



The Arkansas Post Gazette

The Battle of Arkansas Post Sesquicentennial

One hundred and fifty years ago, one of Arkansas's largest battles took place at Arkansas Post with the Union assault on Fort Hindman. Over thirty thousand troops, three ironclads and five "tin-clads" attacked approximately five thousand Confederates from Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana. Confederate troops surrendered after a nearly two day barrage of river artillery that destroyed the fort and displaced the Confederates from the meager protection of their earthworks. It is estimated that the troops captured at Arkansas post in January 1863 represented nearly one quarter of the Confederate forces in Arkansas during that time. The destruction of the fort took away the largest Confederate river defense between the Mississippi and Little Rock. The town of Arkansas post never recovered from the battle and that coupled with the change of the course of the Arkansas River led to the demise of the Post.

In January, the park hosted two school days for students from Gillett, DeWitt, Dumas, Monticello, Star City, Hamberg, Helena and Pulaski Academy. Over 800 students and teachers took part in the two-day living history extravaganza. Guest speakers demonstrated period music, telegraph, letter writing, artifacts, baseball, soldiers' life and women during the war. The artillery crew from Pea Ridge National Military Park also gave cannon demonstrations under Supervisory Park Ranger Troy Banzhaf. School Days led into a flurry of activity to mark the Sesquicentennial Event.

Arkansas Post National Memorial and Arkansas Post Museum State Park both hosted living history camps; The Union camped at the State Park while Confederates setup at the national park's picnic area. The parks were open to the public with food service at the Confederate camp and sutlers at the Union camp. Guest authors were on hand to sign their books: Mark Christ (*Civil War Arkansas 1863: The Battle for a State*), Terry Winschel (*Triumph and Defeat: The Vicksburg Campaign*) and Dr William Shea (*Vicksburg Is the Key: The Struggle for the Mississippi River*). Mark Christ and Terry Winschel both gave presentations at the Memorial Visitor Center on the Battle of Arkansas Post and Vicksburg.

The National Park hosted a memorial ceremony for those who died in the battle. The ceremony was led by Danny Honnoll of the 30th Arkansas Infantry Regiment. This ceremony included a 21-gun salute and recognition of descendants of the veterans who fought in the battle. That evening the State Park hosted a Civil War Period Ball with the Northwest Arkansas musical group Harmony. The State Park also hosted a period style church service on Sunday morning.

This was the largest collaboration between the parks in years. Many of the weekend events including the shuttle service to and from Gillett was made possible with grants from the Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission and the Lower Mississippi Delta Initiative. Another major factor in making the event happen is the help of local individuals, businesses and organizations (listed on page 6.)



Superintendent's Scribblin's

For the last six months or so, we have been meeting and planning the Commemoration of the Battle of Arkansas Post and now that it is done, I have been reflecting back on what transpired -- that is, on what we did and how it worked out. We got out posters, emails, and news releases; we recruited sponsors, did radio interviews and gave talks to civic groups and historical societies; we applied for grants and got the word out to Civil War reenactor associations and published notices in magazines and journals -- basically, we spent a lot of time trying to let folks know what was about to happen. Of course, getting the word out was just a small part of the process -- there were all the logistics of scheduling the events, hiring the shuttle buses, arranging the school days, making arrangements for



parking 2,000+ cars, coordinating with the highway department, law enforcement agencies and emergency services agencies, contracting with the concessionaires, obtaining supplies for the reenactors and publishing programs for all the events. There were still the details we had to arrange as well and nothing seemed to go as smoothly as we anticipated. There were the things we couldn't control and those became the real impediments. Chief among those unpredictable factors was the weather! It seemed to rain incessantly -- at least whenever we wanted to do anything. Besides the weather, the grant that was awarded in November to the Grand Prairie Historical Society from the Lower Mississippi Delta Initiative (NPS) to support a majority of the activities was held up due to a number of factors and never materialized! Considering what we planned to do and what we accomplished, it's a wonder that any

activities happened! I guess it was sheer perseverance that carried us through and that I credit to our lead organizer and volunteer, Dyan Bohnert and our great park staff. We all pitched in and never gave up and for that I have to say it was a job well done.

