



THE HISTORY CURRENT

News and highlights from the Bossier Parish Libraries History Center
Preserving the history and memories of Bossier Parish, Louisiana



All Bossier Parish Libraries locations are closed until further notice due to COVID-19. We encourage you to use your library at home to download eBooks, eAudiobooks, stream movies, and use our online research databases.

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HISTORY IS HAPPENING

by Marisa Richardson

Welcome to our refreshed BPL History Center newsletter - *The History Current!* We selected this name as a reminder of the Red River's influence on Bossier Parish history, with its current carrying important information into town. This *Current* will bring you all of our upcoming History Center events and news!

We are living in what will be historic times. It is important to record our daily lives so that future generations can learn about our experiences. Now is the time to record your thoughts about the pandemic. Journal your personal story and we will add your recollections to our History Center archive.

Please follow us on Facebook to see what's new as we transition to virtual programming. We also have a wealth of digital resources for our patrons to access from home. If you want to stay busy researching your family tree, watching movies, or paging through some magazines, Bossier Parish Libraries has ways for you to do all of this and more without leaving your house.

We miss all of our wonderful patrons and hope everyone is safe and healthy! Looking forward to a time when we can see you in person once again.

SPOTLIGHT: MAMIE EDWARDS STINSON MCKNIGHT

by Amy Robertson

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

Mamie Edwards Stinson McKnight was a Bossier Parish native who made a difference in this parish. She was born into a family of highly influential and esteemed members of the parish and married the same.

Mamie was born in Haughton, LA, in 1887 to John Ford Edwards and Hattie Wyche Edwards. However, she lived the majority of her life in Benton, LA, after moving there with her family after her father became a Bossier Parish Deputy. In 1904, Edwards was elected as the 12th Sheriff of Bossier Parish, where he served until 1920.

When it comes to law enforcement, her Grandfather, Major Robert Emmett Wyche, was the 10th Sheriff of Bossier Parish. He is recorded as the first democratic sheriff elected during reconstruction in 1878, after serving in the Civil War, until his untimely death in 1889.

As for Mamie, she is recognized as one of only two students in the first graduating class of Benton High School in 1904, in which she and Francis "Frank" Worth Scanland were also the first to be awarded diplomas during the first commencement exercise in the school's history. Mamie attended every graduation at Benton High School until she was no longer physically able to.



In 1963, the Shere Khan, Benton High School's yearbook, was dedicated to her in honor of being in the first graduating class. At that time, she was the oldest living graduate and was affectionately called "Mamie Dear."

Being the first female graduate of Benton High School was not the only first for Mamie. She was also the first acting postmistress for the Benton Post office from Jul. 10, 1919 until Apr. 5, 1920. By the way, did you know that March 2020 is the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Benton Post Office?

She was among the first of the women to register to vote in Bossier Parish after the 19th Amendment was ratified on Aug. 18, 1920. Her name appeared in *The Bossier Banner* on Oct. 7, 1920, along with 160 other women of this parish that had registered to vote since the first woman, Mary Bixler, registered on Sept. 17, 1920.

Mamie was always involved in the community, on Aug. 28, 1913, she attended the first meeting of the Woman's Club, The Domestic Art Club, as a charter member and as the club's treasurer. She also served as the Chairman of the committee for constitution and bylaws for the Benton Self-Culture Club, which organized on Sept. 15, 1915.

In 1918 she served as a committee member in charge of securing a furnished workroom for the Benton Branch of the Shreveport Chapter of the American Red Cross. The group was working on knitting and sewing garments to be given to soldiers overseas, as well as hospital garments and bandages.

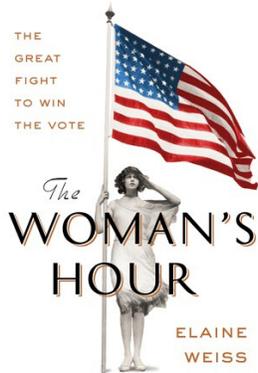
She loved history and her affiliations with the following groups is a testament to this fact. She was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution; Colonial Dames of America; United Daughters of the Confederacy; American Legion Auxiliary; and the North Louisiana Historical Society.

From 1946-1951 she served as the Benton Town Secretary. She was a former member of the Bossier Parish Library Board, a member of the Benton United Methodist Church, and the Women's Society of Christian Service. In 1953, Mamie served as the Bossier Parish 110th Anniversary program chairman, which was "marked by talks on little known facts of historic interest which occurred in Bossier Parish." Guest speakers included Lilla McLure and Rupert Peyton.

She headed up the Benton chapter fundraising event during the 1956 Bossier Parish Cancer Fund campaign. Mamie is among dozens of women that have made a difference in Bossier Parish.

READ ABOUT HISTORY!

