

THE HISTORY CURRENT

News & highlights from the Bossier Parish Libraries History Center

Preserving the history and memories of Bossier Parish, Louisiana

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Snow, Perhaps No This Winter

BY KEVIN FLOWERS, HISTORY CENTER ASSISTANT

Winter in Bossier Parish may or may not bring snow, but it's certain to be a time of interest at the History Center. Check out our upcoming events page for information on our Black History Month program and the dates this year for our World War II's-Day discussion group.

The 1960 Sugar Bowl featured a performance by the Bossier High School Band. Our column on page three details that performance and its memorable impact on those who saw it. History Center staff write a weekly local history column for the Bossier Press Tribune with many interesting stories like this one. You can read these columns every Wednesday in the Press Tribune, or on the History Center Facebook page (@BPLHistoryCenter) or the library website: www.bossierlibrary.org

Take a look at the book section for the latest reads in history and historical fiction. And find out in our Curator's Corner how the History Center is using technology to preserve voices from the past.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

"Out of One Blood"

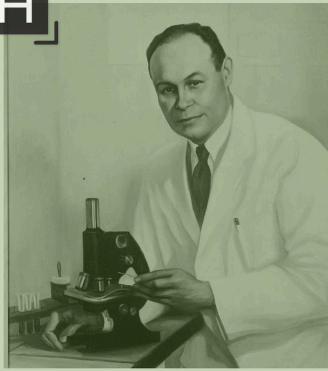
The Science and Civics of Blood Banking

**Mon. Feb. 23, 2026
6:00 PM**

A Black History Month presentation on the scientific and social history --both national & local-- of blood banking.

Speaker: Pam Carlisle,
Outreach Historian,
BPL History Center

Teens and adults welcome.
Free



World War II was the first war where the banking and transporting of blood products to battlefields and military hospitals saved countless lives, thanks to the scientific and logistical innovations of African-American physician and scientist Dr. Charles R. Drew. However, US racial politics wouldn't allow him, as an African-American, to donate blood. When that policy changed, the blood supply itself remained segregated, like much of American society at the time.



World War Tuesdays
discussion series
continues in 2026 on
the second Tuesday
of the month at 10:30
AM.

A special Black
History month
evening event will be
presented on
Monday, February
23rd at 6PM. These
events will be held in
the Central Library
complex's large
meeting room. We
hope to see you
soon!

WORLD WAR II's-DAY



COFFEE and CONVERSATION
Second Tuesday of the Month
10:30 a.m. - Noon

Dates for First Half of 2026:

January 13 • February 10 • March 10 • April 14 • May 12 • June 9



John D. Collins Collection BPL History Center



Join us at the Bossier Central Library Complex for "java and sidearms" (WWII slang for coffee and fixings) on the second Tuesday of every month. Learn about and discuss a variety of WWII topics in a friendly, informal environment. Come each month or just drop in on the days you can. Call the History Center at (318) 746-7717 for more information.



THE HISTORY CURRENT

Bossier High Band Impressive at Sugar Bowl

by Kevin Flowers

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

The 1960 Sugar Bowl featured a New Year's Day matchup of Southeastern Conference rivals LSU and Ole Miss. The second-ranked Rebels were eager to avenge a 7 - 3 loss to the third ranked Tigers that occurred on Halloween night following an 89-yard punt return for a touchdown by LSU star halfback Billy Cannon. For the Bossier High School marching band, the bowl provided not only a chance to see top college teams in action, but also offered the opportunity to step onto a national stage.

Three months earlier, Bossier High had welcomed a special visitor to see the band perform. According to the Bossier Tribune of October 11, 1959, a man named Irwin Poche, chairman of the New Orleans Mid-Winter Sports Association's Pageant Committee, came to Bossier's Memorial Stadium to see the band during halftime of a Bossier High vs Byrd football game. The reason for his visit was to consider inviting the band to play at the Sugar Bowl. The Tribune stated that the Bossier Chamber of Commerce and the Bossier Parish School Board had informed the sports association of the band's availability for the bowl and invited the association to preview the band. Poche was said to be "very impressed with the splendid group."

