EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Upcoming programs and events at Arkansas Post NM.

October 25th, 2003 - Ninth Annual Ghosts of the Past tour
Young and old are invited to join the park for this annual, free event. Guided tours will walk through time in the old town site of Arkansas Post where visitors will participate in living history interpretation. All tours are wheelchair accessible. Program takes place rain or shine. Reservations recommended.

January 10th, 2004 - 141st Anniversary of the Battle of Arkansas Post.
A day of programs exploring the Civil War battle at Arkansas Post.

February 21st, 2004 - Ranger Program: After the Louisiana Purchase
Come discover how the aftermath of the Louisiana Purchase affected Arkansas Post, and the town's brief transformation as the first capital of Arkansas.

March 1st-31st, 2004 - Arkansas Archeology Month Exhibit
An exhibit of artifacts from the park’s museum collection relating to this year's theme of Archeology Month, “Containers before Plastic.”

March 19th-21st, 2004 - Colonial Arkansas Encampment
The 2004 colonial encampment will celebrate the end of Arkansas' colonial era and the 200th anniversary of the transfer of Arkansas Post to American authorities.

March 27th, 2004 - Civil War Preservation Trust Park Day
Join park staff in Park Day, an annual hands-on preservation event sponsored by the Civil War Preservation Trust. Participants will help clean up Civil War exhibit areas, and learn more about the Battle of Arkansas Post.

Excellent Weather during the Civil War Weekend
The beautiful autumn weather on Saturday September 27th brought over one hundred visitors to the park for the annual Civil War weekend event. Programs on Saturday featured a six-pounder artillery piece from Fort Smith National Historic Site. Both artillery and infantry demonstrations were held throughout the day, drawing as many as forty visitors at a time.

This year’s programs focused on the United States Army, and their role in the attack on Fort Hindman at Arkansas Post. The Civil War weekend in September of 2004 will concentrate on the Confederate stories behind the battle.

The large number of United States troops involved in the Battle of Arkansas Post is so overwhelming that often overlooked is the fact that the majority of the US soldiers who fought here experienced battlefield conditions for the first time. Highlighted in this year’s programs was the Chicago Mercantile Battery, an artillery unit from Illinois, following the battle, Captain Cooley of the battery reported, “This is the first engagement of the battery. I take pleasure in noticing implicit compliance with orders of every man connected with my command, not one shrinking from his place of duty notwithstanding our dangerous position.”

A new site bulletin featuring a list of units involved in the battle, and a map of battlefield positions compiled by former park ranger Brian McCutchen was also made available to the public for the first time during the event.

Ghosts of the Past coming October 25
The ninth annual Ghosts of the Past tour will be held Saturday, October 25, 2003.
This year’s theme of ‘First Impressions,’ is intended to explore the descriptions and impressions left behind by various visitors to the Post, with an emphasis on the years following the 1803 purchase of Louisiana by the United States. Take a walk through the history of Arkansas Post and events of nearly 300 years will come to life as living historians and volunteers recreate scenes out of Arkansas Post’s history.

Planned scenes include Henri Joutel’s arrival at the Post in 1687, Governor James Miller describing Arkansas Post to his wife, and a visit to the Post in 1900.

Make Reservations Now!
Each one-hour tour will start from the visitor center beginning at 5 p.m. and departing every 15 minutes with the last tour starting at 8:30 p.m. Each tour is limited to 25 people; therefore, reservations are strongly recommended and may be made by calling 870-548-2207.

Since this is an outdoor program visitors are encouraged to wear comfortable walking shoes and warm clothing. All tours are wheelchair accessible. In case of rain, the program will move to the auditorium of the park visitor center.

THE ARKANSAS POST GAZETTE.
The most interesting part of this whole thing is that man invented time in the first place. So, no matter how accurately you define it, time is artificial. Time is a purely human concept that we use to impose order on the physical world. Our use of time does impose some restrictions on the world around us, but only as a reaction to what humans do. The natural process continues without regard for the passage of time. For example, deer respond to changes in season, they eat when they are hungry and they exhibit periodic habits, but I can’t recall any deer that I have seen wearing a watch to find out what time it is. They simply do not care - it makes no difference to them.

I have to wonder if living would be more enjoyable if we weren’t obsessed with time. The “rat race” would be no race at all, and living a lifetime would be just a matter of events without regard to deadlines. Imagine, if you can, a place where time doesn’t matter - a place where events are dealt with as they happen. I like to believe that parks are just such places. I treasure the occasions when I lose track of time as I watch a breeze rustling the leaves of the trees, or I witness a quarrel between a couple of squirrels. A drifting flock of birds that sail effortlessly over the treetops causes me to envy their seemingly carefree attitude. This is an escape for me. Fishermen experience this same kind of peace as they wait quietly for a bite. These short periods of timeless are to be cherished. Unfortunately, as my mind absorbs all this peacefulness, it snaps back to the reality that I have to get to the store before it closes as 6:00 PM, or I won’t have anything for dinner!

