



# Constitutional Writes

The official newsletter of Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site

Winter 2004  
Volume 2, Issue 1

## Archeological Testing at Central High

On September 16-18<sup>th</sup> archeologists Bill Hunt and Ann Bauermeister of the National Park Service's Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC) conducted archeological surveys of the vacant lot across the street from the current visitor center. The purpose of the survey was to determine whether or not significant archeological resources exist, or potentially exist, on the proposed site of the new visitor center. Bill and Ann, assisted by the site's Chief of Interpretation & Cultural Resources, Laura Miller, conducted documentary research and a geophysical survey on the lot.

Bill Hunt spent the better part of two days at the Arkansas History Commission examining microfilms of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Sanborn Insurance maps, city directories, and tax records for Little Rock. The earliest map, an 1897 Sanborn map, showed two dwellings on the lot, and also two outbuildings and a greenhouse complex labeled "Tipton & Hurst Green Houses." Until just a few years ago, this property belonged to Capitol Wholesale Florist and still contained a greenhouse. Clearly, the greenhouses were a long-standing business in the neighborhood.

While Bill spent his time in the archives, Ann conducted ground penetrating radar (GPR) and fluxgate gradiometer testing of the lot. The GPR was used first because it is easy to use and can inventory a large area in a relatively short time. GPR also allows archeologists to nondestructively locate metallic and nonmetallic objects, subsurface material variations, voids, disturbed soil, and more. The fluxgate gradiometer measures variations in the earth's magnetic field due to subsurface anomalies, such as fired clay bricks or metal concentrations. Lest our readers think that all of archeology is glamorous, keep in mind that Laura's job in assisting Ann was to move a data line (nylon rope) ten centimeters at a time so Ann could follow along the line with the GPR. Laura did appreciate having plenty of time to ponder the complexities of previous development on the lot, as well as life in general. We should have a final report, and therefore a good picture of what is under the surface, by early 2004.

In addition to the survey work, Ann spoke to three of Melissa Donham's science classes from Central High School. Students learned not only about the NPS plans for the vacant lot, but also about what archeologists do and the methods they use. Hopefully, some of them may have been inspired to learn more about archeology as a career. Thanks go out to Ann for taking the time to make this survey project an opportunity to bring archeology, and the NPS's role in protecting cultural resources, to the public!

Laura A. Miller, Chief of Interpretation & Cultural Resources



Ann Bauermeister, archeologist with the NPS MWAC, speaks to Central High School students.

## Superintendent's Greeting

The front lawn of Central High School and the neighborhood along South Park Street recently resounded with echoes from the past. On Saturday, September 27 the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride stopped at the school for a rally. The goal of the event was to make people aware of the challenges faced by immigrant workers as they strive to realize the many promises that life in the United States offers. Two bus loads of Freedom Riders were joined by dozens of local supporters, including representatives of city government, labor unions, and religious organizations. As the rally unfolded, one could not help but to remember and draw comparisons to the events that occurred in the same neighborhood during 1957.

As was the case during the desegregation crisis, a group of individuals presented a public petition for equal opportunity and basic human dignity. Just as African Americans did in the 1950s, the Freedom Riders asserted their claim to liberties that many people enjoy, if not take for granted. And, just as in the 1950s, not everyone embraced the vision.

In another corner of the neighborhood, separated from the Freedom Riders by police barricades, was a second group of individuals who held a rally of their own. These persons, all Anglo-American and likely descended from immigrants themselves, chanted slogans that made clear their perspective that the Freedom Riders are not welcome to share in the rights and responsibilities of living in America.

Together, the rallies were a reminder of the continuing relevance of our Constitution. Both groups were asserting their first amendment rights of peaceable assembly and free speech. Just as in the 1950s, the rallies served as evidence that Americans must continue to be active participants in our democracy, and must work to see that our liberties extend to everyone who contributes to the greatness of this nation.

The civil rights movement has not ended. In the past decades the movement has expanded to demand rights for women, Native Americans, and, more recently, Latinos; new chapters unfold every day. Our park Historian, Laura Miller, likes to say that Central High always will evolve as new groups of students enter and continue to learn and grow, and that we like to think of ourselves as a historic site with stories in the past, the present, and the future. We are honored to be able to share those stories with you. We are excited about the stories to come that will help our visitors fully comprehend that this is, indeed, a land of opportunity for all.

