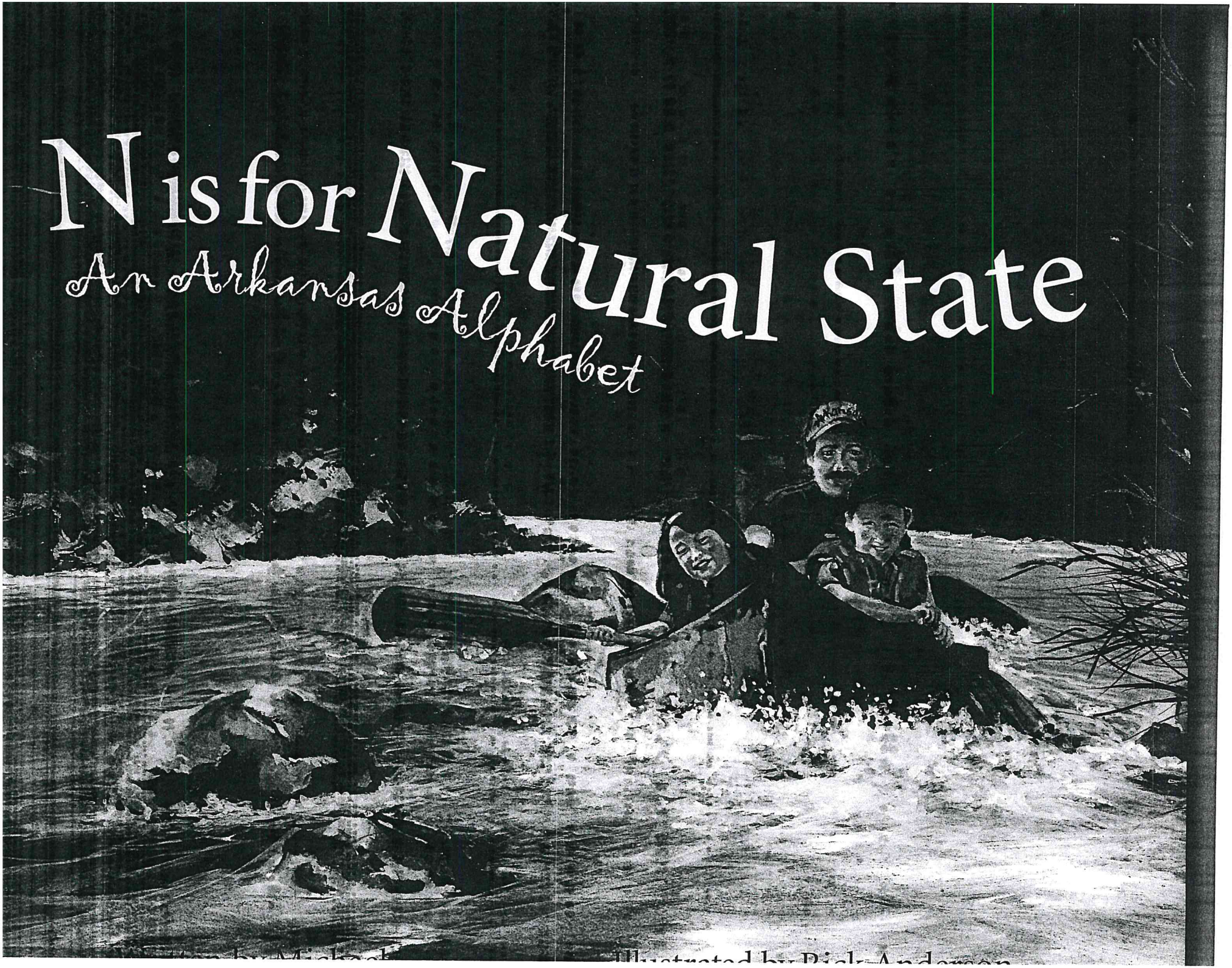
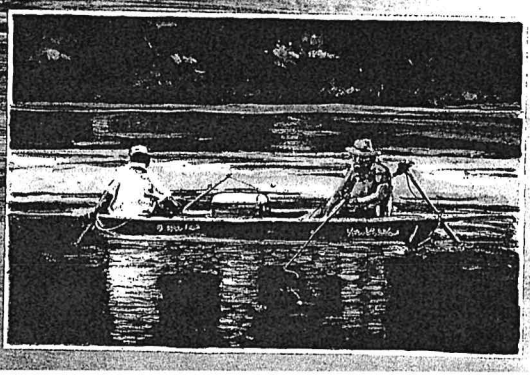
N is for Natural State

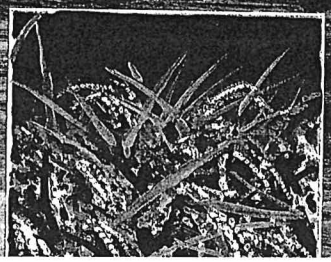
An Arkansas Alphabet



From wide flat meadows to rolling hills
to mountains thick with hardwood trees.
Come, discover what Arkansas
has to offer, from A to Z.



A is for "Acansa,"
a Sioux word for "downstream place."
This region later was named Arkansas—
the state we now embrace.



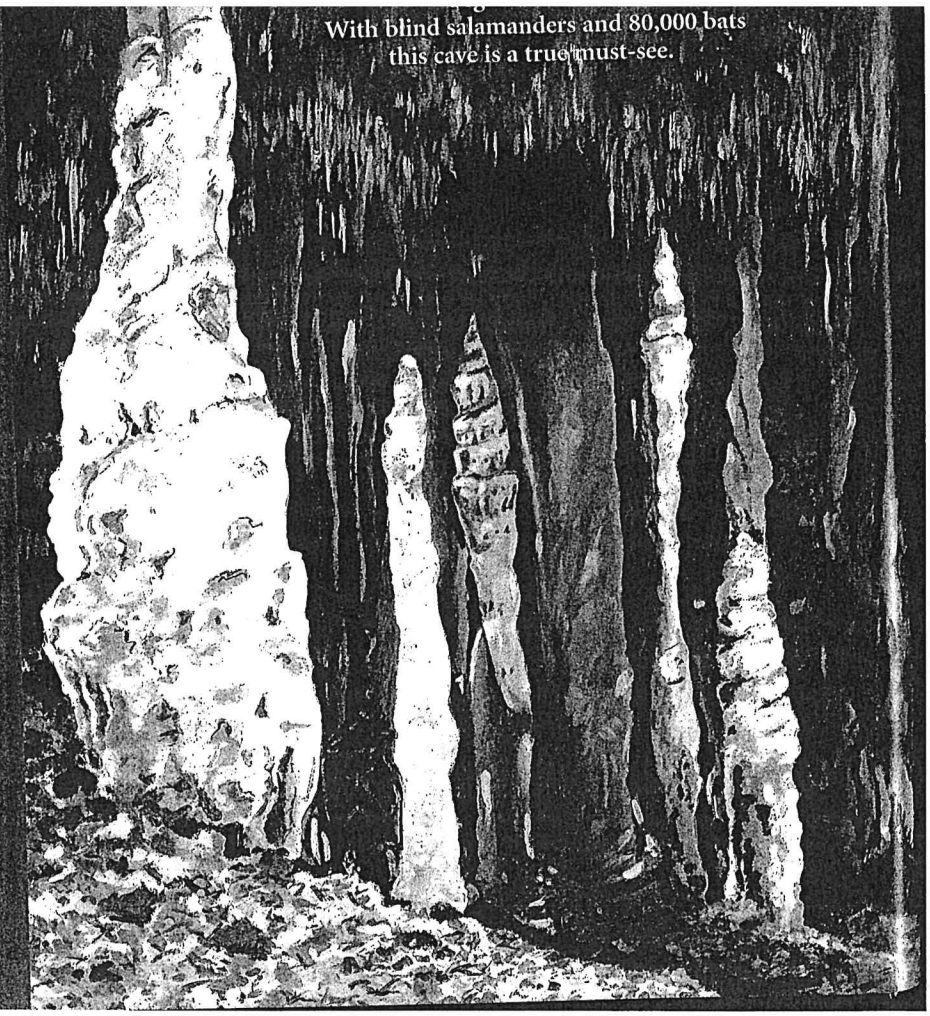
Three hundred years ago, a group of Sioux Indians traveled downstream on the Ohio and Wabash Rivers. They settled in the eastern part of the state along the Mississippi, White, and Arkansas Rivers. This group of Sioux became known as the O-gah-pah, or "downstream people." They later became known as the Quapaw Indians. The word Arkansas is from French interpretation of the Sioux word "acansa."

1673: Marquette visited this area and wrote the word as Arkansoa
1682: LaSalle wrote Arkensa
1686: DeTonti wrote Arkancas
1721: Bernard de la Harpe wrote Arkansas
1836: "Arkansas" was admitted to the Union
1881: The legislature appointed a committee to determine the correct pronunciation of the last syllable. It was decided Ark-an-saw was correct.

a
A

B b

With blind salamanders and 80,000 bats
this cave is a true must-see.



Blanchard Springs Caverns has been called "the cave find of the twentieth century." The largest room is called the Cathedral Room. It measures 1,150 feet long, 180 feet wide and 65 feet tall! There are 80,000 bats in the cave system, including the big brown, the little brown, and eastern pipistrel. The gray bat and Indiana bat are also found here and are on the endangered species list. With huge rooms, crystalline formations, and a multitude of living creatures including the Ozark Blind Salamander, it is easy to see why Blanchard Springs Caverns is a very busy place.

Bill Clinton was born in Hope, Arkansas, in 1946. After attending Georgetown University, Oxford University, and Yale Law School, he returned to Arkansas in 1974. A year later he married Hillary Rodham. Bill Clinton was twice elected governor of Arkansas. He served from 1979-1981 and 1983-1993. During his time as governor, Mr. Clinton signed many bills into law.

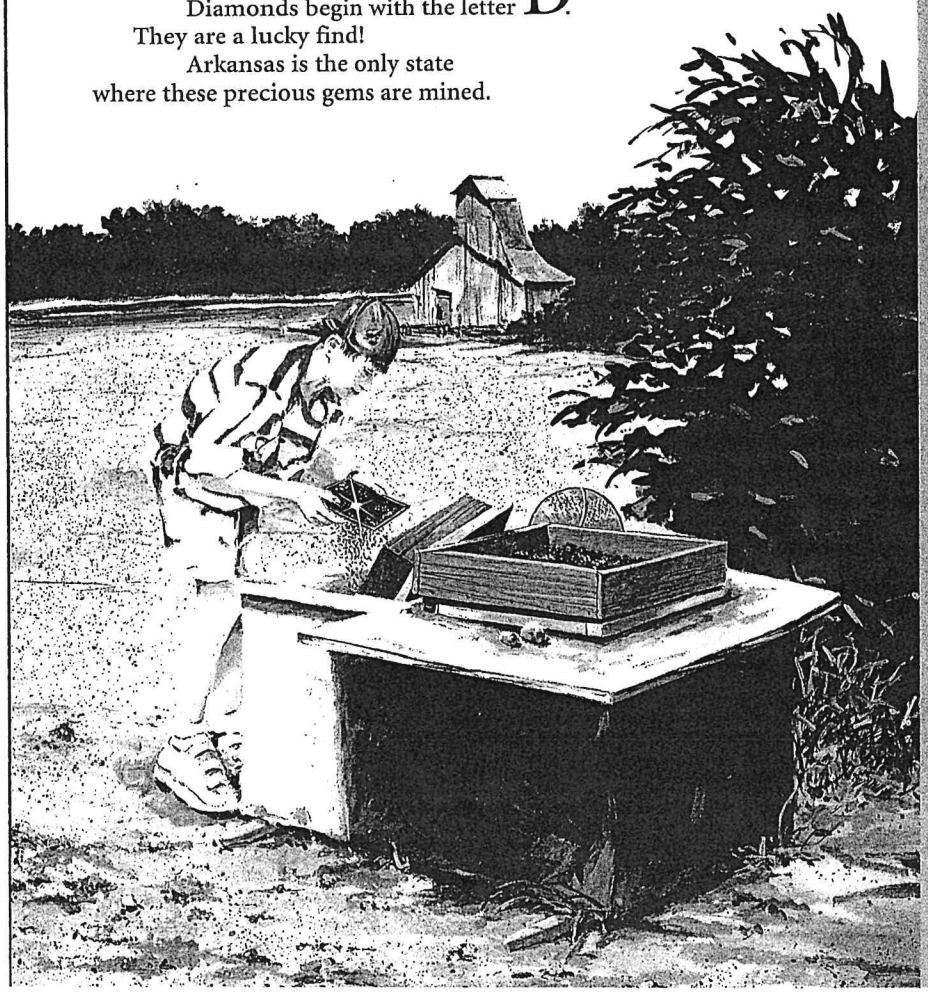
On November 3, 1992, Bill Clinton was elected the 42nd president of the United States of America. Four years later he was reelected to a second term. Under the current laws of the United States of America, presidents may only serve two terms in office, or eight years.