If we think of time as the passage from one experience to the next, what is so magical about a certain number of moments being equal to a measurement of time? We define the period of existence called a second as 1/86,400th of a day, but which day? Clearly, someone decided to standardize on a particular period. In the ancient world, a day was defined as the cycle of the sun or the moon - at one point in history it was defined as the period required for the sun to orbit the earth. As we became more sophisticated scientifically, the definition became stricter, until today, we define the measure of time as being represented by the rate of decay of radio nucleoids (atomic clocks.)

As I was struggling to meet yet another deadline, it dawned on me that these arbitrary requirements we place on ourselves and ourselves are simply our attempts at controlling the world around us. After all, it is all based on time, a totally human invention. Sure there are physical phenomena that define time (day and night, seasons, etc.) but in all reality, time is something we do ourselves. Virtually everything we do relates in one way or another to time (the passage of time, the lack of time, “time’s up”, .....

We eat, sleep and live according to the clock. We’re at work, we serve our time, we even live a lifetime. But is this all really necessary? Why can’t we eat when we are hungry, or sleep when we’re tired. What defines a lifetime? I’m sure there are those who are reading this saying to themselves, “I don’t have time for this nonsense.” But stick with me for a few more minutes and stop and think about this whole crazy way we organize our lives.

If we think of time as the passage from one experience to the next, what is so magical about a certain number of moments being equal to a measurement of time? We define the period of existence called a second as 1/86,400th of a day, but which day? Clearly, someone decided to standardize on a particular period. In the ancient world, a day was defined as the cycle of the sun or the moon - at one point in history it was defined as the period required for the sun to orbit the earth. As we became more sophisticated scientifically, the definition became stricter, until today, we define the measure of time as being represented by the rate of decay of radio nucleoids (atomic clocks.)

Volunteer Program Update

There are a number of on-going Natural Resources projects to work on at the park, including a research project on ant populations inside the park, and herptofauna study. Studies of birds and bats within the park are being finalized now and should start soon. Volunteer opportunities at the park are limitless and anyone interested in assisting the park is encouraged to contact the volunteer coordinator, Park Ranger Eric Leonard for more information.

Edward E. Wood, Jr.
People of the Post: James Wilkinson

The history of Arkansas Post is full of notable characters that are not only important to that of the lower Arkansas and Mississippi River Valleys, but to both Arkansas and American history as a whole. In each issue, it is our desire to present a brief sketch of an individual who, in some way, had a profound association with or impact on the historic Post of Arkansas.

Little remembered today, James Wilkinson is probably 19th century America’s greatest scoundrel. An army officer during the Revolutionary War, Wilkinson went on to play a significant role in the army of the new American republic as well as military governor of much of the western frontier, including Louisiana. Complicating his legacy is his participation in numerous schemes to create a separate nation in the American west, and his work as a double agent for Spain.

Wilkinson was born in Benedict, Maryland, in 1757. He studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and opened a medical practice in Maryland. During the Revolution, he served as aide-de-camp to General Horatio Gates and carried the news of America’s victory at Saratoga to Congress. Wilkinson’s indirect criticism of General Washington’s authority forced his reassignment to administrative duty as clothier general, in which post he served until 1783. Three years later, he moved to the Virginia frontier, where he promoted the territory’s reorganization as the new state of Kentucky. At that time, he secretly advised the Spanish government on American plans for western development, receiving a sizable annual pension and favored trading status for his cooperation.

In 1791, Wilkinson returned to military duty during the Ohio River Territory Indian campaigns, succeeding General Anthony Wayne. As military governor of the southwest territory, Wilkinson participated in the 1803 transfer of the Louisiana Purchase from France to the United States. He served briefly as governor of the vast new territory. He was publicly criticized for his heavy-handed administration and reassigned to frontier military duty. Public concerns about his abuse of authority increased when Wilkinson’s participation in the Massachusetts Insurrection caused him to be charged with treason, and he was discharged from active service. Wilkinson died in Mexico on 28 December 1825.

Fort Vancouver was the administrative headquarters and main supply depot for the Hudson’s Bay Company’s fur trading operations along the Columbia River from 1825 to 1846, and was a critical stop for the Lewis and Clark Expedition. A 1955 community-built encampment of the 33-member Lewis and Clark Expedition is the focus of the park. The fort, historic canoe landing, and spring are essential to the explorers’ winter at Fort Clatsop and their journey back to the United States in 1806.

