotic story of jazz and the underworld: a relationship fostered in some of 20th century America's most notorious vice districts. For the first half of the century mobsters and musicians enjoyed a mutually beneficial partnership. By offering artists like Louis Armstrong, Earl "Fatha" Hines, Fats Waller, Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, Lena Horne, and Ella Fitzgerald a stage, the mob, including major players Al Capone, Meyer Lansky, and Charlie "Lucky" Luciano, provided opportunities that would not otherwise have existed.

Life on the Mississippi: An Epic American Adventure
by Rinker Buck

The eagerly awaited return of master American storyteller Rinker Buck, **Life on the Mississippi** is an epic, enchanting blend of history and adventure in which Buck builds a wooden flatboat from the grand "flatboat era" of the 1800s and sails it down the Mississippi River, illuminating the forgotten past of America's first western frontier.



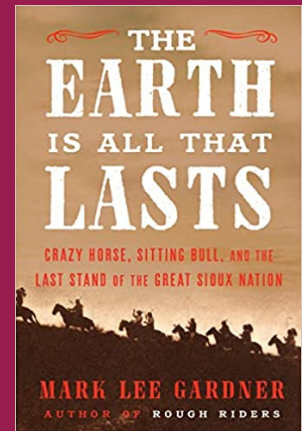
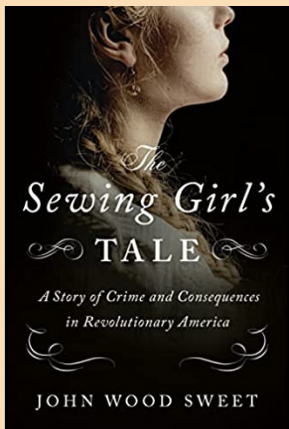
The role of the flatboat in our country's evolution is far more significant than most Americans realize. Between 1800 and 1840, millions of farmers, merchants, and teenage adventurers embarked from states like Pennsylvania and Virginia on flatboats headed beyond the Appalachians to Kentucky, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

The Sewing Girl's Tale: A Story of Crime and Consequences in Revolutionary America
by John Wood Sweet

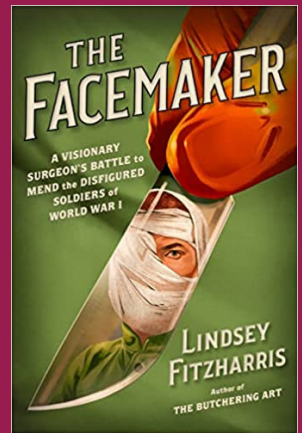
Renowned historian John Wood Sweet presents a riveting Revolutionary Era drama of the first published rape trial in American history and its long, shattering aftermath, revealing how much has changed over two centuries—and how much has not.

Based on rigorous historical detective work, this book moves from a chance encounter in the street into the sanctuaries of the city's elite, the shadows of its brothels, and the despair of its debtors' prison.

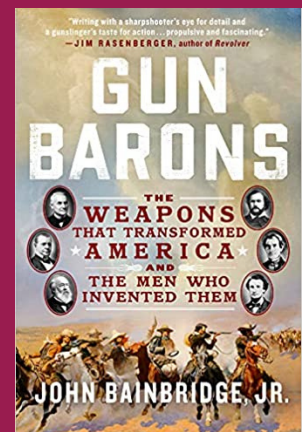
The Sewing Girl's Tale shows that if our laws and our culture were changed by a persistent young woman and the power of words 200 years ago, they can be changed again.



The Earth is All That Lasts: Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and the Last Stand of the Great Sioux Nation
by Mark Lee Gardner



The Facemaker: A Visionary Surgeon's Battle to Mend the Disfigured Soldiers of World War I
by Lindsey Fitzharris



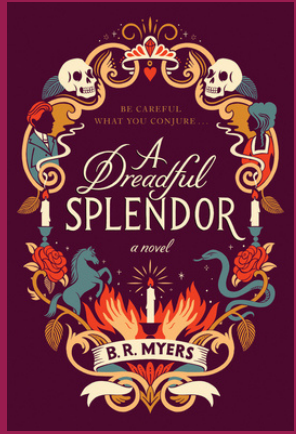
Gun Barons: The Weapons that Transformed America and the Men Who Invented Them
by John Bainbridge, Jr.