As I reflect on what we had to do, I have come to the realization that holding a Sesquicentennial Commemoration was probably as complicated as the original battle! Of course that is silly, but one thing for sure is that we had fewer people and less money to do the job. The military has never been shy with their command hierarchy. They also do not have to deal with convincing folks to participate when they are told to do something. Can you imagine the response if one of the soldiers told their commander they were busy that day and wouldn't be able to participate? Well, that was a recurrent theme for us. With over 280 reenactors registered, we had just shy of forty show up. Consequently, many of our plans went out the window and we ended up with "make-do" solutions.

But enough of the negatives, I want to think about on what went right! There was plenty to be happy about. After nearly three weeks of it raining off and on, I have to say that the greatest joy I experienced during the whole four-day event was the clear sky and the bright sunshine that stayed with us Thursday through Sunday. The school days went great and over 800 students participated. Our volunteers provided a diverse array of insights into the life and times of the Civil War era. Of course, the overwhelming choice of the students was the Cannon Crew from Pea Ridge NMP -- they had the most spectacular presentation and theirs was by far the loudest! I found myself feeling pretty good when I looked out from the flagpoles at the visitor center and saw the solid line of school buses parked along the curb on Thursday and Friday. There were even more buses in the parking lot, but what really brought



Edward E. Wood, Park Superintendent

the sheer numbers home for me was when the kids all sat down for lunch and they lined the curbs. Pictures just can't capture the feeling generated by over 400 students sitting there eating their sack lunches.

The most notable activity of the weekend for me was the memorial ceremony. The solemn ceremony commemorated the participants of the 1863 battle -- their sacrifices, their suffering and deaths, their beliefs and their commitments to their country. The moving presentation gave us a time to reflect on our personal feelings about the Civil War and the tough times surrounding the battles between countrymen. I thought it was extremely well done and sensitive to both sides of the conflict.

While there were detractors, a majority of the participating organizations were positive and extremely helpful. Unfortunately, there is not enough space to personally thank everyone who made this event possible but all in all, we had a great bunch of sponsors as indicated in the "thanks" block (see page 6.)

I just want to add my heartfelt thanks and to say that I am proud to have been associated with everyone who contributed to this once in a lifetime event!

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Parks Look for Public Input

Park-goers can keep up with Arkansas Post National Memorial by checking out our projects at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ARPO>. This website gives you the inside track on park developments.

The new site opens the door to PEPC – Planning, Environment and Public Comment. PEPC is an online collaborative tool that provides you with unprecedented, easy access to documents used in developing and tracking projects within the National Park Service.

It also allows you to tell us what you think about the various projects planned for Arkansas Post.

“People lead such busy lives,” said Superintendent Ed Wood. “This website will help our visitors and others interested in Arkansas Post keep abreast of park issues and provide a quick, easy method for

them to tell us what they think. This input is invaluable in guiding our decision-making.”

Park projects can be as routine as trail rehabilitation and utility location, and as rare as a new visitor center or the relocation of a historic building. Users will find it easy to access several types of public documents, including Environmental Assessments (EA), such as one currently in development for the management of exotic invasive plants in the natural areas of 15 Midwestern parks, including Arkansas Post (#31771 Heartland Exotic Plant Management Plan at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=31771>).

You can use this site to comment on park projects managed by the National Park Service nationwide.



Kirby McCallie, Resource Manager

The website also makes the public comment process more efficient, making the most of tax dollars. Public comments entered through the website are saved directly to a database, saving the park staff from hours of data entry. The system will also save staff from hours of copying and e-mailing various public documents.

“It’s great to have an easy-to-use system that is so beneficial to both the public and the staff,” said Superintendent Wood.

Temporary Exhibits Dig Deeper into Early American Conflicts

Two traveling displays have been added to the Arkansas Post Visitor Center. The first is a large three panel exhibit on the Civil War in the West. The three subjects interpreted are slavery, the struggle to control navigable rivers, and a Nation divided. The exhibit uses a combination of period photography, maps, and art to convey these three key themes of the war on the western front. One very informative image is an 1860 Census map that shows slave populations by county. Another powerful tool displays the cost of the war in lives lost. A series of stars are arranged to show the number of soldiers who died, only each star represents 200 soldiers.

This exhibit was developed by the National Park Service Midwest Regional Office in Omaha, Nebraska and designed by Harper’s Ferry Center in West Virginia. A handful of parks in the Midwest Region have the exhibit. Arkansas Post will keep the display through its Sesquicentennial year, 2013.