For Further Reading


National Park sites with connections to the Louisiana Purchase. During this bicentennial year we have highlighted some of the other parks and how they relate to the Louisiana Purchase. To complete this series, we explore parks beyond the Purchase territory, to the Pacific Ocean.

Arkansas Post is only one of a large number of National Park sites with connections to the Louisiana Purchase. During this bicentennial year we have highlighted some of the other parks and how they relate to the Louisiana Purchase. To complete this series, we explore parks beyond the Purchase territory, to the Pacific Ocean.
The portrait of Don Joseph Bernard Vallière d’Hauterive, Commandant of Arkansas Post from 1776-1779, is a part of the Colonial Arkansas exhibit at the Historic Arkansas Museum in Little Rock.

Colonial Arkansas Before the Louisiana Purchase, on exhibit through December 31 in the museum’s Horace Cabe Gallery, illustrates the interaction between different nations that ultimately led to the United States. Art, Harvard University and Henderson State University in addition to the artifacts from Arkansas Post National Memorial.

Colonial Arkansas and Arkansas Post are featured in Historic Arkansas Museum exhibit and conference. Of all the artifacts uncovered at Arkansas Post in archeological work over the last fifty years, the majority have not been on public display. A number of colonial era artifacts found at the park in the late 1950s and early 60s are part of Little Rock’s Historic Arkansas Museum (HAM) exhibit on Colonial Arkansas. This exhibit, including Quapaw ceramics and a large dugout canoe, as well as a number of other Arkansas Post related items will be open for public viewing until the end of December. The exhibit provides a rare opportunity to explore the colonial era in depth, and we encourage anyone who can make it to visit HAM before the end of the year. Below is a more detailed description of the exhibit.

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In addition to the exhibit, HAM will be hosting a conference and powwow October 9-11 that will bring together internationally known scholars and members of the Quapaw and Caddo nations to discuss Arkansas’ colonial past. Topics will include various aspects of the relationship between Arkansas Native Americans and the Europeans who arrived in the 250 years preceding the Louisiana Purchase. The conference will include the Little Rock premier of the park’s orientation film, “Echoes of the Past.”

Arkansas Post National Memorial

The “Virtual Post” - An Update on Arkansas Post’s presence on the Internet

As a park located far “off the beaten path,” Arkansas Post and its history is unknown to most Americans, and even a large number of Arkansans know little about the park. The internet provides the park an opportunity to educate virtual visitors about both the history of Arkansas Post and the opportunities that the park provides today. This year has brought a number of additions to the park’s presence on-line, and great things are on the horizon.

At the beginning of the summer two on-line books were added to the park’s expanded content. Several months later, and the two books (A study on the Colbert Raid and a work covering the Battle of Arkansas Post) are now available to the public, and adding them to the park’s web site will greatly increase their availability and usefulness.

Arkansas Post was the site of this region’s transformation from a colonial system of government, to a free democratic society. National Constitution Week provides an excellent opportunity to learn more about the transformation of the Louisiana Purchase into American territories.

The National Park Service has published a number of research reports on the history and archeology of Arkansas Post. These reports, service records and other items kindly provided by these individuals help to fill in the details of the battle, and often put a real human perspective on the assault against Fort Hindman.

On occasion, the park receives inquiries from visitors or researchers regarding ancestors who participated in the Civil War battle here in January of 1863. Photographs, service records and other items kindly provided by these individuals help to fill in the details of the battle, and often put a real human perspective on the assault against Fort Hindman.

Visitors examine the Constitution Week display in the visitor center.

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Colonial Arkansas Before the Louisiana Purchase, on exhibit through December 31 in the museum’s Horace Cabe Gallery, illustrates the interaction between different nations that ultimately led to the United States. Art, Harvard University and Henderson State University in addition to the artifacts from Arkansas Post National Memorial.

Most recently, the park has been given a tran-scription from a diary by Private Dyer Hitchcock, Company F, 24th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. Private Hitchcock fought at the Battle of Arkansas Post on August 26, 1820. He was inspired by his research and her visit to publish a web page on the 24th Wisconsin; her page can be found at: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~barrettbranches/Researchers/Karen%20Hett/Baquividx.html

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By the late 19th century European powers were racing to carve up the new world. In 1690 the French moved south from the St. Lawrence Valley to plant the first European settlement in the lower Mississippi Valley. Arkansas Post would be a staging point for the Mississippi River trade between New Formosa and the Gulf of Mexico. Over the next two centuries of settlement the area was occupied by several European nations.

