

# THE ARKANSAS POST GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF ARKANSAS POST NATIONAL MEMORIAL, GILLETT, ARKANSAS

March 2000 • Volume 1, Issue 2



## Cemetery Preservation Workshop Planned for March 11

At 1:30 p.m., Saturday, March 11, Arkansas Post National Memorial, in cooperation with the Arkansas Post State Museum, will host an afternoon workshop demonstrating the proper and safe methods for basic cemetery stone cleaning and preservation.

Instructed by national memorial Ranger Brian McCutchen, and the director of the neighboring state museum, Lillie Fuhrman, the workshop will teach about the various types of stone and metals used on cemetery gravestones and monuments. Sample materials will be available for a hands-on demonstration of materials, techniques, and chemicals and equipment that tend to prove safer for the monument.

According to Lillie, "Our goal is to demonstrate the safe alternatives to the traditional and often harmful practices used in cemetery cleaning. Many people, though they mean well, end up taking decades of life from the monuments by using cleaning materials such as bleach, acid, or wire brushes."

Brian has a long history of instructing classes concerning the preservation of historic gravestones and monuments. Prior to his recent transfer to the Post, he was active in the preservation activities at the Shiloh National Military Park, where he cared for the several hundred monuments and gravestones of the battlefield and national cemetery, and which he used as the basis for his masters thesis about monument preservation.

Since space for the workshop is limited, it is requested that those interested in attending make reservations by calling Arkansas Post National Memorial at (870) 548-2207.

## Many Events Planned at Arkansas Post for Year 2000

Arkansas Post National Memorial has tentatively set its spring and summer calendar of events for the year 2000.

The first event scheduled is a cemetery preservation workshop to be held Saturday, March 11, at the park visitor center. For more information, see article to the left.

March for Parks is slated for Saturday, April 29, and will begin at the visitor center. During this event, volunteer's walk to raise money for the park projects. The Eagle Watch program, which is another popular annual event, is to be held Saturday, May 13. During the day-long "eagle day," bald eagles can be seen with spotting scopes provided by the park.

Two major events are planned for the month of June. The first, a Civil War living history weekend set for June 3-4. Visitors will be treated to infantry and artillery demonstrations that will interpret the equipment, tactics, and camp-life of the occupying Union Army at the Post in 1863.

The following Saturday, June 10, the Post will host the annual children's fishing derby. Children, ages 4 to 14, are allowed to fish in the park lake. Just prior to the event, the Arkansas Game and Fish will stock the lake with four hundred pounds of catfish. Prizes will be awarded for the largest fish.



For more information regarding any of these events contact the park at (870) 548-2207.

## Biography of the Issue

Arkansas Post history is full of notable characters that are not only important to the lower Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers, but to American 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 on the historic Post of Arkansas.

### ***Sherman, William Tecumseh (1820-1891)***

The second-best known Union commander of the American Civil War, William Tecumseh Sherman is perhaps the epitome of the “anything goes” American fighter. Strong, determined, and one who chose to rise through the ranks, rather than serve as a fast-rising political commander, Sherman still reigns as one of the most researched, discussed, and in some circles, criticized, topics of Civil War history.

Sherman was born May 8, 1820, into a middle-class Lancaster, Ohio, family. His father abruptly died when the red-headed lad was only 9, leaving his mother financially incapable of taking care of her entire family. Desiring the best for her children, the widowed mother sent William’s brother to be raised by an aunt, and fostered the nine year old “Cump” to the family of Senator Thomas Ewing, whose daughter Ellen, Cump would later marry.

Sherman’s intelligence was obvious to many. Partially through the influence of his foster-family, Sherman was admitted to and attended the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, graduating in 1840 near the top of his class. In the regular ranks, Sherman was appointed to the artillery where he

received a brevet for his services in California during the Mexican War. Though successful in the military, Sherman resigned in 1853 as a captain and a commissary officer to take employment in the private sector. Living in both California and Kansas, Sherman failed in both banking and the law.

Throughout his life, Sherman would experience several different careers, many often short-lived. However, in 1859, the military trained thirty-nine year old seemed to have found his calling as superintendent of the Louisiana State Seminary and Military Academy at Alexandria. Sadly for the happy school head and his family, Sherman made the painful decision to resign his post, staying loyal to the United States, upon the secession of the State of Louisiana and the obvious coming of war.



Eventually moving to St. Louis to assume the presidency of a city-based street car company, Sherman soon left this position to assume command of the 14<sup>th</sup> U. S. Infantry. Again, the multi-careered family man was in the structured setting of the military.