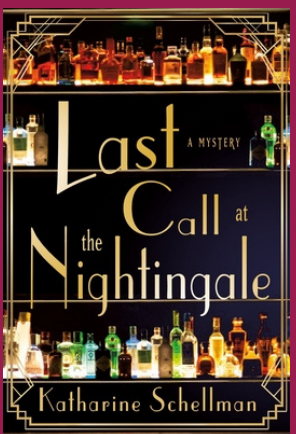
HISTORICAL FICTION RELEASES



The Bewitching by Jill Dawson
A dazzling novel drawing on the 16th-century case of the witches of Warboys, England



A Dreadful Splendor by B.R. Myers
A Gothic murder mystery set in Victorian London, brimming with romance, betrayals, and chills



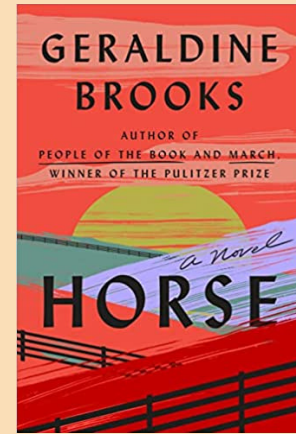
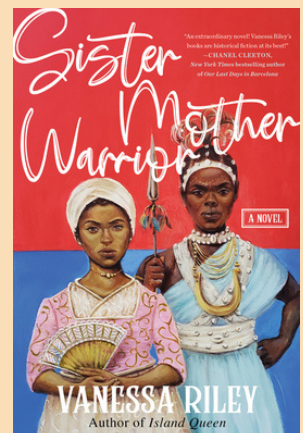
Last Call at the Nightingale by Katharine Schellman
A mystery in Prohibition-era New York, where music, liquor, and secrets flow



The Librarian Spy
by Madeline Martin
From the New York Times bestselling author of *The Last Bookshop* in London comes a moving new novel inspired by the true history of America's library spies of World War II. Ava thought her job as a librarian at the Library of Congress would mean a quiet, routine existence. But an unexpected offer from the US military has brought her to Lisbon with a new mission: posing as a librarian while working undercover as a spy gathering intelligence.

Head to the Libby app for both the ebook and the audiobook!

Sister Mother Warrior
by Vanessa Riley
Acclaimed author of *Island Queen* Vanessa Riley brings readers a vivid, sweeping novel of the Haitian Revolution based on the true-life stories of two extraordinary women: the first Empress of Haiti, Marie-Claire Bonheur, and Gran Toya, a West African-born warrior who helped lead the rebellion that drove out the French and freed the enslaved people of Haiti. Both an emotionally palpable love story and a detail-rich historical novel, **Sister Mother Warrior** tells the often-overlooked history of the most successful Black uprising in history.



Horse
by Geraldine Brooks
A discarded painting in a junk pile, a skeleton in an attic, and the greatest racehorse in American history: from these strands, Pulitzer Prize winner Brooks braids a sweeping story of spirit, obsession, and injustice across American history.

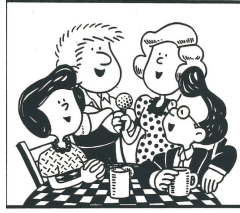
Based on the remarkable true story of the record-breaking thoroughbred Lexington, *Horse* is a novel of art and science, love and obsession, and our unfinished reckoning with racism.

CURATOR'S CORNER

by Randall Palmer

PORT PEOPLE

by Bartage and Black



DONOR PROFILE:

GORDON BARTAGE



PHOTO COURTESY: WWW.BARTAGELAW.COM

As curator for the History Center, I am always looking for relevant items to add to our collection. While researching in old newspapers, I kept coming across a comic strip called Port People in the Shreveport Journal. What caught my attention was that it featured people from the Shreveport-Bossier City area, and I thought if there was any sort of compilation of the comics, it would make an interesting addition for the History Center.

