

3-1989

Ode to Billy Mac: An "Arkansas Hundred" Legacy Booklist

S. Ray Granade

Ouachita Baptist University, granade@obu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/articles>

 Part of the [History of Christianity Commons](#), [Political Science Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Granade, S. Ray, "Ode to Billy Mac: An "Arkansas Hundred" Legacy Booklist" (1989). *Articles*. 54.
<https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/articles/54>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Publications at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Articles by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

Ode to Billy Mac: An "Arkansas Hundred" Legacy Booklist

by Ray Granade

They say you can't take it with you. Yet, at his untimely death, William McDowell Baker did just that. Bill took with him the list of Arkansas authors about which he had spoken with numbers of us over the previous several years. His passing deprived us forever of his judgment and of his answer to the question with which he had dealt—his choice of "one hundred notable books about, or from, Arkansas."¹

We had talked about Arkansas authors on several occasions, and Bill Mac (as Ouachitians knew him) often said he had compiled a list of "an Arkansas hundred" from a "worthwhile" pool three times larger, and that he carried it around in his head. During the spring of 1985, our talk turned serious. Ouachita Baptist University's centennial and the state's sesquicentennial coincided, and we spoke of mounting a display in Riley Library of his Arkansas hundred. We discussed criteria several times, and planned an exhibit which was to stand in the library as the library's salute to both events.

The plan seemed routine. We would mount the exhibit in the spring of 1986. In conjunction, we would print an exhibit catalog with full citations and reasons for the items' inclusion (including the chosen edition or printing, if any choice existed). Our application for sanction as an official Sesquicentennial Event reflected the plan. We proposed "an exhibit of 100 Arkansas authors, chosen to illustrate the state's diverse literary heritage, with an interpretive catalog."²

The planned exhibit would tastefully (and fancifully) display the volumes he had selected, in the particular editions he wished (or we could secure). That part, while interesting, would have been commonplace, for book exhibits are not unusual in libraries. Nothing we would have done in displays, however imaginative or playful, would have matched the catalog we envisioned.

We planned an annotated catalog which would, in about a dozen pages, lay out the list of one hundred, in chronological order by date of publication. A 600- to 1000-word explanation of the selection process would complete the document, save for a preface and response to the list from someone who had previewed it (the only two names which arose in this context were Leland Duvall and Sam Dickinson). In this manner, the discussion which he had begun would be formally launched with the exhibit and catalog. The

catalog was to have been the *piece de resistance* of the effort, and a *tour de force* by Bill. We schemed to produce a document which would live beyond the confines of the state and the constraints of the exhibit.

Bill began the process publicly when he published some results of his thoughts and conversations in the September, 1985, issue of *Arkansas Libraries* under the title "Choosing an Arkansas Hundred: A Preview of Selection Criteria." Readers quickly recognized, and Bill himself admitted, that the article dealt more with what would not make his list than with what would; its design was proscriptive rather than indicative. Above all, it was evocative rather than descriptive. He said he designed it to stir interest, provoke discussion, and help firm up the list which was "about ninety-five percent complete in my own mind."³

The list was, he admitted, a very personal one, with some of the display items chosen as much for their local appeal as for their immortal value. Through the summer, Bill made several trips to Ouachita for research and to ascertain which of our holdings should be displayed. Each time we discussed his progress. Each time he brought a few of his own books, and left them here in what we came to call "his box." Each time he promised to have the catalog copy ready next time. Each time something had intervened, and we would talk some more. He indicated that he planned to write the copy on cards, from which we would type a draft which he would revise and we would finalize.

Our talks were brief, but gradually I gained more insight into how he was making his choices. He once observed that some of the items he planned for the exhibit would not be on anyone's list of a best hundred, not even on his own; but they should be included because of the local connections with the point of display. Two such examples he gave of the local connections, although he never would admit excluding them from "his hundred" list, were the Hardy Winburn novel and Frederick Baars' autobiography. Winburn had pastored the Arkadelphia First Baptist Church on three separate occasions (which combined to give him the longest service in the church's history, no mean feat when one considers its past) and through that position had strong ties with Ouachita. Baars assumed the leadership of

Granade is Director of Library Services, Ouachita Baptist University.

Ouachita's Music Conservatory shortly after 1890, retained it for a number of years, and gave that part of Ouachita the reputation it has continued to enjoy. In addition, Baars' book was locally printed and distributed.

