

# Cane River Creole

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Historical Park  
Louisiana



## THE COTTON PRESS



Fall 2013

### A Word From Our Partners

#### 10th Annual Christmas Downriver 2013

**Cane River Creole National Historical Park, Cane River National Heritage Area and St. Augustine's Historical Society invites you to join us in celebrating Christmas Creole Style:**

**Month of December**, All Cane River area residents are invited to help with traditional Christmas seasonal decorating of their private homes. A special lighting committee will judge homes early in December that honor this long standing tradition. The lighting of lower Cane River homes continues to create Christmas memories that are enjoyed by all who visit our area during the Holiday Season. Lighting displays spotlight the region's strong bond of community. (Simply decorating your home for the season automatically enters you into the lighting contest.) So turn on the Holidays and you just might be recognized for your efforts.

**December 14, 2013**, Christmas on the Plantation, Magnolia Complex 1:00 p.m.–2:30p.m., visit this historical agricultural site and enjoy Christmas music and ornament designing activities. Music will provide entertainment at the Overseer's House. Free and open to the public. Dress according to the weather.

**December 21, 2013**, Christmas "Creole Style" at the unique Badin-Roque House 11:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m. Few remaining structures of this "post-in-the-ground" technique exist in the United States today, and members of St. Augustine's Historical Society will be on hand to showcase and explain the site's significance to our cultural landscape.

*Any funds generated by this event go to preservation efforts of the foundation.*

**December 21, 2013**, Christmas on the Plantation, Oakland Site 1:00 p.m.–2:30 p.m., Enjoy ornament designing while listening to the popular music amid the historical live oaks that frame this Colonial farming operation. Free and open to the public. Dress according to the weather.

–Jean Carter  
Heritage Ranger

# Cultural Connections

## Celebrating Louisiana's Horse & Cattle Culture: Natchitoches-NSULA Folklife Festival 2013



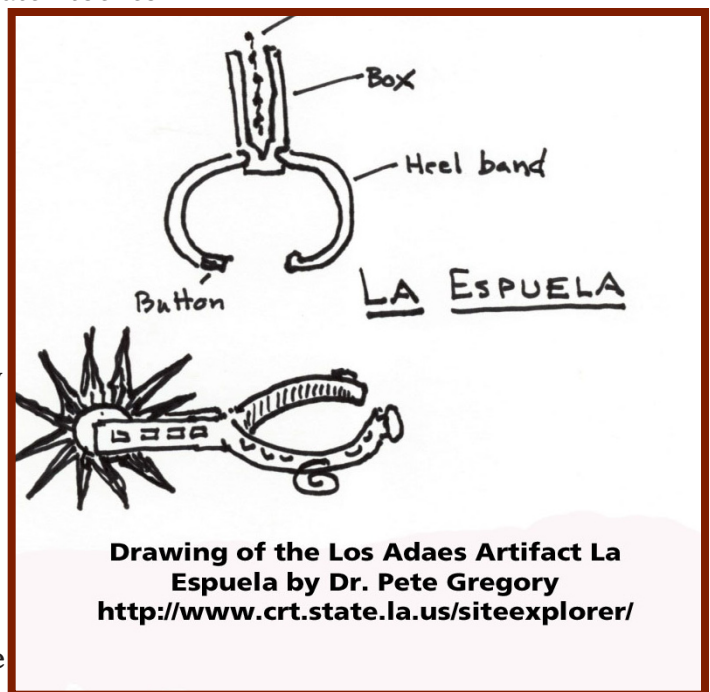
The Natchitoches-NSULA Folklife Festival celebrated its 34th annual event on July 19th-20th at the Prather Coliseum. Since 2003, the park has participated as an exhibitor at the annual Folklife Festival. In keeping with this year's theme of "Celebrating Louisiana's Horse & Cattle Culture," an exhibit was developed to promote the park's museum collection. According to the Louisiana Folklife Center, "There is no period of Louisiana history when cattle and horses have not played a role in the culture." A collection of approximately 50 museum objects recovered from the park's plantation units and Cane River National Heritage Area sites were on display for visitors to enjoy. Artifacts including a saddle, stirrups, horseshoes, spurs, branding irons, a farrier's toolbox, a milking bottle, cowboy-related

objects, and historic photos were part of the exhibit. Reproduction objects including drums, a cotton sack, and farrier's tools were also available for hands-on learning.

This year, the park partnered with the NSULA Williamson Museum to produce a display of Spanish Colonial Era archaeological artifacts excavated at the *Presidio Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Los Adaes* in Natchitoches Parish. The site once served as the capital of the Spanish province of Texas and included a mission, fort, and a community of Indo-Hispanic people known as the *Adaes*. Originally excavated under the direction of Dr. Pete Gregory from the 1960s to the 1980s, the site is a National Historic Landmark located within the CRNHA and is

operated as Los Adaes State Historic Site. The Williamson Museum provided artifacts representative of cattle culture, including a hand-wrought spur known as *la espuela*, amulets used to ward off evil spirits called *higas*, and interpretation of the Spanish frontier outpost occupied during the years 1723-1773.

