



THE ARKANSAS POST GAZETTE

Volume 6, No. 3 x Fall 2011

The Arkansas Post Water Trail Makes a Big Splash



Park Volunteer Don Hubsch installing a sign. Photo by Kirsten Bartlow, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

On June 4, the long delayed ribbon cutting for the Arkansas Post Water Trail was held. Representatives from the National Park Service, Arkansas Game and Fish, US Army Corps of Engineers, and Arkansas Canoe Club were on hand for the event. A float on the trail followed the ceremonies.

The idea for establishing a trail around the Post was the idea of park volunteer and retired US Army Corps of Engineers employee Don Hubsch who is an avid canoeist.

Don contacted Kirsten Bartlow at the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission who had already helped establish the Wattensaw Bayou Water Trail in Prairie County.

The water trail launches from Moore's Bayou. From there, you can float towards Highway 165 or into Post Bayou and Post Bend Lake which surrounds Arkansas Post. Launching or landing boats within park boundaries is prohibited.

The water trail received a lot of buzz with an article in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette. It was also featured on *Exploring Arkansas* with Chuck Dovish in September.

Floating on the trail allows visitors to travel the way Quapaw Indians and early Europeans did during the settlement of Arkansas Post. Visitors see nature in a whole new way from a canoe or kayak. The next guided float is scheduled for November 12. See page 7 for more details on the Fall Float.

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Ghosts of the Past - October 22

The seventeenth Annual Ghosts of the Past is slated for October 22. The candlelight walks through Arkansas History have been pushed back to 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM because of the extension of Daylight Savings Time. Returning guests include the Spanish Soldiers of Fort Carlos III and Union Soldiers of the 113th Illinois. Other talks focus on the early European exploration of Arkansas, the Territorial Period, and the Civil War Hospital stationed in the Arkansas State Bank during the Battle of Arkansas Post. The final stop celebrates the strong musical heritage of the Delta.

Guided tours are scheduled every 15 minutes. Coffee and hot apple cider will be served at the Visitor Center. Reservations are strongly recommended and can be made by calling 870-548-2207.



Park Volunteer Don Hubsch cuts the ribbons for the trail in June. NPS Photo by Jake McAdams

Superintendent's Scribblin's

By Edward E. Wood, Jr. Park Superintendent



As some readers may know, I have the privilege of living in one of the houses in the park. There are perks that come with living where you work and even more when work is a National Park site. I can step out of the house and I'm working; no long commute, no traffic and no grouchy drivers. When I go to work, I start the day by driving through the park to my office in the visitor center. In the early morning the deer are still grazing alongside the road and the rising sun shines through the leaves and seems to dance on the ground. It is particularly inviting this time of year when the temperature is a bit cooler and the mosquitoes are few and far between.

A couple of weeks ago, in the late afternoon, I was working at home on my computer which I keep on my desk in the master bedroom. The blinds were drawn, but I kept noticing

shadows moving across the window. Every now and then I would catch splashes of brown in the cracks between the blinds and the window frame. Raising the blinds is a major undertaking due to the arrangement of our furniture so I headed out to the kitchen to look out the only other window in the house facing the back yard. No more than three feet in front of me, there they were, three deer calmly eating the leaves off my hydrangea. The flowers have long since turned brown but its stems were bare too and only remnants of what used to be large green leaves dangled in places. It is not uncommon for deer to graze in both the front and back yard at our house but I was struck by what I saw this time.

One of the deer had a beautiful set of velvet-covered antlers. He was a magnificent animal with slick fur and what looked like a gleam in his eye. He was much more wary than his companions and he carried himself with a strut that implied royal bearing. I watched him shift from the hydrangea to the freshly cut lawn and decided to get my camera and try to take a picture. Fortunately, the camera battery was charged and ready to go. I hurried back to the window and surprisingly the buck was still there about half way across the yard. As I tried to take the photo, the bushes under the window kept getting in the way. Then I wished I had cleaned the windows more often because they were really dirty. I just knew something would spook my dinner guests but they stayed around while I framed

my shot. The buck gave me a near perfect profile and lifted his head to watch a vehicle travel down the park road. I captured the image and took several more before the small herd moved to another part of the yard.

I have lived in this house for just over thirteen years now and that buck was probably the most spectacular deer I have had the luck to see up close. Even after so many years here, I am constantly being treated to something new. National park areas have that effect on me. It's really hard to verbalize; it's not just the deer, alligators or wide variety of birds; it's not the manicured grounds or tree-covered hiking trails; it's not just the historic sites and their awe-inspiring mystique; it's the montage that results from the combination of all these. That is why they are designated as places worthy of NPS status. It means that someone (an individual or a group) got that "special feeling" when they visited and felt strongly enough to advocate that the area be protected for everyone.