Our History Center staff recommends these nonfiction reads



The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote

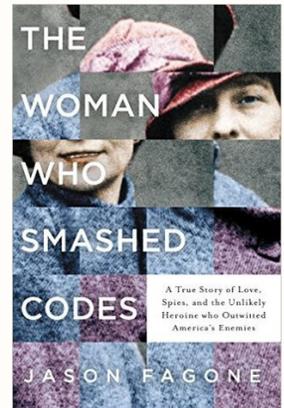
by Elaine F. Weiss
Available as an eBook and eAudiobook on Libby

The Woman's Hour was our March selection for the History Center's Pages Past Book Club. We had a great lengthy discussion on this one! Elaine Weiss gives a detailed account of the struggle to have Tennessee ratify the 19th Amendment, Read this one in 2020 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote!

The Woman Who Smashed Codes: A True Story of Love, Spies, and the Unlikely Heroine who Outwitted America's Enemies

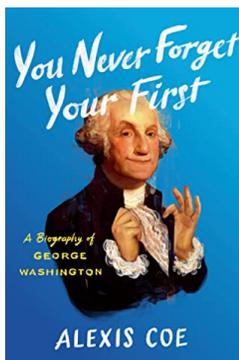
by Jason Fagone
Available as an eBook on Libby

The Woman Who Smashed Codes was a recent selection for our Read & React with History series. Rusty Beckham, history teacher at Benton High School led four evening talks about the life of Elizebeth Smith Friedman. Friedman's code-breaking skills helped catch smugglers during Prohibition and uncover Nazi spy rings. Elizebeth and her husband worked to crack the German Enigma machine, as well as Japan's coding machine, called Purple.



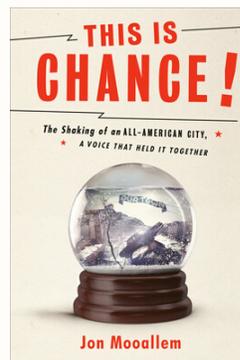
NEW RELEASES

Dive into some new books from your favorite historical eras



You Never Forget Your First: A Biography of George Washington

by Alexis Coe
Available as an eBook on Libby

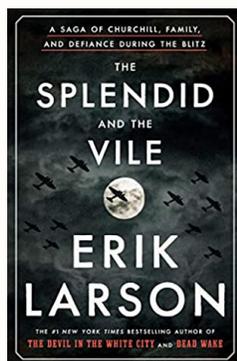


This is Chance!: The Shaking of an All-American City, a Voice that Held It Together

by Jon Mooallem
Available as an eBook on Libby

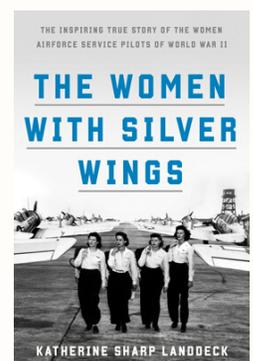
The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During the Blitz

by Erik Larson
Available as an eBook on Libby



The Women with Silver Wings: The Inspiring True Story of the Women Airforce Service Pilots of World War II

by Katherine Sharp Landeck
Available as an eBook on Libby



All books are available for checkout through Bossier Parish Libraries digital resources.

Need an eCard? Head over to www.bossierlibrary.org/libraryathome

CURATOR'S CORNER

by Randall Palmer

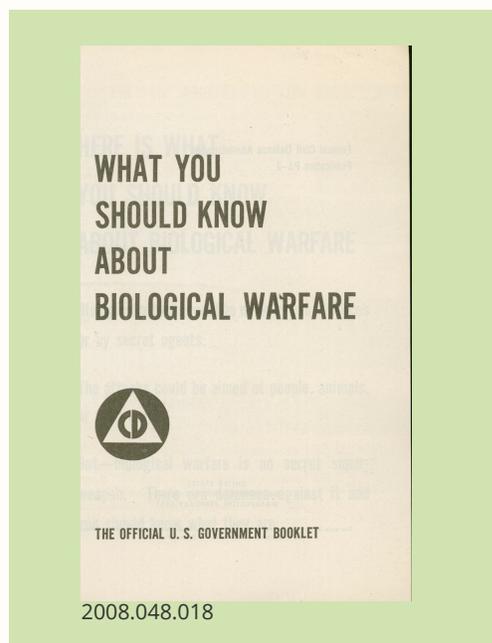
Welcome to the Curator's Corner, where I highlight an item from our collection here at the History Center. I selected the booklet "What You Should Know about Biological Warfare", printed in 1951 by the Federal Civil Defense Administration. It is one of several items in our Civil Defense Collection, the precursor to today's Office of Homeland Security.

