

# Performance Guide

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Welcome to the **Walton Arts Center Performance Guide**, published by the Learning & Engagement department of Walton Arts Center. This guide is designed to enhance your learning in the arts. Enjoy the performance, and thanks for being part of *Digging Up Arkansas*.



Three writers from 1936 must put Arkansas history facts in order before President Roosevelt arrives. Will they succeed? Stories, songs and characters come to life in this new play that illuminates Arkansas' past.

Musicians, Madison County, 1900s.  
Standing from left: George Washington Eoff, Johnny Butler  
Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Wally Waits Collection  
(S-85-57-10)

# Digging Up Arkansas



Walton Arts Center  
life is sweet



# Digging Up Arkansas

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## Ideas for Curriculum Connections

### CCSS:

Reading - Range of Reading & Level of Text Complexity 10; Speaking & Listening - Comprehension & Collaboration 1,2,3; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas 4, 5, 6; Language - Knowledge of Language 3; Vocabulary Acquisition & Use 5, 6; Music and Theater, Arkansas History

### Contributors:

Kassie Misiewicz, Executive Artistic Director, Trike Theatre; Mike Thomas, Fayetteville; George Sabo, Arkansas Archeological Survey; Marie Demeroukas, Shiloh Museum of Ozark History; Historian Tom Dillard; Artist Charles Banks Wilson; Artist Susan Hutchcroft; and Photographer Stephen Ironside.

# Ready, Set, Show!



Walton Arts Center, with support from the Arkansas Arts Council, commissioned Trike Theatre, Northwest Arkansas' professional theatre for youth, to create *Digging Up Arkansas*.

## How the Story Became a Play

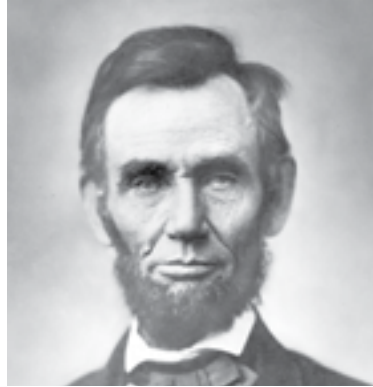
Kassie Misiewicz, Trike Theatre's Executive Artistic Director, and Mike Thomas, playwright, wanted to bring Arkansas history to life for elementary school students through drama. In her research, Kassie read an article about the 1936 Works Progress Administration (WPA) writers who were sent to gather history and stories from Arkansas residents. Mike remembered that for Arkansas' 100th anniversary, President Roosevelt visited the state. So, by putting the two events together, and adding a train wreck that jumbles all the WPA artifacts and notes, the idea for the play was born. *Digging Up Arkansas* is performed within the walls of a tent similar to one the WPA workers might have used. Kassie and Mike collaborated with Jesse Adams, set designer, who created a tent to allow audience and actors to share the playing space, thus working together to remember Arkansas history.



# Finding the Stories



The headpot created by Susan Hutchcroft, was based upon a large, well-executed red and buff head pot from Mississippi County Arkansas. The importance of headpots is what they can tell us about the people who produced them. See page 5.



Abraham Lincoln, circa 1860.  
Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Washington County Historical Society Collection (P-1728)



Log cabin, near Heber Springs, 1910s. Photograph by Gray.  
Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Bob Besom Collection (S-83-87-11)

## Communication

More than 300 years ago Native Americans made their homes close to where the Arkansas and Mississippi rivers meet. They called themselves the Ugakhpa (oo-GAHK-pa). Today the Ugakhpa tribe is known as the Quapaw. French explorers called the Ugakhpa the Ahkansoa (Ah-kan-SUH), after the name used by Illinois Indians who guided French explorers down the river. Even though they spoke different languages, European explorers and Native Americans found a way to understand each other.

## Cooperation

In the early 1700s, French explorer Henri de Tonti established The Arkansas Post, located near the junction of the Arkansas and White rivers. Many cultures and unique people passed through The Arkansas Post where they shared news, traded goods and relaxed by playing music and dancing. The people at the Arkansas Post had to work together to survive as a community.

## Courage

From 1860 to 1865 the United States was in a Civil War. The South used enslaved people to build their towns and work in their fields. The North believed that slavery was wrong and that all people should be free. Arkansans' beliefs were divided. People disagreed. Sometimes even families would be split on the question of slavery; one brother might sign up to fight for the South, while the other would fight for the North.

## Culture

In the 1900s many improvements were made in Arkansas. Better roads were built to improve transportation for Arkansas' citizens, farmers and businesses. Electricity came to rural Arkansas making life more convenient. More schools and universities were created to give more Arkansas young people the opportunity to become educated.

