

THE ARKANSAS POST GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF ARKANSAS POST NATIONAL MEMORIAL, GILLETT, ARKANSAS
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Ghosts of the Past Tour Coming October 23

Saturday, October 23 will be the date for this year's popular *Ghost of the Past* walk through the historic village site of the Post. The theme for 1999 is "*Arkansas Post – A Journey Through the Ages.*" The program, larger than ever, will cover seven different historic periods and topics ranging from the 1686 establishment by de Tonti through the 1863 Civil War battle of Fort Hindman/Arkansas Post.

"Several notable characters will be portrayed, including naturalist and artist John Audobon," said Superintendent Ed Wood. "We will address the French, Spanish, and Early American periods, as well as topics concerning 'free people of color,' Delta agriculture and the time when cotton was 'king.' In addition the site of the Arkansas State Bank will serve as the site of an impromptu Civil War hospital, just as it had in 1863."

Tours for *Ghosts of the Past* will be offered beginning at 6:30, 7:00, 7:30, and 8:00 p.m., respectively. Reservations are required and may be made by calling the park at 870-548-2207.



New Ranger Joins Arkansas Post

Arkansas Post welcomed Brian McCutchen and his wife Sharon to the park family in May. A native of Eastern Missouri, Brian comes to us from Shiloh National Military Park in Tennessee. He brings a great deal of enthusiasm and knowledge with him. He is a graduate of Southeast Missouri State University, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Historic Preservation and a Master of Arts degree in History and Historic Preservation. While serving as a Ranger at Shiloh, he led an extensive cultural resources intern program and conducted workshops on monument and cemetery conservation. He has also spoken and published at length on a variety of topics with strong a focus on post-Civil War veteran commemoration and monumentation, and served as a frequent speaker at Civil War roundtables, associations, and other special interest groups.

Brian joins Ranger Shane Lind in the Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services. "Working with Brian these past few months has been fun. We really work well together and make a great team. We have some great events and projects planned that we're sure the public will enjoy," said Ranger Lind. According to Superintendent Ed Wood, "Brian is a excellent addition to the staff. His knowledge and skills will help strengthen an already strong interpretive program."

Brian will take over culture resource duties as well as taking charge of the park's curatorial collection. He will also serve as the Eastern National bookstore coordinator and author of the park's expanding website. He and Lind will share general



Ranger Brian McCutchen, new member to the Arkansas Post family, transferred from the Shiloh National Military Park in Tennessee.

McCutchen Continued

interpretive duties as well as planning and coordinating special events. The two will also be jointly heading the division and its budget.

“Arkansas Post is a wonderful new challenge. This is an amazing site with a wealth of Anglo history going as far back as the 15th century; French and Spanish Colonial, early United States, and, of course, Civil War, all these periods wrapped up into one impressive park!” McCutchen said.

In his spare time, Brian is currently working on two books, one concerning the early history of the Shiloh battlefield park and its more than 150 monuments, and the other interpreting the architecture and settlement patterns of the Saxon-Lutheran settlements of Southeast Missouri.

His wife Sharon is a native of Savannah, Tennessee, working as a mental health counselor in Savannah. Upon completing her graduate degree in elementary education in 2000, Sharon will join Brian in Arkansas. The staff is excited about welcoming Brian and Sharon to the park family and hope that their time here will be enjoyable and rewarding.

The Post of Arkansas: An Archaeologists Dream

For the past several years Dr. John House, Archaeological Survey Station Archaeologist at the University of Pine Bluff, has really “dug” the history of Arkansas Post. Leading excavations at the park’s soon to be acquired Osotouy Unit, better known as the Menard-Hodges Site, House’s research and discoveries have shed new light on several different periods of the site’s history.

Most often identified with the late seventeenth century Quapaw village of Osotouy and the early locations of the Post of Arkansas (1686-1749), excavations conducted by the Arkansas Archaeological Survey and Arkansas Archaeological Society in 1997 and 1998 were designed to complement results from almost two centuries of prior scientific investigations at Menard. The Survey/Society team excavated in and near the plaza and on two outlying site areas, the Northern Periphery and the Lake Dumond site.