C c

William Jefferson Clinton's
last name begins with the letter C.
He was elected the 42nd president—
the leader of "the land of the free."

42nd President

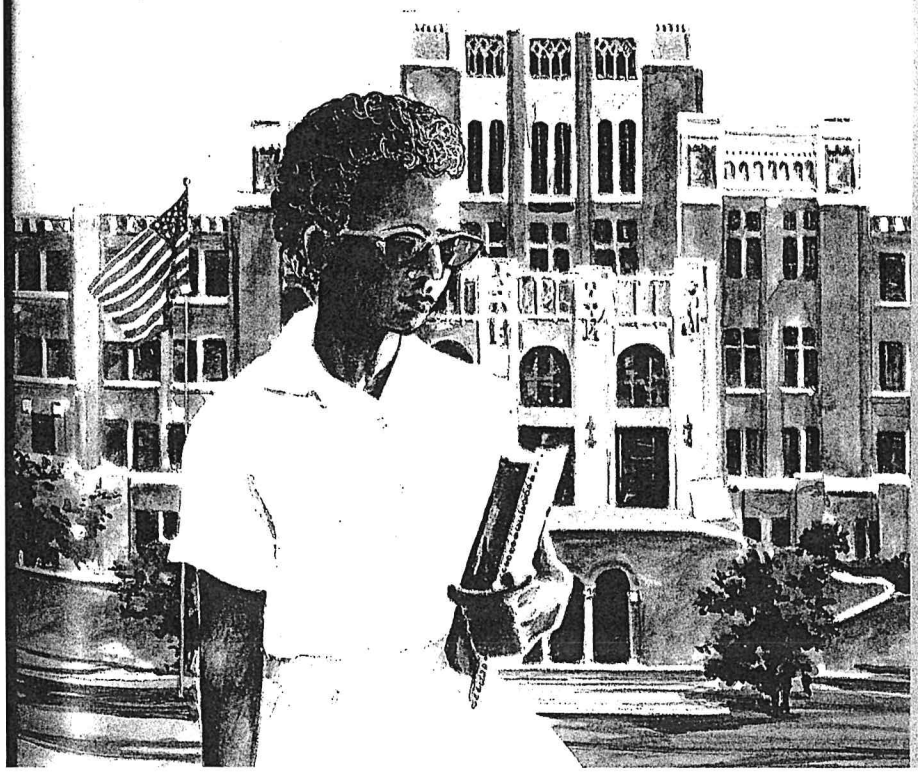
Diamonds begin with the letter **D**.
They are a lucky find!
Arkansas is the only state
where these precious gems are mined.



August 8, 1906. Since then, over 70,000 diamonds have been found at the Crater of Diamonds State Park. Visitors to the park can search for diamonds and keep what they find! The largest diamond discovered so far was nicknamed the "Uncle Sam Diamond." It was found in 1924. "Uncle Sam" weighed 40.23 carats and is valued today to be worth over $650,000. On average, 600 diamonds are found at the Crater of Diamonds State Park every year.

D d

E stands for Elizabeth Eckford.
We remember her to this day.
She tried to enter Central High,
but the National Guard blocked her way.



E e

In 1954 most schools in the South, including those in Arkansas, were segregated. That meant African-American and white students did not attend school together. The United States Supreme Court, the highest court in the country, said segregation in public schools needed to end. The first school in Arkansas to be integrated (where children of all races attend the same school) was Central High School in Little Rock.

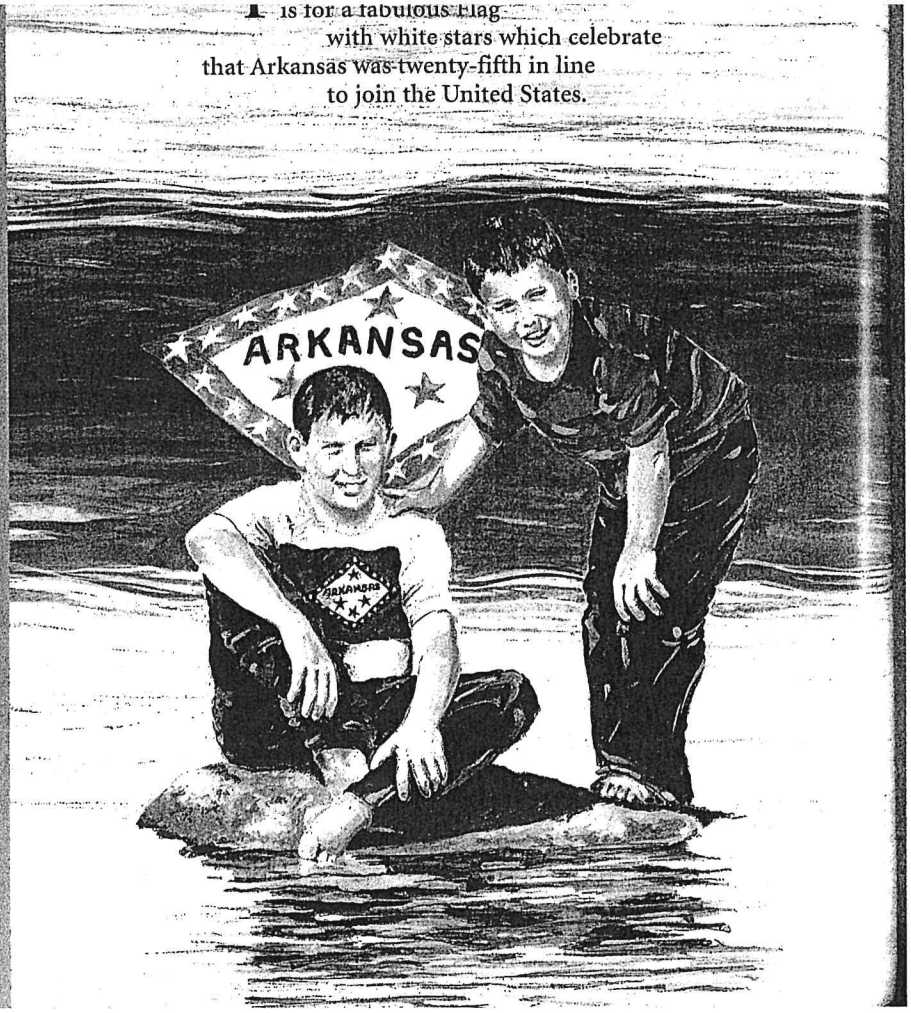
Only nine African-American students registered to attend Central High in 1957. These students planned to arrive together on the first day of school. However, Elizabeth Eckford did not hear about the plan. So she walked to school by herself and faced an angry mob alone. They shouted ugly names and tried to frighten her.

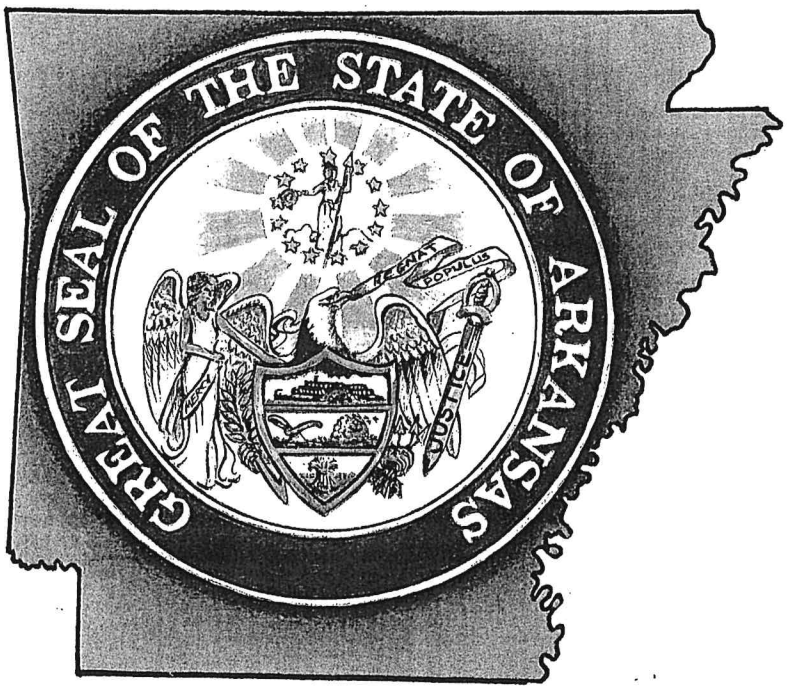
On September 24, President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent army troops to Little Rock to make sure the students were admitted to Central High. The Little Rock Nine (Minnijean Brown, Elizabeth Eckford, Ernest Green, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Pattillo, Gloria Ray, Terrance Roberts, Jefferson Thomas, and Carlotta Walls) bravely paved the way for all of America's children to be

and blue to remind us Arkansas is part of the United States of America. Look closely, there are more than 25 stars on the Arkansas flag. Four of the stars are blue. They are symbols, too. The lone blue star above the word Arkansas represents the fact that Arkansas once belonged to the Confederacy. The three blue stars below the word Arkansas stand for Spain, France, and the United States. Arkansas, at one time or another, belonged to these three countries. The diamond shape reminds everyone that Arkansas is the nation's only diamond-producing state. Arkansas became the twenty-fifth state when it joined the United States of America on June 15, 1836.

Ff

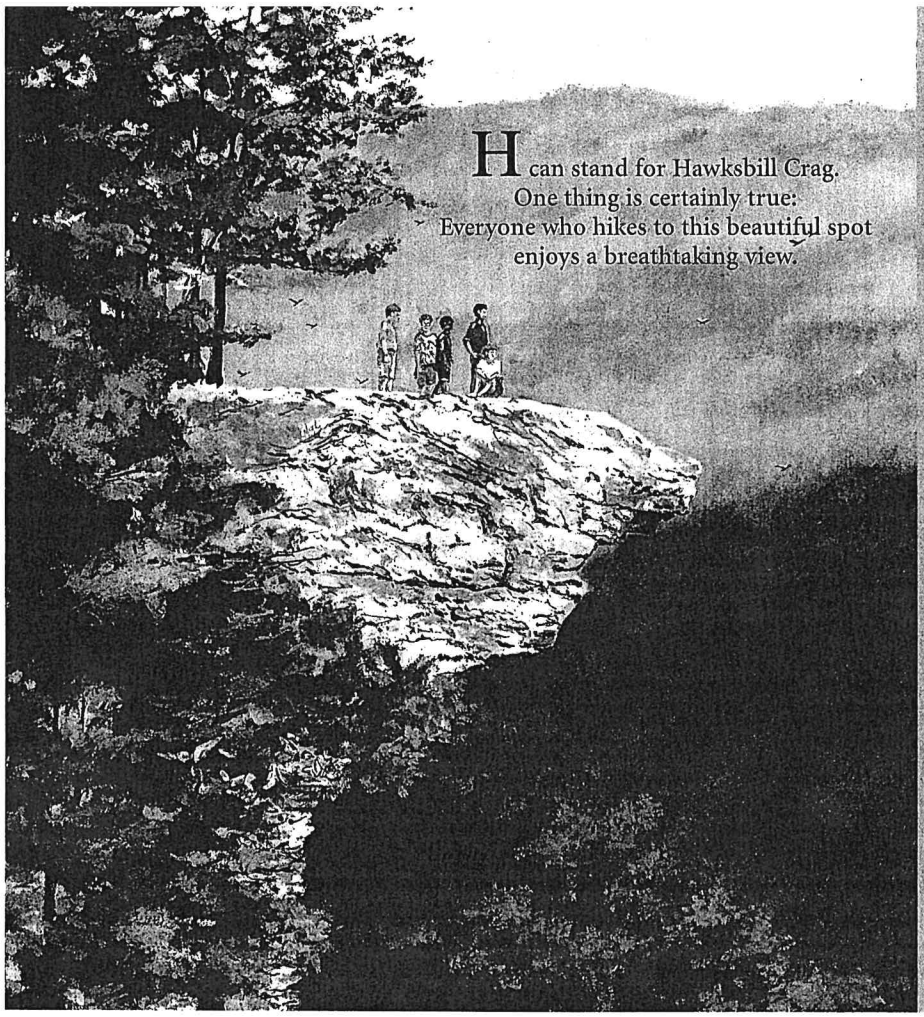
F is for a fabulous flag
with white stars which celebrate
that Arkansas was twenty-fifth in line
to join the United States.