The second exhibit interprets the War of 1812 Bicentennial. This exhibit consists of six panels covering many aspects of that war – causes, campaigns, and its resolution. It was produced by the US Navy and will be up until further notice. For Arkansas, the most direct result of the War of 1812 was the number of veterans who were compensated with bounty land warrants. America was moving west into Arkansas, Missouri, and Illinois. When Missouri sought statehood in 1819, Arkansas became a territory. James Miller, the first Governor appointed to Arkansas was a well-known hero of the War of 1812. Many of the earliest business and political leaders in Arkansas Territory were war veterans.

Comings and Goings

Two members of the Arkansas Post family traded the Arkansas Delta for the Rocky Mountains. Jason Allely accepted a new position at Rocky Mountain National Park late last summer. Jason began at Arkansas Post in 2009 working at the Visitor Center information desk, but quickly found a knack for administrative duties such as payroll and property management. The skills he gained in the private sector helped him learn new computer-based programs for park administration. He still helped visitors when needed and ably stepped into the role of newspaper man, William Woodruff for Ghosts of the Past in 2010. Jason is a committed worker and will be a good fit for Rocky Mountain.



Jason and Sarah Allely

Sarah Allely served as the park's Resource Manager since her 2009 transfer from the Midwest Regional Office in Omaha, Nebraska. Sarah oversaw the park safety program, compliance, environmental management, and nature and cultural resource issues. She did the preliminary work on the Recycling Trailer which has become very popular in the community. She facilitated Environmental Education programs and worked with the park Interpreter on Recycling pro-

grams for the kids. She also assisted with the park's living history program when needed. Sarah currently does volunteer work with the Rocky Mountain National Park and has recently begun work with the US Department of Agriculture. We appreciate all of the hard work and dedication Jason and Sarah showed during their time at Arkansas Post.

Ronald "RD" Danner from DeWitt joined the Maintenance staff for the summer as a seasonal worker. Cornelius Williams (Interpretation, third summer) and Cece Kolesar (Resource Management, second summer) both returned as student employees from the University of Pine Bluff. Both of the seniors assisted with Ghosts of the Past. Cece assisted the Visitor Center on a part time basis into the fall.

Although not a newcomer to the park, Kirby McCallie has been selected as our new permanent Resource Manager. In this new role, she will be responsible for overseeing the protection and management of the park's cultural and natural resources as well as compliance issues for park undertakings. Her position also includes duties as the park safety officer. She has been a valued member of the staff for the last three years, first as a volunteer, then as a student intern biotech and most recently as a student interpretive park ranger. With degrees in both Biology and History, her varied education and experience will be a real asset to the park and her conversion to a permanent career position will keep her with the NPS for years to come. Congratulations and welcome Kirby!



Last summer's Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) employees and leaders: (starting left front) Justin Walker, Jasmine Gilmore, Larry Jeffery, Dustin Danner, (center) Kiara Davis, Kirsten Schwede, (in water) Tre Moss, Holden McCollum. Photo by Ed Wood

Remembering Mahina Waikalani Powell

June 1990 – October 2012

This fall we were saddened to lose our colleague and dear friend, Mahina Powell in an automobile accident. She was a nursing student at the University of Arkansas Monticello. Since last summer she worked part time on the information desk assisting visitors and helping with the Family Fun Day programs. As a coworker, she was dependable and committed to doing a good job. She quickly understood the importance of good visitor service. Before we lost her, she was preparing for her first foray in living history by portraying a fur trader in the annual Ghosts of the Past program. She was very enthusiastic about the challenge, and I know she would have done an amazing job.

As a friend, Mahina was trustworthy, sincere, and really funny. She loved the outdoors, she loved her pets, but most of all she loved people. Visitors responded to her warm, cheerful personality. She welcomed every visitor with hospitality and politely chuckled at the occasional attempt at guessing her Native American heritage; she was actually Hawaiian and born in the Marshall Islands. She grew up in Arkansas City, and she was loved by everyone who knew her. Mahina Powell was an Arkansas original, and she is sorely missed.



-Joe

An Extended Summer Vacation?

Summer time is a time that students use to relax, unwind, and take a break from all of the stress that homework, tests and studying cause during the school year. Some would rather spend their summer doing absolutely nothing, while others may get summer jobs to earn some extra cash. As an environmental biology major at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff for me, summer time was the time to network and began to build work experience through internships. In searching for an internship I gained more experience than what I was looking for, and memories I will never forget.