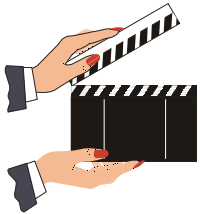
Dr. House will be speaking on the archaeological studies at Arkansas Post on October 16 at 2:00p.m. at the park Visitor Center/Museum auditorium. All are invited to attend this interesting presentation.



Dr. John House views Lake Dumond, the former Arkansas River channel of 1686, from the location of the first Post of Arkansas.

Lights, Camera, Action! Arkansas Post To Get New Film

The current park film, *Arkansas Post Revisited*, will soon be a part of history. The nearly twenty year old film will be replaced by a new one.



Film project leader, Ranger Shane Lind believes the new interpretive film is long overdue, "Since my arrival two and a half years ago, one of my goals has been to replace the park film," Lind said, "the current film is outdated and needs some historical and cultural corrections." Plans are already underway to contract the production out. "We are in the early stages of the project right now but by this time next year the new film should be showing in visitor center auditorium." In addition to the new film, visitors will also be treated to new audio and visual changes.

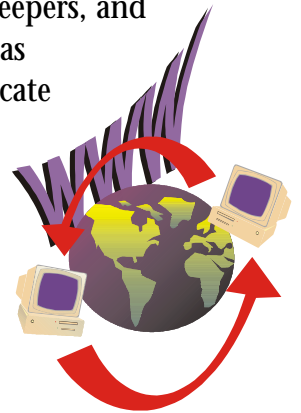
A new ten by seven-foot film screen has been already added to the auditorium. Visitors will also be treated to a new surround sound system and film projector. "The projector is already installed and the surround sound will be up and running soon. We have converted the current film to video and will show it through the new projector with the surround sound system until the new film is completed," added Lind. The park received \$100,000 from the National Park Services Fee Demonstration Program; a program funded from National Parks that collect entrance fees, to complete the project. Some of the money has already been used to acquire the audiovisual equipment.



"The staff at Arkansas Post is committed to a quality and informative interpretive film that will both educate the visitor, and instill an appreciation for the site and its resources," Lind concluded.

Post Expanding on the World Wide Web

In the age of cellular phones, beepers, and personal computers, it appears as though the ability to communicate or gather information is limitless. It is now common to hear such terminology as "beep me," "drop me email," or "what's your URL." Over the next several months Arkansas Post will take a large step in this digital direction by providing to the public an extended world wide web page to serve as a portal to information seekers and researchers concerning the Arkansas Post National Memorial.



"I envision the park web site as having everything you wanted to know about the Post and it's diverse history at only a 'click' away," said Superintendent Ed Wood. "If one were researching Henri de Tonti, a quick search of our site will provide background information of the famous explorer and his contributions to our history."

Internet project leader, Ranger Brian McCutchen, views the web site as a project of constant growth. "The [web] site material will be added incrementally," McCutchen said, "allowing for new information and topics to be added or revised as material becomes available." The site will also serve as an information and special event bulletin board. "Anyone visiting our web site will be kept abreast of special events and lectures, as well as provide the visitor the opportunity to contact us directly via email," McCutchen added.

As currently designed, the Arkansas Post web page provides introductory information regarding the park, its history, and local accommodations. The URL for the page is www.nps.gov/arpo

New Book Coming Concerning Quapaw and European Relations

Judge Morris S. Arnold, the premier historian on the colonial history of Arkansas, and park friend, has recently completed yet another book that sheds new light upon the relationship between the native Quapaw civilization and the European settlers of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries.



In this study, *The Rumble of a Distant Drum: The Quapaws and Old World Newcomers, 1673-1804*, Judge Arnold draws on extensive archival resources in France and Spain, and on his twenty years of research and writing on colonial Arkansas, to produce an engaging account of Quapaw and European relations in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Arkansas. The discussion treats a wide range of cultural intersections, including intermarriage, trade, and political/military alliances, and deals as well with the attempts of the French and Spanish regimes in Louisiana to convert the Indians to European legal and religious norms.