From here, explore Arkansas Post’s three-hundred year role in shaping American history.
### Constitution Week at Arkansas Post

For the tenth year, Arkansas Post National Memorial hosted a National Constitution Week display, including a scroll for visitors to add their names to the Constitution. Constitution Week occurs annually every September 17-23 on the anniversary of the original signing of the Constitution in 1789.

Each year since 1991 the national Constitution Center (NCC) has sponsored the “I Signed the Constitution” program across the country to encourage Americans to affirm their rights and responsibilities as citizens and to learn more about their Constitution. Just as the original signers did, participants can place their signatures on parchment that will be put on archival record in the NCC’s Constitution Center.

This year over one hundred visitors participated in Constitution Week and added their name to the parchment scroll.

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### Colonial Arkansas and Arkansas Post are featured in Historic Arkansas Museum exhibit and conference

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**Colonial Arkansas Before the Louisiana Purchase**

On exhibit through December 31 in the museum’s Horace Calie Gallery, illustrates the interaction between different nations that ultimately led to the United States purchasing the Louisiana Territory from France in 1803. In addition to items from the museum’s permanent collection, the exhibit features rare and unique artifacts on loan from the National Gallery of Art, Harvard University and Henderson State University in addition to the artifacts from Arkansas Post National Memorial.

In addition to the exhibit, HAM will be hosting a conference and powwow October 9-11 that will bring together internationally known scholars and members of the Quapaw and Caddo nations to discuss Arkansas’ colonial past. Topics will include various aspects of the relationship between Arkansas Native Americans and the Europeans who arrived in the 250 years preceding the Louisiana Purchase. The conference will include the Little Rock premier of the park’s orientation film, “Echoes of the Past.”

**Soldier’s diary sheds new light on the Battle of Arkansas Post**

On occasion, the park receives inquiries from visitors or researchers regarding ancestors who participated in the Civil War battle here in January of 1863. Photographs, service records and other items kindly provided by these individuals help to fill in the details of the battle, and offer a real human perspective on the assault against Fort Hindman.

Over the summer a descendant of two members of the 24th Texas Dismounted Cavalry visited the park and provided an number of materials. She was inspired by her research and her visit to publish a web page on the 24th Texas, her page can be found at: [http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~barrettbranches/Researchers/Karen%20Hett/Baqueriv.html](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~barrettbranches/Researchers/Karen%20Hett/Baqueriv.html)

Most recently, the park has been given a transcription from a diary by Private Dyer Hitchcock, Company F, 23rd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry. Private Hitchcock fought at the Battle of Arkansas Post on the December 5, 1862 and his journal includes details of both battles. Private Hitchcock provides a blow-by-blow account of his regiment’s role in the battle, and mentions General Stephen Burbridge prominently. Following the surrender of Confederate Forces, General Burbridge personally thanked the men of the 3rd, saying, “Gentlemen. I hope that my conduct this day has proved to you that I am a union man, and I shall always fight for this Glorious Old Flag.”

Most fascinating is Hitchcock’s journal entries in the days immediately following the battle, and a sketch of Fort Hindman that closely matches maps from the official records of the war.

Below is a more detailed description of the exhibit:

**Arkansas Post National Memorial**

By the late 17th century European powers were racing to carve up the new world. In 1669, the French moved south from the St. Lawrence Valley to plant the first European settlement in the lower Mississippi Valley. Arkansas Post was to be a staging point for the Mississippi River trade between New France and the Gulf of Mexico. Over the two centuries of the settlement’s life, the events surrounding it spilled the conflicts and changes that transformed precious European trading posts and garrisons into new American towns.

From here, explore Arkansas Post’s three-hundred year role in shaping American history.
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Wilkinson was born in Benedict, Maryland, in 1757. He studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and opened a medical practice in Maryland. During the Revolution, he served as aide-de-camp to General Horatio Gates and carried the news of America's victory at Saratoga to Congress. Wilkinson's indiscreet criticism of General Washington's authority forced his reassignment to administrative duty as clothing general, in which post he served until 1783. Three years later, he moved to the Virginia frontier, where he promoted the territory's reorganization as the new state of Kentucky. At that time, he secretly advised the Spanish government on American plans for western development, receiving a sizable annual pension and favored trading status for his cooperation.

In 1796, Wilkinson returned to military duty during the Ohio River Territory Indian campaigns, succeeding General Anthony Wayne. As military governor of the southwest territory, Wilkinson participated in the 1803 transfer of the Louisiana Purchase from France to the United States. He served briefly as governor of the vast new territory. He was publicly criticized for his heavy-handed administration and reassigned to frontier military duty. Public concerns about his abuse of authority increased when Wilkinson's participation in former vice president Aaron Burr's scheme to establish an independent western nation was revealed. He narrowly escaped indictment during Burr's treason trial, and was twice investigated by Congress. Following an unsuccessful court-martial, he returned to his military command in New Orleans.