I can understand how Henri De Tonti may have felt, as he traveled the Arkansas

River, and stumbled upon the beauty of Arkansas Post. As I drove into the park, in the summer of 2010, I was blown away by the breath taking view of water, flowers, and array of wildlife that Arkansas Post was home to. In addition to its natural allure, I quickly realized the amazing amount of history that took place at this peninsula of paradise. I felt privileged that I was able to gain work experience at the expense of enjoying such a wonderful venue.

While working at the park I served as a Park Guide, as well as doing some extensive work with the Natural Resource Division. Many of my days were spent maintaining the visitor's center, greeting



**Cornelius Williams,
Seasonal Park Guide**

guests, and contributing to the weekend summer programs. Although Arkansas Post has so much to offer in terms of cultural and natural history, I believe that the greatest resource the park has is its "people." Like the Quapaw Indians and the French in the early settlements of Arkansas Post, strong relationships were built with my co-workers and even some visitors.

Continued on Page 11

School days



A Special Thanks to Our Event Sponsors and Volunteers

Friends of Arkansas Post National Memorial * Friends of Arkansas Post Museum State Park
Grand Prairie Historical Society * Arkansas Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission
Merchant's & Farmers Bank – Dumas * Ray and Tommy Holzauer * Phillips Community College – DeWitt
Triple P. / Sandbar Restaurant – Pendleton * Kathy's Oasis * The last shot from Frank Scott
Rhonda Mullikan SEAESC * Dumas EMS * Arkansas National Guard Med. Cor. * Gillett City Police
Arkansas County Sheriff Department * Arkansas State Police * Arkansas Highway Department * James Dickson
Gillett Civic Group * Mayor Jared Holzauer - Gillett * Mayor James Berry – Dumas * Ark. Co. Judge Sonny Cox
Dr. William Shea * Mark Christ * Terry Winschel * Daughters of Charity Services of Ark. * Pattillo Center School
DeWitt Chamber of Commerce * Dumas Chamber of Commerce * Desha Co. Historical Society
Arkansas Wildlife Federation * Arkansas Toothpick * US Post Office * Carol Roberson * Chad Phillips
Banks Phillips * Don Hubsch * Britton Williams * Gail Sears * Gay Rusk * Steve Frizzell * Danny Honnell
Freeda Mattmiller * Cormier's Rice – DeWitt * Riceland Foods – Stuttgart * Mountain Pure Water – Little Rock
Gillett Grain * Dean's Pharmacy – DeWitt * Arkansas State Parks staff * National Park Service staff

Anniversary



From any one of 32 school groups to any of the 1,000+ spectators, all enjoyed the Sesquicentennial of the Battle of Arkansas Post.

Eastern National Prepares for Sesquicentennial

As the park prepared for the commemoration of the Sesquicentennial of the Battle of Arkansas Post, so the Eastern National bookstore also developed special products to help preserve the memories of the event. A wide array of Sesquicentennial products were produced and were very popular with participants and visitors alike. These items are still available both in the park bookstore (at the Visitor Center) and online at www.eParks.com. These items will be available until they sell out, so if you are interested in having one or several of them, you should pick them as soon as you are able.



Union Navy at Arkansas Post - Part 3

USS Louisville

During the Civil War, engineer James B. Eads was contracted to build city class ironclads for the War Department. The USS Louisville was among the first of seven gunboats built by Eads in just five months. It was built in St. Louis for a cost of \$89,000. Commissioned in January 1862, the 512-ton gunboat served in the U.S. Army's Western Gunboat Flotilla in a successful campaign to secure the upper Mississippi and its tributaries. She participated in actions at Fort Donelson, Memphis and Vicksburg. Transferred to the Navy in October 1862, Louisville took part in operations above Vicksburg during the rest of that year and into 1863.

At Arkansas Post, the Louisville was one of the first three ships to engage the guns of Fort Hindman. On the first evening of battle, eleven crew members were killed or wounded. On the second day, the gunboats completely disabled the fort and destroyed much of the town. In April 1863, she was one of the Federal ships that ran past Vicksburg's batteries and later engaged Confederate fortifications at Grand Gulf. In the spring of 1864, the Louisville supported the Red River campaign, and remained active on western rivers until the end of the war. She was decommissioned in July 1865 and sold in November. Throughout the war James Eads remained in contact with

Navy commanders to find ways to improve his design. By the end of the war, he had built over thirty ironclads.