First serving as a colonel of a newly organized regiment at the 1861 battle of First Bull Run, Sherman’s military career did not begin smoothly. He was accused of drastically overestimating enemy strengths, he was penned by the press as being “mentally insane,” forcing the commander to step down from command, only to be given another opportunity by western commander Henry Halleck.

Under Halleck, Sherman developed a strong working relationship with Major-General Ulysses Grant, an individual that from 1862 on would have a major influence on Sherman’s direction. It was through Grant’s praise that the buckeye state

*Sherman Continued*

native, still referred to as Cump by his friends, was awarded the title of Major-General of Volunteers.

Sherman would be actively involved in the planning and leadership of the early Vicksburg campaign. Suffering heavy defeat at Chickasaw Bluffs, but recouping his defeat by assisting the U. S. Navy with the successful January 1863 bombardment and capture of the Rebel fortifications of Arkansas Post.

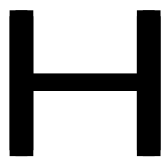
Following the fall of the river city of Vicksburg, Mississippi, Sherman assumed command as a Brigadier General of the regular army, where he immediately led an expedition against the nearby city of Jackson.

From the Mississippi River Valley, the war led Sherman to be associated with fighting at key areas such as Chattanooga, Knoxville, and then back to Mississippi where he eventually replaced Grant as overall commander of the western theater of operations.

Determined to route the Confederate forces and end the war, Sherman's "March Through Georgia" and destructive march through the Carolinas pegged Sherman as a victor through unnecessary destruction.

After the war, Sherman remained in service, replacing Grant as commander-in-chief, retiring from military service almost two decades later.

Sherman died in New York City in 1891. Following a long and patriotic funeral procession, Sherman was laid to rest in the Calvary Cemetery at St. Louis.



**Kudos for Arkansas Post Administrative Staff!!!**

Most people never see the hard work and dedication of the Administrative Staff at Arkansas Post. Although the maintenance and interpretive divisions are more visible to the public, without the administrative staff's diligence and support, the park could not operate.



Donna Robertson and Patricia Grove, recipients of awards for excellence.

The park is pleased that Administrative Officer Patricia Grove and Administrative Assistant Donna Robertson were honored for their hard work and dedication. Patricia, who has been at Arkansas Post for sixteen years, received the Outstanding Fiscal Budget Award from the Midwest Regional office for her excellent work on the 1999 park budget. Donna, who has been at the park since 1995, received an award for her sustained high quality of work and willingness as an excellent team member to assist other divisions within the park when needed. Congratulations!

**Arkansas Post Events At A Glance**

Arkansas Post National Memorial has tentatively set its spring and summer calendar of events for 2000.

For more information on these events, please watch your local newspaper or contact the park at (870) 548-2207

Saturday	March 11	Cemetery Preservation Class
Saturday	April 29	March for Parks
Saturday	May 13	Eagle Watch
Saturday-Sunday	June 3-4	Civil War Living History
Saturday	June 10	Children's Fishing Derby

## ***Ghosts of the Past Bigger and Better Than Ever!***

Once again staff and volunteers hosted Arkansas Posts' annual *Ghosts of the Past*. Held the twenty-third of October, the event featured more than forty characters, docents, and volunteers, and consisted of a chronological walk through six historic periods of the site.

"This past event was bigger and better than any previous," said Superintendent Ed Wood. "We had characters from the Post's history representing a store keeper of the 1750's French period, a government fur trader from the early American time-frame, artist and naturalist John J. Audubon from the 1820's, and a cotton farmer, wife, and slaves interpreting when cotton was 'King.' The last scene consisted of a Civil War field hospital at the Battle of Arkansas Post in 1863." According to Superintendent Wood, "The characters realistically depicted a hospital scene, as an amputation in progress was silhouetted behind a canvas. The scene was very emotional as it was recreated on the site of the actual battlefield hospital."

Perhaps the most moving was the characters played by Della Jamison and Keesa Phillips. Portraying slaves in the cotton field of their "owners," played by Jason and Tracy Bliley, the group brought tears to many, and resulted in letters of commendation from the Louisiana Division of the National Endowment of the Humanities, the office of the Secretary of the Interior, the National Park Service Director, and the Midwest Regional Director.