The "Baker Hundred," as I sometimes thought of the display, encompassed Arkansas authors and Arkansas subjects. Including only Arkansas-bred authors would be unnecessarily restrictive; it could also prove embarrassing, given what Bill viewed as the questionable quality of many Arkansas authors' output. The same problem arose when considering only the addition of those who spent a considerable portion of their lives in the state. Fortunately, as a general rule, those who chose Arkansas as a subject lived here long enough to press a legitimate claim to citizenship.

As time for the display approached, Bill said he was making progress, and would soon be ready. His last note to me admitted that "the bibliography has come along much less smoothly than I had thought . . . and it is time to call a halt to preparation and get to press. I'll come down Thursday and give you final copy." Then I went to school and he to the hospital from which he did not return. The project ended with his life, leaving only our conversations in my mind and "his box" is my office. The incomplete exhibit remained a dream, for I had not his expertise, his criteria, or his list.

What Bill did leave was a cache of books he intended for the cases, and an interesting article detailing as much what he would exclude from, as what he would include on, his list. The exhibit will remain forever unshown, but at least more of his list, as he had it formulated for the display, can be revealed.

My own caveats about the list must presage its revelation. Bill said that about half the books on his list would inhabit anyone's list; another quarter would probably appear on someone else's list; the last quarter should probably cause a great deal of discussion and require defense. That seemed to be his great delight. To have people discussing Arkansas literature might not have been his greatest good, but it was at least a close second (so long as he could be in the midst of the discussion).

As predicted, two books made the list for local consumption. The Baars book was chosen as the perfect tie between the centennial and sesquicentennial celebrations. Not only had Baars taught at Ouachita; his story was an interesting one. The Winburn book's inclusion likewise rested on two counts. First came his pastorate and his positive influence on the community, the school, and literary endeavors in the town

generally. One of his daughters had even gone on to a distinguished career as an English professor after obtaining a Harvard Ph.D. Second, Bill argued that the work had sufficient merit to warrant inclusion in its own right, although he would probably have picked another author if the exhibit had been in another location.

In his article, Bill mentioned that *Three Years in Arkansas* vied for a place with something by Charles Morrow Wilson. He never said what he would pick, and none of Wilson's books appeared in "his box." I included the former in the list, but nothing by the latter. Bill never expressed a preference in my presence, and I've no idea which way he would have gone. Since I had no single book to include for Wilson, I opted for discretion and excluded his entry completely. The reader is hereby warned of the omission.

An oddity, which may be laid partly to whimsy, partly to good scholarship, is that Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* will not be found under its first book-length publication. Bill's decision was that we should display it in its original form of publication—serialized in a magazine—to indicate its true impact. I have followed his wishes in the listing below.

Finally, it is important to stress a distinction that was implicit in what Bill tried to do and explicit in his article, but which is easy to overlook. He consistently talked of "an Arkansas hundred" rather than "the Arkansas hundred." He dealt less with absolutes like "the best hundred" than with conceptions of "a good hundred." And it was a very personal matter. He excluded poetry and picture books; they deserved shelves of their own. "Arkansiana" he excluded by definition: any prose prepared to order by any governmental agency or for any institution. Histories had to go, he printed, though he evidently changed his mind since Orville Taylor's book showed up in "his box" with Staples, Thomas, Woodward, and Shinn's American history (thought not his later *History of Arkansas*). He evidently retained his published intent to exclude Margaret Ross's *Arkansas Gazette*, since "his box" lacked a copy. He may have intended to rely on the library's copy for the display, however, so a definitive answer is impossible. As in the case of Wilson noted above, I opted for discretion and did not include it on the list.

These warnings ended, what follows is a melding of the items Bill said he would probably include when he published what he planned to be the first of several columns on his thoughts about his personal "Arkansas hundred," and the items which actually made it to Riley Library and rested in "his box" when the end came. Those

which made the first listing (in his article) are marked with an "A"; those from the box are marked "L"; those on both lists are designated by "B". It is as close as we shall ever come to this personal hundred, even though it lacks his annotation and is only 3/5ths complete. It is his final contribution to the study and promotion of the Arkansas literature he loved and collected.