USS Ram Monarch

The act of ramming one ship into another as an offensive naval strategy dates back to the Greeks. With the power of steam and the strength of thick iron hulls, naval forces revived this tactic during the Civil War. Ships like the Monarch were altered not as gunboats, but with the specific purpose of running into other ships. Fearing that the Confederates had the support of a ram at Fort Hindman, the USS Monarch was brought to support Porter's fleet. It was kept near the iron clads, but was not needed as a ram.

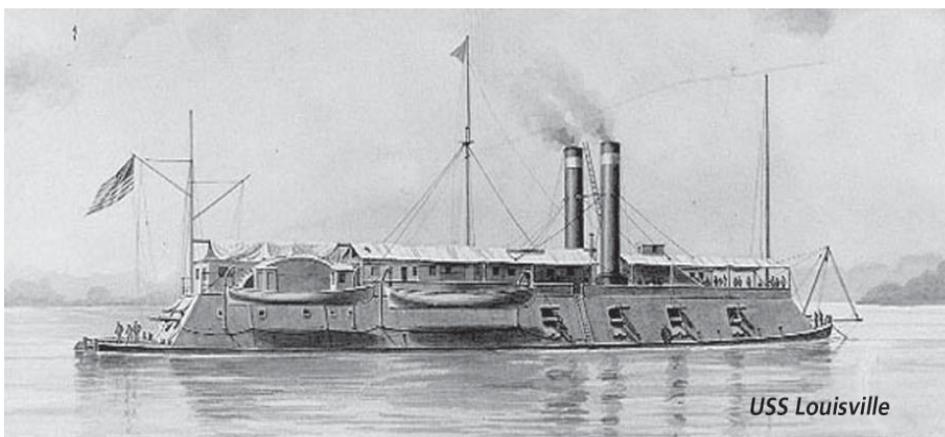
The Monarch was a 406-ton side-wheel towboat built at Fulton, Ohio,



Joe Herron, Park Ranger
(co-written by Eric Leonard,
Andersonville National
Historic Site)

in 1853, and then converted to a ram in 1862 for Colonel Charles Ellet's U.S. Ram Fleet. This ship rammed Confederate gunboats during the Battle of Memphis in 1862.

After Fort Hindman, she conducted further operations on the Yazoo River and along the Tennessee rivers. She was placed in reserve when Ellet's Mississippi Marine Brigade was disbanded in mid-1864, and was sunk by ice while laid up in December 1864.



The 6th Annual Digital Photography Contest

The contest has been expanded to an almost year-around event. To be eligible, photos must be taken within the park boundaries between October 1, 2012 and September 2, 2013 (Labor Day). There are six categories in both the youth and adult divisions. Entry forms and a complete list of rules are available at the Visitor Center as well as through the "Photos and Multimedia" link at www.nps.gov/arp0

Calendar of Events 2013

NATIONAL PARK WEEK

Colonial Encampment / 230th

Anniversary of Colbert's Raid - April 20 Join park staff and volunteers from 10 am to 3 pm to learn about the French and Spanish Colonial period in Arkansas. Members of the Early Arkansas Reenactors and the Arkansas Post Spanish Cannon Crew will conduct musket and cannon demonstrations.



Science Saturday - April 27

Join park staff between 10 am – 2 pm for a series of science-based programs for all ages. Topics covered include climate change, water ecology, identifying exotic plants, and more.



Second Annual Arkansas Post Biodiversity Fair- June 1

Join park staff, volunteers, and professional scientists from 10 am to 4 pm for a fun filled day of biodiversity discovery. Family activities include live animal demonstrations, unofficial antler scoring, guided nature walks, furs and pelts, children's crafts and much more! Registration is not necessary

Youth Fishing Derby Park - June 15

Park Lake will be stocked by the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission with 250 channel catfish for this event. Prizes will be awarded for the largest catfish landed. Competition is open to youth 12 and under. Registration begins at 8:30 am.



Public Lands Day - September 28

The park will host a cleanup of Post Bayou Trail, the Nature Trail, and the Civil War Rifle Pits for Public Lands Day. The cleanup is from 8 am– Noon. Register your family or civic group with Park Ranger Joe Herron by calling 870-548-2207.