The state seal was adopted in 1864 and has many symbols. An eagle holds a ribbon that proclaims Arkansas's motto, *Regnat Populus* or "The People Rule." The state's motto was added to the seal in 1907. The eagle holds a shield that contains pictures of a steamboat, plow, beehive, and wheat. These are symbols of how people make a living in Arkansas. On one side of the eagle is an angel, exemplifying mercy. On the other side is a sword, representing justice. The eagle's talons hold an olive branch, a sign of peace and a bundle of arrows, symbolizing the courage of Arkansas's people to preserve peace. Standing watch over the eagle, angel, and sword is the Goddess of Liberty. She holds a pole and wreath and is circled by 13

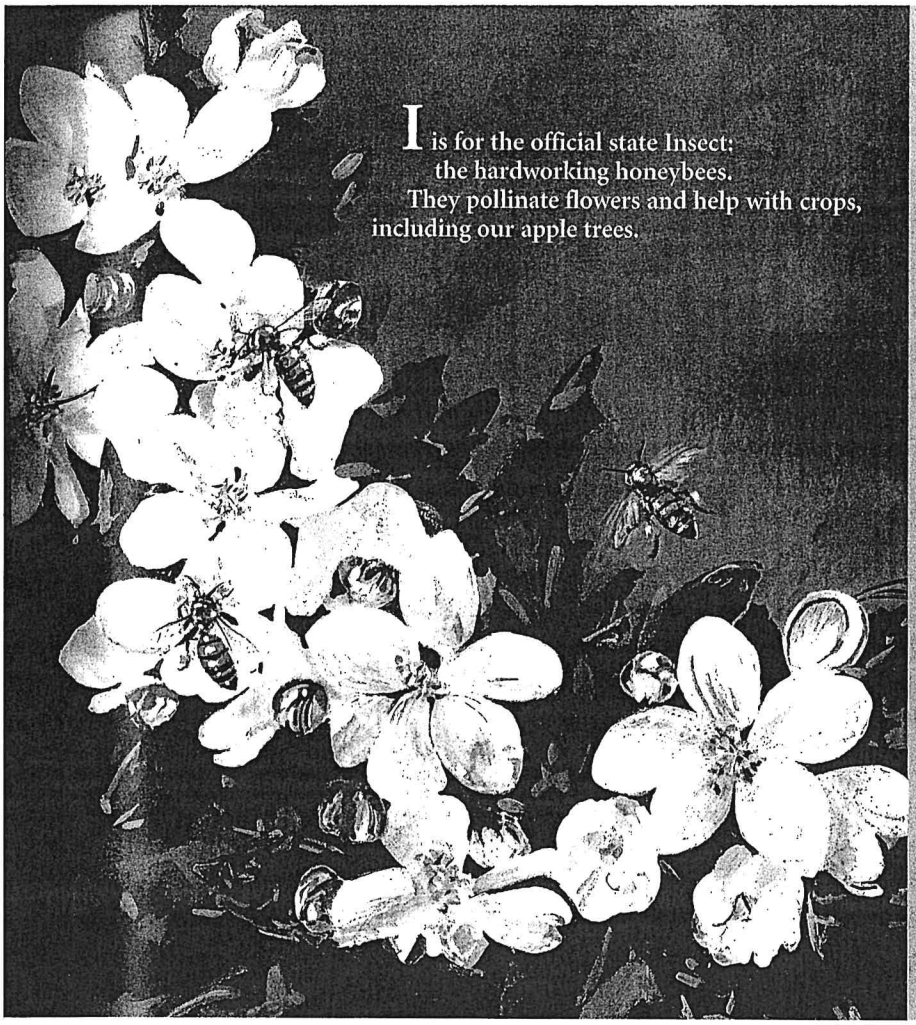
G can stand for our Great Seal.
It's on laws to make them legal.
The symbols include an angel of mercy,
a beehive, plow, and eagle.



H can stand for Hawksbill Crag.
One thing is certainly true:
Everyone who hikes to this beautiful spot
enjoys a breathtaking view.

H h

Hawksbill Crag, also known as Whitaker Point, is a sharp outcropping of rock on a steep cliff in the Ozark Mountains. This amazing rock formation rises above Whitaker Creek in the southwestern part of Newton County. The only way to experience this beautiful scene is to hike a 1.5-mile trail. People agree the walk is worth the effort. Once there, hikers are rewarded with a spectacular view of magnificent mountains dense with trees, deep valleys, animals, and wildflowers.



I is for the official state Insect:
the hardworking honeybees.
They pollinate flowers and help with crops,
including our apple trees.

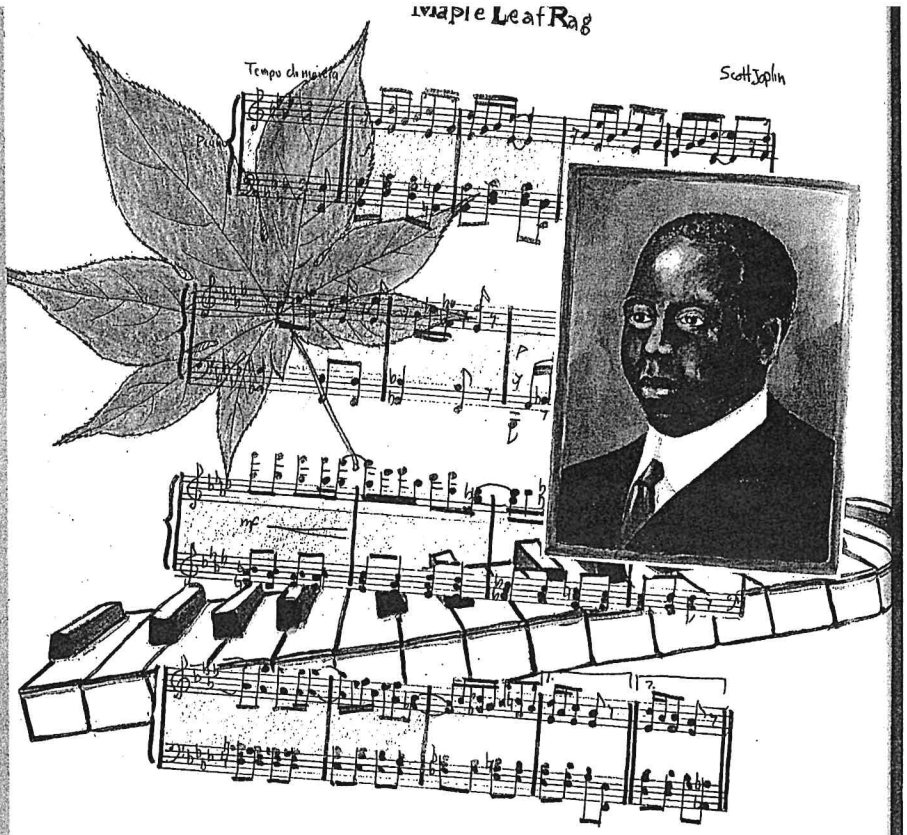
Chosen in 1973, the honeybee is Arkansas's state insect. Its home, the beehive, is depicted on the state seal. Honeybees suck nectar from flowers to make honey. The honey is then sold by beekeepers. In addition to making honey, as the honeybee flies from flower to flower it helps to pollinate many different kinds of plants. This hardworking insect is the official state insect in 16 states, making the honeybee the most popular state symbol.

I i

famous sons, was born into a musical family in 1868. Giles, his father and a former slave, played fiddle. Scott's mother, Florence, played the banjo and sang. By the age of 11, Scott was taking piano lessons and was well on his way to stardom.

Sometime around 1899, Joplin composed his sixth musical piece, the "Maple Leaf Rag." This important song marked the beginning of a style of music called ragtime. Its importance earned Joplin the title "Father of Ragtime Music." Although Scott Joplin composed over 60 songs, he did not receive much recognition while he was alive. Today, over 100 years after some of his songs were composed, musicians continue to play Joplin's songs. The movie *The Sting* featured many of Joplin's ragtime compositions.

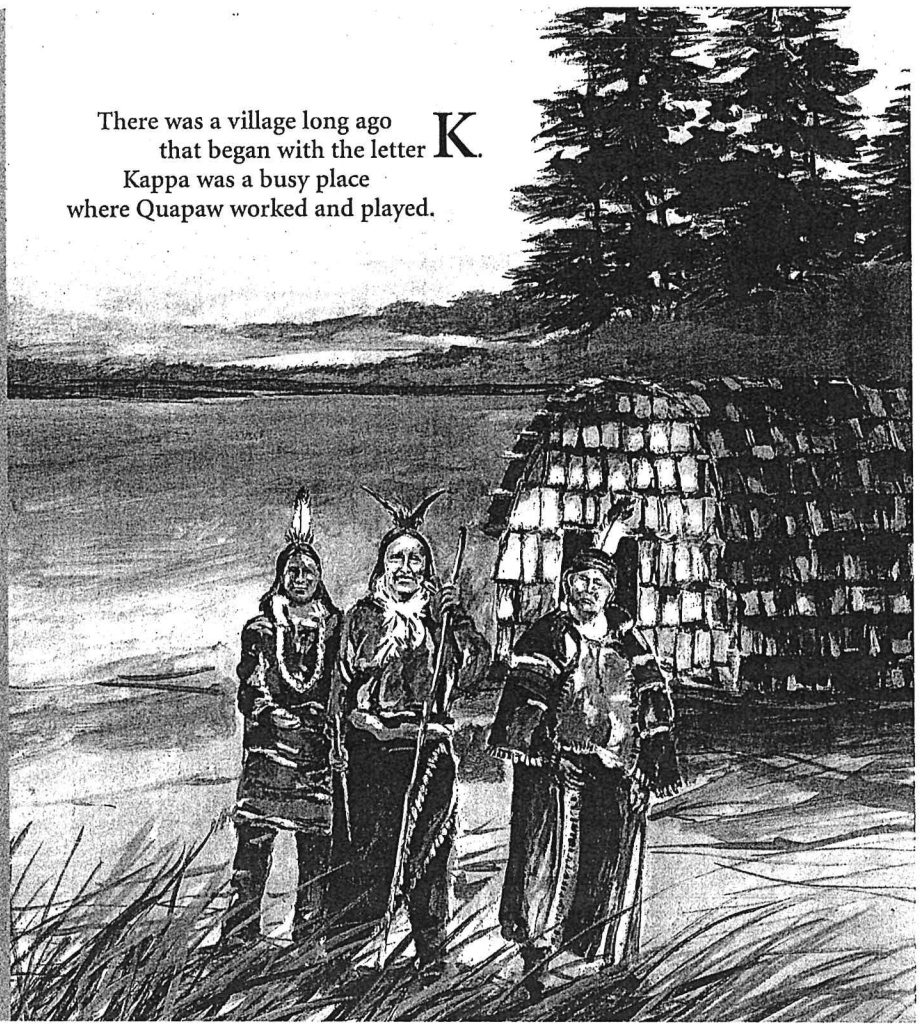
Jj



Scott Joplin wrote the "Maple Leaf Rag."
His name begins with **J**.
This son of slaves wrote many songs
we hear and sing today.

