



“Time Machine” Takes Visitors to Colonial Times

Historians from Arkansas, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky and Missouri converged at Arkansas Post to recreate a realistic colonial atmosphere reminiscent of the historic settlement of the Post two centuries ago.

At Arkansas Post on May 12 and 13, 2001, one could hear the rat-tat-tat of the drums, the crackle of the fire at the camp sites, the roar of flint-lock rifles, and the unmistakable resonance of French life from an earlier period at the Post.



Soldiers demonstrated the rapid-fire of flint-lock weapons.

Approximately twenty individuals portrayed the period. They wore colonial clothing and lived in shelters similar to the earliest shelters of Southern Arkansas. They gathered under the direction of the Early Arkansas Reenactors Association.

During the weekend, the participants interpreted the life-styles, settlement, and military attributes of the region under French and Spanish control. The presentations provided the visitors with a better understanding of the tribulations and overall conditions of the mid-south's earliest settlement.

The main speaker was Judge Morris Arnold of Little Rock who talked about colonial era Arkansas Post and its multi-ethnic inhabitants. He has authored three books concerning the early European period of the lower Arkansas River Valley, and is widely considered the foremost authority on the period.

Ed Wood, the park superintendent, said “most people do not appreciate the complex, social culture that was at Arkansas Post during the French and Spanish colonies.” He went on to say “the combination of historical atmosphere, interpretive programs, special lectures and historical tours truly provided visitors with a better understanding of the colonial period at Arkansas Post.”

Later, Brien McCutchen, former Arkansas Post historian, conducted tours of the historic Post area describing the historic landscape of colonial Arkansas.

Continued on page 4



Superintendent's Scribblin's



I decided to focus my ramblings this time on the question that I am most frequently asked: “What are you doing here anyway?” When asked, it is not generally meant in a derogatory manner. It is really an indication of a lack of understanding of the role of the Superintendent. I have been referred to as the “Chief Groundskeeper” or in some situations the “Chief of Police.” I suppose both hats fit from time to time, but neither really addresses what I consider my primary role: a facilitator.

The term facilitator conjures all sorts of impressions depending on your perspective, but to me it embodies the full responsibilities of my position. I direct the park staff toward accomplishments that are appropriate to the needs of the park; I foster enthusiasm for the resources among visitors as well as the employees and probably the most important aspect of my job is to assure that the park is preserved for the citizens of this country. All these responsibilities are met when there is a staff committed to the goals and mandates of the park, visitors enjoy and understand the need and value of the park and the park survives the political, natural, cultural and sociologic pressures applied.

We plan for the future, adjust the plan to meet unforeseen needs and apply our efforts to assure the integrity of the resource as defined by the planning process. Integral to the plan is an understanding of the needs of our constituency. We fail from the onset if our plan does not meet the desires and needs of our visitors. So in effect, we try to balance the management of the park to meet the needs of a wide diversity of people.

Unfortunately, it is not an easy task. Different interest groups have different and often conflicting goals when they visit us. Some people see Arkansas Post as a great fishing spot without any thought about the historical values associated with three hundred years of human occupation. Still other people focus on one period of the park history. Another group views the park as a great place for contemplation or exercise. The balancing act occurs when we try to compensate for each group's expectations without diminishing those of another group. The Superintendent must take the lead and decide if and when the efforts of the park staff need to be redirected to resolve an imbalance.

So when I am asked, “What are you doing here?” I generally respond by saying, “The best I can make Arkansas Post National Memorial the place you expect when you come to visit.” If it does not meet your expectations, we need to talk. I am eager to discuss where we fall short of your needs and why - it's my job.

Edward E. Wood, Jr.

New Arrivals At The Post

The staff of Arkansas Post would like to welcome Steve Edwards, Taronna Armstrong, and Philip Grove to our park family, and we hope they have a great tenure here.