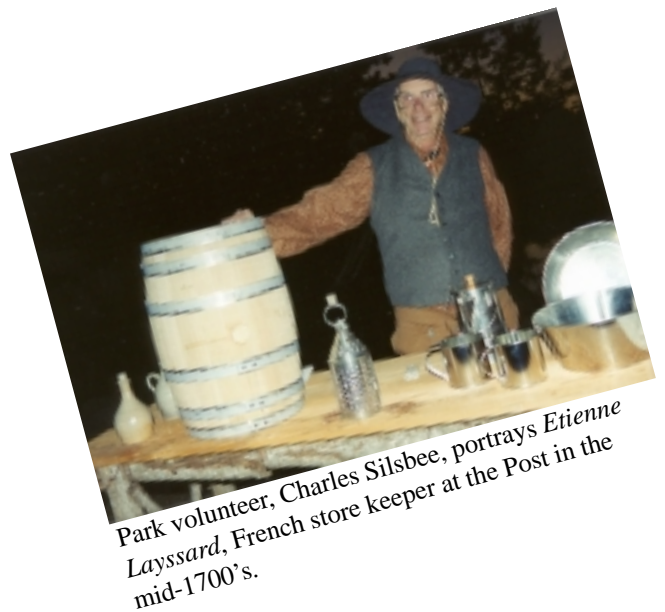
Almost five hundred spectators attended the four guided walks through the historic village site, led by volunteers Ladena Eads, Stacy Dondanville, Diann Cunningham, and Ranger Brian McCutchen. Volunteers from Phillips Community College proved invaluable in setting up the event and portraying the historic characters.



Della Jamison and Keesa Phillips emotionally portray slaves on a local farm.



Tracy and Jason Bliley prided themselves in the cotton boom of the early 1800's and the importance of slave labor.



Park volunteer, Charles Silsbee, portrays Etienne Layssard, French store keeper at the Post in the mid-1700's.





Behind the scenes of the Civil War "tent hospital," where an amputation was silhouetted on the tent canvas backdrop.



Park Superintendent Ed Wood as John J. Audubon. His children, Tobi and Andy, portrayed Frannie Notrebe and Joseph Mason, respectively.



Ranger Shane Lind portrayed failed U.S. government fur trader John Treat.



A total of almost five-hundred visitors attended the *Ghosts of the Past* programs.

This year's cast consisted of:

<b><u>Cast</u></b>	<b><u>Character</u></b>
<i>Kevin Eads</i>	Blacksmith (1840's)
<i>Charles Silsbee</i>	Etienne M. Layssard, French store keeper (1758)
<i>Shane Lind</i>	John Treat, Government fur trader (1807)
<i>Ed Wood</i>	John J. Audubon (1820)
<i>Andy Wood</i>	Joseph Mason (1820)
<i>Tobi Wood</i>	Frannie Notrebe (1820)
<i>Jason Bliley</i>	Cotton farmer (1830's - 40's)
<i>Tracy Bliley</i>	Wife of cotton farmer (1830's - 40's)
<i>Keesa Phillips</i>	Slave woman (1830's - 40's)
<i>Della Jamison</i>	Slave woman (1830's - 40's)
<i>Rev. Jeff Kuddes</i>	Julius Bragg, Confederate Surgeon (1863)
<i>Eric Cunningham</i>	Surgeon (1863)
<i>Rhonda Harris</i>	Nurse (1863)
<i>Kyle Denton</i>	Wounded soldier (1863)
<i>Zack Tibbett</i>	Wounded soldier (1863)
<i>Lilly Furhman</i>	Townperson
<i>Christy Murphy</i>	Townperson
<i>Marliegh Murphy</i>	Townperson

## ***Superintendent's Scribbles***

Have you ever stopped to reflect on what you take for granted? For example, when I flip a wall switch, I expect the light to go on. I seldom think about how the power gets there, I just expect it to be there when I want it. It may seem a bit strange that I have chosen to discuss such matters in this space, but believe it or not, the same considerations (read expectations) apply to our national park.

When you visit Arkansas Post, what are your expectations? Clean restrooms? A quiet walk in the woods? A nice bunch of crappie? A chance to learn something new about our past? I would guess that I've listed at least one of your expectations for your visit. But think for a second about how we at the park can help you meet your expectations. Quite simply, we need to know what they are before we can assure that the conditions are right to help you have an enjoyable visit.

We have recently prepared a separate newsletter which if you haven't already received one, you will shortly, that deals with how we go about managing Arkansas Post in the future. It includes four alternatives to consider and I ask you to please take a few minutes to review them. The whole staff and folks from our regional office in Omaha, Nebraska and our planners from Denver, Colorado have developed these schemes from the comments we collected at public meetings and discussions over the last nine months. We tried to develop scenarios that captured the extremes we heard as well as the legislative mandates that Congress gave us when they established the park as a national memorial.

We could decide for you, but it seems to me that we stand a much better chance of meeting your expecta-

tations, if you participate in the decision process. If you don't, we can only guess what you want or expect from the park.

