

Arkansas Post National Memorial

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

Signature Sheet

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General Statement:

Arkansas Post National Memorial commemorates the first settlement in the lower Mississippi Valley. Originally established by the French as a fur-trading post in 1686, it became a minor military garrison. The location was shifted many times due to the vagaries of the Arkansas River and changes in ownership. By 1752 the Post was established within present Park boundaries, and except for a short time in the early Spanish period, stayed here. When control passed to the United States in 1803, Arkansas Post was the major settlement in this area, and was the territorial capitol from 1819-1821. After the capitol moved to Little Rock in 1821, the Post continued as a river port and trade center until its demise during the Civil War.

I. Arkansas Post is rediscovered

Well into the 20th century, Arkansas Post was a somnolent hamlet of about 100 people, surrounded by farm land, centering around Henry Jones' store, just to the north of the historic area.

The first stirring of interest in a memorial park was shown by Mrs. G. G. Lewis of Stuttgart, president of the Arkansas Authors' and Composers' Society. At a district organization meeting held in her home in November 1923, she proposed that some sort of memorial be placed at the site.

Nothing more was done until columnist Fletcher Chenault published an article on November 11, 1926, in the Arkansas Gazette. He had been impressed by the importance of the site, but distressed by what he found. Scattered amongst the briers and old fields he found mounds of broken bricks and some scattered brick, all that marked the former village. He found a cistern and deep well, both lined with brick. The only memorial he found was a stone tablet erected by the Pine Bluff Chamber of Commerce to mark the site of the first territorial capitol. Further, most of the rifle pits and trenches dug during the Civil War had been leveled by Postmaster L. S. Jones to enlarge his garden.

Chenault then proposed that since the United States government had held title since 1819 to a 147 acre reservation at the site, this land should be deeded to the state as a state park. Some of this reservation had eroded away, but a triangular tract of high ground remained. This tract was the land suggested for the park.

II. Arkansas Post State Park - 1929-1964

State Representative Ballard Deane took charge in 1929, introducing a bill to establish an Arkansas State Park Commission to accept land, money and other articles of value to establish and maintain an historic and recreational area for Arkansas and out-of-state visitors. The bill was passed and signed into law by Governor Harvey Parnell on February 27, 1929.

A 12-man commission, headed by Mr. J. W. Burnett, was duly appointed. After legal clearance of Mr. F. J. Quandt's claim to 40 acres in the historic area, he deeded 20 acres located in the northwestern corner of the reservation to the Commission for a compensation of one dollar. This was done with due ceremony on June 17, 1930.

No funds had been appropriated by the Act of 1929. The Commission prevailed upon Representative Deane to get some money. He did so, and a bill appropriating \$5000 to beautify Arkansas Post State Park was passed on February 20, 1931. Mr. P. C. Howson, a landscape architect, was contacted to take over the work. Work was begun in early March by Red Cross relief recipients. Plans were made. Two tracts of land were acquired, increasing the size to 40 acres. A fence was built to enclose the park. A care-takers lodge was constructed from the remains of the Refeld-Hindman House. The lodge became known as the Quandt House. The cistern and well were restored, and a shelter built over them. A picnic area was built around the ravine. The ravine itself was dammed, and a pond covering seven acres formed. The grounds around the lake were landscaped, and the Statue of Justice, which had been on top of the popula of the old Arkansas County Courthouse in DeWitt was placed on a pedestal by the lake. A road was planned, and partially built. All this work was done between March and November, 1931, when the original \$5000 had run out.

For three years, late 1931 to early 1935, the Commission struggled to get funds. Plans for 10 projects were laid out for 1932. But no funds could be appropriated. The depression was at its height, and no state or private donations were forthcoming. The Commission asked the Arkansas State Park Commission, who might be able to obtain federal funds, to take over the project. The Park Commission agreed and the Arkansas Post State Park Commission passed out of existence on January 23, 1935.

The administration of Arkansas Post under the Arkansas State Park Commission is quite shadowy, as no records have been found. The earliest superintendent after 1935 was a Mr. Herndon, who ran the Post between September 1939 to August 1941, followed by George Mason from 1941 to 1945, Wiley Perritt from 1945 to 1948, George Minshew from 1948 to 1954, Roscoe Poore from July 1954 to August 1959 and finally,

Ovie Bradford from August 1959 until the National Park Service took over on June 23, 1964, with Mr. Bernard Campbell, Superintendent of Hot Springs National Park, in charge.

By 1940 the area had grown to 62 acres and some improvements had been made utilizing Works Progress Administration labor. The caretaker's lodge and the picnic area, started in 1931, were completed. Four overnight cabins were built of logs. But as a whole, little was done. Arkansas Post was at the end of a poor gravel road with the Arkansas River nibbling at the point. There were no bridges across the Arkansas southeast of Pine Bluff and none on the White south of Clarendon. There were ferries at Pendleton and St. Charles, closed at high water.

The period 1941 to 1945 was a hiatus in all park works throughout the country. World War II took all available resources. The end of World War II did not bring a flow of funds. Despite the war-generated prosperity elsewhere, Arkansas was still an impoverished agricultural state, with more pressing problems to take care of. Under the administration of Governor Sid McMath, the road system was upgraded, and by the mid-1950's, State Route 169 ran into the park from Route 1.