Steve Edwards

Steve Edwards, park guide began working at Arkansas Post during the first week of June 2001. A native of Memphis, Tennessee, Steve comes to us from the Bureau of Reclamation at Hoover Dam in Boulder City, Nevada. Steve also worked as a seasonal park ranger at Carlsbad Caverns National Park and Mammoth Cave National Park. He is a graduate of the University of Memphis majored in Parks and Recreation and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Education. Steve's interests include: hiking, backpacking, camping, fly-fishing, caving and just relaxing. Steve stated "he is excited to be back working for the National Park Service and looking forward to the challenging days ahead here at Arkansas Post National Memorial.



Taronna Armstrong

Taronna Armstong, a native of Marianna, Arkansas, joined the Arkansas Post staff during the first week of May 2001 as the division leader of interpretation. She is a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Arkansas and earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Parks and Recreation. During the last nine years Taronna has worked with the National Park Service: Everglades National Park in Homestead, FL, Gateway National Recreation Area in Staten Island, NY, Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, PA and Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site in Topeka, KS. Her interests included reading, relaxing and spending time with family and friends in her spare time.



Philip A Grove

Philip A Grove, native of Shreveport, Louisiana comes to us from Murfresboro, AR. Philip began working at Arkansas Post on April 22, 2001 as a tractor operator. For the past eleven years, Philip has been working in law enforcement and managing a lawn care business. A graduate of Marvell Academy, Philip also attended Arkansas State University and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Philip is married to Jami who is employed by Wire Industries, Inc of Dumas. Philip and Jami have a three-year-old son, Peyton Anthony. They enjoy water sports in their recreation time.



Post's Resource Management Projects On The Way -- Stay Tune!

Some of the projects described in the last news letter have or will become a reality by the end of the summer. They include two different projects dealing with erosion, (1) Pond/Bank erosion stabilization and mitigation and (2) nature trail point erosion stabilization. The first project will curtail the erosion effects of water and invasive exotic animals (i.e. nutria), primarily along the banks of the Visitor Center pond, through hand placement of rock and soil. The second involves the establishment of a fence. The soil will be used to fill in eroded areas below the fence, along the southern most point of the park, and the "Arkansas River Overlook" exhibit. Because these are unauthorized trails in the area, the bank has eroded. The fence will restrict foot traffic in the immediate area allowing vegetation to recover along each mitigated trail.



Progress is underway to establish a buffer zone involving the cooperation of the National Park Service, the U.S. Army of Corps of Engineers and the Arkansas State Game and Fish Division. Once project is completed, hunting will be restricted within the key areas of the park's boundary.

*Kevin Eads Resource Management Specialist
Continued on Page 7*

Maintenance Hard at Work

In addition to regular duties and major projects, Charles Mattmiller, Chief of Maintenance and his staff constructed a new Visitor Center information desk and Eastern National sales area. The desk is 15 X 12 foot rectangle shaped with diagonal-sides and varying heights. The information desk will provide additional sales space for educational items and an area of convenience for visitor services.



The entire park staff expresses our gratitude to Charles Layton and his division for their dedication and hard work.

"Time Machine"

Continued from Page 1

The staff of Arkansas Post thanks all the participants and volunteers that made the colonial event a success, which was both educational and exciting.



French soldier demonstrates how to load a flint-lock weapon.



Visitors chat with reenactors to learn more about their lives as soldiers



Visitors learn about the technique of hatchet throwing



Visitors learned some of the contributions made by women during the war.



Reenactor takes time out of action to sew his shirt.

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 to Arkansas



William Edward Woodruff, the founder of the Arkansas Gazette was a lively, hardworking gentleman who born in 1795 at Long Island. He was apprenticed at the age of 15 years to learn the printer's trade until he was 21 years of age. Hearing that the Territory of Arkansas had just been created, he decided to come to Arkansas and publish a paper. Seeing this as an opportunity to "get in on the ground floor," he bought a small press and complete printers outfit, loaded his cargo on a keelboat and in due time arrived at Montgomery's Point at the mouth of the White River. The only trail to the Post was a bridle path. There were no work teams to buy or rent and even if there had been, it would be impossible to get a wagon through the swamps and forest. Up to this time, steamboats had not attempted to brave the Arkansas River, and even flatboats and keelboats were rare.