For those of you that haven't noticed (and I don't know why you should), I haven't been around the park much during the last several months. The fact is that I'm on a special detail assignment with the Washington Office of the National Park Service helping to develop the new Strategic Plan that will guide the service for the next five years. The plan outlines the goals that the national park



system expects to reach in the coming years. If you want to read the specifics, I urge you to take a look at our latest plan on the internet at:

<http://www.nps.gov/planning/sp>.

I am proud to say that I helped put it together and that we at Arkansas Post will join with the other 381 units of the system to reach those goals.

The dynamics of putting such a document together are complex and time consuming. As a matter of fact, we were editing some of the goals until moments before we published it on the web. We are now working on the technical guide that tells the parks how to report their successes or failures in each of the goals and how to measure them. Though I'm working for the Washington Office, I'm physically situated in Denver, Colorado and it is most convenient because I'm in the same building as most of our General Management Team. It affords us the opportunity to work more closely together in developing an appropriate plan for Arkansas Post.

But enough for the planning, let's get down to the happenings at the Post. Look at the events calendar in this issue. Make your plans to join us. This is an exciting time at the park and I believe that you will find one or more of the programs that

## **Arkansas Post Receives Grant For Wayside Exhibits**

The staff at Arkansas Post was pleased to receive a \$2,000 grant from the National Park Foundation for the design and placement of alligator wayside exhibits at designated areas around the park lake and bayous.

In the past few years, the alligator population in and around the park has grown considerably. "I believe the wayside exhibits will have a dual role," said Park Ranger Shane Lind. "They will not only educate the public about the American Alligator, but also instill an appreciation for the role that it has in our ecosystem."

## **Happy 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Arkansas Post Neighbor!**

It all started in one-half of a dogtrot log house at Arkansas Post State Park, now the location of Arkansas Post National Memorial. The Arkansas Post Museum, as it was known, was officially incorporated in March of 1960, making it the *first* county museum in the State of Arkansas. The museum was moved to its current location when the property of the state park was transferred to the National Park Service.

More than thirty years later, the complex of five exhibit buildings is now part of the Arkansas State Park System and is officially known as the Arkansas Post Museum State Park.

In commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the museum's humble beginnings, an open house at the museum will be held Sunday, March 19, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. with free admission and light refreshments. All are invited to help the museum celebrate it's long history of bringing the story of the Arkansas Post area to visitors worldwide.

## **RAD Program Back At Arkansas Post**

This past December, Rangers Shane Lind and Brian McCutchen traveled to Big Thicket National Preserve, in Beaumont, Texas, to train and be certified under the national Rangers Against Drugs (RAD) program.

RAD is an eight-week program that is designed to promote interest and provide information to children in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade about the National Park System. It also encourages children to develop positive attitudes and behaviors while educating them to the dangers of alcohol and other drugs. The curriculum addresses learning objectives that conform to the standards of both the health and education departments.

In 1994, Dorothy Cook was the first ranger at Arkansas Post to teach RAD to the area schools. Ranger Cook, now at Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, is the RAD Coordinator for the Midwest Region. When Dorothy left in 1995, Ranger Kevin Eads continued to teach the program. Last year he did the RAD program for Delta and Gillett Schools. "I've had a very rewarding experience teaching the RAD program," Kevin said. Unfortunately, due to his schedule, Kevin was not be able to teach RAD this spring.

Now that Shane and Brian are certified, there is an increased desire to provide the program to the school systems. This January and February, Brian provided the first RAD class to Delta Elementary School in nearby Rohwer. According to Brian, "I believe I learned more than the students, however, the students were all eager to learn and proved a wonderful class."

For more information about the RAD program or to schedule the program for your school, please contact Brian or Shane at 870-548-2207.

*Superintendent's Scribblin's Continued*

will appeal to you. It's been several years since we held an encampment at the park and it looks like there will be several civil war era groups participating in the one we have planned for June. Should be an interesting experience.

I would be remiss if I didn't take a few lines to express my appreciation to the whole park staff for their hard work. I would never be able to leave for such long periods if I didn't have such a dedicated group to fill in behind me. It's like a well-oiled machine; it runs smoothly and I have a tendency to take it for granted. Just as I expect the light to come on, I expect the park to run when I'm gone – and I haven't been disappointed. So please, when you visit, take a moment to tell them how much you appreciate their efforts.

I hope that you find this issue of the Arkansas Post Gazette both enjoyable and informative. If you have any comments about any of the articles or if you have suggestions for future issues, please send them to us at: Arkansas Post National Memorial, 1741 Old Post Road, Gillett, AR 72055.

*Edward E. Wood, Jr.*

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