The success of the exhibit was a result of the efforts of inter-divisional park staff and volunteers. Tena Howard (Administration), Jessica Scott (Interpretation), Dustin Fuqua (Resource Management), and VIP Dianne Moran set up the exhibit and answered questions related to the artifacts for over 250 visitors throughout the course of the day. Tim VanCleave (Interpretation) assisted in the dismantling of the exhibit and the safe return of the park's museum collection.



Drawing of the Los Adaes Artifact La Espuela by Dr. Pete Gregory  
<http://www.crt.state.la.us/siteexplorer/>

## Cultural Connections

In addition to the exhibit, the festival committee invited the park and Dustin Fuqua to moderate two narrative sessions called informances during the festival activities. Informance sessions consist of panel-style presentations by which musicians and traditional cultural practitioners perform and share stories with audiences. An informance session involving the acclaimed

Cajun artist D.L. Menard, Cajun musician Terry Huval, and Country & Western musician Hugh Harris discussed the contributions of the legendary Hank Williams, Sr. The trio recalled stories of Hank Williams, Sr.'s influence on American music, and explained the origin of the hit song "Jambalaya" and its basis on the classic Cajun song "Grand Texas." Another informance ses-

sion involving Sarah Jayde Williams & The Sharecroppers Band discussed the influence of cowboy culture on Cajun music. The group also recanted stories of the late Cajun fiddle musician Hadley Castille, grandfather of Sarah Jayde and a longtime Folklife Festival participant.

–Dustin Fuqua  
Cultural Resources Specialist

## Interpretation Team at Work

### Volunteers are Working Hard at Cane River Creole NHP

If you've ever visited a National Park, chances are you've interacted with a volunteer. Volunteers play a vital role in helping park's accomplish their goals in preservation and education. Last year nearly 2.5 million volunteers contributed nearly 100 million volunteer hours at our nation's National Parks. Cane River Creole National Historical Park has its own group of hardworking and dedicated volunteers.

Barbara Smith, a senior at Natchitoches Central is one of these dedicated volunteers. Barbara has been volunteering for almost two years. Along with giving tours of the Oakland main house, Barbara helps out in the gift shop, picks up litter, and has recently assisted in creating signs for the historic buildings.

This past summer, the park received a tremendous volunteer contribution from

Michelle Richardson. Michelle braved the Louisiana heat while helping us plant and maintain the Oakland plantation demonstration garden. Michelle planted crops, cleared weeds, watered, and picked vegetables. Due to Michelle's efforts, the garden has produced a bumper crop of okra, tomatoes, jalapeno peppers, and various other healthy treats.

Elvin Shields is another valuable volunteer. Elvin is becoming well known for his "Plantation Toys". As a child growing up at Oakland, Elvin and his brother created homemade wire toys. Today, Elvin is re-creating those toys as a method of educating today's youth about planta-

tion culture. Elvin has appeared at several park events, showing the public his toy making techniques. This past summer Elvin was instrumental in planning the park's Juneteenth celebration along with helping to furnish the park's Magnolia Plantation slave/tenant cabins.

We even had a volunteer become a published author. Volunteer Thom Brennan wrote a short biography of Jacques Alphonse Prud'homme. Jacques served in the Confederate army during the Civil War and eventually became the owner of Oakland Plantation. Copies of Thom's book are available at Oakland Plantation at no cost.

The park has numerous other volunteer opportunities at both Oakland and Magnolia Plantations. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact Nathan Hatfield at (318) 356-8441.

–Nathan Hatfield  
Chief of Interpretation



# Facility Management

## Facility Projects on the Horizon

Facility Management has received \$200k this fiscal year to manage our backlog maintenance needs. The additional annual funding allows for great programs, which include our Youth Conservation Corp, YCC. The Federal Sequestration has derailed timely planning but nevertheless many projects are on the horizon.

First, our YCC funded Project for FY13 concluded on June 28, 2013 with two wonderful people leaving the park staff: Helena Armstrong and Davente “DJ” Davis. I asked Helena and she has expressed interest in returning as the YCC Work Leader for the FY14 program. Generally, we hire a supervisor, three students, and one returning student as the lead. Since we didn’t have time to hire the supervisor, Ms. Armstrong and Mr. Davis were hired and integrated into our facility operations, which is the capacity we can handle without a dedicated supervisor for the YCC



program.

Second, the Multiple Roofing projects and the Pecan Orchard Realignment Project has added two new members to our CARI family. Michelle Richardson, former CARI volunteer, started work on August 12, 2013 and Charles Roland on August 26, 2013. Please welcome them to the CARI family as they will be overwhelmed with policy, procedures, etc. They both were hired as Maintenance Workers via 1039 seasonal appointments. This means that they work a maximum of 1,039 hours in a year.

Several FY13 projects have been submitted and assigned to our NPS Contracting Team.

–Oakland Plantation Cyclic Tree Maintenance–felling and corrective pruning of many trees

–Magnolia Store Restroom Replacement –sorry, we’ll be closing the restrooms to demo and install ceramic tile floors

–Magnolia Quarters Re-roofing –Cabin #1 to metal (tenant period), Cabin #7 east roof to flat seam, and pending contractor’s cost - porch reconstruction and wood shingle roof on Cabin #2 (slavery period).

