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CC served as training site for KC Blues

By Wendy Richter
For the Siftings

One hundred years ago, baseball fans in Arkadelphia were gearing up for a real treat: A front-page headline in the Southern Standard newspaper of January 4, 1917, proclaimed, "Kansas City Blues to Arrive March 12." It is a little known fact today that Clark County served as a spring training site for the team. A documentary produced in 2015 ("The First Boys of Spring" produced by Larry Foley of the University

of Arkansas and narrated by Billy Bob Thornton) portrays Hot Springs as a popular place for baseball spring training, but Arkadelphia holds a place in the annals of the sport as well.

The Southern Standard reported the following: "The Kansas City Blues will again train in Arkadelphia next spring. In a letter recently received by H. C. Couch, president of the Commercial League, from John Ganzell, the new manager of the Blues it was stated that the Blues would ar-

rive here with perhaps a larger number of players than last year. The owners are well pleased with Arkadelphia as a training place. Last year the Blues were in dandy shape when they left here and led the league for several months. The local Commercial League has tried to get another team to train here but probably will not succeed this year. Exhibition games will be booked with several big league teams for the Blues so the local teams will have opportunity to see them in action. The Boston Red Sox,

Pittsburg Pirates, Cincinnati Reds, and some of the American Association teams will probably be played."

A few weeks later, even more good news surfaced: "Christy Mathewson May Appear Here." The Southern Standard had learned that "Arkadelphia has a good chance of seeing the Cincinnati Reds, with their manager, 'Big Six' Mathewson, in action here the latter part of March." And, local officials were attempting to arrange exhibition games between the "Kansas City Blues who train

here, and Brooklyn, the National League champions, who will train at Hot Springs." Importantly to the local folks, the paper observed that "the fans are assured of some good baseball this spring."

To learn more about Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum (www.clarkcountyhistory.org or 230.1360) or the Clark County Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library (www.obu.edu/archives or 245.5332).