R. Michael Madell, Superintendent

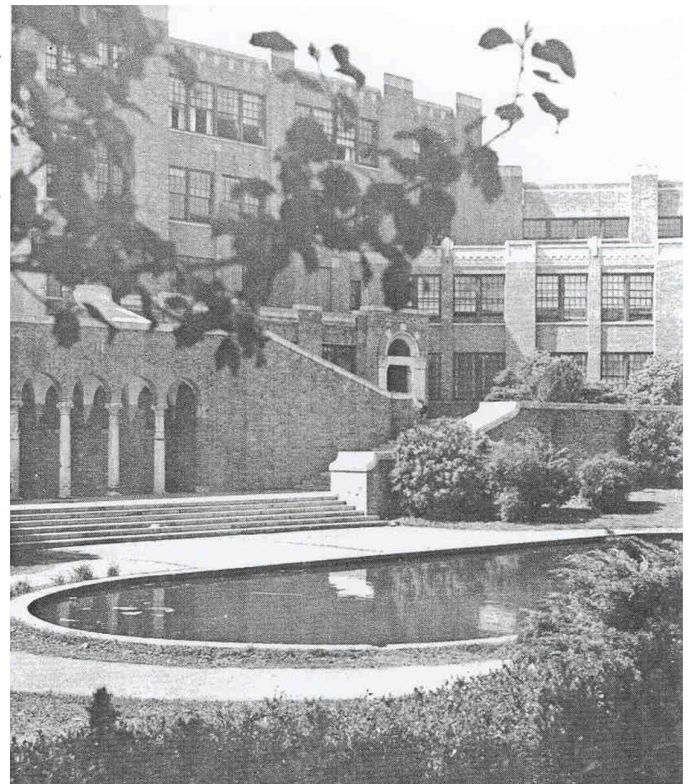
## NPS and the Little Rock School District Join Forces to Restore Reflecting Pool

On September 25, 2003, in commemoration of the 46<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Central High's desegregation, Principal Nancy Rousseau and Superintendent Mike Madell announced a partnership to restore the historic reflecting pool in front of Central High. From the school's construction in 1927, until it was removed in the 1980s because of maintenance problems, the reflecting pool graced the school's front campus and helped create the "park-like setting" that the original landscape designers envisioned.

The school's yearbook, *The Pix*, once described the setting in poetic terms. "The pool, stocked with mammoth goldfish and surrounded by holly and evergreen trees...provides an atmosphere of serenity, peace, and relaxation for the daily production of our show at LRCHS."

One of the management goals of Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site is to assist in preserving the cultural landscape around the school. One of the most significant character-defining features of the landscape is the "streetscape" in front of the school, where many of the dramatic events of 1957 took place. Under a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and the Little Rock School District, the park will provide \$50,000 in funding for the pool's restoration. The school district will contribute additional funds and one class, the Little Rock Senior High School Class of 1953, has already donated \$1,200 toward the project.

**Any class or individual wishing to make a contribution to this project is invited to contact Principal Nancy Rousseau at 501-447-1432.**



Central High School Reflecting Pool.  
Photo Courtesy of the *Pix* yearbook.

# Ruby Bridges Day



Students listen as Park Ranger Spirit Trickey tells them about Ruby Bridges.

To commemorate the anniversary of the desegregation of William Frantz Elementary School in New Orleans in 1960, Central High School National Historic Site celebrated “Ruby Bridges Day” at Sue Cowan Williams Library November 14, 2003. Students from Dunbar Middle School and Gibbs Magnet Elementary School participated in the event. Park Rangers spoke to the students about Ruby Bridges and the role she played in changing education across the country. The Little Rock Community Drum Circle performed and engaged the first grade class from Gibbs in drumming. Minnijean Brown, one of the Little Rock Nine, conducted a mini-workshop about the importance of non-violence with an eighth grade class from Dunbar.

Three years had passed since Little Rock Central High School was desegregated in 1957, but some Southern schools remained segregated. Ruby Bridges was six years old when she integrated William Frantz Elementary School. She had to be escorted to school daily by federal marshals to ensure her safety. Outside the school was an angry mob chanting hateful words opposing integration.



Minnijean Brown (one of the Little Rock Nine) speaks to students about non-violence.

Parents removed their children from Ruby’s class and she spent her entire first grade year alone with her teacher. Clearly, 1960 was a life changing year for Ruby Bridges and the nation. The Little Rock Nine and Ruby Bridges were ordinary young people who achieved extraordinary accomplishments.