Lastly, if you would like to know more about these projects and even our many FY14 projects in the works then contact me or the park’s Exhibit Specialist, Lester Davis.

–Eric Ford  
Facility Manager



# The Green Thumb

## Healing Herbs

Herbs have curative properties, but taken incorrectly, can cause serious reactions. Do not try to create a curative without the guidance of a medical herbalist. Can you guess the name of the herb that grows at Oakland Plantation that could be used as a treatment?

A. You fell while hiking in the back-country that resulted in an open wound; how could you mitigate an infection? The root of this common plant was used medicinally by American Indians and early settlers as an astringent upon open wounds. It can also be used to treat canker sores.



B. Does the presence of varicose veins cause you to cover up your legs? These flowers contain generous amounts of a compound called rutin, which helps maintain the integrity of capillary walls.

C. Do you have a sore throat or bronchitis? The extract of these flowers counteract the micro-organisms that cause inflammation of the throat and respiratory conditions.

## Answers

- A. Geranium (Geranium sp.)
- B. Violet (Viola sp.)
- C. Honeysuckle (Lonicera japonica)

*The Green Pharmacy* by James A. Duke, Ph.D. is a wonderful resource to learn more about herbal remedies.

—Bernadette Cooney  
Master Gardner

## Bookstore Buzz

It certainly has been a time of transition with regards to the bookstore. As you know, last year was our best in terms of sales. To keep the momentum going we are determined to provide visitors with affordable and relevant products. To do this we have discontinued a few items and look forward to adding new items such as harmonicas, a Christmas ornament, and a watercolor print of Oakland.

In March, the bookstore was audited by Eastern National employee Kalia Vincent from Kentucky. In her evaluation she wrote “Store is neat, clean,

well-stocked and attractively arranged. All paperwork is accurate and neatly prepared.” She also stated that “park staff was most helpful and cooperative during the audit.” The positive comments that we received in this audit reflect the hard work and ingenuity that the interp staff has used in working with the bookstore. We are not afraid to try something new; if it sells great—if it doesn’t we look for other alternatives.

In May, we decided to have a sale; several items were discounted in hopes of moving stock. We completely sold out of

two books: *Remember My Sacrifice* and *Louisiana Main Streets*. We started out with twenty-five copies of *A Black Women’s Civil War Memoir* and one is left. We also have one copy of the *Creole Book* on sale. Don’t forget, we also have several containers of Tony’s *Creole Seasoning* left.

If you have suggestions about the bookstore feel free to let me know. Stop by and pick up some gifts (especially the Tony’s) for family and friends.

Thanks  
—Tim Van Cleave  
Park Ranger

# Volunteer Spotlight

Born and raised in Chicago, I joined the military just out of high school. I was stationed in Mississippi and met a guy who I couldn't live without. We married after six months and when our service was complete we moved to Massachusetts for him to attend the New England School of Architectural Woodworking. During that time, I got a heavy dose of outdoor work while employed at a local apple orchard. After graduation, Matt and I moved here to Natchitoches, his hometown. Right

away he set up his own shop and started building custom cabinets. While helping him kept me busy, I knew that I needed to get back to the outdoors. I tried looking for work in a few places around town to no avail. I already do Volunteer Vacations with the American Hiking Society, building or maintaining hiking trails around to country, so I know how rewarding volunteer work is. I found a brochure at Cane River Creole NHP Headquarters on Volunteering in Parks and decided to give it a try until

I found my niche in this town. I found it! I was put to work in the demonstration garden—weeding, watering, and harvesting. I had never gardened before so it was a completely new experience. I enjoyed it so much, I decided to plant my own this fall and put my new knowledge to use.

—Michelle Richardson  
Former Park Volunteer

Michelle is no longer volunteering with us, but don't be sad. She is now a member of Park Staff!

## Editor's Pick

This section of The Cotton Press is dedicated to a park employee who the editor feels has gone above and beyond the call of duty in one way or another. Lester Davis was selected to be The Cotton Press's second Editor's Pick.

Lester is the Exhibit Specialist at CRCNHP. His duties in a nutshell are to assist the Facility Manager with planning, evaluating, initiating, administering, supervising, and performing work on non-conventional/non-typical preservation projects for historic structures that range widely in historic period and architectural style throughout Cane River Creole National Historical Park. What a mouthful!

For the rest of his time at CRCNHP, Lester aspired to become as proficient as possible with his duties as Exhibit Specialist and to teach new appointees the skills of the craft. When asked what he considers to be his proudest moment at CRCNHP,

Lester simply replied, "Being selected to fill the Exhibit Specialist vacancy and receiving formal training as a COR (contracting officer representative)."

I selected Lester as the Fall's Editor's Pick because of his dedication to his career and willingness to help others understand his craft. Lester will stop performing a project to explain every step and the reasons behind them to others who are not skilled in his craft (mainly me). I now know about fence posts and the ease of using cement versus just dirt.

If you want to see a person doing his job cheerfully, look for Lester Davis!

—Jessica Scott  
Editor



**Lester Davis hard at work!**