By 1964, some additions had been made. The loop road around the pond had been made passable. The log cabins, although lacking sanitary facilities, were still in existence, as was the Quandt House although it no longer functioned as a caretaker's lodge. It now housed the Arkansas County Museum. Six outhouses were scattered throughout the park. A house trailer, with a septic tank installed, had been placed for the convenience of the superintendent. Further, a toolshed, a maintenance garage, a pump house able to double as a storm shelter, and culverts were built by 1957. A hangman's gallows, an exhibit, was done in 1960, and a well and sprinkler system and pump installed in 1961.

But Arkansas Post State Park, even with vigorous local support, still was just barely alive. The only logical alternative was the federal government.

III. Interest in Federal administration, 1956-1964

By the middle 1950's, it was evident that state and local support, while energetic, just did not have the means to establish a viable park. In 1956, the Congress, spurred by Congressman W. F. Norrell and Senator J. William Fulbright, appropriated \$32,000 to investigate the potential of the area as a National Historic Site. Next year, a second appropriation called for \$15,000 to complete the work. Extensive historical research by Mr. Ray T. Mattison in 1957 and archeological research by Mr. Preston Holder in 1956 and 1958 and by Mr. James A. Ford and Mr. Robert N. Neitzel in 1958, indicated the area failed to meet the essential requirement of association with a significant event and the National Park Service rejected Arkansas Post as not worthy of national status. However, the Arkansas Congressional delegation was not satisfied and continued to push for recognition. The National Park Service then suggested that Congress establish Arkansas Post as a National Memorial to commemorate events in the exploration and settlement of the Mississippi Valley. Following approval of this idea by the Advisory Board, Congressman Norrell introduced a bill on March 26, 1959 to establish Arkansas Post National Memorial. The bill was passed on July 6, 1960 as Public Law 86-595 (74 Stat. 334). A limitation of \$125,000 was placed on funds for acquisition and development.

The first Master Plan envisaged a Park of 740 acres. Before the land was deeded over to the National Park Service, 519.4 acres was removed due to the eminence of this large area being flooded by the Arkansas River Navigation System Dam 2. On May 25, 1964, valid title to 220.6 acres was deeded to the United States government from the Arkansas State Park Commission. The deed was filed and recorded on December 4, 1964 and final title approval given on March 26, 1965. Proprietary jurisdiction over the area was given to the United States government and the government's agency, the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior.

Another 91 acres below 162 feet elevation were still owned by the Arkansas State Parks Commission adjacent to the Park, upon which a perpetual flowage easement had been deeded to the United States Army Corps of Engineers on October 6, 1964. This area was examined and all but seven acres in the far northwest corner were found to be within the legal limits of the Park boundaries. These 84 acres were then deeded to the United States government and the National Park Service on July 28, 1969 and recorded July 30, 1969. The flowage easement of the Corps of Engineers was left in effect. The current acreage of the Park is 304.6 acres.

IV. Arkansas Post National Memorial, 1964-1975

Arkansas Post National Memorial, despite a short lifespan, has had a rather varied administration. From June 23, 1964, when the Park Service took over, until June 26, 1972, it was an outlying district of Hot Springs National Park, Mr. Bernard M. Campbell, Superintendent. The last State Park Superintendent, Mr. Ovie Bradford, stayed on until the Management Assistant, Mr. T. Reid Cabe, was assigned and arrived on September 28, 1964. Mr. Cabe was Management Assistant until May 5, 1967. Mr. Frank Hastings succeeded him and arrived on May 21, 1967. Due to a reorganization of the National Park Service on January 1, 1972, Hot Springs National Park (and consequently, Arkansas Post National Memorial) was transferred from the Southeast Region to the Southwest Region of the National Park Service. Mr. Hastings was reassigned on June 26, 1972. At that time, Arkansas Post National Memorial was removed from the jurisdiction of Hot Springs National Park and the present superintendent, Mr. D. L. Huggins, was appointed.

Personnel were quite limited. With some temporary laborers, Mr. Cabe was alone for the first six months. Park Ranger Paul Rowe was assigned April 4, 1965 and stayed through the summer. Mr. Paul A. Hout was appointed Historian on June 16, 1966 and remained until March 11, 1968. At this point, the Park Ranger (Historian) position was changed to two Seasonal Park Rangers who worked full-time in the summer and weekends during the winter. One was filled by Mr. Billy C. Davis who has continued as a Seasonal Park Technician to the present. The second was filled by a Mr. Henry who was employed until August 2, 1970. His position was then filled by Mr. B. G. Bland who continued until the position was abolished on May 26, 1973. A Park Technician position was created and filled by Mr. Larry D. Widdifield on October 19, 1971; until his transfer on November 10, 1973. This position was converted to a Laborer position and filled by Mr. Dennis Larry on March 11, 1974.

An Interpretive Specialist (Historian) split position (April through October at Arkansas Post National Memorial and November through March at Hot Springs National Park) was created and filled on May 14, 1972 by Mr. Donald B. Fladmark. This position became permanent at Arkansas Post with the separation of Arkansas Post and Hot Springs in June of 1972. Mr. Fladmark was transferred on February 3, 1974. The position was then filled by Mr. Gregorio S. A. Carrera on June 23, 1974. Mr. Carrera is the present incumbent.