I hope that you too can experience the specialness that is Arkansas Post National Memorial.



Photo by Ed Wood



Greener Gazette

If you would prefer to receive an e-mail update when the newsletter is posted to the park website instead of a hard copy, please e-mail Joe Herron at arpo_historian@nps.gov

White Tailed Deer Surveys

by Sarah Allely, Natural Resource Manager

Wildlife viewing is one of the most popular activities at Arkansas Post. During the fall and winter months, visitors flock to the Park to see the herds of White-tailed Deer that make their home at The Post. Occasionally there are sightings of herds containing as many as 40 deer. White-tailed Deer were driven nearly to extinction in the early 1900's. Since that time predators such as Mountain lions and coyotes, populations have decreased leaving deer populations unchecked. Without these predators, deer numbers have grown dramatically leading to some unfortunate side effects. Overpopulation can lead to disease and starvation, damage to natural resources from the deer foraging on native plants, and threats to safety due to increased vehicle collisions.

Arkansas Post is tracking the size of our deer population with the help of the Heartland Inventory and Monitoring Network, a group of scientists that monitor trends and issues within parks. The work they do helps the managers of Arkansas Post make informed decisions. Each January scientists travel to Arkansas Post to survey the White-tailed Deer.

These surveys serve to document yearly changes in the population and to determine long-term trends associated with these changes. Since the surveys began in 2005, the population has changed every year, in an up and down oscillation. The 2011 surveys showed that the population numbers were on a downward trend. Even with the up and down oscillation, it is evident that the deer population is increasing



with the 2011 population numbers being 33% above average.

Learn more about the Heartland Inventory and Monitoring Network by visiting

<http://science.nature.nps.gov/im/index.cfm>



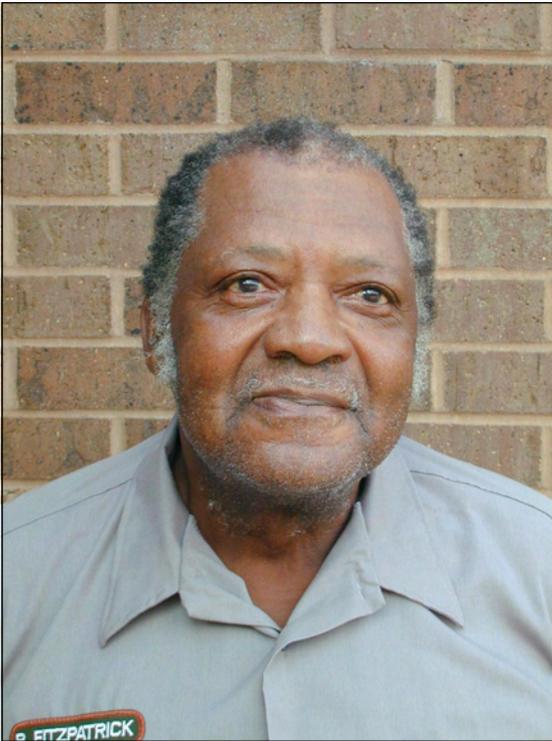
Photo by Ed Wood

Did You Miss the Last Issue of the Arkansas Post Gazette?

Due to printing problems on the previous issue, the Arkansas Post Gazette Volume 6, Number 2 was only released in digital format. If you missed the articles on the Civil War Sesquicentennial, Exotic Plant Removal, Fredrick Notrebe, and the winners of last years Digital Photo Contest, be sure to visit <http://www.nps.gov/arpo/parknews/newspaper.htm> and look under archives. These previous issues are available for download as Adobe PDF.



Comings and Goings



Bobby Fitzpatrick. NPS Photo by Ed Wood

Bobby Fitzpatrick Retires

At 78 years old, Bobby has been a hardworking member of the Maintenance staff since 1994. Bobby was a Sergeant First Class in the US Army and a Vietnam Veteran. He has two children, two grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. Bobby will stay in DeWitt.

“Bobby brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Maintenance team at Arkansas Post, and he will be sorely missed.” David Evans, Facility Manager.

We all wish him the best in his well earned retirement.



Christian Spratt, Joseph Harris, Tyruis Luster, Dabratia Clark, Taylor Bradford, and Kara Jones.