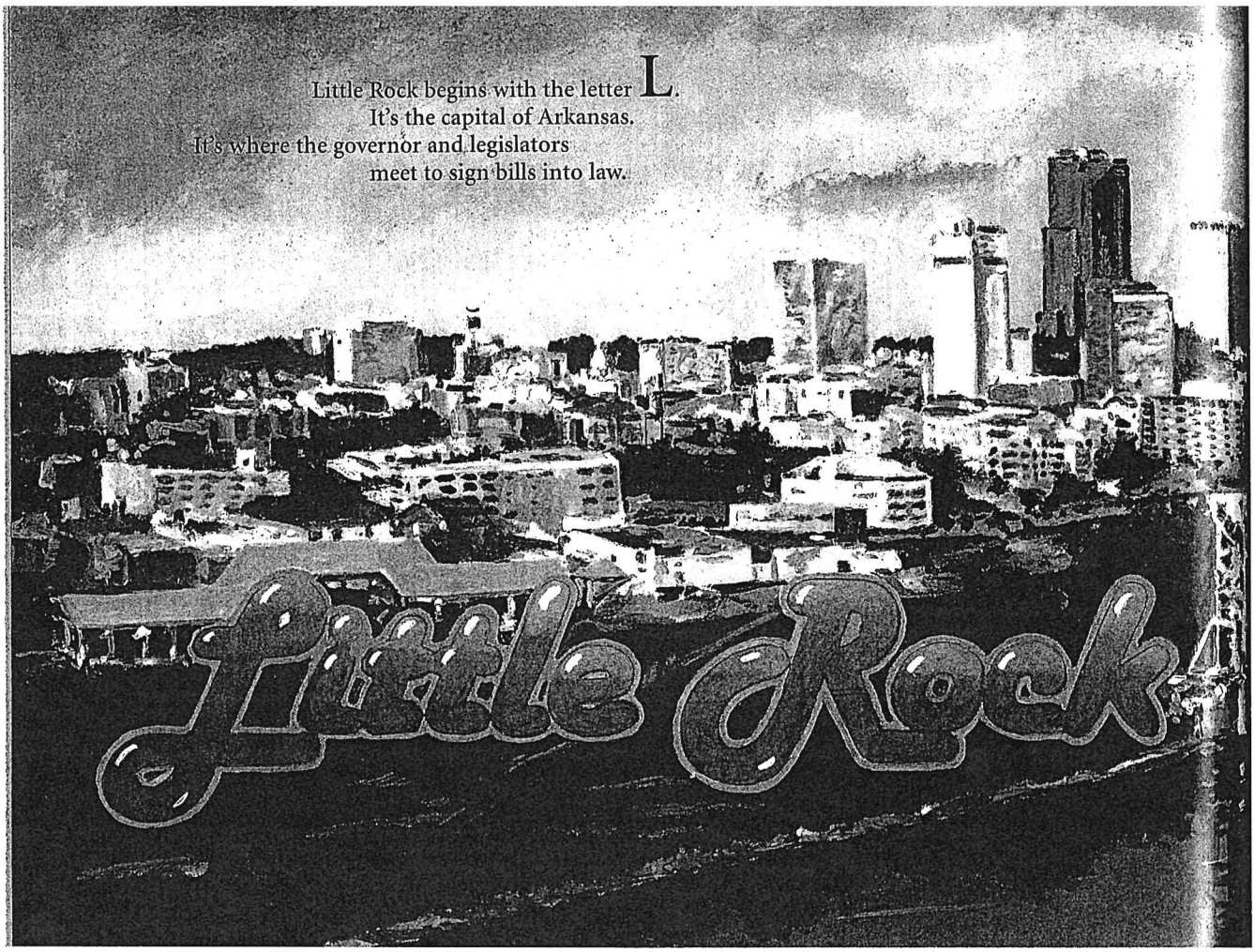
Kk

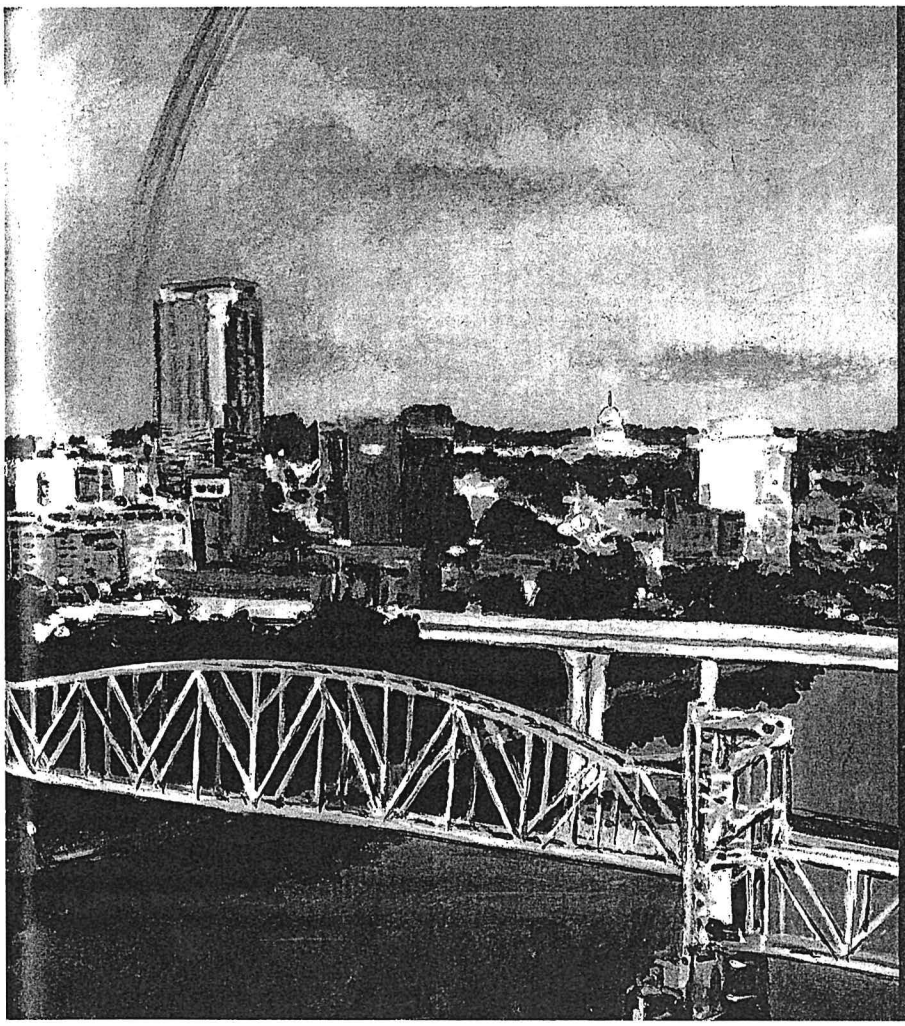
There was a village long ago
that began with the letter **K**.
Kappa was a busy place
where Quapaw worked and played.



Kappa was a Quapaw community located approximately 50 miles south of Helena, near present-day Snow Lake. It is estimated that as many as 4,000 people lived in Kappa. The Quapaw lived in long rectangular homes with bark walls and dome-shaped tops.

When the European settlers came to this area, they brought new diseases to the Quapaw such as smallpox and measles. Because of these diseases, from 1682 to the early 1800s the Quapaw popula-

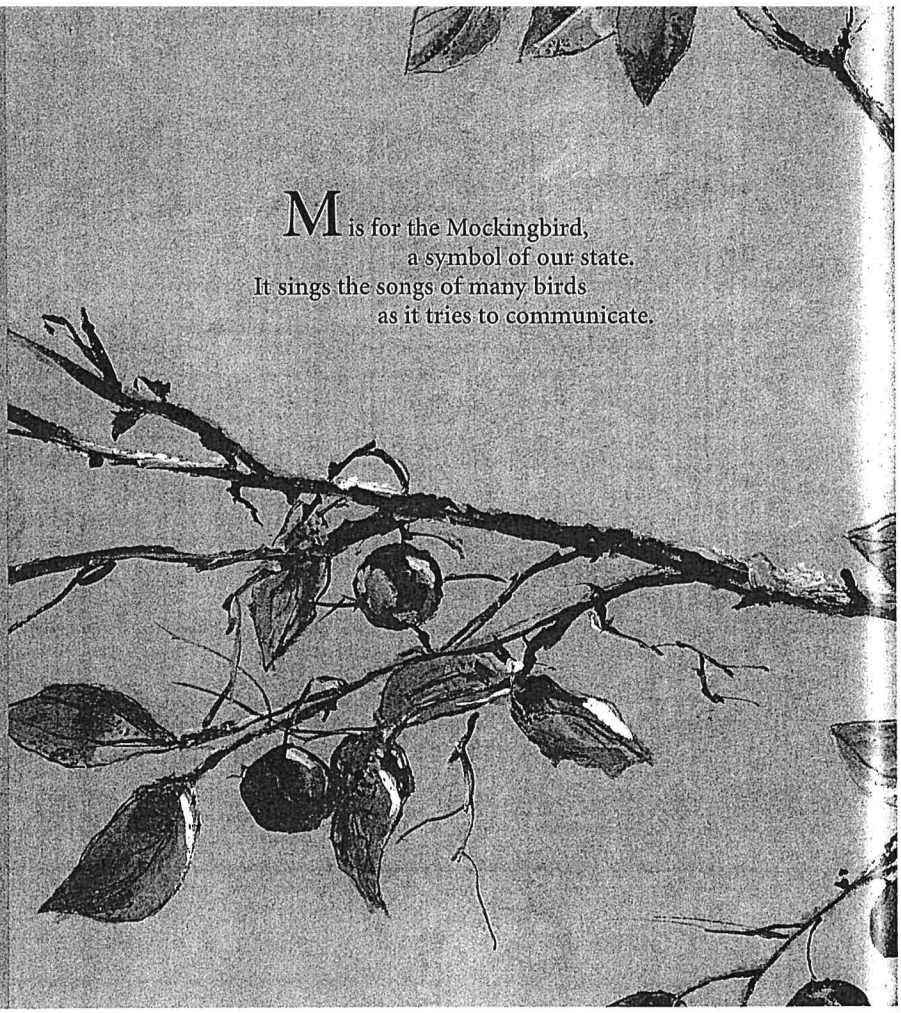




Bernard de la Harpe was a French explorer. La Harpe heard rumors of a large emerald embedded in a rock and he wanted to find it. In 1721 he explored the Arkansas River looking for the emerald. La Harpe did find the green rock, but it was sandstone, not emerald. This spot became known as "La Petite Roche," or "little rock." This title distinguished it from a larger rock outcropping farther up the river.

L l

M m



M is for the Mockingbird,
a symbol of our state.
It sings the songs of many birds
as it tries to communicate.