A part-time Clerk-Typist position was set up in 1968 and occupied successively by Ms. Sandra Brantham, Ms. Sharyl Lehmann and Mrs. Carol Zirbel. In September 1971 this became a permanent Administrative Clerk position, filled and still occupied by Mrs. Zirbel.

A Park Maintenance position was created and filled by the present incumbent, Mr. S. W. Irby on October 25, 1965. Mr. Irby had worked through the summer of 1965 as a laborer. Over the years, the number of laborers has varied, from none in the winter to five in the summer. Several times two or three worked on Saturdays during the winter season. These positions were variously classified as laborers, summer or student aids, and GS-3 Park Rangers. In addition, Seasonals Davis, Henry and Bland, and Park Technician Widdifield often worked in maintenance. Further, each summer since 1971 we have employed a number of Neighborhood Youth Corps personnel: 6 in 1971, 1972 and 1973 and 10 in 1974, each working 32 hours weekly, and 6 working 40 hours weekly in 1975.

Of necessity, much of Mr. Cabe's activity for the first few months of his tenure was of a protection and public relations nature. The local residents had to be apprised of the new regulations now that the area was under federal management regarding hunting, metal detecting, and special items such as cutting Christmas trees and misteltoe. Further, he had to constantly be alert to the activities of the Corps of Engineers contractor who was working below the 162-feet-above-sea-level line, clearing the brush and burning it, to prevent fires from spreading onto park lands.

There were a number of structures in the Park that required removal. Several buildings, including the Jones and Ina Hudson Houses, were removed on July 22 and 23, 1965, to Gillett by Reverend Charles Poe to be used for church services. The so-called "Lady of the Lake" statue was removed on January 20, 1966 and returned to DeWitt under the supervision of her new custodian, Mrs. Charles M. Wright of DeWitt. The old gallows was removed to DeWitt by the Arkansas County maintenance crew in February 1966. The Quandt House, also known as the Refeld-Hindman, built as a caretakers house in 1931, housed the Arkansas County Museum. The museum moved to their new location on March 14, 1966. Immediately, the National Park Service began to use the Quandt House as a temporary Visitor Center. In August 1967, a new Visitor Center was ready and the house was donated to the Arkansas County Museum with the understanding they would move it at no cost to the Park Service. The building was moved on October 26, 1967, to its present site. The last buildings, a frame oil house and a log tool shed, were removed by County Judge John Peterson on December 6, 1967. The last intrusion, the shed covering the cistern, was removed in 1972.

When the National Park Service took over administration, entrance to the Park was by Arkansas State Route 169 which ran directly to the Quandt House on the Park pond. Under a contract awarded by the State Highway Department to Eugene Luhr and Co. of Gould, the highway was rerouted north of the Park. Work began in September 1965 and the road was opened to traffic on June 30, 1966.

At the same time, the Corps of Engineers had constructed an access road running down the west side of the point to bring heavy equipment in to work on the stabilization project on the point. With the closing of the gates on Dam #2 and the filling of the pool on April 1 and 2, 1968, the road was abandoned and obliterated by the Corps.

By mid-1965 it was evident that the statutory limit of \$125,000 for park development would be exceeded by the end of Fiscal Year 1966. Due to the redistricting caused by the Census of 1960, Arkansas County was now in the Second Congressional District of Congressman Wilbur Mills, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. He was aware of the situation and consequently introduced a bill to raise the ceiling on development by \$425,000 to \$550,000. The bill was passed and signed into law on August 11, 1966, as Public Law 89-530 (80 Stat. 339).

A plan for development of the Memorial was necessary. A draft Master Plan was prepared in 1961, revised in 1963, and revised again in 1964. This interim Master Plan of 1964, along with various Management Objectives under more or less constant revision, were the primary development documents in the early years. It was then determined to draw up a Master Plan, Interpretive Prospectus and Development Concept Plan for the area. In a planning directive from the Eastern Service Center dated August 24, 1970, a team was to be sent to the area to develop these plans. The team members for the Master Plan and Development Plan were Team Captain James C. Killian, Landscape Architect Robert Silverman, Historian Edwin C. Bearss, and Landscape Architect Donald M. Fox, of the Eastern Service Center. Representing the area were Superintendent Bernard T. Campbell and Management Assistant Frank Hastings. The team for the Interpretive Prospectus were the same, except Mr. Silverman was the team captain and Mr. Killian a planner. A field trip was conducted September 28 through October 2, 1970. The Interpretive Prospectus and Development Concept Plan were prepared and approved by the Southeast Regional Director on April 12, 1971. The Master Plan was prepared about the same time. It was then put before the public in a hearing held in Gillett on July 22, 1971, where it was approved. It was printed in 1973, and except for corrections of minor errors, is the document in use today, along with the Interpretive Prospectus and Developmental Concept Plan.