NPS Photo by Joe Herron

Summer Employees 2011

The Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) formed in 1970 to provide educational and team building skills to young adults from different social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. More information is available at <http://www.nps.gov/gettinginvolved/youthprograms/ycc.htm>



STEP Employees - Interpretation and Teacher-Ranger -Teacher) Left - Cornelius Williams (University of Arkansas Pine Bluff), Lindsay Robinson Beaton (Teacher, DeWitt Elementary School) Jake McAdams - (Stephen F. Austin University) NPS Photo by Joe Herron

The **Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)** allows college students to gain field experience in National Parks while completing a degree.

Thank you to all of the student employees for a memorable summer!
Have a great school year!

-ARPO Staff



STEP Employees in Resource Management: Travis Franks (University of Arkansas Monticello), Kirby McCallie (University of Arkansas Monticello), Cece Kolesar (University of Arkansas Pine Bluff), Trey Franks (University of Arkansas Monticello) NPS Photo by Joe Herron

The Trail of Tears and Arkansas Post

by Jake McAdams, Seasonal Park Guide (STEP)

The River Route

In 1830, President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act, forcing the relocation of the five “civilized” Indian tribes (Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, and Seminole) from their native homelands in the east to Indian Territory. Arkansas Post became a crucial leg of the relocation journey for the Indians that traveled the water route along the Mississippi, White, and Arkansas Rivers. Beginning with the Choctaw in 1831, the reluctant migrants traveled up the Arkansas River en route to Little Rock, passing Arkansas Post on their journey. During the 1830s relocations, at least one contingency of each of the five tribes traveled through Arkansas Post following this water route.

During the various Indian removals, contingencies traveled to Memphis, TN or Vicksburg, MS on the first leg of their exodus and boarded steam boats which took the Indians, their Army escorts, and provisions along the Mississippi. Depending upon the route, the steam boats would travel along the Mississippi and directly enter the mouth of the Arkansas and proceed upstream to Little Rock. Other contingencies chose to travel over land from Memphis to the White River and then follow it down stream on steam boats and enter the Arkansas at Montgomery’s Point, located approximately sixteen miles below Arkansas Post.

Several traveling bands feared steam boat travel and opted to make the long journey to Indian Territory by land. Groups choosing this option traveled from Memphis or Vicksburg across countless swamps and smaller tributaries throughout Arkansas until they reached Little Rock, usually two weeks later than those following the water route.

Wintering at Arkansas Post

One unlucky band of Choctaw wintered at Arkansas Post in 1831. After the Indians had been forced to leave most of their livestock and possessions in their homes in Mississippi, the group was shuttled to Memphis in Army wagons. Unusually heavy rains delayed their departure from Memphis, and the Choctaw faced starvation even before crossing the Mississippi River. After the two week departure delay, the 2,000 Choctaw in Memphis were loaded on board the steam boats *Walter Scott* and *Reindeer* and transported down the Mississippi River and onto the Arkansas River. Once the party reached Arkansas Post, the Army informed the Indians that the steamboats were needed to transport more soldiers to Fort Smith, Arkansas and they must disembark at the Post. During the Choctaw’s unscheduled lay-over at Arkansas Post, a blizzard blew through the area and the small garrison struggled to house the Indians in 60 tents. As the garrison’s food supply depleted, soldiers and Indians were forced to survive in subfreezing temperatures on a diet of a “handful of parched corn, one turnip, and two cups of heated water” per day. After eight days of enduring the icy conditions at the Post, the Army sent a fleet of wagons to transport them to Little Rock.



For further information:

“Sequoyah Research Center: American Native Press Archives.” University of Arkansas at Little Rock. <http://anpa.ualr.edu/default.htm>.

“Arkansas Trail of Tears.” Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. <http://www.arkansasheritagetrails.com/Tears/>.

Green, Len. *Choctaw Removal Was Really a “Trail of Tears.”* Choctaw Nation, 2010.

<http://www.choctawnation.com/history/choctaw-nation-history/trail-of-tears/>.

The National Park Service and Cherokee Nation teamed up to create a 22 minute educational film about the Trail of Tears National Trail. This film can be shown at the park Visitor Center or for classrooms by special requests. Contact Joe Herron (870-548-2207) if you are interested viewing the Trail of Tears video.