There has been some talk about the coronavirus as a biological weapon. This booklet discusses what biological weapons actually are, and what civilians can do to stay safe. Included are "Six Survival Secrets."

1. Keep yourself and your home clean.
2. Report sickness promptly.
3. Give all possible help to authorities.
4. Don't rush outside right after a bombing.
5. Don't take chances with food and water in open containers.
6. Don't start rumors—don't believe wild stories.

The booklet states, "Start a rumor and you start a panic. A panic could cost you your life. So disregard wild talk about biological warfare and don't pass it on to your friends." This is always sound advice, whether in 1951 or 2020.

It is interesting to compare this list against current guidelines. If you'd like to view this booklet, or anything else in our collection, you can contact us at 318-746-7717 or email me at rpalmer@bossierlibrary.org



MEMORY LANE

Images from the History Center photograph collection



Abney Dell Scanland with a lily
Flynn collection, circa 1930

1999.136.031



**Mrs. Douglas Keith planting the first redbud tree on
Barksdale Blvd**
Pace collection, circa 1940s

1999.004.013



Red River flood of April 1945, South Bossier Parish
Bourgeois collection

2001.009.001

**Want to see historic photos of Plain Dealing,
Benton, or other Bossier Parish places and people?
Let us know what interests you and we will share
photos on our Facebook page and blog!**

HISTORY AT HOME

Discover your family tree with BPL's online resources



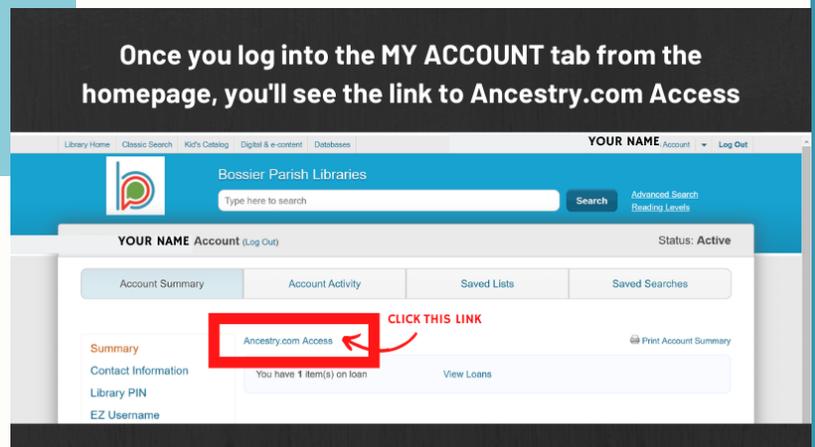
Ancestry Library Edition is temporarily available from home with special remote access! Ancestry Library Edition brings the world's most popular consumer online genealogy resource right to your library account.

Answers await everyone—whether professional or hobbyist, expert or novice, genealogist or historian—inside the more than 7,000 available databases.

Here, you can unlock the story of you with sources like censuses, vital records, immigration records, family histories, military records, court and legal documents, directories, photos, maps, and more.

Login to your BPL account to obtain the link for Ancestry - it will be right on your account page.

Email or call if you have questions!
history-center@bossierlibrary.org
318.746.7717



INTRODUCING: KANOPY

Stream thousands of films right on your home devices at **bossierlibrary.kanopy.com**

For our History Center friends, you can find many PBS documentaries to stream, along with Great Courses. Maybe now is the time you learn all about the American West, Benjamin Franklin, or our National Park System!



NEWSPAPERS.COM

Historical newspapers archive from the 1700s - 2000s containing thousands of well-known regional, state, and small local newspapers in the United States

Go to **bossierlibrary.org/databases** to find the link for the Library Edition of Newspapers.com. You will need to enter your BPL card number to access this resource. Once logged in, you can browse through newspapers from the southeastern US and Texas. Search by name, topic, or even look for specific newspaper issues. *The Bossier Banner* is searchable from 1859-1922.

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**BOSSIER PARISH
LIBRARIES**

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While the BPL History Center is closed during the pandemic, our staff members are still available to answer any research questions you may have.

What do you want to know about Bossier Parish History?

Email **history-center@bossierlibrary.org** or call us at 318-746-7717.

We look forward to hearing from you!

The mission of Bossier Parish Libraries is to open doors to ideas and information by providing access to an array of materials, programs, and technologies that inform, educate, and entertain.

We may have had to close our doors for the time being, but our mission remains the same. With your library card and internet access you can download eBooks, listen to audiobooks, stream movies, read the latest magazines, learn a new language, listen to music, brush up on your photography skills, work on craft projects, learn hand lettering, and much more free and from the comfort of your own home! We even have online tutorials to teach you how to use these online resources!

Contact us to join our mailing list!

The History Center's collection of photographs and documents is always available online at **bossier.pastperfectonline.com**