Park Rangers send special thanks to Ruby Bridges for donating 75 signed copies of her book, *Through My Eyes*, to all of the students who participated in the event.

## BIG BOO!SEUM



Neighborhood trick-or-treaters join in the fun at Big Boo!seum Bash.

Halloween was very fun! Over 600 people participated in our 9<sup>th</sup> annual Big Boo!seum Bash! Ghosts, goblins, witches, princesses, cats and many more creative characters landed at Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site on the eve of October 31, 2003. Our site was taken back in time with our “back to the fifties” event. Some were spotted wearing poodle skirts and bobbi socks! Others danced the shuffle to Elvis and James Brown!

Central Arkansas Transit buses looped around the city collecting and dropping off participants at various sights. Three hours of organized games and activities including face painting, arts and crafts, fishing, fifties dances, record toss, and a chalk mural kept children entertained and happy. Volunteers from Central High School helped make our event a great success! Thank you volunteers!

Spirit Trickey, Park Ranger



New Visitor Center sign.



## New Sign for Visitor Center

Most people realize that they have arrived at a National Park Service site when they see a sign with the familiar NPS arrowhead insignia. Until recently, there was no such sign at Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site. Now, however, visitors will be greeted with a sign that clearly identifies the site as a unit of the National Park System!

The new sign, installed in early November, was designed in a style that mimics the architecture of the sculptures in our Commemorative Garden. The base of the sign and planter was constructed by East-Harding, Inc. and Sonny Fish Masonry. The sign itself was fabricated by Sign Design from Colton, South Dakota.



Visitor Center before sign installation.

# Ranger Recommendation

## DAINGEROUS LIAISONS

Sex and Love in the Segregated South



*Dangerous Liaisons: Sex and Love in the Segregated South* delves into the subject of interracial relationships in the South in the decades following the Civil War. Charles F. Robinson II examines court cases, various laws, and the changing attitudes of Americans toward relationships between whites and blacks during this time period.

Robinson's findings suggest that the underlying issue for many Americans was dominance; white Americans' struggle to retain control over the blacks after the demise of slavery branched out into anti-miscegenation laws that were prevalent in the South after the Civil War. While interracial relationships were often tolerated during the Reconstruction period, southern legislatures soon passed numerous laws prohibiting marriage or romantic relationships between whites and blacks largely because such relationships implied social equality. Robinson's book examines these feelings, and presents an abundance of research on the subject.

Charles F. Robinson II is an assistant professor of history at the University of Arkansas. He is currently a member of the Arkansas Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians and has attended the Southern Conference on

African American Affairs. Robinson has also served as a member of the board of trustees for the Arkansas Historical Association.

*Dangerous Liaisons: Sex and Love in the Segregated South* is available for purchase at the park bookstore, along with other educational materials about the Civil Rights era.

Michelle Simpson, Graduate Assistant

## A Quality Experience!

This past July, our staff conducted a survey to determine how satisfied visitors were with their experience at Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site. The survey also was designed to measure how well visitors understand the significance of the site as explained through our exhibits and ranger programs. The survey is part of the National Park Service's efforts to comply with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). GPRA was passed by Congress in 1994 to evaluate and measure the efficiency and effectiveness of federal agencies.

We are excited to report that 99 percent of those responding to the survey believed the overall quality of facilities and services at the Historic Site are either "very good" or "good". Ninety-eight percent of respondents believed the quality of our exhibits were "very good" or "good". **One hundred percent** of respondents were satisfied with assistance received from our employees!

When asked to explain in their own words the things they learned during their stay, 92 percent of visitors were able to accurately describe one or more of the significant messages we try to convey through our exhibits and programs. We are committed to maintaining this high quality service in years to come. Please stop by to view our exhibits or participate in one of our programs. We're certain that you will agree with the respondents to this summer's survey that Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site is a quality experience!

# Staff Notes - New Arrivals!

**Lea Flowers Baker** is the new Education Specialist at the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site. She came to the park from the Department of Arkansas Heritage in Little Rock, where she served as Education Coordinator. Lea has a Bachelor's Degree in History and a Master's Degree in Public History from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Over the past ten years, Lea has been involved in curriculum development, including the development of lesson plans and interactive technology on the Civil War with Pea Ridge National Park, the governors of Arkansas, and the Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial for students of Arkansas history and their instructors. Lea looks forward to working at the Little Rock Central High School NHS and taking an interdisciplinary approach to curriculum-based program development at the site!