Louisiana Indians Walking Along the Bayou by Alfred Boisseau

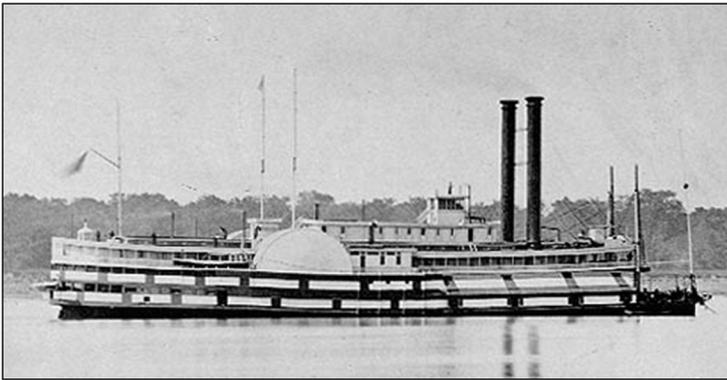
Union Navy at Arkansas Post: Part 1

by Joe Herron, Park Ranger and

Eric Leonard, currently Chief of Interpretation at Andersonville National Historic Site



Something that surprises many visitors to the Post today is the colossal size of the Union force that attacked Fort Hindman in January 1863. With over 32,000 men, dozens of transport ships, and eight heavily armed gunboats, General Ulysses Grant angrily remarked that General John McClernand had taken “Caesar’s half” of the Western Army in the wilderness. Although well positioned, Fort Hindman and its approximately 5,000 defenders stood little chance to such overwhelming odds. Fort Hindman briefly held the gunboats back on the evening of January 9, but the next day the gunboats completely silenced Fort Hindman’s artillery. Union casualties could have been much higher if it were not for the large navel force and their destruction of Fort Hindman’s large guns. The following are two of the large ships that played a role in the naval attack.



USS Black Hawk

This 902 ton side-wheeler was originally a civilian steamboat named the *New Uncle Sam*. Built in New Albany, Indiana, she was purchased by the Navy after the war began. After being fabricated into a “Tinclad”, she was commissioned and renamed *Black Hawk*. The tinclad ships were quicker than the heavy ironclads. This large ship became the flagship of the Mississippi Squadron under Rear Admiral David D. Porter.

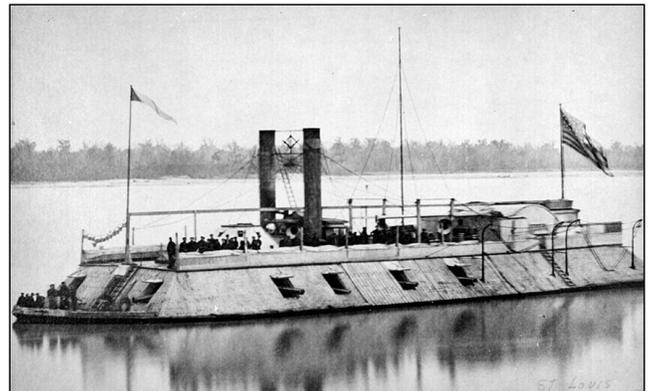
The decision to attack Fort Hindman and plans on how to

attack were made aboard the *Black Hawk* by General McClernand, General Sherman, and Admiral Porter while on port at Milliken’s Bend on January 3. During the battle, Admiral Porter directed the attack from a tugboat named the *Ivy*. The *Black Hawk* was heavily engaged, firing shrapnel and light rifled shell at Fort Hindman. During the heat of the naval battle, the gunboats reportedly moved within 60 yards of the Fort. With the fort unable to mount a defense, the gunboats were able to lay heavy artillery fire on the Confederate line.

The *Black Hawk* participated in most of the major western rivers operations during the remainder of the Civil War including Vicksburg and the Red River campaign in 1864. On April 22, 1865, *Black Hawk* accidentally burned and sank near Cairo, Illinois. Her wreck was salvaged and sold in 1867.

USS Baron De Kalb

Originally called the *USS Saint Louis*, this 512 ton City Class Ironclad was commissioned in January 1862. Taking part in several battles, the *Saint Louis* was badly hit and disabled by Confederate cannon fire at Fort Donelson. The *St. Louis* took part in campaigns along the Mississippi in May and on the White River in June. She was renamed the *Baron De Kalb* when transferred to the Western Gunboat Flotilla in September.



At Arkansas Post, the *Baron De Kalb* was one of three ironclads

involved and the first to attack the Fort. On the first evening of the attack, the ironclads did not fire until reaching within 400 yards of the Fort. After two hours of fighting in the dark, the *Baron De Kalb* had seventeen casualties. The next day, the ship was heavily involved with finishing Fort Hindman and then firing on the Confederate line.