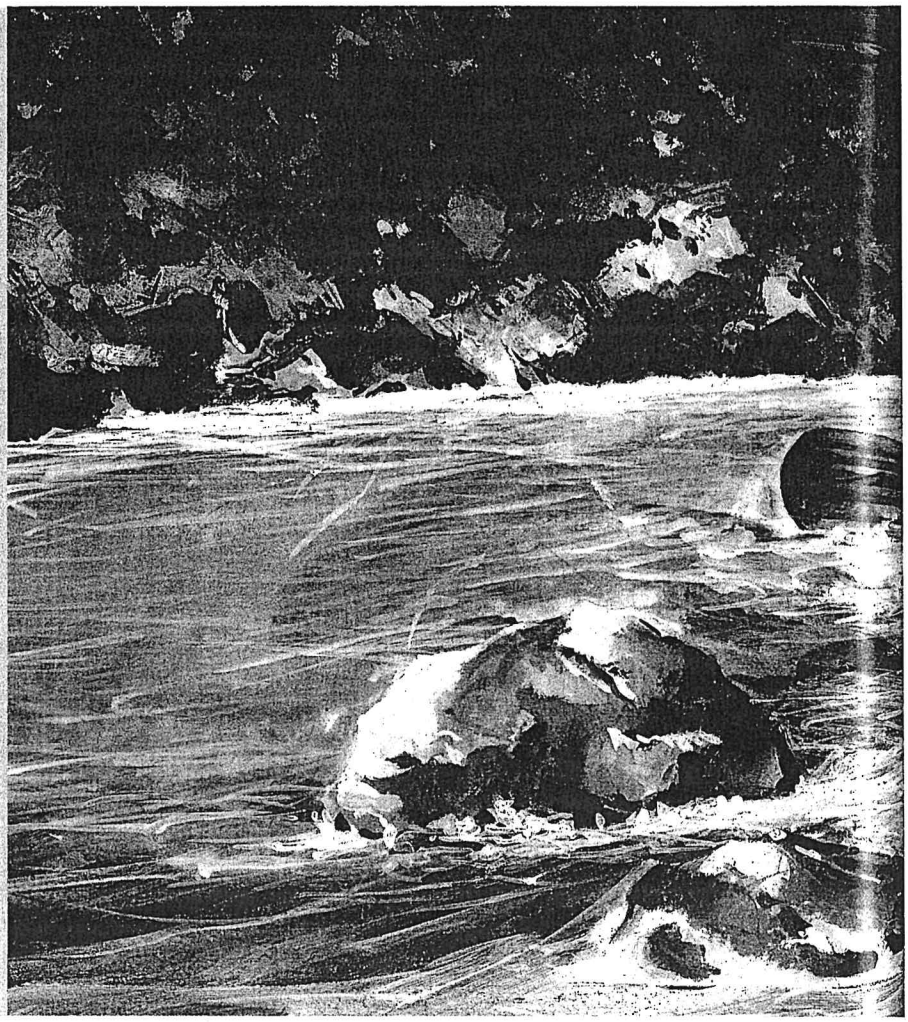
The Arkansas legislature adopted the mockingbird as its state bird in 1929 at the suggestion of the Arkansas State Federation of Women's Club. Primarily gray with a white underbelly and black, gray, and white wings, the bird is called a mockingbird because it "mocks" the sounds of other birds and noises around it. Mockingbirds are capable of changing their song frequently, as often as 30 times in 10 minutes. The male and female mockingbirds work together to construct their nests, and use them for several seasons. Mockingbird eggs are blue or green. They also raise their young together, feeding them insects and fruit.

beauty. "The Natural State" has over 600,000 acres of lakes and 9,700 miles of rivers and streams. Over 2 million acres of national forests provide our residents and visitors many opportunities to enjoy nature at its best.

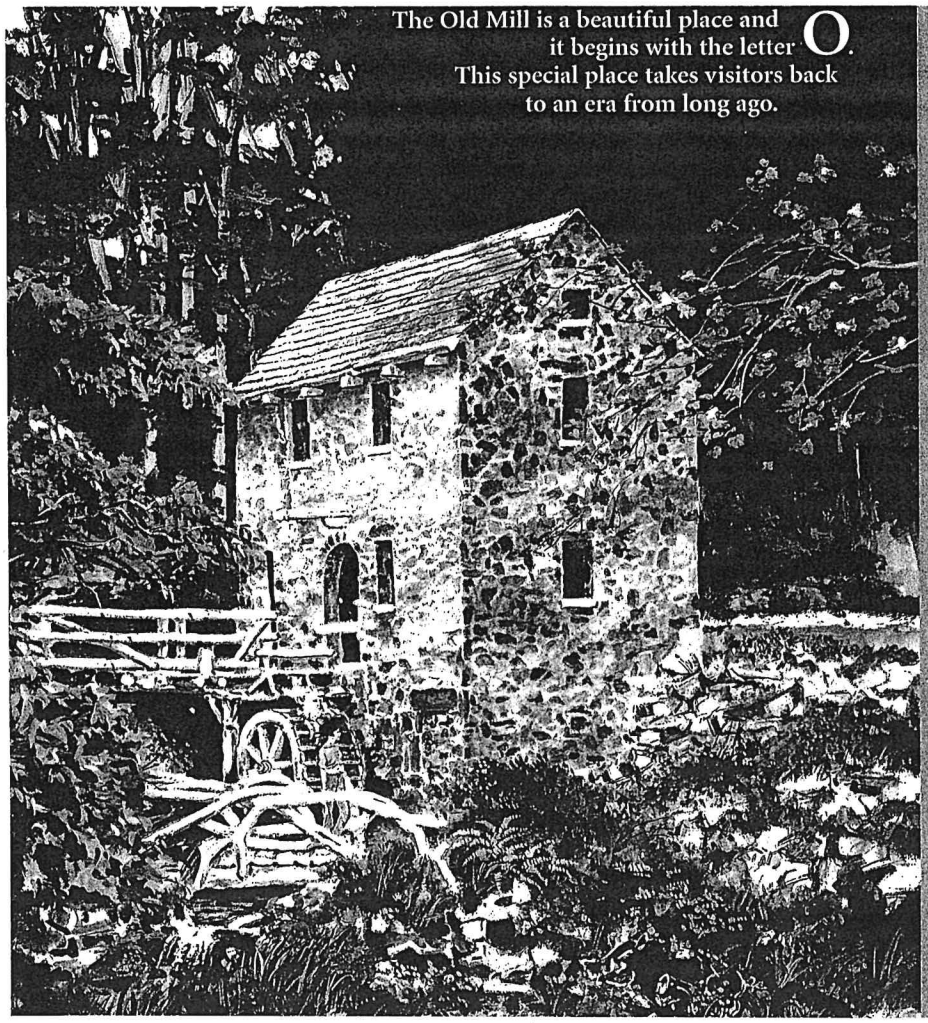
With the exception of citrus fruits, Arkansas soil grows almost every crop produced in the United States. In fact, Arkansas leads the nation in the production of rice. Combine its natural beauty, rich farmland, and scenic views and it's easy to see why Arkansas is called "The Natural State."

It is believed that Arkansas is the only state that can "survive" on its own natural resources.

n N



Of course, N is for "The Natural State"
where unspoiled beauties abound.
We have timber, water, fertile soil,
and diamonds in the ground!



The Old Mill is a beautiful place and
it begins with the letter O.
This special place takes visitors back
to an era from long ago.

Pugh's Mill Park. Renovated in 1933, the Old Mill's design resembles a neglected mill from the early 1800s. The gristmill, which grinds grain into flour, dates back to 1828. Because of its stunning beauty, the Old Mill is one of the most photographed places in Arkansas. The mill was featured in the beginning scenes of the movie *Gone with the Wind*, and is thought to be the only remaining structure from that movie. Intriguing footbridges and a lovely lake surround the mill. The Old Mill is a favorite location for weddings or just enjoying a beautiful day. The Old Mill was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.

O o

P can be for Poultry.
Arkansas leads the nation
in raising commercial broilers.
Now that's cause for celebration!

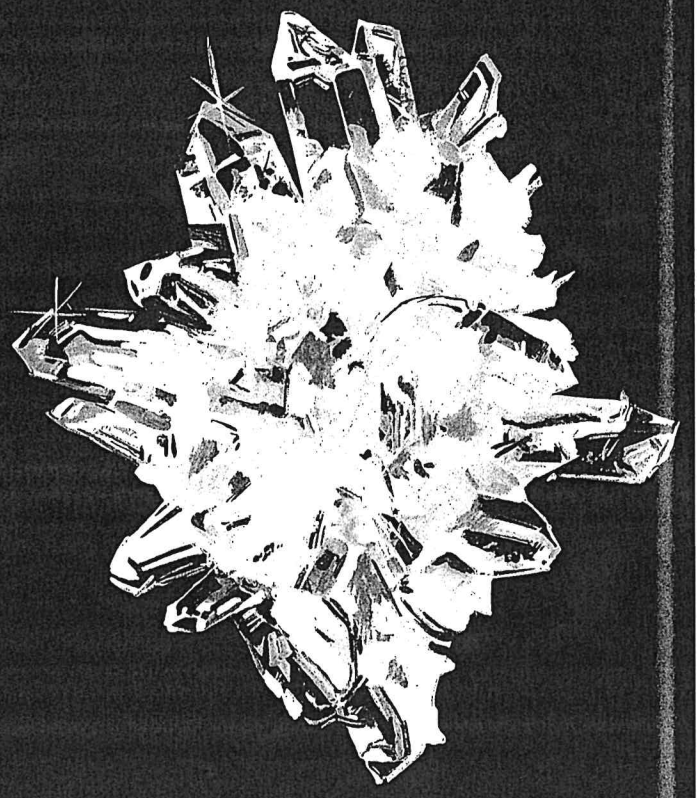
Most of the 7,000 poultry farms in Arkansas are spread across the western part of the state. Why there? Early poultry farmers understood that the noise and smells chickens make require rural settings. Arkansas is mostly rural and provided an ideal place to raise poultry. Early poultry farmers discovered an added bonus. The "poultry litter," a mixture of manure and bedding, dramatically improved the surrounding pastureland. Soon, what was once pitiful land supported crops and livestock.

Today Arkansas ranks second in the nation in the production of broilers and third in the number of turkeys raised. Arkansas exports poultry to Mexico, Russia, and Japan.

It is estimated that one in 10 Arkansans work in some business associated

q

Q is ideal for Quartz crystal,
our state mineral, pure and clear.
"Rock hounds" hunt and dig them up
to keep as a souvenir.



Arkansas leads the United States in the production of quartz crystals. Quartz is second only to feldspar as the most common mineral in the earth's crust. Made of a mixture of silicon and oxygen, it is formed when water is percolated deep in the earth. The Ouachita Mountains are a rich source of some of the world's purest quartz crystals.

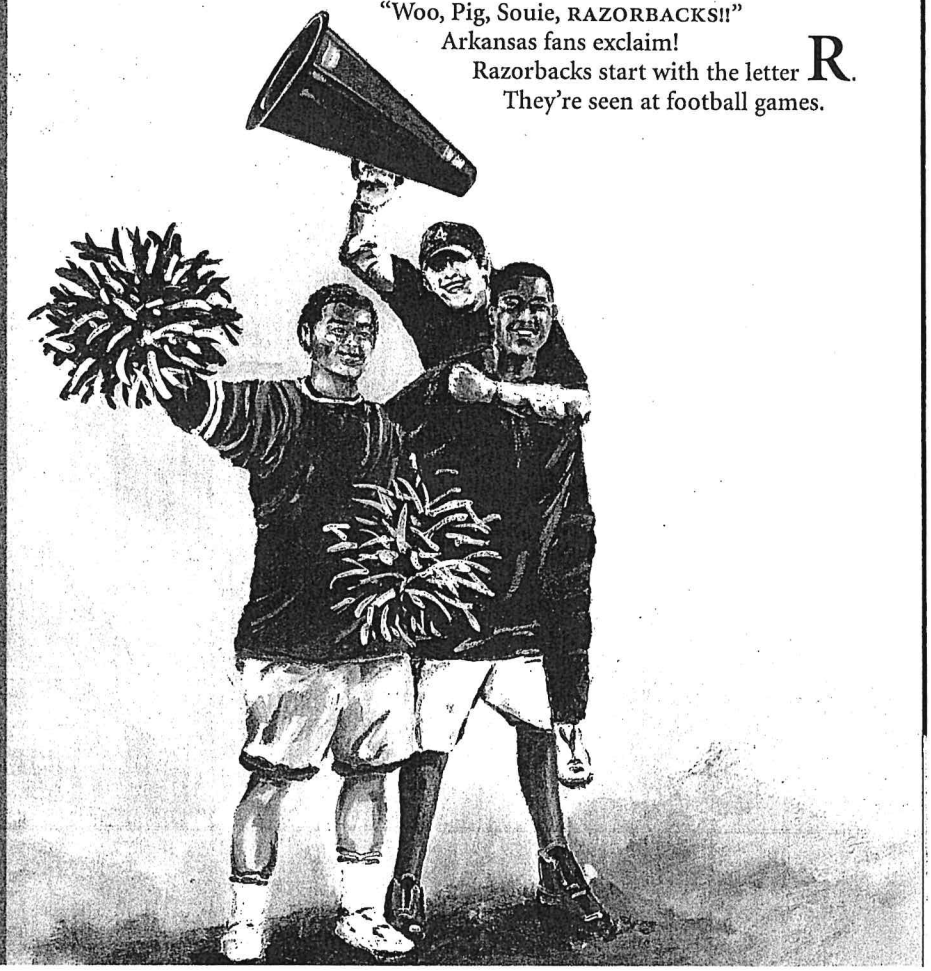
There are many types of quartz, including smoky, bubble, coontail, cubic, phantom, and rainbow. Because of their clarity, some crystals are called "water-clear."