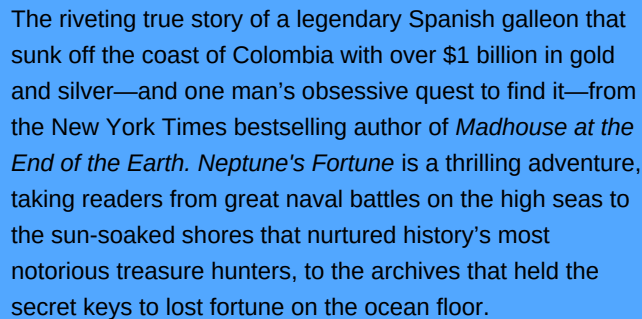
The Bossier band had distinguished itself by being selected to represent Louisiana numerous times at the Lions Club International band competition, winning first place in 1956, 57 and 59 in cities such as Miami, New York and Atlantic City against dozens of other high school bands from throughout the country. More first-place wins would come in the 1960s. With that track record, it's no surprise that the Sugar Bowl showed interest.

Within days of Mr. Poche's visit, the band received the hoped-for invitation. The Bossier High marching band was bound for New Orleans. Bossier Schools Superintendent T. L. Rodes was thrilled. "This marks the realization of a dream that has extended for years in Bossier," he was quoted as saying in an article in The Shreveport Journal on October 13, 1959. News of the invite created so much excitement that the Bossier Chamber made arrangements to help get fans to the game. According to the Bossier Tribune's October 18 edition, the chamber sponsored a train to carry approximately 300 band boosters, parents and fans to the bowl game, and orders for tickets to ride the train inundated chamber offices.

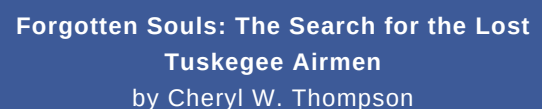
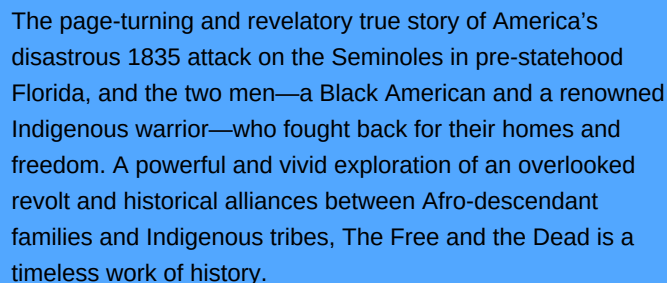
As game day approached, band members spent untold hours preparing for their performance. The Bossier Press of November 20, 1959 stated, "Fourteen big minutes. Those are the precious minutes in which thousands of eyes - and perhaps millions - will be turned upon the world champion Bossier High band." (*article continued on page 7*)



Bossier High School band 1959 - 1960
Photo by Shorter. History Center collection

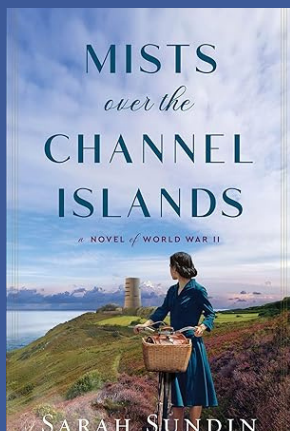


A vivid portrait of the unsung American women from 1776 to today who changed the course of history in their fight for freedom and helped shape a more perfect union. Over a decades-long, distinguished career, award-winning journalist Norah O'Donnell has made it her mission to shed light on untold women's stories. Now, in honor of America's 250th birthday, O'Donnell focuses that passion on the American heroines who helped change the course of history.





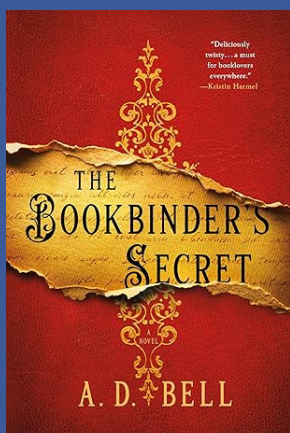
HISTORICAL FICTION RELEASES



Mists over the Channel Islands

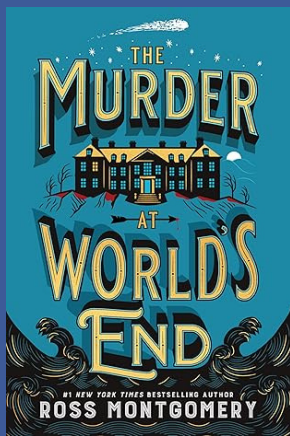
by Sarah Sundin

As Germans invade the British Channel Islands, Dr. Ivy Picout must help run her family's medical practice