Mr. Woodruff bought two dugout canoes and lashed them together. With the aid of two hired boatmen, he poled and dragged these canoes, loaded with printing equipment up the Arkansas and to the Post. This journey from Franklin, Tennessee took the greater part of three months.

When he reached the Post, there was a housing shortage! This capital of the territory had, at that time, a population of around a hundred persons. So, again displaying a determination that never faltered, he proceeded to build a log hut in which he set up the outfit and got ready to publish.

Mr. Woodruff's printing experience now served him in good stead. He set the type, did his own presswork, edited the paper, was his own business manager and sold subscriptions for \$3.00 a year in advance or \$4.00 at the end of the year. It is not surprising that he advertised in the first issue: "AN APPRENTICE WANTED a lad from 14 to 16 years of age, respectable connections, and of studious and industrious habits is wanted immediately at this office, as an Apprentice to the Printing Business."

Mr. Woodruff's first editorial proclaimed him "Republican" and further stated, "The Gazette is now before the public; we leave it to them to decide upon its merits, while we return, with pleasure, to our labors."

From that time on, the paper became a powerful instrument in the Territory and the State guiding and molding public opinion. It remained the only paper in the state until 1830. The Gazette moved with the seat of government, Little Rock, in 1821.

I Caught One! During Children's Fishing Derby

On June 2, 2001 Arkansas Post held its Annual Children's Fishing Derby. It was cosponsored by Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. Approximately 150 young fishing pros from around the area, participated in the free event.



Dozens of children participated in this year Children's Fishing Derby. The stocked lake provided for "good catchin"

The lake was stocked two days before the event. The young fishing pros quickly found their favorite spot along the lake and proudly threw in their lines. Most of them caught several fish and some even reached their limit of ten. Winners were awarded prizes based upon the weight of the largest fish caught. This year's first place winner was Charnescia Lee, second place went to Brenden Robbins, third to Lawren Johnson and fourth place to Martin Lee Walt.

Congratulations to the winners and all the other derby participants!

Resource Management

Continued from Page 4

This will ensure safety for visitors and employees. Favored hunting areas outside the park boundary will not be affected.

A herpetological inventory is another upcoming project and is expected to start the latter part of June. This project will involve the placement of trammel nets, cover boards and will involve several different procedures including the seining of ephemeral pools, noise/spot counts and time constrained searches. So, if you find yourself within the park and happen upon a 2X4' piece of corrugated tin or plywood pieces on the ground, please don't disturb them as researchers are checking these areas to see what type of reptiles or amphibians have established habitat. This project is a continuation of the natural inventory initiated in April of 2000 and the project is to be completed by June 2001.

If you are ever in the park and spot something of interest such as a cover board, deer enclosure or the resource manager acting like a nut, and would like to find out more about it just contact a ranger, he or she will be happy to explain the who, what, when and where. We will also explain why it is being done.



Tyler McCallie, Tyler Joe Goodell and Nolan Moore assisting with the bank stabilization.

Did you know.....

At the time of the Louisiana Purchase, when Arkansas became part of the United States, northern states had passed laws against slavery. In Arkansas, however, slavery was still allowed. In 1820, one year after the creation of the Arkansas Territory, Arkansas owned 1,617 slaves. Ten years later, the number had climbed to 4,567.

The constitution that Arkansas sent to Congress in 1836 allowed slavery to continue. For this reason some members of Congress opposed the idea of statehood for Arkansas. Congress believed that if the United States admitted another state in which slavery was legal, the balance between slave states and free states would be upset.

Congress finally resolved this difficult issue by admitting Michigan, a free state, on the same day that it admitted Arkansas, a slave state. Arkansas became the twenty-fifth state to join the United States of America.



Greer, Tom "The world around us: Arkansas"



THE ARKANSAS POST GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF ARKANSAS POST NATIONAL MEMORIAL

April - June 2001 • Volume 3, Issue 5
1741 Old Post Road • Gillett, AR 72055