Utilities, roads and other facilities and housing were in a rudimentary stage in 1964. A pump house had been built in 1957, and a well and sprinkler system installed in 1961 under state administration. The sewage disposal system consisted of 6 outhouses scattered at random through the area, and a septic tank for the caretaker's trailer. The road system consisted of the loop around the pond, tying into Route 169 near the Quandt House. A gravel route ran along the site of the present entrance road towards the Scull Cemetery.

A small well was drilled in July 1965 by Layne-Arkansas of Stuttgart for \$6,950. The well was tested for yield and drawdown on August 30, 1965, and was found suitable for conditions at the time. A second trailer was placed in early 1966 and a second septic tank installed to be used by the Park Ranger.

In July 1967 an underground electric system consisting of 166 feet of 4-inch galvanized steel conduit was installed at the cost of \$974.40, and an underground telephone system of 30 feet of 2-inch galvanized steel conduit was also installed, costing \$121.80, both being put in place by N.M. Graves and Son, as portions of Contract No. 14-10-0131-1628.

A major construction project was completed in July 1967, consisting of a building designated as Building No. 1, designed as a maintenance garage, but to double as a Visitor Center for the indefinite future. This building was frame, single-story, 1,107 square feet, electric central heat and air-conditioning, with a 192.5 square feet of office space, 33 square feet for storage, a rest room and a small hallway, costing \$17,820.46. Also constructed was a structure designated as Residence Building No. 7, a frame, single-story, 1,280 square feet, with central electric heat and air-conditioning, consisting of three bedrooms, one and one-half baths, with carport, costing \$20,632.40. Both were part of Contract No. 41-1-10-128-1, C. J. Sutton Construction Company, contractor. Both were tied into the electric and telephone systems installed earlier.

Under this same contract and by the same contractor, a bacterial treatment sewage lagoon was constructed, enclosed by a chain-link fence, and served by two pressure pumps and 400 feet of pipe, with an annual consumption of 75,000 gallons. This portion was completed on March 29, 1968, at a cost of \$8,236. To insure an adequate water supply for the two new buildings, the contract included a test well and 369 foot deep well with 750 thousand gallons of annual consumption with a pump and pressure tank, 250 feet of pipe and connections to the new buildings, costing \$10,219.02. This system was completed March 29, 1968.

In 1971, under Contract No. 14-10-1:990-573, work was begun by C. J. Sutton Construction Company in the new picnic area. A comfort station was constructed, costing \$16,847.84, including water and electrical connections, completed on October 15, 1971. A sewer connection consisting of a sewage pumping station, 15 feet of 6-inch PVC pipe and 2,215 feet of 4-inch PVC pipe, costing \$16,526.46, was also completed on October 15, 1971. An additional portion of this contract consisted of constructing the picnic area itself, including setting up 15 fireplaces and 25 picnic tables, costing \$4,344.20, was completed on October 15, 1971

The road system was first modified in 1967 after the opening of new Route 169 in 1966. The contract, a portion of Contract No. 14-10-0131-1628 let to N. M. Graves and Son, consisted of an entrance road .19 miles long, from the entrance to the Park to the parking lot, including the .07 mile parking lot, finished by July 7, 1956, costing \$15,480.73. The entrance road then was extended down the existing road surfaced with asphalt under Contract No. 1410-1-970-865 by L and N Asphalt Company, completed October 16, 1972, costing \$38,314.25. The total cost for the entrance road, from the Park boundary to the junction, a distance of .64 miles, was \$53,794.98.

While under state administration, a loop road had been built around the pond. State Highway 169 intersected it at the northwest side of the pond after crossing Post Bayou on a causeway and then coming down a more or less natural swale in the hillside. When new Highway 169 was opened north of the Park, the old causeway was abandoned, but the old road remained. With the new picnic area and comfort station being built in the far northwest corner of the park, this old road could be used as an entry. Such was part of Contract No. 14-10-1:990-573 with C. J. Sutton Construction Company, to use this portion of the old highway, curve to the west around the crest of the hill to the picnic area loop, resurfacing the whole as they went. This portion of the contract was completed on October 15, 1971, .62 miles long, and costing \$31,404.00.

The Picnic Area Road, however, cut through the Civil War trenches. It was decided to use this road as a dividing line between the historical and recreational zones of the Park, necessitating relocation of approximately 2/3 of this road towards the northeast, outside the former trenchlines. The new road joins the entrance road just south of the Visitor Center and cuts through the woods rejoining the old Picnic Area road at the curve. The old road through the trench line and down to the junction was obliterated and seeded. The road obliterated is .40 miles in length, the new road is .34 miles in length including three culverts and ditching. The job began on July 21, 1975, under Contract No. CX 7000-5-9002 with HCC-Harper (Joint Venture) in the amount of \$94,408. This job was completed on December 5, 1975. The road to the Picnic Area totals .58 miles.

The surfaced roads may be summarized as follows: Entrance Road, .64 miles and .07 miles parking lot; Picnic Area Road, .58 miles and the one road built under state administration, the Historic Loop Road, .68 miles.

Two secondary roads were built by N. M. Graves and Son by July 7, 1967 as part of Contract No. 14-10-0131-1628, at a total cost of \$13,421.03. These were a residence road, 18 feet wide, .04 miles long with a .01 mile parking area, and a maintenance road, 12 feet wide, .03 miles long with .10 mile parking area.