People collect quartz crystals for their beauty. However, they are also used in jewelry, semiconductors, electronics, optics, and in the aerospace industry.

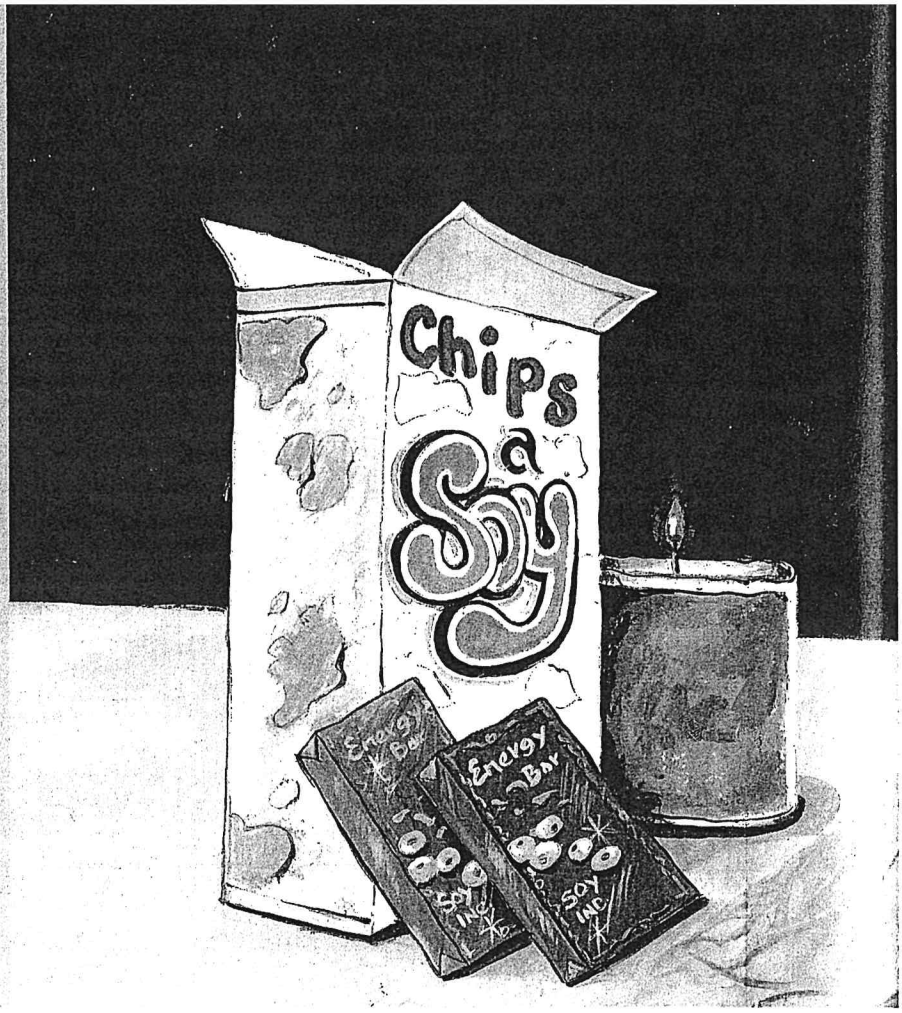
Popular with people of all ages, college football is the number one sport in Arkansas. Most Arkansas fans watch the University of Arkansas Razorbacks. Originally called the Cardinals, the team changed its name in 1909 at the suggestion of the coach at the time, who referred to the team as a "wild bunch of razorback hogs." The wild pigs were once commonly found in the area. Today's fans are notable for their red-colored razorback hats.

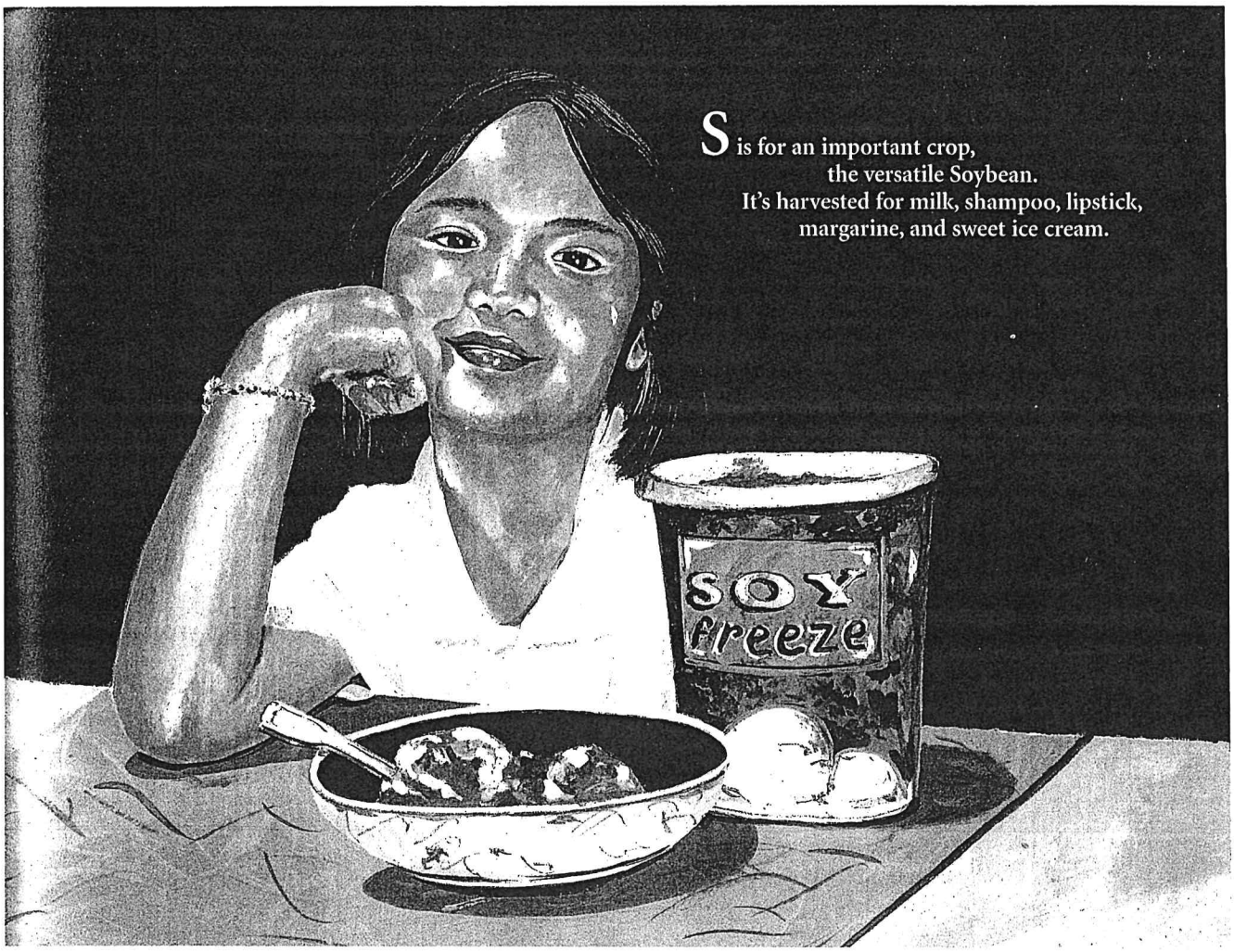
Rr

"Woo, Pig, Souie, RAZORBACKS!!"
Arkansas fans exclaim!
Razorbacks start with the letter **R**.
They're seen at football games.