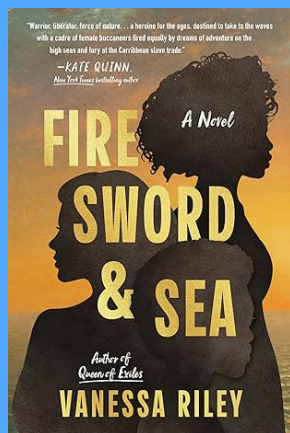
The Bookbinder's Secret by A.D. Bell

A confession found in a burned book reveals forbidden love, lost fortune, and murder



The Murder at World's End by Ross Montgomery

Secrets, murder, and mayhem collide as an unlikely duo hunt a killer in a manor



Fire, Sword & Sea

by Vanessa Riley

Vanessa Riley provides a fresh take on high seas adventure through the eyes of the courageous, swashbuckling, based-on-a-real-life female pirate Jacquotte Delahaye. The research Riley has done on this 1600s saga is truly remarkable, second only to her depictions of the lush Caribbean setting and the diverse, multi-faceted cast of characters.

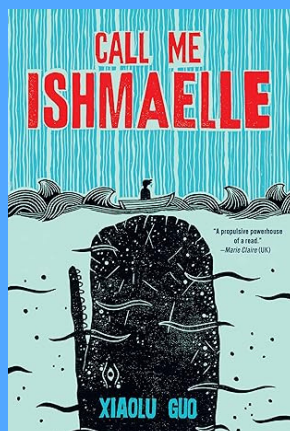
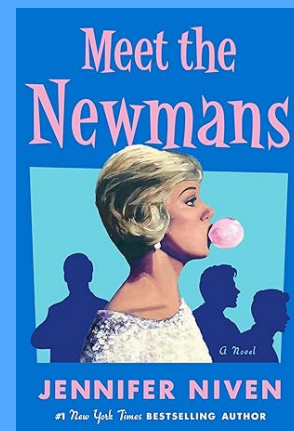
Find the e-audio on Libby



Meet the Newmans

by Jennifer Niven

For two decades, Del and Dinah Newman and their sons, Guy and Shep, have ruled television as America's Favorite Family. Millions of viewers tune in every week to watch them play flawless, black-and-white versions of themselves. But now it's 1964, and the Newmans' idealized apple-pie perfection suddenly feels woefully out of touch. Ratings are in free fall, as are the Newmans themselves. Funny, big-hearted, and deeply moving, *Meet the Newmans* is a rich family story about the dual lives we lead. Because even when our lives aren't televised weekly, we all have a behind-the-scenes.



Call Me Ishmaelle

by Xiaolu Guo

From the National Book Critics Circle Award-winning author, a feminist reimagining of Herman Melville's classic *Moby-Dick* through the eyes of one inimitable woman and a diverse, swashbuckling crew.

GIVING NEW LIFE TO OLD VOICES

The leaps and bounds that technology has made within the past few decades can be a double-edged sword for preservationists. On the one hand, the widespread adoption of computers and the Internet has made it easier to process new items, and certain materials are more accessible to more people than ever before. On the other hand, some materials are becoming increasingly difficult for even those caring for them to access. Audiovisual materials in particular are at risk of becoming inaccessible, as the technology used to play them becomes obsolete. Fortunately, there are sometimes ways to convert these materials into more accessible formats. The audiocassettes in the Bossier Parish History Center's care are one such case. The History Center is now able to store the audiocassettes' content - primarily oral history interviews about historical events and figures - as MP3 files, which can then be stored on its computers and online database, a process known as "digitization." Content that has previously only been accessible at the History Center can now be sent anywhere in the world. Voices that might not have spoken in decades can be heard once again, with just a couple clicks.

The Bossier Parish History Center has nearly 200 oral histories in our care, which were recorded and collected from the 1990s to the 2010s. Most were recorded by History Center staff members, some on site, some at interviewees' homes, or at a location of interest. Many of the interviewees were chosen because of their heavy involvement in the Bossier Parish community. For example, there are multiple interviews of George Dement Jr., restaurateur, innkeeper, and mayor of Bossier City from 1989 to 2005, and one of Joe Maggio of Maggio Grocery & Deli, the oldest neighborhood store in Bossier. Other interviewees were chosen because they had witnessed a certain aspect of history, such as Gypsy Damaris Boston, who was interviewed as part of a project to chronicle Bossier residents' experiences with the Great Depression, or Nell Charney, a former New Orleans resident who was interviewed about her experiences during Hurricane Katrina.