Two sidewalks were also built. One, leading from the parking area to the Visitor Center, was completed by July 7, 1967. The work was .03 miles of concrete, 6 feet wide, costing \$464.00, was part of Contract No. 14-10-0131-1628 with N. M. Graves and Son. The second sidewalk, built as part of Contract No. 41-1-10-128-1 with C. J. Sutton Construction Co., consisted of two parts, one leading from the maintenance parking area to the Visitor Center, and the other from the residence to the driveway, totaling .023 miles, 5 feet wide, bituminous-treated surface, completed March 29, 1968, costing \$348.00.

N. M. Graves and Son, as another portion of Contract No. 41-10-0131-1628, also constructed an interpretive loop trail from the Historic Loop Road and ending near the dam, completed by May 23, 1967. This trail was .24 miles long, 5 feet wide with a bituminous surface, costing \$3,204.05.

Finally, N. M. Graves and Son, as part of their Contract No. 14-10-0131-1628, did some landscaping, including seeding and fertilizing after the road and trail construction, completed by July 7, 1967, totaling \$2,596.08. C. J. Sutton Construction Company, as part of their Contract No. 41-1-10-128-1, did some seeding, dressing and planting 20 specimen trees and shrubs to landscape the area around the Visitor Center and residence, completed by March 29, 1968, costing \$2,525.32. The cost of the landscaping of the Picnic Area Loop and road, done by C. J. Sutton Construction Company under Contract No. 14-10-1:990-573, was included in the total price for the picnic area and the road.

Thus, a summary of construction projects would list 6 major projects. First, in 1965, with Layne-Arkansas to drill a small well, cost \$6,950. The second, Contract No. 14-10-0131-1628, with N. M. Graves and Son, concerned underground electric and telephone conduits, entrance road, two secondary roads, a sidewalk, an interpretive loop and landscaping, was mostly completed by July 7, 1967, and cost \$36,262.09. A third, Contract No. 14-1-10-128-1, with C. J. Sutton Construction Co., concerned construction of a residence and Visitor Center, a sewer system, a water supply, a sidewalk, and landscaping around the new buildings. This contract was completed by March 29, 1968, at a cost of \$59,781.20. The fourth, Contract No. 14-10-1:990-573, also with C. J. Sutton Construction Company, consisting of a picnic area loop with comfort station and attachments to utilities, road construction to the picnic area and landscaping of the picnic area, was completed by October 15, 1971, costing \$68,122.50. The fifth contract, Contract No. 1410-1-970-865 with L and N Asphalt Company, completed October 16, 1972, consisting of resurfacing the entrance road, cost \$38,314.25. The last, Contract No. CX 7000-5-9002, relocation of part of the Picnic Area Road and obliteration and reseeding the part relocated, with HCC-Harper (Joint Venture), cost \$94,408.

By 1971, with the addition of new personnel to bring the park up to minimum staffing standards, it was obvious the small room in the Visitor Center could not hold five people, plus administrative records, supplies, etc. The space could barely hold the personnel already in residence. From the General Services Administration, a house trailer was acquired on November 29, 1971, with a value of \$4,070, from Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, with a cost to the park only of moving costs and putting in place across the maintenance parking lot from the Visitor Center.

The major interpretive theme has remained the same throughout the existence of the area: two hundred years of European settlement of the lower Mississippi Valley and the expansion of the United States.

The first thoughts in 1961 envisioned focusing on the period 1686 to 1821, emphasizing the French period, ignoring developments after the capitol moved to Little Rock. As investigations went on, this idea was shown to be erroneous. Arkansas Post under French, Spanish and American rule was important until 1863 during the Civil War. Arkansas Post had also moved at least 10 times since the establishment of the first Post in 1686, and the first time an establishment was placed on the site of the present park was in 1752. First the French then the Spanish tried to attain two mutually exclusive objectives: be near the Mississippi River and avoid the almost annual spring and early summer floods. The present park, although 30 miles from the Mississippi, was above all but the most extreme high water marks.

The on-site remains were all from the American period and almost all after 1821. Further, the early idea almost totally ignored the original inhabitants, the Indians. And further, the sites of all the Arkansas Posts, including the ones in the immediate vicinity of the Park, had either been washed away by the shifting course of the river, or lost in the marshy bottomlands of the White, Arkansas, or Mississippi Rivers.

The key to this impasse was seen to be in the title of the park, Arkansas Post National Memorial. The ideas in 1975 point to memorializing the two hundred year struggle to subdue to wilderness and establish the American nation, from 1686 to 1863, with equal emphasis on the Indians, the European movement across the Mississippi and the American period, ending with the demise of Arkansas Post in the Civil War, pointing out the reasons for its demise. Included in this story will be the tremendous influence the Arkansas River has had, first in the establishment of Arkansas Post, and then its direct influence on the demise of the village.