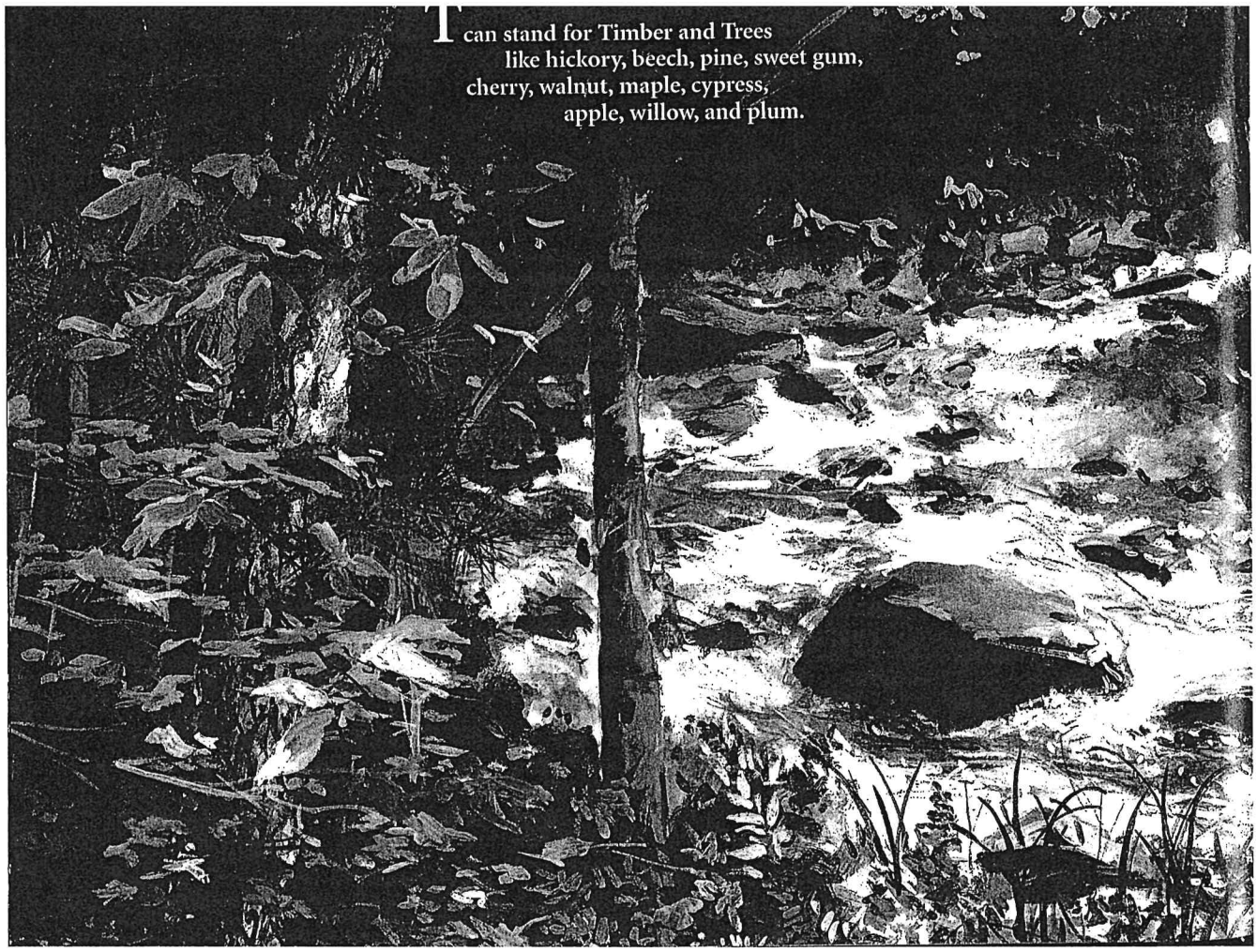


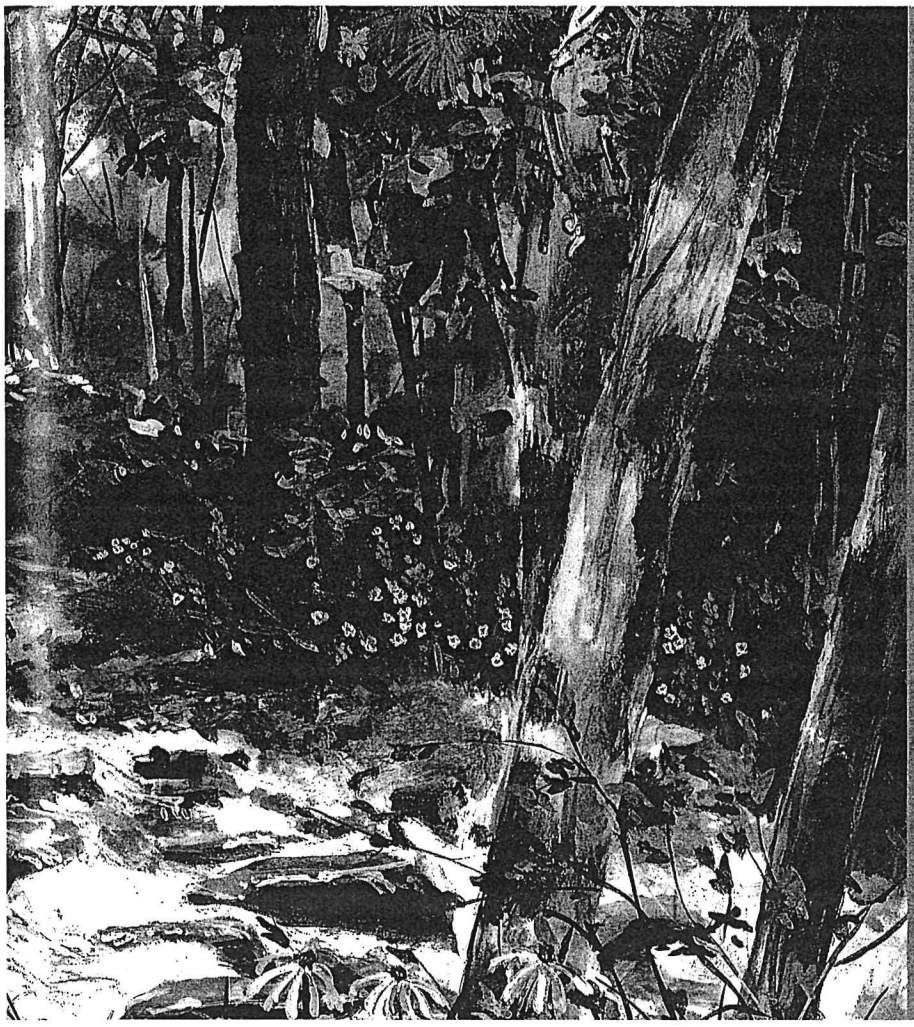
growing crops. Soybeans are one of our state's most important agricultural items. Nearly one hundred million bushels are cultivated in Arkansas each year. Most soybeans are grown in the Mississippi Alluvial Plain. Arkansas ranks in the top 10 states in soybean production. Soy is a valuable product, used as a health food, and is found in many products such as milk, flour, salad dressing, margarine, candles, crayons, and ice cream.





S is for an important crop,
the versatile Soybean.
It's harvested for milk, shampoo, lipstick,
margarine, and sweet ice cream.





Tt

Part of the reason Arkansas is called "The Natural State" is because of its vast expanse of forest. Approximately 200 species of trees are native to Arkansas. The word "timber" refers to forest trees used for buildings or making wood products. Trees and timber cover over 17 million acres, or nearly half of the state.

Although there are many varieties of pines such as loblolly and short leafs, the general name "pine tree" was adopted as the official state tree in 1939. Pine is a dominant resource in the production of paper.

The apple blossom was adopted as the official state flower in 1901. It was chosen because, 100 years ago, Arkansas was known as "The Land of the Big Red Apple." The Arkansas Apple Festival is

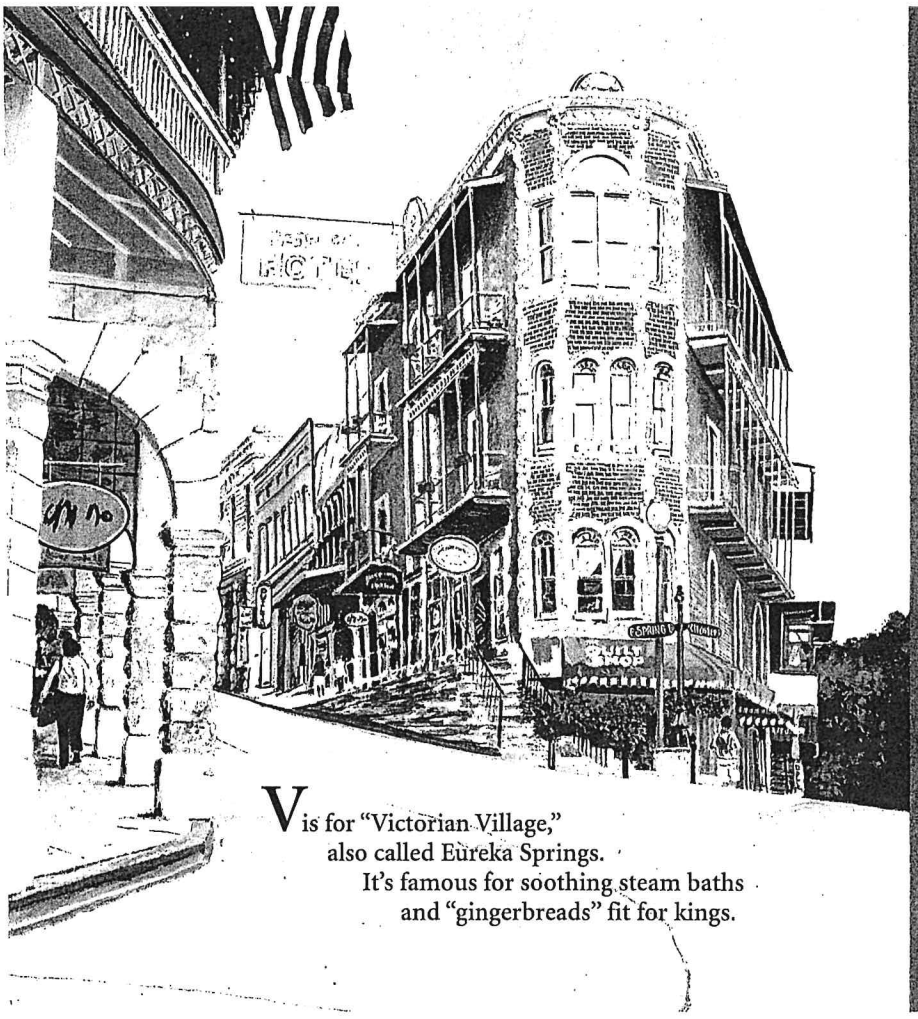
Arkansas and was an ironclad river ram built in 1862 at Memphis, Tennessee. The second ship was the USS *Arkansas* built in Philadelphia in 1863. It sailed for three years. The third ship was a warship built in Newport News, Virginia, in 1899. This ship was renamed the *Ozark* and was used until 1919. The battleship *Arkansas* was built in Camden, New Jersey, in 1911. It served in World War I and World War II. That ship was intentionally sunk by an atomic bomb on July 25, 1946. The fifth and final ship to be named Arkansas entered the scrapping dock in November 1997 to be recycled.

At 586 feet, the last USS *Arkansas* was almost the length of two football fields. It took a staff of 45 officers and 540 enlisted men to run the ship.

U

u

The noble USS *Arkansas*
proudly served the red, white, and blue.
That is why this beautiful battleship
represents the letter U.



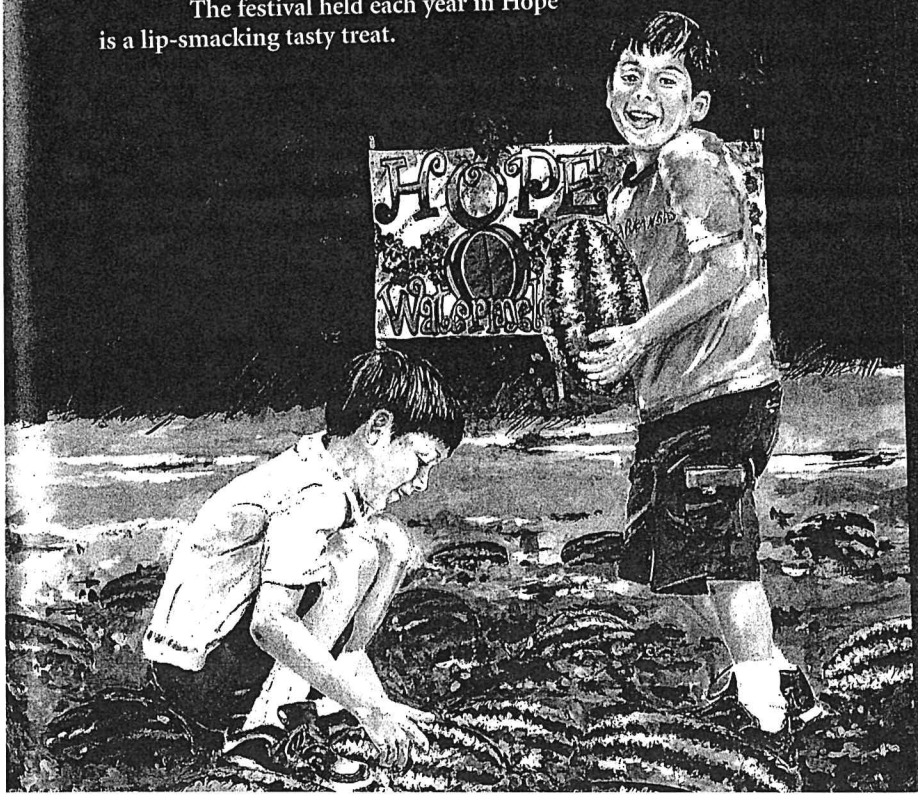
V is for "Victorian Village,"
also called Eureka Springs.
It's famous for soothing steam baths
and "gingerbreads" fit for kings.

V

Dr. Alvah Jackson discovered Basin Springs in 1856. He claimed the water had healing properties. People heard Dr. Jackson's claims and by 1879 the population was 10,000. The town was named Eureka Springs on the Fourth of July, 1877. Health-seekers come to this Victorian village to visit the spas.

The Victorian style of architecture is characterized by ornate decorations. This type of house is often called "gingerbread." Eureka Springs has many buildings featuring the gingerbread look.

Watermelons begin with W.
They're plump, red, juicy, and sweet.
The festival held each year in Hope
is a lip-smacking tasty treat.



On the third weekend in August, thousands of people flock to Hope, Arkansas, to celebrate the Hope Watermelon Festival. This area is said to grow some of the biggest watermelons in the world. Watermelons weighing as much as 200 pounds are displayed during the festival. The all-time winner weighed in at an amazing 260 pounds. During the festival people compete in watermelon-eating and seed-spitting contests. Watermelons grown in Hempstead County are commonly considered the world's largest.