With the outbreak of renewed war between America and England in 1812, Wilkinson was posted to Canada. His major offensive against the British in Montreal failed, and he was discharged from active service. Wilkinson died in Mexico on 28 December 1819.

As governor of the Louisiana Territory immediately following the 1803 transfer, Wilkinson's domain included Arkansas Post, and he visited the settlement on at least one occasion on his way to and from New Orleans. Wilkinson appointed the first Justices of the Peace in the District of Arkansas. His son, Lt. James B. Wilkinson, was a member of Pike's expedition to the west, and returned to the United States via the Arkansas River and Arkansas Post. A nephew, Benjamin Wilkinson, also worked for a short time in the Indian trade at the Post.

Fort Vancouver was the administrative headquarters and main supply depot for the Hudson's Bay Company's fur trading operations in the immense Columbia Department. Under the leadership of John McLoughlin, the fort became the center of political, cultural, and commercial activities in the Pacific Northwest. When American immigrants arrived in the Oregon Country during the 1830s and 1840s, Fort Vancouver provided them with essential supplies to begin their new settlements.

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Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail

This site celebrates the historic expedition of the Corps of Discovery, led by Captain Meriwether Lewis and Captain William Clark. Thirty-three people traveled with them into unknown territory, starting near what is now known as Wood River, Illinois in 1804, reaching the Pacific Ocean in 1806. Today's trail follows their route as closely as possible given the changes over the years.

It is approximately 3,500 miles long, beginning near Wood River, Illinois, and passes through portions of Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. The Lewis & Clark NHT does not have a formal visitor center along any portion of the trail. Various organizations and individuals are responsible for trail stewardship with oversight provided by the Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail office.

National Parks and the Louisiana Purchase

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The American Lotus at Arkansas Post

During late summer and early autumn, visitors to Arkansas Post are treated to the sight of lily pads and blossoms courtesy of the American Lotus.

Nelumbo lutea, the American yellow lotus, is the only lotus native to the United States. American lotus is a perennial aquatic herb with spongy, long, cylindrical rhizomes that produce tubers during the fall months. Leaf stalks are long, supporting leaves that are both floating and standing above the water surface. Leaves above the water tend to be elevated outward from the center and appearing funnel-like. Flowers are solitary, showy, on long stalks, frequently overlapping the leaves. The petals are numerous and yellow.

The American lotus produces the largest flower of any plant in North America and occurs in quiet waters in ponds, lakes and the edges of slow moving streams and rivers from Iowa to New York and south to Oklahoma, East Texas and Florida.

A number of common names, many of native American origin, are used to identify this species. Among them are: American lotus, yellow lotus, water-chinquapin, duck acorn, lotus lily, yellow Nelmculo, yanquapin, workapin, and pond lily. In the Arkansas Post area, the common name of yanacpin is most frequently used; in fact, a nearby community on the Arkansas River is named Yancopin, likely for the presence of the American Lotus.

Lotus blossoms and lily pads in Post Bend.

The American Lotus at Post Bend. The National Park Service cares for the Internet E-mail 870 548-2207

Library has been cataloged (by Park Ranger Dorothy Cook and volunteers Lynn and Elizabeth Gaines), and in that time a large number of books, journals and other resources have been added, making the current catalogue almost meaningless. This winter we will again tackle the park library with the intention of updating the catalogue, and are on the lookout for volunteers interested in helping out.

Volunteer Program Update

There are a number of on-going Natural Resources volunteer projects in the park at present, including a research project on ant populations inside the park, and herptofauna study. Studies of birds and bats within the park are being finalized now and should start soon.

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Rugged and Sublime, edited by Mark Christ, is one of a number of excellent books on the Civil War in Arkansas.


Best Little Stories from the Civil War by C. Brian Kelley. $16.95

Civil War Parks: The Story Behind the Scenery by William C. Davis. $8.95

Wallace, edited by William C. Davis. $8.95

Civil War Songbook with Historical Commentary, by Keith & Rusty McNeil. $15.95

Arkansas Post National Memorial commemorates the earliest European settlement in the Lower Mississippi valley. First established in 1688, 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.

Arkansas Post National Memorial
1741 Old Post Road
Gillett, AR 72055
Phone 870 548-2207
E-mail arpos@nps.gov
Internet http://www.nps.gov/arpo/

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