## Making History Come To Life

While writing the play, Mike Thomas took historical facts and imagined a scene with real people interacting in a real setting. He created a story about these facts and answered these questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why?

Thomas wrote the play in four sections: Communication, Cooperation, Courage & Culture.

- > Choose a fact from Arkansas history
- > Answer the 5W's
- > Write a story
- > Share stories



# Imagined Lives



Martha Young, Fayetteville, early 1900s.  
Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Washington  
County Historical Society Collection (P-4741A)



Civil War Union soldiers, perhaps from Wisconsin, early  
1860s. Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Delia  
Mattison Collection (S-87-179-2B)



Bentonville Colored School, Bentonville, 1909. Courtesy  
Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Elizabeth Robertson  
Collection (S-95-7-20)

## Writing from Different Perspectives

A monologue is an extended, uninterrupted speech by a character in a drama. The character may be speaking his or her thoughts aloud, directly addressing another character, or speaking to the audience. Ask students to imagine the time is 1860 and the Civil War has started. Imagine that the people in the photographs (left) lived in Arkansas.

### Ask Students to:

- > Examine each character.
- > Imagine their lives.
- > Imagine what you see, smell, hear, taste and feel.
- > Infer how they might think and speak.
- > Write a monologue for one character following the prompts below.
- > Answer these questions as if you were the person in the photo.

My name is...

I come from . . .

I'm wearing... (tell why)

My family is...(describe how big/small; describe relationships)

I like to...

My community, where I live is... (describe community)

The people in my community are . . .

The most important person in my life is... (tell why)

Something important to me is...(tell why)



# Arkansas' First People



The clay bowl (left) and the bottle (right) are both excellent examples of pre-Columbian, Caddo Indian pottery making. Both are from the University of Arkansas Museum Collection, used with permission of the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma.

## Quapaw and Caddo Artifacts in Arkansas

Quapaw people were excellent craftsmen. Caddos were expert pottery makers. Their creations, whether in clay, wood or stone were often decorated with complex and beautiful designs. Clay vessels were created in many shapes including flat platters, rounded bowls, curved jars and bottles. These vessels were used to store food, in food preparation and eating. They were also valuable for trading for items like salt or bear oil.

The bowl (pictured above) represents a type that archeologists call *Friendship Engraved*, named after the Arkansas town, Friendship, located on the Ouachita River just north of Arkadelphia. It was made during the A.D. 1400-1500 period. The bottle (pictured above right) represents an example of the type *Hodges Engraved*, made between A.D. 1500 - 1700.

## Keep the Puzzle Pieces Together

Archeologists try to understand the past by studying artifacts and other things that are very old. The process is like trying to put together a puzzle with some of the pieces missing.

At an archeological dig site, some pieces are preserved, like stone or fired ceramic bowls, while some have perished, like wood, leather or fiber objects. When untrained people dig for and collect artifacts, they take away some of the puzzle pieces necessary for understanding history. In addition, it is important to learn not only from an artifact but also from where it is found, its context. Learn more at the Arkansas Archeological Survey University of Arkansas System, online at [arkansasarcheology.org](http://arkansasarcheology.org)

Historians carefully examine an effigy pot in the play *Digging Up Arkansas*. Clay artist, Susan Hutchcroft used coils of clay to create the pot shown below. She used a wooden tool and rock with smooth edges to polish the clay and press it together. When the pot was almost dry, she used a technique called "sgraffito" (sgra-FEE-toe) to scrape away the surface of the clay and create a design. The pot was placed in a pit dug in the ground and filled with layers of combustible materials. A fire was built and the layers of material allowed the fire to become very hot and harden the clay. Smoke from the fire shaded the clay and became part of the surface design.

The clay headpot was created as a property for *Digging Up Arkansas*.



See image on page 3, upper left.



# Artists create *Digging Up Arkansas*



Jason Suel, actor and musician



Kassie Misiewicz, Director



Justin Cunningham, actor and musician



Jules Taylor, actor and musician

## People who put on a show

> Producers – people who put productions together, solve problems and keep track of budgets.

> Writers – people who imagine the people, places and actions in a story and write down all the words, song lyrics and music. The writers are: playwrights, lyricists and composers.

> Directors – people who create the vision of the show. They work with designers and performers to bring the play to life on stage. They are problem solvers and decision makers.

> Designers – people who imagine the scenery, costumes, lights, properties and sound in the play.

> Technicians – people who build the sets, sew the costumes, hang the lights, build properties and record the sound imagined by the designers.