- Abbott, Shirley. *Womenfolks: Growing Up Down South*. New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1983. [B]
- Angelou, Mya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. New York: Random House, 1970. [A]
- Ashmore, Harry S. *An Epitaph for Dixie*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1958. [B]
- Baars, F. D. *The Story of the Seas: A Romance in Reality of a Sailor's Life*. Arkadelphia (AR): Baars & Neeley, 1896. [L]
- Babcock, Bernie S. *Hallerloogy's Ride with Santa Claus: The Story of a Little Arkansas Negro Boy Who Took a Ride with Santa Claus*. Perryville (AR): Rice Print Shop, 1943. [B]
- Botkin, B. A., ed. *Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945. [B]
- Editor of the *Arkansas Sketch Book* [Bernie S. Babcock]. *The Man Who Lied on Arkansas and What It Got Him*. Little Rock (AR): The Sketch Book Publishing Company, 1909. [L]
- Elgin, Suzette Haden. *Twelve Fair Kingdoms*. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1981. [L]
- Farris, Jack. *Ramey*. New York: J. F. Lippincott Co., 1953. [L]
- Federal Writer's Project Staff. *Arkansas: A Guide to the State*. New York: Hastings House, 1941. [B]
- Fletcher, John Gould. *Arkansas*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947. [B]
- Garner, Claud. *Cornbread Aristocrat*. New York: Creative Age Press, 1950. [L]
- Gerstaecker, Frederick. *Wild Sports in the Wild West*. New York: Geo. Rutledge & Co., 1854. [A]
- Giles, Janice Holt. *The Plum Thicket*. New York: Fawcett Crest, 1954. [L]
- Greene, Bette. *Summer of My German Soldier*. New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1973. [L]
- Gwaltney, Francis Irby. *A Step in the River*. New York: Random House, 1960. [B]
- Harman, Samuel W. *Hell on the Border: A History of the Great United States Criminal Court at Fort Smith, Arkansas*. Fort Smith (AR): Hell on the Border Publishing Co., c1897. [A]
- Harington, Donald. *The Architecture of the Arkansas Ozarks: A Novel*. Boston: Little Brown & Co., 1975. [B]
- Hays, Brooks. *Politics Is My Parish: An Autobiography*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981. [A]
- Hogue, Wayman. *Back Yonder: An Ozark Chronicle*. New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1932. [A]
- Hughes, Marion. *Three Years in Arkansas. A Complete History of My Three Years of Life, Liberty and Happiness [sic] along the Rocky Path of Life Down in Old Arkansas*. Chicago: M.A. Donohue & Company, 1905. [A]
- Jackson, Thomas W. *On a Slow Train Through Arkansas*. Forrest City (AR): Marshall Vance, 1892. [B]
- Lancaster, Bob. *Southern Strategy*. New York: Seaview Books, 1981. [L]
- Lee, C.P. *High Noon*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1944. [L]
- McDonough, Nancy. *Garden Sass: A Catalog of Arkansas Folkways*. New York: Conard, McCann & Geoghegan, 1975. [L]
- Masterson, James R. *Tall Tales of Arkansas*. Boston: Chapman & Grimes Publishing, 1943. [B]
- Medearis, Mary. *Big Doc's Girl*. New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1950. [L]
- Nash, Dr. C.E. *Southern Stories*. 2 vols. Little Rock (AR):, 1898. [B]
- Noland, Charles F.M. *Pete Whetstone of Devil's Fork*. Van Buren (AR): The Press Argus, 1957. [L]
- Nuttall, Thomas. *A Journal of Travels into the Arkansas Territory During the Year 1819*. Philadelphia: Thos. H. Palmer, 1821. [A]
- Porter, William T., ed. *The Big Bear of Arkansas, and Other Sketches Illustrative of Characters and Incidents in the South and Southwest*. Philadelphia: T.B. Peterson & Brothers, 1843. [L]
- Portis, Charles. *True Grit*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968. [B]
- Randolph, Vance. *Ozark Folksongs*. 4 vols. Columbia (MO): The State Historical Society of Missouri, 1946. [B]
- Rayburn, Otto Ernest. *Ozark Country*. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1941. [B]
- Read, Opie. *I Remember*. New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1930. [B]
- _____. *Opie Read in Arkansas: And What He Saw There*. New York: J.S. Ogilvie Publishing Co., 1891. [L]
- Robertson, Mary Elsie. *Jordan's Stormy Banks and Other Stories*. New York: Atheneum, 1961. [B]
- Shinn, Josiah H. *History of the American People*. New York: American Book Co., 1899. [L]
- Simon, Charlie May. *Johnswood*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1953. [A]
- _____. *Straw in the Sun*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1945. [A]
- Staples, Thomas S. *Reconstruction in Arkansas, 1862-1874: Studies in History, Economics and Public Law*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1923. [L]
- Stuart, Ruth McEnery. *In Simpkinsville: Character Tales*. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1897. [B]
- Taylor, Orville W. *Negro Slavery in Arkansas*. Durham (NC): Duke University Press, 1958. [L]
- Thanet, Octave. *Expiation*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890. [B]
- Thomas, David Y. *Arkansas in War and Reconstruction, 1861-1874*. Little Rock (AR): Arkansas Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1926. [L]
- Thompson, Edward, *A Seed in Spring*. Philadelphia: Macrae-Smith Co., 1948. [L]
- Twain, Mark. "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, a Comrade of Tom Sawyer's," *The Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, 19 (November, 1884-April, 1885). [B]