Lea Flowers Baker

**Quincy Watson** became a member of the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site staff as a park guide on November 3, 2003. He attends Philander Smith College and is a junior, majoring in business administration. He also serves as President of the McKinley Newton Honors Academy at the college. He enjoys learning new things and looks forward to expanding his knowledge in the field of history.



Quincy Watson

**Jan Lee** became the first Administrative Officer for Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site in 2003. Jan is a 15-year veteran of the National Park Service. Before arriving in Little Rock, her career included assignments in Madison, Wisconsin with Ice Age National Scenic Trail, North Country National Scenic Trail, and Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail. Prior to joining the NPS, she also worked for the US Fish & Wildlife Service National Wildlife Health Research Center in Madison, Wisconsin. Jan has two lovely children, Robert and Tammy, and in her spare time she and her husband Dan enjoy traveling and camping. Jan and Dan recently purchased a home in the country and are quickly learning about Arkansas insect control methods!

Jan Lee



**Spirit Trickey** has been promoted to Park Ranger. Spirit has been a member of our staff for eighteen months, and is an enthusiastic and exemplary employee.

---

## Education Corner

"A nation which does not remember what it was yesterday, does not know what it is today."  
President Woodrow Wilson



The Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site has initiated an exciting new chapter in its interpretation efforts with curriculum-based programming for students of Arkansas and American history. Using state and national guidelines, students will engage in learning more about civics and history through the development of writing skills, higher order thinking activities, interdisciplinary efforts and one-on-one interaction with Interpretive Rangers and education staff. They will also have the unique opportunity to learn about the 1957 crisis and the Civil Rights Movement through the use of the cultural landscape of the historic site as a primary resource.

It is important to remember and to teach the students of Arkansas that not only are the historical events at Central High School important, but so are the present and future – as reflected in the continuing influence of the 1957 crisis. So, we encourage teachers and students to utilize the site as a center for learning about the civil rights guaranteed under the Fourteenth Amendment and that social change is possible by all persons – regardless of age, race, or sex. Pro-active behavior can induce change and bring about a better world for all of its citizens.

The interpretation and education staff will be implementing new programs through 2004, including bringing civics and history alive in the form of loan box programs, in-class opportunities, workshops, writing and essay contests, and tour/lesson plan partnerships with such institutions as the Arkansas State Capitol and the Clinton Library. For more information on educational programming, please call (501) 324-5682.

**Lea Flowers Baker, Education Specialist**

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Little Rock Central High School  
National Historic Site  
2125 Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72202

First Class Mail  
Postage and  
Fees  
**PAID**  
City, State  
Permit number

## EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the  
Interior

This newsletter is brought to you by the staff of Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site.

### Editor

Tarona A. Bennett, Park Ranger

### Comments? Write to:

Superintendent  
Little Rock Central High School  
National Historic Site  
2125 Daisy L. Gatson Bates Drive  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72202

Phone: (501) 374-1957  
Fax: (501) 376-4728  
Website: [www.nps.gov/chsc](http://www.nps.gov/chsc)  
Email: [chsc\\_visitor\\_center@nps.gov](mailto:chsc_visitor_center@nps.gov)

## 2004 Scheduled Events

### January

Jan. 19 - Martin Luther King Holiday.

Join park rangers for a special program on Dr. King and a traveling exhibit from the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site at the Sue Cowan Williams branch of the Central Arkansas Library System.

### February

Feb. 16 - Daisy Bates Holiday. Park rangers will conduct a special program on Daisy and L.C. Bates and the role of the NAACP in the desegregation of Little Rock's schools and will conduct a special tour of the Daisy Bates House National Historic Landmark.

Feb. 3, 10, 17 - *Eyes On the Prize* documentary series at the Darragh Center for Intellectual Freedom at the Main Library, Central Arkansas Library System in Little Rock.

### May

May 15 - Panel discussion in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* Supreme Court decision.

Park Rangers are available to give tours of the visitor center exhibit, commemorative garden and the exterior of Central High School. Off-site visits to present a talk on Little Rock and the 1957 crisis can be arranged as well. The Visitor Center features the exhibit, "All the World is Watching Us: Little Rock and the 1957 Crisis," as well as a bookstore with a wide selection of educational materials.

Contact a park ranger for more information on daily program topics and scheduled events. Reservations are required for tours and can be made by calling the park at (501) 374-1957.