The interpretive program at Arkansas Post has suffered from covering a large period of time with a virtual void of structural remains except

subsurface remains and the extremely fragmented nature of documentary remains. The period documents from 1686 to 1803 are in archives in Paris and Madrid, and much of early Arkansas historical documentation was lost or destroyed during the Civil War. However, nine studies of the area, five historical and four archeological, have been prepared. Four of the historical reports have been published by the National Park Service, although not for public distribution. The four studies published were done by Historian Edwin C. Bearss: Structural History of Post of Arkansas, American Period, 1804-1863; Montgomery's Tavern and Johnston and Armstrong Store; The Colbert Raid and, in conjunction with Historian Lenard E. Brown, Structural History, Post of Arkansas, 1804-1863 and Civil War Troop Movement Maps, January, 1863. A study by Historian Ray H. Mattison, "Report on the Historical Investigations of Arkansas Post, Arkansas," was produced in 1957 prior to the establishment of the park to investigate park potential. Of the four archeological studies, two were produced in 1957 and 1958 to investigate park potential and to identify sites of Arkansas Post and to identify de Tonti's post: Preston Holder, "Archeological Field Research on the Problem of the Locations of Arkansas Post, 1686-1803, A Preliminary Report on Work in Progress at the Menard Mounds Site, Field Season, Fall 1956 - Spring 1957" and James A Ford and Robert N. Neitzel, "Excavations at the Menard Site, Arkansas County, Arkansas, 1958." Two others were done by National Park Service personnel in the 1960's: Archeologist Rex E. Wilson, "Archeological Explorations at Arkansas Post - 1966" and Archeologist John W. Walker, "Excavation of the Arkansas Post Branch of the Bank of the State of Arkansas." One other study on Montgomery's Tavern, done in 1971 under contract by the University of Arkansas has not been completed.

The development of an interpretive program is at most tentative until the proposed Visitor Center, to be built on the shores of the park lake, and a wayside trail through the village site, are completed. Plans are now being drawn up by Comprehensive Professional Services, Little Rock, AR, with input by Harpers Ferry Center, Denver Service Center, Southwest Regional Office and the Park. Until then, the program is geared to verbal and descriptive signing, with a audio-visual presentation and five exhibits in the Visitor Center.

When the National Park Service came in (in 1964), there were a number of signs installed by the Arkansas History Commission and one installed by the Arkansas Civil War Centennial Commission. These were found to be limited in context and the language too obscure, and were therefore removed. Eight interpretive signs, one-inch green letters with black leatherette texture background, 30 inches X 36 inches, mounted on seven foot alucrete posts, were installed in August 1966. These signs were relocated and three additional signs added in the summer of 1967. These signs are still in use. The cost, plus the 35 frames noted below, was \$2,140.20.

Thirty-five aluminum frames to hold 6" x 8" signs were obtained to use on the nature trail at the point. Twenty-five were installed and plastic laminated signs were used for effect in 1969 and 1970. The original effect was not too favorable. The signs emphasized the vegetation, not history, and the signs tended to disintegrate in the climate here. After considerable revision to get more historical relevance into the program, the signs were condensed down to nineteen and put on aluminum. These signs were installed in late 1973 and early 1974. Along this trail is located the Great Cross with an audio station installed in 1971, as a memorial to de Tonti and the Frenchmen who founded the original Arkansas Post. At the cistern, a map has been installed to indicate size and extent of the village, and the amount of land fallen prey to the river.

Work on the exhibits and audiovisual presentation for the temporary Visitor Center generally has followed early plans. Preparation of the exhibit plan was begun in the Eastern Museum Lab as early as June 24, 1966, consisting of three exhibits: introduction to Arkansas Post, display of historical artifacts, and the Arkansas Gazette exhibit. Preparation of an audiovisual script was also started. Exhibit two was pretty well put together by August 1966 although changed from earlier plans, exhibit one by late September and exhibit three by late October. By June 1967 the three exhibits were nearing completion and installation began when the building was ready to be occupied on July 31, 1967. One item that had not been found was a sword of the Spanish period. In February, 1968, a French sword was found on the grounds, and immediately sent to the Eastern Museum Lab for preparation as an exhibit called "Tool of War." The case was installed in the winter of 1969. The cost of the three original exhibits, plus one on the Traill's flycatcher and the Tool of War exhibit, came to \$7,085.71. The equipment for the audiovisual exhibit was installed in the fall of 1967. The script was prepared, and the art work begun by September 1, 1967. The presentation was ready, and running by March 29, 1968. The cost of the audiovisual presentation was \$2,888.00.

As the Bicentennial drew near, the need for some commemorative at Arkansas Post was deemed desirable. Arrangements were made with Mr. Bert Hanor of Hot Springs to do a three-panel exhibit on the Colbert Incident of 1783. The work was completed and installed on September 12, 1973, at a cost of \$486.00.

As early as September 1970, the Arkansas Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution expressed a desire to memorialize the Colbert Incident at Arkansas Post. As a marker was deemed to be inappropriate, a number of proposals was made to the DAR and they made their choice of a diorama. After much jockeying for position, and awaiting the

study by Historian Edwin C. Bearss, the diorama on the site had to be scrapped, because the site was gone and it was much too expensive. The Park Service disliked the idea of a plaque or marker. The DAR frowned on the idea of placing their project in the new Visitor Center. The final decision, in late 1974, was to build a corner of Fort San Carlos III near the site of the proposed Visitor Center and possibly overlooking the site of Fort San Carlos III (the exact site is unknown, but is probably now under water), and install four paintings of the story of the Colbert Incident with an appropriate audio. As of December 1975 the DAR has contributed the \$15,000 they promised for the project, the site selected, the plans ready, the logs cut, the paintings commissioned, and the report by Historian Bearss completed.