Family Fun Days: Saturdays 9 am – 1 pm
Register for these events by calling 870-548-2207

June 22 – Birds and Mammals: The first Europeans to settle Arkansas sought the furs of small mammals and deer. Today Arkansas Post draws birders from across the region. Join us for a bird hike and talks on mammal tracks and identification.

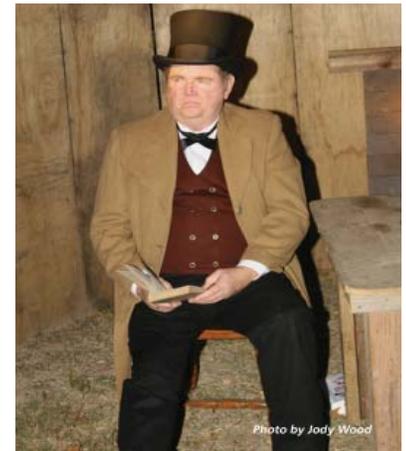
June 29 - Reptiles and Amphibians: Learn about the slippery and scaly inhabitants of Arkansas Post. Special programs on snakes, turtles, and alligators and a hike around Park Lake are just part of the fun.

July 6 – Civil War Kid's Day: We will start the day's program with a hike to the rifle pits to discuss the Battle of Arkansas Post. Activities and crafts will help kids learn about young people in 1860s Arkansas.

July 13 – Colonial Kid's Day: What kind of chores and games would a kid have done during 1700's Arkansas? Join Rangers and volunteers to learn about the early days of Arkansas History. Musket and Cannon demonstrations will be conducted.

July 20 Junior Archaeologist / National Park Traveler: Parents and kids are welcome to learn about the field of Archeology and how it is practiced in National Parks. What are their tools and how is it different from the movies? The other part of the day's programs will show ways to get the most out of your visit to the National Park. We will discuss how to plan your trip to America's best kept secrets and how to get the most educational experience out of the places you visit.

July 27 Digital Photography Workshop: Participants will learn basic techniques for taking outdoor digital photographs and how to capture nature in action at Arkansas Post. Participants will create a frame for their picture and at the end of the day; they will also receive a copy of their best photograph to take home. You may bring your own digital camera or you can reserve one of the park's digital cameras when you call to register.



[The 19th Annual Ghosts of the Past -October 19](#)

Join park staff and volunteers for the annual guided walk through Arkansas History. Living History presentations will portray events from the exploration and settlement of Arkansas Post, Colbert's Raid, and the Civil War. Tours start every 15 minutes from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm and will last approximately one hour. Reservations are strongly recommended.

[Save the Date: November 16-17](#)

The park is currently planning a large scale cleanup of the Osotouy Unit of the park which includes the area locally known as Menard Mounds. This collaboration may involve the Quapaw nation and scouting groups. More information will be coming soon.

(Summer Vacation continued from page 5)

In the workplace employees must have the ability to wear different hats or have different skill sets; however in addition to skills at Arkansas Post, I wore different hats literally. As a park guide, the standard National Park Service flat-hat was worn during tours/ programs, but on occasion I got to relive history by wearing the Tri-corn hats of the Spanish Colonial uniforms. Firing the cannons during special programs filled my heart with even more joy, with the thought of how our fathers had fought battles and wars defending the place I had come to love.

After graduating from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff in May 2012, I was saddened at the thought that my tenure of working as a student employee at the Post was ending and my last summer at the Post was here. I begin to reminisce on the great opportunity that National Park Service had given me, to expand my skills and gain valuable work experience. Whether it was giving tours, doing research, or just enjoying the view of Post Lake at lunch, the summers I spent at Arkansas Post will never be forgotten. Just as the earlier settlements moved on from this wonderful place, I must also part. As I leave my memories behind, I'm quickly reminded that the three summers I worked as a student intern, were more than an internship, because I enjoyed them as if there were an extended summer vacation.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Arkansas Post National Memorial
1741 Old Post Rd.
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
Gillett, AR 72055

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



Mackensie and Peyton Hunt from Washington state were the first to earn the Junior Civil War Historian patch at Arkansas Post. Learn more at <http://www.nps.gov/stri/forkids/jcwh.htm>