W

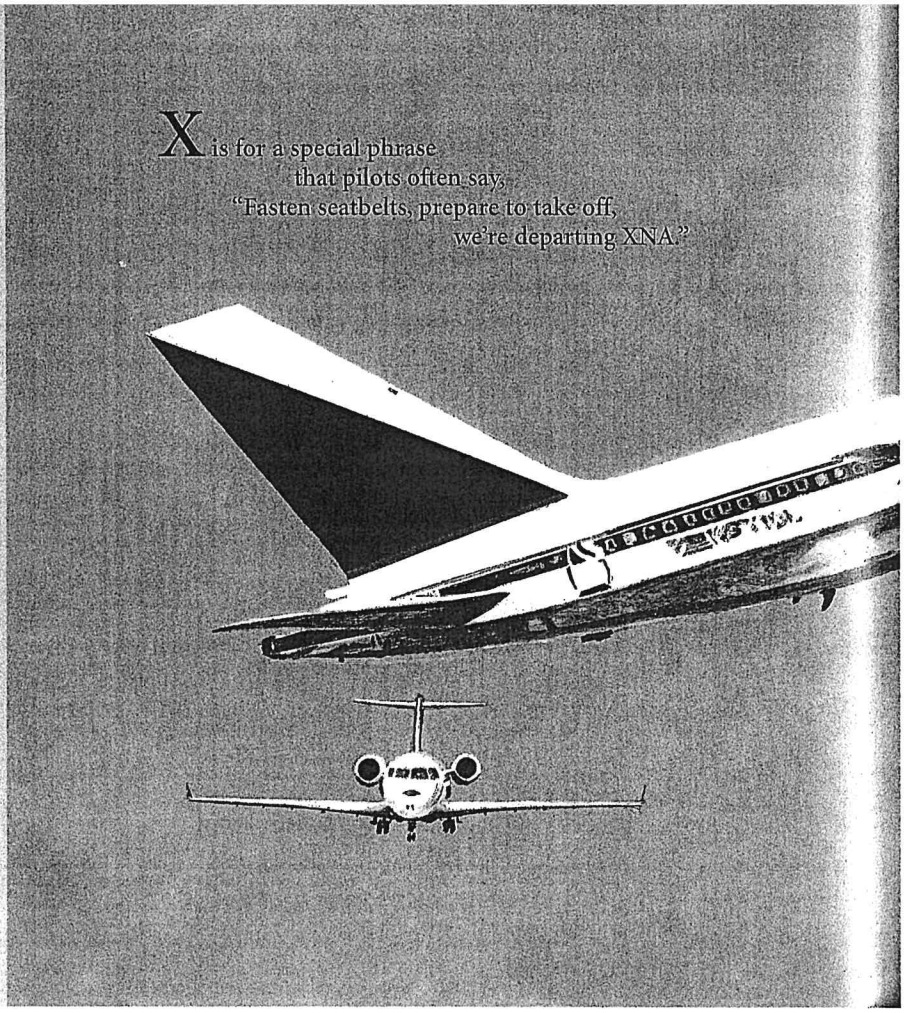
W

construction, President Bill Clinton dedicated the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport in Fayetteville. Approximately 8,000 people and Air Force One were present at the dedication.

Air carriers and the Federal Aviation Administration use a three-letter code called an identifier to keep track of planes, passengers, and luggage. XNA are the three letters used to represent the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport but have no real meaning other than to represent the airport. It has been said XNA could stand for eXciting New Airport or eXtra Nice Airport.

X

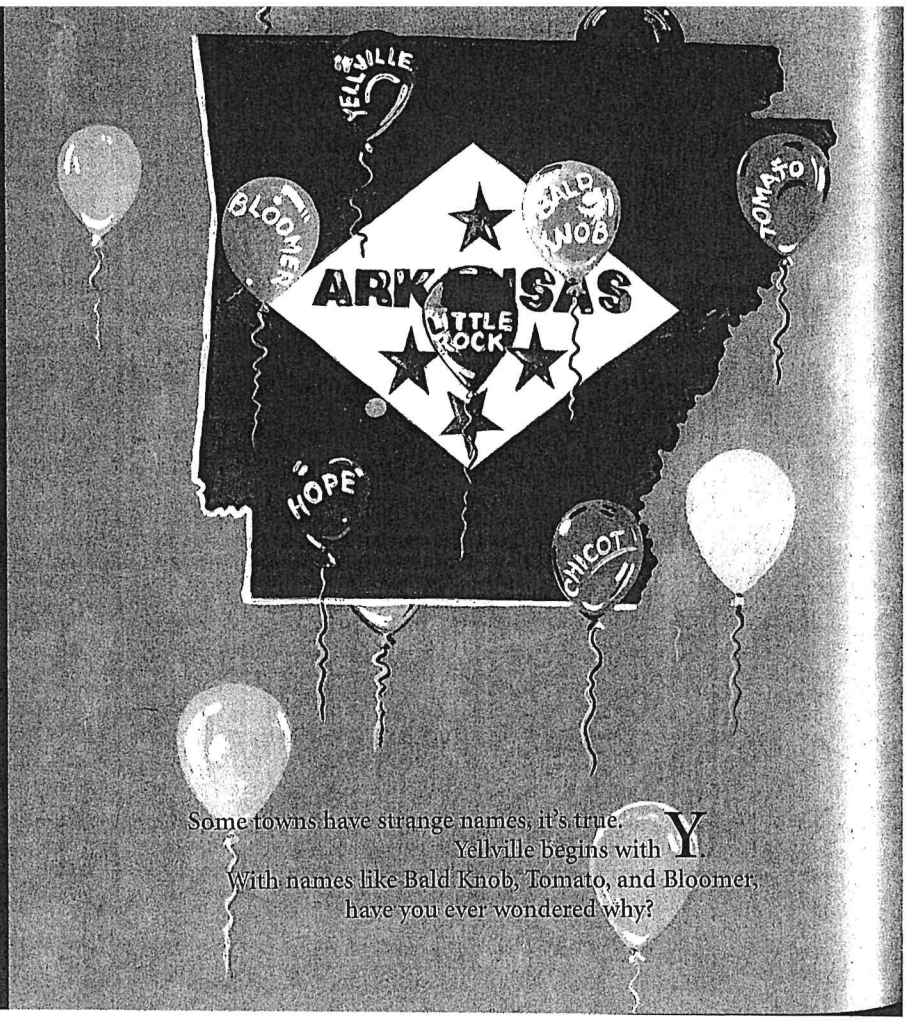
X is for a special phrase
that pilots often say,
"Fasten seatbelts, prepare to take off,
we're departing XNA."



Y

You've learned our state got its name from the Quapaw Indians. But do you know how your town was named? You may be able to do research to find out.

Yellville is located in the north central part of Arkansas. It is famous for hosting the national Wild Turkey Calling contest every year during the month of October. But Yellville wasn't always called Yellville. Archibald Yell became the second governor of Arkansas in 1840. It is rumored that four years later, during a political race for Congress, Mr. Yell offered to pay the residents of Shawneetown 50 dollars to rename their town Yellville. The residents changed the name of their town in his honor, but were never paid the money. Do you think this story's true?



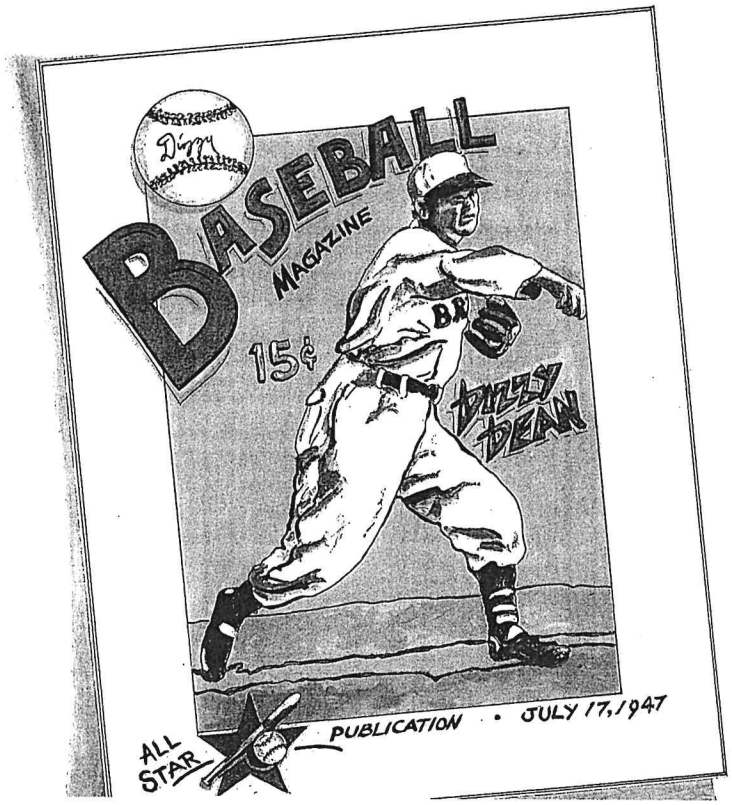
Some towns have strange names, it's true.
Yellville begins with Y.
With names like Bald Knob, Tomato, and Bloomer,
have you ever wondered why?

Z

Jay Hanna "Dizzy" Dean (1911-1974) was born in Lucas, Arkansas. In 1932 Dizzy began his pitching career by winning 18 games for the St. Louis Cardinals. Two years later, his brother Paul "Daffy" Dean joined him and the Cardinals.That year, Dizzy set a record by winning 30 games. His record stood for 34 years. In 1934 each brother won two games, leading the Cardinals to the World Series victory. Dizzy was named the most valuable player.

Voters elected Dizzy into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1953.

Two Zs are in Dizzy Dean's name.
He had pinpoint accurate aim.
This legendary baseball pitcher
made it to Baseball's Hall of Fame.



A Cave Full of Facts

1. What was "the cave find of the twentieth century"? Why was it called that?
2. Arkansas is the only state to mine what gem?
3. What did the Little Rock Nine accomplish?
4. There are three blue stars at the bottom of the Arkansas state flag. What do they represent?
5. What is the only way to experience Hawksbill Crag?
6. Why was the honeybee chosen as the state insect?
7. What kind of music did Scott Joplin help create?
8. Why did the population of Kappa decline?
9. How do male and female mockingbirds work together?
10. What one crop does not grow in Arkansas?
11. In what crop does Arkansas lead the nation?
12. One in 10 Arkansans work in what business?
13. Name three industries that use quartz.
14. Where did the name "Razorbacks" come from?
15. Name three food products that use soybeans as an ingredient.
16. What does the word "timber" refer to?
17. Pine is the dominant resource used in the production of what product?
18. How much did the largest watermelon at the Hope Watermelon Festival weigh?
19. What does XNA stand for?
20. Dizzy Dean is famous for what?

Natural Answers

1. Blanchard Springs Caverns has been called "the cave find of the twentieth century" because of its size and the many natural wonders found there.
2. Diamonds, at the Crater of Diamonds State Park
3. The Little Rock Nine were the first African-American students who registered to attend and integrate Central High in 1957.
4. The three stars represent Spain, France, and the United Kingdom—nations that at one time ruled the area that is now the state of Arkansas.
5. The only way to get to Hawksbill Crag is to hike a 1.5-mile trail.
6. Honeybees help pollinate plants and crops in Arkansas.
7. Ragtime
8. European settlers came to the area, bringing new diseases the native Quapaw community could not fight.
9. Male and female mockingbirds build their nests and raise their young together.
10. Citrus fruits
11. Rice
12. Raising chickens
13. Quartz is used in jewelry, semiconductors, electronics, optics, and the aerospace industry.
14. "Razorbacks" was a nickname for wild pigs that roamed Arkansas.
15. The soybean is used in milk, flour, salad dressing, margarine, and ice cream.
16. Timber refers to forest trees used for buildings or making wood products.
17. Paper
18. 260 pounds
19. XNA is the three-letter code used to identify Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport in Fayetteville.
20. Jay Hanna "Dizzy" Dean won a record-setting 30 games as pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals. He was named Most Valuable Player in the 1934 World Series and is in the National Baseball Hall of Fame.