On 13 July 1863, during an expedition on the Yazoo River, the *Baron De Kalb* was sunk by a Confederate mine.

Next Issue - *USS Cincinnati* and *USS Rattler*

Program Recap: Summer 2011

Even before summer officially began, the park hosted a Civil War Encampment with visiting authors Terry M. and Margaret Ann Chatfield McCarty in May. They signed copies of their book “The Chatfield Story”. The diaries and letter of Private McCarty were passed down to Margaret Ann who published his stories with her husband. They shared a program on how they put together the biography. Dyan Bohnert presented the Civil War Medicine Woman and reenactors from the region shared the history of 1863 Arkansas. Another pair of reenactors, Ron and Linda Tankersley, drove from Texas to take part in the camp. Ron also had ancestors in the Battle of Arkansas Post.

The Youth Fishing Derby kicked off summer for Arkansas Post. Over 40 kids took place in the 2011 Derby. Makayla Gilbreth caught the largest fish at one pound, fourteen ounces and Spencer Hutchins won the “best three” category with three fish weighing in at five pounds, two ounces.

Colonial Kids Day was also well

attended with a both small arms and cannon demonstrations. Kids also learned about the chores and games that kids in eighteenth century Arkansas would have participated in.

Another kids program studied the Civil War in the Delta. They learned about letter writing and journals. There was also a walk to the rifle pits and Jake McAdams shared a living history program from an Illinois soldier who fought at the battle.



Left - Cornelius William shows how to make butter at Colonial Kids Day (NPS Photo by Lindsay Robinson Beaton)



Right - Dyan Bohnert hands Superintendent Ed Wood the money raised in March for the Parks. Back row includes Marsha Hein, Jane Hubsch, Phyllis Fullerton, Julie Simpson, and Joe Herron (NPS Photo by Jason Allely)

Summer also included two Digital Photography Workshops and a day of programs on birds and mammals.

The trailblazers program was well attended this year with eight participants earning the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award.

Dyan Bohnert helped revive the March for the Parks with raised over \$1,100 for the Civil War Exhibit room at the visitor center.

Calendar of Events Fall - Winter 2011

October 22 - The 17th Annual Ghosts of the Past - Join park staff and volunteers for the annual guided walk through Arkansas History. Living History demonstrations will portray events from the exploration and settlement of Arkansas Post, Colbert’s Raid, and the Civil War. One hour tours will start every fifteen minutes starting at 6 PM. The last tour will depart at 8:30 PM; Reservations are strongly recommended and can be made by calling the park at 870-548-2207.

November 12 – The Fall Bayou Float – When rivers were the highways of the old world, the Quapaw and early Europeans used canoes to travel the Bayous around Arkansas Post. This float will travel from Moore’s Bayou to Post Bayou on the Arkansas Post Water Trail (if weather and vegetation permit). Please wear seasonally appropriate clothing. If you cannot bring your own canoe or kayak, some seats may be available. The program is free, but registration is required.

Call Joe Herron for more information 870-548-2207.

December 10 – Open House – In partnership with the Arkansas Post State Park Museum, the park will hold an open house starting at 1 PM. This year, the park commemorates 325 years of Arkansas Post. A Ranger program, “Rivers and Bayous: Superhighways of the Old World” will be presented in the park theater at 1:30 and 2:30.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arkansas Post National Memorial
1741 Old Post Road
Gillett, AR 72055

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Arkansas Post National Memorial commemorates the earliest European settlement in the Lower Mississippi valley. First established in 1686, the Post was an important staging point for Mississippi River trade between New France and the Gulf of Mexico. Situated along the Arkansas River, the small settlement here blossomed into the first capital of the Arkansas Territory. It was the site of a small Revolutionary War skirmish as well as a two-day Civil War Battle.

Arkansas Post National Memorial
1741 Old Post Road
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Phone
870 548-2207

E-mail
arpo_historian@nps.gov

Internet
www.nps.gov/arpo

Visitor Center Hours
Daily 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Grounds and Picnic Area Hours
Daily 8:00 a.m. to dusk

The Arkansas Post Gazette
Edited by Joe Herron



The Sobinovskiy Family from West Virginia finishing the Junior Ranger program. For the twins, Arkansas Post is number 203. The oldest girl has 259 badges.

NPS Photo by Lindsay Robinson Beaton

Next Issue - Winter

Featuring articles on:

-March for the Parks

-Recycling Trailer: Year One Update

-2011 Digital Photography Contest Winners

-Union Navy at Arkansas Post Part 2

-Superintendent's Scribblings

And More