> Performers – people who act, sing, play an instrument and dance in the play.

> Stage Managers – people who oversee the actors and crew for the production each day, organize and problem solve.

> Crew – people who work backstage during the performance to keep it running smoothly.

> Learning & Engagement Team – people who develop workshops, study guides or learning activities for audiences who will see the show.

> Communication Team – people who design posters, create advertisement or communication to tell people about the show.

> Underwriter – people or organizations who provide money to create and tour the show.

> Audience – people like you, who come to see a performance!

Who's  
Who  
in the  
Play



Playwright - Mike Thomas  
Music Contributor - Mac Harness  
Director - Kassie Misiewicz  
Stage Manager - Sarah Leer  
Production Manager - Josh King  
Actors - Justin Cunningham, Jason Suel, and Jules Taylor

Set Design - Jesse Adams & Alex Newby  
Costume Design - Tessa Miner  
Properties - Jesse Adams, Keila Lorenc  
Crew - Walton Arts Center Production Team  
Communication - Walton Arts Center Communication Team  
Producer - Dr. Patricia Relph



# Digging Up Arkansas Timeline



*The Quapaw*, by Charles Banks Wilson. Used with permission of the artist.

## Researching Arkansas People, Places, and Time

Like playwrights, visual artists such as painter Charles Banks Wilson, conduct research to learn about the people they want to depict. The facts they uncover become part of the art work they create.

>Ask students to brainstorm how they would research Native American tribes of Arkansas.

>What primary sources would they use? What secondary sources would they use?

>Visit many historical museums in Arkansas. Museums offer curriculum-based educational programs and resources.

**1000**

Caddos (ca-DOES) and Quapaws (KWA-paws) made clay effigy vessels.

**1542**

First European explorers see Arkansas.

**1686**

Arkansas Post established by Henri de Tonti.

**1803**

European traders and trappers develop relationships with Quapaws.

**1836**

Arkansas is admitted as the 25th state of the Union.

**1861**

Arkansas secedes from the Union - Civil War.

**1871**

University of Arkansas is established in Fayetteville.

**1880**

Reconstruction in Arkansas includes building roads, transportation systems and new buildings.

**1886**

Washington Elementary School is established in Fayetteville.

**1900**

Communities, schools, business and cultural centers grow.

**1935**

President Franklin Roosevelt establishes the Works Progress Administration (WPA) Writer's Project and visits Arkansas.

Sources: *Paths of our Children: Historic Indians of Arkansas* by George Sabo III, and *An Arkansas History for Young People* by Shay E. Hopper, T. Harri Baker and Jane Browning.

## Visit Museums to learn about Arkansas History:

> Old State House Museum, 300 West Markham., Little Rock.

[www.oldstatehouse.com](http://www.oldstatehouse.com)

> Historic Arkansas Museum, 200 East Third Street, Little Rock.

[www.historickansas.org](http://www.historickansas.org)

> The Shiloh Museum of Ozark History 118 West Johnson Ave., Springdale.

[www.springdaleark.org/shiloh](http://www.springdaleark.org/shiloh)





Arkansas playwright, Mike Thomas teaches drama at Fayetteville High School.

**From the Playwright:**

“Writing a play about my home state has given me a new sense of pride in my beautiful surroundings. I’m rediscovering all the great things I’ve grown to take for granted.

Keeping our audience in mind was challenging at times. We had to make the colorful history of the state come alive but on a level that our audience would relate to and understand. Keeping a third grader laughing and learning is a real task.

The idea was to allow the students to see that they are a part of history, just like a state is the sum of it’s parts, so are we. The elements

of good storytelling are an excellent way to learn.

Arkansas is one of the most moved back to states in the country. When you really study how it has evolved over the years, you understand why.

I am continually impressed and fascinated with Arkansas’ past, present, geography, people and events. They are all so diverse and unique.”

**Learning at Walton Arts Center:**

- Laura Goodwin, Vice President
- Dr. Patricia Relph, Arts Learning Specialist
- Sara Broome, Manager
- Sallie Zazal, Schools Coordinator
- Mallory Barker, Schools Concierge

**AHA! Arkansas History through the Arts**

The arts help students deeply respect, understand and remember the history of our state. Walton Arts Center’s **Arkansas History through the Arts** (AHA) Program enriches the school experience in Northwest Arkansas and supports real learning outcomes. Students learn to love Arkansas history when they see *Bear State of Mind*, *Digging Up Arkansas*, *An Ozark Journey* and *Down the Dirt Road Blues*. Teachers appreciate AHA performances for the way they engage students and make learning last.

**Arkansas Arts Council**

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