Arnold demonstrates that after six generations of largely peaceful and cooperative interaction, Quapaws and French had created a highly symbiotic society in which the two disparate peoples had become connected in complex and subtle ways. He shows, too, the significant extent to which the Quapaws retained their identity by effectively pursuing their national interests in the context of an intense imperial contest among the French, Spanish, and English. The most enduring artifact of a hundred and twenty-five years of French and Indian congeniality was Arkansas Post, which by the time of the Louisiana Purchase had come to contain a few hundred mostly mixed-blood (métis) residents. Arnold describes the Post in

detail, along with the character of its population, and the economic activities that sustained it during the colonial period.

The Arkansas Post - Eastern National sales outlet, located in the lobby of the park Visitor Center/Museum, is eager for the spring 2000 publication to arrive. The author's previous books, which are available for purchase at the park, include *Unequal Laws Unto a Savage Race: European Legal Norms in Arkansas, 1686-1836*, and *Colonial Arkansas, 1686-1804: A Social and Cultural History*, both published by the University of Arkansas Press.

1999 March for Parks A Success!

This year's annual March for Parks event was another success. Over thirty participants raised \$1,852. The money raised from this year's event was used to purchase a high-resolution slide scanner, allowing park staff to scan photographic slides to computer. Once digitized, the image quality is enhanced and can be used for a variety of purposes.

The park would like to thank all those who participated and donated their time and money to this year's March for Parks event. All proceeds from the event stay at Arkansas Post for the purpose of item purchases that will better serve the public. Since 1993, \$11,906 has been raised by the annual march. In the past, Arkansas Post has used proceeds to purchase items such as living history costumes, spotting scopes, binoculars, a camcorder, a monitor with built-in VCR, and exhibit cases for the park's museum items.

Without March for Parks, the purchase of most of these items would not have been a reality. Again, thanks to all who participated and we will see you next year!

Biography of the Issue

The history of Arkansas Post is full of notable characters that are not only important to that of the lower Arkansas and Mississippi River Valleys, but to both American and Arkansas history as a whole. In each issue, it is our desire to present a brief biographical sketch of an individual who, in some way, had a profound association or impact to the historic Post of Arkansas.

Tonty, Henri de (1650-1704), explorer, trader and founder of Arkansas Post, was probably born in Paris, the eldest son of Lorenzo de Tonti and Isabelle de Liette. His family fled to Paris from Naples after taking part in an insurrection. He joined the French armed forces when he was eighteen. While in military service he lost his right hand in a grenade explosion. When he replaced the hand with one made of metal, he became known as “the man with the iron hand.”

At the age of twenty-eight, de Tonty was introduced to Robert Cavalier, Sieur de la Salle whom he joined on an expedition to North America. Once in Canada, de Tonty was given the task of building the Griffon, the first sailing vessel on the Great Lakes. Together, La Salle and de Tonty explored much of what is now Michigan and Illinois, and built forts in that territory.

De Tonty had a feudal loyalty to La Salle and was his courageous lieutenant. He saw La Salle for the last time in 1683, when La Salle went back to France to prepare for the colonization of the Louisiana territory. In 1686, de Tonty set out for the Mississippi River valley in search of La Salle, whom he believed

to be in the area. His efforts to find him were unsuccessful. It would be four years before he learned the fate of La Salle’s expedition, which ended in disaster on the Spanish Texas coast in 1687.

Failing to find La Salle, de Tonty led his party to some land granted to him by La Salle on the Arkansas River. He ordered ten of his men to build a trading post there. The exact location of Poste de Arkansa is not known. It was on the north bank of the river, estimated at eighteen to forty-five miles from its mouth, near a Quapaw village called Osotouy. De Tonty and the rest of his men returned to Illinois. The men left at the post, led by Coutoure Charpenter, built a French Style cabin and awaited trappers and traders.

A few men from La Salle’s expedition reached the post and were overjoyed to find Frenchman there. The survivors, led by Henri Joutel, told of their misfortunes and the death of La Salle, who had been killed by some of his own men. When de Tonty heard the news, he set out to recover La Salle’s body, but this adventure failed when some of his men decided it was not worth risking their lives for a man’s body, even La Salle’s.