Archeological work has been done in the area at Menard by Preston Holder in 1956 and 1957 and by James A. Ford and Robert N. Neitzel in 1958, and at the point by Holder in 1956, prior to establishment of the Memorial. After establishment, work was done in the general area of the Village by Rex E. Wilson in 1966, at the Arkansas State Bank site by John W. Walker in 1967, at Montgomery's Tavern in 1971 by Pat Martin, and examining the sites of Visitor Center and road construction by William Westberry in 1974. The materials recovered in all the excavations are now in safe keeping at the University of Arkansas and the Arkansas Archeological Survey. Reports have been submitted on all except the ones in 1971 and 1974, as noted earlier.

Historical research has been limited to the work done by Ray H. Mattison in 1957, and three studies by Edwin C. Bearss in 1964, 1971 and 1974, and one by Bearss and Lenard E. Brown in 1971. No studies are currently in progress.

At the present date, December 1975, Comprehensive Professional Services of Little Rock, under contract to the National Park Service has, in cooperation with Harpers Ferry Center, Denver Service Center, Southwest Regional Office and the Park, prepared detailed and comprehensive plans for the Visitor Center and the Trailside Exhibit System. The planning phase is nearly complete. However, the Congressional limitation of \$550,000 for development of Arkansas Post has nearly been expended. Unless the Congressional limitation is lifted to nearly \$2 3/4 million as in a proposal now before Congress, these plans will have to be postponed until the limitation is lifted.

The major public relations problem has been the lack of knowledge about hunting regulations during the fall and winter, and regulations against running of deer by dogs, legal outside the Park. Every fall several dogs chase deer into the Park, and the dogs are impounded until the owner comes to pick them up. Another problem that has come to light in the last few years is the use of metal detectors by relic hunters to find valuable artifacts. The Park Service has rules

against this, but the relic hunters still come. Some success has been made by frequent patrolling of the Park and its boundaries, but no feasible way has been found to stop this practice.

Arkansas Post National Memorial has a good working relationship with the Eastern National Park and Monument Association. In addition, there is a genuinely cooperative feeling with the Arkansas County Museum and the Grand Prairie Historical Society. Although our fields of interest do not actually coincide, there is an exchange of pertinent information with the Arkansas Agricultural Museum in Stuttgart. In recent archeological work in the Park, the University of Arkansas and the Arkansas Archeological Survey have done much work on contract. While all has not been smooth, relations generally have been good. As a result of the former subordinate relation of Arkansas Post to Hot Springs National Park, relations have been friendly and cooperative with the administration there.

No major disasters have been noted here beyond a severe ice storm on January 2, 1974, that effectively isolated the area for several days. Power and telephone services were cut. Almost all the trees in the area suffered some damage. Lamar Neill Tree Service pruned dead, damaged, and diseased limbs in or near visitor use, maintenance and residential areas. Removal and disposal of limbs and downed trees was done by Park personnel. Four hundred man days were needed to return the Park to near its former state. A further minor catastrophe occurred on March 18 or 19th, 1975, when a tornado, or near tornado, swept down the Arkansas River and sideswiped the point. No damage was done to personnel, visitors or property, beyond the downing or breaking of between 20 to 30 cedar trees in the area. The disruption will be noticeable for some time.

Arkansas Post National Memorial has never had a dedication as such. When the Visitor Center and Wayside Exhibits are completed, such a dedication will be in order.

However, 6 different ceremonies have been held in or concerning the Park. On June 23, 1964, the deed to the area was formally presented by Governor Orval Faubus to Southeast Regional Director Elbert Cox of the National Park Service, before a crowd of several hundred spectators. Also attending were Mrs. W. F. Norrell, widow of Congressman Norrell, who was instrumental in getting the legislation through Congress; Mr. George Pike, DeWitt presided; Mr. L. C. Dial, Chairman of the Arkansas State Publicity and Parks Commission; Mrs. Cora Swindler, sister of State Representative Ballard Deane, who sponsored legislation setting up the state park in 1931; and Dr. H. V. Glenn, president of the Arkansas Post Museum Association; plus several state representatives

and senators. Representing the National Park Service, besides Mr. Cox, were the superintendents of the three National Parks in Arkansas - Mr. Bernard Campbell of Hot Springs National Park, who would exercise supervision over the Memorial, Mr. Thomas Norris of Fort Smith National Historical Site, and Mr. Ray Nelson of Pea Ridge National Military Park. Also in attendance was Research Historian Edwin C. Bearss, who did and is doing research on the area.