- _____. *Life on the Mississippi*. Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1883. [B]
- Wagner, Constance. *Sycamore*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950. [L]
- Wallace, Edward Tatum. *Barrington*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1945. [L]
- West, Don. *Broadside to the Sun*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1946. [L]
- Williams, Leonard. *Cavorting on the Devil's Fork*. Memphis (TN): Memphis State University Press, 1979. [L]
- Williamson, Thomas R. *The Woods Colt: A Novel of the Ozark Hills*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1933. [L]
- Winburn, Hardy L. *The Lead Hunters of the Ozarks*. Boston: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., c1927. [L]

Winslow, Thyra Samter. *My Own, My Native Land*. Garden City: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1935. [B]

Woodward, C. Vann. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966. [B]

NOTES

¹William McDowell Baker, "Choosing An Arkansas Hundred: A Preview of Selection Criteria," *Arkansas Libraries*, 42 (September, 1985), 16.

²Document in author's possession.

³Baker, 16.

⁴Document in author's possession.

Cataloging Forum

by Stephen Foster

DAUGHTER OF AACR2

Last year in *American Libraries* the venerable and always witty Michael Gorman, Mr. Big of the Cataloging Syndicate, published a short, funny article about the revised edition of AACR2 that was to make its appearance at the end of 1988. It is now here. The terra-cotta 'R2', as we catalogers affectionately call it, has given way to what Gorman called "AACR2 1/2", or "Daughter of a Dynamic Decade," now in a rich dark green, available in a fifty-dollar, ring binder format to accommodate those endless revisions that are bound to follow.

Gorman's humorous posturing in the article was an attempt to alleviate the fears and trepidations on the part of the cataloging community that the wake of the revised "R2" would be similarly catastrophic to the LC surrender of "superimposition" and the event of AACR2 itself—a bibliographic Dunkirk. There had been some complaints that the "revised AACR2" was a sneaky maneuver, a cowardly refusal to call it what it really was—AACR3! Richard Smiraglia, Gorman notes, had suggested a "Snake in the Grass" award for the creators of "Daughter of R2." But, as Gorman says, "The air will not be thick with catalogers throwing themselves out of upstairs windows when AACR2 1/2 is implemented." Gorman is right. Daughter of R2 is a revision and updating of her parent without the major headaches that accompanied the "radical" changes that came ten years ago. It appears, as far as I can tell so far, to combine the wisdom of "not fixin' what ain't broke" with some very happy clarifications. The infamous rule 21.IB2,

for example, the rule for making corporate bodies main entries, the rule which created so much havoc with the introduction of AACR2 is pretty much unchanged with the revised edition. The new green cover is also a considerable improvement over that brown-orange tone with which we had to spend so many hours.

One of the major changes of the revised AACR2 is Chapter Nine, "Computer Files." "Computer Files" replaces the cumbersome "Machine-Readable Data Files." This in itself is an improvement. The first paragraph of Chapter Nine of the revised edition takes 41 words to say what took 97 words in the 1978 edition. I'm happy anytime you can say the same with less. Compare now the following:

1978 Edition: 9.0B1 Chief source of information. "The chief source of information for a machine-readable data file with an adequate internal user label' is such an internal user label. If the information required is not available from the chief source, take it from following sources [etc., etc.]"

1988 Edition: 9.0B1 Chief source of information. "The chief source of information for computer files is the title screen(s). If there is no title take the information from other presented internal evidence (e.g., main menus, program statements)"

Seeing these two rules juxtaposed should give us catalogers, perhaps, some feeble hope that there is progress in the universe. The 1978 edition is virtually unintelligible—the footnote, which I omitted, does not help—but the 1988 edi-