Henri de Tonty
1650 - 1704

De Tonty evidently was optimistic for Arkansas Post. In 1689, he granted land there to Jesuit priests for their use in teaching “the mysteries of our Holy Religion to the Savages who are upon our River of Akanzea.” Settlement by Jesuits would be important in maintaining good relations with the Indians. De Tonty pledged to provide support for a missionary and to build a mission house for the Indians. However, the Jesuits did not take up the land grant, and nothing came of these plans.

After only a few years, the post was languishing. Its commander deserted in 1687, and De Tonty was more interested in the possibilities of settlement on the Gulf coast. Arkansas Post was never the primary object of his interest in trade on the lower Mississippi and his efforts to extend French power there.

In 1700 de Tonty went to Louisiana Territory near the mouth of the Mississippi and settled, serving the French crown on Indian matters. He died at Mobile, most likely of yellow fever. He had spent most of his life dealing with Indians and trappers. He was a courageous explorer and effective administrator, well respected by Indians, missionaries and the French aristocracy. He laid some of the groundwork for French Louisiana.

In 1898, a sizable group of Italians, led by an Italian priest named Pietro Bandini, migrated from Sunnyside Plantation in Chicot County to northwestern Arkansas to escape conditions of servitude at Sunnyside. They named their new settlement Tontitown in honor of their countryman, who had explored what is now Arkansas two hundred years before.



Summer 1999 Youth Conservation Corps employees Michael Lynn, Casey Godfrey, and Nick Bradley

Great Accomplishments by Park Division of Maintenance

As always, the Arkansas Post Maintenance Division has been kept extremely busy due to a wealth of work and a very small staff. Led by Charles Layton Mattmiller, the staff has tackled diverse projects with great skill and energy.

Due to an abundance of rainfall and warm temperature, the spring season began very busy and continues so into fall. An ongoing occurrence of early spring storms and high winds caused an unusual amount of tree maintenance and grounds cleanup. The residence area of the park has been landscaped to provide adequate drainage and improve the appearance by the placement of sod and grass seed. The Visitor Center lawn was seeded in heavy use areas to establish turf for both erosion prevention and a pleasant appearance.

Within the past year all park roads have been overlaid, culvert replaced, and road shoulders repaired. All of the old style picnic tables had reached the point of no repair and have been replaced by new vinyl coated metal tables. These tables provide more sanitary conditions and will prove more efficient to maintain. In addition, the pump for the electric fire suppression system is in the process of being rebuilt. It is part of the park water system that supplies the residences, maintenance compound, Visitor Center and picnic areas. When switched on, it will pressurize six hydrants/hose house units at various locations.

To assist with the summer projects, five local youth worked this summer with the park maintenance unit. Three YCC and two JTPA workers not only helped with special projects, but with routine custodial duties, administrative work, grounds, roads, trails, buildings, utilities, and trail/road sign maintenance.

And The Survey Says. . .

If you visited Arkansas Post during the month of June, chances are you were asked to fill out and return a visitor survey card regarding the park. Arkansas Post, along with the other units of the National Park Service, participated in this project to assist in complying with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRRA). GPRRA is one of the most recent and comprehensive of a number of laws and executive orders directing federal agencies to join the “performance management revolution” already embraced by private industry and many local, state and national governments. It seeks to make government both more effective and more efficient. Effectiveness is doing more with less. Efficiency is using resources wisely and without waste by looking at the cost to benefits ratio. GPRRA requires each park to submit a six-year strategic plan, an annual performance plan and an annual performance report.

Each strategic plan includes a mission statement and mission goals, long-term goal, and external analyses. The surveys were to assist in measuring GPRRA Goal IIA1 (visitor satisfaction) and IIB1 (visitor understanding and appreciation) for each National Park unit. The University of Idaho Cooperative Park Studies Unit for the National Park Service conducted the survey. After completing the surveys, visitors were asked to mail them to the university, where the survey team compiled the data and issued a report to each park.