On March 2, 1969, the Arkansas Territory Sesquicentennial Commemoration, sponsored by the Arkansas Commemorative Commission, the Arkansas Sesquicentennial Committee and the National Park Service, was held at Arkansas Post National Memorial, attended by over 4,000 visitors. Master of Ceremonies was Chairman E. P. Pyeatt of the Arkansas Commemorative Commission. The main address was given by Congressman Wilbur D. Mills. In attendance were Governor Winthrop Rockefeller, Director George B. Hartzog, Jr. of the National Park Service, Chairman Dr. Boyce Drummond of the Arkansas Sesquicentennial Committee, Superintendent Bernard T. Campbell of Hot Springs National Park, Management Assistant Frank E. Hastings of Arkansas Post National Memorial, Rev. Horace Grogan, Arkansas Folk Singer Jimmy Driftwood, and members of the Commission and Committee. Music was performed by the Navy Band, Naval Air Station, Millington, Tennessee, and the McGehee High School Band. Colors were presented by the U.S. Navy Recruiting Station. Coverage was provided by the Arkansas Gazette and newspapers in Stuttgart, DeWitt, Dumas and Pine Bluff, all four television stations in Little Rock, and radio station KDEW in DeWitt.

On July 10, 1971, prior to the official opening of the Wayne Hampton Bridge at Pendleton, known as the Pendleton Bridge, a fish fry was held at Arkansas Post National Memorial, sponsored by the DeWitt Chamber of Commerce. About 500 people attended the fish fry. Main focus of interest was the archeological work being done at the Park by a crew of University of Arkansas students, directed by Dr. Michael Hoffman and Mr. Pat Martin. Dignitaries attending the fish fry and the bridge dedication later included Governor Dale Bumpers, Senator John L. McClellan, Arkansas Supreme Court Justice Carleton Harris, Arkansas Highway Commission Chairman John W. Harsh, Arkansas County Judge John L. Peterson, Desha County Judge Bonnie Zook, and Reverend James F. Richardson.

On July 22, 1971, a public meeting was held in Gillett on the proposed Master Plan for Arkansas Post National Memorial. Acting Regional Director Charles Marshall presided, assisted by Management Assistant Frank Hastings. Virtually every public and civic organization in Arkansas County sent representatives, plus such state governmental agencies as the Arkansas Highway Department, the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism and the Arkansas History Commission. State Representative Wayne Hampton sent a delegation from the state legislature. Others from throughout the state interested in the development of Arkansas Post also attended.

On November 11, 1973, as one of the events to start the Bicentennial Observance, the alleged grave of Henry W. Conway at the Scull Cemetery, just north of Arkansas Post National Memorial, was marked by an official military grave marker, sponsored by the Grand Prairie Historical Society, attended by about 100 spectators. Attending were state historian Dr. John L. Ferguson of the Arkansas History Commission, Mrs. James S. Pollard, Jr., of the Grand Prairie Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, President Malcolm Browning of the Grand Prairie Historical Society, four of Conway's descendants, Rev. Dale Diffie, Mrs. Ralph Bergschneider of the Arkansas Post 4-H Club, Brown-Wright Post 158 of the American Legion. Taps was performed by two members of the DeWitt High School Band.

On February 28, 1974, Arkansas Post was declared a Bicentennial Area, in ceremonies jointly sponsored by the National Park Service, the Arkansas DAR and the Arkansas American Revolution Bicentennial Celebration. Master of ceremonies was State Representative Wayne Hampton. Main order of business was the presentation by State Regent Mrs. Silas E. Carroll, Jr., of the DAR, to Southwest Regional Director Joseph C. Rumberg of the National Park Service, of a \$15,000 check to be used to construct an appropriate memorial to the Colbert Incident at Arkansas Post. In addition, Executive Director Mrs. Glennis J. Parker of the Arkansas American Revolution Bicentennial Celebration presented a Bicentennial flag to Superintendent D. L. Huggins of Arkansas Post National Memorial. Also in attendance representing Governor Dale Bumpers was Mrs. Dale Bumpers, Arkansas State Historian Dr. John L. Ferguson, State Vice-Regent Mrs. Bernard M. Brazil of the DAR, Regent Mrs. Otto Leibrock of the Grand Prairie Chapter, DAR, and Mrs. Jean Pollard, Bicentennial Chairman. Approximately 100 people attended the ceremonies.

V. Arkansas Post - the Future

What does the future hold for Arkansas Post National Memorial? The area is still one of the virtually unknown, undeveloped parts of the National Park System. Plans are being made for a Visitor Center and Village Trail System that will fully interpret the Park story, but this depends on the raising of the Congressional ceiling. After this is done, Arkansas Post can become a fully functioning element of the National Park Service, and as further investigations and research turn up new information, completely fulfill its mission: to commemorate the early settlement of the lower Mississippi Valley and the development of a new nation.

However, one must always keep in mind that it must be ready for political, economic and social changes. Great plans were envisioned in 1931. The Great Depression, World War II and the impoverished condition of Arkansas postponed those plans, and the introduction of the National Park Service raised the focus from Arkansas to the entire United States. Thus, we must be ready to adjust, but not to abandon, the development of Arkansas Post.

The vision of Mrs. Lewis, Mr. Chenault and Representative Deane is still unfulfilled. The work begun by Congressman Norrell and Senator Fulbright is not complete. It is up to us, the men and women of the National Park Service, to carry on this work. New chapters will be added to this administrative history. But the story of Arkansas Post will never be finished -- just continued into the future.