Device used to digitize audiocassette recordings.

Photo by Jaylie Rester.

Still others were interviewed because they were historians themselves and quite knowledgeable of a certain subject, or because they had just made a significant donation to the History Center's collection, such as Samuel J. Touchstone, who was interviewed in 2004 about Civil War relics and maps that he had found and donated to the History Center. A handful of audiocassettes in our collection cannot actually be classified as oral histories, but nevertheless hold historical significance, like a copy of "Union of the World," an album by the Shreveport-born Ever Ready Gospel Singers, which features the group speaking of their history, as well as several of their songs.

Whatever the reason for its existence, each oral history contains a unique perspective on the history of Bossier Parish and beyond. Their loss would mean the loss of dozens of eyewitness accounts, in some cases of events that no one today is alive to speak of. Thanks to the digitization process, they have not only not been lost, but have actually been made much easier to listen to. There is a chance that in just another decade or two, technology will progress to a point where once again, the History Center must convert the oral histories to another format or risk losing access to them. However, for the moment, it is good to know that we have successfully carried these pieces of the past a little further into the future.

SUGAR BOWL CLASSIC

Standing Ovation Given Bossier High Bandsmen

Headline from The Shreveport Times, January 2, 1960

Bossier Band Impressive *(from page 3)*

The band was scheduled to perform for eight-minutes during a pre-game exhibition and six minutes at halftime. The game would be televised nationally.

When their moment to shine came on New Year's Day 1960, the Bossier High band members didn't disappoint. In short, they knocked it out of the park, er, stadium. Both The Shreveport Journal and The Shreveport Times of January 2 stated that the band received a standing ovation. An article in The Times from January 5 detailed the band's performance, saying members executed maneuvers called "Company Fund," "Diamond" and "X," among others, while playing music like the "Grand Entry March," "March Gloria" and "Colossus of Columbia March." The newspaper stated that the band exited the field "by dividing into four main sections, two breaking toward the sidelines and the other two filling in as the other two approached them."

Accolades weren't long in coming. According to The Shreveport Times article from January 5, Bossier band Director Kenneth Green's office was "flooded" with letters from states such as Texas, Illinois, Missouri, North and South Carolina, and Mississippi offering praise for the band's showing and the "high degree of discipline" of its members. One letter writer asked Green for notes and diagrams of the band's performance. A reporter for the New Orleans Times Picayune was said to have written that his vote for outstanding players during the Sugar Bowl would go to the Bossier band.

Managing Editor for The Shreveport Journal Robert Packwood wrote on January 4, "It was one of the finest band performances we have ever seen and, as far as we are concerned, outdid any college band that appeared New Year's Day in any of the televised bowl halftime shows." Well done, Bearkats.

Film of the band at the Sugar Bowl is available for viewing by searching on YouTube for Bossier City High School band 1960. If you have any photos or other information relating to the history of Bossier City or Bossier Parish, the History Center may be interested in adding the materials to its research collection by donation or by scanning them and returning the originals. Call or visit us to learn more. We are open M-F 9-6, and Sat. by appt. Our phone number is (318) 746-7717 and email is history-center@bossierlibrary.org. Find us online at <https://www.facebook.com/BPLHistoryCenter/> and <http://bpl-hc.blogspot.com/>



Bossier Bearkats

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History Center**

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Bossier City, LA 71111**



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HISTORY CENTER OPENING HOURS

→ MONDAY	9 AM - 6 PM
→ TUESDAY	9 AM - 6 PM
→ WEDNESDAY	9 AM - 6 PM
→ THURSDAY	9 AM - 6 PM
→ FRIDAY	9 AM - 6 PM
→ SATURDAY	BY APPOINTMENT ONLY



Contact us to join our email list!

HISTORY CENTER PRESENTATIONS

The Bossier Parish Libraries History Center offers fun and informative presentations on a variety of local history, archaeology and genealogy-related topics, for a variety of age groups, here at the History Center or in your class room or meeting place.



Selections include:

A History of Bossier Parish
Homemade & Home-raised: Eating Well in Bossier Parish
Genealogy 101
Haunted History of Bossier Parish
Women Who Made a Difference in Bossier Parish
A Bossier Celebration of Sports
and many more...

Contact Pam Carlisle, Outreach Historian at 318-746-7717 or
pcarlisle@bossierlibrary.org to schedule.
Please make request at least one month in advance.



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