Arkansas Post NMem 1999 Visitor Survey Card Data Report



Introduction

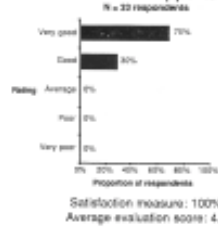
To assist the National Park Service in complying with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRRA), a visitor survey was conducted in units of the National Park System in FY99. The survey was developed to measure each park unit's performance related to NPS GPRRA Goals IIA1 (visitor satisfaction) and IIB1 (visitor understanding and appreciation).

The results of the Visitor Survey Card (VSC) survey conducted at this park are summarized in this data report. A description of the research methods and limitations is on the back page.

Below (left) is a graph summarizing visitor opinions of the "overall quality of facilities, services, and recreational opportunities." The satisfaction measure below this graph is a combined percentage of "good" and "very good" responses. This is the primary performance measure for Goal IIA1. (The satisfaction measure may not equal the sum of "very good" and "good" percentages due to rounding.)

Below (right) is the FY99 GPRRA reporting measure for Goal IIA1. The percentage included in the box should be used for reporting GPRRA Goal IIA1 performance. The response rate for this park survey was 11%.

Overall quality of facilities, services & recreational opportunities

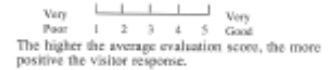


Understanding the Results

Inside this report are graphs that illustrate the survey results. The report contains three categories of data—park facilities, visitor services, and recreational opportunities. Within these categories are graphs for each indicator evaluated by park visitors. For example, the park facilities category includes indicators such as visitor center, exhibits, restrooms, and so forth. In addition, responses for indicators within each category are averaged into a combined graph for the category (e.g., combined park facilities).

Each graph includes the following information:

- the number of visitor responses for the indicator;
- the percentage of responses which were "very good," "good," "average," "poor," and "very poor;"
- a satisfaction measure that combines the percentage of total responses which were "very good" or "good;" and
- an average evaluation score (mean score) based on the following values: very poor = 1, poor = 2, average = 3, good = 4, very good = 5.



FY99 GPRRA Reporting Measure for Goal IIA1

Percentage of park visitors satisfied overall with appropriate facilities, services, and recreational opportunities:

100%

Arkansas Post is pleased to announce that the report showed the percentage of park visitors satisfied with the facilities and services here at this unit was **100%**. The staff at Arkansas Post will strive to maintain a high level of satisfaction and provide the best environment and services possible.

If you would like to review a copy of the Visitor Survey Report, a copy is located at the visitor center information desk. Please ask a staff member for assistance.



Desiring To Volunteer? Contact Arkansas Post National Memorial Today!

870-548-2207

or email: arpo_superintendent@nps.gov

SUPERINTENDENT'S SCRIBBLIN'S

I hope you enjoy the first issue of the Arkansas Post Gazette, our newsletter about park issues and programs. It is our goal to produce future issues on a quarterly basis, and invite your comments and suggestions. My highest priorities include keeping our friends and visitors informed about what we are doing and to maintain open lines of communication with everyone that is interested in the Post. One aspect of communication that we are stressing is the implied, two-way sharing of information. We need to know what our visitors expect, want and enjoy about the park programs and operations. I want to take this opportunity to ask for your thoughts.

As you can read in the included articles, there are many things going on at the Post. We hope to expand our offerings on the Internet as well as to upgrade our programs and exhibits. As most of you probably know, the park is currently undertaking the task of rewriting our General Management Plan (the basic document that guides the park management for the next ten plus years). We have the chance to do some really exciting things in the future and the only real limitation I see is our inability to visualize what we actually want. There have been several suggestions put forward and from my standpoint, they only represent a small percentage of the things we can accomplish. Sure, it will take a tremendous amount of energy, money and people to implement some of the more elaborate schemes; but without a target that strains our abilities, we will settle for less than we could achieve. It is going to take a real commitment on the part of our staff, friends and volunteers to "make it happen."

Arkansas Post National Memorial belongs to the citizens of this great country and we want to assure that we manage it consistent with the desires and expectations of a majority of its owners. Stop by and let us know how you feel we are doing. We look forward to seeing you.

Edward E. Wood, Jr.

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