I contacted the writer of the comic, Gordon Bartage, and he was happy to donate a copy of a Port People, The Second Year, a compilation of the strips from 1986-1987. When he came in to donate the book he was kind enough to sit down with me to discuss the comic.

A Louisiana attorney since graduating from Tulane in 1977, Bartage's second career as a writer began after seeing an advertisement in the Shreveport Journal looking for someone to write a bi-weekly column. He submitted samples of his writing, including a humorous article addressed to President Reagan volunteering his wife for the Teacher in Space program, and landed the job. He wrote the column for roughly a year, and discussed with the Journal editor the idea of a comic strip set locally. His editor paired Bartage with the Journal's illustrator Dave Black. In April 1985, Port People made its debut.

Port People centered on the fictional Café Conservative and its owner Monty Springs. Other characters included Junior Leaguer Melanie Melissa, Biff the Yuppie, newswoman Eve Ernest, and others. In addition to the main characters, local and state politicians were regularly satirized in the strip. Names at the time included Bossier City Mayor Don Jones, Shreveport Mayor John Hussey, and Governor Edwin Edwards. The comic was similar in tone to other strips, such as Doonesbury or Bloom County, with storylines primarily drawn from events in Shreveport-Bossier.

Regarding the reactions from local politicians about appearing in the strip, Bartage said, "They were good sports about it...I can't say they enjoyed it, but I think that's part of the expectation if you are in the public eye, that's part of what you have to deal with, and it wasn't mean-spirited...our philosophy was 'sing, don't burn.'"

The comic strip lasted until 1991, when the Shreveport Journal ended its 96 year run. Bartage jokingly attributes Port People to the demise of the Journal, "Circulation just dropped like a rock once we did the cartoon," he laughs.

Currently, Bartage focuses on his law practice and saves his humor for family & friends. He is on the board of Company Repertory Theatre, which brings theater to schools & nursing homes. He looks back with fond memories of his time writing Port People, "I loved the opportunity to express my creative side, and work with people. When you do things like that you meet people that you otherwise never would have gotten to meet." Gordon Bartage can be contacted at gbartage@aol.com. You can reach Company Repertory Theatre at www.facebook.com/companyrep/



WORLD WAR II'S-DAYS

COFFEE & CONVERSATION

Join us at the History Center on the second Tuesday of every month. Chat about a variety of World War II topics in a friendly and informal environment.

We'll have "java and sidearms" for you to snack on -- that's some WWII-era slang for coffee & all the fixings!



DATES: SEP 13, OCT 11, NOV 8, DEC 13

GENEALOGY

S-O-S



Have you hit a brick wall in your genealogy searching? Are you unsure of the best way to look for ancestors in your family tree? Bring your questions to our History Center staff during our Genealogy SOS hours!

Remember that our History Center staff are always available to guide you in using our genealogy resources. Genealogy SOS is an event designed to highlight this service. Use your own laptop or one of our library computers.

S-O-S UPCOMING DATES:

WED, SEP 7 - 1-3PM

THURS, SEP 29 - 1-3PM

THURS, OCT 13 - 1-3PM

MON, OCT 17 - 1-3PM



Bossier Parish Libraries History Center

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Bossier City, LA 71111



BOSSIER PARISH
LIBRARIES

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history-center@bossierlibrary.org

www.bossierlibrary.org

Contact us to join our mailing list!

Time Travel Kits

"Check Out" the past with kits from the BPL History Center. They are ideal for home or classroom learning. All kits have a 3 week checkout period. Kits contain a variety of themed items, including books, DVDs, games, crafts, and activity sheets.

Time Travel kits for adults

Caddo Indians & Archaeology
Home Economics
Louisiana Music
Roaring 20s: 100 Years Ago
World War II: Pacific
World War II: Europe & the Homefront



Time Travel kits for kids

Caddo Indians
Newspapers
Cotton Farming
Frontier Life
Transportation

